

**Lesson 46**  
**Time –4/1/30 AD, 12 Nisan Monday**

In the previous lesson we saw the first two of three of Jesus' prophecies about of the future. He had He delivered them after He had left the Temple on Monday evening. The first prophecy had predicted the upcoming destruction of the Temple in forty years. The next prophecy had predicted all the trials which would come upon believers during the Church Age. Here, in the third prophecy, Jesus talked about the Great Tribulation which would take place after the Church Age and just before His Second Coming.

**Prophecy on the Mount of Olives – the Tribulation**

**Matthew 24:15 “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—**

**Mark 13:14a “When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—**

The comment, “let the reader understand,” is identical in both Matthew and Luke. That makes it certain that it was Jesus' comment, not that of Matthew or Mark. It related to the readers of Daniel 9:20-27. These words were intended by Jesus for all generations that would read Daniel. For the time being we will carry on in the Gospels' accounts of Jesus' prophecy. A little later in this lesson we will study the Daniel passage about the “abomination that causes desolation.”

**Matthew 24:16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.**

**Mark 13:14b then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.**

This appears to refer to the flight of believing Israel at the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation. It is depicted in Revelation 12:6. At that point they will be protected for the last three and a half years of the Tribulation after the death of the two witnesses who preached God's word for the first three and a half years. I believe that “the mountains” here probably refers to the mountain range called “Horeb” in the Bible. That range contains Mt. Sinai.<sup>1</sup>

**Matthew 24:17-20 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.**

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<sup>1</sup> *That mountain range is in north central Arabia. See my paper “The Route of the Exodus” or my study on the Book of Exodus. Both show where the real Mt. Sinai is located.*

**Mark 13:15-18** **Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that this will not take place in winter,**

I believe that all indications from Scripture show that, by God's grace, this will actually take place in the spring just after the Passover.

**Matthew 24:21-22** **For then (*the Great Tribulation*) there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.**

**Mark 13:19-20** **because those (*the Great Tribulation*) will be days of distress unequaled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again. If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.**

This makes it clear that Jesus was talking about the Great Tribulation. More specifically, it is talking about the last three and a half years of the seven-year Tribulation.

**Matthew 24:23-26** **At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.**

**Mark 13:21-23** **At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if that were possible. So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.**

That time is the second half of the Tribulation. At the beginning of that time all of the fallen angels will have been thrown to earth out of the universe.<sup>2</sup> They will have great powers to deceive and perform miracles.

**Matthew 24:27-28** **For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.**

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<sup>2</sup> *Revelation 12:7-9* “And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

In the countryside you can locate a carcass from miles away, because you can see the vultures above it in the air. In the end times, believers will be able to spot the time of Christ's return by the sight of the Lord's Angelic host. The carcass in the image speaks of the dead bodies of the armies of the Beast. One group will be in the Valley of Megiddo (Revelation 16:16) sixty miles to the north of Jerusalem. The second group will be in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1) fifteen miles to the southeast. The two groups will have been deployed in an enveloping movement around Judea and Jerusalem as described in Ezekiel 39:3.

Matthew 24:29 **“Immediately after the distress of those days <sup>3</sup> “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.’**

Mark 13:24-25 **“But in those days, following that distress, “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.’**

Luke 21:25-26 **“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.**

The distress of those days refers to the ‘the abomination that causes desolation.’ The “stars falling from the sky” refers to the casting down of the fallen angels from their habitations in the universe at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

Matthew 24:30a **“At that time <sup>4</sup> the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky,**

This event occurs at the end of the seven-year Great Tribulation. Josephus recorded that a star in the shape of a sword (which is in the shape of a cross) appeared over Jerusalem at the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. It is interesting that a similar sign seems to be indicated here at the time of Jerusalem's final deliverance.

Matthew 24:30b **and all the nations of the earth will mourn.**

They will mourn because they will have rejected Him and will understand that they are undone.

Matthew 24:30c **They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.**

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<sup>3</sup> *The distress of those days is ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’*

<sup>4</sup> *The end of the Tribulation.*

Mark 13:26 **“At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.**

From Daniel’s description of the same event we can infer that the clouds refer to the “clouds of heaven” which are His heavenly armies:

Daniel 7:13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.”

