

Matthew

Chapter 24 Part 1

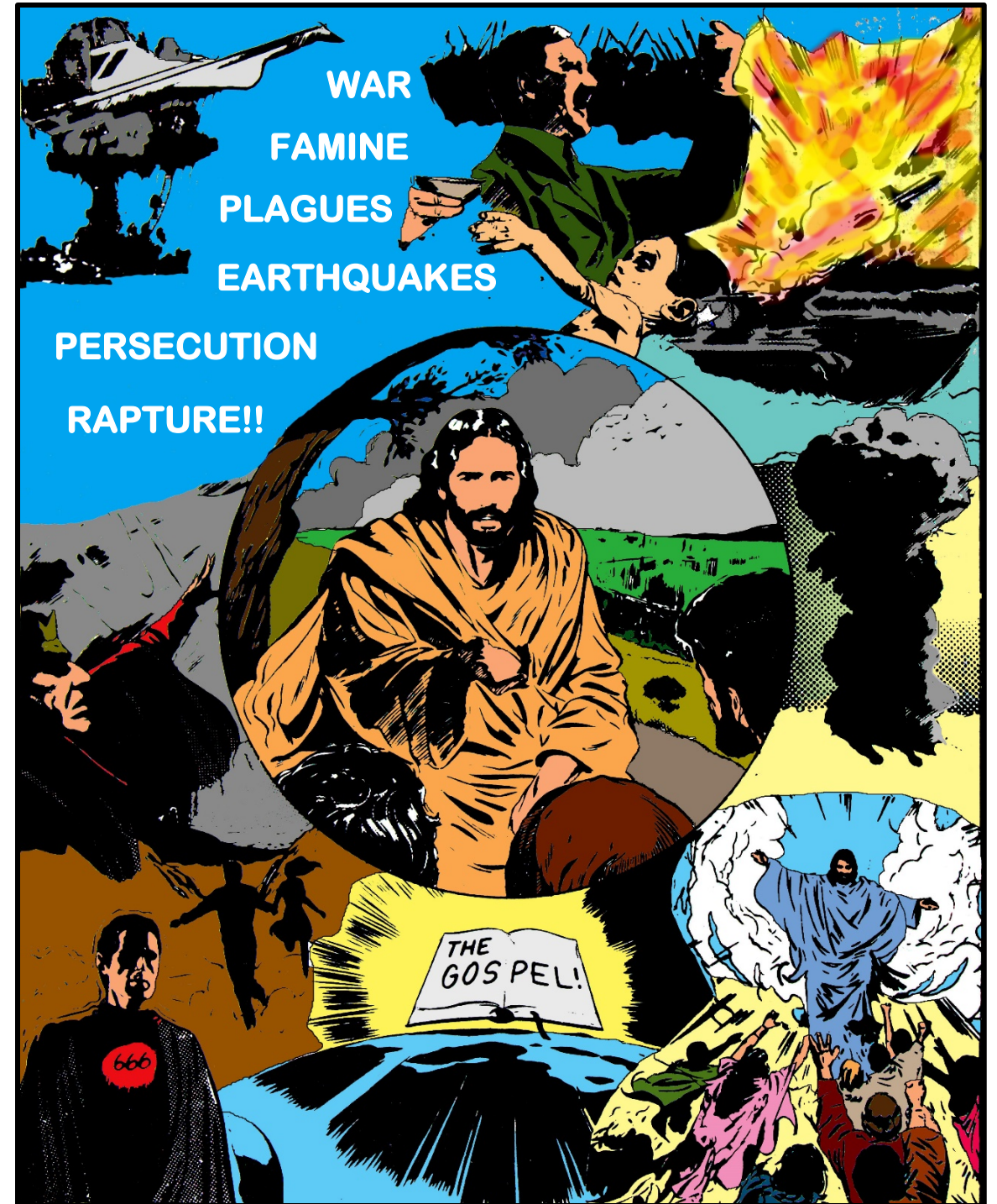
WHEN?

FOR THEN...

**IMMEDIATELY
AFTER...**

AND THEN...

Compilation and edition of prophetic
commentaries by Gaetan



The big “WHEN” and the ANSWERS: “...for then, immediately after, and then...”

