

**Matthew 24:14:** *'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.'*

*This Gospel of the Kingdom:* first, John the Baptist came crying out: 'Repent for **the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand**. He came in fulfillment of Isaiah: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: <sup>5</sup> And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.' Isaiah 40:1

When Jesus came, He preached the **Gospel of the Kingdom** offering Israel their long awaited Kingdom ruled by their long awaited Messiah. At that point, it would have been true: 'her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.' But she refused and compounded her sin exponentially by crucifying her Messiah while literally spitting in the face of God and rejecting **His offer of the Kingdom**. Consequently, Israel was 'set aside' for 2000 years to be further 'dealt with' while Jesus Christ is building His Church, His Body, His Bride; when He completes that work, He will remove His Bride and Israel will come back to the forefront for the final 7 years of the Tribulation while that **Gospel of the Kingdom** is once again preached, this time to all the World and not just to Israel. This time, Israel will receive her King and Messiah at the last possible moment when He finally returns in all power and glory at Armageddon.

'Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!' Israel's leaders knew John the Baptist was speaking from Isaiah; they knew Who Jesus was as soon as He came fulfilling Old Testament prophecy and preaching the same Gospel: 'Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' He was not saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is here, now in the World. In fact, He said, 'My Kingdom **is not** of this World.' The Kingdom of Heaven had not yet come but the offer was made: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, ready to be revealed and I, Jesus, Am your Messiah and King. Receive Me now and it will all be yours.' That offer was officially made during His final week on Earth as He entered Jerusalem, riding on the colt of a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9:

*'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.'*

Israel did not receive her King but, rather, crucified Him, all according to God's will; God had always planned to insert a previously unknown 2000 year gap of time, between the 69th and 70th Weeks of Daniel, during which the Lord Jesus Christ would build His Church, His Body, His Bride. BUT: **the Church is not the Kingdom of Heaven!** That is the heresy first preached by Catholicism and now by so many other apostate groups.

**Verse 15:** *'When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)'*

This verse is written exclusively to Tribulation Saints. Jesus said this just a few days before He knew He would be crucified, proving beyond any doubt that God's will was for Him to be crucified as the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the World: 'And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb **slain from the foundation of the world.**' Rev. 13:8

Jesus is quoting from the prophecy of 'The 70 Weeks of Daniel,' Dan. 9 This also proves, according to Daniel's prophecy, that from the time of the Crucifixion (end of 69th Week) the 70th Week, the Tribulation, was meant for the future after an unknown gap of time, nearly 2000 years, so far. What Jesus just referred to is what will occur at the midpoint of that final 70th Week of Daniel... 'When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)**' Jesus is obviously speaking of a future event.

This is also the proof that Jesus knew full well that they would reject Him, resulting in that 2000 year gap of the Time of the Church because that same *abomination of desolation* is still future; the one who will accomplish it, the Antichrist, is still future... but now, finally, it is the **very near future**.

**Verse 16:** *'Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: <sup>17</sup> Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: <sup>18</sup> Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. <sup>19</sup> And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! <sup>20</sup> But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: <sup>21</sup> For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.'*

Up until the exact midpoint of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will have been somewhat honoring of the 7 year peace treaty he had confirmed at the exact beginning of the Tribulation. Life around the World will be increasingly terrible... like it was for Jews in mid-30's under Nazi Germany but then, at the midpoint of the Tribulation when He performs that Abomination of Desolation and demands that all worship him as god, it will be like the nights of Nov. 9/10 1938: Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, when the full hatred of Hitler and so many other Germans was unleashed upon Jews. From that night, life for Jews was hell of Earth and so will it be for the entire World from the midpoint of the Tribulation, the Abomination of Desolation, but so much worse. We will study the Tribulation more fully at a later time.

Here, in Matthew, Jesus warns Tribulation era Jews that at the moment the Antichrist enters the Temple and declares himself god... all hell breaks loose on Earth; the Jews have been warned: *'Immediately!!! Have your Jeep gassed up at all times; have food and water in it; grab your family and run as fast as you can over to Jordan and, possibly, into the 30 square mile 'Petra' complex where you will be hidden, and kept safe, by God.'*

*'And the woman (Israel) fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God (possibly Petra), that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.'* Rev. 12:6

This second half of the Tribulation is known as the Great Tribulation, the Time of Jacob's Trouble: *'For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.'*

This will be the absolute worst time, on Earth, since Adam and Eve.

**Verse 22:** *'And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.'*

Jesus will return just in time to prevent the complete annihilation of mankind: possibly because of nuclear weapons: *'And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; **Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.**'* Zech 14:12

Those days will be cut short for one reason: when Jesus returns to set up His Millennial Kingdom, there will need to be people who will have come to faith, who are still alive in their mortal bodies, from every nation. These mortals will marry, reproduce and live long lives but... this is not Heaven on Earth. Yes, the Earth will heal and become a paradise but all of the mortal humans living and growing will still have the same sin nature that we do now. Satan will be bound and unable to tempt to sin but what does James say: *'... every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.'* James 1:14

Jesus will come to rule the Earth from Jerusalem; we will have been given our glorified, eternal bodies at the Rapture and we will be His representatives as we rule and reign with Him. As people from every nation are born, live and die, many will put their faith in Jesus Christ while others will not, just like today. Many will hold, and hide, secret sin in their hearts. Obviously, the Lord Jesus Christ will know every man's heart, as always, but He will allow them to live and grow, like now, always giving them every opportunity to come to Him in repentance and faith but many will never do so. Only the elect will be left alive at the beginning of the Millennium and only the elect will come to faith after they are born, and grow up, during the Millennium, as God reveals Himself to each one and draws them to Himself. Then, at the end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed for a short time and he will gather these rebels from around the World. As they are drawn toward Jerusalem in an attempt to

overthrow the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, they will all be destroyed in an instant: *'And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, <sup>8</sup> And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.'* Rev 20:7

Those days (the Tribulation) will be shortened for the sake of the elect, the chosen of God, from the foundation of the World, to be saved, to live through the entire Tribulation without having received the Mark of the Beast or worshipping his image, and they will be welcomed into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ as He rules and reigns for 1000 years with us, His beloved Bride, ruling and reigning with Him. By the 'days being shortened,' it means that He will come back, just in the nick of time, so that they do not perish in the last days of the wicked kingdom of the Antichrist. Finally... He will not 'tarry' and wait as He now does.

