

the LAST GENERATION

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass,
till all these things be fulfilled.” (Matthew 24:34)

There is a generation that will be the last. It will precede the arrival of the one we call the Antichrist and the return of Jesus. According to Psalm 90:10, a generation—the lifespan of a person—is seventy years. Jesus is clear that we can observe the events of this generation unfolding in our world and know, without a doubt, that we are living in the final generation. Considering what is happening in the world today, we can say with assurance: we are that final generation.

EVERYDAY EVENTS

Matthew 24:4-6

Jesus outlined the events preceding the final generation in Matthew 24. He teaches that throughout all generations since his coming, many would pervert his teachings—even claiming to be him. Much of this distortion in our present age enters through the denominations emphasizing certain doctrines above others. Additionally, Islam, Catholicism, Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Spiritism, and many others have been significant perverters of Scriptures. Jesus also taught that throughout all generations, wars and rumors of wars would be part of everyday life.

All the deception, wars, and rumors of war are daily occurrences, but do not indicate we are the final generation and should not cause us to believe we have entered the final generation.

THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS

Matthew 24:7-8

The events that let us know we are the final generation are those Jesus calls the “beginning of sorrows.” These sorrows refer to the great tribulation that will be unleashed when the Antichrist is in authority. The “beginning” of sorrows begins the events that increase in frequency and intensity leading to the rise of the Antichrist and the great tribulation he unleashes.

Jesus outlines these “beginning of sorrows” events as *nations in conflict with nations*. The Greek word for nation is *ethnos*, and refers to all forms of ethnic and racial conflict. *Kingdom against kingdom* refers to wars between empires—such as World War I and World War II. Never has there been truly global wars involving most empires and nations until these conflicts. *Famines, diseases, and earthquakes* have also increased in both frequency and intensity to the point that they are now always the realities. For more information and statistics download my free eBook, COMING SOON, from www.hope-for-today.com.

Though these events have existed throughout history, never have they all converged at the same time, and remained ever-present, until our twentieth century. When I was growing up in the 1950s and 1960’s, these events would appear and then fade away, not to resurface for many years. Today, they are all with us continually, increasing in intensity and frequency year after year.

These are the events that, when they appear together in the same generation with great intensity and frequency, reveal that we are living in the final generation. Without doubt, that generation is our present generation. Our generation is setting the truly global political, religious, and cultural stage necessary to welcome the Antichrist. Yes, as the last generation, you and I will see with our own eyes the one called the Antichrist, peace with Israel, the rebuilding of the temple, and the great, global holocaust of Jews and Christians.

THE END TO THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS

Matthew 24:9-14

We will know the “beginning of sorrows” is ending and the great tribulation is about to take place when the recent martyrdom of Jews and Christians are hated by all nations, persecuted in countless ways, and even killed. At this point in history, America has not yet experienced the atrocities seen in most other parts of the world. However, now that we’ve reached the end of the beginning of sorrows, we also know we are entering the next phase—“hatred by all nations and continual persecution.” (24:9)

During these times let’s keep in mind the words of the apostle Peter: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (1 Peter 4:12-13)

I am convinced that the recent martyrdom of Charlie Kirk was a sign to the United States that its season of Christian ease, freedom from physical persecution, has come to an end. Charlie’s last name, derived from the Old Norse *kirkja*—meaning “church”—symbolically suggests that the bullet which pierced Charlie’s neck pierced the church itself.

The caution to each of us is this: as physical persecution increases and intensifies, many will be offended by what they see happening to fellow believers and will withdraw from the Christian faith and fellowship. Not only that, but in their desperation to preserve their own lives, they will betray, hate, and distance themselves from those they once worshipped and fellowshiped with. (24:10)

We must also be cautious of what others teach about the days we are living in. Many will not teach what the Bible truly says and will deceive many because they do not understand the Scriptures. Sadly, too many don’t believe or teach that we are the last generation. (24:11)

Another caution during these times is the overwhelming presence of sin and evil. You will be tempted to fall away from your faith, give in to sin, and just go with the flow. Because the pressure of living in a sin dominated culture will be so great. No matter how strong you believe your faith is now, the pressure will be so great that even you will feel the pressure to move away from Jesus (24:12)

No matter how difficult things become, we must be so much the more committed to remaining faithful, guarding against deception, and resisting the temptation to hate those who hate us. Jesus gives us the key word—endurance—to carry us through. To endure is to feel the pressure, to wrestle with thoughts of giving up, but holding on regardless. You cling to your faith, remembering the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 8:18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Always seeing the prize before us—the fulfillment of God’s promises to us—is the motivation for enduring whatever comes our way. (24:13)

The great encouragement in these days of increasing trouble and pressure is this: the true gospel will continue to be preached. People will continue to be saved. Hope will not die. Hold on. Hold on just a little while longer. It'll all be over soon. (24:14)

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Matthew 24:15-22

As persecution and martyrdom increase, we approach the end of what Jesus called “the beginning of sorrows.” But it is the appearance of the *abomination of desolation* that marks the beginning of a far more intense period called the Great Tribulation. Jesus himself warned: “When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand)” (24:15; Mark 13:14).

