

# Matthew 24 and the End Times

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## INTRODUCTION

**The 21st Century church is not living in “the end times” but in the Kingdom Age. The “end times” or “last days” or “latter days” referred to by New Testament writers was the period from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in 33 AD to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD that ended the Jewish era. In Matthew 24 Jesus gives an outline of these “last days” events leading up to His coming in the clouds of judgment in 70 AD. That generation saw the fulfillment of all those prophecies just as Jesus prophesied!**

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One of the most widely held views among evangelical Christians is that we are now living in “the end times”. This is so commonly held to be true that nobody bothers to question whether this is actually so. Numerous books and articles are written to expound on the “end times”. Cataclysmic prophecies are hauled out at every disaster to show all these earthly travails are merely fulfillment of what can be expected in “the end times”. More prophecy books have been sold than any other genre of writing. Whole publishing and broadcasting industries have been created around these prophets and their prophecies.

This is not merely idle speculation – a lot depends upon the correct answer. For instance, suppose this is not the end times and the entire Israeli state and the American war in the Middle East turn out to be a disaster? What if there is no Russian invasion of Israel as predicted by the preachers of the end times? What if there is no great anti-christ to rise up over the European Union and make a pact with Israel? In fact what if there is no Rapture in the next 20 years and we are facing not the Great Tribulation but the great world economic depression as the oil starts running out, economies contract, empires of debt implode, Baby Boomers retire with no savings, pension funds collapse from collapsed world stock markets...etc etc. Are you ready for this kind of disaster scenario? Is the Church ready to deal with the onrushing crises of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

If we are indeed in the end times then we don't have much to concern ourselves with. The coming world collapse and the demise of billions will not be our concern as the Rapture will have taken us safely out of harms way. But if these are not the end times then we must ask ourselves, where are we in God's timeline and are we and the Church ready to face the tumultuous times of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

If you are to understand what the Lord is calling the Church to do in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century then you urgently need to know what time we are living in. The time we live in determines our strategy. Our vision of the task in hand determines our strategy. If you or your ministry leader believes that we are living in the “end times” and that the

Rapture will take place at any moment then this really affects how your local church operates, how you do financial planning, what the emphasis of teaching and ministry is in your fellowship group and how you grow and mature spiritually.

If you believe the Antichrist is going to takeover the world then what is the point of even planning practical strategies for discipling nations into the Kingdom? If the Antichrist is taking over the world what is the point of long term financial planning? If you believe that you are going to escape the tribulation then why do disaster planning?

### The End Times for Babylon the Great

Here at the Kingdom Vision we do believe in the end times. We just don't believe it's the end of the world. We are however coming to the end of the Babylon New World Order prophesied in Revelation 18. We are in the midst of an economic collapse that will lead to the collapse of corporations and nation states. We are also entering the oil collapse that will lead to the collapse of the ability for planet earth to keep supporting 7 billion people. This in turn will lead to the collapse of civilization as we know it. And then? And then “when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the people will learn righteousness” and the Kingdom of our Lord will spread to cover the earth!

So the signs that we are looking for are not when does Jesus return to take us out of here but how and where is the world system collapsing and what must we do to get out of Babylon that we be not partakers of her judgment!

Rapture preachers on TV have their audiences enthralled looking at Israel for signs of a new Temple and a Russian invasion. I am looking for different signs for my readers: economic indicators, debt levels, oil shortages, solar flares, revivals in Africa, China, South America, food shortages, UFO's (the Abyss has opened!), return of the Nephilim, outpourings of the Holy Spirit and power, restoration of gift ministries!

But let's look and see what the New Testament writers have to say about "last days", "latter days" or end times. And after reading these scriptures see if you don't agree with me that all the New Testament writers believed that they were living in the end times. But understand this...they were not wrong or mistaken! They were living in the "last days" of the Jewish era but the beginning of the Kingdom Age!

### **Peter the Apostle...**

Peter on the day of Pentecost, when the 120 were gathered in the upper room and the power of the Holy Spirit was poured out and everyone started speaking in tongues, clearly under the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit preaches to the gathering crowds and says: "this is that spoken of by the prophet Joel, and it shall come to pass **in the last days**, sayeth the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh..." (Acts 2: 16, 17) Peter, speaking under the anointing of the Holy Spirit declares that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit taking place right there before their eyes, in the upper room in Jerusalem in about 33 AD was a direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel which was to take place "**in the last days**".

