

# *The Blessed Hope!*

***“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”*** –(Titus 2:13)

*Diamond & Nugget #105*

Understanding the Bible can be both an easy task as well as a very daunting one. It comes down to your level of knowledge. My experience has been built upon a long period of more than six decades, first as an ignorant novice student-pastor to that of a proficient college/seminary graduate and post-graduate scholar. I would like to take this “Diamond & Nugget” to hypothesize about one of the more difficult passages of the Bible, namely Matthew 24:22. It has a similar twin passage found in Mark 13:20.

***“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”***  
***(Matthew 24:22, KJV)***

***“And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.”*** ***(Matthew 24:22, NKJV)***

*καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐκολοβώθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη πᾶσα σὰρξ διὰ δὲ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς κολοβωθήσονται αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι*

*(Greek Textus-Receptus)*

***“And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.”*** ***(Mark 13:20, KJV)***

***“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.”*** ***(Mark 13:20, NKJV)***

This will be the focus of interpretation but first I want to share a piece that a good friend of mine in California sent me a few days ago. I will come back to the above focus text

later; it is certainly relevant to what I am about to share next. I am experiencing euphoria the past few weeks as one event after another cascades before our purview of history unfolding before our very eyes.

Jonathan Brentner wrote a great piece a few days and I think it will be a blessing to others as well and so I share it in this “Diamond & Nugget”

By [Jonathan Brentner](#)

May 16, 2022



In a recent blog post, [Now is the Time](#), I included these words in the introduction:

*“Apart from an expectation that’s firmly fixed on Jesus and His imminent appearing, I could not cope with all that I see. My “blessed hope” of seeing “the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” has never been more precious to me than it is now (Titus 2:13). The expectation of Jesus’ appearing is the anchor of my soul during these chaotic times.”*

I see more threats on the horizon of our world than I could possibly explain in one article. However, I have an overwhelming peace in my soul as I witness biblical prophecy coming to life all around me. Knowing that the Lord might come for me at any moment continually calms my heart.

I also sense an urgency to warn the church concerning the dark storm clouds looming on the horizon. My concern is especially for those saints that lack the biblical understanding of our day, which would enable them to understand our world from a prophetic perspective and thereby prepare their hearts for what might lie ahead. So many of them are snoozing at the worst possible time in history to do so.

There’s insanely good news ahead for those of us in Christ because of His imminent appearing to take us home, but so few fix their eyes on this glorious hope.

Let’s look at the bad news first.

#### WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME

Daymond Duck, one of my favorite writers on biblical prophecy, wrote an article entitled [Running Out of Time](#), which recently appeared on the Rapture Ready Website. He specifically mentioned the food shortages and quoted these warnings from the CEO of Goya Foods, Bob Unanue:

1. *“We are on the precipice of a global food crisis.”*

2. *“Americans will have to tighten their belts and consume less.”*
3. *Americans “can afford higher-priced food, but other countries won’t be able to bear it.”*

The looming worldwide food crisis and so many other things tell us that the world is quickly running out of time before the four horses and riders of [Revelation 6:1-8](#) begin their deadly trek across the earth. These things also signify the nearness of the time when Jesus catches us up to meet Him in the air since this must happen before the events of Revelation 6.

The diesel fuel shortages looming in the eastern half of America will greatly accelerate the looming food shortages in the U.S.

Last week, I listened as the head of the United Nations announced its partnership with Klaus Schwab and the World Economic Forum (WEF) in order to speed up the implementation of the UN’s Agenda 2030. The seventeen goals of this plan are readily available on the UN’s website and they clearly depict a Marxist one-world government.

The Luciferian globalists of our day have openly laid out two paths that will enable them to exert greater control over the nations of the world.

The first is that of ceding America’s national sovereignty, and many other nations as well, to the World Health Organization (WHO). Leo Hohmann, an investigative reporter and blogger described it this way:

*The WHO will be hosting its annual meeting, the 75th World Health Assembly, May 22-28 in Geneva, Switzerland, attended by delegates from at least 194 nations. It is during this Assembly that members will be voting on the amendments that will hand over additional sovereignty, control and legal authority to the World Health Organization. The WHO, if these amendments are approved, will obtain the authority to declare an international health emergency, overriding national governments.*

Here is what Michele Bachmann, former Congressman and candidate for President, had to say about the impact of this vote upon the United States:

*“This means that the WHO would have decision-making authority to intervene in the United States government policy and any nation of the world without our permission. For instance, the lockdown where you see 26 million people today locked down in Shanghai, China. They can’t leave their apartments or homes. The WHO would have the authority to be able to enforce that here in the United States, on whatever pretext they want. They don’t have to show data. They could do this.”*

It was President Biden who submitted the draconian amendments to the WHO that will result in the loss of U.S. sovereignty over all health emergencies if the delegates approve them. This is pure evil and without a doubt will result the loss of much life if the WHO approves the Biden amendments.

Second, the plans to move the nations of the world to a digital currency will give the elite powerbrokers of the world the ability to impose their will upon the nations despite any and all resistance to their agenda. This will lead to the mark of the beast described in [Revelation 13:15-18](#).

If these two things happen, it will not matter how the majority votes in elections. It will not matter what they want from their government. The Luciferian elite will have the control they need to impose their New World Order on everyone and enslave the people of the world. And they have already announced their plans to accelerate their formation of the New World Order.

Please know that Satan is behind all these things and his ultimate purposes are to deceive and kill people. Jesus' apt description of the devil in [John 8:44](#) explains much of what we in our world.

### **THE HOPEFUL LENS OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY**

The church must wake up to the urgency of the hour. It may seem for some that things have taken a turn for the better, but please understand that it's a *pseudo calm* before the impossible times that lie ahead in the near future.

Believers need to hear and understand biblical prophecy more than ever in the history of the church. They desperately need the calm that comes from looking at the world through the eyes of biblical prophecy and eagerly awaiting Jesus' appearing.

The news events of our day are frightening; however, God's joyful plans for our future are both comforting and encouraging ([1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:18](#)). As I said earlier, there's insanely good news for those in Christ.

The Bible tells us that:

- There will be a terrible worldwide famine with great shortages of food during the early months or years of the Tribulation. What we see today is the lead up to what will happen after the Rapture.
- Lawlessness and deception will abound in the last days, which is today.
- The Luciferian globalists of our day will succeed in setting up a New World Order over which the antichrist will assume control after we are gone.
- The Lord's wrath will descend upon the world as never before in history. Those perpetrating violence, the murder of unborn children, the disruption of our food supply, and violence face a horrifying future, one that will lead to their great distress and eventually their death.
- Isaiah 13:9-13 and 24:1-6 describe God's future judgment on the earth. The severity of what lies ahead for the wicked of our day fits with their murderous agenda, deception, and unprecedented lawlessness.
- The Lord has planned a way of escape for us. It's the Rapture. Don't let anyone deceive you, Jesus is coming for us before the judgments of Revelation 6-18 sweep over the entire planet.

I know it's difficult to wait for our departure from this world. I wish that I could say that the Lord will come for us before we suffer any more from the hostility of our deadly enemy, the devil. I know that many who read this live in countries where the oppression of the enemy far exceeds what we now face in the U.S.

Unfortunately, a large number of believers today have become desensitized to the imminent appearing of Jesus and have stopped watching for it. They do not know what Scripture says about the day in which we live and live without any awareness of Jesus' imminent appearing. As a result, they easily fall prey to the deceptive lies of the mainstream media, which they hear repeated over and over again.

The result is a snoozing church that remains unaware that time is running out for the world as we know it. Many believers plan for the future as though they have decades of life ahead of them; they do not.

One of two things will interrupt the long-range plans of the sleeping saints in America:

1. The Rapture will occur
2. The Lord's judgment on the U.S. will greatly increase and drastically change everything

I wish I could say that the Rapture will occur in the next few days, weeks, or months so that we might avoid the turmoil ahead for us, but I cannot predict its timing. I pray that the Rapture will happen soon.