What is the purpose in having mortal humans who are born, live long lives and die, with many of them refusing to place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for Eternal Salvation and Life? Why would He do that?

Why doesn't He just start Eternity, at the end of the Tribulation, with everyone having Eternal Life?

What are His Reasons for the Millennial Kingdom on Earth, His 1000 year reign, ruling over mortal humans: thousands, then millions and finally multiplied billions of humans filling the Earth? Why?

One reason, obviously, is that there will be born many more of His Elect during that 1000 years but a major purpose is this: Even with the Lord Jesus Christ personally ruling over all the Earth, with perfect peace and justice, the things mankind has supposedly clamored for, over the past 6000 years... even then... there will be millions who reject His rule and His offer of Eternal Life. At the moment when fire comes down from Heaven and destroys them all... God's perfect Wrath, His perfect Justice, His Righteousness, Holiness, Love, Grace, Mercy and every other aspect of Himself, will be justified and evident to all as He will have consigned, to the Lake of Fire, every person, over all the past 7000 years, who have rejected the Love, Grace, Mercy, Forgiveness and Salvation of God; every person in the Lake of Fire will have no one but themselves to blame for all Eternity.

The heart of man is deceitfully wicked and can only be changed, and made new, when one comes to God, in repentance and faith, through the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Life, Death and Resurrection as payment for all their sin. No one, throughout Eternity, who is in the Lake of Fire, will be able to justifiably say, 'God was not fair!'

Every human, ever born, was given enough revelation from God, of Himself, to be able to turn to Him in faith.

*'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; <sup>19</sup> Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. <sup>20</sup> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; **so that they are without excuse.** <sup>21</sup> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. <sup>24</sup> Wherefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: <sup>25</sup> Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.'*** Romans 1:18

Even with God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom they can see, hear and touch, living among them, they will reject Him to their eternal condemnation. *But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened.*

**Verse 23:** *'Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. <sup>24</sup> For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. <sup>25</sup> Behold, I have told you before.*

Remember: in this section He is speaking to Tribulation Saints: those living during the reign of the Antichrist. It will be a time like never before; evil will abound, false christs and false prophets will perform wondrous lying signs and wonders; the whole world will be deceived and follow after the Antichrist except... the Elect; His Elect will not be deceived. Notice He doesn't say, the Elect will be deceived; He says, 'If it were possible they would be

deceived. He would not have said *'If it were possible,'* if it were possible; He would have said, *'Even the Elect might be deceived.'*

Just like now, just like with you and me... God will always guard and keep His Elect safe and secure in His hand until either death or His return at Armageddon. And just like us: until either death or the Rapture.

Many who sit in churches today, listening to false teachers who lead them astray, those who are not really born again believers but just 'church-goers,' will be left behind at the Rapture and unless they are of God's Elect whom He plans to draw to Himself during the Tribulation, they will be deceived; they will believe the false prophets and false christs, they will receive the Mark of the Beast and they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire.

**Verse 26:** *'Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. <sup>27</sup> For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.'*

Here is more proof that this section of Matt. 24 is written for Tribulation Saints and not to the Church: then, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ which they will be waiting for, will be His coming in all power and glory at Armageddon, like lightning flashing from one end of the sky to the other: every eye will see Him as He comes to destroy all His enemies and to finally... finally set up His 1000 year Kingdom on Earth.

**Verse 28:** *'For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.'*

There will be dead bodies scattered all over the Earth, far too many to be counted. Remember when we studied Ezekiel 38/39... special teams will scour the land, during the beginning of the Tribulation, to hunt for and bury dead bodies; the same will probably be true at the beginning of the Millennium.

The only dead bodies that result from His coming for us in the Rapture will be from crashes of trains, planes and automobiles that were piloted by Christians who were suddenly taken up to meet the Lord in the air.

**Verse 29:** *'Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: <sup>30</sup> And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.'*

Just before His coming at Armageddon all these cosmic disturbances will occur; then, He will return in all power and glory when every eye will see Him. No such disturbances are prophesied before the Rapture.

**Verse 31:** *'And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.'*

This is similar but not the same as His coming for us in the Rapture; when He comes for us in the Rapture, no one will see Him except His Elect whom He calls up to Himself at which time we will all rise up together; He will not send out angels to gather us... we won't need to be carried by angels like the mortals at the end of the Tribulation will; we will have received, in the twinkling of an eye, our glorified, eternal bodies like Jesus Christ's own Body... if He can 'rise up' on His own power, so shall we be able to also in our new, eternal, glorified bodies. **'We will be like Him for we shall see Him as He is!'** 1 John 3:2

Here, after Armageddon, He does send out His angels to gather all the Tribulation Saints who remain alive at His coming; they will remain in their mortal bodies and so need to be carried by angels.

Next time... Jesus finally begins to tell His Disciples, and us, of the Last Days of the time of the Church and our Blessed Hope, His coming for us in the Rapture!