

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SEALS AND MATTHEW 24.

## I. THE PRELIMINARY SIGNS OF MATTHEW 24:4-8 AND THE FIRST FOUR SEALS

In the last two sessions we examined

1. **Matthew 24:4-31** and discovered that the Sermon on the Mount of Olives consisted of three main sections:

<p><i>PRELIMINARY SIGNS OF ADVENT</i> <i>Matthew 24:4-8</i> "the beginning of the birth-pangs" "the end is not yet"</p>	<p><i>THE TRIBULATION TIME</i> <i>Matthew 24:9-28</i></p>	<p><i>IMMINENT SIGNS OF ADVENT</i> <i>Matthew 24:29-30b</i> <i>THE SECOND ADVENT</i> <i>Matthew 24:30c-31</i></p>
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Further the Preliminary Signs outlined in Matthew 24:4-8 were

- False Christs
- Nation against Nation, Kingdom against Kingdom
- Famine
- Earthquakes in various places

Luke 21:10-11 added to this list

- Pestilences

2. We then turned our attention to **Revelation 6:1-8** and examined the First Four Seals. As each was opened a rider on a horse was called forth. Each rider has different equipment and his horse is of a different colour.

- The first rider, with a bow is given a crown of victory. He represents CONQUEST/WAR
- The second rider, with a great sword takes peace from the earth. This results in men slaying one another. He represents SLAUGHTER/LOSS OF LIFE
- The third rider has a pair of scales with which he is to measure wheat and barley. He represents FAMINE.
- The Fourth Rider whose name is death is followed by "hades". He represents PESTILENCE/PLAGUE.

The Correspondence between the Preliminary signs and the horsemen of the first four seals is obvious. Both cover the same ground. Our conclusion is that the First Four Seals express the Preliminary Signs of Advent in Matthew 24:4-8 using the imagery of Apocalyptic.



## II. THE IMMEDIATE SIGNS OF ADVENT (Matt. 24:29-30b) AND THE SIXTH SEAL.

Matthew 24:29-31 can be subdivided into three points:

### a. *The Signs of Imminent Advent*

#### **Matthew 24:29-30a** (ESV)

<sup>29</sup> “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man . . .

“The powers of the heavens” are the “sun”, “moon” and the “stars”. These are to “be shaken” as by an earthquake. The result of the shaking of the heavens is that

- The sun will be darkened
- The moon will not give its light
- The stars will fall from heaven

These PHYSICAL SIGNS will accompany

- “the sign of the Son of Man”

### b. *The Reaction of the Wicked:*

#### **Matthew 24:30b** (ESV)

<sup>30</sup> . . . and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn . . .

### c. *The Second Coming:*

#### **Matthew 24:30c-31** (ESV)

<sup>30</sup> . . . and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Sixth Seal can be similarly subdivided as follows:

### a. *The PHYSICAL Signs that immediately precede and thus announce the Second Coming:*

#### **Revelation 6:12-14** (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, <sup>13</sup> and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. <sup>14</sup> The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

The physical signs presented are:

- “a great earthquake” (6:12)

- “the sun becomes black as sackcloth” (6:12)
- “the full moon becomes as blood” (6:12)
- “the stars of the sky fall” (6:13)
- “the sky vanishes like a scroll (6:14)
- “every mountain and island removed out of its place” (6:14)

With respect to these PHYSICAL SIGNS it is important to note the following:

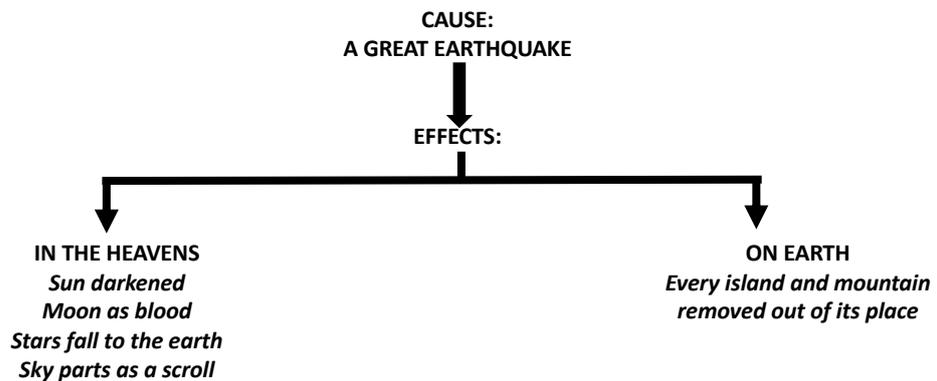
- They occur simultaneously. The “GREAT EARTHQUAKE” is COSMIC in scale:

It *SHAKES the HEAVENS* and causes the stars to fall – this is likened to a fig tree which “sheds its winter fruit when **shaken** by a gale.” (6:13).

The same earthquake also causes the sun to darken, the moon to become like blood and the sky to vanish “like a scroll being rolled up”.

The same *SHAKES the EARTH* and moves “every island and mountain out of its place” (6:14).

These are all related to the earthquake as EFFECTS are related to a CAUSE.



- Further, these events are directly CONNECTED TO THE SECOND COMING as the response of the wicked to them reveal:

**Revelation 6:16 (ESV)**

“Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne.”

The Advent is a WORLD-WIDE phenomenon: “every eye shall see Him”. The events that usher in the Advent will also be WORLD-WIDE. They are not hidden in a corner for the vision of a few.

Seventh-day Adventists have INHERITED an understanding of the physical events associated with the Sixth Seal from the MILLERITE Movement which SEPARATED the EFFECTS from their CAUSE.

**FIRST** the “Great Earthquake” which introduces the Sixth Seal was identified as the LISBON EARTHQUAKE of November 1, 1755 which was the result of

the movement of the two Tectonic Plates that meet under the Atlantic Ocean at the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. These two plates – the North American Plate and the Eurasian Plate – are moving apart.

They shifted significantly on November 1, 1755 causing a major earthquake which measured 11 on the Richter Scale. It was followed by several shockwaves and Tsunamis which caused extensive damage in Portugal, Spain, North Africa, France, Northern Italy. Lisbon particularly suffered both from the earthquake and the resultant tsunamis as well as fires that followed.

The LISBON EARTHQUAKE fails to fulfil the Biblical criteria for “the Great Earthquake” in that

1. it was ***not accompanied*** by the signs in the heavens – the sun was not darkened, the moon did not become as blood, the stars did not fall from heaven

2. it was ***not extensive enough*** for it did not remove “***every*** mountain and island . . . from its place”. The Great Earthquake is world-wide in its impact. The Lisbon Earthquake was not.

3. The LISBON EARTHQUAKE did ***NOT OCCUR at the right time*** for the Great Earthquake comes to view again in the Seventh Bowl

***Revelation 16:17-20*** (ESV)

<sup>17</sup>The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air . . . “It is done!” <sup>18</sup>And there were . . . a ***great earthquake*** such as there had never been since man was on the earth, ***so great was that earthquake***. <sup>19</sup>The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell . . . <sup>20</sup>And ***every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found***.

The Seventh bowl concludes the Seven Last Plagues and ushers in the Second Coming.

The Seven last plagues are yet future and the Lisbon earthquake therefore occurred at the wrong time.

***SECOND:*** The sign that “***the sun became black as sackcloth***” was identified by the Millerites as **the Dark Day of May 19, 1780. This was 25 years after the Lisbon Earthquake.**

**In Hartford, Connecticut as the General Assembly met in the Chambers of the State House it “grew so dark that it seemed as if the sun had been turned off. Outside on the streets of Hartford there was an inky blackness. Birds were silent and disappeared, and fowl retired to their roosts.**

This again was a LOCALIZED EVENT occurring in the New England States of C18th USA which fitted the Millerite time-frame for the Advent in 1844. It is an interpretation that separates cause and effect.

