

Masterwork of the Messiah

Expositional Study Of Matthew's Gospel

The King And The Kingdom: Part 4

Matthew 24:9

Written By

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The disciples of Christ, who anticipated the imminent arrival of the messianic kingdom at any moment, asked Christ the logical eschatological questions after His day long debate with the religious authorities

³ As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

As I have said earlier, He answered these two questions in reverse order, giving more intricate detail to the second question while brushing off the first, for the most part.

The signs Jesus presented, weren't just general signs applicable to all times, but where special divinely ordered ones which will occur during the seven year tribulation, a time period prophesied by Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). In fact, all of the ones He mentions up to the Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24, verse 15 will all occur in the first half the seven year tribulation. We know this because they coincide with the seal judgments which begin the tribulation period, as detailed by John in Revelation 6. By studying these particular signs, therefore, saints in this age will know where they are in relation to the Messiah's kingdom

program. I'm sure this will give them hope at one of the most horrific and ominous times in world history, hope that the King and kingdom are coming soon.

Some rightly ask as they become acquainted with the ferocity of God's judgment during this period, "What are God's purposes in this unique, foreboding period?" We can readily identify five from biblical references:

- One, God will punish Israel, as a nation, for their rejection of the Messiah. Since they rejected the true Shepherd, He would send them a false Shepherd, i.e., the Anti-Christ, who would persecute them (Zechariah 11; Daniel 9:27).
- Two, God will redeem repentant Israel. Their historical rebellion against God would come to an end as they see the Messiah as their Messiah and Savior (Zechariah 12-13).
- Three, God will level His long-awaited judgment against the godless world, a world which by nature has rejected Him and will at that time embrace the false god, the Anti-Christ (Matthew 3:12; 7:22-23; 8:28; 11:22; 12:36, 41,42; 13:30-50; 16:27; 22:13-14; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 24:25; Romans 2:5-12; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-8).
- Four, God will unmask the utter and illogical unbelief of the world, leaving them without excuse in eternity when He brings His final judgment against them at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20). Despite outright divine and demonic activity, the people of the world will choose to worship the false Messiah, the Anti-Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 13:3-8), over the true Messiah, Jesus. Their unbelief will cost them in time and eternity.
- Five, to culminate God's historical battle against the Devil and his menacing minions. All of the twenty-one judgments detailed in Revelation 6 through 18 showcase the progressive nature of this pitched battle which will terminate with the glorious arrival of King Jesus with the armies of heaven (Revelation 19).

Based on these purposes, you can see why we, as saints, have hope. Our blessed hope is built around the concept developed by Jesus in Matthew 24 that He ...

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

Future saints can verify if they are in the tribulation period by studying the signs Jesus discloses here.

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

- False Christs (Matthew 24:4-5)
- World-wide Warfare (Matthew 24:6-7a)
- Famine (Matthew 24:7a)
- Massive Earthquakes (Matthew 24:7b-8)

To these Christ added yet another:

Persecution (Matthew 24:8-13). Watch how Jesus opens up this particular sign:

⁸ But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

This statement serves to identify the chronology of the time. All of these four signs He just mentioned will occur in the first half of the tribulation. The fifth will arise at this time as well:

⁹ Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

As Jesus teaches, there will be basically four logical descriptions of this intense time.

One, Christians will experience tribulation, a Greek word denoting intense pressure, something akin to being placed in a vice (θλίψις, *thlipsis*). ¹ What kind of pressure will be applied to these saints is unstated; however, we can venture some guesses:

- “I’ve noticed that you don’t have the small scar from the chips the government implanted for us all to have in order to buy, sell, or trade. Why is that? I think I will have to report you to the authorities because this is a crime against the New World Order.”
- “Every Sunday, my wife and I notice an unusual amount of cars around your house. What is going on? You wouldn’t be having worship services would you? That is prohibited by the New World Order and will result in heavy fines and even imprisonment. So what about it? What’s going on in your home?”
- [At a police station] “I just wanted to let you know that I noticed a Bible, yes, a Bible at my grandmother’s home yesterday. These were banned by the New World Order because of their disruptive nature to said utopian society; therefore, I thought you’d like to know. Her address is ...”
- [A police officer to the Christian] “Sir, you are being arrested, along with several of your friends because as we have monitored your speech on your cell phones, it is quite apparent you are using Christian jargon which is verboten in our new culture. So, let’s go downtown. You’ve got to be booked, processed, and then jailed for your insurrectionist ways.”

Pressure of untold intensity will be brought against believers during this time of God’s wrath, coupled with the activity of the Anti-Christ. That pressure, of course, is present in our day, is it not? From driving Bibles out of hotel rooms because they upset people, to forbidding the Dublin Girls, a group of Christian ladies who strive to stay in shape physically and spiritually, from

¹ Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Erdmans Publishing, 1980): 202-203.

praying in a Georgia mall recently,² from the goal of the Hindu nationalist movement to ride the country of Christians,³ to numerous attempts to have Christian-based veteran memorials torn down, the pressure is increasing. Unfortunately, what we are experiencing today is but the leading edge of a massive tidal wave of global Anti-Christian rules, regulations, and actions.