This discourse was delivered after Jesus had left the temple for the last time. It was about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and His second coming at the end of the World. Some of His words are recorded in such a way that it can be difficult to know which event they refer to. Perhaps it was intentional. It seems plain that He had in mind TWO distinct events, separated by an interval of time.

In this class we will not cover all the verses of this chapter but we will focus mostly on the **“when”** question.



MAT.24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.

MAT.24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, **there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.**

MAT.24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, tell us, **when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?**



First event: the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD by the Romans:

The disciples were bragging to Jesus about the temple, what a beautiful building it was. "He said unto them, see ye not all these things?"--This beautiful gorgeous mountain of snowy buildings that Herod the Arab had reconstructed for the Jews! Jesus predicted that it would be torn stone from stone, and not one single stone would be left standing upon another! (*Mk.13:2, Lk.21:6.*)

A prediction which was completely fulfilled by the Roman soldiers about 70 AD, in the invasion by Titus, under Vespasian the Emperor. He attacked the Jews for their rebellion, and sacked and burned Jerusalem, and crucified 100,000 Jews on crosses around the city!

The Romans then burned the Temple building itself with over 6000 Jews inside: They had fled there for refuge on the words of a false prophet who had told the Jews that if they would flee into their temple and resist the Romans--they would be spared by God in the surroundings of their sacred temple. On the other hand, when the Christians saw the “*signs*” of the Romans coming, they fled the city and were saved; they had fled into the wilderness at the warning of their true



Messiah and were saved. The followings verses in the parallel gospel of Luke were Jesus' warning and answer of **when** shall these things be... the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD:

LUK.21:20-24 "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, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations."



Remember, the temple was largely composed of wood. They burned the wooden portions, which were embellished with the gold and the silver. The melted gold and silver ran down within the cracks between the great stones of its foundation. They even tore the foundation stones apart to get at the gold and silver!

So, there wasn't one single stone left standing upon another, in literal fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus Christ! Perhaps so that they would also no longer try to connect any building with God's worship, but would worship Him in Spirit and in Truth! *Jn.4:21, 23-24*

Second event: the second coming and the end of the world:

Indeed, in the Olivet discourse, which is also registered in *Mark 13* and *Luke 21*, it is sometimes difficult to know whether you are reading about 70 AD or the end time, or both at once – particularly in this version in Matthew 24. The disciples asked Jesus: “Tell us, **when** will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?”

The disciples associated the destruction of the temple (70 AD) with Christ's return. It is because there are aspects of the first event that recur at the time of the second that the Lord's answer to their questions was given in those terms. They thought, "My goodness, **when** the Temple is destroyed, that must be **when** You're coming back and that's **when** the world must be going to be destroyed!" They didn't realize that it was going to be destroyed 40 years later by the Romans, and it would still be another couple of thousands of years or more before the end of the World or more precisely of His second coming!

ACT.1:6-7 ...they asked of him, saying, Lord, **wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?** And he said unto them, **it is not for you to know the times or the seasons**, which the Father hath put in his own power.

In the book of Acts, the disciples thought Jesus would restore Israel immediately. It wasn't for those to whom Jesus was speaking then to know, because they didn't have to know! They've already been dead now for nearly 2,000 years!



They weren't going to go through the Great Tribulation and Jesus wasn't about to come back, He hadn't even gone yet! He basically told them to get going with the task of evangelization of the world. But now that His Word is being fulfilled in these last days, we can begin to perceive and to understand ***“the times and seasons”*** better!

The answer His disciples received from their question, ***“what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”***, is often referred to as the ***“Second Coming,”*** the dramatic return of Christ prior to His takeover of the world and the establishment of the kingdom of God on Earth. The term ***“the end of the world”*** is used here not to signify the end of the planet, but the end of the unjust and inhumane reign of man. (***Daniel 2:44***) Jesus himself looked forward to His Coming again as a definite historical event in which He Himself personally and literally will appear to gather to Himself those who have been redeemed by His blood.

Jesus answered their question by not just pointing out one sign but many signs that would indicate the proximity of these 2 events: some about the events of the year 70 AD, and others about His second coming at the time of the end and there are some that can be applied to both events.





MAT.24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **take heed that no man deceive you.**

MAT.24:5 For many shall come in my name, **saying, I am Christ**; and shall deceive many.