I can say with absolute certainty, however, that those who know Jesus as their Savior will miss all of the Day of the Lord described in Isaiah 13 and 24 and all of the judgments of Revelation 6-18.

On the one hand, we live in exciting times. We are witnessing the ancient prophecies of Scripture coming to life before our eyes in ways we could never have imagined just ten years ago. We see the kingdom of the antichrist taking shape and realize that it signifies the nearness of our home going.

On the other hand, those who know what the Bible says about our day recognize the extreme danger of living in a world filled with deception, lawlessness, and wickedness.

Pastors: as these things continue to escalate exponentially, people will show up at your church wanting to hear a biblical perspective on the chaos of our day. If you fail to put these threatening world events into the framework of biblical prophecy, they may not hear what you say regardless of how eloquently you preach. At some point, they will need to hear the specifics of the Gospel future or they will not return.

I do not have all the answers as to how we rouse a snoozing church; I just know that it's greatly needed in a day when so many Bible-believing churches remain silent on the topic or give people a false hope.

**Romans 13:11 KJV – “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”**

Getting back to Matthew 24:22, the "elect" in the New Testament usually refers to those who accept God's invitation and place their faith in Jesus of Nazareth. But many who see this passage dealing with the suffering of the siege of 70 AD, as well as most of those who see it dealing with Daniel's 70th week, believe the "elect," used in this verse, means the Jews. The world deserves extended judgment for its sins. **"But for the elect's sake,"** the days of this horrible tribulation will be shortened. To be fair, I will bring into this study a number of Bible scholars and experts in their own on the Bible. What one has to remember about commentaries is that they represent views of scholars, albeit their best interpretation but even at that they could be wrong.

**Those days - What days?** From the immediate context ([Matthew 24:21](#), cf also same phrase "those days" in [Matthew 24:19](#)) the answer clearly is the **days** of the time of the Great Tribulation, the last 3.5 years (1260 days = 42 months = time, times, half a time) preceding the end of this present age which will be brought to an end ("cut short") by the Second Coming ushering in the Messianic Age, the age of righteousness (aka, the Millennium). Those days will be days of three and one-half years of unprecedented oppression on Israel (as well as all believers alive at that time) as described in multiple passages in both testaments (see [Daniel 7:21, 25](#) [saints in context = Jews]; [Revelation 11:2](#), [Revelation 12:6, 14](#); [Revelation 13:5](#), [Revelation 13:15](#))

The late Greek scholar and expert **Dr. Spiros Zodhiates** writes *"The contextual referent of "those days" is the [Great Tribulation](#)."* ([Exegetical Commentary on Matthew- Dr. Spiros Zodhiates - 2006](#))

**R T France** attempts to explain Jesus' statement as compatible with a 70 AD fulfillment writing *"The horror was in fact "cut short" by the Roman capture of the city after five months, bringing physical relief to those who had survived the famine in the city."* (NICNT) As an aside it seems that most "preteristic" interpreters are forced to appeal to non-inspired, secular historical writings to buttress their interpretations rather than relying the fully inspired Scriptures to comment on Scripture.

However even the **ESV Study Bible** observes that *"It is evident that the reference is **not** to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, since the unprecedented destruction described in [Mt 24:21](#) did not take place in 70."*

### **ARE "THOSE DAYS" REALLY "THOSE DAYS" OF MATTHEW 24:15-21?**

As has been discussed in [Matthew 24:15-note](#), those who hold to a 70 AD fulfillment of [Matthew 24:15-22](#) have a number of "problematic passages" to deal with, whereas a futuristic interpretation encounters far fewer problems. Some "preteristic" commentators (like [D A Carson](#)) recognize there are significant problems with their historical interpretation and thus try to say that **"those days"** in [Matthew 24:22](#) does not really refer to **"those days"** Jesus had just described in the immediate [context](#)! Beloved, if you begin to jettison the golden rule that "[Context Is King](#)" in [interpretation](#), rest

assured that your interpretation will likely be *askew* if not even *absurd*! What is fascinating is that **Carson** does recognize that **no life** in [Matthew 24:22](#) "*normally refers to all mankind and is more sweeping than "no one in Jerusalem."* I totally agree, and indeed that truth actually **supports** a "sweeping" last days or end times, eschatological **tribulation** and not a fulfillment in 70 AD! In addition note that the literal Greek of [Matthew 24:22](#) begins with "*kai*" (English = "**and**") which the NAS does not translate, but the ESV and NET versions do. The point is that "**and**" is a **copulative** which clearly links the narrative in [Matthew 24:22](#) with Jesus' words in [Matthew 24:21](#). These two verses are clearly related (*coupled*) despite what some "preteristic" commentators contend! Notice also that in **context** Jesus has just used the same phrase "**those days**" in [Matthew 24:19](#) which serves to link "**those days**" in [Matthew 24:22](#) with the **days** of the Great Tribulation. Finally, keep the overall **context** of this section in mind -- Jesus has just described days of unprecedented tribulation, but in [Matthew 24:22](#) comforts and encourages those who will find themselves in **those days** with the mercy filled truth that "**those days**" will be "**cut short**." Any other interpretation clearly distorts and twists the text out of its proper context!

**Unless those days had been cut short** - On one hand this description serves to emphasize the unparalleled, unprecedented "*consuming ferocity*" of the **Great Tribulation**! On the other hand this description emphasizes the sovereign control of Jehovah God over ALL the affairs of this world. In His great mercy, He has decreed the Great Tribulation will last only 3.5 years (1260 days) and not one day more! There is no "if" about the shortening of these days; they shall be shortened.

"**Cut short**" does not mean the **Great Tribulation** will be less than 3.5 years, but only that it will be abruptly terminated by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Paul** describes the cutting short of those days of the horrible 42 month rule of the **Antichrist** ([Revelation 13:5](#)).

And then that lawless one (**Antichrist**) will be revealed (**apokalupto** = **When?** Answer = [Matthew 24:15](#) and [2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:3, 4](#)) whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and **bring to an end** (cp "**cut short**") by the appearance (**epiphaneia**) of His **Coming** (**parousia**) ([2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:8](#)).

**Dr. Zodiates** on **those days...cut short** - The time would be longer if God were not merciful, but since He is, He will shorten the period in which the Antichrist expends his fury. (**ibid**)

**Hiebert** comments that this "strong figurative statement (**Ed**: referring to the fact that **koloboo** can mean "amputated") indicates that God has forcefully acted not to permit them to be extended to the full length that human passions would have carried them."

**Cut short** ("amputated," "mutilated") (2856)([koloboo](#) from **kolobō**<sup>3</sup>s = maimed, cut off) means strictly speaking to cause something not to be full length and so to cut short, to curtail, to abridge, to mutilate, to amputate (LXX – [2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 4:12](#) "cut off their hands and feet"). Figuratively as used in all 4 New Testament passages **koloboo** refers to a reducing in number or extent. Our English word halt, in the sense of lame, is related to it, since it refers to a person whose walking ability has been cut short or curtailed.

Notice Jesus' use of the [aorist tense](#) which here speaks of a future event as it were a past completed action ([Proleptic](#)). In other words, God has decreed in the *past* that the yet *future* Great Tribulation will be cut short.

The adjective **kolobos** meaning maimed or mutilated is used in secular Greek in the description of a donkey (Moulton-Milligan).

**Moulton and Milligan** also record an unusual use of **koloboo** - "The epithet **ho kolobodaktulos**; *the stump-fingered*,"; (which was) applied to Mark (writer of Gospel) (Hippolytus Philos. vii. 30), has been traced to a desire on the part of the philosophers to ridicule the shortness of his Gospel, but is more probably due to some natural defect of the evangelist himself."

**Marvin Vincent** on **koloboo** - A very picturesque word. The verb is, literally, to dock, to cut off, leaving a stump, as a limb. Wycliffe, abridged. As a fact, various causes did combine to shorten the siege. Herod Agrippa was stopped in his work of strengthening the walls by orders from the emperor; the Jews, absorbed in their party strife's, had totally neglected preparations to stand a siege; the magazines of corn and provisions were burnt before the arrival of Titus. Titus arrived suddenly, and the Jews voluntarily abandoned parts of the fortification. Titus himself confessed that God was against the Jews, since otherwise neither his armies nor his engines would have availed against their defenses.

