

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)

Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King's baptism.

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)

Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)

Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

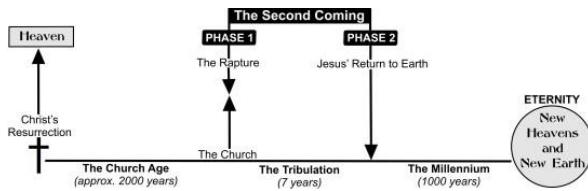
Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

Matthew 24-25 is commonly called “The Olivet Discourse” because Jesus gave this address to His disciples on the Mount of Olives. This was given just a few days before the crucifixion. It has been called “***the most important single passage of prophecy in all the Bible***” (Tim LaHaye). Someone else has said, “***it provides the master outline of end-time events***” (David Jeremiah). I call Matthew 24-25 a “Prophetic Seed Plot” because here Jesus introduces new seeds of end times information that the rest of the New Testament then builds on.

It is here that Jesus introduces us to two phases of His Second Coming. The first phase is sign-less and comes as a SURPRISE; the second phase has all manner of obvious signs and therefore is totally predictable once these signs begin to happen.

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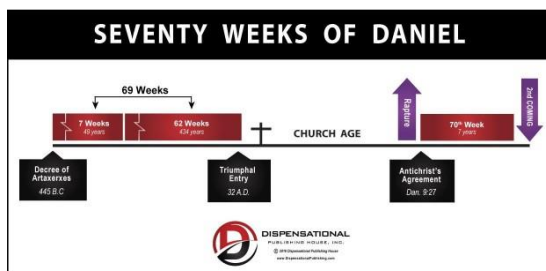


It is Jesus Himself Who first introduces the SURPRISE first phase of His Second coming as seen here in Matthew 24. It is Jesus Who is the first one to introduce the first aspect of His second coming as being like a thief who comes in the night which the rest of the NT writers (Paul, Peter, John) then build on (Mt. 24:43-44).

In Matthew 24:3 the disciples asked Jesus, “**what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of age?**” All the way through Jesus is essentially dealing with what marks the END OF THE AGE – that is the end of the pre-Messianic or the pre-kingdom age that climaxes in the 2nd Coming.

And we don’t have to wonder what END is in view because Jesus in the flow of thought in Matt. 24:15 tethered the idea of “the end” to what Daniel prophesied in the 70th week of Daniel prophecy as found in Daniel 9:24-27.

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When Jesus references “the end” in this context He is speaking of the end of the 70th Week of Daniel commonly called the 7-year Tribulation Period that will usher in the 2 coming of Christ to the earth.

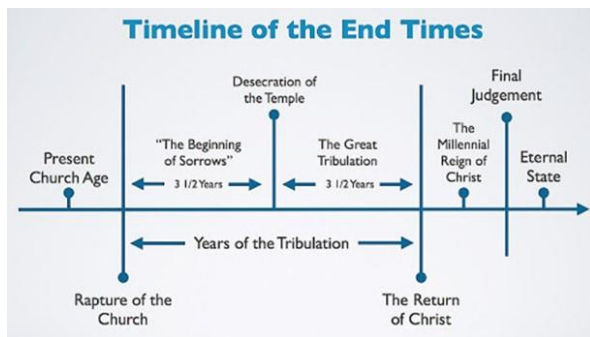
The 7 year-tribulation period is divided up into two 3 and ½ year segments.

Slide # 4

Daniel's 70th Week – Matthew 24:4-14

Matt. 24:4-8	Matt. 24:9-14
3 ½ Years	3 ½ Years
“All these are but the beginning of birth pangs” (v. 8)	“ Then they will deliver you up to tribulation...” (v. 9)
“but the end is not yet. ” (v. 6)	“and then the end will come. ” (v. 14)

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Slide # 6

Key connector Words

First half of the 7-year Tribulation

v. 6 “the end is **NOT YET**”

v. 8 “the **BEGINNING** of birth pangs”

Last half of the 7-year Tribulation

v. 9 “**THEN** they will deliver you up to tribulation...”

v. 14 “then **THE END** will come.”

