

CITY OF THE LIVING GOD

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

39

SERIES

In dedication to all the soul-winners that need a Bible study on Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives concerning the end time events.

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Published by Paul Baumeister, P.O. Box 2366, Elk Grove, California 95759.

Printed in the United States of America.



City of ^{the} Living God



“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?” (Matt. 24:2-3).

Jesus’ sermon on the Mount of Olives opens up a great understanding about the end times. He described the total destruction of the city of Jerusalem including the temple. The disciples were stunned at the subject and wanted to know more about it. So, they asked him very specific questions concerning these end time events.

They ask him two questions:

1. When will these last day events occur?
2. What will be the sign that shows his coming and the end of the age?

The manner in which Jesus answers these questions is done so according to Jewish common customs and practices. They call this a chiasm (pronounced kay-azim) which we will discuss in the next section.

THE QUESTIONS

Some people think that Jesus did not answer the first question since he answers the question about the sign of his coming immediately after being asked both questions. It is not that he did not answer the question. He used the chiasm method for answering questions which was very common in Hebrew literature. He answered the questions in reverse: the last question first and the first question last.

The chiasm structure of Matt 24:3-44 is as follows. We will number the first “Question A” and the second “Question B.”

Question A: —When will these things happen? (v 3a)

Question B: —What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? (v 3b)

He Answers Question B first:

“Question B” Answer: —What will be the sign of My coming and of the end of the age? (vv 4-35).

He answers Question A last:

“Question A” Answer: —When will these things happen? (vv 36-44)

QUESTION B ANSWER

Jesus answers the disciples question, “What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age”? He answers this question in verses 4 through 35. Their question is concerning the events that lead up to the Second Coming of the Lord when Christ comes to the earth with his saints at the Day of the Lord, which is the Battle of Armageddon. These

events occur during the Great Tribulation which will come upon the whole earth. He describes the events leading towards the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

Matthew 24:5-8

“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.”

It's important to notice that he describes these symptoms as “the beginning of sorrows.” In the original Greek, the sorrows refer to “birth pains”—like the sign of a pregnant woman who is about to give birth to her child. In other words, all of these signs are not the actual event but they are signs that the birth (Tribulation event) is near. He is basically saying, *“don't think that the tribulation already happened, but that they are signs that the tribulation is very close.”*

He further describes the events leading up to the Great Tribulation as a time in which many will be offended. There will be other signs of disloyalty, hatred, deceit, and lawlessness. It is obvious we are living during this time. Never in the history of the world have we seen more division, hatred, offense, deceit, and anarchy. Anarchy describes this end time sign that we are close to the tribulation time. It is a time where people no longer respect rule and order. It is complete lawlessness which is a needed characteristic of the Great Tribulation when the man of lawlessness (Antichrist) will rule the earth.

He describes the events of the Great Tribulation in verses 15-35. He explains the events as occurring when the antichrist performs the “abomination of desolation” that the Prophet Daniel prophecies (Dan. 9:26) where he places his own image in the Temple in Jerusalem for worship.

2 Thessalonians 2:

“...and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who 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.”

The Book of Revelation describes this event further.

Revelation 13:15

“He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, 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.”

Jesus finishes the description of the Great Tribulation in which all of the armies of the earth surround the city of Jerusalem at the Battle of Armageddon in which Jesus comes to earth at the Second Coming and gathers his tribulation saints. This is not the rapture since the church has already been raptured seven years earlier. These are God’s earthly people of Israel and the gentile saints that became part of Israel during the tribulation.

Matthew 24:29-31

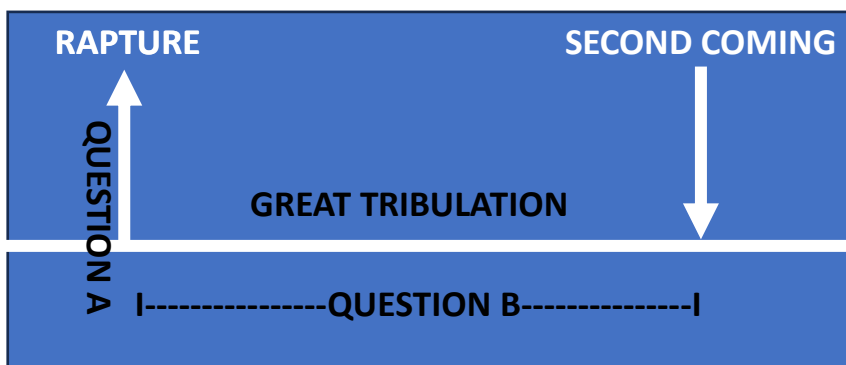
“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

QUESTION A ANSWER

After Jesus answers “Question B,” he then answers “Question A” in verses 36-44. Just a recap. In verse 4-35, he describes the events leading up to and during the Great Tribulation. Now he will answer “Question A”, “When will these things happen”?

In other words, Question A will answer the question when will the events of the Great Tribulation and Second Coming take place. Basically, they are asking when will the beginning of the Great Tribulation take place.

In the following timeline, you can see how the Questions are addressed according to the events in sequence.



Jesus answers it clearly that all of the events during the Great Tribulation period will take place after the rapture of the Church.

Matthew 24:36-42

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be

taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”

Some have misunderstood this coming in verses 36-44 as occurring after the Great Tribulation at Armageddon. This coming is the rapture of the church when Christ will come and meet his bride in the clouds. How do we know this? Because at the Second Coming of the Lord to earth, every eye will see him come. At the rapture, “no one knows” it is contrasted by people being caught away as if it were not known by any. At the rapture, Jesus meets us in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:17). At the Second Coming, Jesus returns to earth with his saints.

So, verse 36 alludes to the fact that the time of the Second Coming is not knowable. No one can know when he will come. This is in full contrast to verse 33 that states that they “will know that it is near.”

Look at the verses in 36-44 that show how it is not knowable. In other words, with the rapture of the Church no one knows the time as opposed to the Second Coming at the end of the Great Tribulation, the Jews will know that they are at the end.

The Rapture	The Second Coming
<i>“But of that day and hour <u>no one knows</u>” (v 36)</i> <i>“and did <u>not know</u>” (v 39)</i> <i>“you do <u>not know</u>” (v 42)</i> <i>“<u>if</u> the head of the house had known” (v 43)</i> <i>“<u>when</u> you do not think” (v 44)</i> <i>“he <u>does not expect</u>” (v 50)</i> <i>“an hour which he <u>does not know</u>” (v 50)</i>	<i>“you <u>know</u> that summer is near” (v 32)</i> <i>they “<u>will know</u> that it is near” (v 33)</i>

Jesus describes the parable of the Master that delays in verses 43 and 44 to depict the soon and imminent (meaning: it can happen anytime) return of the Lord which is the rapture.

Matthew 24:43-44

“But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

It is obvious that the rapture is going to happen when we least expect it. He describes the rapture with such graphic detail:

Matthew 24:40-42

“Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming”

This chapter is not written to scare us, but to make us aware of what will take place soon. It was written to help us make sure we are ready at all times. Now the real question is are you ready? Have you turned your life over to Jesus? If you have not, right now is a good time to start.

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