

# Masterwork of the Messiah

## Expositional Study Of Matthew's Gospel

### *The King And The Kingdom: Part 3*

Matthew 24:6

Written By

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**D**uring the social upheaval of the 60s, with the war in Vietnam dividing our nation and the Soviet union rattling their saber on countless fronts, songs surfaced expressing the feeling of some of the youth in America. Barry McGuire, a devout believer in Jesus, wrote one of those melancholy, seemingly nihilistic tunes. He labeled it *Eve Of Destruction*:

The eastern world it is explodin', violence flarin', bullets loadin'  
You're old enough to kill but not for votin'  
You don't believe in war, what's that gun you're totin'  
And even the Jordan river has bodies floatin'

But you tell me over and over and over again my friend  
Ah, you don't believe we're on the eve of destruction  
Don't you understand, what I'm trying to say?

Can't you see the fear that I'm feeling today?  
If the button is pushed, there's no running away  
There'll be none to save with the world in a grave  
Take a look around you, boy, it's bound to scare you, boy

But you tell me over and over and over again my friend  
Ah, you don't believe we're on the eve of destruction

I remember talking to my parents on many occasions regarding this topic. I wanted to know, "Do you guys think the world is really coming to an end?" Theologically, I also asked them countless times, "Do you think we live in the times when the Lord will bring His judgment and His kingdom?" I could pose questions of this nature because my pastor, Dr. Harold Lind, loved eschatology and constantly directed us to this topic in his sermons and Bible studies.

In the protests, riots, nuclear bomb drills at school, assassination of key public figures, corruption charges against key politicians, advancements of the communists in China, and the Russians placing missiles in Cuba, just off the coast of Florida, it sure did look like the end was neigh. But it wasn't. In fact, national and international social, economic, moral, and spiritual unraveling had, in many respects, just begun, waiting to reach new lows in our day. Speaking about ISIS in Iraq torturing and murdering Christian men, women, and children in horrific fashion in the last few weeks, retired Lt. Col. Ralph Peters alarmingly observes:

"We are dealing with a death cult," Peters told Fox News' America's Newsroom. "This is the most destructive force I've seen in my lifetime ... "Islamic State [ISIS] is the most brutal organization in my lifetime, in your lifetime, and even in the lifetime of World War II vets. There is nothing like this before."<sup>1</sup>

He's right. We've never seen brutality on such a wide scale as this modern history, and if left unchecked by the nations of the world, the blight will most surely spread for such is the nature of evil.

Once again in my lifetime, I'm left wondering, "What in the world is going on? Is this the end as prophesied by Jesus? Is the coming of the kingdom right around the corner?" The answer to both question is, "No." We are merely watching the natural and logical outcomes brought about by the degenerative nature of sin as it impacts everything from rogue military organizations to the very fabric and structure of the cosmos. All are tainted and contaminated by sin, resulting in a constant downward spiral which will culminate in unparalleled divine judgments never seen before in history, judgments which will be designed to categorically judge wickedness and positively erect the messianic King and kingdom, as foretold in the prophets (Isaiah 2; 9; ). Put in different terms, what we are witnessing is but a small taste of what will occur in the seven year tribulation, when God will pour out His wrath in anticipation of His glorious arrival (Revelation 19). Jesus calls these future judgments signs, items you can look for to verify you are, at the time, living in the final seventieth week so of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). Prior to His crucifixion, He detailed those signs to His disciples in Matthew 24. They are shocking. They are scary. They are sobering. But they create hope insofar as they buttress the theological/eschatological fact that ...

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<sup>1</sup> Lt. Col. Ralph Peters: ISIS Is 'Brutal, a 'Death Cult.' Newsmax.com <http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/Ralph-Peters-ISIS-Iraq-death-cult/2014/08/13/id/588526/#ixzz3AN7QJDs3>.

