

# The Philadelphia Church

*And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. (Matt 4:19)"*

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## What Good News?

The good news or gospel that must be proclaimed to all the world as a witness to all nations before the end of the age arrives is not the good news about the many miraculous deeds of Christ Jesus. It is not the good news of the soon coming kingdom of God. Both of these gospels have been proclaimed to the world. Rather, it is the unadorned message that all who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13). And with the proclaiming of this good news comes the end.

After visiting the temple days before the Crucifixion, Jesus' disciples came to Him privately and asked, "[W]hat will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" (Matt 24:3). Jesus'

answer begins what is commonly called the Olivet discourse. And going through this Olivet discourse, Jesus first says that many will come in His name and lead many astray (v. 5), which is probably not the best translation of the Greek. He tells His disciples not to lead others astray, for the possibility seems to exist linguistically for His disciples to lead later disciples astray. Indeed, when the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, his doubly accursed gospel was his condemnation of teachers from Jerusalem and the headquarters Church mixing the old covenant that separated humanity through physical circumcision with the new covenant by which hearts and minds were spiritually circumcised. A similar mixing of covenants occurs today when the physical promises and blessings for obedience to the old covenant are grafted onto grace, thereby promising material prosperity for the disobedience or lawlessness of the greater Church. Grace is that cloak of Christ's righteousness that presently covers, with the blinding brightness of the sun, the nakedness of the spiritually circumcised Body of the Son of Man. When Christ Jesus became our high priest, grace was a better promise added to the second covenant initially mediated by Moses (Deu 29:1 — this second covenant continues through chapters 30 & 31). So the first point of Jesus' Olivet discourse is a warning to His disciples about leading others astray, which if were not possible, He had no need of mentioning.

Continuing in Jesus' Olivet discourse, Jesus says that disciples will hear of wars and rumors of wars (Matt 24:6), an ongoing condition since the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century. But wars and rumors of wars do not denote the end of the age nor date His return. Nor will nation rising up against nation, or famines and earthquakes (v. 7) date His return. All of these things are but the beginning of the last Eve's birth pains (v. 8).

The Apostle Paul identifies Jesus as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45). The correspondence between the events recorded about the first Adam and the history recorded about Jesus creates the juxtaposition of the first Adam being the physical shadow of the spiritual last Adam. As the first Eve was created following a deep sleep coming over the first Adam, the last Eve was created when the resurrected and glorified Jesus, on the evening following His Ascension, breathed on ten of His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit [*Pneuma 'Agion*, or Breath Holy]" (John 20:22). The greater Christian Church, then, is the last Eve. And the age-ending Tribulation is the hard labor pains of spiritual childbirth as this last Eve delivers three sons, a spiritual Cain at the beginning of the Tribulation, a spiritual Abel approximately seven months later, and a spiritual Seth after three and a half years. It will be this third son that only has to endure to the end to be saved, for Cain will be marked, and righteous Abel will be slain by his brother.

In verse 9 of Jesus' Olivet discourse, the hard labor pains of spiritual childbirth have begun; the seven years of tribulation have started. And the first point of bad news is, "Then they will deliver you [His disciples] up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake." The situation has drastically changed between verses 8 and 9. The reality of

biblical prophecy is that the firstborn son[s] of God will be consigned to death just as Jesus of Nazareth was consigned to death.

Jesus adds a second point of bad news, "And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another" (Matt 24:10). The Apostle Paul writes about this falling away, or great rebellion that occurs before Christ returns. As the circumcised nation that left Egypt did not enter into God's rest because of unbelief that became disobedience, the spiritually circumcised nation, with the exception of a Joshua and a Caleb, will not enter into God's rest because of its unbelief that becomes disobedience when it tries to enter God's rest on the following day. This spiritually circumcised nation will attempt to enter God's rest on Sunday instead of on the Sabbath. The reasons needed to justify this holy nation's unbelief and disobedience were developed and argued centuries ago. When the first wave of enthusiasm ebbed following Calvary, the usurpers prevailed against those teachers of Israel who would have disciples live as Judeans. Lawlessness won, temporarily. But when the Son of Man is revealed, there will be no covering for lawlessness. Disciples who spurn the Sabbath when they have the power to keep it will be rejected, for they do not love the truth enough to walk uprightly before God. And they will betray and truly hate those disciples who keep the Sabbath, for the keeping of a diminutive [in comparison with the seventh day of the spiritual creation week] Sabbath or the weekly Sabbath remains for the people of God (Heb 4:9).

