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Signs of Christ Coming

Mark 13, Luke 21

Matthew 24:6-14

Matthew 24:6-14, *And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of sorrows. ⁹“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹²And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

Matthew 24 and 25 is known as “The Olivet Discourse.” It is a discourse by our Lord Jesus Christ, delivered on the Mount of Olives. Its subject is the second coming of Christ.

His own message about His own second coming.

The disciples have asked Him the questions in verse 3 that trigger this great sermon.

When shall these things be?

The destruction of Jerusalem,

The destruction of the temple,

The coming of the Messiah in His kingdom.

What shall be the sign of Your coming?

What shall be signs of the end of the age?

They want to know when it is that the Messiah will establish His kingdom, judge His enemies, purge Jerusalem, gather the scattered Jews, and establish His kingdom.

They have the feeling that it's very near, that it could happen at any moment.

They thought that maybe only days away.

Because Jesus had said that there was going to be desolation on Jerusalem and Israel, a time of purging. That there was going to be a throwing down of the temple.

They must have thought that meant the rebuilding of the great millennial temple would begin. Jesus was coming in the name of the Lord, and surely that was very near.

John the Baptist arrived as a messenger before the Messiah. Jesus as Messiah would have to judge the godless nations that had rejected Him and His people. It all looked like it was going to come together at this moment.

But in answer to their question **Matthew 24:4-25:46**, Jesus gives the longest answer to any question asked in the New Testament.

He tells them that His coming is in the future.

He doesn't tell them how far in the future.

None of us knows that. We know better than they did because we have lived two thousand years since.

V 8, He calls them the beginning of birth pains.

The birth being the coming of the Messiah into His kingdom. There are going to be some birth pains right at the end, just before the Messiah comes in His kingdom.

Jesus doesn't tell them how far into the future, but He does describe the character of these birth pains in the future that will bring in His glorious kingdom.

If these are the birth pains to the end, the birth pains to the establishment of the kingdom, then they must come at the very end.

Even as birth pains in a woman come at the very end of her pregnancy, just prior to the giving forth of that new life.

The Lord is describing what will happen in the very end. He sweeps us to a time called, in verse 21, the Great Tribulation. A time in the future, yet ahead of us.

Before Jesus comes back there will be these birth pains that will issue in the establishment of His kingdom.

Deception was the first thing that must take place.

V 4-5, And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

There will always be false Christs. There will always be people claiming to be Jesus Christ.

The time of the Tribulation, the time of the birth pains, a time when the Lord removes the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit, which holds back sin from reaching its maximum potential. All that will be removed, and sin will run wild.

Lot of false deliverers and false Messiahs trying to get people to follow them. The epitome of that group will be one called Antichrist will be the ultimate false Messiah.

Jesus says that before I come in My kingdom, there will be deceivers who come and say, 'I am Christ' and they will lead many astray.

Daniel chapter 8 and 11 Revelation chapter 13 and 19 and 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and all those passages tell us about this final deceiving antichrist.

The first mark, the first of the birth pains that begins to unfold in the time of the Tribulation is a time of great deception, particularly epitomized in the deception of antichrist who leads the whole world to follow him and worship him as if he were God, the ultimate deliverer of man.

Here are the signs that are the beginning of the birth pains not the end, but just the beginning.

2. Conflict/ Dissension.

V 6-7, And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

This is just the beginning of the birth pains.

The coming time is going to be characterized by wars and rumours of wars. If you are not involved in one immediately, or even if you are, you will hear about other wars.

Where wars don't even exist, there will be rumors that they will have a cold war. Every conceivable kind of global warfare, nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom.

There is no distinct difference between those two unless we would say that a nation is a group of people without a king and a kingdom is a group of people with a king, and that's the only distinguishing element in those two.

The point is that nations and kingdoms globally wide will be engaged in wars and rumors of wars.

We have always had this.

We have had time periods of brief peace in the world, and most nations themselves have had times of war and times of peace.

We are not denying that that will be true throughout all of man's day. There will be times of war and there will be nations fighting nations and kingdoms fighting kingdoms.

But still, what our Lord is saying here is that in the end, the beginning of sorrows that bring the kingdom, there will be worldwide warfare on a scale unknown prior to that time.

In massive proportions, there will be an intensification of war across the earth. The wars will be national, nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be great groups of people, cultures against cultures.

V 6, “And you will hear”

Future.