## The Messianic King Will Bring The Kingdom (Matthew 24:1-25:46)

### What Are The Signs Of The King's Arrival? (Matthew 24:4-35)

The first 3 ½ years of the tribulation will be called a time of birth pains; namely, because they serve two purposes. One, negatively they speak of the pain the world will endure as God unhinges the cosmos to judge the wicked for embracing wickedness and rejecting the Messiah. Two, positively they, by definition, point to the real hope that new life, or a new kingdom is coming at the conclusion of the birth cycle.

How will this defined period of judgment begin? With ...

*False Christs (Matthew 24:4-5).* False teachers and messianic figures, with demonically persuasive powers, will dominate this time, culminating in the ultimate anti-God, lawless world leader, the Anti-Christ. Other signs follow this sign. Before we consider them, I'd be remiss in my duties as a shepherd if I didn't ask you again, "Are you being careful that you, as a Christian, are not being duped by some false system of belief? Are you staying engaged in spiritual disciplines so your mind is permeated with God's unchanging, timeless truth(s)?"

A second sign logically follows the first.

*World-wide Warfare (Matthew 24:6-7a).* Jesus introduces this sign in this ominous fashion:

<sup>6</sup>You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. <sup>7</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ...

The present tense infinitive, *hearing* (ἀκούειν), tells us that people of this generation will witness global warfare and skirmishes all the time because they will be literally everywhere. The fact warfare follows false messiahs may tell us the origin of the conflagrations just might be religious in nature. One can well imagine the war which could erupt over the appearance of the so-called 12<sup>th</sup> Iman, or the Mahdi, especially if other nations rejected him as the so-called prophesied One.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica: **mahdī**, (Arabic: "divinely guided one"), in **Islāmic** eschatology, a messianic deliverer who will fill the **Earth** with justice and equity, restore true **religion**, and usher in a short golden age lasting seven, eight, or nine years before the end of the world. The Qur'ān (Islāmic sacred scriptures) does not mention him, and almost no reliable *ḥadīth* (saying attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad) concerning the *mahdī* can be adduced. Many orthodox Sunnī theologians accordingly question Mahdist beliefs, but such beliefs form a necessary part of Shī'ī doctrine.

The doctrine of the *mahdī* seems to have gained currency during the confusion and insecurity of the religious and political upheavals of early Islām (7th and 8th centuries). In 686, al-Mukhtār ibn Abū 'Ubayd at-Thaqafī, leader of a revolt of non-Arab Muslims in **Iraq**, seems to have first used the doctrine by maintaining his allegiance to a son of 'Alī (Muḥammad's son-in-law and fourth caliph), **Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyah**, even after al-Ḥanafiyah's death. Abū 'Ubayd taught that, as *mahdī*, al-Ḥanafiyah remained alive in his tomb in a state of occultation (*ghaybah*) and would reappear to vanquish his enemies. In 750 the 'Abbāsīd revolution made use of eschatological prophecies current at the time that the *mahdī* would rise in Khorāsān in the east, carrying a black banner.

We can see how easily this could occur, can't we? Addressing the current rioting in Missouri over the shooting of an unarmed teen, one police official recently remarked on a talk radio show I tuned into: "We are but one bullet away from social chaos." Unfortunately, he's right.

With our unsustainable national debt of \$17 trillion (which both political parties have run up), it is just a matter of time before our economy implodes. Sure, our leaders, from both parties, continually kick the economic can down the road, but one day the whole structure has to collapse, and when it does what ensues? Social chaos? Looting of grocery stores? Wide spread riots? Exploitation by drug cartels now embedded in our cities and culture? Gang warfare? Expansion of the police state to create order, followed by curtailed freedoms? One can well imagine what will occur the day the banking industry collapses, along with our political structure because the dollar will be worthless.

And as our adverse financial situation, combined with our endless entitlement programs move our leaders to trim down our military, we can readily see how much more dangerous the world has become and is becoming. Enemies held in check for years are now feeling bold to achieve their brutal, godless goals, knowing they probably won't face any long-term consequences from us. So, evil and unrest spreads.

