



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

First Sign- Deception

Mark 13, Luke 21

Matthew 24:4-5

Matthew 24:1-5, *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” ³Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” ⁴ ⁵For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.*

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.

A glorious message.

Jesus came to Israel to be their Redeemer, Saviour, Messiah, and their King.

John says, *“He came to His own and His own received Him not.”* **33 years** after He entered this world, He is about to exit. He began His ministry by offering Himself to the people of Israel and He ended it by them rejecting Him.

Only a couple of days now before He will be executed on a cross by the very people He came to save and to rule.

Jesus gave His final pronouncement of judgment on Israel.

Matthew 23:37-39, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”*

The last public speech Jesus ever gave to the people of Israel. His final words to them are words of judgment. He never preaches another sermon.

He pronounced judgment on the nation Israel from **Matthew 21-23**, judgment on the false leaders and judgment on the people who followed their deceptions.

His judgment came in the form of direct statements of judgment. It came in the form of parables of judgment.

Matthew 23, a blistering denunciation of the false leaders that led the people astray, and He closes it by saying, “Your house is left unto you desolate.” A pronouncement of judgment.

Jesus says you won’t see Me again until I come as Messiah and King.

- On the one hand, He pronounces judgment.
- On the other hand, He says I will be back.

- On the one hand, He says your house is left unto you desolate, wasted.
- On the other hand, He says I will return to restore it again.

This particular conclusion to His message, no doubt, filled His disciples’ hearts with great hope.

They heard that He pronounced judgment, but they also heard that He would come as the one who would establish His kingdom. They had waited for this for all the years that they had been with Jesus.

At the close of the sermon in **Matthew 23**, the disciples were probably at the high point of their experience with Jesus

through all the three years of their ministry. They heard Him say that He was going to bring judgment. They also heard Him say that He was going to come in the name of the Lord.

They felt because of the way they understood the Old Testament prophets.

He was going to bring judgment, and that judgment would be purging and cleansing and then immediately would be followed by His kingdom. They believed that they were on the edge of the Messianic kingdom.

Luke 19:11, *Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.*

The disciples, from the time He approached Jerusalem, thought the kingdom should immediately appear, and so they were living in that anticipation. When the crowd threw palm branches and clothing in front of Him as He rode, they shouted, *“Hosanna, blessed is He that come in the name of the Lord, Hosanna to the Son of David.”*

They thought this was all a part of readying the people for the kingdom. Then He went into the temple and cleansed the temple, they thought that was the purging of the hypocrites.

They believed Jesus is going to come in the name of the Lord as their Messiah. They see all this happening immediately.

V 2, And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Jesus even tells them that the temple itself will be destroyed, and that fit into their teaching, too. Because they remembered that Ezekiel said in the kingdom there would be a new temple. Existing temple was built not even by a Jew but by Herod, the Idumaeen. It was a temple that was occupied presently by hypocrites and false religionists.

The Messiah had reached the moment when He was going to bring His kingdom.

- They disregarded His words about dying, about a seed falling into the ground to die.
- They ignored what He said about having to be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes and to be crucified and to rise again the third day.

All they could see was the kingdom.

Jesus had already begun to cleanse the temple and now He was going to destroy it.

He was going to judge the ungodly and purge the nation, and then He was going to come in full glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, and they believed they were imminently at that point. This was how they interpreted the prophets.

The sequence of their kind of **eschatology or their doctrine of the last days**.

- They thought they were right on schedule.
- They had been through time of tribulation.
- The forerunner had come.
- The Messiah was there.
- He had begun the purging of Jerusalem.
- It would be followed by the destruction of the godless nations, the gathering of the scattered Jews, and the setting up of the kingdom.
- They thought they were right at that moment that the kingdom would come.

They didn't have any sense of a long time period between the first and second coming. They didn't have any idea that Christ would come and then He would go back, and it would be a long period of thousands of years before He returned. That's not the way the prophets spoke.

They only spoke of one coming of the Messiah.
They didn't fill that large gap in the middle.

The New Testament calls this a mystery which was hidden in time past. The whole church age as we know is unrevealed in the Old Testament. There is a big gap which they did not understand.

Isaiah 61:1-3, *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, ³To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”*

V 4-11, have more of that prophecy.