What we call a future durative which doesn't mean anything to most of us, but the idea of it is it carries the idea of continual hearing. You will continually hear wars, continually hear rumours of wars, and continually hear of nations and kingdoms fighting each other.

A constant kind of ringing message at that particular time in history.

Daniel sweeps us into the future period. Daniel takes us all the way to the time when the Messiah is coming to set up His kingdom. Prior to that, Daniel describes the warfare.

Daniel 11:40, *“At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.”*

The antichrist rules a great kingdom basically made up of the territory that once belonged to the old Roman Empire. In other words, it is going to be a unified Europe. He will be the king of a western confederacy.

He will be the king of a revived Roman Empire engulfing Europe. Daniel makes that abundantly clear throughout his prophecy.

The antichrist has established himself as a great power. Not only that he established himself as a great power in Europe, but he is a threat to the whole world.

Naturally he has sights on the Middle East. Of course, Israel, always threatened by its Middle Eastern neighbours, wants protection and so enters league with him.

Daniel 9:27, entering a covenant with antichrist for protection by this great western empire of which he is the head. At the time of the end, with antichrist ruling this great confederacy, dominating that part of the world. Western culture being so advanced technologically and has a great force of power over the rest of the world.

The king of the **south** moves aggressively against the antichrist. This is some kind of African coalition and

confederacy that pushes north toward the power of the antichrist.

The king of the north, no doubt **Russia** with all its allies in the Middle East pushing as well, with chariots and horsemen and many ships entering into the country, shall overflow and pass through.

The antichrist, the king of the south, the king of the north they all converge is in the holy land Israel.

Daniel 11:41-43, *He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. ⁴²He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.*

The Antichrist defeats all these great powers. He even defeats the Russian power for the moment as well as the king of the south. He wins a great and glorious victory.

Daniel 11:44-45, *But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy*

mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

The antichrist has this tremendous victory, and he plants the tabernacle of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain.

What he does is put up his palace right in the middle of Jerusalem on Mount Zion. He establishes himself as God. Yet it says he shall come to his end and none shall help him.

Daniel looks to the end and talks about a world war that's mind-boggling.

- Where we have the force of Western power in Europe.
- We have the great force of the Russian confederacy.
- We have the great amalgamation of all that is in Africa.
- We have the Orient, Red China.

All converging in Israel for a holocaust of war at the end time. Daniel says that we anticipate this kind of battle.

Zechariah looks to the end time and sees the similar scene.

Zechariah 14:1-3, *Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. ²For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not*

be cut off from the city. ³Then the Lord will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.

The whole world is going to converge on Jerusalem in a final, incredible battle.

Exactly the way Daniel ended his prophecy, that he will come to his end, and he will not be able to find anyone to help him then.

There is going to be a worldwide war, again converging on Jerusalem, and Zechariah points it out in the exact way.

This is a very consistent picture from the prophets as well as from our Lord Himself.

Haggai 2:22-23, *I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots And those who ride in them; The horses and their riders shall come down, Every one by the sword of his brother. ²³'In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the Lord, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the Lord of hosts."*

As if Zerubbabel is seen in his descendant in that final time when God sends His own army to destroy the armies of the world. Then sets up that one who comes out of the loins of

David, out of the loins of Zerubbabel, to be the King, none other than Messiah.

So great dissension will come at the end. We can see this now beginning to unfold.

All of us live in this constant sort of threat of nuclear war and the constant strife that goes on across the globe, simply setting the stage for this final holocaust.

The book of Revelation gives us even more detail as we look at this, wars and rumours of wars and kingdoms against kingdom and nation against nation and all this great warfare that's going to come in the end.

When the seven seals unfolded. A will left to someone was sealed seven times in Roman law so it couldn't be violated without people realizing it.

It is God's willing the world to Christ. As He opens one seal after another, He takes back the world. Each seal reveals what events take place as He retakes the world for Himself.

The second seal opens.

Revelation 6:4, *Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.*

The false peace established by the antichrist is taken from the earth and they begin to kill one another.

We have the war, the world beginning to kill itself in a massive slaughter.

Revelation 6:5-6, *When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales^[c] in his hand. ⁶And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."*

He is balancing out grain and it is famine conditions. There's not enough food to go around and that's the result of war.

The fourth seal.

Revelation 6:7-8, *When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁸So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.*

The massacre of one fourth of the population of the world. At these statistics today, 1.6 billion people are massacred in the slaughter that takes place worldwide.

Sixth Trumpet.

Revelation 9:13-15, *Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.*

Another host of demonic forces to massacre a third of the population that's left after the original fourth have been slaughtered.