**TDNT** on use of **koloboo** in Mark - God has cut short the time of affliction, i.e., made it less than the oppressors purpose, so that **the elect** may be preserved from physical destruction (as indicated by the "all flesh" of [Mark 13:20](#), the physical nature of the sufferings, and the presence of **the elect** at the parousia, [Mark 13:27](#)).

Other than [Matthew 24:22](#) the only use is twice in [Mark 13:20](#) "**And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days.**"

**ESV Study Bible** - Some suggest this means that, if God's wrath were to continue unchecked against the wickedness of humanity, no one would survive the eventual destruction. Others see in this a reference to a cutting short of either the seventieth "seven" (week) of [Daniel 9:27](#) or the 42 months of [Revelation 11:2](#). (**Ed comment:** The 42 months of [Revelation 11:2-note](#) are the last 3.5 years, the time of the **great tribulation**, corresponding to the Antichrist breaking the seven year covenant with Israel in the middle of the seven years as described in of [Daniel 9:27-see notes](#)) **It is**



**evident that the reference is not to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70**, since the unprecedented destruction described in [Matthew 24:21](#) did not take place in 70.

**Hendriksen** likewise recognizes the problem of interpreting 70 A.D. as the time of fulfillment of the **great tribulation** - It should hardly be necessary to add that justice is not done to the concept of this tribulation, which immediately precedes "**the end**" of the world's history and which surpasses any other distress in its intensity, if it is referred solely to the sorrows experienced during the fall of Jerusalem.

### **PHYSICAL PRESERVATION PREDICTED FOR THE ELECT**

**No life** - The Greek word for "**no**" means absolutely none! Life is the Greek word **sarx** which can be translated "**flesh**" here speaking not of the "fallen flesh" (sin nature inherent in every human), but of the physical flesh of our body.

**Weber** - Jesus said as much when he indicated that those days would necessarily be cut short, implying divine intervention (24:22). Christ will intervene to prevent complete genocide and the wholesale destruction of the human race. But even in judgment, the Lord will display mercy, particularly for the sake of the elect (plural of **eklektos**, "select, chosen ones"). These are those who have placed faith in him and followed him as his disciples. (Holman New Testament Commentary)

**Would be saved** ([4982](#))([sozo](#)) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril and that is the sense in this context. Jesus is not speaking so much of spiritual salvation as He is of physical preservation of one's life. [Matthew 24:13-note](#) refers to spiritual salvation.

**But (de)** is a **term of contrast** which always calls for the reader to ask "**What is being contrasted?**" Most of the time the answer is easy as it is in this case. This simple exercise will give force you to slow down, to examine the context and ultimately to allow the Spirit a chance to speak to your innermost being. Too often we are trying to just "*get through*" our morning reading to satisfy our "*quota*" for the day. God is not nearly as interested in us "*speed reading*" His Word out of a sense of obligation as He is in us being still and acknowledging that He is God and He is good. (compare [Psalm 46:10](#)).

**Those days will be cut short** - This is a promise the believers in the Great Tribulation will find to be very precious and comforting. They will know that "this too will pass!"

**For the sake of** - Is this not a manifestation of the great love and mercy of God that not all might have to die! All of mankind deserves hell, but in His kindness God bestows the gift of heaven to those who believe in His Son.

**John Phillips** has an interesting note on **for the sake of the elect** - This is another of those statements in Scripture that show how much the careless and unbelieving world owes to the presence of God's people in its midst. (Exploring the Gospel of Matthew)

**The elect** speaks of believers and in context specifically speaks of Jewish believers. Of course, this passage is clearly applicable to Gentile believers who come to faith in the Great Tribulation. The fact that there will be Jewish and Gentile believers alive when Jesus this time is "cut short" provides a population on earth who will then enter into the **Millennium**. If all the elect were killed, there would be no elect to populate the Messianic Kingdom. Jesus expands on this idea in [Matthew 25:31-45](#) where the Judgment of the Sheep and Goats determines which of those who are alive after the Great Tribulation will enter into His Kingdom, which will initially be populated only of true believers.

**Zechariah** speaks of the Jewish **elect** who will **be saved** out of the Great Tribulation - *"In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. ....<sup>8</sup>"* *And it will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (This is the language of the New Covenant into which 1/3 of the Jews will enter by grace through faith = [Jeremiah 31:31-34-note](#)) ([Zechariah 13:1-note](#); [Zechariah 13:8-9-note](#))*

**Comment:** The Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. with killing of up to a million or more Jews was a foreshadowing (BUT NOT A FULFILLMENT) of the refining fires of [Zechariah 13:8-9](#) (confirm [Daniel 12:10](#) "Many [JEWS = the 1/3] will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked [JEWS - the 2/3's] will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand [DO YOU HAVE INSIGHT TO UNDERSTAND OR HAVE YOU BOUGHT INTO THE LIE OF [replacement theology aka supersessionism?](#)]."), but there is absolutely no record that 1/3 of the Jews were born again at that time! In the holocaust of WWII there was a foreshadowing (BUT NOT A FULFILLMENT) of this final, ultimate "holocaust" (Great Tribulation) for at that time one-third of the Jews in the world were killed (6 million). In the final time of testing on the Jews **two-thirds** of the world's population of Jews will be killed. At that time one-third will be saved, the **remnant** that Paul referred to when he said "All Israel will be saved." ([Romans 11:26-27-note](#)). Clearly, Paul is referring to "**all**" of the one-third described by [Zechariah 13:8-9](#).

**Elect (chosen)** ([1588](#))(*eklektos* from verb *eklego* which in middle voice [eklegomai] means select or pick out for one's self which is derived from *ek* =out + *lego* = call) means literally the "called out ones" or "chosen out ones". The idea of *eklektos* is the ones who have been chosen for one's self, selected out of a larger number. In regard to election as related to salvation, Wuest comments that *"This election does not imply the rejection of the rest (those not chosen out), but is the outcome of the love of God lavished upon those chosen-out."* (Wuest)

If you wrestle with election and free will notice the juxtaposition of these two doctrines in Paul's last letter...

**Remember** Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel (NOTICE NOW HOW PAUL DESCRIBES THE "WORKING OUT" OF HIS GOSPEL), <sup>9</sup>for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God (~"THE GOSPEL") is not imprisoned. <sup>10</sup>For this reason (SINCE THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF SALVATION [Romans 1:16](#)) I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen (PAUL'S ENDURANCE FOR THE ELECT SHOWS , so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. ([2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:8-10](#)))

**Henry Morris** writes that *"The Scriptures, in a very natural way, combine the **doctrines of divine election and human responsibility**, apparently not concerned with the problem this would later seem to pose to generations of theologians. Paul was willing to suffer countless difficulties and persecutions so that the elect might hear, believe and receive the salvation for which they already had been chosen by God before the world began. The apparent paradox is only resolved in terms of the infinite mind and ability of the Creator. We may not be able to understand how both can be true, just as we cannot see both sides of a coin at the same time. However, both sides are real and both doctrines are true. We can believe and rejoice in both truths, even though we don't yet comprehend how each supports the other."*

The **doctrine of election** is mysterious and we will never fully comprehend it on this side of glory (compare [1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:11-12](#)). However, Paul shows us how we are to live in the face of this doctrine (and not let it be divisive!) - **"For this reason (referring to the "Gospel unchained" in [2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:9](#)) I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen (the elect), that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory."** ([2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:10-note](#)) Paul did not know who the "**elect**" were, but he nevertheless endured for their sake and so too must we. We see a similar pattern in First Thessalonians where Paul reminds the believers at Thessalonica of God's "**choice (ekloge)** of you." ([1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 1:4-note](#)) Then he explains how their election was effected, explaining "**our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction."** ([1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 1:5-note](#))

As **W A Criswell** says "The word "**for**" introduces a clause that explains the way in which election works. However one understands this mysterious doctrine, the text makes clear its intimate relationship to the Gospel of Christ, the preached word, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit."