Yes, we can easily see how Christ's words will be fulfilled. All North Korea has to do is roll its tanks south across the DMZ. All China has to do is seize Taiwan, and they will have every reason to because they are flush with American cash, they possess a plethora of weapons, their communist ideology is expansionistic by nature, and they have a surplus of young men because of their restrictive birth laws. All Russia has to do is drive its mechanized army across Ukraine, then Poland, then Moldova, then Romania, and then Europe. All the illegal aliens among us have to do is get radicalized by La Raza and we have a real problem on our hands as they would strive to take back their land. All one nuclear third world country would have to do is fire one EMP weapon from a ship off our Eastern seaboard and we've have a real problem on our hands, nationally and globally.<sup>3</sup>

Belief in the *mahdī* has tended to receive new emphasis in every time of crisis. Thus, after the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212), when most of Spain was lost for Islām, Spanish Muslims circulated traditions ascribed to the Prophet foretelling a reconquest of Spain by the *mahdī*. During the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, a person claiming to be the *mahdī* appeared briefly in Lower Egypt.

Because the *mahdī* is seen as a restorer of the political power and religious purity of Islām, the title has tended to be claimed by social revolutionaries in Islāmic society. North Africa in particular has seen a number of self-styled *mahdīs*, most important of these being 'Ubayd Allāh, founder of the Fāṭimid dynasty (909); Muḥammad ibn Tūmart, founder of the Almohad movement in Morocco in the 12th century; and Muḥammad Aḥmad, the *mahdī* of the Sudan who, in 1881, revolted against the Egyptian administration.

<sup>3</sup> Newsmax.com. EMP Attack Would Send America into a Dark Age. Wednesday, September 23, 2009 11:25 AM  
By: Ronald Kessler.

In a matter of seconds, an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack or a geomagnetic storm would set America back to the 14th century, Gale Nordling, president of a company that protects against such a catastrophe, tells Newsmax. An EMP attack occurs when a nuclear bomb explodes in the atmosphere. The electromagnetic pulse generated by the blast fries all electronics in line of sight. EMP was first detected after the detonation of the Starfish Prime nuclear test on July 9, 1962. While the explosion occurred near Johnston Island in the Pacific Ocean and was not designed to be an EMP blast, it blew out street lamps, television sets, and telephone communications in Hawaii nearly 1,000 miles away.

A single nuclear bomb exploded over the Midwest would generate an electromagnetic pulse that would destroy the chips that are at the heart of every electronic device. While military and intelligence networks may be shielded against EMP, the rest of the country's technological infrastructure is not.

Geomagnetic storms emanating from the sun could cause a similar catastrophe. Such a storm occurred in 1859, but because a system for distributing electric power had not yet been invented, it did not do any appreciable damage. On March 13, 1989, a minor geomagnetic storm left six million people without power in eastern Canada and the U.S. for 12 hours.

"If a nuclear device designed to emit EMP were exploded 250 to 300 miles up over the middle of the country, it would disable the electronics in the entire United States," says Nordling, president and CEO of Minneapolis-based Emprimus. "That would disable the entire electric grid. It would disable communications, it would disable fuel manufacturing and production, it would disable hospitals and medicines, it would disable 911 call centers." Everything else would be shut down, Nordling says.

"Water treatment facilities, food storage facilities, everything would be gone," Nordling says. "Financial records would be wiped out. Your investments would be gone. Your medical records and prescriptions would be zapped." Forget about your computer and the Internet, heating and air conditioning, supermarkets, telephones, and radio and television. Banks and ATMs would shut down, credit cards would become useless, and hospital operating rooms would close.

While vehicles made before 1970 might still work, they would be useless. That's because gasoline could not be obtained, and newer cars and trucks, disabled by the pulse, would block the roads and highways. In most cases, the damage to chips would be permanent. Because tow trucks would not operate, cars would never be cleared from roads.

The vast majority of Americans would die from starvation or disease or would freeze to death, according to William Graham, who was chairman of the bipartisan congressional Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack. Yet at a hearing of the House Committee on Homeland Security on July 21, Graham testified that the government has done virtually nothing to address the effects of such an attack on the civil sector.