The prophet sees the Messiah coming, preaching the gospel, and bringing the vengeance of the day of God at the very same time. But that isn't how it is. Then that is followed immediately by the kingdom, which is a time of comfort for mourners, a time of beauty for ashes, oil of joy for mourning, garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and the planting of trees of righteousness.

V 11, *For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

The whole Messianic work is seen in one unit.

Luke 4, Jesus in Nazareth, in the synagogue.

Luke 4:16-21, *So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written ¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” ²⁰Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”*

Jesus only got halfway through **Isaiah 61:2**.

The next line is: *“And the day of vengeance of our God.”*

Why didn't He talk about that part?

Why didn't He read that part?

Because that is future.

Here was an indication that what Isaiah saw as a whole, Jesus would fulfill in two separate parts.

That is why He closed the book after preaching the acceptable year of the Lord.

- ✓ The first time the Saviour came, He came to preach.
- ✓ The second time He comes, He comes to judge.

It wasn't until the gospels unfolded that we began to see the distinction between the first and second coming.

Even the disciples didn't perceive His coming as a second coming. They perceived that He would come only in the sense of coming in fullness as Messiah.

They don't understand this long period of time in which the Lord is redeeming the people from all over the earth.

They ask the questions in V 3, Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Waiting for something to happen momentarily, they were so excited. They could sense that the child of Isaiah 9 was ready

to take on His shoulders the government of the kingdom of God.

- They could sense that the stone cut out without hands of Daniel was ready to crush the power of evil men, that the Messiah,
- They could sense that the Son of Man would be given dominion and glory in a kingdom that was everlasting.
- They could sense what Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, had said was about to happen.
- They could expect Zechariah had said was about to come in the day of the Lord.

They think it's momentary.

They ask, "When?" and "What is the sign?"

What makes them feel such anticipation?

The fact that Jesus promised the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem.

He promised He would come in the name of the Lord.

He said the temple would be devastated.

They think it's imminent.

Prediction of future not 70 A.D.

So, Jesus must explain to them that it isn't and it's yet in the future, great way off.

That is the purpose from verse 4 on. It is a prophetic sermon that sweeps them and us into a time that has not yet come.

Does not describe time between then and **70 A.D.**, the destruction of Jerusalem. There is no way that can be possible. The terms won't allow us to believe that. It does not describe the church age.

It must describe the future time, right before the coming of Christ. They want to know the signs of the coming of Christ, the signs of the end of the age.

This is not the time period prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, it is not just the church age, as many commentators have wanted to lead us to believe, but that it's the end time.

V 7-9, People coming and saying, "I am Christ," and deceiving, wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom, famine, earthquake, persecution, killing, and hating.

V 11, defection from the faith and false prophets.

V 12, love of many grows cold.

V 14, gospel of the kingdom is preached.

Jesus describing all kinds of signs that are going to come at the end of the age.

They are signs of the coming of the Messiah.

V 8, *"All these signs are the beginning of birth pains."*

Very important. It's the Greek word for birth pains, the actual pain a woman has in bringing forth a child. It is the beginning of birth pain.

When does birth pain occur?

At conception?

During pregnancy?

Birth pain occurs just prior to birth, at the very end.

The last thing that happens and you know you are there.

You start monitoring the frequency of birth pains until they come in a rapid succession and then it's time for the issuing forth of life. Birth pains happen at the end. They are not strung out all through pregnancy. Neither are these things strung out all through the history of the church age. They are things which occur in rapid-fire succession that issue in the birth, as it were, of the Messianic kingdom.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ²For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

How does a thief in the night come?

Very quietly, unexpectedly, suddenly.

1 Thessalonians 5:3, *For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

The coming of Christ is sudden.

The destruction of it is sudden.

"It's like birth pains on a woman with child" same illustration.

When Paul wants to illustrate something that comes suddenly and devastatingly, just before the day of the Lord, he uses the illustration of birth pains. So, this is consistent with the use that Jesus has. Birth pains, in the Jewish mind, came suddenly and expectantly just before birth.

1 Thessalonians uses the way the illustration is used in **Matthew 24**.

So, when it says these are the beginning of birth pains, this must put us at the end.

Our Lord is saying before the end, there will be a sequence of birth pains.

Birth pains come at first infrequently.

Then more frequently and more frequently until they come in very frequent sort of expulsions until that child is sent out of the body.

