

Current Affairs # 28 – Signs Concluding the Age, Part 1

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March 30, 2020

In this progression, I want to come to the sayings of Jesus regarding the clash of these kingdoms and the signs He prophesied that would happen at the time when this conflict between the kingdoms boils over and becomes entirely visible and engaged in the earth. For that, I want to give a set of readings from the prophetic words of Jesus. I will go in chronological order, beginning with Matthew, chapter 24. Then I will read from Mark, from Luke, and from John. In Matthew, chapter 24, beginning at verse 1,

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 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.”

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?”

And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 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 (Matthew 24:1-14 NKJV).

I will come back to this, but let me read some more readings from the book of Mark, chapter 13, starting at verse 1, and we will follow that.

Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” [So they were very proud of the temple buildings.]

And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives... (Mark 13:1-3a NKJV, comments added in brackets).

So the picture we get is this: Jesus had been in the temple complex. They were leaving the site of the temple, and that is the point at which some said, “Look at how beautiful these buildings are. Look at these massive foundation stones.” I happened to have seen some of these stones, and they are indeed massive. Jesus prophesied, “Not one of these stones will be left upon another, that will not be thrown down. In the minds of the disciples, that was an impossibility that could only be explained by the cataclysm of the end of the age also coming at that same time. Now history tells us that it did not require the cataclysm of the end of the age for the temple to be overthrown or overturned—not one stone left upon another. There was a thin sheet of gold that was placed on the roof of the temple. When the Romans burned the temple in AD70, the molten gold flowed down and some collected between the cracks of the stones. The rumor arose that the Jews had used gold as mortar for the stones of the temple. So overworked and underpaid legionnaires, sensing an opportunity for a bonus pay day, worked together in teams to overthrow every stone. Not one stone was left upon another, regardless of how massive the stones of the building of the temple were. But it was inconceivable to the disciples of Jesus that the prophecy concerning “not one stone being left upon another;” the only way they could foresee that prophecy being fulfilled was if it also consummated the age and concluded with the return of the Lord.

So later they were on the Mount of Olives. The picture is that they left the temple complex, walked down the path toward the east, crossed the Valley of Kidron, crossed the brook of Kidron (off to the left is where the Garden of Gethsemane is), and they went up the hill to the Mount of Olives. When He sat on the Mount of Olives, where Matthew just says His disciples came to Him privately, Mark says it was Peter, James, John, and Andrew who asked Him privately.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?” [Apparently, they also said, “What will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?”]

And Jesus, answering them, began to say: “Take heed that no one deceives you” (Mark 13:3-5 NKJV, comments added in brackets).

And He continues on with essentially the same narrative as that we have just read in Matthew. He moves on to say, “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see to it that you are not troubled. These things must happen, but the end is not yet. Because nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, famines, and *troubles*,” this adds. “These are the beginnings of sorrows” (cf. Mark 13:7-8). “Troubles” there would be the term *taraché* (Strong’s Greek 5016), which means roiling, or disturbance, or sedition.

I will read you the third piece from Luke. Luke’s reference will be to the roaring and tossing of the sea. This was Luke, chapter 21, and it will be from verses 5-36. Again, this adds color and greater texture to the prophetic words. I am getting to something, obviously.

Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, “These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.”

So they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?” (Luke 21:5-7 NKJV).

Left out of this narrative is that they had departed from the temple complex, that Peter, James, John, and Andrew had come to Jesus while He sat on the Mount of Olives and asked Him these things. The way Luke frames it is, “When will these things take place?”. He does not include the more definitive statements, “What will be the signs of Your coming and the end of the age?” But as he continues on, we see essentially the same record.

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.’” (Luke 21:8 NKJV)

So, He prophesies. He prophesies people will be foretelling His coming before He comes. “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He’ (namely, Jesus is the Christ), and that, ‘The time has drawn near.’” One of the signs of the end of the age is a lot of people prophesying that Jesus is coming back. Now unless

you are speaking from the Spirit of God, you will be debunked routinely, like “88 reasons why Jesus would come in ’88” or John Hagee’s blood moons. You will be routinely shown to be false, not speaking for Him, and in fact, deceiving. Because He said, “Take heed that no one *deceives* you by telling you that Christ is Christ, they are hearing from God, and the time has drawn near.”

Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.”

Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. [In other words, you will be able to speak what I give you to say.] Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your soul” (Luke 21:9-19 NKJV, comments added in brackets).

Then He tells them: “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that **its** desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains,” and so on (cf. Luke 21:20-21). Let me come back and unpack this for you. Let’s use the book of Matthew, the first in this chronological order. By the way, let me just reference one more thing from the book of John, because it bears witness with the rest of this chronology. This is from John 16:1-28. He begins by saying,

“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them” (John 16:1-4 NKJV)

Then he goes on to give many more signs toward the end of the age, but he speaks this in verse 25,

“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;” (John 16:25 NKJV).

I wanted to highlight that in the midst of this, all of this, that Jesus acknowledges that some of what He is saying, or at least what He is saying, is figurative. The point being, there is a duality of reference continuously throughout all of the preceding narratives of the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that speak of the return of the Lord. He is saying, “At least some of what I am saying, I am saying figuratively.”