That Peter clearly believed they were living in the last days is further confirmed in his epistle (! Peter 1: 19,20) "Christ...who was verily foreordained before the foundations of the world but was **manifest in these last days** for you." Jesus made His appearance on earth in the "**last days**" i.e. about 33 AD!

### **The Writer of Hebrews.....**

The writer of Hebrews (probably either James or Paul) says, "God who at sundry times and divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in **these last days** spoken to us by His Son..." (Hebrews 1:1,2) And he repeats very emphatically in Hebrews 9:26, "... but now once **in the end of the world** has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself". Very clearly the writer of Hebrews is saying that Jesus' appearance and sacrifice happened at "the end of the world" and that when God spoke to them through Jesus it was during "the last days". The word "world" is from the Greek word "eon" meaning age. What he means is that Jesus appeared at the end of the Jewish age of Temple sacrifice to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself!

### **John the Apostle....**

John writes in his epistle to the Church (1 John 2:18), "Little children **it is the last time**; and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, **even now are there many antichrists**, whereby we know **that it is the last time**." Can it get any clearer? John clearly believed that he was living in the end times because the prophesied antichrist had come...in their time, 2000 years ago! No John, surely you're wrong, why I've got 8 great prophecy books that says that the end times are upon us 40 years after the founding of the state of Israel in 1948 and the Antichrist is still going to come! Who am I supposed to believe?

### **Paul the Apostle....**

Paul warns his disciple Timothy that they are living in the last days and therefore he must watch out for certain things:

"Now the Spirit speaks expressly saying that **in the latter times** some shall depart from the faith...(1 Tim.4:1)

"For know also that **in the last days** perilous times will come..." (2 Tim. 3:1)

Paul was warning Timothy that because they were in "the latter times" or "the last days" these things were going to happen and this is what he must do to guard against these deceptions. So why warn Timothy about what is going to happen in "the last days" if he did not believe that Timothy is living in the last days? What is the point of warning him what is going to happen in 2000 years time?

### **Jesus our Lord....**

In Matthew 24 we find Jesus and the disciples viewing the great temple in Jerusalem. It was a monumental piece of construction by King Herod the Great that took decades to build at enormous cost. As the disciples stood admiring the great building Jesus made the remarkable prophecy: "for verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The startled disciples then asked Him "tell us when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the world?" (meaning "eon" or the end of the age). His incredible time prediction in verse 34 says, "Verily I say unto you, **this generation shall not pass away until all these things shall be fulfilled.**"

These clear scriptures of the New Testament leave you with only one of three options:

1. Yes, Jesus, Peter, John, James and Paul did believe they were living in the last days but they were just flat out mistaken. Obviously they were not living in the end times or last days because the world has gone on for another 2000 years.
2. Yes they were living in the "last days" or "end times", but this is actually a period of time that stretches for thousands of years because they were living in the end times and we are also living in the end times.
3. The New Testament writers were in fact correct that they were living in the end times but we are not correct in thinking we are living in the end times.

Option 1 is not an option for any Christian who believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God. In fact if you were to read any of the many skeptics who try to point out supposed mistakes in the Bible, one of their primary attacks always is to point out that the writers of the New Testament all believed that they were living in the "end times", "last days" or end of the world. That the world has gone on for another 2000 years is proof to them that these early Christians were deluded and the Bible a fallible document.

Option 2 is just plain avoiding the issue. It's a fudge. You can't seriously think that when the Bible talks about the end times it is talking about a period of 2000 years. So

1517 was that also the end times? And so was 1789? And so was 1820? Sorry but I don't buy it.

Option 3 is the only realistic, scriptural option for Christians of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. But it leaves us unfortunately with some major unavoidable problems and it is time we confront these issues head on and get the mind of Christ for our time. The clear indication from scriptures is that the writers of the New Testament believed they were living in the "end-times". And since scripture does not lie the only right conclusion we can therefore make is that we in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are not living in the "end-times". This also means that anyone preaching to you that these are the "end-times" and the world is about to end and we are shortly about to be Raptured out of here does not have the mind of Christ, does not understand scripture and does not know that in actual fact we are already in the Kingdom Age!

## The End Times & Matthew 24

But what would make the early Church believe they were living in the "last days"? The answer is found in Luke 21 and Matthew 24. They believed Jesus when He said "this generation" would see the end of the age and His return!

