

Lighthouse Bible Church

January 4th, 2015

Matthew 24: 9 – 14 *Scripture Reading: Mark 13: 9 - 13*

‘Signs that the end is Near’ #3

Stand – Read – Pray

We have been working our way through Matthew Chapter 24 looking at the signs that the end is near and the return of Jesus and the end of the age, or the end of time as we know. And these signs are being given to the disciples and to us by Jesus Himself in response to some questions that the disciples had asked Him.

They had asked Him, in Matthew 24: 3, what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age. So Jesus begins to answer the question ‘what will be the sign of Your coming’ what will be the sign that we know that the end is near and that you are coming back.

And Jesus is about to give them several signs to watch for but He also says in Verse 8 ‘all these, all these signs, are the beginnings of sorrows or the beginning of birth pangs’. *Explain. You will begin to see them more and more.*

We have looked at several of the signs already in Verses 4 – 7. Jesus says that just before My return and leading up to My return you will see more and more deceivers coming in Jesus’ name saying they are the Christ. He said in Verse 11 ‘many false prophets will rise up and deceive many’. He said in Verse 24 ‘for false Christ’s and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonder to deceive if possible even the elect.’

Jesus said there would also be wars and rumors of wars and that nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. We looked in great detail about some of those wars that scripture warns us about.

Jesus said that during this time leading up to His return there would also be great earthquakes in various places. We looked at some of those predicted in scripture for the future and the destruction they will cause. He also said there would be famines and pestilences and we also looked at why that would happen as well.

And as we have said before, today we have false Christ's, false prophets, we have wars and rumors of wars and we have earthquakes and famines and diseases; but not on the scale that will be just before the return of Christ. As we see these signs today we know that we are getting closer and closer and that should motivate us to share our faith, share the gospel and to teach Bible truth about end time events, and, as **2nd Peter 3: 11 – 12** says, **since all these things will come to pass we ought to live in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.**

So Jesus says that in addition to the signs I have already told you about, I want to tell you something else that will happen to the born again believers who are alive in that time. Look at Verses 9 – 10.

Verses 9 – 10: 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 and will betray one another and will hate one another.

Jesus says 'another sorrow' or 'birth pang' you will see leading up to My return will be the persecution of born again Christians and it will be a persecution like the world has never seen before. And again, we have Christians being persecuted today, but not like it will be then.

But just to give you an example of what is going on in our time today, in July of this year 2 young ladies came to Christ and began attending church. Just a couple of months later, in October 2013, on a sunny Sunday morning, two suicide bombers entered the All Saints Church compound in Peshawar, Pakistan. These Islamists waited until the services were over and the nearly 500 worshipers began to gather for a meal together. At 11:45, they detonated their suicide vests and killed 78 people and injured another 130. It was the deadliest attack on the Christian minority in the history of Pakistan. VOM

A recent Open Doors report documented 2,123 murders of Christians for their faith in 2013. An estimated 100 million believers in Christ, meanwhile, still suffer from ruthless persecution around the globe, they said. Among other atrocities carried out against Christians for their faith: imprisonment, torture, rape, execution, expulsion, forced labor, and more. Christians are persecuted in more than 65 countries around the world, with the vast majority in Asia and Africa — and especially in the Middle East, where Islamist rulers often purport to make faith in Christ a crime *Open Door Stats* According to the organization's findings in its Open Doors 2014 World Watch List, released last week, Christians are still by far the most persecuted demographic on earth — and the trends are getting worse. In 2012, the group's annual report documented the martyrdom of more than 1,200 Christians. Last year, there were more than that **martyred just in Syria** alone. *Open Door Stats*.

Jesus says that you can watch for another sign leading to the end of the age and My return and that is that **they will DELIVER you up to tribulation and kill you...**

That word **deliver**, *paradidomi*, means to arrest or surrender to or turn over to and it is used, as in **Matthew 4: 12** and **Acts 22: 4** of putting someone into prison, or in **Matthew 27: 26** of delivering Jesus to death by crucifixion. It has the idea of imprisonment for punishment or execution like Jesus says they will deliver you up to **tribulation and kill you.**

Jesus goes on to say in Verse 9 that **you will be hated by all nations** and it will be for **My name's sake**. It will be because you identify with Me, Jesus says, that you will be arrested, persecuted, hated and killed.

They will be the living example of **Matthew 5: 10 – 12** which says **blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely FOR MY SAKE...**

Remember what Jesus said in **John 15: 18 – 19**: **if the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you ... if they persecute Me they will persecute You.**

And during this time leading up to the return of Jesus Christ and the end of all things, the hatred and persecution and killing of Christians will get worse and worse. Look at **Revelation 6: 9 – 11** *Read*

In **Revelation 11: 7** the two witnesses of God **are overcome and killed** by the Anti-Christ. In **Revelation 13: 7** it says that the beast, the anti-Christ **was granted power to make war with the saints and to overcome them**. In **Daniel 7: 21, 25** it says of this same time period that he would **make war against the saints, persecute the saints and prevail against them**.