What should our response be? Let me give you some biblical ideas:

- Don't be shocked. As Paul warned: ¹² *Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted* (2 Timothy 3).
- Realize you will be hated without cause, as they did with Christ. Jesus cautioned us regarding this: ¹⁸ *If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you ...* ²⁵ *But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE* (John 15).
- Use good to overcome evil, as Paul counsels: ²¹ *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good* (Romans 12). Don't match mean word for mean word, put down with put down, and so forth. Look for the good way you can respond to those who oppose Christ.
- Don't fail to engage. Remember it was Jesus who promised, ¹⁹ *But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say.* ²⁰ *For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you* (Matthew 10). Speak up when Christianity is maligned and when Christ is disparaged, and do not worry about what your words should be because God will give you what needs saying.
- Do realize you are blessed of God for representing Him, and He will personally reward you for your service: Jesus told you this much: ¹⁰ *Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* ¹¹ *Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.* ¹² *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you* (Matthew 5).

There is more we could say, but this will you some much needed direction as we all head into the prophetic pressure cooker.

Two, Christians will be executed. Again, we are speaking about tribulation saints, or those who will be saved by the preaching of the 144,000 converted Jews (Revelation 7:1-4). During this period, Christians will die *en masse* for their faith in Jesus. Revelation 7 gives us this sad word:

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before

² Todd Starnes, *Women Ordered to Stop Praying Inside Mall*, FoxNews.com, August 5, 2014, accessed August 21, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/08/05/women-ordered-to-stop-praying-inside-mall>.

³ *India Free of Christians*, Voice of the Martyrs, accessed August 21, 2014, http://www.persecution.com/public/newsroom.aspx?story_ID=%3d373032&featuredstory_ID=%3d343535.

the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;¹⁰ and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,¹² saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?"¹⁴ I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."¹⁵ For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.¹⁶ They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat;¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes (Revelation 7).

According to Revelation 20, verse 4, these saints will be beheaded for their faith:

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20).

Isn't this ironically interesting? The same method for killing Christians who won't convert in Syria or Iraq by ISIS, will be the same one adopted by the government of the Anti-Christ. And to think that the world, at large, will embrace this method of capital punishment and that they won't even blink at the unjust, unfounded termination of a Christian. Shocking. The deception at this time will be so great, I'm sure these people will think they are actually doing the right thing. How mistaken they will be.

All of this makes you wonder, why will the Anti-Christ execute Christians and Jews (Revelation 13)? I can think of many reasons:

- He will despise a moral voice at the epitome of an immoral time.
- He realizes he can only increase the power of his corrupt government by ridding that government of those who'd dare hold him accountable. Yes, he will not want to hear from those who'd dare challenge him for breaking law to create new laws. Regarding this premise, the late Judge Robert Bork once wrote, "By removing religion from the public space, we marginalize it, we deny its importance to society and relegate it to the private sphere. But if men need a transcendence that can be brought to bear on public affairs, and if religion is denied that role, other forms of transcendence, some of them quite

ugly and threatening, may move in to occupy the empty space.”⁴ I would modify those words “may move” to “will move.”

- He will absolutely not tolerate anyone who will not worship him as god.
- He will rid the world of those who live other-worldly.
- He will rid the immoral culture of those who live for a moral counter-culture.
- He will seek to expunge the Word from the world as it is showcased in the lives of those who embrace it as absolute, eternal truth.
- He will terminate those who remind him of the Christ he ultimately hates.
- He will endeavor to eradicate the race which ushered in the Messiah, and who is the recipient of all the messianic prophesies and promises.

Currently, we can isolate countries where Christians are being openly martyred for their faith. That number is small; however, there is coming a day and time when the world will collectively march lock-step with the spirit of the godless age to judge the godly.

As we approach this time, what can you do?

- Pray for saints in openly hostile countries.
- Pray for the underground Church in China and North Korea.
- Give your monies to support Christian refugees, who are literally running for their lives.
- Don't forget those, like Pastor Saeed Abedini, who are incarcerated for their faith in Jesus and are facing execution on trumped up charges. If you can take some sort of action, take it so he is not forgotten.
- Read and stay up on what is going on world-wide where Christians are concerned. *Voices of the Martyr's* web site is a good place to start.

Darkness is descending, but we still have to be points of brilliant light in creative, bold ways. Will you?

Three, Christians will be hated. We already are, but this will only intensify during the tribulation. With the Church out of the way, and the Spirit of God pulled out of His restraining mode, the hatred of the Devil toward Christ and His followers will hit the world like a fast-moving tsunami. Why will Christians be hated?

- Because they are associated with the name which drives godless people insane. The name of Jesus. As I prepared to write this sermon, I heard how one school teacher yesterday asked a young lady to leave her class for saying, “God bless you” to another student who had sneezed. She said, “I will not have religious talk in my classroom.” Huh? Free speech covers every filthy rapper to walk the planet, but you've got to be careful of those who'd dare use the “God” word. I've experienced it. Haven't you. Just the other day while I spoke with a couple I just met in the area, the Muslim wife quickly started pulling physically away from the conversation when I mentioned I pastored a

⁴ Robert Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996): 274.

- local church. That was just too much for her. Believe me; you could feel the animosity and hatred.
- Because they actually believe that Jesus is the only God and the only means by which sinners can be saved.
 - Because they believe that the Bible is the only Word of God, meaning there are no other holy books from God in any other religion.
 - Because they believe that Jesus came, lived a perfect life, died as our sin-substitute, and rose again, the victor over sin, death, and Satan.
 - Because they courageously call supposedly moral progression, immoral digression.
 - Because they won't go along to get along in a godless culture.
 - Because they believe we will all give account to the living God for our lives and lifestyle choices when we die.
 - Because our presence holds their desire for greater levels of wickedness in check.