### The three questions of the disciples....

The disciples showed Jesus the great temple in Jerusalem that took decades to build by Herod at enormous cost and was a true wonder of the ancient world. Jesus startled His disciples by stating emphatically that the time would come when not one stone would be left on another. They like the other Jews of their time were aware of the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, time prophecies, that indicated judgment and destruction and the appearance of the Messiah in their time. So they asked Him three questions:

Matth 24: 3, "when shall these things be, what shall be the sign of thy return and the end of the world" ( the original Greek uses the word "eon" meaning "age", so the disciples were referring to the end of the "age").

Lets answer these three questions with three statements that will give you an entirely new view of the end times:

These things were to happen within 40 years (a generation) of when Jesus spoke these words (33 AD)

The end of the Jewish age of Temple sacrifices for sin and the end of the Jewish nation occurred in 70AD with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Roman armies of Vespasian and Titus slaughtering 1,100,000 people in the process.

The signs of the Lord returning in the clouds to pour out judgment over Jerusalem were to be famines, pestilence, wars, false Messiahs, signs in the heavens, persecutions of His disciples, the gospel preached in all the world and eventually Jerusalem surrounded by armies before its destruction.

These three statement place the entire fulfillment of Mat-

thew 24 from 33 AD to 70 AD! But lets see if this is so...

Jesus answered the "when" question with a very clear, unmistakable statement in verse 34, "For verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled". When Jesus said "this generation" which was to see the fulfillment of all the predictions He made, was He referring to the people who were listening to Him speak in 33 AD or was He talking to us 2000 years in the future? At first glance reading through Matthew 24 it must be obvious that these prophecies can only refer to a future generation; the end of the world has not come, neither a great tribulation nor the return of Christ. Or have they?

But reading through the chapter it also seems obvious that Jesus was directly speaking to His disciples warning **them** not to be deceived, warning **them** that they would be persecuted, warning **them** to flee from Jerusalem when they see the abomination of desolation etc. So which generation is it?

In Matthew 23 the previous chapter Jesus described the wickedness of that generation and declared that Jerusalem would be left desolate and that judgment is coming upon them, and He says in verse 36, "all these things shall come upon **this** generation". He was clearly referring to those living in 33AD in Jerusalem. The same for "this generation" in Matthew 24:34 that would see the end of the Temple, the destruction of Jerusalem and His return upon the clouds.

For the Dispensational Rapturist teachers of today "this generation" of Matthew 24:34 is the generation that saw Israel becoming a nation again in 1948, which is why the enormous expectation of the return of Christ by 1988 and the prediction of a Russian invasion of Israel in the 1980's. The problem is that they are now in the same prophetic time trap that the Jehovah's Witnesses got themselves in a 100 years ago. They put out these prophecy books declaring that the generation that saw the Great War (1914 World War 1) would be "this generation". Then as the decades passed came the death watch, "who is still alive from 1914?". Obviously they had to drop this false teaching eventually. When the 40 year generation period of 1988 passed with no Rapture, then the prophecies started shifting in the 1990's. "This generation" was the generation that saw Israel capture Jerusalem in 1967. So the new 40 year cut off date was 2007 which looked very promising; the Rapture at the new millennium date of 2000 and a 7 year Tribulation till 2007. Well that also did not work out (unless I missed the Rapture). Now the current craze is 2012. And that will also pass with no Rapture (of course if I am wrong I will be enormously happy to exit out of here ...but unfortunately I don't believe it).

The entire teaching of modern day prophecy books that we are living in the "end times" is based on this mistaken interpretation of Matthew 24 that we are "this generation" that will see the coming of the Lord, the Great Tribulation, the Rapture.

I have already shown you the many scriptures showing that the writers of the New Testament all believed that they were living in “the last days”. That is because the New Testament (including Revelations as proven by Ken Gentry in his book “Before Jerusalem Fell”) was written before 70 AD and the destruction of Jerusalem.

Most people reading Matthew 24 are willing to concede that yes some of the signs Jesus spoke of did happen during that day but what about His promise to return? Surely that cannot be applied to that generation?

### **Jesus already came in the clouds!**

Actually yes, the promise of His return in the clouds to that generation happened and not only the New Testament writers but Jesus Himself said He would return in that generation!