Matthew 24:31 **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.**

Mark 13:27 **And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.**

Luke 21:27-28 **At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”**

I believe that in the terms “from one end of heaven to the other” and “to the ends of the heavens” the word “heaven” refers to the universe. The fallen angels will already have been on earth from the midpoint of the Tribulation. This describes the gathering of the elect angels to participate in and witness the final defeat of Satan in the great Angelic Conflict. At the same time, the LORD will gather all the believers from all generations of history to participate in and witness the defeat of the beast and the human enemies of the faith. This verse may indicate that the believers who have “gone to heaven” have in fact gone to “the heavens.” That would be the part of the universe / heavens which are controlled by the angels of the LORD.

I believe the rapture of the Church will begin on the first day of the seventh month in the Jewish Calendar at the Feast of Trumpets <sup>5</sup> (Leviticus 23:24) with a Trumpet call:

1 Thessalonians 4:16 “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

Seven years plus ten days later, to the day, just before His return, there will be another trumpet call which will fulfill the imagery of the Day of Atonement:

Leviticus 25:9 “Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land.”

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<sup>5</sup> *Called by the Jews today “Rosh Hashanah.”*

The gathering of all believers in Jerusalem will be accomplished five days later on the Feast of Tabernacles (also known as the Feast of Ingathering).

**Matthew 24:32-33** “**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. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.**

**Mark 13:28-29** “**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. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.**

**Luke 21:29-31** **He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.**

At the beginning of the discourse the disciples had asked: Matthew 24:3b “what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” The signs Jesus had just described would be witnessed by the generation of those who would see the end of the age.

**Matthew 24:34** **I tell you the truth, this (*that*) generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.**

**Mark 13:30** **I tell you the truth, this (*that*) generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.**

**Luke 21:32** **“I tell you the truth, this (*that*) generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.**

There is a controversy related to the translation of the word (γενεά {ge-ne-ä'}) translated here as “generation.” Some would translate this word as “age” thus eliminating many problems. Unfortunately, it is a stretch to translate the word this way. When the disciples asked about the “age,” within this same context in Matthew 24:3, they used the word αἰών {ī-ō'n}. This is the word that is usually used to express the concept of “an age.”

The word translated “this” is ἡ {hā}. It is the nominative, singular, feminine article of ὁ {ho}. According to the Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament that word can be translated “the, this, that, or who.” Accordingly, I think “this generation” should probably be translated as “that generation.” Either way, it is clear that the “this generation” here is referring to the “that generation” who would see all the signs described in Matthew 24:15-22 and Mark 13:14-30. They were those who saw the signs beginning with “the abomination the causes desolation.” They are not the “this generation” of the disciples then standing in front of Jesus. All the signs described in those passages will be fulfilled within the seven years of the Great Tribulation.

**Matthew 24:35-36** **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**

**Mark 13:31-32** **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**

**Luke 21:33** **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.**

The statement that, at that time, even the Son didn't know about that day or hour seems to support the teaching that, during His incarnation, Jesus had relinquished, or emptied Himself of His omniscience (along with His omnipotence and omnipresence). Later, after His resurrection, Jesus took up those attributes of His Godhead, and again knew all things.

The statement that “no one know the day or the hour” proves that this last part has been speaking of the last days before the Second Advent of Christ. It isn't talking about the destruction of Jerusalem. The destruction of Jerusalem had already been prophesied in Ezekiel 4 to happen forty years after the final rejection of Jesus Christ.

### **Prophecy on the Mount of Olives – Command to be Watchful**

**Matthew 24:37-41** **As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 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; 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. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.**

Those “taken away” by the Noah's flood were all unbelievers. This is not warning believers about the Rapture of the Church, this is warning unbelievers about the cleansing of the World of all unbelievers when Jesus returns to the earth to reign. Here, those taken will be unbelievers and those left will be believers. At the Rapture, those taken will be believers and those left will be unbelievers.