"People say it would bring us back to the 1800s, but it's worse than that because in the 1800s there was a much larger sector that did farming and produced food, and there weren't so many people living in inner core cities," Nordling says. "All that has changed."

Nordling cites a prediction by William R. Forstchen, author of "One Second After," that an EMP strike would take the U.S. back to the 14th century. That is because when Thomas A. Edison invented the light bulb in 1879, the country had established police and fire departments, hospitals, and food and water distribution systems. Since an EMP strike would render those entities inoperative, the country would be in chaos, and disease, starvation, and lawlessness would prevail. The book is a fictional account of a town struggling to survive after an EMP weapon is used against the United States.

"Unfortunately the social order would break down so quickly, because you put people in an impossible position," Nordling says. "Do they try to feed their family and do so even with violence and everything else? Or what do they do? Or does the family starve?"

Some people who are concerned about EMP stock supplies of food and water to last for months or even years.

Nordling, a lawyer and electrical engineer, became interested in EMP two years ago after learning that while military facilities are protected against EMP, the civil sector is not.

"It seemed like this was a very, very serious threat to everything in America, because everything is run by computers and computerized control systems, and there is absolutely no protection being designed into any of these systems," Nordling says.

The police official was only partly right. Globally we are but one bullet away from mass chaos. Jesus warns us. When this occurs, when the Anti-Christ appears to push his peace

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With 25 employees and associates, Emprimus claims to be the only company that designs and tests shielding against EMP for the private sector. That includes protection against devices that use high-power microwaves (HPM) to target particular facilities.

While a few financial institutions are engaging Emprimus to shield their backup data centers, the vast majority of banks and stock brokerage firms have no such protection of either backup centers or computers used by employees. Because of competitive pressures, Nordling says companies don't want to invest extra sums in EMP protection and are as unprepared as the U.S. was before the 9/11 terrorist attack.

While the effects of EMP are catastrophic, Nordling says protection against it is relatively simple and reasonable in cost. As one example, data centers can be protected by encasing them in light weight copper mesh that is grounded. The outlay could be as low as one percent to 10 percent of the cost of a facility, especially if shielding is included when a structure is built.

Asked why companies like Merrill Lynch or Citibank don't cite EMP protection as a selling point, Nordling says, "Perhaps for some businesses that would be a good idea. But I think at this point, companies are so concerned about this for security and other reasons they don't even want to talk about what they've done with their data centers or where they are."

Russia or China have the capability to explode an EMP device over the U.S., and countries like Iran or North Korea are believed to be working on acquiring one. Those countries also could launch a more limited EMP or HPM attack against selected targets like power plants, oil refineries, or Wall Street. Terrorists could appropriate such weapons from rogue states.

In the event of an EMP attack, the electrical power grid would be destroyed because its computers would be inoperative and transformers critical to it would take years to replace. Only a few countries build the transformers, and they take more than a year to make.

Aside from an EMP attack, "If a large geomagnetic storm occurred, you could have from 30 to 70 percent of these transformers being fried," Nordling says. "So in essence, our power grid could be out for years just because of a natural event, versus a nuclear EMP event."

In contrast to the U.S., "Over 300 companies in Europe have in fact protected themselves against EMP. They're way ahead," Nordling says. "Ten to 12 countries have now done work on different parts of their infrastructure to protect it."

Unlike protection against a nuclear blast, shielding to protect against EMP is a relative bargain. For example, the 300 transformers that are critical to the power grid could be protected for \$200 million to \$400 million.

As noted in the Newsmax story [EMP Attack Could Wipe Out U.S.](#), neither Republicans nor Democrats have been willing to spend that small sum. In fact, the U.S. government is doing "nothing" to protect the power grid or the rest of the infrastructure from an EMP strike, confirms Dr. Peter Vincent Pry, a former staff member of the EMP commission who heads EMPACT America, which seeks to call attention to the largely unrecognized threat. But given the reasonable cost, Nordling says, companies could be held liable for not protecting against EMP and solar storms.