This *abomination of desolation* was first prophesied in Daniel 9:27, where it is said that in the middle of the final week, “he [the Antichrist] shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate.” The middle of the week refers to the breaking of a seven-year treaty three and a half years after it was entered into by Israel and her enemies.

This refers to the one known as the Antichrist, who will exalt himself above all that is called God, even sitting in the temple of God and declaring himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4). This blasphemous act unleashes the final and most intense period of tribulation, described by Jesus as: “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (24:21).

The severity of this time is so great that Jesus warned, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22). The term *flesh* here refers to all people—meaning that if Jesus did not intervene, the Antichrist’s destruction would result in global annihilation.

THEN JESUS COMES

Matthew 24:23-31

During this time of great tribulation, there will be an increase in those claiming to be Jesus. False prophets will also appear claiming to speak for God while contradicting His Word. To lend credibility to their deception, they will perform great signs and wonders—miracles so convincing that even the strongest of Christians will be tempted to believe and follow their teaching (24:24). Jesus gave these warnings in advance so that we could be prepared and not deceived when these events take place (24:25).

Countering the false prophets and Christs, Jesus taught that his return will not be a secret or take place anywhere on the earth: “If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not” (Matthew 24:26).

Jesus’ return will take place immediately after the great tribulation, the end of the seven years the Antichrist is in authority (24:29). It will be unmistakable and visible to all; like lightning flashing across the sky Jesus will be seen in the clouds (Matthew 24:27). This glorious appearing will take place *immediately after* the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:29). At that moment, what we call the

rapture will occur when Jesus sends out his angels to gather his people to him; “He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (24:31).

In this scenario there is no rapture before the great tribulation and there is no one left behind who has any possibility of being saved after the rapture, since the end of our present age takes place at this time and then we enter the thousand-year millennium.

DISCERNING THE TIMES

Matthew 24:32-51

In the preceding verses, Jesus outlined the events leading to the rise of the Antichrist, the great tribulation, and his return. Here, in Matthew 24:32–51, he offers illustrations to emphasize the importance of discerning our times. We are meant to know where we are on the prophetic timeline, and to live with spiritual alertness—not complacency.

The Fig Tree (24:32–35)

Jesus turns to nature to reveal how we can recognize the final generation. Just as the budding of a fig tree signals that summer is near, so too do the prophetic signs—the beginning of sorrows—described earlier in the chapter indicate that the arrival of the Antichrist and Jesus’ return is less than seventy years away.

Jesus declares that the generation witnessing the convergence of these signs (leaves) will be the last before his return.

We can say with complete confidence that you and I are living in this final generation.

Let us continue to be watchful, discerning, and prepared.

The Days of Noah (24:37-39)

In these verses, Jesus turns to familiar history to make a sobering point: while we can discern that we are living in the final generation, we cannot know the exact twenty-four-hour day or sixty-minute hour of his return.

Just as in the days of Noah, when judgment came suddenly upon a world consumed with everyday life, so too will it be when Jesus returns. Despite the convergence of prophetic signs—intensifying pressure, rampant sin, and widespread violence, people will continue eating, drinking, marrying, and going about their everyday routines, unaware of the approaching climax of history.

This presents a great danger: the distractions of daily life dulling our spiritual sensitivity (Mark 4:19). We risk missing the prophetic significance of our generation simply because we’re absorbed in everyday life. The greatest danger is that these distractions could cause us to be left outside of the proverbial ark when Jesus returns.

Jesus’ warning is clear—do not let the cares, riches, and possessions of life lull you into spiritual sleep. Stay awake. Stay aware. His return will be sudden, and only those watching will be ready; even as in the days of Noah.

ONE TAKEN, ONE LEFT (Matthew 24:40–42)

Jesus continues his warning with the image of two people in the field, two women at the mill—one is taken, the other left. The separation is sudden, without warning. There's no time to prepare once the moment arrives. In other words, everyday life and busyness will continue on up to that day Jesus returns.

The difference between those taken and those left behind isn't what they were doing, but whether they were watching. Whether they have the hope and longing of his return in their conscious and spirit (1 John 3:2-3; Titus 2:13), again emphasizing the importance of watching: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

KEEP WATCH (24:43-51)

Jesus intensifies his urgency to spiritual vigilance with two powerful illustrations: the thief in the night and the faithful servant. Both emphasize one central truth—we must keep watch.