A third point of bad news is that "many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray" (Matt 24:11). These false prophets will, almost unanimously, identify the second Passover slaughter of a third of humanity (this ransom of spiritual Egyptians was foreshadowed by the ransom paid by physical Egyptians for the liberation of physically circumcised Israel [Isa 43:3-4]) that begins the seven years of tribulation as the sixth trumpet plague (Rev 9:15). They will be wrong, dead wrong, for they will then have disciples accept Satan, when cast from heaven (Rev 12:9-10), as the returned Christ. These many false prophets will include those who teach that the Tribulation will only be three and a half years long. The day of the Lord, or Lord's day begins in the middle of seven years of times like none humanity has previously experienced. The Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28) when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and His Christ (Rev 11:15 & Dan 7:9-14). This is when the fourth beast has its body given over to be burned (Dan 7:11), when the deadly wound is delivered to the amalgamated first beast of Revelation chapter 13, and when Satan is cast from heaven and goes after the woman who had given birth to the male child [Jesus of Nazareth] (Rev 12:13). There still remains a time, times and half a time before Christ returns (v. 14). The three beasts from whom dominion was taken (because the kingdom of the world has become Father and Son's) but whose lives were extended a season and a time (Dan 7:12) receive purloined authority to reign for forty-two months, or three and a half years. The authority they usurp belongs to Christ Jesus, but the dragon when cast from heaven comes posing as the Messiah, comes as the true antiChrist. And all of this occurs after the four beasts and the little horn wear out the saints of the Most High for a time, times

and half a time (Dan 7:25). This wearing out ends when dominion is taken from the little horns and the four beasts, not when the Messiah returns, for the first three beasts have their lives extended (without dominion over the holy ones) for a season and a time.

There is a time, times and half a time before Satan is cast from heaven, then another time, times and half a time after he is cast to earth. The identifying phrase *time, times and half a time* equals 1260 days (from Rev 12:6 & 13:5), thereby creating a 2520 day long period of tribulation. These seven prophetic years are, therefore, thirty-five days shorter than seven solar years. The second Passover occurs thirty days after the Passover. If the seven prophetic years begin at a second Passover, then Christ's return will be on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, will be when Joshua lead the uncircumcised children of Israel across the Jordan, and when Jesus entered Jerusalem before His Crucifixion. (Of course, the Passover is figured off the lunar calendar, so the correlation between the lunar and solar calendars suggests possible return year pairings, which cannot be determined in advance due to prophesied astronomical phenomena.) The spiritually uncircumcised children of God who have endured to the end will be saved through physically entering God's rest [Christ's Millennium reign over humanity] just as the physically uncircumcised children of the firstborn son of God (Exod 4:22) entered God's rest in the promised land. The spiritually circumcised children of God will enter God's rest [the heavenly realm or dimension] through glorification on this same day. Jesus entering Jerusalem with palm branches waving and the crowd shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" (John 12:13) is the shadow of the glorified Jesus' return as the Messiah.

Returning to Jesus' Olivet discourse, the fourth point of bad news is, "And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold" (Matt 24:12). Lawlessness or sin will be shown to be extremely sinful for the same reason that God gave circumcised Israel "statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life, and I [God] defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that I might devastate them. I did it that they might know that I am the Lord" (Ezek 20:25-26). When lawlessness is increased, the separation or gulf between those who, by faith, keep the law and those who will not keep the law becomes so wide that everyone can see the division.

Now in Jesus' Olivet discourse, after four major points of bad news comes the first piece of good news: "But the one who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matt 24:13). In His discourse, Jesus hasn't introduced any other piece of good news. Everything has been negative. From the linguistic possibility of His own disciples deceiving many to the love of many growing cold, there seems to be no hope for genuine Christians.

"And this gospel [or good news] of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14). Thus, the good news to be proclaimed is that of Jesus' immediately preceding sentence: *But the one who endures to the end*

*shall be saved.* The reason for the proclaiming of this good news being the sign of when the end comes is that this good news is the birth announcement of a spiritual Seth, who is fathered by God "in his own likeness, after his image" (Gen 5:3). And from this spiritual Seth comes the race of men who will populate the earth during Christ Jesus' millennial rule.

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