When Jesus stood before the priests at His trial, Caiphias, the High Priest asked Him, “**Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. And Jesus answered Him and said I Am, and you will see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven**” (Mark 14:61-62). Jesus predicted they (the High Priest and the Sanhedrin) would see His coming in the clouds! In response to this statement the High Priest “rent his clothes...and said ye have heard his blasphemy” Let me explain to you the importance of this interaction between Jesus and the High Priest, what was really going on and not what popular prophecy books think is going to happen.

You read recent popular prophecy books and they tell you “Jesus is coming soon in the clouds of glory and every eye will see Him! Praise God, the TV crew from CNN in Jerusalem will dramatically display to all the world the return of Christ descending on a cloud from heaven!” Or something like that. But here is what Jesus was actually saying to Caiphias and his fellow priests, and they understood perfectly what He meant and that is why they cried “blasphemy” because they read the same Bible:

*“Caiphias I am! I am the one who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, I am Yahweh who came down Mount Horeb in a cloud, I am Yahweh who rides the swift cloud in judgment of the nations and you will kill me but I will rise again and I am coming back again and you will see Me coming in a cloud of judgment on you and all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and I will put an end to your hypocrisy, your lies, your Temple, your sacrifices which I no longer accept, the end has come for Jerusalem, you wanted Me as the Messiah to deliver you from Rome but I will use Rome to put an end to you”*

This coming of the Lord in the clouds as a sign of divine judgment is clearly expressed in Isaiah 19:1:

***“...behold the Lord rides upon a swift cloud and shall come into Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it”***

The priests saw Him coming in clouds of judgment in 70AD when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and that proved to be “the sign of the Son of Man in heaven”. He now rules over all nations and even Rome must do His bidding!

But Jesus also prophesied that some of His disciples would be alive at the time of His return. In Matthew 16:27-28 Jesus said to His disciples, “For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father’s glory with His angels...I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom”. Jesus predicted some of His disciples would not die before they saw Him coming with His angels in glory!

After His resurrection Jesus met with His disciples before His ascension and indicated to Peter that he would suffer for Him and so Peter asked Jesus what about John? “Jesus answered, If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” John 21:22. History tells us John lived to an old age and saw the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. John saw the return of Jesus!

No wonder James declared, “we are living in the last days” (Jas.5:3) and “the judge is standing at the door” (Jas.5:9). He knew “the Lord’s coming is at hand” (Jas.5:8). The writer of Hebrews would say, “In just a little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay.” (Heb.10:37) Around 57 AD Paul writing to the Corinthians declared that “the time is short” (1 Cor. 7:29). Peter declared that “the end of all things is at hand” (1 Peter 4:7).

Ken Gentry in his book “Before Jerusalem Fell” gives a strong historical study showing that the Book of Revelations was written before 70AD when Jerusalem fell. We can then understand why John in his opening verse (Rev.1:1) declares these prophecies must “...shortly come to pass” (not in 2000 years time!). John goes on to say in Revelation 1: 3,7 “Blessed is he that reads and those that hear the words of this prophecy for **the time is at hand**... behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall behold him and **they also which pierced him**...” Can you see what John is saying in Revelations? The coming of Jesus in the clouds to bring judgment on Jerusalem is at hand and **those who pierced Him in 33AD** will still be alive to see this judgment and people all over the world will “see” this judgment. Later in Revelations he predicted exactly how many months this judgment would take to destroy Jerusalem, 42 months: “and the holy city shall they (the Gentiles, Rome) trample under foot for forty and two months” (Rev.11:2) And this is exactly what happened, the armies of Vespasian and Titus fought for 42 months from 66 AD until Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD.

All the early New Testament Church believed they were living in the “end times”, judgment was coming in their time and Jesus would return in the clouds of judgment in their day. And it happened! Just as Jesus predicted and all the signs of Matthew 24 were fulfilled!

Now lets look at the other signs of Matthew 24 that were fulfilled by 70 AD.

## **False Christs...**

**Matth 24:4-5 “...for many shall come in my name saying I am Christ and shall deceive many.”**

Josephus the historian wrote of an imposter Thadeus who in 45AD had a multitude of followers, took them down to the river Jordan to show his power to part the river. At the time of Felix (mentioned in Acts) the country was filled with imposters that Josephus said Felix had to put to death every day...there were so many. There was an Egyptian who pretended to be a prophet and gathered thousands of men to Jerusalem to show “how at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall down”. Paul was asked in Acts 21:38 whether he was “that mad Egyptian”. Another deceiver was Simon the sorcerer who, according to Irenaeus, claimed to be the Son of God and the creator of angels. Origen writes of a certain wonder worker Dositheus, who claimed to be Christ foretold by Moses. Another was Barchochebas and Bar-jesus mentioned in Acts 13:6. Many more could be named. The era was rife with false Messiahs because of the time prophecies of Daniel.