Revelation 9:16, *Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.*

They came and they had tremendous power to kill.

Revelation 9:18-21, *By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. ¹⁹For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. ²⁰But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor*

hear nor walk. ²¹And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Even after one fourth of the world is massacred in the holocaust of war, another third is massacred, some men still don't repent.

The mighty power in this war, in part, is not only the demonic forces of hell and Satan himself but it is the antichrist, the beast.

Revelation 13:7, *It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*

Revelation 13:10, *He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

He kills with the sword.

So here is the antichrist, just as we saw in the Old Testament in Daniel. He is the one who massacres the king of the south, the army of the north, defeating the army of the east. Sets up his power worldwide.

Just incessant massacre in warfare at the end time. All of man's hopes come smashing down to nothing as it all wraps up.

Revelation 16:13-14, *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

John sees these three unclean spirits, they are demonic spirits out of hell, no doubt of great power, high ranking demons.

Revelation 16:16, *And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.*

The demon forces of the world gather all the armies of the world to converge on Jerusalem to destroy it and to keep the King of kings from coming back.

They all come there ready to fight and there's a holocaust of war as they battle each other. In the midst of that battle, Christ comes and destroys them all.

We can see that the Revelation, as well as the prophets of the Old Testament, support the words of our Lord that that will be a time of war and rumours of wars and nations rising against nation.

Matthew 24:6, *you will hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that you are not troubled.*

Don't raise an outcry.

Don't be alarmed.

Do not immediately panic.

Because that is not quite the split second for the coming of the King. That's what he says.

See that you do not become troubled, to become alarmed because all these things must come to pass.

It is all necessary for sin to have its final, furious fling, but the end is not yet. The end is not yet. It would seem as though it must be, but it is not yet. There are still a few things yet to come. They come in an ever-increasing speed.

Our Lord says, no, this is not the time for the kingdom.

This is not the time for the final judgment.

This is not the time for the destruction of the ungodly.

This is not the time for the renovation of Jerusalem and the purging of the temple.

It will happen in a future time, a time when there will be deception like the world has never known, a time when there will be dissension on a worldwide scale like the world has never known.

3. Destruction.

V 7, *And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*

Jesus said there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. In addition to the false Christs, in addition to the worldwide massacres and the wars, there will be disasters of staggering proportions over all the whole earth as the cursed earth itself begins to disintegrate.

The Greek word for Famines is *limoi*.

The Greek word for earthquake is *seismos*, from which we get seismograph, to measure earthquakes.

What are pestilences?

Loimoi in the Greek, it means diseases, plagues.

Fearful sights, from the root phobos from which we get phobia, fear. Horrible events, it means.

Fearful sights mean terrorizing happenings. Signs from heaven, changes in the sky.

In that time when the whole world begins to disintegrate, there will be plagues and diseases as well as earthquakes and famines, horrible events that are indescribable and terrorizing, as well as changes in the sky itself.

The world has had its share of famines.

The world has had its share of plagues, its share of horrible events, holocausts.

There have even been times when there have been unusual signs in the heavens.

But nothing to even comes close to this.

V 7, *“in various places.”*

In other words, these things aren't going to happen here and there from time to time, but they are going to come in large doses in many places at the same time.

Though we have had disasters, never to this extent and on this wide a scale in the history of the world. The whole world begins to self-destruct when sin runs rampant.

The Lord has restrained sin today. He is restraining sin for the preservation of His people, for the preservation of His earth. But when He removes the restraint that is concurrent with the Rapture of the church then all these things happen.

We go out at the beginning of the Tribulation. Then comes the Tribulation. When the church goes and all the redeemed are off the face of the earth, and as **2 Thessalonians** say then everything begins to disintegrate.

The created earth can't support the evil of the people in it when that evil is unrestrained. Everything in the universe begins to fly apart. The whole world begins to crumble.

At that point, Revelation 9 says hell opens up and Satan lets loose demons that have been there through the centuries. They multiply the demonic population. God allows them to do signs and wonders to deceive the world and to capture the minds of the world as sin runs rampant.

Earthquakes.

As the sixth seal opens the beginning of sorrows unfolds.

Revelation 6:12, *I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

A great earthquake.

As the seven angel pours out his bowl, now we are at the very end of the Tribulation.

Revelation 16:18, *And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*

Revelation 16:20, *Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

The earthquake at the very end. But there's another massive earthquake we just saw in the sixth chapter of Revelation as well.