#### **AN INTERPRETATION OF MATTHEW 24-25 by Thomas Ice** **Part 17 - Matthew 24:22 The Cutting Short of Days**

***"And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short."*—[Matthew 24:22](#)**

In our journey through the Olivet Discourse, the passage at hand has a number of interesting issues with which I will deal. They include: the cutting short of days, no life would be saved, and who are the elect? I shall proceed to deal with them.

### THE CUTTING SHORT OF DAYS

Three-quarters rapture advocate, Marvin Rosenthal, says *“The Lord is teaching that the Great Tribulation will be cut short.”*<sup>1</sup> He continues: *“The shortening of the Great Tribulation to less than three and one-half years is one of the most important truths to be grasped if the chronology of end-time events is to be understood.”*<sup>2</sup> Does this text teach that the Lord will cut short the number of days prophesied elsewhere from 1260 days ([Revelation 11:3](#); [12:6](#))? Will the Great Tribulation be less than 1260 days? Simply put, no! What does it teach?

First of all, only Mark ([Mark 13:20](#)) has a parallel passage to Matthew, while Luke does not. Luke’s omission of this verse is perhaps due to the fact that his focus is upon A.D. 70,<sup>3</sup> thus this statement relating to the future tribulation would not be appropriate. Mark tells us specially that it is “the Lord” who had cut short those days. Otherwise, there is no significant difference in the two passages.

The Greek word for **“cut short”** has the core meaning *“to cut off,”* or, when applied to time *“to cut short.”*<sup>4</sup> Dr. Randolph Yeager notes that the verb used both in Matthew and Mark means *“lopped off, ‘mutilated.’ To shorten. Always in the New Testament in a chronological sense—[Matthew 24:22](#); [Mark 13:20](#).”*<sup>5</sup> It is significant to note that both verbs (in Matthew and Mark) *“are all in the aorist tense and indicative mood with the augment,”* declares Dr. Renald Showers. *“Aorist tense verbs have no time significance except when they are in the indicative mood with the augment. That form is used to express past time.”*<sup>6 7</sup> What does this mean?

Dr. Showers tells us that *“a number of scholars have concluded that since the two verbs in [Mark 13:20](#) are in that form, they are expressing action in the past and therefore have significant bearing on the meaning of Jesus’ statement.”*<sup>8</sup> What is that bearing? It is that the *“aorist tenses are prophetic pasts: God has already decided about the future,”*<sup>9</sup> as one scholar explains. Another says, *“The future tense interprets the preceding ‘had been shortened’ as having a future reference (like the Hebrew ‘prophetic perfect’).”*<sup>10</sup> This means that the cutting short, spoken of by our Lord in both Matthew and Mark, is something that has already taken place in the past when God’s plan for history was put forth before the creation of the world. *“The aorist tenses put this action in the past,”* concludes Ezra Gould. *“The language is proleptic, stating the event as it already existed in the Divine decree.”*<sup>11</sup>

Marvin Rosenthal’s conjecture that these passages support his mistaken view that the Great Tribulation will be cut short of its Divinely decreed 1260 days does not hold up under scrutiny of the biblical text. Dr. Showers explains as follows:

Jesus was teaching that God in the past had already shortened the Great Tribulation. He did so in the sense that in the past He determined to cut it off at a specific time

rather than let it continue indefinitely. In His omniscience, God knew that if the Great Tribulation were to continue indefinitely, all flesh would perish from the earth. To prevent that from happening, in the past God sovereignly set a specific time for the Great Tribulation to end. <sup>12</sup>

Said another way, God, in His omniscience, knew that if He let the Great Tribulation go 1320 days (an arbitrary number for the sake of illustration), then all flesh would be wiped out. Therefore, in eternity past when God was planning this time of history, He cut it short to 1260 days, so that the elect would in fact be saved.

### **NO LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN SAVED**

We have already seen previously that for Satan and the Antichrist their goal for these events is to destroy the Jewish people. Why does the Devil want to do that? He believes that if he can destroy the Jews, then He will be able to prevent the second coming, since Christ's return is a response to the converted Jewish remnant's request for physical deliverance. Satan believes that if he can prevent a key event in God's predestined plan for history from occurring then he will have defamed God and proven his slander that God is not worthy of His exalted position. He cannot succeed because God is faithful to fulfill His word.

So what does the phrase "*no life would have been saved*" (literally "*all flesh would not be saved*") mean in light of Christ's prophetic sermon? There are two views that I think are worthy of consideration and they revolved around the meaning of the term "*no life.*" Does it refer to the Jewish remnant, which is destined for salvation during this time, or does Christ have in mind all humanity? First, I agree with the general consensus among commentators that salvation in this context refers to physical deliverance and not salvation from one's sins (i.e., justification), because the danger in this context is physical, not spiritual. <sup>13</sup>

Before studying and writing this current commentary, I held the view that "*no life,*" or "*no flesh*" was a reference to Israel. I have changed my mind and now think that this phrase refers to all humanity. Why have I changed? I have changed my mind primarily because of the lexical data (i.e., how a word or phrase is used in other instances). Dr. Stanley Toussaint explains:

BAG <sup>14</sup> take ***pasa sarx*** to mean every person, everyone. With the negative they take it to mean no person, nobody and list [Matthew 24:22](#) and [Mark 13:20](#) as instances of this meaning. The expression ***pasa sarx*** comes from the Septuagint which in turn looks at the Hebraism ***kol basar*** "all flesh." Gesenius <sup>15</sup> says this Hebrew construction means "*all living creatures...especially all men, the whole human race...*" Therefore, to interpret "*all flesh*" in [Matthew 24:22](#) and [Mark 13:20](#) as referring to Jews living in Judea in A. D. 70 is too limiting. "***All flesh***" describes all humanity. <sup>16</sup>

### **Dr. Craig Evans concurs:**

...reflects Semitic idiom (e.g., [Genesis 9:11](#): "*never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood*", [Isaiah 40:5](#): "*all flesh shall see it together*")...the warning that the

period of tribulation will be so severe that unless shortened it will extinguish human life argues that the prophecy portends more than the Jewish war....but the fate of the whole of humanity did not hang in the balance. <sup>17</sup>

It appears that Satan's effort to destroy the Jews would result in the total annihilation of all humanity, were not for Christ's intervention at the second advent. This fact provides us with further insight into the purposes of Christ's return.

### WHO ARE THE ELECT?

The term **“the elect”** is uttered three times by Jesus in the Olivet discourse ([Matthew 14:22, 24, 31](#); also in [Mark 13:20, 22, 27](#)). I believe that all three uses must refer to the same entity in each instance. They clearly refer, in context, to some group of believers during the tribulation. Since the church has been raptured, it cannot refer to her. Thus, does **“the elect”** reference saved Jews and Gentiles, or only the Jewish remnant? I believe that this term refers to the Jewish remnant, primarily because of contextual factors.

While it is true that the term **“the elect”** is used in the New Testament Epistles of church age believers (i.e., both Jews and Gentiles) (see [Romans 8:33](#); [Colossians 3:12](#); [2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:10](#); [Titus 1:1](#)), it is also true that this term is used in a variety of other ways. Note multiple uses as follows: Rufus, a choice man ([Romans 16:13](#)); elect angels ([1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:21](#)); of Jewish believers ([1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:1; 2:9](#)); Christ a choice building stone ([1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:4, 6](#)); a chosen lady ([2<sup>nd</sup> John 1:1](#)); a chosen sister ([2<sup>nd</sup> John 1:13](#)). In the Old Testament the term **“elect”** is used in the following references to Israel: [Isaiah 42:1; 43:20; 45:4; 65:9; 65:15; 65:22](#); [Psalm 89:3; 105:6, 43; 106:5](#); [1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 16:13](#). The verbal form of **“to choose”** is used dozens of times in relation to Israel in the Old Testament (i.e., [Deuteronomy 7:6](#)). Even though a majority of the biblical occurrences refer to Israel, usage must always be determined by how it is used in a specific context. *“In this context, it is most likely used regarding the nation,”* concludes Dr. Ed Glasscock. *“Daniel identifies this time as ‘decreed for your people and your holy city,’ indicating that Israel, not the church or mankind in general, will be the center of the Tribulation suffering.”* <sup>18</sup>

We have seen that the term elect has a fairly wide range of usage. *“Out of every dispensation there will be some gathered of God’s mere mercy and sovereignty. These are ‘the elect’ of that dispensation,”* explains Robert Govett. *“Therefore the term has as many special meanings as there are dispensations.”* <sup>19</sup> But since the focus of this passage is upon Israel it is not mystery that Christ has them in mind. William Kelly says, *“the evidence unmistakably points to a converted body of Jews in the latter day, not standing in church light and privilege, but having Jewish hopes, and while awaiting the Messiah.”* <sup>20</sup> The term **“the elect”** is most likely used because Christ looks forward to those belonging to the Jewish remnant, though not yet saved, they are chosen to such a destiny—the elect. Maranatha!