In summary the disciples asked what will be “***the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?***” (v. 3). Jesus proceeded to describe various SIGNS that will define the 7-year Tribulation Period which will culminate in the 2nd Coming. In Matt. 24:4-8 Jesus listed deception, widespread war, famine, pestilences, and earthquakes as just the beginning, but the end is not yet. What Jesus lists corresponds to the first 4 seal judgments in Rev. 6:1-8. This relates to the first half of the Tribulation Period. Verse 9 then transitions to the 2nd half of the Tribulation that brings us to the end.

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The Flow of the Olivet Discourse

- 24:1-3 – The Setting and Questions
- 24:4-35 – Tribulation (“***sign events***”) culminating in the 2nd aspect of the Second Coming
 - 24:4-8 – First Half of the Tribulation
 - 24:9-14 – Second Half of the Tribulation**
 - 24:15-28 – Recapitulation of Second Half of the Tribulation
 - 24:29-31- Second Coming
 - 24:32-35 – Parable of the Fig Tree

Matthew 24:9–14 (NKJV)

9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.

The Greek word (Tote) translated here as “**Then**” is a “**time word**” and “**a transition word**” that is best understood as transitioning to the second half of the tribulation period. It can be translated as “then” or as “at that time”.

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Then (tote) is an adverb that functions as an **expression of time**. **Tote** means at that time or a point of time subsequent to another point of time. Note that this adverb is found in Mt 24:9, Mt 24:10 and Mt 24:14 and generally indicates sequence (a successive order of two or more things). – ***Bruce Hurt***

In context Jesus has just stated that all these things in verses 4-7 are the beginning of birth pangs which is a descriptive phrase elsewhere used in relation to the Day of the Lord/Tribulation Period (cf. Isa. 13:8 and Isaiah 26:17 (cf. Isa. 66:7-8; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 22:23; 30:5-7; 48:41; Hos. 13:13; Mic. 4:9-10; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 12:2).

The Scripture in no uncertain terms marks the middle of the Tribulation as a clear turning point in the Tribulation Period.

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Daniel 9:27 (NKJV)

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

This is exactly what Jesus references in Matthew 24:15. 2 Thess. 2 reveals more specifically what this height of abomination involves.

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2 Thessalonians 2:4 (NKJV)

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

This is the same time period that Rev. 13 addresses...

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Revelation 13:5–7 (NKJV)

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

In the last half of the Tribulation Period it will be open season on Christians as Antichrist declares all out war on them. And he will have legal control to pursue killing Christians all over the world. At this point there will be no safe place to hide. It is precisely at this time that all in the world will be commanded to take the mark of the beast (666) or they cannot buy or sell anything as shown later in Rev. 13 (Rev. 13:16-18).

This last half of the Tribulation is called “***the time of Jacob’s trouble***” in Jer. 30:7; or the time of “***great tribulation***” by Christ in Matthew 24:21. This will be the absolute worst time in human history. And it will be really rough for those who convert to be God’s people.

Tribulation (Gk. thlipsis) has the idea of “persecution” or “distress” and is used 3 times in this chapter (v. 9, 21, 29). The persecution at this point will be very murderous and full of hatred.

The unbelieving world will intensify its hatred of God and because it cannot attack Him directly it will fiercely attack His people.

– ***John MacArthur***

Many see a parallel here with the 5th seal which relates to martyred saints in the Tribulation Period.

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Revelation 6:9–11 (NKJV)

9 When He opened the **fifth seal**, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been **slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.**

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

The hatred for Christians at this point will be universal being “***hated by all nations***” Christ says, “***for My name’s sake.***”

The Church Age has no specific “signs” but it does have trends that prepare the way for the Antichrist.

Slide # 13

1 John 2:18–19 (NKJV)

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now **many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.**

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

Apostasy that turns on Christians is part of last days madness that prepares the way for the ultimate time of persecution under Antichrist. We see this developing trend even now.

In many parts of the world, the persecution of Christians now exceeds any period in history. According to Dr. Todd M. Johnson of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, more than seventy million Christians have been martyred throughout history, and more than half of those deaths occurred in the twentieth century. ...Open Doors International... estimate[s] that 360 million Christians in the world today experience extreme persecution because of their faith. That is one out of every seven believers worldwide. – **Dr. David Jeremiah** in his book *The World of the End*, p. 94

Christians today indisputably are the most persecuted religious body on the planet, and too often the new martyrs suffer in silence.