"As the word spreads about the danger of an EMP attack and how devastating it would be, I think that puts utilities and banks and other organizations that have customers at risk of lawsuits," Nordling says.

On the other hand, Nordling says, "If we have an EMP attack, we would not have functioning courts where lawsuits could be filed."

program in a world engulfed in complete unrest, in every way imaginable, know that this pain is but a prelude to great pain which will culminate in His magnificent arrival.

What will Christ's kingdom be like? The antithesis of the kingdoms of the world. His kingdom will only know peace on a global scale.

<sup>4</sup> And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war (Isaiah 2).

<sup>17</sup> And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever . <sup>18</sup> Then my people will live in a peaceful habitation, and in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places ... (Isaiah 32).

<sup>12</sup> "For you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands (Isaiah 55).

The world is headed to greater unrest, but true peace comes first spiritually to the one who stops warring against the Christ starts walking with Him by faith. Is He your Savior, the King of your life yet? He awaits your decision to radically change your life. Additionally, peace will come to this old earth when the Messiah arrives. Will you be with Him in that kingdom? Are our times troublesome and unnerving? Indeed. But even when they grow more complex, desperate and destructive Jesus comforts us: *See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place.* Yes, don't be undone because, as a saint, you know now, and saints will know then, that this type of global conflagration is divine destiny in order to usher in the Messiah.

*Famine (Matthew 24:7a).* Once more, the next sign is a natural and logical outcropping of the former.

... and in various places there will be famines ...

Mankind has experienced famines before, and there are many currently devastating peoples around the world. We also know there are a variety of factors behind famines; however, war is at the top of the list. One article titled *Famine and Disease* on Unicef.org puts this point in bold relief:

Most such deaths arise from disruption of the normal production and distribution of food. The manipulation of food supplies has always been a significant tactic of war but has been used particularly ruthlessly of late. For example, in the early 1980s, the Ethiopian Government used scorched-earth tactics to destroy hundreds of thousands of acres of food-producing land in Tigray.<sup>31</sup> And in Angola, the UNITA forces sowed large areas of land with anti-personnel mines to hamper food production in government-controlled areas,

while mobilizing and relocating its own supporters to create food production bases. In many countries, grain stores have also been subject to attack by rebel and government forces.

War also hinders the distribution of food relief. Governments often feed their armies first, distributing to the civilian populations only the food that remains. In Somalia in the 1980s, one estimate suggested that only 12 per cent of some food aid shipments reached the people for whom they were intended.<sup>4</sup>

When the world plunges into truly global warfare in the end-times, famine will rear its ugly head.

John, in his third seal judgment, occurring in the first half of the seven year tribulation, expands upon the prophetic words of Jesus:

<sup>5</sup> When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come ." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard *something* like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine (Revelation 6).

The emphasis here is upon the scarcity of food. Interesting. They who reject Jesus as the Bread of Life, they who reject the Bible as food for the soul, they who live for a high calorie intake, fine cuisine, food on demand, snacks in between meals, endless varieties of various food types (how many types of canned soups, chips, cookies, cereals and so forth are there ...), they who can't wait for the next *Diner's*, *Drive-ins* & *Dives* program so they can at least salivate just watch someone eating amazing amounts of food, they who, in a sense, worshipped food, who didn't understand that "man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4), yes, they will experience a global, not a regional, time of the very thing they took for granted.

John warns us that at this time food will be so scarce it will be weighed prior to distribution. How much will wheat cost? A denarius, or a day's wage for a laborer (Matthew 20:2). How much for a lesser and supposedly cheaper meal of barley? The same. A day's wage. Imagine working all day long just to buy a paltry amount of food for just your basic life staples. There won't be any money left over for Five Guys, Mike's American Grill, Domino's Pizza or the like. All monies will flow toward just surviving from day to day, with absolutely no hope of all the extra niceties which used to be consumed at will and in endless amounts. Think of all the money we, as Americans, spend annual on food which is not a necessity now: \$65 billion on soft drinks (Each soft drink costs 10 cents but costs on average of \$1.29. Can you say 1,200% mark-up? Can you say greed?), \$96 billion on beer, \$16 billion on chocolate, \$500 million on Girl Scout Cookies, and \$110 billion on fast food. God's point is sobering and spine-stiffening, isn't it? The abundance the world knows now is short-lived. He will strike that which we value most in order to cause the wicked to consider Him as the true Messiah.