I could go on, but I'm sure you get the point. The hatred which is brewing and stewing now, will come a full, rolling boil during this period of judgment as the Devil realizes his time is limited to wreak havoc on God's people.

Three, Christians will watch false Christians drop like flies.

¹⁰ At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

The word Jesus employs for fall away is most instructive. It is *skandalisthesontai* (from the verb *σκανδαλίζω*) which is the root of our word scandalous. In Greek, this particular word has two lexical connotations:

σκανδαλίζω (σκάνδαλον) 1 aor. ἐσκανδάλισα. Pass.: 1 fut. σκανδαλισθήσομαι; 1 aor. ἐσκανδαλίσθην; pf. ptc. ἐσκανδαλισμένος; (LXX, Aq., Sym., Theod.; PsSol 16:7; TestSol; AscIs 3:14 [but not in Test12Patr, EpArist, Philo, Joseph., apolog.]; Cat. Cod. Astr. X 67, 23; Christian authors).

① to cause to be brought to a downfall, *cause to sin* (the sin may consist in a breach of the moral law, in unbelief, or in the acceptance of false teachings)

ⓐ τινά *someone* (Mal 2:8 Sym., Theod.; PsSol 16:7 γυναικὸς σκανδαλιζούσης ἄφρονα; Palladius 5 p. 21 σκανδαλίσαι ψυχὴν) Mt 5:29f; 18:6, 8f; Mk 9:42f, 45, 47; Lk 17:2; 1 Cor 8:13ab; 1 Cl 46:8.—Pass. *be led into sin* (Sir 23:8; 32:15; AcJ 82 [Aa II/1, 192, 1]) so perh. 2 Cor 11:29 (s. 2 below).—The abs. pass. can also mean *let oneself be led into sin* (for the 'permissive pass.' s. Gildersleeve, Syntax I §167), *fall away* (Passio Perpet. 20, 10 vGebh.; MartPt 3 [Aa I p. 82, 22]) Mt 13:21; 24:10; Mk 4:17; 14:27, 29; J 16:1; D 16:5.—ἐσκανδαλισμένοι Hv 4, 1, 3; m 8:10 are *people who have been led astray*, but who have not altogether fallen away fr. the faith.

ⓑ σκανδαλίζεσθαι ἐν τινι (Sir 9:5; 23:8; 32:15) *be led into sin, be repelled by someone of Jesus; by refusing to believe in him or by becoming apostate fr. him a person falls into sin Mt 11:6; 13:57; 26:31, 33 (cp. AscIs 3, 14 δώδεκα οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ σκανδαλισθήσονται); Mk 6:3; Lk 7:23. ἐν ᾧ ὁ ἀδελφὸς σκανδαλίζεται Ro 14:21 v.l.*

② to shock through word or action, *give offense to, anger, shock* (AcJ 56 [Aa II/1 p. 178, 35]; Athanasius, Vita Anton. 81; Palladius 37 p. 115 σκανδαλίζω πολλούς; 46 p. 136) τινά *someone Mt 17:27 (JDerrett, NovT 6, '63, 1-15); J 6:61. Pass. Mt 15:12.—τίς σκανδαλίζεται; perh. who has any reason to take offense? 2 Cor 11:29 (s. la above).—S. σκάνδαλον, end.—DELG s.v. σκάνδαλον. M-M. EDNT. TW.*⁵

When Christians start to feel the pressure from the godless world, when being a Christian starts costing you something (like a job, or a date, or a raise, or a, well, you fill in the blank), when Christian-laced conversations on personal cell phones start being used against Christians in a courts of law for terroristic tendencies, when the authorities start collecting the license plate numbers of every car which pulls into a church parking lot on a given Sunday, when the IRS starts fining Christians because of new reasons they dream up for fines, yes, when it becomes dangerous to be a believer in an unbelieving culture, churches will shrink immediately, Christian book sales will plummet, Christian signs and ornamentation will be discarded, church budgets will head into the perpetual red zone, missionaries will lose a portion of their support base, and so on and so forth. All of this will occur because the wheat will be sifted from the chaff and the chaff, which previously masqueraded as being part of the body of Christ, will turn on the body for self-preservation purposes.

Makes me wonder, “If the program of the Anti-Christ were launched this week, how many of you would be back next week to worship the Lord and listen to the teaching of the Word of God?” Makes me want to ask, “Is your faith for real, or is it just something of convenience for you right now? Yeah, are you talking and walking like a Christian, but really you have never embraced the Savior by faith?” “Are you a professor or a possessor of faith in Jesus?” Friend, let me challenge you to make sure your faith is real faith, faith grounded in person and work of Jesus Christ. When tough times come, when the Devil unleashes his minions against believers, I can tell you whose side you need to be standing on. It’s the side of Jesus.

As the world will slip into the depths of apostasy, it is only logical to read what comes next.

¹² Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.

Remove the law-abiding and you naturally have unchecked lawlessness. As the future godless world system, empowered and governed by the lawless one called the Anti-Christ (2 Thessalonians 2, 3 8), replaces Judeo-Christians constitutions and legal structures with immoral, idolatrous ones, and as he, and his blind servants pursue, persecute, and eliminate Christians world-wide, a state of utter lawlessness will spread like a plague.

⁵ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000): 926.