- **John L. Allen Jr.** in his book *The Global War on Christians*

The world is gearing up for the rule of Antichrist. It's coming – the only question is when. It's just a matter of timing.

10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

Hatred is a MAJOR defining reality of depravity and will be highlighted at this point in history. "**Offended**" is from the Greek word "*skandalizo*" which literally means "caused to stumble" in the sense of falling spiritually which suggests that these people were previously professing believers. The idea here is to morally take offense and hence to fall away. The sense here is that of apostasy. These people had some knowledge of the truth but as Paul says in 2 Thess. 2:10 "**they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved**". They stumble over the truth because they are offended by the cost of associating with it.

Although they will have had an outward identification with Christ, they will prove by their desertion that they never belonged to Him. When the persecution becomes too severe, they will forsake Christ and join fellow unbelievers in assailing God's people. – **John MacArthur**

Because they are offended, they betray those who love the truth. Betrayal is an “inside job”. The ultimate example of betrayal is Judas (Mt. 10:4). Luke calls him a “traitor”. Today a synonym for being a traitor is to be a Judas. These people are Judases. The world will be full of them at this point, and they will turn in friends and family to Antichrist in an act of spiritual treachery and show no loyalty to friends or family whatsoever.

Betrayal is one of the worst things in life.

What makes betrayal so raw and painful is that it comes not from our enemies but from those we believed to be our friends. Even our family. People can't betray us unless we've allowed them through our grid of defenses – unless we've let down our guard and trusted them.

- ***David Jeremiah***

Again, “**hate**” is a prominent defining trait of a calloused depraved society at this point. The fruit of the Spirit is first and foremost love, but these people are given over to Satan and therefore characterized by HATRED.

11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Antichrist comes on the scene with a whole army of false prophets and deceivers.

My mentor Dr. John C. Whitcomb served in World War II. He said that Hitler could never have accomplished the havoc that he did had he not had a whole army of people who thought like he did – who had the same drive – and the same passion that he did.

And so it will be with Antichrist. Yes, he will head it up, but he can only be in one place at a time, so he will have in league with him “many false prophets” who will deceive the masses throughout the world.

The world doesn't know God's truth and is being set up for mass deception. People who don't follow God's truth are vulnerable to Satan's lies that he propagates through his servants.

False prophets claim to speak for God – they claim to have a message from God. But here is the thing: their prophecies are not true. It leads away from God instead of to God and it is not consistent with Scripture.

Slide # 14

John 5:43 (NKJV)

43 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.

Jesus came in the Father's name, meaning He came in fulfillment of the Father's Word. Everything about Jesus lined up with what the Father gives as Messianic credentials. But the Antichrist will come on his own terms – doing his own thing. Yes, he will do miracles by the power of the dark side – but they are not connected to any legitimate Messianic prophecy. He simply operates in a vacuum – appealing to people's feelings instead of to God's truth – and thereby the masses will be deceived.

Again, the last days of the church age sets the stage for the coming of Antichrist and they are said to be "***last days perilous times***" in which apostasy is the defining trait (cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:1-4).

Slide # 15**1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)**

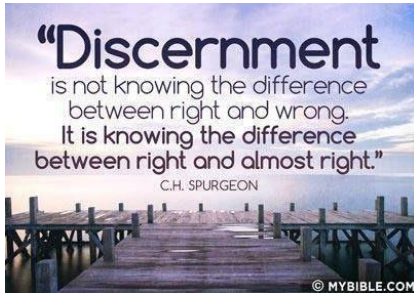
1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

The thing about false prophets is that they are deceptive. They mislead people but they do it in a deceptive manner. It sounds good to the naive. The promise of health, wealth, and prosperity sounds good – especially when you quote chapter and verse about submitting to the authorities that be. But in this case, it will be Antichrist and his commands will fly directly in the face of God's Word. The danger of a false prophet is that he speaks in the lingo of Scripture just enough to be deceptive.