The following three passages from Matthew, Mark, and Luke here are all separate and different from each other, although they are all warnings to be alert. Below is Matthew's account:

**Matthew 24:42-44** **“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 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. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.**

This is Matthew's record of a restatement of the warning Jesus had made often (Luke 11:21-23, Luke 12:39). Here, the house is the world, and the owner of the house is Satan. The "thief" who is going to take away what Satan owns <sup>6</sup> is Jesus Christ. This speaks of the fact that Satan is ignorant of when Jesus will return to claim Satan's world. Many of the first century AD disciples expected Him to return in their lifetime. Each of us should live our lives with the expectation that He will come on any day.

Matthew's account also speaks to the fact that Satan would be totally surprised at the method by which Christ would deliver salvation. Next is Mark's account:

**Mark 13:33-37** **Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"**

This different warning, recorded in Mark, was given at the same time. In it the "house" is Christ's Church, and the servants who are charged with protecting it are all believers. They were to be aware that they would be held responsible for using the gifts given to them to nourish it and protect it. Below is Luke's account:

**Luke 21:34-36** **"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."**

In the warning recorded in Luke, Jesus enumerated some of the temptations that would cripple and blind many. It is noteworthy that one of the primary temptations would be anxiety, or failure to trust in God.

**Matthew 24:45-47** **"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for**

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<sup>6</sup> *In the Book of Job Satan boasted that he ran the world: Job 1:7 "The LORD said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the LORD, 'From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.'"*

*Just a few days before this Passover Jesus had called Satan "the prince of this world": Matthew 12:31 "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven cast out.*

**that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.**

Here Jesus expanded on the rewards given to those who exercised leadership of the Church and fed them (with the Word). To understand this parable, it is important to understand that there are two different kinds of servants here. The faithful and wise (believing), and the wicked (unbelieving). It is only the wicked that are consigned to a place with the unbelievers. If you don't understand this, and think the servants are all believers, then it sounds like a denial of eternal security. It isn't.

**Matthew 24:48-51 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>7</sup>**

However, Jesus foresaw that some of those who became "leaders" in the Church were actually wicked (unbelievers). They were here warned that the one they superficially called "master" wouldn't spare them from Hell. I can't help thinking of the history of many of the Popes.

**Luke 21:37-38 Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet (*Mount of Olives*). And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him. NASB**

I have substituted the more literal translation of the NASB which just tells us that Jesus taught in the Temple during the day and didn't linger at night. After Sunday's entry into Jerusalem, Christ and the disciples went back to Bethany. After Monday night Jesus established the Garden of Gethsemane as their place of residence during the Passover. Thus, on Tuesday night Judas knew where to take the Temple guards to arrest Jesus after they failed to find Him in the room where the Last Supper was held.

Now we can turn to study the passage in Daniel.

### **Daniel's Passage about the Abomination that Brings Desolation Daniel 9:20-23, 26b-27**

**Daniel 9:20-21 While I (*Daniel*) was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill <sup>8</sup>-- while I was**

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<sup>7</sup> This was the second time recorded in Scripture Jesus had given this warning. The first time was about six months before (*Luke 12:39-48*).

<sup>8</sup> *The Temple Mount.*

still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.<sup>9</sup>

While Daniel was still praying, he got an answer. The angel Gabriel who he had seen twelve years before in a vision, now came to him again. Daniel recognized him at once.

**Daniel 9:22-23** He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:

The heart of Daniel’s prayer had been that Israel and Jerusalem would be allowed to fulfill their original destiny as indicated by their names.<sup>10</sup>

The immediate answer to Daniel’s prayer which set things in motion is recorded in Ezra 1:1-4 “In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia (*which was also the first year of Darius the Mede*), in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: ‘This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you--may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.’”

However, the answer Gabriel brought Daniel was far larger in scope than just the permission to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. It went to the heart of Daniel’s prayer. It stretched beyond the first year of Cyrus to the return of the Messiah as King. The answer was that Israel and Jerusalem would fulfill their promised destiny.

I covered the prophecy of the first sixty-nine of seventy weeks of years given to Israel to fulfill their destiny in Lesson 41 of the Life of Christ (pages 10-12). The last seven years are covered in Daniel 9:26b-27.

