

# MATTHEW 24 vs 21

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**21 for then will be great tribulation** / Jesus is talking to His disciples, telling them in advance about the destruction of Jerusalem, and watching their response. Undoubtedly, they are horrified and shocked. And that's over the Temple being destroyed; and Jerusalem being mowed down. And Jesus doesn't need to fill in all the details of war and terror. He knew Josephus, the historian was going to be on the scene reporting the nightly news for all the generations to hear. We have Josephus' vivid account what took place.



Jesus knows what's in our hearts. And His disciples really don't know about the Church that He is building in the time of the Gentile nations... that will come to an end. Jesus has been talking about wars and famines and false prophets; and the love of many will grow cold... and the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world and then... the end will come.

Remember: **Jesus** taught in all Syria and the multitudes heard him gladly; what **Moses** taught about God was known from Egypt and throughout the middle east; **Daniel** and **Ezekiel** taught in Babylon and Persia -- Iraq and Iran; **Jonah** taught in north Iraq; **Jeremiah** took the law to the Isles of the West; the **disciples** went through all Turkey and East Europe -- Macedonia, Greece and north to Russia... ALL heard the good news of the Messiah; the **queen of the South** told of the God of Solomon... and 1000 years later **Paul** taught those in the same deserts of Arabia; the **Eunuch from Ethiopia** took the good news to his country and evangelized the entire African continent; **Timothy** went to east India; and don't forget: China's greatest emperor **KangXi** who reigned longest during the Qing dynasty wrote poetry about his savior Jesus Christ,

Jesus says...

**for then will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever will after** / this tribulation has not happened; and Jesus says what Daniel said, This tribulation coming... we have never seen anything like it; and we never will... when it is finished.

To the church of Philadelphia, Jesus said, because you have kept My word and not denied My name... I also will keep you from the terrible hour of testing which will come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. **the Feast of Trumpets, the 5<sup>th</sup> great Day belonging to the Lord... already occurred.**

**22 And except those days be shortened** / and God will shorten them... for His people Daniel says, many will be purified and whitened and brightened... those who did not embrace the Suffering Savior's first coming... those described in the churches of Revelation starting with Ephesus, who lost their first love... to Laodicea, who thought they needed nothing, who left the Lord standing outside their door; all will be holding their services as they go into the tribulation:

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**And except those days were shortened, no life would be saved: but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened** / for the sake of God's elect... / it's already determined by God. That's the way He wants it; that's the way it will be:

the House of Judah... and the House of Israel; He cares about both those peoples. He really cares about faithful Judah and Jerusalem; but He also cares about faithful Israel... the 10 northern tribes; lost Israel... that name meaning: **the ones ruled by God**. Rebecca's millions upon millions of children... like the stars of the heavens and the sands of the sea... they were to be a blessing to the world...that He also cares about.

He warned us about the desolation of the Temple; He warned us about the desolation of His Church.

**23 Then if any says to you, Lo...mark this, here is Christ = the Messiah, or over there He is, do not believe them** / don't go; don't stop to listen. Run!

**24 For there will arise false Christs, and false prophets, and will show mega signs and wonders; so as if possible, the elect would be deceived** / they would be caused to wander into error.

His second warning continues...

**25 Behold, I have told you** / in advance, before it happens; He told us all we need to know.

**26 Why is all this said? If they will say to you, Behold, He is in the desert, don't go** / what? lots of goofy stuff; He won't be there!

If they say...

**Behold, He is in the secret place don't believe it** / it sounds too freaky, doesn't it?! There are lots of secret societies and organizations that will be destroyed. He won't be there. people will be saying lots of stupid sounding things; don't believe them. No pilgrimage necessary; no loading up the car. When Jesus spoke it was clear.

**27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines even to the west so will also be the coming... of the Son of Man** / as quick and unexpected as that happens; flashing in a moment; / **the parousia**; the official coming... **the 6<sup>th</sup> great Day of the Lord**... which John tells us is after the marriage supper of the Lamb... when He comes with the armies of heaven; **No one on earth, no one in heaven... will miss His coming.**



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Then Jesus gives us this very strange maxim; He just spoke clear, now He's stumping the super mystical

**28 for wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will be gathered.**

What a vivid metaphor! Carcass and vultures. This verse has had so many narrowly focused applications.

**Is it the dying Temple** with its traditions and the Roman vultures gathering? Maybe.

**Is it His Church**, more like a cadaver than a vital, living body... growing cold in the time of the Gentiles, with false-christs and false prophets, hucksters and charlatans -- vultures gathering over that body? Possibly.

**Or is it the gathering of the nations to Armageddon** to war against the living God? It could be.

But if that's the meaning, then in Revelation 19, verse 17 and 18... we read of the angel saying to all the fowl that fly in the midst of heaven; all the birds; all the winged critters, not just vultures:

Come, be gathered... to the great supper of God. You're invited too!

That you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and the flesh of their riders, and the flesh of all -- free and bond, and small and great!

That's a 9- or 10-course meal God has prepared for all the fowl of heaven... dining on all those that rose up against the living God.

Can you imagine the belch after that dinner?

So let's not get bogged down with the meaning of:

**wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will be gathered** / because it sounds like wherever those little peckers are pecking on His people... God will have the final laugh! With a bunch of bird-brains pecking on those peckers! It makes you proud of God; He's thought of everything! And all He's asked us is: be watchful; be faithful.

**29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light** / four times in the prophet Joel's little book he speaks of this obvious violent disturbance... visible in the skies. No one is going to miss HIS appearing;

**and the stars will fall from heaven** / only Matthew, Mark and Luke... tell us Jesus' last days prophecies. John doesn't in his gospel. But in Revelation 9, he tells us he saw... A star fall from heaven... and was given a key. So obviously, we're talking about intelligent beings -- well, let us say, powerful beings... powerful way beyond you and me... though their intelligence might be in question;

**and the administrative powers of the heavens will shake** / and somewhere in these words is probably heaven's biggest asteroid: Satan himself being thrown down, too .

<sup>30</sup> **And then will appear the sign in heaven... of the Son of Man, then all the tribes of the earth will mourn** / the Son of all mankind: those who went through the great tribulation; they will weep, and smite their chests,

**and then... they will see the Son of Man coming** / Yes! The word is: **parousia**; He is on official business, **this 6<sup>th</sup> Day belonging to the Lord** has arrived; He will put down the rebellion, and it can happen suddenly, simply by His appearing.

<sup>31</sup> **And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet** / notice where He sends His angels, **and they will safely gather together His elect from the four winds** / from every direction,

**from one end of heaven to the other.**

Huh?! That's right. His elect will not go through the tribulation... the catching away of the dead in Christ and those living who remain... Paul wrote Thessalonians has occurred: For God has not appointed us to wrath. They kept the Word of His endurance; they did not deny His Name. Matthew writes: immediately after the tribulation; and after the sun and moon stop shining or reflecting light... which is not difficult to imagine if a terrible global war has ensued; and after the heavens shake loose whatever dirt is up there... after all that,

**those on earth will see... the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven... with administrative power and great glory...**

You know, it's going to be exciting. Who would want to miss it?