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Nearly two thousand years have passed since Jesus gave his followers the signs prior to his return. Matthew 24:4-51 warns the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel, “**Watch out that no one deceives you.** For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”

- **Revelation 2 and 3—the churches of Revelation.** Deception is Jesus’ first concern. He is warning Judo-Christians that many in the ministry will come as if they were given the authority to teach in Jesus’ name and interpret scriptures through their own authority.

After Jesus was resurrected, he met with seven of his disciples who had returned to fishing. He called out to them early that morning to throw their net on the right side of the boat and there they caught 153 big fish. After this catch, Jesus specifically spoke to Peter questioning his love for him. Three times, Jesus asked Peter if he loved him. Peter could not understand Jesus’ line of questioning. Peter was the bold and outward disciple of the twelve. He was adamant of his love for Christ like many churches in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, yet Jesus had to remind Peter that **he must follow Jesus** (John 21:22b). Peter was walking side-by-side with Christ, an image of one who considers himself as having equal authority with Christ, not one following Christ. There have been in the past and it continues into the present, a ministry, like Peter, who have assumed the authority of Christ to interpret scriptures through their own eyes. As a result, Christ’s seven churches do not teach the same doctrines because some in the ministry have assumed the authority of Jesus Christ to be a teacher, yet Jesus said that we have only one teacher.

“Don't let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for **YOU HAVE ONLY ONE TEACHER**, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters. And **do not call anyone on earth your father, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.** Neither be called teachers, for **YOU HAVE ONE TEACHER, that is, CHRIST**” (Matthew 23:8, 10).

Only Christ has the authority to **interpret** scripture for he is the Word and Son of God. Nowhere in scripture has Christ, our one interpreter:

- changed the Sabbath to Sunday
- nailed the law to the cross
- terminated God's Holy days
- approved the Christianization of pagan celebrations.

In addition, difficult teachings written in the Bible should not be interpreted by the ministry, but through humble and fervent prayer asking God through Christ for understanding. Christ taught one theology. The ministry is required **to repeat, not interpret** the teachings taught by Christ and avoid falling into the sin of the ancient priests in Jerusalem who "ruled by their own authority, and the people loved it that way" (Jeremiah 5:31b).

Jesus warned the churches of Revelation to overcome their misunderstandings and misconceptions. The ministry and the congregation of these churches who do not overcome will not be saved. Only the overcomers will be rewarded. It is the responsibility of each member of the church to test the teachings of their ministry. Judgment rests on individuals; there is no option to push blame on someone else.

**"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains."**

- **Revelation 6—the first four seals.** These events are the beginning of birth pains as Christ, the rider on the white horse gives the churches of Revelation the task to take the gospel to the whole world. A congregation is growing within the womb of a faithful church—a congregation obedient to God's law and living God's ways. The rogue heavenly rulers, powers and principalities of Ephesians 6:12 work against God's plan of moulding mankind into a repentant and righteous people. They will stir up hatred among the nations on earth and squelch the word of God causing many of faith to faint and grow weary looking to alternative theologies. The work of the beast of the earth led by the false prophet will be very successful during this time. People will be enticed to embrace theologies taught by science, medicine, alternative religions, and strange philosophies.

There is a physical parallel as false theologies rise; famine and sicknesses of all types increase. People fill the hospitals today and unstable governments struggle to feed their people. This parallel will increase as time moves closer to the persecution of the faithful.

**"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.** At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will

be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

- **Revelation 6:9-10—the fifth seal lasts seven years.**

**Persecution of the Christians who hold the testimony of Jesus and keep the commandments of God will opportune the preaching of the gospel to the whole world.**

A movement began with the election of President Trump in the U.S.A. and has continued where the 21<sup>st</sup> century nations of Israel and other nations are standing up to their globalist leaders. They are voting against them in support for leaders who stand for sovereignty. The globalist leaders are fighting back attacking all national leaders who go against them. The anti-globalist leaders support their rule of law and are standing strong enforcing their law, which was instituted as a direct result of their Christian values and culture. This movement is still in its early stages, but as God’s plan for mankind comes into fruition, the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel may find themselves in a religious revival and standing alone, separated from the rest of the nations in the world when their time of testing is in full force.

A time rests on our near horizon when Christians within these anti-globalist countries will be attacked by the powerful globalist leaders because they will be seen as opposing their theology. During this time, the opportunity to take the gospel to the whole world will be amplified. The Smyrna church of Revelation is prophesied to be persecuted. They are rich in the word of God and their testimony will be the pure word of God. They will stand by their faith and grow even stronger. They will not be alone. The Philadelphia church will stand by them.

The Philadelphia church has “little strength” (Revelation 3:8b) because they are a scattered people. There is always strength in numbers, but Christ will open the door for this group of people and no one will be able to shut it. They, too, will speak the gospel as they are brought before leaders. “When you are brought before the synagogues, rulers, and authorities, do not worry about how to defend yourselves or what to say. For at that time the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say” (Luke 12:11-12).