MAT.24:6 And ye shall hear of **wars and rumors of wars**: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

MAT.24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be **famines**, and **pestilences**, and **earthquakes**, in divers places.

MAT.24:8 All these are the beginning of **sorrows**.

“Sorrows” is the English translation of the Greek word “odin” that appears in the original text of Matthew’s Gospel. This word more commonly means **birth pangs**, the painful muscle contractions that a pregnant woman experiences during labor and

subsequent childbirth. The world has experienced these birth pangs of wars, famines, plagues, and earthquakes for millennia. The apostle Paul noted: ***“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now” (Ro.8:22).***

But labor only goes on for a limited amount of time. The birth of the **“baby,”** which in this case is Jesus’ return and the end of this age, is not going to wait forever.

So, at the end of this age, Jesus Christ Himself told us that there would be a time of birth pangs which would precede the Great Tribulation (see verse 21). Are we now living in that time of birth pangs? It is interesting to note that all of the things that Jesus said would occur in it are happening today. How long does that growth go on before the child comes forth? Nine months, a long time!

But when she begins to have the birth pangs, watch out brother, you'd better get her ready for the delivery! And the closer they get together and the more severe they are, the nearer the time for her to bring forth!

The pangs are here now, and they're getting harder and closer together, and the time of the birth of the End is almost here! Some of you mathematicians can figure out the comparison between how long a woman is pregnant and how short the birth pangs are. The birth pangs are only hours compared to months of preparation. The Lord is comparing it to that. The World's had years of preparation, hundreds of years, millenniums! And now the birth pangs! They won't just take a few hours, but in relationship, they'll take a few years. We know we have at least that much left.



MAT.24:9 Then shall **they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations** for my name's sake.

MAT.24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

MAT.24:11 And many **false prophets** shall rise, and **shall deceive** many.

MAT.24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, **the love of many shall wax cold.**

MAT.24:13 But he that shall endure unto **the end**, the same shall be saved.

So far the signs of the time that Jesus mentioned have been:

*False christs
Wars,
Famines,
Plagues,
Earthquakes,
Persecution,
False prophets,
Iniquity abounding*

SIGNS_{of the} TIMES



We've had these things ever since Jesus was here, haven't we, for the last 2000 years. He said they're only the beginning. It's only the beginning, folks, just the beginning but they certainly have progressed and increased in intensity just like the birth pangs of a pregnant woman.

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

But here He's going to give another significant prediction! They wanted to know, "**When** is the End of the World going to be?" So, He says here in this 14th verse: "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the End come."

This particular sign clearly shows that we are really nearing the End! And that is one of the signs of the End that wasn't entirely fulfilled until just recently! The Gospel has been preached in all nations all over the World, especially the last 50-100 years or so! If not directly by missionaries, certainly by radio, television, internet and literature or their travelers, visitors and so on.