The Thief in the Night (24:43–44)

Jesus compares his return to a thief breaking into a house. If the homeowner had known when the thief was coming, he would have stayed alert. The message is clear: you won't get a warning—so live ready.

This isn't about fear—it's about wisdom. The unpredictability of Jesus' return demands constant spiritual alertness. We are not meant to guess the hour; we are meant to live every hour as if it could be the one. "So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." (24:44)

The Faithful and Wicked Servant (24:45–51)

Jesus draws a contrast between two servants:

The **faithful servant** is wise, diligent, and trustworthy. He continues to serve others and fulfill his responsibilities, even when the master is delayed. When the master returns, he is rewarded and entrusted with even more.

The **wicked servant**, convinced the master won't return soon, becomes careless and abusive. He indulges himself and mistreats others. When the master arrives unexpectedly, the servant is judged severely.

This is a warning to resist spiritual complacency. The delay in Jesus' return is not permission to live without righteousness or to abandon the hope of his coming—it is a test of our faithfulness. We must ask ourselves: Am I faithful? Truly faithful? His delay is also an expression of God's compassion. God is not slow in keeping His promise, but patient, not wanting anyone to not enter his eternal kingdom. He is holding back as long as possible so that all may have the opportunity to repent and be ready to enter his kingdom (2 Peter 3:9).

In these verses Jesus isn't just telling us to be ready—he's showing us what readiness looks like: a life of consistent obedience, compassion, and spiritual alertness. A life with our consciousness

always in tune to the fact that he is coming when we least expect him. A life with our bodies and minds fully submitted to righteousness.

MATTHEW 25

Here in Matthew 25 Jesus continues his urgency to be ready with the focus that our readiness is dependent on the Holy Spirit being alive and active within us.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1–13)

This parable focuses on ten virgins who set themselves apart in purity for a specific bridegroom waiting patiently in expectation of the call that he had come for them. Though they all lived in expectation and all heard the call, only five were prepared to meet him.

Those who were prepared were considered wise because their lamps—symbolizing the human spirit—were filled with oil, representing the Holy Spirit. The other five, though they initially had oil, allowed it to run out. Unprepared at the crucial moment, they were left behind.

This parable emphasizes that spiritual readiness is not achieved through personal discipline alone, but through the active, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. As the apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 8:9, without the Holy Spirit we do not belong to Jesus: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

What about you? Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed in Jesus? (Acts 19:2) And if so, is the Holy Spirit still active and alive within you today?

The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30)

Here, Jesus tells of a master who entrusts his servants with talents—symbolizing Jesus giving the gifts of the Holy Spirits—before going away. Two servants invest and multiply what they’ve been given. Another hides his talent out of fear. Upon the master’s return, the faithful are rewarded, and the fearful servant is cast out.

This parable teaches the same lesson as the parable of the ten virgins. The talents are the gifts of the Holy Spirit given by God when the Holy Spirit lives within us. Watchfulness includes stewardship. We’re called to let the Holy Spirit be active and alive through us—not to bury Him in fear or complacency. To not use what God has given is to keep the Holy Spirit hidden, inactive, and buried within us.

The Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46)

In these verses, Jesus clearly teaches that a time of accountability is coming—when He will separate all people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The standard? How they treated “the least of these”: the hungry, the stranger, the sick, and those in prison.

Jesus' use of the word "brethren" and not neighbor reflects our responsibility toward fellow believers. As we live in a world that often opposes us—where we are misunderstood, mistreated, and even hated—it is vital that God's people care for one another, from the least to the greatest, according to genuine need. No one in God's family should be without. No one with the resources to help a fellow brother or sister should hold back.

So what about you? Do you tell someone you'll pray for them, yet do not help when you have the means to meet their need? The apostle James offers a sobering rebuke to such empty gestures:

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled'; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

We are quickly moving into a time where dependence upon one another will be a necessity. Are you prepared?

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Jesus isn't just returning for those who believe—He's returning for those who are ready. Who are prepared. All ten virgins believed, yet only five were prepared. All the servants believed, yet only some were faithful. Belief alone is not the measure for meeting Jesus at his return; readiness is. Readiness is a life marked by obedience, filled with the Holy Spirit, God's gifts, and loving His people with tangible compassion. It's not enough to say, "I believe." The question is: does your life reflect that belief in action, in surrender, in spiritual vitality? Jesus is coming. The hour is unknown. You believe. But are you ready?

So what about you? When Jesus returns, will your lamp be full, your talents multiplied, and your heart found faithful doing God's work? Now—today—is the time to make yourself ready.

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