Both the Smyrna and Philadelphia churches will be opposed even by the other Christian churches. Initially, the five general groups of the Christian churches of Revelation won’t support them because these churches still need to overcome their misunderstandings and misconceptions of God’s word, but a change will come for them at the half-way point when the two witnesses arrive and preach the same message as the Smyrna and Philadelphia churches. The gospel will go out to the whole world.

A hatred for God’s word will be intensified as the rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities of Ephesians 6:12 knead their hatred into the nations. Hatred, itself, will increase for no logical reason or for any just cause. Two camps of people will rise out of this darkness. One group will despise the other and the other group will stand strong holding the testimony of Jesus and keeping the commandments of God through persecution from within and without.

“So, when you see standing in the holy place ‘**the abomination that causes desolation,**’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.”

- **Revelation 6:9-10—the fifth seal. Persecution of the Jews in Israel.** As the movement back into sovereignty and opposition against globalism increases, a yet unknown opportunity will ignite a religious revival among the Jews and sacrifices again will be instituted. The globalist forces will oppose this religious revival at the same time opposing the Christian religious revival.

Persecution will affect both Jews and Christians, within and without. The nations of the world will watch in awe and in confusion with the religious turmoil within these nations. They won’t understand the work of the Great Potter moulding His people; they will only see the discomfort of His pressure on them.

Pressure of all types will escalate. Satan will be thrown down to earth and his beast coalition from out of the sea will arise and the nations will surrender without a fight because of the immense display of power from this rogue alien force.

The Antichrist, the leader of the coalition is “a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty” (Daniel 11:21a). This leader is not human nor is he a royal heavenly member, but an insignificant rogue heavenly being filled with hatred for God and Jesus Christ. When Satan increases his spiritual power, this “king will do as he pleases. **He will exalt and magnify himself above every god** and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods... He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women [Jesus Christ], nor will he regard any god, but will **exalt himself above them all**” (Daniel 11:36a-37). Only a heavenly being can do this. If he were merely a mortal, he could be taken out easily by special forces from all the nations. He is not taken out, rather, he is worshiped by all the nations.

“The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon [Satan] because he had given authority to the beast, and **they also worship the beast** and asked, ‘**Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?**’” (Revelation 13:3b-4)

They know that they cannot make war against him because of his massive strength, so they surrender and worship him.

This wicked heavenly ruler will torture the Jews and Christians who he will take into captivity. Their time of suffering will be like no other time in their history. The Antichrist is determined to prolong the suffering of God's people and eventually kill every man, woman and child, even those who coward over to his side.

**"The people of Israel are oppressed, and the people of Judah as well. All their captors hold them fast, refusing to let them go. Yet the Redeemer is strong; Yahuah Almighty is his name. He will vigorously defend their cause so that he may bring rest to their land, but unrest to those who live in Babylon"** (Jeremiah 50:33-34).

"At that time if anyone says to you, **'Look, here is the Christ!'** or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time."

The beasts of the earth and sea—those rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities will play with the Jews and Christians presenting to them false Christs and false prophets. They will do all they can to lead them away from God—their God. Those who remain faithful, will be mocked and they will say, **"Where is your God?"** (Joel 2:17b)

"At that time, I will deal with all who oppressed you. I will rescue the lame; I will gather the exiles. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they have suffered shame" (Zephaniah 3:19).

"The enemy said of you, 'Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession'... because they ravaged and hounded you from every side so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations and **the object of people's malicious talk and slander**, this is what Yahuah says, 'In my burning zeal I have spoken against the **rest of the nations**, and against **all Edom**, for with glee and with malice in their hearts they made my land their own possession... and because **you have suffered the scorn of the nations, I swear with uplifted hand that the nations around you will also suffer scorn"** (Ezekiel 36:2-7).

"So, if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as **the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man**. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather."

Jesus warned the people of Judah and Israel that the exact moment of his arrival is top secret, but when he is given the green light by God Almighty, his arrival will be like lightning in the sky and everyone will see. There will be no doubt.

"Immediately after the distress of those days **'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'**"

- **Revelation 6:12—the sixth seal.**

"And when I saw the Lamb open the sixth seal, there was a great earthquake, and **the sun became black like sackcloth of goat hair, and the whole moon turned blood red,**

**and the stars of the sky fell to the earth** like unripe figs dropping from a tree shaken by a great wind” (Revelation 6:12-13).

“The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Joel 2:31).

The distress “of those days” will primarily be the rogue heavenly forces against the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel. God’s people will be brought “into the fire”. God says that He “will refine them like silver and test them like gold. 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 our God’” (Zechariah 13:9).

“At that time **the sign of the Son of Man** [lightning from the east during absolute darkness] will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

- **Revelation 6:15—continuation of the sixth seal.**

God, together with Jesus Christ and the resurrected saints, will overthrow the beasts of the earth and sea and their coalition and rescue His people.

“Then the kings of the earth, the nobles, the commanders, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and free man, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. And they said to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Revelation 6:15-16).

