

Jesus answers His Disciples' three questions but not in the exact order which they asked; He chooses to save the best till last; He saves His answer, which is filled with hope for His Bride, until last.

Jesus clearly speaks of two separate comings: He will come in all power and glory, at Armageddon, when every eye will see Him but, also, 7 years before, as He comes for us at the Rapture. **Remember this as we read.**

When we began our study of Matt 24, we saw the Disciples asking Jesus three distinct questions: when will the Temple be destroyed, what will be the sign of Your 'coming' and what will be the sign of the end of the age. The King James reads, 'the end of the World' but the Greek word used, AION, from which we get the English word, eon, is better understood as, age, a long, specific period of time. Remember, one of the Names of God is: Ancient of Ages; He is God Almighty through all His created ages of time. The 'age' the Holy Spirit inspired the Disciples to ask about was our present age, the 'Age of human government' or, 'the Time of the Gentiles,' which we saw described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream which Daniel interpreted as the five successive World Empires: Babylon, Medes and Persians, Greece, Rome and the presently forming revived Rome or... the Age of Gentile Government.

To this point in Matt 24, Jesus has answered very clearly, the third question: 'What will be the sign of the *end of the Age*?' His coming at that time, at the end of Gentile or human World government, at the end of the seven year Tribulation, at Armageddon, will be His coming in all Power and Glory when every eye will see Him and all the Nations will mourn how they had rejected Him. Jesus said that His coming at that time will be as lightning flashing from one end of the sky to the other; that will be the moment when God reveals Himself like no other time in all of time.

The Disciples may have thought they were simply asking the same question in two different ways; they expected only one 'coming;' they, like so many today, had no idea that Jesus would 'come' two different times in two completely different ways and here, in Matthew 24, He describes those two 'comings' at two different times, separated by seven years, and in two different ways; the first, like a thief in the night, silently breaking into a home to steal away what he came for with no one else realizing he was even there.

To this point, He has clearly and graphically described His final coming in all Power and Glory. Now He will begin to describe His coming in the clouds for His Church, a coming which, previously, had been a hidden mystery. That mystery will remain hidden until Paul is given the revelation to present it more fully than Jesus does, here.

This is important: when He comes in Glory, at Armageddon, it will not be at an unknown day and hour, like the Rapture; those who understand will have been able to calculate His coming, to the day, exactly seven years from the day the Antichrist confirms a seven year treaty between Israel and her neighbors, and also from the day of the Antichrist's Abomination of Desolation, exactly 3 1/2 years.

When He comes for His Church, in the Rapture, that will be the day which no one knows; that is the day for which we are commanded to carefully and attentively watch. In that coming, He will come down only as far as the clouds to call His Church, His Body, His Bride up to Himself in the Rapture.

Now He will give us the greatest sign of all, the sign which would inaugurate the End Times, our times: the restoration of the Nation of Israel, the day when Israel was recognized again as a Nation: May 14, 1948; ours is the generation which He is about to say will not expire until all these things, He has described, be completed.

'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. ¹² And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.' Isaiah 11:11

The recreation of the State of Israel would be THE major sign to the nations that the End Times have begun.

Verse 32: *'Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.'*

Of the fig tree, He says, 'his' not 'it;' He personifies it; it is Israel. How ignorant do today's false teachers have to be to so simply think that this parable is saying, 'When the fig tree sprouts, it's almost Summer!'

How many, today, pretend that the Words of Jesus, the commands of Jesus are so important to them and yet, here we read a direct command from Him which is not only ignored by so many, it is actually despised by those same: '**Learn!** a parable of the fig tree!' Learn it! Understand it! Don't be afraid to believe it or repeat it! Therefore, it's crucial that we clearly understand what God signifies when He speaks of the fig tree. So many refuse to recognize the significance of what Jesus is saying here because they refuse to study and LEARN what He means by the fig tree because they don't want to know the truth of what Jesus is saying. They have swallowed the lies of false teachers and they will not humble themselves to see the truth.

The first sprouts on the fig tree, in Spring, are its blossoms which ripen as the early fruit. Later, when the fig tree begins to sprout its leaves, the later fruit ripens and finally becomes ready for harvest, which will have already begun. To understand this prophecy, we must, first, determine what He means by **the fig tree**.

God often refers to the fig tree, the grapevine and the olive tree as representing Israel. This, from Strong's Concordance: '*The vine is a symbol of Israel's spiritual privileges. **The fig tree is a symbol of Israel's national privileges.** The Olive Tree is a symbol of Israel's religious privileges.*'

*'For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; ⁸ A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and **fig trees**, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;'* Deut 8:7

'And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; ³⁰ When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. ³¹ So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. ³² Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.' Luke 21:29

'Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. ¹⁸ And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:' Jer 29:17

*'I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the **fig tree**...'* Hosea 9:10

*'And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his **fig tree**...'* 1 Kings 4:25

In describing Israel's coming barrenness and expulsion from the land, Joel writes: 'The vine is dried up, and the **fig tree** languisheth;

Jeremiah wrote, '*The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the LORD... One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad... Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil... Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah... And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: ⁹ And I will deliver them to be removed...'* Jer 24

In Luke 13, Jesus told another parable of a fig tree: '*A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. ⁷ Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*

⁸ And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: ⁹ And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.'

