

# END TIMES & THE RETURN OF CHRIST (PART I)

Sunday, February 10, 2019

Why do we study prophecy?

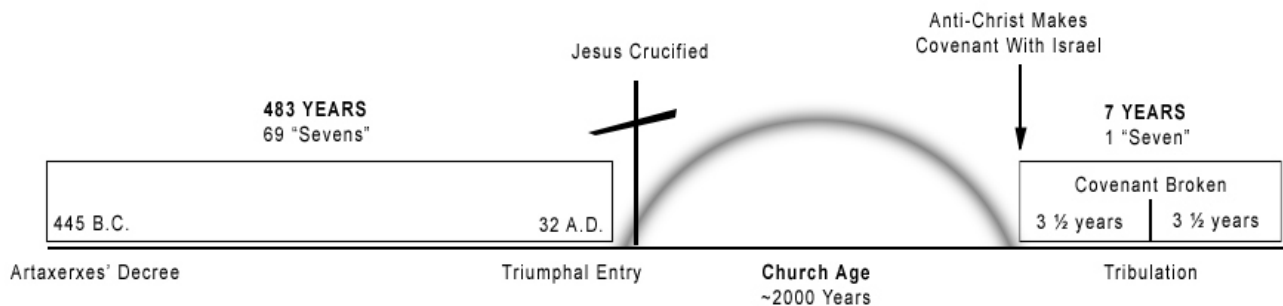
<sup>32</sup> “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.” (Mark 13:32)

“Those who are **wise** will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered.” (Dan. 11:33)

<sup>20</sup> He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. (Rev. 22:20)

Why does it seem like prophecy isn’t studied or taught in the church today?

What is our general approach to studying prophecy?



## A Framework for the End of the Age: The Seventy Sevens (Dan. 9:24-27)

### The purpose of the Seventy Sevens

<sup>24</sup> “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.

## **7 Sevens – Jerusalem is rebuilt**

<sup>25</sup> “Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

## **62 Sevens – Messiah is cut off and both Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed**

<sup>26</sup> After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

## **The final Seven commences with a covenant**

<sup>27</sup> He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

## Jesus Describes the Events Preceding His Return (Matthew 24:1-44)

1. Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple (Dan. 9:26). Matt. 24:1-2

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. <sup>2</sup>“Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

2. The disciples ask for a sign of his coming and the end of the age. Matt. 24:3

<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

3. Jesus indicates that the early warning signs include the arise of false Messiahs, threats of war, actual wars, and natural disasters. These are not the end (the immediate events leading to his return), but are the beginning of the end. Matt. 24:4-8

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains.

4. Jesus frames a second time frame after this that leads to the end. This includes his people being persecuted and hated by all nations because of him. Only those who stand firm through this persecution will be saved. The gospel of the kingdom will, in this time frame, be preached to all nations. Then the end will come. Matt. 24:9-14

<sup>9</sup>“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. <sup>10</sup>At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup>and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup>Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, <sup>13</sup>but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup>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.

- a. Jesus identifies a sign that this second time frame has begun: The abomination spoken of by the prophet Daniel (9:27). When this occurs, those who are in Judea (i.e., the Jewish people) must flee to the mountains. He designates this as a period of “great distress” (literally, “great tribulation”). Matt. 24:15-21

<sup>15</sup>“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—<sup>16</sup>then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup>Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. <sup>18</sup>Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. <sup>19</sup>How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! <sup>20</sup>Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup>For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.

- b. False prophets and messiahs will appear to perform miracles to deceive everyone, including believers, but that these shouldn’t be mistaken for his return, which will be as unmistakable as lightning crossing the sky. Matt. 24:22-28

<sup>22</sup>“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. <sup>23</sup>At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. <sup>24</sup>For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup>See, I have told you ahead of time.

<sup>26</sup>“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. <sup>27</sup>For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

- c. Jesus will return following significant atmospheric events in a display that will be visible and unmistakable to the entire world, who will mourn when they realize

who he is. He will rally and gather all those who have trusted in him. Matt. 24:29-31

<sup>29</sup> “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.’

<sup>30</sup> “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> 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.

5. Jesus returns to a consideration of the overall time frame, not the specifics. The fig tree provides an analogy of our expectation for these things: When the first signs appear, the remainder will be witnessed by a single generation. (I.e., these events will not occur over a vast period of time.) Matt. 24:32-35

<sup>32</sup> “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. <sup>33</sup> Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. <sup>34</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. <sup>35</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

6. No one except the Father knows when these events will begin. But it will be unexpected and will catch everyone off-guard. Many will be unprepared. Some will be taken and others left behind as in the days of Noah, suggesting that some people will escape some or all of the events he described. Matt. 24:36-44

<sup>36</sup> “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> 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; <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

<sup>42</sup> “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. <sup>43</sup> 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 let his house be

broken into.<sup>44</sup> So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

### Paul Explains Israel's Place in the Larger Plan (Romans 11:25-29)

<sup>25</sup> I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, <sup>26</sup> and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion;  
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

<sup>27</sup> And this is my covenant with them  
when I take away their sins.”

<sup>28</sup> As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, <sup>29</sup> for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.