In **Revelation 16: 4 – 6** it says an angel pours out his bowl of judgment on the rivers of water and they became like blood because **you have judged those who have shed the blood of the saints and prophets**. In **Revelation 17: 6** it says **I saw the woman**, a picture of the false religious system aligned with the anti-Christ under the name of Babylon, **drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus**.

As a matter of fact, the anti-Christ and his partner, the false prophet, that make up mystery Babylon of Revelation 17, are going to **Revelation 13: 14 – 15**, says **to make an image of the anti Christ and he was granted power to give breath to the image of the east that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**

And of course, all true Christians will not worship the image and will not get the mark and will eventually not be able to buy sell or trade and will be forcefully exposed and killed. That is what Jesus says will happen in Matthew 24: 9, they will be delivered to prison, beating, torture, and death because of the incredible hatred that unsaved people have for Jesus.

And remember what was read earlier in **Mark 13: 9 – 11** *Read.* Well, back to Matthew 24 and verse 10.

Verse 10: and then many will be offended and will betray one another and will hate one another.

Something else that will happen during this time will be the exposing of the true and false converts of Christ. As a result of Verse 9 and the intense persecution and threats of death, **many** supposed Christians will then show that they were not really followers of Christ at all, they had never been truly converted. *The word **betray** is also paradidomai as Delivered in Verse 9.*

As a matter of fact **they will betray one another and hate one another** because they are **offended**. That word offended is *skandalidzo*, it is where we get our English word to scandalize, but then it meant to trap or entice. What He is saying is, someone who is **not** a true convert but has outwardly identified with Christ through church or works or whatever, like the ones Jesus referred to in **Matthew 7: 21 – 23**, when the persecution and imprisonment starts, they will be enticed to evil, their sin nature will come out and it will do so in such a way that they will turn in other true believers.

It reminds me of the parable of the soils of **Matthew 13: 20 – 21** which says *brief overview* **but he who received the seed on stony places this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy yet he has not root in himself but endures only for a while for when tribulation or persecution arise because of the word immediately he STUMBLES**, that word stumbles is the same word, *scandilidzo*.

These false converts show that they were never really known by Jesus even though they appeared to on the outside because when the pressure comes, they will abandon their false Christianity to save themselves and then they will even turn in those who they know or suspect are true believers.

True Christians will endure to the end, no matter what the cost, even if it means losing their life for the sake of the gospel. But these here aren't true Christians and it will become evident.

One writer said this “such people abandon Christ’s visible church because they were never a part of His invisible church. They forsake God’s earthly family because they were never born into His heavenly family... The true disciple of Christ is willing to suffer as Christ suffered, and no amount of affliction will cause Him to renounce his Lord and Savior... a professed Christian who turns His back on Jesus Christ and refuses to suffer for His sake was not a true believer in the first place. A person who genuinely belongs to Christ may sometimes falter and be disobedient (like Peter) but he will never reject His Lord.. The person who belongs to Christ continues to confess Him to serve Him and to suffer for Him when that is necessary. He does not endure because of his own strength and fortitude but because he is indwelt by Christ’s own Spirit, who never fails to give sustaining grace to God’s children”. *MacArthur Matthew 24 page 26*.

It is like what Jesus said in **Matthew 10: 38 – 39**: **he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.** Jesus says when the cost of discipleship becomes too demanding those false converts will abandon Christ and His church and His people.

It will become so serious that even members from one's own family who profess to be Christians will turn on other family members and deliver them up to death. **Mark 13: 12 – 13** says **now brother will betray brother to death and a father his child and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death...** *also Luke 21: 16.*

Then Jesus says that another sign to watch for, similar to Verse 4 and 5, is in V 11.

Verse 11: **then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.**

Now you not only have false Christ's and false Messiah's, you have **false prophets** who will be able to **deceive many** through their deceptive teaching and through deceptive signs and wonders. Look at **Verse 24**: **for false Christ's and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive if possible even the elect.**

As a matter of fact during the end times it says in **Revelation 13: 13 – 14** that **he performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men and he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs....** He will even cause **Revelation 13: 8** says, **all those who dwell on the earth to worship Him** that aren't born again believers.

These false prophets and their false religious systems are going to be so convincing by what they teach and by what they do, that they will **deceive many**. We have them today, don't we? But not like it will be in that time; we certainly are moving in that direction with the false religious systems and teachings out there today.

As a matter of fact Paul warned Timothy in **1st Timothy 4: 1**: **that in the latter times some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons..**

Why are they going to be so convincing? Listen to what **2nd Corinthians 11: 13 – 15** says **for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ and no wonder for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light therefore it is not great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness..**

That is why they are going to be so believable and why so many will be deceived; because they are energized by Satan and his demons and they will teach a deceiving message of salvation and a deceiving message contradicting every basic, important doctrine to the Christian faith.

