

47. Jesus Taught About the Great Tribulation

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why it is a privilege to suffer for Christ. That will help them to have strength when they face opposition because they are Christians. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus went on to teach four of His disciples about the Great Tribulation.

Mark 13:14-16 says, “So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.” In these verses, we see that Jesus referred to one of the things written by Daniel in the Old Testament to help the disciples understand what is going to happen in the future when the tribulation comes.

In Daniel 9:26-27, we read, “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. 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.” In Daniel 9:24-27, Daniel talks about seventy weeks of years that will happen before the Lord will bring in everlasting righteousness. Daniel divided those weeks of years into three periods of seven weeks, sixty-two weeks and one week.

Daniel said, in Daniel 9:25, that this period would begin with the command to restore Jerusalem. That verse says, “Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, *there shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.” In Nehemiah 2:1-8, we read about King Artaxerxes giving the command to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem. That happened in 445 B.C. The seven weeks and sixty-two weeks make a total of sixty-nine weeks. Each week represents seven years or a total of four hundred and eighty-three years. On the Jewish calendar, that would be in the month of Nisan of A.D. 30. The exact day in that month is either the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, or the very day He was crucified. That makes the prophecy by Daniel an exact prophecy that was fulfilled by the death of Jesus.

This means that there is a break between week sixty-nine and week seventy of the prophecy of Daniel. The church was unknown in the Old Testament. That is why it is called a mystery in the New Testament. As a result, the break before the seventieth week is the period of the church. The church began on the Day of Pentecost and will be completed when Jesus takes the church to heaven at the time of the Rapture, described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Then, the seventieth week of years of Daniel will immediately follow the Rapture. The verses quoted from Daniel, in the preceding paragraphs, show that it is in the middle of this week that the “abomination of desolation” will be set up in the temple that will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The antichrist will set up his own image in the temple, and that will be the “abomination of desolation” mentioned here, in

Mark.

Matthew 24:15 says, “Therefore when you see the “abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place’ (whoever reads, let him understand).” Here, in Mark, we see that Jesus warned that as soon as the antichrist sets up his image in the temple, the Jews in Judea must flee to the mountains immediately in order to escape the attempt of the antichrist to destroy all of the Jews. Those who are sitting on their housetop will not have any time as they flee to go into their house to gather things to take with them. Those who are out in the field will not have any time to return to their house to get extra clothes.

Mark 13:17-20 goes on to say, “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter. For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.” In these verses, we see that Jesus warned that those who are pregnant or have very young children will have an especially difficult time trying to escape. Jesus may have been thinking about the evil that Menahem showed to the women of Tiphseh, realizing that similar things may happen as Israel flees from the antichrist. 2 Kings 15:16 says, “Then from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphseh, all who *were* there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked *it*. All the women there who were with child he ripped open.”

Jesus also said that those who will have to flee the antichrist need to pray that their flight will not be in winter. The winter would create several extra challenges for the people. There would be no food on the trees or in the fields. That is the rainy season in Israel, and overflowing streams could make it impossible to flee through the open countryside where people would not see them. Then, Jesus explained why this will be such a dangerous time for the people of Israel. Jesus said that there would be greater tribulation in those days than there ever was in past history or will be in the future. Matthew 24:21 says, “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.”

Jesus said that the Lord has already determined long ago to keep these days short because otherwise no one would survive. In Daniel 7:25, we read about the antichrist and how long God will let him persecute Israel, and the tribulation saints, once he sets up his image. That verse says, “He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.” Here, we see that the antichrist will be able to persecute the tribulation saints for half-a-time. This will be the second half of the tribulation, so will be a period of three-and-a-half years.

Jesus also warned that, during the tribulation, there would be false christs and false prophets. Mark 13:21-23 says, “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, *He is* there!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.” God wants

Israel and those who will become saints during the tribulation to know that there will be many who will try to deceive them. This will be especially important, because they will become saints after the Rapture of the Christians, so those who have been following the Lord for many years will not be on the earth to teach them.

These false christs and prophets will say things like, “Look, here *is* the Christ!” or, “Look, *He is* there!” Jesus warns that such false teachers are not to be believed. Revelation 1:7 tells how Christ will come at the end of the tribulation. That verse says, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” During the second half of the tribulation, Israel and the tribulation saints will be hiding from the antichrist. The goal of the devil will be to get the people of Israel, and the tribulation saints, to leave the places where they are hiding so the antichrist can destroy them.

Then, we are told how these false christs and false prophets will try to deceive the tribulation saints. We see that they will perform signs and wonders to deceive the saints. The fact that they will do signs and wonders to try to deceive the elect during that time should not surprise us. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 says, “The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” Here, we see that the antichrist himself will deceive all who reject the truth with all power, signs, and lying wonders. Since Satan is able to give the antichrist the ability to deceive those who reject the truth with all power, signs, and lying wonders, it should not surprise us that he is able to give that same power to others. These false christs and false prophets are going to try to deceive the elect in the same way the antichrist will deceive those who are unbelievers.

That is why Christ gives this as a clear warning to those who will be tribulation saints, so they will not be deceived by these false christs and false prophets who are saying that Christ has appeared at various places on the earth. Instead, they are to wait and see Christ when He appears in the clouds. His appearance signals the fact that He has come to fight against the antichrist to defeat him and all of his armies. Zechariah 14:4 says, “And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, *making* a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.” This valley will allow the tribulation saints to escape from the antichrist for a final time before he is destroyed and the Lord becomes the King over all of the earth.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain what Jesus taught about the Great Tribulation to help others understand. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to explain what Jesus taught.