Deception is a major defining trait of the end times. We see this emphasis in Matt. 24:4 where Jesus says, "Take heed that no one deceives you." We see it in verse 5 where Jesus says, "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." And then again in verse 11 He says, "many false prophets will rise up and deceive many."

The best safeguard against deception is to know God's truth well.

Slide # 16



12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Lawlessness is the idea of being without the restraint of law. In 2 Thess. 2:8-9 the Antichrist is called "the lawless one". He has no regard for any law other than his own. After all he claims he is God, and he sets the rules.

Slide # 17

2 Thessalonians 2:7–10 (NKJV)

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

This "lawless" spirit is seen in Psalm 2 where the rulers of the nations take counsel together against the LORD and His Anointed saying, "*Let us break Their bond in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.*" (Ps. 2:3).

We see this in our day where depravity seeks to defy even the laws of nature as ordained by God claiming people can choose their own gender. We see this spirit of "**lawlessness**" in today's world where there is tremendous backlash against the whole of the Judeo-Christian ethic on which our society was founded. Again, this is all stage setting for the Antichrist who brings persecution, hatred, betrayal, deception, and lawlessness to a head.

Without the proper restraint of law, the love of many will grow cold and die out. No one will care about others anymore. The world will be a calloused place. Depravity is vicious and ugly and unchecked it does the unthinkable.

The emphasis on HATRED is very strong at this point. What is presented is a miserable world full of haters (cf. Titus 3:3).

v. 6 “wars and rumors of wars...”

v. 7 “nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”

v. 9 “you will be hated by all nations...”

v. 10 “will hate one another.”

v. 12 “the love of many will grow cold.”

13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

The word “**saved**” (Gk. *sozo*) means “*to be delivered*” or “*to be rescued*”. However, from what and in what manner is dependent upon the context. So, the question becomes – is this talking about physical deliverance or spiritual deliverance.

Some have thought that enduring to the end and thereby being saved means perseverance of the saints even to the point of death and thus has spiritual salvation in view. It is certainly true that true believers will persevere even unto death. A cross reference to argue for this view is found in Matt. 10:22 where the identical language is used in regard to those who will die for their faith (cf. Rev. 2:10).

Slide # 18

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they **did not love their lives to the death.**

It will not be a time when people profess Christ as they do in our day where there is no significant cost for associating one's self with the Christ. In that day it could cost one their life! – **Bruce Hurt**

Years ago, I heard a testimony about a believer who came out of a context of cruel persecution in a communist country. As they came here, they expressed shock that people could actually live in a context where they professed Christ but didn't really mean it. They said that where they came from, they would never fake it – because the cost was too high.

That will certainly be true in the Tribulation Period under Antichrist. People are not going to fake it if their profession is not real – because it may very well cost them their life. But having said that, I would also argue that the nature of true saving faith is the same in every dispensation.

Romans 10:13 is said to be the verse most often used to invite sinners to receive Christ. And while that may be true, we should note that Romans 10:13 is a quote from Joel 2:32 in the OT which is prophetically found in a Tribulation context in the day of the Lord.

Slide # 19

Joel 2:32 (NKJV)

32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

Romans 10:13 (NKJV)

13 For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

My point is the nature of saving faith today is the same as saving faith that will be exercised in the Tribulation Period as the very same language applies to both eras. The faith that saves in Romans 10 is expressed in the same way as that which will be expressed in the Day of the Lord as seen in Joel 2:32.

So the first view is that true faith endures to the end and does not completely or finally apostatize, but is willing even to die for Christ if necessary. Those who do this will be saved spiritually and ultimately go into the kingdom. This is certainly true theologically.

Although saving faith may have lapses, it always has the quality of permanence. – **William MacDonald**

It is not that a person's endurance will produce salvation but that his endurance will be a Spirit empowered product and proof of the reality that he is saved. ... Endurance is always a mark of salvation.

– **John MacArthur**

Slide # 20**Hebrews 10:38–39 (NKJV)**

38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if **anyone draws back**, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

39 But we are **not of those who draw back to perdition**, but of those who **believe to the saving of the soul**.

However, having said all that, in this whole immediate context *the end* relates to the end of the age that ushers in the coming of Christ which serves to answer the disciples’ question about the end of the age (v. 3).