And by the way, this kind of religious system and teaching will be just what the false converts in Verse 10 will be looking for. A religious system, that satisfies their religious bent, and yet allows them to live an unconverted lifestyle and will never experience persecution and will be able to judge those narrow minded Christians and turn them in thinking they are doing God's service. Jesus says in Matthew 24: 11 'watch out for them'.

Then He says a lot of this is going to happen because of what Verse 12 says.

Verse 12: and because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Another sign that the end is near and that Christ is coming back soon is the fact that **many** will live in **lawlessness** and their **love will grow cold**. Again, we seem to be living in that time frame right now as we look around us. We see suicide bombers with no love or conscience go into a school and blow up a hundred children. We see people loot, riot, injure and destroy property under a false notion of justice....*use other examples here*, but it will be nothing like what it will be in the time of the end, which makes me think that we are not too far off. Jesus says **lawlessness will abound**. That word lawlessness is another word used in scripture for unrighteousness, for sin, for lawless deeds and for iniquity.

Sin will abound because **many** will have lost any kind of **love** for one another, for one other's property, or for one another's lives. What He is saying is that sin, iniquity, lawlessness will run rampant all across the globe and it will evidence itself in **lawless behavior** on a scale the world has never seen, in rape, murder, destruction of property, violence, you name it. The 10 commandments will be violated on a grander scale than when they were given to Moses and the nation of Israel was breaking them.

That is what Paul told Timothy in **2nd Timothy 3: 1 – 5** *Read*

Verse 13: but he who endures to the end shall be saved.

He who **endures** *hupomeno*, who abides under, who lines up under is what that word means, who endures the persecution, the hatred, the natural disasters, the deceivers, by holding on to Christ and His Word, will be **saved**. Not in the sense of receiving salvation, but in the sense of realizing the fullness of their salvation because at the end, Christ comes back and then the fullness of their salvation will be experienced. Endurance always marks the genuineness of a true born again believer.

Jesus said in **Matthew 10: 22** that **you will be hated by all nations for My names sake but he who ENDURES to the end will be saved.** **Revelation 2: 11** says **He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the 2nd death.** Then we'll end with Verse 14

Verse 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.

Jesus says 'before the end comes and I return, there will be a **worldwide proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.** In spite of all the false Christ's preaching a false message, in spite of all the wars, death and destruction, in spite of the great earthquakes, in spite of the famines and pestilences and tribulation and hatred that believes will go through, the gospel message will continue to be preached until the very last person God wants to hear, hears and then **the end will come.**

How is the gospel going to be **preached in all the world** during such a difficult time in human history. Well, one way we see in **Revelation 11: 3 – 7** where the **two witnesses** will share the gospel for 3 ½ years and all the world, if they will see them laying in the streets for 3 ½ days, will certainly see and hear them preaching for 3 ½ years by the same means. Revelation 11 says they will **prophesy** and they will **finish their testimony.**

Another way the gospel will be preached world wide is in **Revelation 14** with the **144,000** Jews from the 12 tribes of Israel preaching the gospel all over. But the way that the gospel will get proclaimed worldwide the fastest, **Revelation 14: 6:** tells us is **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...** That angel is fulfilling Matthew 24: 14.

Not to mention all the believers **Revelation 6: 9**, **Revelation 7: 14**, **Revelation 12: 11** and **Revelation 20: 4** that will share their faith and die for their witness to Jesus and the Word of God.

If they are going to be willing to share the gospel in that kind of environment, then why are we so afraid to share it in our easy, non threatening environment today, with little to no threat of persecution, at least here where we live.

Well, Jesus says there a lot of signs to watch for, but there is one sign in particular that will be the beginning of the great tribulation; that will be for next time.

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Introduction and Review:
2nd Peter 3: 11 – 12

Verses 9 – 10:

Delivered:

Matthew 4: 12, Acts 22: 4, Matthew 27: 26

Hated:

Matthew 5: 10 – 12, John 15: 18 – 19

Revelation 6: 9 – 11, 11: 7, 13: 7, 16: 4 - 6

Daniel 7: 21, 25, Revelation 17: 6, 13: 14-15

Mark 13: 9 – 11

Offended:

Matthew 7: 21 – 23, 13: 20 – 21, 10: 38 – 39

Mark 13: 12 – 13

Verse 11:

Revelation 13: 8, 13 – 14, 1st Timothy 4: 1

2nd Corinthians 11: 13 – 15

Verse 12:

2nd Timothy 3: 1 – 5

Verse 13:

Matthew 10: 22, Revelation 2: 11

Verse 14:

Revelation 11: 3–7, 14: 7, 14, 14: 6, 6: 9, 12: 11, 20: 4

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Matthew 7: 21 – 23, 13: 20 – 21, 10: 38 – 39

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Revelation 13: 8, 13 – 14, 1st Timothy 4: 1

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2nd Timothy 3: 1 – 5

Verse 13:

Matthew 10: 22, Revelation 2: 11

Verse 14:

Revelation 11: 3–7, 14: 7, 14, 14: 6, 6: 9, 12: 11, 20: 4