Exactly the way it will be in the end time.

There will come birth pains, events separated by distance, and then less distance and less distance until finally, right at the time of the coming of Christ, there will be an explosion of concurrent holocaust events across the earth.

The frequency and chronology of frequency becomes condensed more and more until finally, the kingdom comes.

V 8, Our Lord is talking about the end time, just before the kingdom.

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

What is the end?

V 6 and V 13 and the end is mentioned. The end is not yet, He says.

What end is He talking about?

V 3, *"The end of the age."*

He is talking about the end of the age. It must be that that is His subject.

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

What end is He talking about the end of the age.

The people who go through these events, these birth pains and endure until the end and the end of the age, will be saved.

So, Jesus must be talking about people then.

We are not going to endure until the end unless this all happens fast and unless we the Rapture.

The disciples didn't endure to the end because the end hasn't come yet. He is talking about people going through these things and enduring until the end of the age.

Jesus must be talking about people who are alive at the end of the age who are able to endure it. The troubles that come upon people are coming upon people who are alive at a time when they could endure to the end of the age.

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.

What end?

The end of the age again.

Prior to the end of the age, there is going to be worldwide preaching of the gospel. Now, that couldn't have been true before 70 A.D.

There was no preaching of the gospel around the world before 70 A.D., and it isn't even true today.

There are many places in the world where the gospel is not being preached at all and has never been preached. But before the end, it will be preached in all the world.

How is this going to happen?

Before the end of the age supernaturally, instantaneously, miraculously, there will be a worldwide blanketing of the gospel by supernatural means so that everybody on the face of the earth is going to hear it.

Before the end of the age, there is going to be a worldwide preaching of the gospel. That never happened. Not today and that wasn't before 70 A.D.

V 15, *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),*

All going to break loose when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

Daniel 9:27, *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”*

What Antichrist is going to do is that he goes into the temple in the future Tribulation time, he desecrates the temple, he

commits sacrilege in the temple where the Jews have set up their worship. He does it until the consummation, final end and that determined or that which is determined by God to be done is poured out on the desolate.

In other words, final judgment.

He does it at the very end, in the final day of man when God is going to pour out judgment.

Antichrist at a time when the Prince comes to finish transgression, make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

Daniel 9:24-27, the prophet says the abomination of desolation takes place right before the Prince who sets up everlasting righteousness, right before final judgment and vengeance.

So, it must be at the end time.

V 15, *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet*

Then you know you are seeing the signs of the end.

Daniel tells us that that happens just before the Messiah sets up His kingdom and judges the ungodly.

Another indicator is that we must be looking at a future time.

V 21, *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

It will be the worst time in the history of the world.

When is the worst time in the history of the world?

It is got to be the end time.

It must be the time when God's vengeance breaks out.

Daniel speaks about the antichrist in **chapter 11**.

Daniel speaks these same words in **chapter 12**.

Daniel 12:1, *“At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.*

There will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time. Similar words of our Lord.

The worst time of trouble ever in the history of the world. Followed immediately by the resurrection to everlasting life and shame and contempt.

It is the time prior to the final resurrection, the time prior to the final judgment, the final vengeance, the final establishing of God's kingdom. So, it must be the future. The time of great tribulation like the world has never known.

Another indicator is in verse 29.

V 29, *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

Christ comes immediately after the Tribulation.

The Tribulation of which He speaks is the Great Tribulation of verse 21. It's the time that's does not like any other time.

It must be the time in the future.

What time is it?

According to Daniel in **Matthew 24:15**, *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),*

It is the time of the abomination of desolation.

Which is right before the second coming.

All these indicators tell us this must be future.

Finally, look at verses 32 to 34 as another and last indicator.

V 32-34, *“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*

A parable.

You have a fig tree, you see leaves, and you know fruit is to follow. Fruit comes in the summer.

You see the leaves, and you know the fruit’s coming.

Just a signal.

Likewise, when you see all these things a signal.

What generation?

The generation that is alive when the signs happen, the generation that sees them all coming to pass, “will not ever pass away till all of this is fulfilled.”

The fulfillment of all the time of the end is going to be seen by the people who see the signs. The signs are reserved for the people who are going to be alive at the end time. That takes this whole thing and pushes it into the future. The generation alive when the signs begin to unfold will be alive when Christ comes to set up His kingdom.