The word translated “**end**” here is the Greek word “**telos**”. It refers to the ultimate end, purpose, or goal of an action. Thus, it refers to the very end of a process. It is used in context in verse 6, 13, and 14.

Slide # 21

v. 6 - “**the end** is not yet.”

v. 13 – “endures to **the end** shall be saved.”

v. 14 – “then **the end** will come.”

As noted in verse 9 many (if not most) true believers alive at that time will be killed.

Slide # 22**Revelation 7:9 (NKJV)**

9 After these things I looked, and behold, **a great multitude which no one could number**, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

Revelation 7:13–14 (NKJV)

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “**Who are these** arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

14 And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the **ones who come out of the great tribulation**, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

An innumerable number of believers will die for their faith in the great tribulation.

And yet I think the language of “***to the end***” in verse 13 indicates that the preferred view is that some believers will survive the horrors of the Tribulation and be physically delivered to go into the kingdom. It will be these survivors who will populate the kingdom in terms of those born in the kingdom age.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

A specific gospel emphasis is emphasized here; namely “***this gospel of the kingdom***”. When John the Baptist came onto the scene he came preaching, “***Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!***” (Mt. 3:2). When Jesus followed, He came on the scene preaching, “***Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.***” (Mt. 4:17).

Subsequently what characterized Christ’s ministry was teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom with the accompanying evidence of healing all kinds and every sickness and disease which served as PROOF that He was indeed the Messianic King offering the kingdom on the condition of repentance.

Slide # 23

Matthew 4:23 (NKJV)

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing** all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Matthew 9:35 (NKJV)

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing** every sickness and every disease among the people.

But as the nation rejected Christ as seen in the blasphemy of the Spirit in Matthew 12; the kingdom program was then put on hold and delayed as seen in the parables of Matthew 13. After that the kingdom was no longer offered – no longer is it said to be “***at hand***”. The language of the gospel of the kingdom is no longer used after Matthew 13.

We don't see it anymore in the gospel of Matthew until we get to chapter 24. We don't see it in the NT epistles.

We don't see it until we get to the future Tribulation Period which is the context here in Matthew 24. Then the GOOD NEWS of the kingdom will again become a prominent emphasis. Then once again the kingdom will be on the horizon – then once again it will be at hand and thus will again be the dominant emphasis that will be preached.

Today in the Church Age we are not preaching “***the gospel of the kingdom***” in the sense as emphasized in Matthew.

Today we are preaching “***the gospel of Christ***” (cf. Ro 15:19+, 1Co 1:9+, 2Co 2:12+, 2Co 9:13+, 2Co 10:14+, Gal 1:7+, Phil 1:27+, 1Th 3:2+). It is also called by other names such as “***the gospel of the grace of God***” (Acts 20:24), but never in the epistles does it say we are proclaiming “***the gospel of the kingdom***” because we are not doing so in a direct sense like we see emphasized in the gospel of Matthew.

Verse 14 is often misused to show that Christ could not return for His church at any moment because so many tribes have not yet heard the gospel. [But] this refers to the gospel of the kingdom, not the gospel of the grace of God. – ***William MacDonald***

Slide # 24

The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of salvation in the Messiah with the **emphasis** that the **Messianic kingdom is about to be established.** – ***Wycliffe Bible Commentary*** (emphasis mine)

And note “**this gospel of the kingdom**” in this tribulation context will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

In the first half of the Tribulation God will raise up 2 special witnesses who will have a ministry that impacts the entire world as seen in Revelation 11. Then God will raise up 144,000 Jewish evangelists and they too will have a ministry that will impact the entire world. Immediately after the calling of the 144,000 are mentioned in Rev. 7:1-8 we read this...

Slide # 25**Revelation 7:9 (NKJV)**

9 After these things I looked, and behold, **a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

The implication is that the 144,000 Jewish evangelists will win huge multitudes of people to the Lord. But God is not done yet. He insists that **“this gospel of the kingdom”** be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations”.