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<sup>4</sup> Unicef.org, *Famine and Disease: Relation between famine and war*, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/5famdis.htm>.

Pragmatically, this should cause us to consider if our response to food, as Christians, is within the bounds of reason. Are we disciplining ourselves, or gorging ourselves? Do we truly live on the food of the Word of God so much so we find it more fulfilling than a literal meal? Further, are we doing our part, corporately and individually, to address the impact of starvation when we see it or hear about it? Eschatology is always practical.

To continue with John's text, he reveals how God permits oil and wine to remain available. Why? To illustrate there will be a vast division between the financially inferior majority, who have no luxuries whatsoever, and the super wealthy, who compose the 1% who are still able to flaunt the power of their god. Their day will come, as you see in the rest of the book of Revelation; however, when the effects of these initial judgments begin to pile up, when the line between the have and the have not's grows even wider, you can readily see who this will contribute to social upheaval of unparalleled proportions, as Christ prophesied.

Following John's seal judgments to the fourth one, we learn the end result of this time of famine:

<sup>7</sup> When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." <sup>8</sup> I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth (Revelation 6).

The result of world-wide war and famine will claim the lives of ¼ of the world's population, or a staggering 1,750,000,000 people (figuring the world's population at 7 billion). How many people is that? This figure represents the entire populations of Europe (741.2 million) and the U.S. (317 million). Imagine if all of these countries had no inhabitants. It would be like the empty, silent, weed-infested, wild, carnivorous animals running loose streets of Los Angeles in sci-fi thriller *I Am Legend*. You would think this would turn the hearts of men to God, but to read the rest of Revelation 6 you quickly discover it will only harden the hearts of the godless, much like what occurred with the heart of Pharaoh (Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12, 34; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8).

On the flip-side, this particular judgment will merely usher in the kingdom age, a time known for the exact opposite, as we read from the inspired pens of numerous Old Testament prophets:

<sup>20</sup> Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, He, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. <sup>21</sup> Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left. <sup>22</sup> And you will defile your graven images overlaid with silver, and your molten images plated with gold. You will scatter them as an impure thing, and say to them, "Be gone!" <sup>23</sup> Then He will give you rain for the seed which you will sow in the ground, and bread from the yield of the ground, and it will be rich and plenteous; on that day your livestock will graze in a roomy pasture. <sup>24</sup> Also the oxen and the donkeys which work the ground will eat salted fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. <sup>25</sup> On every lofty mountain and on every high hill there will be streams running with water on the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall (Isaiah 30).

Other ancient, inspired texts tell us of what is yet to come when the Messiah reigns over the throne of David (Ezekiel 47 ... the entire chapter; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13).

God will paint a dark picture during man's judgment, and the blackness of this appointed, long-awaited time of tribulation will merely set the stage for the stark contrast with the spectacular abundance of the kingdom period, a time when the curse isn't able to negatively impact man's planting or reaping. It's just amazing, and exciting. Again, I have to ask you: Will you be there with Jesus in the kingdom?

To this particular sign/seal, Jesus adds another:

*Massive Earthquakes (Matthew 24:7b-8).* Historically, earthquakes, on occasion, been a harbinger of the judgment of the Almighty (God controls them: Psalm 46:2-3; 75:3; They are a demonstration of His omnipotent power: Exodus 19:18; Judges 5:5; 2 Samuel 22:8; Nahum 1:5; Revelation 11:19; They are a sign of the end of time: Isaiah 24:19-20; Ezekiel 38:19-20). In the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation, God will use them to literally shake the earth in order to warn man of the coming Great Tribulation followed by His appearance in glory. Of the judgments/signs listed thus far, this will be the first one where God's hand will be explicit. As Jesus prophesies:

<sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. <sup>8</sup> But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

The Greek for earthquake is *seismos* (σεισμός), meaning to shake. Obviously, non-Greek speakers immediately recognize this word from its inclusion in our English language. Physically and geologically what causes an earthquake? Here's is what we learn from the USGS website:

An earthquake is the ground shaking caused by a sudden slip on a fault. Stresses in the earth's outer layer push the sides of the fault together. Stress builds up and the rocks slips suddenly, releasing energy in waves that travel through the earth's crust and cause the shaking that we feel during an earthquake. An earthquake occurs when plates grind and scrape against each other. In California, for example, there are two plates the Pacific Plate (which extends from western California to Japan, including much of the Pacific Ocean floor) and the North American Plate (which is most of the North American continent and parts of the Atlantic Ocean). The Pacific Plate grinds northwestward past the North American Plate along the San Andreas Fault at a rate of about two inches per year. Parts of the San Andreas Fault system adapt to this movement by constant "creep" resulting in many tiny shocks and a few moderate earth tremors. In other parts, strain can build up for hundreds of years, producing great earthquakes when it finally releases. Large and small earthquakes can also occur on faults not previously recognized; recent earthquakes in Alabama and Virginia are good examples.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Facts & Earthquake Fantasy." USGS website. Accessed on August 14, 2014.  
[http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/topics/megaqk\\_facts\\_fantasy.php](http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/topics/megaqk_facts_fantasy.php). Earthquake Facts & Earthquake Fantasy

With eight continental fault plates and nine oceanic ones, you can imagine the devastation if they all either slammed into, or pulled away from each other at the same time.<sup>6</sup> And that is what I believe will occur.

Think about it this way.

Just during the week I worked on this study there were 672 quakes within the last seven days, 3, 020 in the last month, and 38, 121 so far in 2014, according to [earthquake.usgs.gov](http://earthquake.usgs.gov) (a favorite site for Californians, or ex-Californians like me). Further, if the largest quake ever felt was the 9.5 monster in Chile on May 22, 1960, and the end-time will be God's time of cosmic/global wrath against sin and sinners, don't you think the earthquakes Jesus speaks of here will be shocking, even heart-stopping? I do. According to Isaiah 24, God is going to shake the earth, literally, an action resulting in earthquakes. Can you even begin to wrap your mind around what devastation will occur if there were multiple city leveling 10.5 or higher mega quakes all around the world contemporaneously? Can you imagine the destruction wrought by attendant, high velocity tsunamis. Yes, that is a plural. Not one massive mountain of water moving at 200 mph, but, say, five, or ten. No wonder Luke says that men will faint from fear related to the roaring and tossing of the sea in his parallel account (Luke 21:25-26).

Currently, the wicked are going about their business and taking advantage of an earth which is, for the most part, predictable and cooperative. In the time of the end, mankind will visibly watch the earth expand and contract, like an old man attempting to force air into his weary, diseased-ridden lungs. Will this divine activity never seen before get mankind's attention? Yes. Will it cause him to turn to God en masse? No. He, who loves darkness more than light, who cherishes evil over good, will willingly and robotically embrace the lie that the Anti-christ is not just the world ruler, but that he is god. Jaw dropping.

What about you? Will you let the current global catastrophes to cause you not just to ponder the presence of a holy, eternal God, but will fear of wrath against your sin move you to trust His Son, Jesus, the true Messiah/God, as your personal Savior?

For those who are saints and who struggle with God's work through nature, I would direct you to *Trusting God* by Jerry Bridges; namely, chapter 6 titled *God's Power Over Nature*. Read this and you'll gain a better grip on how to speak and think about this all-important subject to those who don't know God, and who reject Him outright. For those who think divine use of natural calamities is unjust, you can gain some much needed insight from Mr. Bridges when he remarks:

God does not willingly bring affliction or grief to us. He does not delight in causing us to experience pain or heartache. He always has a purpose for the grief he brings or allows to come into our lives. Most often we do not know what that purpose is, but it is enough to know that his infinite wisdom and perfect love have determined that the particular sorrow is best for us. God never wastes pain.