Understand that the whole of the Olivet Discourse is future.

That is not to say that some of the things that will happen then don't happen now, but they will happen then at a scale and on a level and on proportions that are far beyond anything we have ever known now.

We have war now,

- We have earthquake now,
- We have famine now,
- We have trouble in our world now,
- We have killing now,
- We have persecution now,
- We have hatred now,
- We even have some things happening in the sky that disturb us now.

But nothing compared to the incredible display that's going to take place in that compressed, brief period of time called the birth pains of the kingdom when God sends the earth into wracked pain as it brings forth the King in His kingdom.

Understand we have been taken into the future.

V 6, *And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled;*

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.*

V 15, *“When you therefore see the abomination of desolation.”*

V 20, *And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.*

How can this be future when Jesus is talking to the disciples and He says you, you, you, you, you? Isn't He talking to them?

This is an editorial privilege given to a prophet.

When God picks up a prophet and transports him into a future time to speak on a future theme, he speaks directly to the people of that time.

The use of “you” doesn't in any way reflect on the fact that this must be fulfilled by the people to whom He speaks. You, whoever you are alive in that time.

You, whoever you are to whom this applies.

It is you that is editorial in a sense. Whoever you are.

This is the prophetic freedom to speak directly to the society in the future to which God has transported the prophet in the process of revelation.

The Old Testament use of that in many places. The prophets of the Old Testament frequently spoke directly to people who were yet to be born in the future saying to them you, you, you, though they had not even been born.

Isaiah 33:17-24; Isaiah 66:10-14; Zechariah 9:9; Zechariah 3:17-20;

But all those passages and myriads of others have prophets speaking in a direct way to people yet unborn to whom the prophecy will directly apply.

Isaiah 44:24-45:13 prophecy about **Cyrus, about 170 years** before even he was born.

Isaiah 45:3-6, I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel. ⁴For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. ⁵I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,

The whole passage you are about Cyrus not the people prophet Isaiah was prophesying.

There is a prophetic privilege in speaking.

The Great Tribulation, a time in the future just before Christ comes.

What are the signs?

What are the signs to indicate His coming?

What are the signs to indicate the establishment of His kingdom?

What are the signs to indicate the end of man's age and the beginning of God's eternal, glorious kingdom?

V 8, He gives us the beginning of those signs, the beginning of those birth pains.

They start out slowly, they become more rapid, more rapid, until finally at the end it's just a holocaust of things exploding all over every place.

As we are studying the book of Revelation, we can see the unfolding of the seals.

Six seals are unfolded and then the seventh. Bursting out of the seventh seal comes seven trumpets. Bursting out of the seventh trumpet comes seven bowls of wrath poured on the earth.

At an increasing speed.

- The seals go over a period of years.
- The trumpets, over a period perhaps of weeks.
- The bowls, maybe over a period of hours or days.

As the birth pains become closer and closer, more compressed, more concurrent at the end.

We are going to start with the Lord in the sermon seeing the beginning.

In the beginning, there will be six birth pains.

Deception.

The first sign is deception.

We are not saying there is no deception today.

We are not saying there wasn't deception then.

There has always been deceiving and deception.

There has always been people who come in the name of Christ, in the name of God, to lead people astray. There have always been false Christs and there always will be.

But not like there will be at the end. Everything is heightened, intensified, and escalated. Although the Olivet Discourse does not deal with the Rapture of the church. It is not to say there is no Rapture.

We believe that the church of Jesus Christ will be raptured out, and all these things that take place will take place after the church has gone and after the Holy Spirit takes back His restraining power and lets all hell break loose.

So that the evil of this deception will exceed all other deceptions. The evil of these wars will exceed all other wars. The evil of these conflicts will exceed all other conflicts.

The evil of this hatred and this murder will exceed all other hatred and murder when there is no restrainer left in the world to restrain the evil of men.

We are looking at a time when deception is at its climax.

Deception is the first mark, the first sign of the beginning of the birth pains.

V 4, *And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.*

Don't be deceived!

There are going to be people in that period of time who are looking for answers, the world is going to begin to disintegrate, evil is going to run wild.

V 12, "because lawlessness shall abound."

Do you think it's bad now?