Jesus uses a Greek word here which denotes a hatred of all law, religious, judicial, and the like. By adding the Greek alpha (α) to the beginning of the word law (*nomos*), *all* law is negated, but from what we are seeing in our day, the hatred of God's law is first and foremost. From the most powerful politician to the most insignificant blue collar worker, we daily live to see people just chomping at the bit to cast Judeo-Christian laws aside so they can devise their own laws, laws which won't limit their thirst for greater darkness, presented, of course, as greater morality for the masses. What will be the result? Man will be left to his own devious, dangerous, deadly devices, and as in the time of Noah evil will know no limit or restraint and chaos will ensue. Regardless of where you stand on what's going on in Ferguson, Missouri right now, one thing is sure: chaos reigns supremely and the police are ill-equipped to keep up with it and to keep it in check. Such is a small picture of what the end-times will be like as societal structure will heave and implode upon itself. And as that world will slip into the bottomless pit of sin, it will only be logical for sin to overpower any and all forms of love, be it love for the down-an-outer, to the love of a person in a shattered relationship. No. At this time, sin will reign supremely, and where sin reigns there is no room for love of God, love of God's Word, and love of neighbor and fellow man.

Amidst this social unraveling, Jesus offers this cryptic promise:

¹³ But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Is he speaking here about salvation? No. To equate these words with salvation would make salvation based on faith plus perpetual endurance. We know this won't hold theological water because we know that carnal Christians, like the Corinthians, didn't endure very well in their day but were still called saints in chapter one of Paul's first letter to them (1 Corinthians 1:1-4). I believe this is a tenuous position, as well, because Paul is very clear that salvation is based on grace, through faith, and that it is not a work in any way, shape, or form (Ephesians 2:8-10).

What, then, is Jesus promising here? I like the way Pastor Warren Wiersbe opens up the meaning of this seemingly thorny verse:

“The end does not mean the end of his life; it refers to the end of the age (Matt. 24:14). Those believers on earth during this terrible period, who endure in their faith, will be saved when the Lord comes at the end and delivers them.”⁶

The word save has many lexical meanings, with one of them being salvation;⁷ however, the context and theology must validate which meaning is the correct one. Based on the observations

⁶ Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: An Exposition of the New Testament Comprising the Entire 'Be' Series* (Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1989): 87.

⁷ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000): 982. **σῶζω** fut. σώσω; 1 aor. ἔσωσα; pf. σέσωκα. Pass.: impf. ἐσφζόμεν; fut. σωθήσομαι; 1 aor. ἐσώθην; pf. 3 sing. σέσωται **Ac 4:9** (UPZ 122, 18 [157 B.C.] σέσωμαι) w. σέσωσται or σέσωσται as v.l. (s. Tdf. ad loc. and B-D-F §26); ptc. σεσωσμένος **Eph 2:5, 8** (Hom.+—σῶζω [=σῶϊζω] and the forms surely derived fr. it are to be written w. ι subscript. On the other hand, it is not possible to say how far the ι has spread fr. the present to the tenses formed fr. the root σω-. Kühner-BI. II 544; B-D-F §26; Mlt-H. 84; Mays 134)

① **to preserve or rescue fr. natural dangers and afflictions, save, keep from harm, preserve, rescue** (X., An. 3, 2, 10 οἱ θεοὶ ... ἱκανοὶ εἰσι κ. τοὺς μεγάλους ταχὺ μικροὺς ποιεῖν κ. τοὺς μικροὺς σῶζειν; Musonius p. 32, 10; Chion, Ep. 11; 12 θεοῦ σῶζοντος πλευσσοῦμαι; Ar. [Milne 74, 15]).

② **save from death** (ins [I B.C.]: Sb 8138, 34 σῶζονθ' οὔτοι ἅπαντες who call upon Isis in the hour of death) τινά *someone* (Apollon. Rhod. 3, 323 θεός τις ἅμι' [=ήμιᾱς] ἐσώωσεν from danger of death at sea; Diod S 11, 92, 3; PsSol 13:2 ἀπὸ ῥομφαίας [cp. Ps 21:21]) **Mt 14:30; 27:40, 42, 49; Mk 15:30f; Lk 23:35ab, 37, 39;** 1 Cl 16:16 (Ps 21:9); 59, 4; AcPl Ha 5, 12. Pass. (TestJob 19:2 πῶς οὖν σὺ ἐσώθης;) **Mt 24:22; Mk 13:20; J 11:12** (ἐγερθήσεται P⁷⁵); **Ac 27:20, 31;** 1 Cl 7:6. Abs., w. acc. easily supplied **Mt 8:25.** ψυχὴν σώσει *save a life* (Achilles Tat. 5, 22, 6; PTEbt 56, 11 [II B.C.] σώσει ψυχὰς πολλὰς; EpArist 292; Jos., Ant. 11, 255) **Mk 3:4; Lk 6:9; 21:19** v.l. τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σώσει *save one's own life* (Gen 19:17; 1 Km 19:11; Jer 31:6) **Mt 16:25; Mk 8:35a=Lk 9:24a** (on **Mk 8:35b=Lk 9:24b** s. 2aβ below); **17:33** v.l. (PGM 5, 140 κύριε [a god] σώσον ψυχὴν).