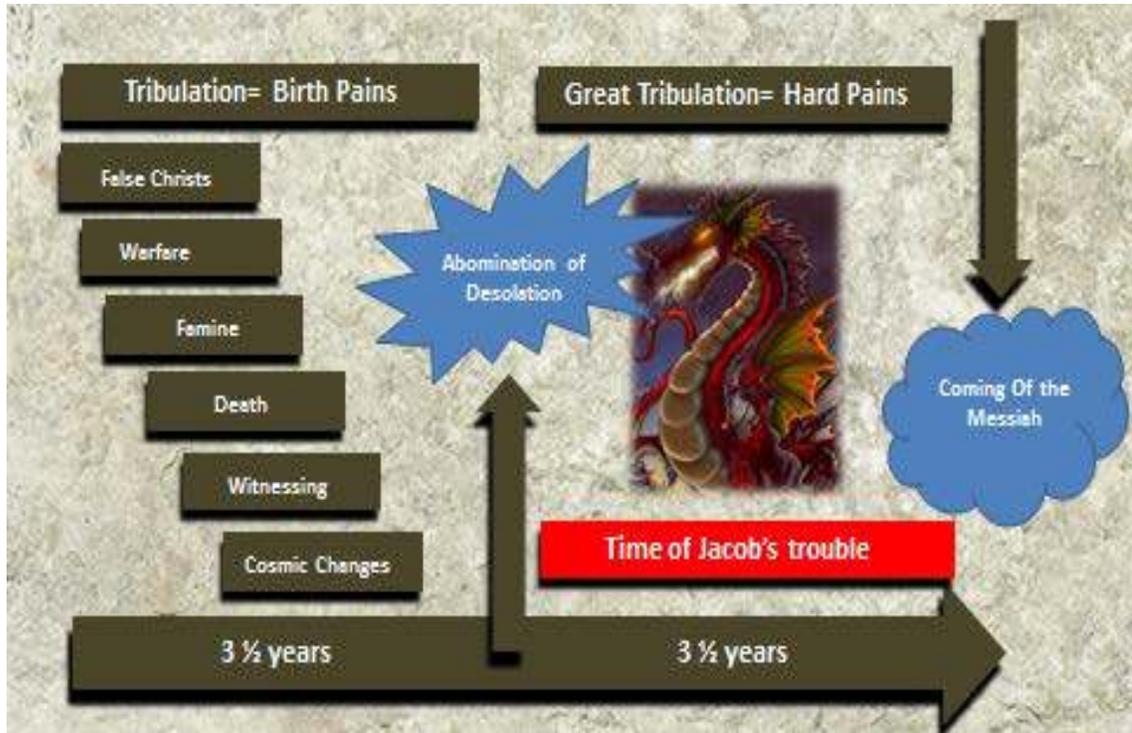
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<sup>6</sup> "World Map Of Fault Lines," [Mapsoftheworld.com](http://Mapsoftheworld.com). Accessed on August 14, 2014. Continental Plates: North American Plate, South American Plate, African Plate, Arabian Plate, Eurasian Plate, Bismarck Plate, Indo-Australian Plate, Antarctic Plate; Oceanic Plates: Juan De Fuca Plate, Pacific Plate, Nazca Plate, Scotia Plate, Cocos Plate, Caribbean Plate, Philippine Plate, Fiji Plate, Carolina Plate.

He always uses it to accomplish His purpose. And His purpose is for His glory and our good.<sup>7</sup>

So, please realize that even the depth and breadth of this seismic judgment has the holy purposes of God built into them, purposes meant to challenge the lost with His person and redemptive provision, and purposes designed to prepare the earth for His restorative arrival.

The same timeless spiritual truth holds true in our day of uncertainty all over the world. As C.S. Lewis once said, "Pain is God's megaphone." Has He got your attention? I can think of no better, more timely, question to ask as we head toward the real Eve of Destruction.



<sup>7</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988): 102.