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<sup>1</sup> Marvin Rosenthal, *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), pp. 108-09.

- <sup>2</sup> Rosenthal, *Pre-Wrath Rapture*, p. 111.
- <sup>3</sup> See Alan Hugh M'Neile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: MacMillan, 1915), p. 350.
- <sup>4</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, a translation and adaptation by William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 442.
- <sup>5</sup> Randolph O. Yeager, *The Renaissance New Testament*, 18 Vols. (Bowling Green, Ken.: Renaissance Press, 1978), vol. 3, p. 301.
- <sup>6</sup> H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 193.
- <sup>7</sup> Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord, Come! A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., 1995), p. 51.
- <sup>8</sup> Showers, *Maranatha*, p. 51
- <sup>9</sup> W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), vol. 3, p. 351.
- <sup>10</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, second edition, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 484.
- <sup>11</sup> Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to St. Mark*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896), pp. 247-48.
- <sup>12</sup> Showers, *Maranatha*, p. 51
- <sup>13</sup> See Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), p. 316.
- <sup>14</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, a translation and adaptation by William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957).
- <sup>15</sup> William Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, including the Biblical Chaldee*, 13th. Edition, Translated from Latin by Edward Robinson (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1882).
- <sup>16</sup> Stanley D. Toussaint, "A Critique of the Preterist View of the Olivet Discourse," unpublished paper presented at The Pre-Trib Study Group, Dec. 1995, no page number.
- <sup>17</sup> Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27—16:20 in Word Biblical Commentary*, 34b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), p. 322.
- <sup>18</sup> Ed Glasscock, *Moody Gospel Commentary: Matthew* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), p. 472.
- <sup>19</sup> Robert Govett, *The Prophecy on Olivet* (Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle Publishing Co., [1881] 1985), p. 54.
- <sup>20</sup> William Kelly, *Lectures on The Gospel of Matthew* (Sunbury, PA: Believers Bookshelf [1868] 1971), p. 492.
- Part 16 - Matthew 24:21 Historicism, Preterism & Daniel

**Ray Stedman is one of the twentieth century's foremost pastors and biblical expositors.** And so I will conclude with his interpretation of Matthew 24:22.

**"Then shall the end come?"** With these dramatic words, Jesus begins to answer the question of the disciples, **"What will be the sign of...the close of the age?"** He has prefaced these words with a powerful telescopic view which sweeps through all the intervening centuries and describes their character as one of deception and confusion. Now he focuses upon the (to the disciples) far-distant period, which he calls **"the end of the age."** Without further delay he describes, in Matthew 24:15-22, the sign of the close of the age:

**"So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (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 to take what is in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. And alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."**

The Lord's language here is the most somber he could employ. He is speaking of a time of trouble that is coming, the like of which has never been seen before in all human history. It will be a time of superlative distress, of unprecedented peril to human life, a time of shattering, staggering suffering, such as has never been seen before. There have been many black moments in history, but never one like this. For those who will be living in Judea (in and around Jerusalem), it will be a time to act promptly and quickly to get out of the city. It will be a time for emergency action. There will be no time left for the usual occupations of life.

These words are so fantastically suggestive that we must not hurry over them. In the words appearing in parentheses, "let the reader understand," the apostle Matthew is warning us that there are things hidden here which are not apparent on the surface. He is urging us to think, investigate, examine, and thus understand all that may be involved. We must be careful, then, to relate these words to other Scriptures, and especially to those in the Book of Daniel which Jesus specifically mentions.

### **Daniel's Prophecy**

For the present let us seek to understand this sign of the close of the age. It will be, says Jesus, **"the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel."** No book of the Old Testament has been so unfavorably dealt with by the critics as the Book of Daniel. The validity of its authorship by Daniel has been scorned and it has been ascribed to some unknown writer who lived no more than a 100 to 160 years before Christ; its prophetic content has been flatly denied; and in many ways it has been more violently attacked than any other book in the Bible. Yet it is sheer presumptive arrogance for any alleged disciple of Jesus Christ to take a view of Scripture that contradicts the view of the Master. The Lord Jesus here clearly regards the Book of Daniel as a valid prophecy, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and accurate in detail.



The sign our Lord refers to is mentioned in Daniel at least three times. It is the sign of a man, a man who offers himself to the Jews to be worshipped as God. The disciples clearly understood that he was referring to the predictions in Daniel of the coming of a man who would take away the continual burnt-offering of the Jews and instead offer himself as **"the abomination which makes desolate"** or the desolating sacrilege. That man is described in Daniel 8:23-26:

***"And at the latter end of their rule, [that is, the rule of certain kings who will come upon the world's scene in the Middle East], when the transgressors have reached their full measure, [that marks the time when evil has come to its full expression], a king of bold countenance, one who understands riddles, shall arise. His power shall be great, and he shall cause fearful destruction, and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people of the saints. By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall magnify himself. Without warning he shall destroy many; and he shall even rise up against the Prince of Princes; but, by no human hand, he shall be broken. The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told is true; but seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days hence."***

#### **A Double Fulfillment!**

Note that Daniel was told that the vision was not concerning his own days but *"pertains to many days hence."* The critics insist that this was fulfilled in the turbulent days of the Maccabees in 168-165 B.C., when a Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, did indeed desecrate the Temple in Jerusalem, offer a sow upon the altar, and erect a statue of Jupiter to be worshipped. But though that was undoubtedly an historic foreview of the final **"abomination of desolation"** it could not have been the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, for otherwise Jesus would not have said, more than 165 years after Antiochus, that men could yet expect to see *"the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place."*

Another reference in Daniel to this sacrilege is found in chapter 9. It is in the midst of the tremendous prophecy that is called the **"the vision of the seventy weeks."** This was an announcement to Daniel by the angel Gabriel that God had marked off a period of 490 years (seventy weeks of years), which would begin when the Persian king, Artaxerxes, issued a commandment to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (fulfilled in 445 B.C.)\* It would terminate with a period of terrible trouble during which a coming prince would cause the Jewish sacrifice and offering to cease and would thus establish the abomination which makes desolate.

The angel said that **first seven**, and **then sixty-two** of those weeks (a total of 483 years) would end just before the Messiah would be **"cut off."** A period of indeterminate length would then intervene before the 70th or final week (seven years) would. The angel said that first seven, and then sixty-two begin. During that indeterminate period the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed and the Jews would endure wars and desolations until the end. The actual words are these in Daniel 9:26, 27:

***"And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one [literally, Messiah] shall be cut off, and shall have nothing; [that is clearly the crucifixion] and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. [This was fulfilled under Titus forty years after the crucifixion]. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war; desolations are decreed. And he [the prince who is to come] shall make a strong covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, [the abomination of desolation], until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."***

One further glimpse of this remarkable **"prince who is to come"** is given in Daniel 11:36-39. There he is called simply "the king."

