**AN INTERPRETATION OF MATTHEW CHAPTER 24**

**Signs Of The End Of Age**

Matthew 24 was a prophecy which came from Jesus as a reply to the disciples’ question “What will be the sign of your coming at the end of the age”? Jesus’ answer is broken down into four parts.

1. General signs leading up to the last days
2. Special signs to indicate the final days of the age, i.e. the great tribulation
3. Spectacular signs to occur at his triumphant coming with power and great glory
4. Admonition to believers living before the tribulation to be spiritually ready for the unexpected and unknown time of Christ’s coming for his faithful.

***General signs leading up to the last days (24:4-14)***

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Jesus started by warning his disciples against deceit. He predicted that many will come in his name claiming to be the Christ and deceive many. Wars will abound and rumors of war, nations rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, Famines and Earthquakes in various places. These were what he called the beginning of sorrow. When we tune into the news daily, the happenings above are not far from what we see. We hear of pastors and religious leaders duping unsuspecting victims of money and properties, defiling young people, committing all manner of atrocities with the revered name of Christ. We also hear of wars in the middle east, Africa even in the north eastern part of our country. Earthquakes, floods and Tsunamis fill up news reports around different continents from across the globe. All these Jesus called the beginning of sorrow.

He continued by talking about an unfathomable hatred for believers which will lead to the persecution and hatred of many by all nations. I need not go far to buttress this point. Just a peek into the attitude of people in the market and work place towards those who refuse to compromise and live out their Christian faith tells you that the persecution is existent. Killings of Christian all around the world for the sake of their faith is becoming a norm in the news.

He predicted apostasy. Many at times when you try to witness to people you hear things like” I too used to be a strong Christian before” or “we have done all these things you people are doing now”. Many have left the faith for different reasons; ranging from betrayal by those they looked up to as brothers in the faith to over familiarity with things of God.

Jesus further spoke about false prophets who will deceive people, the increase of wickedness which will cause the love of many to grow cold but follows it with a promise for those who stand till the end – salvation. In this social media age things that were abhorred in the past have become norms that even professed Christians defend. Young and old dressing seductively without restraint, men burning with passion for men, women burning with passion for women, Adultery rate skyrocketing, fornication becoming a norm for people everywhere, young and old involved in rituals and harvesting human parts, people doing everything and anything to get rich. Our society has decayed that people no longer see the wrong in the above-mentioned vices.

When the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the end, the end will come. Despite the persecutions and killings missionaries are going to the remote ends of the earth to preach the gospel message. The gospel of the kingdom is what was mentioned not gospel of prosperity or any other gospel. When the message of the salvation of our God is preached all over the earth then shall the end come.

***Special signs to indicate the final days of the age, i.e. the great tribulation***

The abomination that causes desolation is a reference to the prophecy of Daniel in Dan 9:27,11:31 and this is also spoken by Saint Paul in 2Thess 2:3-4.

The Lord predicted great distress in those days. Jesus further talked about false prophets performing great signs to deceive even the elect. There is even a disclaimer in verse 25 “See, I have told you ahead of time”. These prophecies are happening today, yet people fall for it because they are not in resonance with the word of God. People want miracles and signs yet they do not want a relationship with the God of the miracles. Hence the need for shortcuts which leads to deceit.

Jesus further gave signs that all the earth shall see at his coming. “As lightning that comes from the east is visible even from the west, so will the coming of the son of man”.

***Spectacular signs to occur at his triumphant coming with power and great glory***

The third part talks about the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the signs that accompany it, and the rapture of the elect.

Many Christians today argue with the message of rapture but here Jesus says it himself. There will be great mourning in all the nations of the earth when they see the son of man coming in power and glory. The “had I know” will set in. those that have shut out their heart to the message of the gospel will be filled with regret.

“*And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of heavens to the other*”

The believers who are right with God shall be gathered.

Jesus gave an assurance in verse 35 that “*Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words will never pass away*”.

***Admonition to believers living before the tribulation to be spiritually ready for the unexpected and unknown time of Christ’s coming for his faithful***

Jesus made a comparison of his coming and the days of Noah. Noah was telling the people of the flood to come and they were eating, drinking and getting married and ignored his warning until the ark was shut. Another illustration used was that of two persons grinding at a mill and one disappearing, two persons working in the field and one disappearing; this is very clear and concise description of the rapture. Believers should be always ready, they should not give into despair as Jesus encouraged them to “keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come”. The Lord will come at an hour when believers do not expect him.

The next two verses are directed to pastors and religious leaders; Jesus admonished them to “*give the servants food at the proper time*”. We live in a generation and time where the church has been secularized and leaders are deaf to the voice of the Holy Spirit and look at material things as the benchmark for success. The undiluted word of God should be preached and always as frequent as we eat food, because failure to do this will lead to spending eternity in hell.