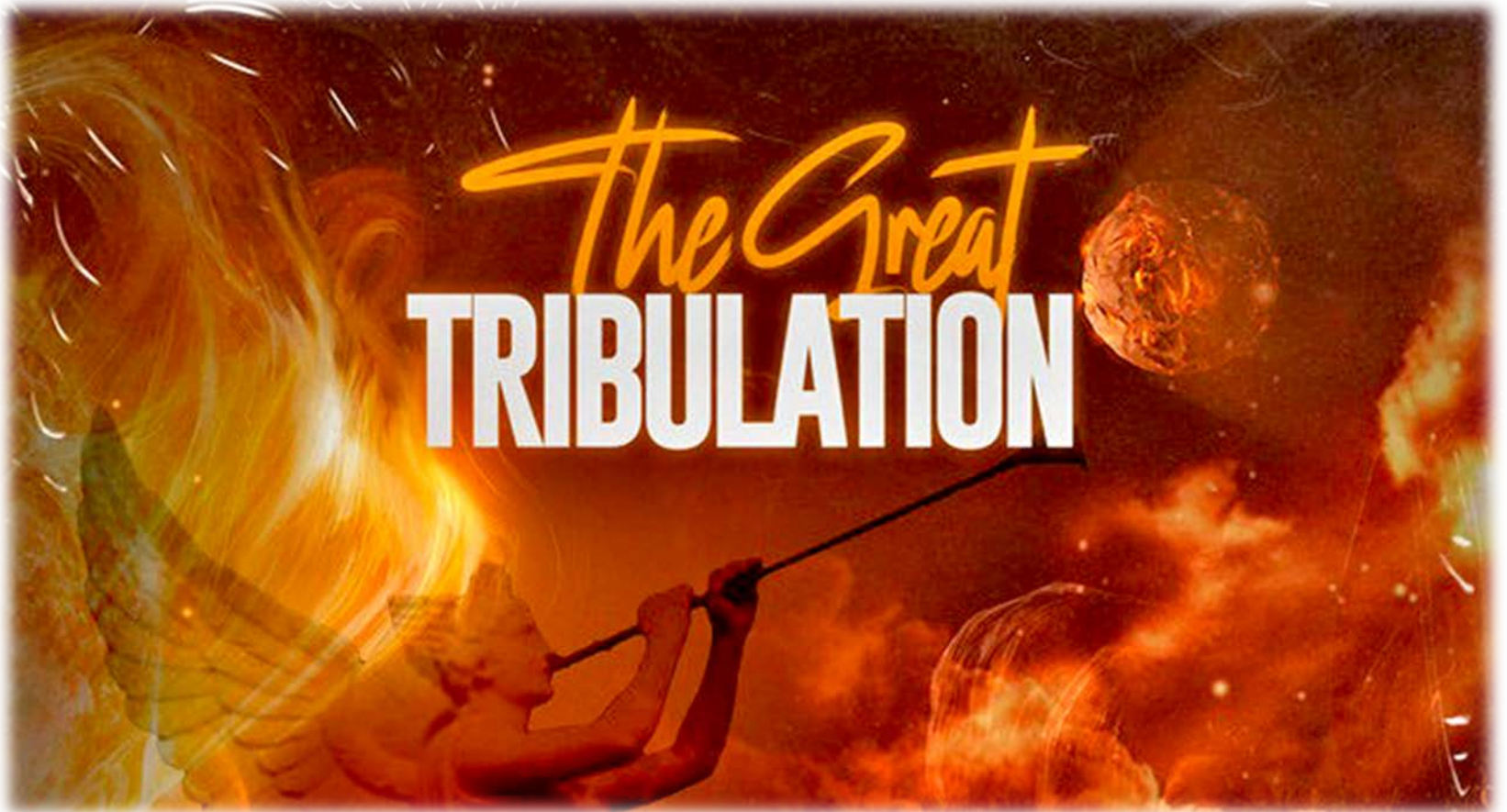
Every nation on the face of the Earth has today heard the Gospel! Perhaps not every tribe and tongue, dialect and little tiny group, but every single nation on the face of the Earth has now heard the Gospel. Now He's going to be even more specific about the exact end of things with the following key verses which will be the focus of this class:

MAT.24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand)

MAT.24:21 for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

MAT.24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

MAT.24:30 and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.



MAT.24:31 And he shall send his angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they shall gather together his **elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Jesus was explaining **when** and how the very end and His second coming would come about. You could think of it like someone giving you directions. They might say *“You go down this road and you’ll see some trees and there will be a hill”*, kind of general things. This is like what Jesus did when He said there would be *“wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes.”*



But the one giving you directions might then say something like, *“But when you see that big red barn..., **when** you see that, **then...**”* That’s how Jesus taught this. After the somewhat general signs, He next gave something very specific indeed. He said, *“**When** you shall see the Abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy place...”, when you see that, “**Then** there will be great tribulation.”*

Jesus next said in verse 29, **"Immediately after the tribulation of those days..."** He will gather together His elect. So, as you can see, Jesus was pretty specific in verses 15, 21, 29 to 31 in giving us guideline for our understanding of the timing of the events just before His Return.

In part 2 of this study, we will go through those same verses again with more details.

Be ready for these events. You can receive Jesus at this very moment. It is a free gift of God.
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

If you haven't done so yet, please pray this simple prayer:

"Dear Jesus, I want to know You personally. Please forgive all my faults. I accept that You are the Son of God and that You died for me. I invite You into my heart and life. Thank you for your gift of eternal life and please fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Help me to read and understand Your Word. Amen"

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