

¹⁵ “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³ Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹ “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. ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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 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. ³² “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁴ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Matthew 24:15–35, ESV

Sermon Title: Know That He Is Near

- A. North Caroline ... conference ... full rack of ribs I regret
 - 1. Didn't think about the next day

- B. We're all like that ...
 - 1. We live for the day AND DON'T think about tomorrow
 - a. How many brush more thoroughly the day before the dentist?

- C. We rarely live, thinking about the consequences of tomorrow
 - 1. BUT tomorrow's always coming
 - a. More importantly ... the Bible teaches us that Jesus is coming

- D. Last Week's Message—the disciples ask three QS
 - 1. When ... Temple's Destruction, End Times, Jesus' Coming ... be?
 - a. Jesus gives 9 signs of Destruction, Ending, AND Coming
 - i. False Messiahs
 - ii. Wars
 - iii. Natural Disasters
 - iv. Persecution of the Church
 - v. Apostasy, Betrayal, and Hatred within the Church
 - vi. False Prophets
 - vii. Increased Immorality
 - viii. Decreased Love for God and for others
 - ix. The Gospel Will Be Preached throughout the World

- E. It's already happened before 70AD AND continues to happen in 2018
 - 1. Already AND NOT Yet
 - 2. We have been living in the end times since 70AD
 - 3. Jesus can come back any time
 - 4. Will we be ready ... will we be called faithful

Jesus is coming soon, friend. Will we be ready? Will we be found faithful?

Prayer

A. 9 signs of Destruction, Ending, AND Coming

1. False Messiahs
2. Wars
3. Natural Disasters
4. Persecution of the Church
5. Apostasy, Betrayal, and Hatred within the Church
6. False Prophets
7. Increased Immorality
8. Decreased Love for God and for others
9. The Gospel Will Be Preached throughout the World

B. Vs. 4-14 ... events leading up to the Destruction of Temple & the End

1. BUT verses 15 -20 focus on the Destruction of the Temple uniquely

¹⁵ “So when **YOU see** the abomination of desolation **spoken** of by the prophet Daniel, **standing** in the holy place (let the reader understand),

A. *Abomination*—extreme disgust OR hatred

1. That brings ... *Desolation*—destruction

- a. **Daniel 11:31**: *Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.*

2. In 168BC, Antiochus Epiphanes erected an altar to Zeus ...

- a. Over the alter for burnt offering ... sacrificed swine on it ...

- i. AND made the practice of Judaism a capital offense

- This led to the Maccabean revolt

3. By referencing it, Jesus is saying something very similar will occur

- a. Either when the Zealots took over the temple in 68AD

- b. OR when Rome destroyed the Temple in 70AD

¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those **who are nursing** infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

A. Pray that your flight may not be ... on a Sabbath

1. Stores owned by Jews would be closed
2. The gates would possibly be locked

B. The Point ...

1. Get out while you can because the siege is going to be horrible

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never **will be**.

A. For then—

1. After the destruction of Jerusalem ... Jesus jumps forward in time

B. There will be great tribulation—

1. The stage has been set
 - a. All the signs have already occurred ...
 - i. One world leader could make one decision ...
 - Another could react to that decision ...
 - ◆ One world leader to pick up a phone OR press a button
 - ★ AND we're there!
2. There will be a great tribulation ...
 - a. AND it could all begin tomorrow ... later tonight

C. *Such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now ...*

1. *No, and never will be—*

a. Terrible stuff ... (Jerusalem—a mother eating her child)

i. WWII—12 million in the Holocaust ... 20 million under Stalin

- 70 years later ... AND think about the military power now

D. It's the already BUT NOT yet

1. It's already happened ... BUT we're still waiting for it to happen

a. In Revelation ... the 7 Seals will be broken

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

A. Those days will be so terrible that ... left unchecked ...

1. NO one would survive

a. The only thing that will cut it all short is ...

i. His mercy for His own ... His mercy for the elect

b. His chosen will endure/persevere

i. Those who were NOT chosen will NOT endure

2. There will be great tribulation ...

a. BUT His elect will be saved ... they will endure

i. SO ... be encouraged ... in the midst of your sorrow/pain/hurt

3. There will be great tribulation ...

a. AND everyone will be looking for a savior

²³ Then if anyone says to YOU, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs & false prophets will arise & perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

A. Jesus warns of false saviors ...

1. The tribulation will be so great that everyone will seeking a reprieve
 - a. AND there will be false christs and false prophets
 - i. AND they will be doing incredible ... compelling miracles
2. BUT they serve to only lead people astray (deceive)
 - a. If possible, even the *elect*—
 - i. They will be clever ... convincing ...
 - AND many professing Christians will be deceived ...
 - ◆ BUT NOT the elect ...
 - ★ Notice this is the second time we've seen this word
3. There are the elect AND the non-elect
 - a. AND time AND perseverance will show who is truly saved ...
 - i. AND who is NOT saved

²⁵ See, *I have told YOU beforehand.*

A. All of this will happen ...

1. All of it is being said beforehand by Jesus to warn us ... Why?
 - a. To NOT be deceived AND ... to trust Jesus ...
 - i. To NOT be deceived by all the false prophets/messiahs ...
 - BUT to keep our eyes expectant on the true Messiah
2. There will be incredible tribulation
 - a. AND people will be looking for a savior

²⁶ *So, if they say to YOU, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.*

A. People will be looking for

1. BUT He will NOT be in the desert OR in some secret building

²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

A. The Lord Jesus will come very publicly

1. Like lightning from the east ... BUT shining as far as the west ...

a. Jesus, the Son of Man will be seen in the sky

i. **Daniel 7:13–14**: *I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*

• The Lord will appear in all of His glory ...