You can't even fathom what it will be like then, when all hell breaks loose on the earth and the church is gone and the restrainer's not here.

Jesus says beware because of deception. Don't let anybody lead you astray.

Here is a world falling apart. Here is a world where natural affection is gone, according to what Paul says to Timothy.

A world where all social relationships are disrupted.

A world that is in economic chaos.

A world that is living in mad, furious sinning.

Everything begins to come to pieces and collapse.

This world looking for leaders.

This is a world looking for Messiahs, Saviours, and deliverers, and as soon as they start crying out for those kinds of leaders, there are going to be false Messiahs all over the place offering themselves as the solution.

V 5, *“Many shall come in My name saying ‘I am Christ’ and shall deceive many.”*

We think we have our deceivers now and we have our false Christs and false Messiahs all over the place, and they have always been around.

But nothing like they are going to be in that desperate time. Jesus says don't be deceived. They are going to come in the end time, many who will deceive you, who will want you to believe they are the Christ. They will come in My name.

This Olivet Discourse, portions of it, are also recorded in **Mark 13 and Luke 21**.

Luke 21:8, *And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them.*

In other words, they are going to say, "It's time for my kingdom" The Lord says therefore don't go after them.

They are going to come and say, "I am the Christ, it's time for my kingdom."

We have had many of them.

But not like they will be in that day in a world that is in absolute desperation and crying for deliverers and leaders.

We have a very religious bent in our nature, and they are going to seek religious leaders. It is going to be an explosion of fraud and false Messiahs.

V 23-24, *"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*

Numerous false Christs and false prophets arise and shall show great signs and wonders insomuch as if it were possible. They would deceive the very elect.

- They are not going to be just like some of the false teachers in this era.

- They are going to be able to do signs and wonders.
- They are going to be able to do magic.
- They are going to do supernatural demon inspired deeds that are going to captivate the attention of the world.

Myriads of false Christs ultimately will culminate in one false Christ known as Antichrist.

Antichrist will be the epitome of the false Christs. He will be the ultimate demonized individual, Satan indwelt.

- **Daniel** calls him the little horn, the king with the fierce face, the willful king.
- **John** calls him the beast.
- **Paul** calls him son of perdition and man of sin.

He comes as the culmination of all false Christs, and he is so convincing and so deceptive that Daniel 9:27 says even Israel as a nation makes a covenant with him and enters into league with him, believing him to be their deliverer.

That is how deceitful he is. All the nations of the world fall into his deceptions and come under his power. He deceives many.

Daniel 8:23, *“And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.*

Do you know why human history waits?

Do you know why God doesn't intervene?

God is waiting for transgression to come to its full.

As if God wants to give sin all that sin needs to damn itself and then eliminate it from existence forever.

What does it mean, “*understands sinister schemes.*”?

He has communion with the demons and the devils of hell. He is a medium who contacts the spirits beneath.

Daniel 8:24-25, *His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.*
²⁵ *“Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means.*

An awesome conqueror.

He will be a very effective deceiver.

He uses peace, he uses negotiation to consume the world and bring them into his power.

As the Tribulation unfolds, the first thing that happens, the beginning of the birth pains of **Revelation 6**, is the same beginning of the birth pains as we find right here in **Matthew 24**.

➤ **Matthew 24**, “First, beware of deceivers.”

- **Revelation 6**, “As the Tribulation begins, there will come a rider on a white horse, conquering. He has a bow but no arrows.”

What does that mean?

He intimidates but never shoots.

He conquers with peace.

The beginning of the birth pains is deceit, false Christ.

The beginning of the Tribulation false peace, a false rider on a white horse who is imitating the true rider on the white horse of Revelation 19.

Daniel sees the same thing.

In the latter time, when the transgression comes to the full, here comes this king.

- He comes in power.
- He does awesome things.
- He brings power to himself through peace, and he stands up against the Prince of princes.
- He stands against Christ.

Daniel 11:36-39, *“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. ³⁷He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he*

shall exalt himself above them all. ³⁸But in their place he shall honour a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honour with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. ³⁹Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

- He goes just until God's wrath has run its course and that's the end of him.
- But in that time, he will accomplish marvellous things.
- He will blaspheme God.
- He will honor the god of fortresses.
- A god whom his father's knew not shall he honour with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.
- He raises up new gods.
- He is an idolatrous antichrist.