## **Wars and Rumors of War...**

**Matth. 24: 6-7, “and you will hear of wars and rumors of war, see that ye are not troubled, be ye not troubled for the end is not yet” (not the end of the world, the end of Jerusalem!)**

When Jesus made the prophecy in 33AD the Roman world was relatively peaceful and quiet but that changed in the years ahead. The rise of false Messiahs were causing big problems for the Romans in keeping order in Judea according to Josephus. Before Jerusalem fell four emperors came to violent ends within a space of 18 months. The Roman historian Tacitus writing of the period mentions “disturbances in Germany”, “commotions in Africa”, “insurrections in Gaul”, “war in Britain”, “war in Armenia”. Among Jewish communities there were great killings, In Seleucia 50,000 Jews were killed, there was a great uprising against the Jews in Alexandria with thousands killed, in a battle between Jews and Syrians in Caesarea 20,000 were killed. The Roman world was in a turmoil after the long peace of Augustus and Tiberius.

## **Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes...**

**Matth. 24:7 “and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places.”**

The Bible tells us in Acts 11:28 about famine “throughout all the world...in the days of Claudius Caesar”. Eusebius mentions famines during this time in Rome, Judea and Greece. Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius mention famines during those years.

There were also great pestilences and diseases, a natural result when people are dying of famine. Suetonius wrote of a pestilence in Rome at the time of Nero that killed more than 30,000 persons. Josephus writes of great pestilences in Babylon in 40AD.

There were also a great many earthquakes during this time. Seneca writing in the year 58 AD, said “How often

have the cities of Asia and Achaea fallen with one fatal shock! How many cities have been swallowed up in Syria! How many in Macedonia! How often has Cyprus been wasted by this calamity!... News has been brought to us of the demolition of whole cities at once!”

## **Persecutions of the disciples...false prophets.**

**Matth.24:9 “and they shall deliver you up to be afflicted...”**

Jesus predicted that for His name’s sake the disciples would be afflicted, hated, persecuted, imprisoned and executed. The persecution first came from the Jewish authorities with the permission of the Romans who did not want to be involved in local sectarian squabbles. Acts 8:1 they faced “great persecution” and in Acts 22:19 they were “imprisoned and beat in every synagogue”. They were hated and some put to death (Acts 7:59; 12:2). But Jesus also said that among them many false prophets will arise and deceive many (Matth.24:11. Folks, we still have them today!). Peter would later write of many false prophets in the Church who led many astray (2 Peter 2), John also recorded this fulfilled prophecy, “many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1) and Paul also spoke of false apostles and false teachers in the Church (2 Cor. 11:13; 2 Tim. 2:17,18; Titus 1:10,11).

After the burning of Rome by Nero in 64AD the persecution of the Christians increased dramatically as Nero blamed the Christians for the calamity.

## **Gospel to be preached to all nations...**

**Matth.24:14 “and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”**

When Jesus spoke of “then shall the end come”, He is still speaking of the end of the Jewish era and the end of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD. The gospel did indeed go all over the world in the next 40 years. The disciples spread the message into the far flung corners of the known world. Paul testifies to this in Romans 1:8 “Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world”. In Romans 16:26 he says of the gospel having been “made known to all nations”. In Colossians 1:6,23 Paul could write “the gospel is come unto you as it is in all the world...the gospel which you have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven”.

The historian Eusebius writing of the beginning of the Church declared that the apostles and disciples spread to all parts of the known world preaching the gospel.

## **Abomination of Desolation.**

**Matth.24:15-20 “When you therefore see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet....then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains...”**

Jesus now begins to describe the Jewish revolt against Rome that lasted from 66-70 AD.