So just before the climactic bowl judgments are poured out which will bring the labor pains of the tribulation period to maximum intensity issuing in the birth of the kingdom; just before this, God will send out an angel to preach the gospel to every tribe, tongue and nation.

Slide # 26**Revelation 14:6–7 (NKJV)**

6 Then I saw another **angel** flying in the midst of heaven, having the **everlasting gospel** to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to **every nation, tribe, tongue, and people**—

7 saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

Nowhere else in the Bible do we find angels actually preaching the gospel. At this point God will employ even an angel in this task to canvass the world one last time, in effect crying out that people might even at this last moment respond.

The everlasting Gospel is that God triumphs forever which is essentially synonymous with the **“gospel of the kingdom”**. Note the emphasis on the fact that this message is going out to ALL peoples of the entire world (cf. Mt. 24:14).

The events of the Tribulation Period are “all world events”. God’s people will be “hated by ALL nations” (v. 9). The gospel of the kingdom will “be preached in ALL the world as a witness to ALL the nations (v. 14). At this point God will be operating on a GLOBAL scale that uniquely involves the whole entire world at once.

This truly is the LAST CALL and then the end will come!

Slide # 27

THE SIGN OF THE GLOBAL GOSPEL AND THE END OF THE AGE	
THE SIGN	THE END
This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world	THEN the end will come
An angel will preach the eternal Gospel to those who live on the earth Revelation 14:6-7	The King of kings returns bringing this age to an end Rev 19:11-16

If we let context rule our interpretation, the end to which Jesus refers is the end of the age, which is the initial question asked by the disciples ([Mt 24:3](#)). – **Bruce Hurt**

“The end” here has the definite article here in context referring to a very specific END, namely “the end” that will usher in the 2nd Coming of Christ.

As we live in the Church Age Paul says we are those “***upon whom the ends of the ages have come***” (1 Cor. 10:11). We know we live at the end – we just don’t know how much of the end there is.

Right now the stage is being set for the last day’s finale in which God’s judgment will come upon the entire world which will usher in the 2nd Coming of Christ to the earth.

God has deposited His truth to His Church so that we might be a witness to the world (1 Tim. 3:15). And part of that witness is to warn the world that judgment day is coming (Acts 17:30-31).

Noah preached a warning for 120 years and then the flood came. Lot tried to warn his family of impending judgment, but they didn’t take him serious and thought he must be joking (Gen. 19:14).

Soren Kierkegaard was a Danish Theologian who lived in the 1800s. He gave this illustration:

“A fire broke out backstage at a theatre. [An actor] came out to warn the public; they thought it was a joke and applauded. He repeated it; the acclaim was even greater.” Kierkegaard then said he thought this is how the end would come.

Peter says, “*know this first: that scoffers will come in the last days... saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’*” (2 Pet. 3:3). This is where we live.

There are NO overt signs in the church age as judgment comes to the earth like a thief in the night, but for those who have eyes to see we see the growing trends of hatred, lawlessness, and apostasy which are setting the stage for the Antichrist. The great sign in the Church Age (if you want to call it that) is that of apostasy where people no longer take the warning of coming judgment seriously.

Even now we see the mystery of “***lawlessness is already at work***” (2 Thess. 2:7). Even now we see many antichrists are on the scene who are setting the stage for the Antichrist who is to come and by this we know it is the last hour (1 Jn. 2:18).

Even now the stage is being set, even now the warning is going forth that Judgment Day is coming and that people should get right with God while they still have the opportunity.

The Bible says, “***now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.***” (2 Cor. 6:2). The Bible says God, “***now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world***” (Acts 17:30-31). The Bible says God is patiently waiting because He is “***not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance***” (2 Pet. 3:9). The Bible says, “***Today, if you will hear His voice do not harden your hearts***” (Heb. 3:7-8).

As we enter into 2023 we wonder if this is the year that Jesus will come in the Rapture and the world will enter into the Day of the Lord judgment! No one knows but we are told to be ready – to watch and be ready!

May our watchword for 2023 be “Live ready!” The storm of God’s judgment is coming! Be ready! Live ready!