The rulers, the commanders and all who hold positions of authority and those who submitted to Wickedness will fear the arrival of Jesus Christ. They will seek their death and cry out, “Hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne [God Almighty] and the wrath of the Lamb [Christ]!” (Revelation 6:16b)

**Zachariah detailed the rescue of the Jewish people in Jerusalem.** “Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You [the Jews] will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You [the Jews] will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then **the Lord my God** will come, and **all the holy ones with him.** **On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light**” (Zachariah 14:3-7).

**Zachariah described the great battle of God with His remnant from the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel against the nations of the world.** “Return to your fortress, O prisoners of

hope,” God says in Zechariah 9:12. Finally, God’s people are trusting and relying on Him. “I will bend Judah as I bend my bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, O Zion [God’s children on earth], against your sons, O Greece [descendants on earth from His ancient heavenly enemy], and make you [Judah and Israel] like a warrior’s sword” (Zechariah 9:13).

“I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them. They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them. The Ephraimites will become like mighty men, and their hearts will be glad as with wine... Then, the LORD will appear over them; his arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; he will march in the storms of the south, and **the LORD Almighty will shield them**. They will destroy and overcome with slingstones. They will drink and roar as with wine; they will be full like a bowl used for sprinkling the corners of the altar. The LORD their God will save them on that day as the flock of his people” (Zechariah 10:6-7, 9:14-16).

God Almighty will give these remnant people victory over the raging nations. The remnant nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel with the faithful people within the nations of the world—all the people who refused to worship Satan and the beast, will rejoice together in this great victory. “And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name” (Revelation 15:2).

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, **from every nation, tribe, people and language**, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb... ‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’” (Revelation 7:9, 14).

The gospel will go out to all the world during Jacob’s trouble and countless people will listen, repent and turn to their Creator—the Almighty God, the God of Israel.

“Now learn this lesson from **the fig tree**: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.”

- **The fig tree images the people of Israel—all twelve tribes.** Fig trees produce twice in a year. The first fruits appear in Spring and produce from the old branches—the Breba crop. The second fruits appear in Summer and produce from the new growth—the Higos crop.

Jesus is describing the crop from the new growth—the tender twigs. Watch for a conversion of the people of the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel. They should be acknowledging the God of Israel, desiring to obey His commandments and striving to live His way. During their captivity, they will call out to Him for their rescue and declare

their allegiance to Him. That is the lesson from the fig tree and the sign just before the return of Christ. This will be an exceptional time when millions turn to God sincerely and completely.

“I tell you the truth, **this generation will certainly not pass away** until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

- **“This generation” is the house of Judah who rejected Christ.** They will not pass away; they will go on despite calamity and having rejected Christ as their Savior until the great persecution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century nations of Israel has taken place, Jacob’s trouble is complete.

This prophecy is absolute.

**“No one knows about that day or hour,** not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

- **It is top secret!** God’s enemies—the rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities of Ephesians 6:12 are planning their counter-attack and God Almighty will not disclose that day or hour. He has kept that piece of His plan secret to everyone—even His Son. It will be a surprise for the enemy; they won’t be ready. To the righteous, they will be ready because they are watching and they are wearing the armour of God: self-controlled, belief in God, love for God and fellow mankind, and have immense hope that God will extend them grace despite their past behavior.

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night [for the wicked]. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. **But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.** You are sons of the light and sons of the day... So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled... But since we belong to the day, **let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet**” (I Thessalonians 5:1-5a, 6, 8).

**“As it was in the days of Noah,** so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

- **Mankind under the rule of Satan and the beast of the earth and sea will be living in peace.** They will have accepted the rule of Satan; they will have totally surrendered any hope of freedom; many may even enjoy the worldwide state of wickedness. It will be as it was in the days of Noah: eating and drinking, giving in marriage, and accepting daily living in wickedness as the norm.



“While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape” (I Thessalonians 5:3).

Noah, his wife and three children were the only people prior to the flood who sought God’s way of life. They warned the rest of the people, but the people would not listen. So, it will be prior to the return of Christ, the repentant remnant of the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel will warn the nations, the wicked will not listen.

“**Two men** will be in the field, one will be taken and the other left. **Two women** will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.”

- **The parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins** mirrors the future event prior to the return of Christ. Only five, the five wise virgins, entered into the marriage supper with Christ.

“Therefore, **keep watch**, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have left his house be broken into. **So, you also must be ready**, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

- **Be ready!** God has given His people His Holy days and His plan is woven into them. Still, that critical moment in time when Christ returns remains top secret. Being ready entails a permanent lifestyle in the ways of God: building day by day a closer relationship with God and Christ, living daily God’s way, growing in grace and in the knowledge of God, studying God’s word daily, looking forward to the return of Christ and all people living God’s way, and standing strong under the flag of the Almighty God pledging an eternal allegiance to the Great Creator with enduring patience.

“**Who then is the faithful and wise servant**, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

- **Choose God’s way and never look back or fall backwards.** Whenever Christ returns, he will find the faithful servant studying the word of God, obeying and loving God and His Son and living God’s way today, tomorrow and eternally.

The signs of the end of the age will be first the repentance and conversion of the people of the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel, then the people in the nations of the world. It will be wonderful!

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