***THIRD,*** a meteorite shower that occurred in New England on November 13, 1833 was interpreted as being the **FALLING of the STARS** of the Sixth Seal.

This again was a LOCALIZED EVENT occurring in the New England States of C18th USA which fitted the Millerite time-frame for the Advent in 1844. It is an interpretation that separates cause and effect.

**FOURTH**, these localized events occurring over a period stretching from 1755 to 1835 did not IMMEDIATELY usher in the Second Coming.

b. The REACTION of the Wicked to these Signs

**Revelation 6:15-17 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave<sup>[d]</sup> and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, <sup>17</sup> for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

There are seven groups of people here that react to the SIGNS of the SIXTH Seal which usher in the Second Coming. These are

- the kings of the earth
- the great ones
- the generals
- the rich
- the powerful
- slave
- and free

Yet they are all united in the terror demonstrated. They “hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb”.

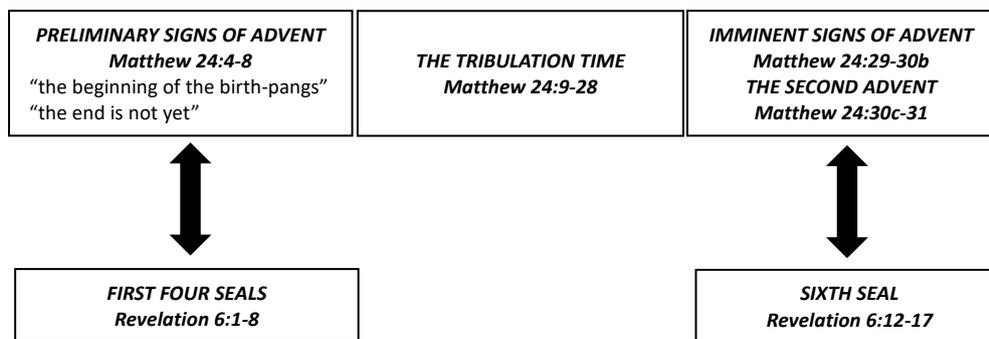
In both Old and New Testament times when invasion of Judea occurred the populace would hide in the caves and among the rocks of the wilderness area. But here in terror they cry out for the mountains and the rocks to fall on them. The wilderness that had offered protection to the children of God during the 1260 years, offers now no protection to the Wicked from God.

Note in passing the chiasm:

Rocks  
Mountains (v.15)  
Mountains  
Rocks (v.16)

The time that has arrived is “THE GREAT DAY of THEIR WRATH” (v.17).

CONCLUSION: Both Matthew 24:29-30b and the Sixth Seal cover the same events. Therefore both the Preliminary Signs and the Imminent Signs of Advent are covered in the Seals.



### III. THE FIFTH SEAL AND MATTHEW 24

We will now consider the relationship between the Fifth Seal and Matthew 24.

The Fifth Seal opens to reveal those who had been “slain for the word of God and the Testimony they had borne”.

#### **Revelation 6:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup>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 witness they had borne.

Their deaths occurred prior to the opening of the Fifth Seal. One such martyr is mentioned in the Letter to the Church in Pergamos:

#### **Revelation 2:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup>“I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith<sup>[b]</sup> even in the days of ***Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you***, where Satan dwells.

They are not literally “under the altar”. The imagery is of the daily service in which the blood of the sacrifice was poured out at the base of the altar. The deaths of the martyrs is being acknowledged as a sacrifice acceptable to God.

#### **Revelation 6:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup>They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

They cry out for God to intervene.

#### **Revelation 6:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup>Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number

of ***their fellow servants***  
 and their brothers<sup>[c]</sup>  
 should be complete,  
 who were ***to be killed***  
 as they themselves had been.