So that time will be characterized by fearful earthquakes.

Revelation 11:13, *In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

This happens in the city of Jerusalem.

Jesus said it will be a time of earthquakes.

Famine.

As the third seal that opens in the time of Tribulation.

Revelation 6:6, *And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."*

Don't touch the rich people's oil and the rich people's wine out a living. A denarius is one day's wage. The measure of wheat is a pint and a half. You work a whole day, and all you can get with it is a pint and a half of grain.

Famine conditions.

Disastrous conditions.

Revelation 6:8, *So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.*

The famine will result in a part of that fourth of the earth starving to death.

Revelation 8:7, *The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.*

Hail and fire mixed with blood are thrown on the earth, third part of the trees are burnt up, all the green grass is burnt up. Now, that's going to create famine.

The growing things, a third of them all destroyed.

Revelation 8:9, *And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. ¹⁰ Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of*

water. ¹¹The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

Those who depend upon the sea for their food aren't going to have it.

The fresh water is gone, not going to be able to have fresh water to irrigate and so forth. People are going to die because of the waters.

The whole cycle of day and night is going to change, the seasons are going to change, crops aren't going to grow, and there's going to be worldwide chaos when God starts changing all things.

Pestilence or Plagues.

As we move toward the end, closer to the end of the birth pains, we see the pouring out of the bowls, which come in rather rapid-fire succession.

Revelation 16:2, *So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.*

Some kind of terrible plague is going to come that brings a grievous sore on people, some kind of cancer.

Revelation 16:3, *Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.*

In the seals judgement happened, it was only a third of the sea, now it's all the sea.

We are at the end and it's really coming fast.

Revelation 16:4, *Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.*

Revelation 16:8, *Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.*

Revelation 16:10, *Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.*

All these terrible, unimaginable plagues.

The horrible things there as war, death, famine, and massacre comes. As the sky begins to fall apart, as the earth begins to shake horrible fearful events.

Revelation 9, the bottomless pit is opened, and demons begin to ooze out of the bottomless pit, demonic beings, and men are going to be so tormented.

Revelation 9:5-6, *And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.*

Frightening when hell belches out all its remaining demon sources.

Revelation 12:12, *Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."*

Not only is the pit going to belch out all its demons, but Satan is going to be thrown out of heaven, and he is going to land on the earth and bring forth all the evil that his mind can conceive.

Revelation 16:3 where the sea turns to blood and the fresh water turns to blood. Sun burns people, darkness comes. They gnaw their tongues for pain.

We can't even imagine the pain of being in absolute darkness and injuring yourself and running into things and being in fear.

Three more evil spirits out of hell who work wonders and gather the world to Armageddon. It's just inconceivable things, staggering.

Revelation 18:8, *Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.*

Her is the worldwide economic system called Babylon. The rest of that chapter describes her devastation.

The Lord says, "All these are just the beginning of the end." Just the beginning.

We have seen the glimpse of the things at the beginning and to the bowls which is the culmination.

But there is a beginning of these things, earthquakes, plagues, signs from heaven, horrible events, famine, and they escalate to an unbelievable proportion toward the end.

These are the birth pains.

V 8, All these are the beginning of birth pains,

Would the Jews understand that?

Yes, they would.

The Jews had been taught that before the Messiah came, there would be birth pains.

Jewish writings speak very frequently of the labour pains of Messiah.

This is the birth pains then they would have known what He was talking about. Familiar terminology.

All these things tell us that the coming of Christ is near. They will all come at the end time in such a way that it is far beyond us to even conceive.

Deception, Dissension, and Devastation.

4. Desecration.

V 9, *“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.*

There will be a desecration.

To desecrate means to treat a holy thing in an unholy way.

The holy people of God will be treated in an unholy way.

There will be outright and widespread persecution of the redeemed that exceeds all other persecutions.

There is no other persecution to even compare with this.

Jesus says you who are believers in that day, you will be delivered up.

That is a technical word often used for arrest.

Matthew 4:12, when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, it there uses *paradidōmi*.

It is a word that means to be arrested.

Jesus says in that time the true believers are going to be arrested.

They are going to be afflicted.

They are going to be murdered.

They are going to be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

Because they identify with the Lord Jesus Christ, they will pay with the hatred and animosity of the world.

Mark 13:9, *“But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.*

The Jews initially, in the beginning of the end, will be in on the persecution of the believing people.

Where do the believers come from if the church has been raptured?