His deception is incredible.

His deception is described in greater detail in **Revelation chapter 13**.

John sees him not as a fierce face and not as a willful king but in another perspective, as a beast. He is a beast who rises up out of the nation and the symbolism is very vivid.

He is a powerful beast.

He is a devastating beast.

Revelation 13:4-5, *So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"* ⁵*And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.*

This is how the end starts.

It starts with him, and he goes for 42 months or three and a half years, the second half of the 70th week of Daniel, that seven-year period, spoken of in **Daniel 9:27**.

Daniel said there is yet one week of tribulation.

One week = seven years.

In the middle, this antichrist takes his place.

The last 3 and ½ years, or 42 months, he sits in great power.

Revelation 13:6, *Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.*

He opens his mouth, and he speaks blasphemy against God.

He blasphemes God's tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven.

Revelation 13:7-8, *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.* ⁸*All who dwell on the*

earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

All that dwells on the earth shall worship him.

Can we imagine such deceitfulness?

The world literally believes this is Messiah and Saviour.

Coming alongside him is another beast known as the false prophet. He has all the power of the first beast, and he causes the earth and all that dwell in it to worship the first beast.

Revelation 13:11-14, *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹²And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.*

Keep your eyes open in the end that you be not deceived because there are coming false Christs in My name saying, 'I am Christ,' who will deceive many."

How many?

The whole world!

Don't let it happen to you.

What a warning!

Who is behind this deception?

Revelation 12:9, *"The dragon, the old serpent, the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world."*

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ²not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

Somebody was telling the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord had already started. They were already in it.

Don't let anybody make you think we have entered the day of the Lord.

Why?

A falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

Paul is in line with Daniel.

Paul is in line with Jesus.

Paul is in line with Revelation and says the very same thing.

Before the coming of the Lord, there will be the revealing of this man of sin, the son of perdition, the willful king, the king with fierce face, the beast who deceives the world.

He opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped so that he, as God, sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-10, *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

He comes and deceives the whole world.

The Bible is tremendously consistent.

The second half of the Tribulation, the last three and a half years, begins with the ascendancy of the false Messiah. Prior to him, there will be a whole lot of them.

Even perhaps during his reign, a whole lot of them fight against him unsuccessfully.

The first sign of the end of man's age is deception.

Deception that is so effective, literally ultimately results in the deception of the whole wide world.

We shouldn't be surprised why our Lord warns us, "You better beware."

Application:

How does it apply to me?

If you are a Christian, you ought to rejoice that Jesus is coming and that sin will be ended, done away.

- You ought to rejoice.
- You ought to be thrilled that God's character will no longer be dishonoured, defamed, and blasphemed.
- You ought to be thrilled that the antichrist, the beast, the false prophet, Satan himself will be thrown forever into the lake of fire with all the Christ rejecters and God haters of all history.
- You ought to be thrilled that Jesus will be exalted and worshiped and adored forever and ever.

But at the same time, we ought to be saddened because when that happens, there will be the judgment of the ungodly. They will forever be put out of the presence of God.

Forever lost. It will happen. Jesus just made sure we didn't doubt that by putting in the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem when He said, "Not one stone shall be left upon another." In **70 A.D.**, about 30 years later, that did happen. Not one stone was left upon another.

Titus Vespasian, stood in the midst of the temple ground and shouted to his soldiers not to do that, but they did it anyway. Titus, no doubt, represented Satan trying to stop the prophecy from being fulfilled, but God was mightier than Satan, and God had allowed the passionate hate of those Romans against the Jews to carry them to the place where they rejected the commands of their own general, and they tore that thing down against their own general's commands. Josephus writes in his record this.

God's purposes can't be stopped and just as the temple was flattened and not one stone remained upon another, and that is exactly what happened, so these things will come to pass just as exactly.

When we know that, we know that history is in the control of God and destiny is in the control of Christ.

We rejoice on the one hand for that inevitable destiny, and
We sorrow on the other hand for what will come to those who
know not the Saviour.

But we certainly don't just take this as an idle curiosity. That
would be the height of foolishness.

If you don't accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, then you must
fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Come to the only one who can save, the Lord Jesus Christ, who
has died for you and risen again and offers you forgiveness,
eternal life, and blessedness in His heaven.