③ w. ἕκ τινος **bring out safely** fr. a situation fraught w. mortal danger (X., An. 3, 2, 11; SIG 1130, 1 ἐκ κινδύνων; OGI 69, 4; JosAs 4:8 ἐκ τοῦ λιμοῦ; 28:16 ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 286) ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου **Jd 5.** ἐκ χειρὸς Φαραῶ AcPl Ha 8, 11; ἐκ Σοδόμων 1 Cl 11:1 (Pla., Gorg. 511d ἐξ Αἰγίνης δεῦρο). ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης **J 12:27.** ἐκ θανάτου *from (the threat of) death* (Hom. et al.; Pla., Gorg. 511c; UPZ 122, 18 [157 B.C.]) **Hb 5:7.**—Of the evil days of the last tribulation ἐν αἷς ἡμεῖς σωθησόμεθα B 8:6; cp. 1 Cl 59:4.

④ **save/free from disease** (Hippocr., Coacae Praenotiones 136 vol. 5 p. 612 L.; IG², 1028, 89 [I B.C.]; Mitt-Wilck. I/2, 68, 32 [132 B.C.]: gods bring healing) or *from possession by hostile spirits* τινά *someone* ἢ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε **Mt 9:22a; Mk 5:34; 10:52; Lk 8:48; 17:19; 18:42.** Cp. **Js 5:15;** AcPl Ha 5, 31. Pass. *be restored to health, get well* (Just., D. 112, 1; Ael. Aristid. 33, 9 K.=51 p. 573 D.) **Mt 9:21, 22b; Mk 5:23, 28; 6:56; Lk 8:36; Ac 4:9; 14:9.** Also of the restoration that comes about when death has already occurred **Lk 8:50.**

⑤ **keep, preserve** in good condition (pap; Did., Gen. 145, 1.—Theoph. Ant. 1, 12 [p. 84, 4]) τὶ *someh.* (Ath. 17, 2 ὁ τύπος ... σῶζεται, R. 20 p. 73, 10 μνήμη and αἴσθησιν; Eunap., Vi. Soph. p. 107: θειασμός) pass. τὴν κλησιν σῶζεσθαι Hs 8, 11, 1.

⑥ pass. **thrive, prosper, get on well** (SibOr 5, 227) σῶζεσθαι ὅλον τὸ σῶμα 1 Cl 37:5. As a form of address used in parting σῶζεσθε *farewell, remain in good health* B 21:9 (cp. TestAbr B 2 p. 106, 1 [Stone p. 60] σῶσόν σε ὁ θεός).

⑦ **to save or preserve from transcendent danger or destruction, save/preserve from eternal death** fr. judgment, and fr. all that might lead to such death, e.g. sin, also in a positive sense **bring** Messianic **salvation, bring to salvation** (LXX; Herm. Wr. 13, 19 σῶζειν='endow w. everlasting life'.—Of passing over into a state of salvation and a higher life: Cebes 3, 2; 4, 3; 14, 1. Opp. κολάζειν Orig., C. Cels. 2, 38, 16).

⑧ act. τινά *someone* or τὶ *someh.*

α. of God and Christ: God (ApcEsdr 2:17 p. 26, 9 Tdf. σὺ δὲ ὄν θέλεις σῶζεις καὶ ὄν θέλεις ἀπολεῖς) **1 Cor 1:21; 2 Ti 1:9; Tit 3:5;** AcPlCor 2:10, 16. The acc. is easily supplied **Js 4:12.** ὁ θεὸς ὁ σῶζων **Mt 16:16** D.—Christ (Orig., C. Cels. 3, 14, 9): **Mt 18:11; Lk 19:10; J 12:47; 1 Ti 1:15; 2 Ti 4:18** (εἰς 10d); **Hb 7:25;** MPol 9:3. σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν **Mt 1:21** (σ. ἀπὸ as Jos., Ant. 4, 128); also ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν GJs 11:3; cp. 14:2. The acc. is to be supplied 2 Cl 1:7. διὰ τῶν ἀγγῶν ἀνδρῶν AcPl Ha 1, 16.

β. of persons who are mediators of divine salvation: apostles **Ro 11:14; 1 Cor 9:22; 1 Ti 4:16b.** The believing partner in a mixed marriage **1 Cor 7:16ab** (JJeremias, Die missionarische Aufgabe in der Mischehe, Bultmann Festschr. '54, 255–60). One Christian of another σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου **Js 5:20** (on σ. ἐκ θαν. s. 1a above). Cp. **Jd 23.** Of ultimate personal security **1 Ti 4:16a; Mk 8:35b=Lk 9:24b** (for **Mk 8:35a=Lk 9:24a** s. 1a above). **p 983**

γ. of qualities, etc., that lead to salvation ἢ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε **Lk 7:50** (s. 1c above). Cp. **Js 1:21; 2:14; 1 Pt 3:21;** Hv 2, 3, 2. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν πλοῦτος ἢ τὰ νῦν ἐν τῷ βίῳ λαμπρὰ σώσι (=σώσει) σε *it's not [the wealth or pomp in this life] that will save you* AcPl Ha 9, 8 (for the restoration s. corresponding expressions 2, 21–27).