When the church has been raptured, God sets loose in the world two witnesses listed in Revelation 11. They go everywhere proclaiming the truth. They are murdered by the world, but they rise from the dead.

It is a very convincing miracle because it says every eye in the world is going to see them. It will probably be shown on national, international, and satellite television.

They will rise from the dead. They will have an impact in winning some people to Christ.

There will be another 144,000 Jews who will be preaching the gospel.

There will be people who come to Saviour during that period. They will be the objects of persecution, not only by the world but by the Jews as well because they will deliver you not only to be killed but, in the synagogues, to be beaten.

The rebels at that time refused to believe in the Messiah among the Israelites, according to **Ezekiel 20:38**.

There will be rebels who must be purged out.

There will be Gentiles coming to Christ, there will be Jews coming to Christ.

There will be rebel Jews and rebel Gentiles, of course, who will persecute the true believers. It will be a time of severe persecution and martyrdom.

Some Jews would have believed in Messiah, or will believe in Messiah, some will not and the ones who will not be beating the others in that very place and perhaps even taking their lives. There will be a time of severe persecution and martyrdom for true believers.

Desecration, treating holy objects shamefully.

V 9, *They will kill you.*

You will be hated not only by the Jews, but you will be hated by the whole world and all the nations.

Therefore, there will be no refuge, no place to hide, no place to escape.

Why do they hate you?

Because of My name.

They hate Christ.

The world hates Christ.

They always have and they will hate Him then especially when they are under the control of Antichrist who sets himself up against Christ.

Always believers have been hated,
Always believers have been killed,

But then it will be beyond anything ever experienced. Worldwide desecration of the saints.

They will be martyred and massacred from one end of the globe to the other in that period of time.

Revelation 6:9-11, *When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

They have been massacred right in the Tribulation and John in his vision sees them there.

John sees some of the martyrs crying, "How long?" and the Lord says not until all the rest of those who are to be killed are killed.

John has a vision, and he sees a great multitude which no man could number of nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues and they are standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They are clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. They are crying out and saying, "Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne and the Lamb."

Revelation 7:9-10, *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

Who are these people?

Revelation 7:14 *And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

How did they get out of that Tribulation?

They were martyred.

They were killed for the sake of their commitment to Jesus.

Revelation chapter 11 where they murder the two witnesses.

Revelation chapter 12 where it says the dragon, Satan, makes war with the remnant of the sea.

Revelation 13:7, *It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*

Revelation 17, the great harlot, the great prostitute, the false religious system of the Tribulation, is drunk with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

There will be desecration of the redeemed.

5. Defection.

Jesus turns to talk about the believing people, or the people who identify with God and Christ.

First, there will be desecration. There will be a treating of these people with great persecution.

As a result of that, there will be defection.

V 10, *And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.*

Very tragic.

The pressure is so great as the world begins to massacre believers that some people who have superficially identified with Jesus Christ, like the seed that fell in the thorny ground.

It doesn't really have any root, but it pops up and it looks good to start with, some people who initially identify with Jesus Christ. When they see the price to be paid, they are offended.

They are not willing to pay that price.

They begin to turn in their offense, and they don't only reject Christ, they betray to the persecutors the true believers.

They start betraying the true believers, turning them in, giving their names and addresses, telling where they can be found to be killed.

Are they real believers?

Of course not.

If they were real believers, they would continue in the truth.

If they were real believers, they would give their life, if need be.

If they were real believers, they would follow on in obedience.

1 John 2:19, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.*

John 8:31, *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*

Our Lord Himself laid out the principle of discipleship.

Matthew 10:24-25, *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have*

called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!

If they said Jesus was of Satan, they are going to say it of you. But it is enough for you to be like Him. The true disciple is willing to suffer like his Master suffered.

Matthew 10:32-33, *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

Matthew 10:38, *And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.*

The person who says, “I don’t want the cross, I don’t want to die, I am getting out,” that person is not even worthy to be a disciple.

That person is not even a belonging one to Christ.

The person who belongs to Christ continues.

The person who belongs to Christ is willing to pay the price not because he has some special character of his own but because if he is a true believer, the Holy Spirit grants him sustaining grace.

Hebrews 3:12, *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

When somebody departs from the living God, they manifest an evil heart of unbelief. Paul said to Timothy, “If any man denies Him, him will the Lord deny.”

So, these people attached themselves outwardly to Christianity, but when the heat got turned up, they got out.

They were offended, seduced away because they would not pay the price.

They betray each other. What a tragic thing.

This is going to happen in that time.