***"And the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation [the great Tribulation] is accomplished; for what is determined shall be done. He shall give no heed to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women; he shall not give heed to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these; a god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god; those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with honor. He shall make rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price."***

All of these passages in Daniel agree concerning the coming of a man who shall be the fulfillment of our Lord's prediction and shall be the sign of the end of the age. There are also other references in Scripture to this man. Paul is unmistakably describing the same man in 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:3, 4:

***"Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God."***

Once again, we have a clear description of him in the Book of Revelation, where John describes him in 13:5-8:

***"And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months; it opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has***

***not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain."***

Before he uttered these words on the Mount of Olives, Jesus himself had referred to this coming man when he said to the rulers of the nation on one occasion, ***"I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive."*** (John 5:43). This is that Antichrist which has been predicted in all the Scriptures, and who shall symbolize in his person all that stands against God. There are many other references to him in the Old Testament prophets but we do not have the space to consider them all.

### **Will the Temple Be Rebuilt?**

Perhaps you are asking, *"If the temples was destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70, what is this 'holy place' in which the Antichrist will appear?"* The obvious answer is, the temple must be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The Lord is clearly indicating that there will come a time when the Jews will repossess the temple area. In view of that expectation perhaps the most important event since the first century was the capture of Old Jerusalem by the Jew in the Six Day War of 1967. For the first time since 1897 years (since A.D. 70) Jews were once again in possession of the temple site. It is now occupied by the Moslem mosque called the Dome of the Rock and the existence of that shrine raises a tremendous obstacle to the rebuilding of a Jewish temple. But there is no other place it can be built, for God decreed in the Old Testament that Jewish sacrifices can be offered there and nowhere else on earth.

No one knows whether the present possession of Jerusalem by the Jews can be maintained. And how they will surmount the problem of rebuilding a temple on the place now occupied by an Arab holy place is anyone's guess. But rebuild it they shall, for as Jesus said in another connection the "scripture cannot be broken." Rumors appear from time to time that plans for such rebuilding have already been completed, and even that the building itself has been partly prefabricated and is ready for assembly at almost a moment's notice. But all these reports must be taken with a grain of salt for prophetic interest is now running high and the wish is often father of the thought.

### **A Literal Event---A Specific Place**

***"When you see,"*** said Jesus, ***"the man who fulfills the qualifications described in the Book of Daniel, sitting in the temple and claiming to be God, then you will know that the end of the age has arrived."*** It will be a literal event to occur in a specific spot on earth at a definite moment in time. The prophecy of the seventy weeks in Daniel, already referred to, clearly indicates that there yet remains a seven-year period to be inaugurated before the prophecy is fulfilled. It also declares that it is in the middle of these seven years that the Antichrist will desecrate the Jewish Temple by his claim to be God. It is evident, therefore, that it is only the last three and one half years of this seven year period which can be properly called ***"the end of the age."*** This is also designated in other places as lasting for forty-two months (Revelation 13); a time, two times, and half a time, (Daniel 7); and one thousand two hundred and sixty days,

(Revelation 12). These all add up to three and one half years. Daniel also calls this the **"time of the end."**

But the sign of the desolating sacrilege does more than mark the beginning of this end time. It also describes it. The signs of Scripture are never intended merely to be milestones by which we can mark off the progress of time. They are, instead, intended to reveal the hidden principles of the time in which they appear. For instance, the Jews were continually demanding of Jesus that he give them a sign that he was the Messiah. He said to them, **"No sign shall be given...except the sign of the prophet Jonah."** He went on to explain: **"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."** (Matthew 12:39,40). His own burial and resurrection, then, was to be the sign. When that sign occurred they would understand the meaning of his coming.

The sign of the resurrection did not come at the beginning of His ministry but rather at the end. But it dramatized the meaning of His coming. It stands forever as a symbol of the new life he came to give, the new principle by which men are intended to live, a wholly new creation. The sign here is also of that nature. It is not intended to mark the beginning of the end of the age, and also to indicate its character. It is a literal sign, but also symbolic.

### **Seeing the Invisible**

If we could learn to read life rightly, almost everything is a sign. God is forever visualizing-materializing the invisible forces at work in human affairs into visible events. As we observe the events we can gain insight into what is going on behind the scenes. This is the secret behind all matter. We see visible objects around us—a table, a chair. We say we understand what is made of—wood, plastic, or other substance. But every one who is acquainted with modern science knows that this is not the whole story. What we are seeing is the visible manifestation of invisible forces. Electromagnetic forces joins together the atoms and makes up the object we see, so that what we call wood, plastic, or metal is really an invisible force making itself known in terms of a visible object. Something like this occurs in the realm of events as well as objects. When the event takes place that Jesus describes, and the Lawless One sits in the Temple of God it will be because, throughout the world, humanity has already enthroned itself as the only god man needs. The event in the Temple will be the visible representation of that world-wide fact. The day is coming, Jesus says, when the triumph of the scientific method, as we know it today, will bring man to confirm himself in the deadly delusion that he is his own god, and does not need any other. In that day the words of Psalm 2:1-3 will be fulfilled:

***"Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and His anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us.'"***

But that is the day when God will laugh, says the same Psalm, and he will say, "***I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. Kiss [the Son], lest he be angry, and you perish***" (vv. 6, 12). God will have the last word, though man for the moment seems to triumph.

This is a "***holy place***" in the human spirit. It is the place that was intended by God to be the royal residence for His Holy Spirit. Thus man can become what God intended him to be: the human expression of the divine life, the means by which the invisible God is made visible in human affairs. But in that place man enthrones himself and renounces and rejects all other forms of authority, and declares there is nothing greater than man.

The triumph of the philosophy of humanism will not come suddenly into world affairs in the last day. The apostle Paul wrote in his own day, "***the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.***" (2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:7). It had begun even in the first century. The apostle John wrote, already "***many*** [antiChrists] ***have***" (2<sup>nd</sup> John 1:7). No, it will not be a case of a sudden intrusion into the routine of daily human events. This idolatry of man has been building up throughout the centuries and is rapidly approaching the crisis when it will manifest itself, as the Lord describes, in a clear symbol of the times.

In our own day this lie of humanism grows gradually more powerful and persuasive. You can hear it on every side, in a thousand and one subtle variations. Recently a prominent scientist demanded that the scientific methods of observation, experiment, and logic be applied to the solution of the terrible moral and social problems of our day. Now there is nothing wrong with that idea in itself; what is wrong is the confidence expressed in his conclusion which indicated that nothing else is needed to solve men's problems. He said, "*If it would [be applied] it would lead to a psychozoic kingdom [whatever that is] on earth for the ever-evolving human species.*" There is the empty dream, the web of illusion that man can be his own god, that he can live full and complete life without recognition of the authority and Lordship of Jesus Christ.

You can hear this lie when someone says, "*I'm not going to worry about someone else; I've got to think of myself first.*" It is evident in business when young men are told, "*Look, if you want to get ahead in this company you've got to forget about all these old-fashioned ideas of cheating and lying. There really are no such things, you know. It's only thinking that makes them so.*" It is flung at us daily on television and radio, and every magazine paints it in living color. We are all subjected to a constant din beating away at our ears, telling us that we can live complete and healthy lives without the need for God through Jesus Christ.

It is not that the world does not acknowledge a certain place for God, but that it is usually a very small place. It's nice to have God around once in a while, especially if you're inclined to be religious. Certainly it's all right to set aside one morning a week to go to church and tip your hat to him, but you can live a perfectly wonderful life without that. If that helps, fine, but if it doesn't, forget it. How widespread this philosophy is today! Man makes all the rules and can handle all the problems. Man exists for his own glory; down with anyone who thinks otherwise. That idea is dominant equally in the

communist East and the capitalist West. Soon this widespread attitude will demand a figure, a leader, in whom all the excellencies that man sees are personified. It will find its ultimate expression in a man who shall appear, to satisfy the hunger for hero worship in the world.

### **The Bitter End**

When this man appears the world will be ready to follow him to the end. But what is that end? Listen again to the Son of God: **"the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel."** Literally it means that abominable thing which creates a desolation. How do you depict desolation? Most would think of a desert, a howling wilderness, a lifeless, dreary waste with the eternal wind moaning in torment across scorching barren sand. Already there are many lives like that today. Increasingly we hear pitiful reports of men and women, and even boys and girls, who experience nothing but futility and live lives of barren desolation. Why? Because of the abomination that makes desolate. Because of the abysmal lie that man can be his own god, that we have somehow in ourselves the adequate resources to satisfy, that we can find in some busy round of activity or pleasure that which meets the deepest need of our heart.