In the parallel passage in Luke 21:20-21 He says:

**“and when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies then know that the desolation thereof is nigh, then let them which dwell in Judea flee into the mountains...”**

Jesus was referring to the prophecy in Daniel 9:26,27 that said, *“the people of the prince that shall come (the Romans) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary...for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation.”*

These prophecies of Daniel and Jesus were remarkably fulfilled during the revolt of 66-70 AD. Josephus the Jewish historian gives us a lengthy detailed description of the happenings during those days both when he was on the rebel side and later when he joined the Romans. He tells us that in 66 AD Eleazar the Zealot leader and his army took control of Jerusalem and the Temple area. They stopped the daily sacrifice that was made by the High Priest for Rome and Caesar. Soon faction fighting broke out between rival gangs and in the process the High Priest Ananias and the other priests who wanted peace with Rome were slaughtered in the temple. The Temple was desecrated by the Zealots. The Roman garrison was unable to stop the fighting and they were soon slaughtered as well after surrendering themselves. This caused the Romans to mobilize their legions from Syria under General Cestius who marched on Jerusalem and surrounded the city. Then for no apparent reason he stopped the siege and withdrew his troops back to Syria, The Zealots thought this was a great sign from God and attacked the fleeing Roman army and slaughtered them. Rome was appalled and mustered together the largest Roman army assembled under Vespasian and his son Titus and this started a 42 month war campaign on Judean soil culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the slaughter of 1,100,000 people according to Josephus.

Eusebius the early Church father recorded in his history that the Jerusalem Church remembering the words of Jesus and seeing the Roma siege lifted quickly left Jerusalem and headed for the hills of Petra. Thus were fulfilled the prophecies of Jesus of the abomination causing desolation; that Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies, and then the eventual tragic end...”**for then shall be great tribulation...**” (vrs. 24).

### **The Sun and the Moon darkened**

**Matth. 24:29-30, “and immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened...”**

The language used here by Jesus is the same used by Isaiah in Isaiah 13:10 to describe the coming fall of Babylon by the Medes and the destruction of Idumea in 34:4. This is common apocalyptic language used to describe the destruction of a nation.

### **Gathering of the Elect**

**Matth. 24: 31, “and he shall send his angels...and gather his elect from the four corners of the earth.”**

The Gospel went out first to the Jews throughout the Roman empire. Those who believed Jesus was the prophesied Messiah did not believe the false prophets who went out from 66 AD to gather Jews from all over the world to join the rebellion believing that the Messiah was to miraculously appear to save them from Rome. More than a million Jews from all over the world believed these false prophets and were gathered in Jerusalem but ended up being trapped and slaughtered. The wheat was separated from the tares. In Luke 19:27 Jesus said, *“but those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring here (Jerusalem) and slay them before me.”* That happened in 70 AD. It was also the end of the “judaeizers” infiltrating the early Church!

### **As In the Days of Noah**

**Matth. 24: 37-51, “But as the days of Noah were so shall the coming of the son of man be...”**

The multi-million best selling “Left Behind” series has caused the greatest misinterpretation of these scriptures. The clear teaching of these books is that as Jesus said, one is taken and one is left behind. You want to be taken and not left behind! The clear teaching of these books are the Rapture will take the Christians away and the wicked will be left behind to endure the Great Tribulation. Now read these scriptures again and see who is “taken away”! Jesus said it is the wicked that get taken away! The righteous are left behind! Just as it was in the days of Noah when he and his family were left behind and the wicked taken away! But that is what you get with false teachers...scriptures always get distorted to suit pet theories!

**Please note: When Jesus refers here to His coming, He is not referring to His coming at the end of the Kingdom Age, at the last trump, at the resurrection. He is referring here to His coming in the clouds which we already have seen is the Biblical reference to His judgment on Jerusalem.**

### **End Time Delusions**

It is time for the Body of Christ to take up its Kingdom calling of discipling the nations, destroying the works of Satan and establishing the Lordship of Jesus in all the earth. But we allow ourselves to be deluded by oratorical pulpiteers who love audiences, meetings, endless meetings and endless books, shows, tapes, conferences that the end is upon us. Its time to stop all the talking and start doing the work of the Kingdom. But you won't get on with it while you still think this is “the end times” and Satan is going to take over the world! And preachers who love the idea of “end times” are not going to tell you any different. End times mean send in your money now so we can get the gospel out before the end. End times mean millions more in book sales, Israel tours and prophecy conferences!

End time teaching is a dead end, a cul de sac that leads the Church to immobility and disengagement. Anyone preaching “end times” is not giving you any practical strategy for discipling the nations. If your Church leadership is preaching “end times” then you must know that no matter how often you hear “Kingdom”, there will be no strategy that will actually bring in the Kingdom. It's time to move on!