⑨ pass. *be saved, attain salvation* (TestAbr A 11 p. 90, 3 [Stone p. 28] al.; Just., A I, 18, 8 al.; Theoph. Ant. 2, 14 [p. 136, 15]) **Mt 10:22; 19:25; 24:13; Mk 10:26; 13:13; 16:16; Lk 8:12; 18:26; J 5:34; 10:9; Ac 2:21** (Jo 3:5); **15:1; 16:30f; Ro 10:9, 13** (Jo 3:5); **11:26; 1 Cor 5:5; 10:33; 1 Th 2:16; 2 Th 2:10; 1 Ti 2:4** (JTurm, Rev. d'Hist. et de Littérature religieuses 5, 1900, 385–415); **1 Pt 4:18** (Pr 11:31); 2 Cl 4:2; 13:1; IPHld 5:2; Hs 9, 26, 6; AcPl Ha 1, 5 and 21.—σωθῆναι διὰ τινος *through someone* (Ctesias: 688 Fgm. 8a p. 452 Jac. [in Ps.-Demetr., Eloc. c. 213] σὺ μὲν δι' ἐμὲ ἐσώθης, ἐγὼ δέ; Herm. Wr. 1, 26b ὅπως τὸ γένος τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος διὰ σοῦ ὑπὸ θεοῦ σωθῆ) **J 3:17;** 2 Cl 3:3; *through someh.* (Mel., P. 60, 440 διὰ τοῦ αἵματος) **Ac 15:11; 1 Cor 15:2; 1 Ti 2:15** (διὰ A 3c); Hv 3, 3, 5; 3, 8, 3 (here faith appears as a person, but still remains as a saving quality); 4, 2, 4. ἐν τινι *in or through someone* 1

I just made, I believe it most tenable to conclude Jesus isn't speaking here about spiritual salvation, but physical salvation, a concept He will develop in chapter 25, verses 32 through 33 when He speaks of how He will separate the sheep (believers) from the goats (unbelievers) upon His physical arrival.

Ostensibly, what does this all mean to us in the here and now? Plenty. We should teach our children to be law-abiding members of society. We should be law-abiders. We should vote for leaders who uphold the law and don't seek to change, modify, or alter it to suit their evil purposes. We should do what we can, when we can to keep lawlessness in check.

One additional tribulational sign appears in verse 14:

Proclamation (Matthew 24:14). After a long list of very scary, spine stiffening signs, Jesus adds this positive concept:

¹⁴ This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The word gospel here in the original text does not have an article, meaning it is anarthrous. Grammatically, this means the unique construction points to the quality of the gospel.⁸ Practically, this means the judgment and grace sides of God's eternal gospel are showcased.

I find this most interesting and instructive. At a time when evil is running rampant, when the Devil's false trinity is duping the world (Revelation 13), when false teaching is anywhere and everywhere, when Christians are in short supply, when immorality has judicially replaced morality, when a Bible will probably be as hard to find as it was in Denzel Washington hit movie *The Book of Eli*, God's gospel will go forth warning mankind of impending judgment if they don't repent and promising this forgiveness and kingdom life in God's presence if they do turn to Him.

How will the gospel spread and be heard?

Cl 38:1; AcPl Ha 2, 29; *in or through someth.* **Ac 4:12; 11:14; Ro 5:10.** ὑπό τινος *by someone* (Herm. Wr. 9, 5 ὑπό τ. θεοῦ σ.; Philo, Leg. All. 2, 101 ὑπό θεοῦ σώζεται) 2 Cl 8:2. ἀπό τινος *save oneself by turning away from* **Ac 2:40** (on σ. ἀπό s. 2a above; ELövestam, ASTI 12, '83, 84–92). διά τινος ἀπό τινος *through someone from someth.* **Ro 5:9.**—χάριτι *by grace* **Eph 2:5**; Pol 1:3. τῇ χάριτι *διὰ πίστεως* **Eph 2:8.** τῇ ἐλπίδι *ἐσώθημεν* (only) *in hope have we* (thus far) *been saved or it is in the context of this hope that we have been saved* (i.e., what is to come climaxes what is reality now) **Ro 8:24.**—οἱ σωζόμενοι *those who are to be or are being saved* (Iren. 1, 3, 5 [Harv. I 30, 9]) **Lk 13:23; Ac 2:47** (BMeyer, CBQ 27, '65, 37f: cp. Is 37:2); **1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15** (opp. οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι in the last two passages); **Rv 21:24** t.r. (Erasmian rdg.); 1 Cl 58:2; MPol 17:2.

③Certain passages belong under 1 and 2 at the same time. They include **Mk 8:35=Lk 9:24** (s. 1a and 2a β above) and **Lk 9:[56] v.l.**, where σώζειν is used in contrast to destruction by fire fr. heaven, but also denotes the bestowing of transcendent salvation (cp. Cornutus 16 p. 21, 9f οὐ πρὸς τὸ βλάπτειν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ σώζειν γέγονεν ὁ λόγος [=Ἐρμῆς]). In **Ro 9:27** τὸ ὑπόλειμμα σωθήσεται (Is 10:22) the remnant that is to escape death is interpreted to mean the minority who are to receive the Messianic salvation. In **1 Cor 3:15** escape fr. a burning house is a symbol for the attainment of eternal salvation (πῦρ α; cp. also Cebes 3, 4 εἰάν δέ τις γνῶ, ἡ ἀφροσύνη ἀπόλλυται, αὐτὸς δὲ σώζεται).—WWagner, Über σώζειν u. seine Derivata im NT: ZNW 6, 1905, 205–35; J-BColon, La conception du Salut d'après les Év. Syn.: RSR 10, 1930, 1–39; 189–217; 370–415; 11, '31, 27–70; 193–223; 382–412; JSevenster, Het verlossingsbegrip bij Philo. Vergeleken met de verlossingsgedachten van de Syn. evangeliën '36; PMinear, And Great Shall be your Reward '41; MGoguel, Les fondements de l'assurance du salut chez l'ap. Paul: RHPR 17, '38, 105–44; BHHW II 995, 1068.—B. 752. DELG s.v. σωζ. M-M. EDNT. TW. Spicq. Sv.