When men give themselves to that lie it is the abomination that makes desolate, and the desolation is in abundant evidence all about. Psychologists tell us the major problem today is meaninglessness, desolation, futility. Life is all surface and no depth. For this reason the suicide rate is rocketing to new heights. Jesus saw all this as he looked ahead across the centuries. It was little wonder, therefore, that the tears rolled down his face as he looked out over the rebellious city below him, where already the abomination which makes desolate had begun its evil work. He wept over the stubborn city as he weeps over the stubborn hearts of men today.

Against this background of increasing desolation the gospel come as glorious good news. When Jesus sensed the emptiness in the lives of many in his own day, he said, **"If any one thirst, [Where do you thirst? In a wilderness!] let him come to me and drink... 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"** The solution for thirst in a desert is to drink, endlessly and continuously, of this foundation. There is an old hymn by Horatio Bonar that puts it very nicely.

**"I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Behold, I freely give The living water, thirsty one. Stoop down, and drink, and live.' I came to Jesus, and I drank Of that life-giving stream. My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, And now I live in Him."**

He's the answer. But notice what stands in the way. It is man's pride. He does not want to stoop down, to drink. We do not like to acknowledge the fact that we are dependent, even helpless. Man resists that, and because he does he will not stop, and if he will not stoop he cannot drink. But if he does stoop and drink, he will, as the hymn declares, live! It will not be but one drink but a continual drinking, and therefore, a continual living. This is God's answer to the terrible emptiness and futility of our day.

We can be sure that as the age goes on to its close, things are going to get worse. The sense of futility will deepen, the suicide rate will increase, the pressures will become more intense. Yet through all those darkening days the gospel will offer its glorious invitation, "*Thirsty one! Stoop down, and drink, and live*"

No one ever needs to learn to drink. Every baby is born with the ability to drink. The one thing the human heart can do without instruction is receive. Receive Jesus Christ, drink of him, ask him to come in to be in you a fountain of living water, Master of every moment of life. In your response to that invitation, the glorious promise will begin to be fulfilled.

### **"DOUBLE REFERENCE" PROPHECY**

I am of the specific view that we are looking at a "Double reference prophecy," something that is well attested in prophetic Scripture already, compresses the Rapture and Return phases of Christ's Second Coming into a single prophecy without reference to the Rapture and Return having separate fulfillments years apart. Surprisingly many Bible students, even pastors are unaware of what this infers. It becomes insightful in our understanding Bible prophecy.

The compression of these two events into a single prophecy makes them appear to be a single event. The Old Testament prophets saw the "*coming of Christ*" to be a single event because the predictions of Christ's coming in a manger and coming as a King were compressed "*double-reference*" prophecies.

The Second Coming prophecy of Matthew 24 fits the same mold, a Rapture and a Return appearing as one prophecy while separated in actual fulfillment.

Few laws are more important to observe in the interpretation of prophetic Scriptures than the law of "*double reference*". Two events, widely separated as to the time of their fulfillment, may be brought together into the scope of one prophecy. [Quoting Thomas Hartwell Horne, Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures I, pg. 390, Pentecost continues] The same prophecies frequently have a double meaning, and refer to different events, the one near, the other remote...The prophets thus having several events in view, their expressions may be partly applicable to one, and partly to another, and it is not always easy to make the transitions.  
-(Dwight Pentecost, '*Things To Come*', pg. 46-47.)

*"Events which bear some relationship to one another and are parts of one program...so there is a double reference, may be brought together into one prophecy even though separated widely in fulfillment. Feinberg states: ...Certain events of the future are seen grouped together in one circumscribed area of vision, although they are really at different distances. (Charles Feinberg, Premillennialism or Amillennialism, p.37.) ...events that are widely separated as to the time of their fulfillment may be treated within one prophecy. This is particularly true in the prophecies concerning Christ, where events of the first and second advents are spoken of together as though taking place at the same time....there may be a near view and a far view."*

-(Dwight Pentecost, 'Things To Come', pg. 62-63.)

*"Because of [Double Reference prophecy] the prophets did not clearly perceive these two phases of Christ's second coming [the Rapture and the Return]." **Description of double reference**— "...prophecies are given for two audiences separated in time."*

Paul Lee Tan, 'The Interpretation Of Prophecy', pg. 95, 178.)

*"In the interpretation of prophecy...Certain events of the future...although they are really at different [times]...are grouped together [in a single prophecy] seemingly almost indiscriminately."*

-(Dwight Pentecost, 'Things To Come', quoting Charles Feinberg) pg. 62.)

One of the more important Bible scholars on prophecy was the late Dr. Chuck Missler. Early on in his ministry, I learned of Chuck through a program called "Steel on Steel" with host John Loeffler. I began to acquire all of Chuck's work once he went to the CD/DVD format. His early programs and teachings were on cassette tape, something that I chose never to buy because of their tendency to crinkle when rewinding. One of his 'Personal Update' News Journal carried an article about Daniel's 70 Weeks. It was titled "**The Precision of Prophecy**" by Chuck Missler dated November 1, 2004. It is amazing how twenty years has flown by when I think of Chuck's work. In 1998, I set out to acquire all of Chuck's CD, and later DVD series of teaching. Chuck's 'Personal Update' was chocked full of Biblical insights. Here is the content of his Daniel's 70 Weeks:

As we reflect on the outcome of this year's election, let us all remember that, fundamentally, we are neither Republicans nor Democrats: we are Monarchists and we look forward to our Coming King... Question: when did Jesus ever present Himself as a King?

### **Irrefutably Documented**

To fully appreciate the remarkable significance of the following article, it is essential to realize that the Book of Daniel, as part of the Old Testament, was translated into Greek prior to 270 B.C., almost three centuries before Christ was born. This is a well-established fact of secular history.[\[1\]](#)

### **The Septuagint**

After his conquest of the Babylonian Empire, Alexander the Great promoted the Greek language throughout the known world, and thus almost everyone — including the Jews — spoke Greek. Hebrew fell into disuse, being reserved primarily for ceremonial purposes (somewhat analogous to the use of Latin among Roman Catholics).

In order to make the Jewish Scriptures (what we call the Old Testament) available to the average Jewish reader, a project was undertaken under the sponsorship of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 B.C.) to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Seventy scholars were commissioned to complete this work and their result is known as the "Septuagint" ("70") translation. (This is often abbreviated "LXX".)



The Book of Daniel is actually one of the most authenticated books of the Old Testament, historically and archaeologically, but this is a convenient shortcut for our purposes here. It is critical to realize that the Book of Daniel existed in documented form almost three centuries before Christ was born.

### **Gabriel's Zinger**

Daniel, originally deported as a teenager (now near the end of the Babylonian captivity), was reading in the Book of Jeremiah. He understood that the seventy years of servitude were almost over and he began to pray for his people.

The Angel Gabriel interrupted Daniel's prayer and gave him a four-verse prophecy that is unquestionably the most remarkable passage in the entire Bible: Daniel 9:24–27. These four verses include the following segments:

- 9:24 – The Scope of the Entire Prophecy;
- 9:25 – The 69 Weeks;
- 9:26 – An Interval between the 69th and 70th Week;
- 9:27 – The 70th Week.

### **The Scope (Dan 9:24)**

***“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy Place.”***

— Daniel 9:24

The idiom of a “week” of years was common in Israel as a ***“sabbath for the land,”*** in which the land was to lie fallow every seventh year.<sup>[2]</sup> It was their failure to obey these laws that led to God sending them into captivity under the Babylonians.<sup>[3]</sup>

Note that the focus of this passage is upon ***“thy people and upon thy holy city,”*** that is, upon Israel and Jerusalem. (It is not directed to the Church.)

The scope of this prophecy includes a broad list of things which clearly have yet to be completed.