The wonderful redeemed and godly people are going to be betrayed by the people who are offended and aren't willing to pay the price. They are going to turn informer and turn them in so they can be killed, slaughtered.

Luke 21:16, *You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.*

That is the defection.

Some of them will defect because the price is too high.

V 11, *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.*

Not false Christs now, but false teachers. Some of them will defect because they don't want to pay the price, and some of them will defect because they have been deceived.

The defection will be a twofold defection at that point.

Many false prophets will arise.

V 24, *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*

If Satan is running all over the world, and Satan is primarily disguised as an angel of light, that age is not only going to be filled with all kinds of overt evil, but it's going to be filled with all kinds of false religion.

Revelation 17 we have this unbelievably evil, vile, wretched world religious system called the harlot, the great whore, the prostitute. It is a prostitution of religion.

If the church is a bride, this is a harlot.

So, there will be all kinds of religious deception flourishing as Satan does everything, he can call people away. Those people who outwardly attach to Christ. Show that they are interested going to be torn away and deceived as cults and all those kinds of lying groups have great effect on the world.

People will take the mark of the beast. They will worship the vile, wretched image of the beast. All this is a part of the deception.

V 12, *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*

The third element of defection.

Some defect because they won't pay the price and die.

Some defect because they are deceived.

Some defect because they choose iniquity.

Iniquity is the word "lawlessness." It is the word that means they violate God's law.

The sin will be so abundant that it will draw people who are moving toward the truth right back out of it.

Paul wrote to Timothy and described that last day. He described that wickedness.

2 Timothy 3:1-4, *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,*

Global wretchedness, global lawlessness, vice gone rampant, men engulfed in it unrestrained.

It is coming fast.

These things don't seem as remote to us as they might to our society 20 years ago. Their affection, though it's shallow, their affection for Christ grows cold. They are wooed away by the love of evil, the wretched love of evil.

V 13, *But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

How can you tell the saved?

Because the saved don't defect.

They don't defect.

They are not going to go away because the price is too high.

They are not going to go away because they are deceived.

They are not going to go away because they love evil.

The ones that endure to the end, they are saved. They will be delivered out of that.

Some will die and some will live, but they will all be delivered, whether in life or death, they will be delivered from the wrath to come.

Endurance is always the mark of the mark of the saved.

Matthew 10:22, *And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.*

The man who, in that statement, Jesus was saying, who goes to the end of his life and endures whatever comes, gives demonstration that he is one who in the end will be saved. He will be delivered out of this life into the glories of heaven.

So it will be in the future, the one who endures all is an overcomer and he is the one who will be saved.

Luke 21:19, *By your patience possess your souls.*

It is the one who endures by God's power, God's grace, who wins in the end. The faith that perseveres is the faith of the saved, the faith of the redeemed.

In the end there will be terrible defection as people who identify with the church suddenly run.

We'd find out the people who could be wooed off by the false prophets. We'd see the ones who loved their lawlessness more than they loved God.

Only the enduring ones will be delivered.

6. Declaration/ Proclamation.

The final sign of the coming, the final beginning birth pain, is declaration.

Before the Lord comes, this must happen.

V 14, *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

Before the end comes, before the establishing of the kingdom, this must happen worldwide proclamation of the gospel.

In spite of persecution, defectors, false prophets, false Christs, hell belching out its demons all over the earth, in spite of all this terrible, horrible, inconceivable mess, diminished love, antichrist ruling and reigning, Satan trying to fight against Christ, wars, famines, earthquakes, and signs in heaven, the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations. Then it is going to come, the kingdom.

How is that going to happen?

How is that gospel going to be preached?

Revelation 14:6, *Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—*

This is the fulfillment of **Matthew 24:14**.

Preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole world isn't talking about what's going on now.

It is talking about what this angel's going to do in one great, supernatural, miraculous, final evangelization of the world. It happens right before judgment.

Revelation 14:7, *saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."*

Another angel comes behind that angel.

Revelation 14:8, *And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."*

Man's day is over. You better get right with God. This is the great evangelistic effort carried on by glorious angels in the heavens flying all over the globe just before the final holocaust breaks loose.

The everlasting gospel is the same gospel God has always given, that He judges sin and rewards righteousness.

These angels will call the world to the Savior and then shall the end come but not before that, says our Lord.

Conclusion:

So those are the birth pains.

But those are only the beginning of the birth pains.

How do we know when the birth pains start?

How do we know when they really begin?

This is going to be our study of verse 15 through 28.