⁸ Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond The Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996): 244-245.

- Through the 144,000 sealed Jewish converts.
- Through the two witnesses of Revelation 11 fame.
- Through the countless people who will bravely turn to faith in Jesus, even at the risk of their lives.
- Through the angel who will fly through heaven given mankind the message. We read about this in Revelation 14:⁶ *And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;*⁷ *and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."*

What grace in a graceless time. Before God brings the final judgment curtain down, He gives the wicked one more opportunity to reconsider their ways, and this time He employs an angel flying around the world in the sky to make sure they know what they need to do in order to be saved. Again, I say, what grace in a graceless time.⁹

⁹ Grant Osborne offers a sound discussion about the gospel presentation in his commentary on *Revelation*, in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002): 534-537.

i. First Angel with the Eternal Gospel (14:6-7)

The characteristic *Καὶ εἶδον* (*Kai eidon*, And I saw; translated in various ways in 12:13; 13:1, 11; 14:1) introduces a further aspect of the vision. The *ἄλλον ἄγγελον* (*allon angelon*, other angel) occurs in 14:6, 8, 15, 17, 18 and presents a problem because there is no other angel in the immediate context of this interlude. In 7:2; 8:3; and 10:1 the reference is to another in the series of angels who carry out the judgments of God in the book. Most likely the use of "another angel" is to call the reader back to the seven angels who introduced the trumpet judgments, for these angels also introduce divine judgment. This angel is "flying in midair" and speaks with "a loud voice," similar to the eagle announcing the three woes in 8:13. This connects the message of this angel with those proclamations of judgment, and the "flying in midair" signifies an announcement made to the whole world.

This first proclamation of judgment, however, is significantly different from the others. This angel carries *εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον* (*euangelion aiōnion*, the eternal gospel), with the anarthrous form (of all the NT occurrences, only here and in Rom. 1:1 is it anarthrous) emphasizing the highly theological character of this "good news." This is the only time *εὐαγγέλιον* appears in the Apocalypse, though the verb is found in 10:7 ("the mystery of God ... announced to his servants the prophets") as well as here. Moreover, the cognate *εὐαγγελίσαι* (*euangelisai*, to preach) gives "to preach the gospel" special force. But it is a very different gospel from the one found elsewhere in the NT, for it does not mention Jesus and his sacrifice for sin, nor is there the call for repentance as in 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11. Instead, the nations are called to "fear God and give him glory" in light of the coming judgment. Some (e.g., Mounce, Beale, Schnabel) believe there is no offer of salvation here but only a proclamation of judgment. This would fit the context of 8:13; 10:7; and 14:6-13 (judgment on the nations for what they have done to God's people), and since the "gospel" is addressed to *τοὺς καθήμενους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς* (*tous kathēmenous epī tēs gēs*, those sitting on the earth), these are the "earth-dwellers" who chose Satan over God (11:10; 13:8, 14) and received the message of doom (8:13). Moreover, they are further described as "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people," like those in 10:11; 11:9; and 13:7 who also follow the beast and participate in his evil deeds. Thus, it is indeed possible that this is forced homage rather than an offer of salvation.

It is more likely, however, that a final chance to repent is being given the nations. Everywhere that *εὐαγγέλιον* is found in the NT, it implies the gracious offer of salvation. Lohse (1960: 85) links this with the proclamation of the gospel in the end times in Mark 13:10 and parallels. Altink (1984: 187-89) believes that since the four key words of this passage also appear in David's psalm of thanksgiving in 1 Chron. 16:8-36 ("fear" in 16:25, 30; "glory" in 16:24, 27, 28, 29; "judgment" in 16:12, 14; and "worship" in 16:29), this passage reflects the emphasis on God's redemptive

activity at the return of the ark of the covenant (193). In a later article, Altink (1986: 217) states that 14:6–7 reflects the covenant form of the OT, employing the covenant prologue (14:7), covenant stipulations (14:7, 8–9), witnesses (14:7–9), and blessings and curses (throughout chap. 14). While this latter scheme is somewhat artificial, he makes a strong case for the positive rather than negative force of this passage. Michaels (1997: 173) notes rightly the parallel with the summary of Jesus' kingdom message in Mark 1:14–15, "The kingdom is near. Repent and believe the good news." Also, in Rev. 5:9 and 7:9 the fourfold "nation, tribe, tongue, and people" is used for those who are converted from among the nations; and in 21:24, 26 the "nations" bring their "glory and honor" into the New Jerusalem. Aune (1998a: 825) calls this "an appeal for repentance and conversion to the God who created heaven and earth in the context of impending judgment."