### **The First 69 Weeks (Dan 9:25)**

A very specific prediction occurs in verse 25:

***“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”***

— Daniel 9:25

This includes a mathematical prophecy. As we have noted in previous articles, the Jewish (and Babylonian) calendars used a 360-day year;<sup>[4]</sup> 69 weeks of 360-day year's totals 173,880 days. In effect, Gabriel told Daniel that the interval between the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem until the presentation of the Messiah as King would be 173,880 days.

The "Messiah the Prince" in the King James translation is actually the *Meshiach Nagid*, "The Messiah the King." (*Nagid* is first used of King Saul.)

### **Bull's-Eye!**

The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes Longimanus on March 14, 445 B.C.<sup>[5]</sup> (The emphasis in the verse on "the street" and "the wall" was to avoid confusion with other earlier mandates confined to rebuilding the Temple.)

During the ministry of Jesus Christ there were several occasions in which the people attempted to promote Him as king, but He carefully avoided it: "Mine hour is not yet come".<sup>[6]</sup>

### **The Triumphal Entry**

Then, one day, He meticulously *arranges* it.<sup>[7]</sup> On this particular day he rode into the city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey, *deliberately* fulfilling a prophecy by Zechariah that the Messiah would present Himself as king in just that way:

***"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."***

— Zechariah 9:9

Whenever we might easily miss the significance of what was going on, the Pharisees come to our rescue. They felt that the overzealous crowd was blaspheming, proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah the King.<sup>[8]</sup> However, Jesus endorsed it!

***"I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."***

— Luke 19:40

This is the only occasion that Jesus presented Himself as King. It occurred on April 6, 32 A.D.<sup>[9]</sup>

### **The Precision of Prophecy**

When we examine the period between March 14, 445 B.C. and April 6, 32 A.D., and correct for leap years, we discover that it is 173,880 days exactly, *to the very day!*

How could Daniel have known this in advance? How could anyone have contrived to have this detailed prediction documented over three centuries in advance? But there's more.

### The Interval (Dan 9:26)

There appears to be a gap between the 69th week (verse 25) and the 70th week (verse 27):

***“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”***

— Daniel 9:26

The sixty-two “weeks” follow the initial seven, so verse 26 deals with events *after* 69th week, but *before* the 70th. These events include the Messiah being killed and the city and sanctuary being destroyed.

As Jesus approached the city on the donkey, He also predicted the destruction of Jerusalem:

***“For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”***

— Luke 19:43–44

The Messiah was, of course, executed at the Crucifixion...***“but not for Himself.”***

The city and the sanctuary were destroyed 38 years later when the Roman legions under Titus Vespasian leveled the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, precisely as Daniel and Jesus had predicted. In fact, as one carefully examines Jesus’ specific words, it appears that *He held them accountable to know this astonishing prophecy in Daniel 9! “Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”*

### The 70th Week

There is a remaining seven-year period to be fulfilled. This period is the most documented period in the entire Bible. The Book of Revelation, Chapters 6 through 19, is essentially a detailing of that climactic period.

The interval between the 69th and 70th week continues, but it is increasingly apparent that it may soon be over.

The more one is familiar with the numerous climactic themes of “end-time” prophecy, the more it seems that Daniel’s 70th Week is on our horizon.

Have you done your homework? Are you and your family prepared?

As the holiday season approaches, share with your family and friends this incredible demonstration of just who Jesus really is, and what the significance of all this is to every one of us!

Amazing grace, indeed!

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For a more complete exposition of this amazing passage, see our briefing pack, [Daniel's 70 Weeks](#).

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1. Encyclopedia Britannica , Volume 10, p. 642. [↵](#)
2. Leviticus 25:1–22; 26:3–35; Deuteronomy 15. [↵](#)
3. 2 Chronicles 36:20–21. [↵](#)
4. Genesis 7:24; 8:3,4; Revelation 11:2; 12:6; 13:3,4; etc. [↵](#)
5. First identified in Sir Robert Anderson's classic work, *The Coming Prince*, published originally in 1894. Now available in any Christian bookstore. [↵](#)
6. John 6:15. Always in control: John 7:30, 44; 8:59; 10:39. [↵](#)
7. Luke 19:28–40. [↵](#)
8. Luke 19:39. [↵](#)
9. Luke 3:1: Tiberias appointed in A.D. 14; 15th year, A.D. 29; the 4th Passover occurred in A.D. 32. [↵](#)

#### Sources

- Anderson, Robert, *The Coming Prince*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1894. The classic work on the Seventy Weeks of Daniel.
- Missler, Chuck, *Daniel's 70 Weeks*, Koinonia House, 2004. (Also, the newly recorded Expository Commentary on Daniel, 16-session study with notes.)

As I need to draw this “Diamond & Nugget” to a close, I can think of so many “Double Reference” or “Double Fulfillment” verses in the Bible; however, none are more spectacular as is the Daniel 70 Week Prophecy.

I trust that this “Blessed Hope” article will greatly bless and encourage you as we find ourselves in the turbulence phase of transitioning from the Age of Grace to the ominous Great Tribulation period embodied in Daniel 9:27. The focal passage of Matthew 24:22 is suggestive for sure that God is about to execute His grand plan of Rapture and Deliverance. Matthew 24 is errantly used by critics of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture, and can be a brain teaser to the Bible student, and maybe more so when you have been studying as long as I have.

Rest assured that all what is happening presently was to be expected and probably more. My point is we are going home shortly. Jesus last words of Revelation were to the effect that he would not forget us. **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”** -(Revelation 3:10)

The word “patience” can be translated patience (29x), enduring (1x), patient continuance (1x), patient waiting (1x).

In context of Revelation 3:10, this church kept the word or teaching about the patient endurance of Christ. They kept looking to "*Jesus the author (leader, example, pacesetter) and finisher (perfecter who brings believers to maturity and completion because He has already reached the goal toward which believers strive) of our faith.*"

For the joy (a joy believers will share) that was set before Him, He "*endured the cross, despising the shame (caring nothing for the shame and unafraid of it), and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*" -(Hebrews 12:2). This implies that they laid aside every weight (or encumbrance) and sin, and then, by running with patient endurance the race set before them, they kept their eyes on Jesus.

What did Jesus mean when He promised He would keep these believers from the "***hour of temptation***"? There are two principal and conflicting views concerning this matter about which there is much dispute. They deserve to be compared with each other.

First of all, it should be noted that the verse should be viewed from an end-time perspective, for Jesus immediately says, "***Behold, I come quickly.***" Obviously, the temptation or trial in view is not a personal distress or a local persecution. It belongs to the eschatological time of temptation "***which shall come upon all the world.***"

Such an early theological writer as Dr. Edwin Hatch says in his "Essay on Biblical Greek" that 3:10 has an "*evident reference to the tribulations which are prophesied later on in the book*" (pg. 73). Most exegetes agree that it refers to what is called the Great Tribulation. This must mean that Philadelphia and the other churches are representative of the whole Church in this age. Again, we are looking at a dual prophecy or double fulfillment of a prophecy separated by two millennia.

Now, what does Jesus Christ mean when He says, "***I will keep you from the hour of temptation***"? Will the Church be kept in and through the Tribulation, or will she be kept from coming into it at all? One school of thought holds the Church will go through the Tribulation, but that Christ promised special protection here, pointing to John 17:15, where the same phrase "***kept from***" is found. Other expositors see in this verse a promise that the Church will be kept from enduring this trial, which is a time of God's righteous judgment upon sin, that the contexts of John 17:15 and Revelation 3:10 are quite different.

We have Pentecost coming up in two weeks on Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, and I did a Blessed Hope way back discussing specifics on Pentecost as a high watch date for the Rapture, primarily since this date was the birthing of the Church. It could also be the removal of the Church in the travail and tribulation building all around the world. In the past few weeks I have been experiencing euphoria the past couple weeks as I note one sign after another being played out on the world stage. The attacks on God and the Church, Christians suggests we are about to be delivered!

The next most probable date after Pentecost next month will be Feast of Trumpets or Rosh HaShanah on September 25/26<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Blessings from our Lord Jesus Christ

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