◆ AND the whole world will see it

²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

A. NO two scholars agree with what this verse means

1. All people will see Him in the sky ... like vultures encircling death

2. Symbolic of the death/judgment Jesus will bring (corpses/vultures)

a. BUT first, all the lights are going to go out

²⁹ “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.

A. Everything will be darkened

1. **Ezekiel 32:7**: *When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light.*

2. **Joel 2:10**: *The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun & the moon are darkened, & the stars withdraw their shining.*

3. **Isaiah 34:4**: *All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.*

B. *The powers of the heavens will be shaken—*

1. **Hebrews 12:26–27**: *At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.*
 - a. The lights will go out ... AND there will be a great earthquake ...

³⁰ *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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.*

A. The tribulation has come ... the end has come ... AND now ...

1. Jesus in all of His power AND glory comes in the clouds
 - a. **Revelation 19:11–16**: *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

2. This will be the terrible day of God's wrath ... the final judgment
 - a. Notice verse 30 ... all the tribes of the earth will mourn
 - i. Why? Because it's finally happened
 - What they denied ... what they refused to believe ...
 - ◆ Is coming true
 - ★ They will mourn b/c it will be over for them
 - ii. All who have NOT bent the knee to Jesus will be judged
3. BUT for His saints ... His children ... His elect ... His people ...

³¹ 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.

A. Jesus will appear in the clouds ...

1. AND He will gather His people unto Himself
 - a. **1 Corinthians 15:52:** *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.*
 - b. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17:** *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*

*³² "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, YOU know that summer is near. ³³ So also, when **you** see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁴ Truly, I say to you, this generation will **not** pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will **not** pass away.*

A. The stage has been set folks

1. The warning has been issued ... BUT the stage is set
 - a. The destruction of Jerusalem has already happened
 - b. We've been living in the last days for a long time now ...
 - i. We're just waiting the Father's decision to send the Son
2. The stage is set ...
 - a. It's just up to the Father ...
 - i. AND when He's ready ... the end will come quick
 - Revelation 6:1–2: *Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.*

³⁵ *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will **not** pass away.*

A. Friend, we can trust Jesus' words to come true

1. AND most of us, here, do
 - a. BUT I DON'T think that most of us realize ...
 - i. Just how quickly His words could come true
 - He's told us: *Know That I Am Near*
 - ◆ Friend, Jesus could come back tomorrow ... even tonight

B. AND SO I've got two questions for us:

1. Knowing that God could come back tomorrow ... tonight ...
 - a. Are you ready for Jesus' return? Ready for the coming judgment?
 - i. The Gospel—Bad News, Good News
2. Knowing that God could come back tomorrow ... tonight ...
 - a. Are you living a surrendered life to the king?
 - i. We exist to Love, Follow, and Share Jesus

3. To love Jesus

- a. Our hearts are enamored with created things
 - i. BUT Jesus, the Creator, is more powerful AND glorious
 - *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*
 - ◆ Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it ...
 - ◆ Prone to leave the God I love ...
 - ◆ Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it ...
 - ◆ Seal it for Thy courts above
- b. The things of this world will NOT satisfy
 - i. We can eat a full-rack of baby-back ribs ...
 - BUT tomorrow, we'll end up paying for it
- c. Friend, the things of this world will one day be NO more
 - i. When Christ comes, then the end of this world will come
 - Jesus is more precious ...
 - ◆ More valuable than the idols of this world

4. To follow Jesus

- a. Jesus is coming back in the clouds
 - i. He will save His AND judge those who are NOT his
 - He will come in the clouds in power AND glory
- b. BUT this is only b/c Jesus was first on the cross
 - i. High AND lifted up ... an atoning sacrifice for our sin
 - This was Jesus' glory
 - ◆ Jesus suffered AND died ... that we might live
 - ★ AND to follow Christ is to suffer
- c. There will be tribulation ... BUT His elect will endure
 - i. Are struggling in your faith today?
 - Friend, if you belong to Christ, He will cause you to endure
- d. He DOESN'T always remove us from the pain/sorrow suffering
 - i. BUT He Himself knows what it means to suffer
 - He is the Man of Sorrows ... acquainted with grief ...
 - ◆ AND thru the tribulation will feel unbearable at times ...
 - ★ He can bear ... He has born it

- e. He is always with us AND will NEVER leave us
 - i. **Matthew 28:19–20:** *And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*
 - ii. SO will you live your life surrendered to Jesus?
 - Will you live today as if He is coming back any time?
 - ◆ Will U follow the Lord Jesus in every aspect of your life?

5. To share Jesus

- a. We, as His people, expect His return
 - i. BUT there will be so many who will mourn at His return
 - For He comes for the full redemption of our souls
 - ◆ For others, He comes in full judgement upon their souls
- b. There are so many who already stand condemned
 - i. Will we be the Good Messengers of the Good News?
 - **Matthew 28:19–20:** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*
 - ◆ From 1 to 100

C. It's all about the Gospel

- 1. Our Need for the Gospel ... others' need for the Gospel
 - a. Church, we have have been saved AND ...
 - i. Now have this glorious hope of His appearing ...
 - Because of the Gospel
 - ◆ Let us put our faith in the Gospel AND the Gospel alone