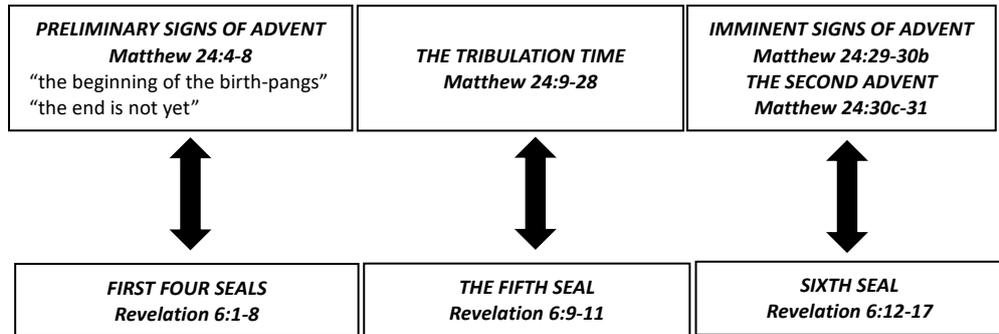
So the Fifth Seal reveals a period in which the saints are to be KILLED as does Matthew 24:9-28 which pictures a period in which the saints are to be killed during the tribulation time

**Matthew 24:9** (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup>“Then they will deliver you up *to tribulation* and *put you to death*, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

The content of the Fifth Seal therefore matches that of the Tribulation Time of Matthew 24:9-28.

The last part of the Jig Saw Puzzle falls into place. The Fifth Seal fits between the First Four Seals which parallel Matthew 24:1-8 and the Sixth Seal which parallels Matthew 24:29-30b. So the Fifth Seal parallels the Tribulation Time of Matthew 24:9-28.



**IV. THE SEVENTH SEAL AND MATTHEW 24**

One last task remains: to establish the relationship between the Seventh Seal and Matthew 24.

There is one aspect of Matthew 24:29-31 that the sixth seal does not develop”

**Matthew 24:30b-31** (ESV)

<sup>30b</sup> . . . and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

The Seventh Seal reads:

Revelation 8:1

We would expect this to be developed in the seventh seal but it is not. Revelation has much more to say before the Second Coming is discussed in detail (Revelation 19:11-22:5)

**THUS THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES ARE REITERATED IN THE SEAL SECTION OF MATTHEW 24:1-31.**

## THE FIRST FOUR SEALS

### PRELIMINARY SIGNS OF ADVENT

REVELATION 6: 1- 8; MATTHEW 24: 4 -8 (NKJV)

#### REVELATION 6: 1- 8 (NKJV)

**N**OW I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."

2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see."

4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see."

8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with

#### MATTHEW 24: 4 – 8 (NKJV)

**T**HEN Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

6 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

8 "All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

Studies in Revelation

## THE SIXTH SEAL

### IMMINENT SIGNS OF ADVENT

REVELATION 6: 12 - 17; MATTHEW 24: 29 - 31 (NKJV)

#### REVELATION 6: 12 - 17 (NKJV)

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

#### MATTHEW 24: 29 - 31 (NKJV)

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

## THE FIFTH SEAL and THE TRIBULATION TIME OVERVIEW

REVELATION 6: 9 - 11; MATTHEW 24: 9 - 28 (NKJV)

### 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.

### MATTHEW 24: 9 - 28 (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.

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

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

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

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

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.

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 "Then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountains.

17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe *it*.

24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

25 "See, I have told you beforehand.

26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*.

27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

28 "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

## THE FIRST SIX SEALS and THE LORD'S LITTLE APOCALYPSE OVERVIEW

REVELATION 6: 1 - 17; MATTHEW 24: 4 - 31 (NKJV)

### REVELATION 6: 1 - 17 (NKJV)

**N**OW I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."

2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

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4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see."

8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with

him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

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.*

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

### MATTHEW 24: 4 - 31 (NKJV)

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

6 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

8 "All these are the beginning of sorrows.

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.

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

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

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

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

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.

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

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27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

28 "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

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30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, as they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, as they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.