God owns the vineyard. In it, He planted Israel, the fig tree. For three years, Jesus had sown, planted and watered but Israel spurned His care. They crucified Him as He prayed, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' God answered that prayer and allowed the fig tree 40 more years until He brought Rome, in

A.D. 70, to destroy Jerusalem, to cast Israel out of His vineyard and drive them away to the nations. Once again the Jews were symbolically captive in Egypt. God cut down His fig tree but He left the root. The root would lay dormant for nearly 2000 years. Finally, in the last days, the fig trees root would begin to sprout and send forth its leaves. Then we would know that the time for His coming is very soon. What was not clearly known was that His coming would entail two separate comings with seven years between them, the final Week of *Daniel's Seventy Weeks*.

'And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away' Matt 21:19

Here, the fig tree once again symbolizes the Nation of Israel. She would soon reject and crucify her King and she would soon wither and die for the next 2000 years.

'And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ²¹ And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. ²² And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.' Mark 11:20

Jesus said, 'Have faith in God.' He meant, 'Have faith in Me.' Israel did not and just as the fig tree withered and died, so too, did Israel.

Verse 32: The rebirth of the Fig Tree, up from its root, is all, and only, about Jesus prophesying that in the End Times, Israel, after having been cast out to the four winds and chopped down to its root, would miraculously be reborn as a nation again to begin the Last Days in earnest.

Verse 33: *'So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. ³⁴ Verily I say unto you, **this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.** ³⁵ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.'*

What generation? THIS generation: us, now, we are that Last Days generation! Here, simply, is the Truth: Jesus said, 'The generation which sees Israel back in the land, after nearly 2000 years (May 14, 1948)... that generation will not pass, will not end, until all End Times prophecies, up to and including His Second Coming, to Earth, at Armageddon, are fulfilled. Period!!! And He does not mean that the people of that last generation would live to be 150 years old. He means that the final generation, before His return, would last for the number of years of normal humans living at that time.

Back when God delivered Israel out of Egypt, the time it took for the unbelieving generation to die out in the wilderness was 40 years.

Before 1800, life expectancy hovered around 35-40 years. Today, it has doubled to around 75-80 years. Of course, we cannot limit God and His plans; my mother lived into her 102nd year. If God was basing His plan on that kind of lifespan, then Jesus might not come, in the Rapture, until around 2042: 20 years from now.

However, from Scripture, we can deduce that God sees a generation as being between 40-80 years. If He were planning on the 'last generation' being 80 years, then we could expect the Rapture in the year: 2021! Consequently, we would be remiss if not expecting, looking for, teaching, and warning, that the Rapture could very well happen today!

Verse 36: *'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.'*

Up until this verse, Jesus has been warning and teaching, especially Israel, those who will miss the Rapture and then come to genuine faith during the 7-year Tribulation, the 70th Week of Daniel.

Now He suddenly begins to speak to a different audience, we born again believers who are alive and looking for our 'Blessed Hope' when Jesus comes down into the clouds to call us up to Himself in the Rapture.

We must stress: whenever a writer or speaker refers to Jesus Christ coming at an 'unknown' time, he/He is referring to the Rapture. Remember: those living through the Tribulation have been given enough information to be able to calculate, exactly, the day of Jesus coming in all power and glory at Armageddon. He will come 2,520 days from the confirmation of the 7 year treaty and 1,260 days after the *Abomination of Desolation* when calculated using years of 360 days each. (When God prophesies, He means 360 day years.)

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes for us in the Rapture, He will not step onto Earth and He won't be seen by everyone but only by we who are called up; we will be changed in an instant; we will 'see Him as He is and we will be like Him!' But of that day, no one knows except God. We cannot calculate it in any way; we must wait, watch.

Verse 37: *'But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.'*

The days of Noah were characterized by evil and rebellion; have we ever seen such evil and rebellion in this country and around the World? And yet, He says, in essence, that everything will be going along as always when He comes for us: eating, drinking, marrying... but like the days of Noah, after we are taken out, the Holy Spirit will stop restraining evil; gross evil which will then come rushing in like a flood; there will be great darkness and evil.

In Luke 17, He says, *'Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; ²⁹ But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.'*

By referencing Lot, He is also pointing to abounding homosexuality and debauchery; we certainly don't need to be convinced of that!

Verse 40: *'Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.'*

We want to be among those taken. He is directly referencing the Rapture: *'Watch because you don't know when I will come at that time.'*

Verse 43: *'But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. ⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.'*

There's a reason why Jesus speaks of a thief: the thief finds a way to come in quietly and to leave before anyone knows he's been there. Again: you don't know when I'll come: obviously He means the Rapture.

Verse 45: *'Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. ⁴⁷ Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.'*

We are that servant whom our Lord will make rulers with various responsibilities; how greater or lesser our responsibilities, will depend upon our faithfulness now, before the Rapture, as we are being taught and trained; we are like young princes and princesses being trained to one day take the throne.

Verse 48: *'But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; ⁴⁹ And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; ⁵⁰ The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

So many, today: pastors, teachers, TV evangelists, authors... they twist and deny the true Word of God; they bilk their followers of 100's of millions of dollars, living in \$8,000,000 homes with fleets of jets. They have convinced themselves that Jesus will not come for a very long time and that they are free to live as the World lives. They reach and grasp for every dollar they see; they lie and teach falsely like the Pharisees. They destroy the lives of widows as they push them to send in their last dollars so they can receive their miracle. They disgust the Lord Jesus Christ and when they stand before Him, many of whom never went up in the Rapture, they will cry out, *'But Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'* *'Cast them into darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* Matt 7:22