Now let’s go back and unpack it from Matthew. The first thing they asked Him was, “When shall these things be?” Because Jesus had said to them, “You see all these stones? You see all these beautiful buildings and the wonderful adornments that you are so proud of? Not one stone will be left here upon another that will not be thrown down.” When Peter, James, John, and Andrew then caught up with Him on the Mount of Olives, it is obvious they had been discussing what He meant by what He had said amongst themselves. So when He sat down with them on the Mount of Olives, they presented Him with the questions, and they conflated the two issues of the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem—and the destruction of Jerusalem itself, by extension, I might add, because Jesus brought it up Himself in the Luke account (Luke 21)... They conflated the destruction of the temple, as part and parcel of the destruction of Jerusalem, with the overthrowing of every stone, with the return of the Lord and the end of the age.

But Jesus began by addressing the signs of His coming and the end of the age, and then He moved backward to talking to His disciples about the destruction of Jerusalem. Then, He further talked to them about things they would experience in their lifetimes; and then He talked to them about things that would happen beyond their lifetime. Which things are what John builds upon in the book of Revelation, because, guess what? John was one of the four—Peter, James, John, and Andrew—with Jesus on the Mount of Olives when He was talking to them about these things. Subsequently, John was given further revelation of these things concerning the culmination of the age—at a time, by the way, Peter and James and Andrew and even Paul had already died. By the writing of the book of Revelation, these others had already died. John was the last remaining apostle. So there is a continuity between what Jesus spoke on the Mount of Olives to them and what John picks up on and is given revelation about when He is taken into heaven.

So, to say that these things were all about the fall of Jerusalem in AD70 is absolutely bogus. It is not accurate, and it artificially limits the prophetic view that some scholars have chosen to advocate. No. He is talking about a time, according to Revelation, chapter 5, about verse 13, where a song is sung to Jesus that He purchased men for God from every tribe, tongue, language, and nation—that would be beyond the Roman Empire and it would be beyond the time of John—and He formed them into a royal priesthood and a holy nation. That would track all the way back to the original intent of God to have a Kingdom comprised of people of every tribe, language, tongue, and nation. So it is the conclusion of the age, actually.

For our purposes, there are some remarkable signs for us to unpack. As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, then, He said to Peter, James, John, and Andrew—whether there were others who were hearing, we do not know, but we know specifically those because that is said—He said to them, “Take heed that no one deceives you.” So the first thing to note is a spirit of deception that defines the character of the age. Why? Because it is a kingdom based in deception, from the beginning. So when this kingdom reaches its apogee and is about to be judged, what is going to be its last gasp effort? The spirit of deception will have ripened. But this time, the deception will be an attempt to seduce, if it were possible, even the very elect. But that is not new, because Adam was God’s appointed viceroy. When the enemy came into the garden, he attacked God’s viceroy with deception. So he is going to attack the Kingdom of God and the saints in the end of the age with deception. Instead of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he is going to lie about who Christ is and when He is coming in order to deceive many. Because when Jesus does not come, as these prognosticators have routinely said, what happens? Exactly the condition that we have here today: people do not believe anymore.

In Y2K, the year 2000, many denominations went on record—I remember many of the Calvary Chapel preachers from California and others went on record—talking about how this was going to be the sign that begins the return of the Lord. Many of their teachers, and they were not the only ones, numerous others started businesses to sell freeze-dried foods and encouraged people to buy all kinds of prepper’s supplies. But after He did not come, many of these famous figures were dethroned. You see, we forget these things because we never hold anybody to account. They keep on going, even after they have participated in deception. Then we had the blood moons of John Hagee, and nobody holds him to account. But many will come trying to deceive people about the return of the Lord. So much so, the deception is when people have been routinely deceived, they give up hope. They stop talking about the return of the Lord.

In fact, the Scriptures say they are scandalized. They are scandalized by those who preach about the return of the Lord. It says, “many will be offended,” and the word for offended is the word *skandalizó* (Strong’s Greek 4624), which is to be offended or scandalized. They will say, “How dare we bring such disrepute?”— that is Matthew 24:10, that says they will be scandalized — “How dare we talk about the return of the Lord? How gauche? How out of step?” That is actually where we have come to. And the prophetic voice has been largely muted because people are afraid of the blowback from believers who would be scandalized that we are dragging them again into this mix. But again, I say to you, without the words of sent ones, you have only people who are capable of deceiving and people who are capable of embarrassing in these times.

But He said, “Here is how you will know:

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places (Matthew 24:6-7 NKJV).

What is also added are “troubles.” And Luke translates it the “roaring and tossing of the sea,” which on one level, a natural level, means tsunamis, and on another level it means humans, as the sea of nations in distress. So much so, that their hearts fail them for fear because they have no solutions to this cascading of events.

All these are the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:8 NKJV).

The term “sorrows” there is the word *ódin* (Strong’s Greek 5604); it is pronounced (o-deen’), and it means birth pangs. Remember, I told you in one of the earlier broadcasts that in the reference in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, that the day will come upon the unbelievers as birth pangs on a pregnant woman. This speaks to birth pangs—beginnings of sorrows.

*“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended [that is *skandalizó*], will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be*

saved. 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 (Matthew 24:9-14 NKJV, comments added in brackets).

After that, He goes on to talk about things that relate to the fall of Jerusalem, which is: “Then you will see the abomination that causes desolation,” and so on (cf. Matthew 24:15 and following). After that, He assures His disciples; and then after that, He speaks and concludes about the end of the age.

So, when I come back with the final broadcast in this series, I want to specifically unpack these verses that I have read to you from the book of Matthew, chapter 3, beginning at verse 4. We will continue on then, in the next broadcast. This is very important, so hear it all.