**Daniel 9:26b** The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

The ruler that will come is the Anti-Christ, the beast of Revelation 13:1. He was the horn (ruler) of the fourth beast revealed in Daniel 7. He was the horn (ruler) that would supplant the three horns (rulers). We know that he would come from the people (the Romans) who would destroy

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<sup>9</sup> This just tells us it was at twilight. There was no actual evening sacrifice at that time because there was no Temple in which to make the sacrifice.

<sup>10</sup> Israel means “Prince of God.” Jerusalem means “teaching of Peace.”

the city (Jerusalem) and the Sanctuary (the Temple) after the death of Jesus Christ. We can conclude that he will come from some form of the people of the Roman Empire. It will be some form of a revived Roman Empire. The point is that after the “cutting off” of the Anointed One, the Romans would destroy both the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. This was a prophecy that was fulfilled by the event about six hundred and fifty years after Daniel wrote this prophecy.

**Daniel 9:26c** **The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.**

This “end” spoken of here was the last seven years of the 490 years of the special destiny of Israel. At the beginning of that time, the events of the Tribulation will come like the flash floods that sometimes burst out of the mountains of Judea.

**Daniel 9:27a** **He (*the beast / ruler that will come*) will confirm (*strengthen or make rigorous*) a covenant (or treaty) with many for one ‘seven.’**

The one “seven” here is the seven-year Great Tribulation. The question is: Who are the “many?” Some have interpreted this as speaking of a special treaty between Israel and the revived Roman Empire of the beast. I believe it may instead refer to a treaty with most of the rest of the world (“the many”) by which they will recognize the beast’s Supreme authority, hence the number 666 on every man’s hand and forehead (Revelation 13:16-18).

**Daniel 9:27b** **In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.**

We know from Revelation 11:1-13 that for the first three and a half years, the LORD’s two witnesses (Moses and Elijah) will preach in Jerusalem but are then killed with the help of the beast from the Abyss. That brings the time to “the middle of the seven.” It is almost certain the putting “an end to sacrifice and offering” only follows the deaths of those two men. That raises the question, what were the “sacrifices and offerings” spoken of here. Does it mean that the Temple will be rebuilt and the Temple sacrifices and offerings which were a shadow of Christ will be reinstated? Or does it mean the sacrifices and offerings which God has required since the First Advent of Christ:

Romans 12:1 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

Philippians 2:17 “But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.”

Hebrews 13:15-16 “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

1 Peter 2:4-5 “As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- you also, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

I think that the correct answer is that the beast will put an end to the second kind of sacrifices. We know from Revelation 12 that those who are believers will flee from Jerusalem at that time to be protected for three and a half years in the desert. This will temporarily put an end to those sacrifices and offerings in Jerusalem.

Daniel 9:27c **And on a wing ~~of the temple~~ he will set up an abomination that causes desolation,**

The term “of the Temple” does not even occur in the original (which the brackets in the NIV acknowledge). We do know from 2 Thessalonians that the location of the Temple is involved:

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the ~~rebellion~~ *leaving behind*<sup>11</sup> occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed,<sup>12</sup> the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up ~~in~~ *toward* God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

In the phrase where the NIV translation says that the man of lawlessness (the “beast” of Revelation and the “little horn” of Daniel 7) will set “himself up in God’s temple,” the Greek word translated “in” is actually εἰς {ās} which is translated “into, unto, to, towards, for, or among” according to the Outline of Biblical usage in the BLB. It is not the word for “in” which is the Greek word ἐν {en}. I take the word to mean that the setting of himself up refers to a location close to the ancient site of the Temple. Does this mean he puts a throne there with himself on it? We know from Revelation that the false prophet of the beast will set up an image of the Beast:

Revelation 13:14a-15 “He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.”

I believe this is that to which 2 Thessalonians 2:4 refers. It is to be set up close to (or toward) the Temple. This leads me to believe that the image will be set up close to the location of the

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<sup>11</sup> Literally in the Greek the word is ἀποστασία {ap-os-tas-ee'-ah} which means a “forsaking, leaving behind, or standing away from.” Considering what we know about this occasion from 2 Thessalonians 2:7b it seems likely this is speaking of the Rapture, when the Church and the Holy Spirit forsake the world for a time rather than the world forsaking God.