Three further points: (1) in 15:4 the victorious saints in heaven sing, "Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name?" an obvious reference to conversion (it is followed by "all nations will come and worship before you"); (2) in 16:9 the sinners "did not repent so as to give him glory," thus defining repentance (unto salvation) as "giving God glory"; (3) in 19:5 God's "slaves" are defined as "those who fear him," and in 19:7 the great multitude sings, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory." It is clear that in Revelation "fear God and give him glory" are code words for repentance and conversion. Bauckham (1993b: 286–89) makes a good case for an allusion to Ps. 96:2b, "Proclaim [LXX εὐαγγελίζεσθε] his salvation from day to day," especially since the next line of the psalm says, "Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all peoples" (96:3). The context of the psalm fits the emphasis here quite well. Finally, that this is an "eternal gospel" emphasizes the everlasting nature of this message; it partakes of the eternal nature of God himself. Judgment refers to the events of chapters 19 and 20 and would hardly be called an "eternal gospel." Thus, when the victorious saints in 15:4 celebrate that "all nations will come and worship before you," they sing of the results of this offer of salvation. The decision as to whether this is a call to repentance or a proclamation of judgment is linked to two earlier questions: whether "repent" in 9:20, 21 and 16:9, 11 refers to God's actual offer of repentance or simply to the depravity of the nations in refusing to repent and whether the people who are "terrified and give glory" to God in 11:13 are converted from among the nations. I find it unlikely that all of this material in the book would be used just to highlight the judgment theme. Moreover, when the persecutors in 16:9 refuse to "repent and give [God] glory," it is quite likely that this means "repent and be converted." So a true offer of salvation is far more probable. DeSilva (1998b: 789–94) calls this passage "the call to respond justly to the divine patron" and says that it forms a summons to honor God and his commandments, to give him the exclusive worship that is his due.

The message of the "eternal gospel" is delivered in a "loud voice" (also 14:9–11, 15, 18), so that all the inhabitants of earth can hear (14:6). The first two elements replicate the reaction of the survivors of the earthquake in 11:13, Φοβήθητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν (Phobēthēte ton theon kai dote autō doxan, Fear God and give him glory). The call to "fear God" is frequent in the OT (Deut. 31:12; 1 Sam. 12:14, 24; Ps. 34:11; Prov. 1:7; Isa. 11:3), as is the command to "give him glory" (1 Chron. 16:24; Ps. 22:23; Isa. 24:15; 42:12). In effect, this sums up the OT and Jewish call to salvation. However, it is also a major NT emphasis; "fearing God" (2 Cor. 5:11; Phil. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:17) and "giving him glory" (Luke 1:46; Rom. 15:6, 9; 1 Pet. 2:12) summarize the only proper response to God's salvation. In Rev. 15:4 the triumphant saints praise God, singing, "Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name?" Thus, here this is a call to salvation, to repent and enter the realm of the holy.

The reason (ὅτι, *hoti*, because, for) for repenting is that ἤλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ (*ēlthen hē hōra tēs kriseōs autou*, the hour of his judgment has come). The aorist ἤλθεν is culminative, emphasizing that the time of judgment "has already arrived" (cf. 6:17 and 11:18 for similar uses of this verb), and this imminence is the basis of the final chance to repent, similar to Mark 1:15, "The kingdom of God has arrived; repent and believe the gospel." The use of ὥρα for the divinely appointed "hour" parallels the theme in John, where it signifies Jesus' "hour" of destiny (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20). In Revelation the term often speaks of the final outpouring of judgment: 3:10 ("the hour of trial"); 9:15 (the angels "kept ready for this very hour"); 14:15 ("the hour to reap has come"); 18:10, 17, 19 ("in one hour your doom has come"). This echoes the similar use of "hour" in Daniel (see Beale 1999: 752), as in 4:17 LXX, the "time" of Nebuchadnezzar's judgment, or 11:45 LXX, "the hour of his end will come." Here we have the first of four uses of κρίσις in the book (14:7; 16:7; 18:10; 19:2), with two (16:7; 19:2) stressing the truth and justice of God's judgments on the nations. In this context, the certainty and imminence of God's judgment makes the call to repentance all the

Right now that same gospel of grace is being extended to you, and you, now, have a decision to make. Will you be with Christ or apart from Him?

more critical—there will not be another opportunity, and there are only two choices, repent or face the final judgment.

The final element is a call to “worship” (προσκυνήσατε, *proskynēsate*) the God who “made the heaven and the earth and the sea and the springs of water.” In twenty-one of the other uses of this verb, “worship” refers not to forced submission but to homage and praise given to God (4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 9:20; 11:1, 16; 15:4; 19:4, 10 [twice]; 22:8, 9) or to the false trinity (13:4 [twice], 8, 12, 15; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20). In 20:4 the two are brought together when the victorious saints are described as those who “had not worshiped the beast or his image.” It is clear that the nations are forced to make a choice: worship God and receive salvation or worship the beast (14:9, 11 below) and receive judgment. Kraft (1974: 193) calls the angel a heavenly herald calling the whole world to pay homage to the King. The description of God as “the one who made the heaven and the earth” occurs only here, but creation theology permeates the book (3:14; 4:7, 11; 5:13; 10:6; 12:16). The God who created and sustains this world will end it on the basis of his sovereign will. Moreover, the fourfold litany of “heaven, earth, sea, springs of water” as in 10:6 reiterates the victims of the first four trumpets (8:6–12) and bowls (16:2–9). As such these summarize the effects of God’s wrath and prove again that one of the purposes of the judgment septets is to prove the omnipotence of God, disprove the earthly gods, and give the nations a final chance to repent. This parallels the call of the early church to the pagan world to “turn from worthless things [idols] to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them” (Acts 14:15; cf. Acts 17:24–27; Rom. 1:19–20). An appeal to God’s creating the universe was an essential component of early Christian evangelistic preaching to Gentiles.