<sup>12</sup> According to 2 Thessalonians 2:8, first comes the Rapture (“the leaving behind”), then comes the revealing of the Beast (the man of lawlessness). The Beast is not fully revealed until the middle of the Tribulation (3½ years in).

Temple, on what Daniel 9:27 calls a “wing.” I believe the living image will probably be above the plaza at what is now called the “Wailing Wall” in Jerusalem. That wall is on “a wing of the Temple.”



*The Western Wall or “Wailing Wall” of the Temple*

Daniel 9:27d **until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”**

The end for the beast which is decreed was previously recorded in Daniel 7 and is recorded in Revelation 19:

Daniel 7:11 “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.”

Revelation 19:20 “But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.”

## *The Lesson of the Fig Tree – Tuesday Morning*

You will note that according to Matthew the withering of the tree may have begun “immediately” on Monday morning but was not noticed by the disciples until the next day (Mark 11:12-14 and Mark 11:20-21) which was Tuesday morning. There is no reason to suppose that the observation that Matthew recorded here was not made the next day (on Tuesday) “when the disciples saw” the completed withering. In other words, Matthew recorded the comment out of chronological order to complete the episode in one thought. Mark, on the other hand, recorded it chronologically.

This also places the entire episode of Mark 11:20-26 and Matthew 20:19b-22 on the road into Jerusalem on Tuesday morning and after the teaching in the Temple on Monday.

**Mark 11:20-21** **In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”**

**Matthew 21:19b-20** **Immediately the tree withered. When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” they asked.**

The curse on the fig tree that Jesus had cast had taken effect immediately. The curse the Jews had cast on themselves by failing to be fruitful would take effect in fifty-five days, at Pentecost. Their mission would be taken from the people of Israel and given to the Church which included peoples from many nations and tongues.

**Matthew 21:21a** **Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree,**

This ability to curse is taught elsewhere in scripture:

Matthew 18:18 “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

1 Timothy 1:19b-20 “Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.”

This curse is always brought against those who reject the faithful teaching of the Gospel of Christ.

**Mark 11:22-23** **“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.**

Matthew 21:21b **but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done.**

To reconstruct the scene, Jesus was standing on the Mount of Olives, facing both Mt. Zion and the Temple Mount. What is the “this mountain” of His promise. Did He mean the mountain literally or figuratively? The promise seems rather extravagant if literal. It was impossible that any of the three mountains could be moved until the Second Coming. All three mountains have a role to play at the return of Christ, and they must remain in Jerusalem. The other possible interpretation is that Jesus was speaking figuratively. Figuratively, Mt. Zion is associated with the death of Christ and the Mount of Olives is associated with His ascension. Both are associated with the work of Christ in bringing us back to God from the consequences of our sin. Figuratively, the Bible often uses the “sea” to speak of judgment. I believe that Jesus was speaking figuratively of the fact that by faith any person can cast the work of Christ into the “sea” of God’s judgment and thus be qualified to stand before God. In a similar figure Moses cast the tree (symbol of the cross) into the bitter waters of Marah (Exodus 15:22-26) and it became sweet. Also, when the axe head had sunk in the deep waters (judgment), Elisha cast in a branch (it was actually a tree) which stood for the cross and made it float (2 Kings 6:4-7). Seen figuratively, this promise of Jesus that day in Jerusalem has been claimed millions of times as each of us who have trusted in Christ have prayed to cast the mountain of Christ’s work on Mt. Zion into the sea of judgment against us. Every time the salvation prayer of faith in Christ has been made, it has been answered. This is a far greater miracle than moving a mountain made of soil and rocks. A passage in Micah is of special note:

Micah 7:19 “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”

Mark 11:24 **Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.**

Matthew 21:22 **If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”**

If we understand that we stand before God on the basis of the redeeming work Jesus did on the cross, we will pray the prayers that God will always answer.

Mark 11:25-26 **And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”<sup>13</sup>**

Any attitude of prayer which holds unforgiveness in one’s heart isn’t Christ-like and is sinful. God cannot hear the prayer of a person abiding in sinful thoughts.

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<sup>13</sup> Mark 11:26 is in the *Textus Receptus* though not in the *Alexandrian text* of the *faulty Codex Sinaiticus*.

