

SESSION 6: *Putting It All Together—Part 2*

I. THE THREE DISTINCT PROPHETIC *TIME FRAMES* IN GOD'S END-TIME PLAN

- A. *Scripture* describes three distinct prophetic time frames in the End Times.

We clearly find these when comparing Matt. 24 with 1 Thess. 5:2-3 and Dan. 9:27.

- B. They all relate to the final seven-year period of *natural* history and are compared to the labor pangs that a woman endures just before the birth of her child.

This is a prophetic picture of the trauma that all on the earth will endure just before the birthing of the Millennial Kingdom.

- C. The angel Gabriel spoke to the prophet Daniel about the final seven years of natural history immediately before the Messiah would rule the world from Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24-27). Gabriel spoke of these seven years as a *week*.

This was a common expression in ancient Israel. They thought of both a week of years (seven years) as well as a week of days (seven days).

This final seven-year period just before Jesus' return is often referred to as "Daniel's prophetic week."

- D. The first prophetic time frame is referred to as the "*beginning* of birth pangs" (Matt. 24:4-8; Mark 13:5-8, Luke 21:7-18).

During this time, the nations will have military conflicts with one another.

My opinion is that the beginning of birth pangs began in either 1948, when Israel became a nation, or 1967, when the city of Jerusalem came under Jewish control.

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...8 All these are the beginning of sorrows (birth pangs). (Matt. 24:7-8)

- E. The second prophetic time frame is referred to as a worldwide period of *counterfeit* peace and safety (increased labor pangs) which starts at the beginning of the final seven years and continues for 3½ years (1 Thess. 5:2-3; Dan. 9:27).

It will not appear as a time of trouble for unbelievers who lack spiritual discernment. However, it will be a time of trouble and persecution for the Church.

For you yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains (Great Tribulation) upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (1 Thess. 5:2-3)

- F. Paul described the world as celebrating peace and safety immediately before the time of sudden *destruction* (Great Tribulation).

This is a temporary counterfeit world peace that will suddenly end when the Great Tribulation starts. No nation will escape.

- G. The third prophetic time frame is referred to as the *Great Tribulation* (hard labor pangs) and lasts for 3½ years (Matt. 24:21; Jer. 30:5-7).

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matt. 24:21)

- H. Why do we care about these three time frames?

God in His mercy, revealed these to the Church in Scripture to give us understanding of what is coming and its general sequence to prepare us. God desires that we not be deceived by the great trends of peace and safety which will seem so good. The Lord does not want us overwhelmed by the pressures that surprise us. Rather, the Scriptures are a light in the darkness or as a compass in a storm out at sea. We will be prepared.

II. WORLDWIDE COUNTERFEIT PEACE AND SAFETY (1 THESS. 5:2-3; DAN. 9:27)

For you yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains (Great Tribulation) upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (1 Thess. 5:2-3)

- A. The second prophetic time frame will be a time of peace and *safety*.

It comes just before the third prophetic time frame, the Great Tribulation. This period will continue during the first 3½ years of the last seven years of this age.

This will be a time of peace and safety for unbelievers only. The Church will be persecuted at this time.

- B. Twice, Paul refers to "*they*" as those who rejoice in peace and then those who will not escape.

This "*they*" refers to all the unbelieving nations on the earth, including Israel.

Those who are deceived think the time of peace was God's blessing instead of the work of the Antichrist.

- C. The time of peace will be the result of the Antichrist making a seven-year *peace treaty* (Dan. 9:27).

One of the implications of this covenant or peace treaty will be to allow Israel to offer animal sacrifices (commanded by Moses) in their temple in Jerusalem.

*Then he (Antichrist) shall **confirm a covenant** (peace treaty) with many (Israel and Middle East nations) for one week (seven-year period); but in the middle of the week (after 3½ years) he shall bring an end to sacrifice (in the Jerusalem temple, thus breaking the covenant). (Dan. 9:27)*

- D. Since the Jerusalem temple does not currently exist, this prophecy implies that it must first be *built*.

The temple is the context in which the Abomination of Desolation occurs.

(Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2; 13:12-18; Dan. 9:26, 27; 11:31; 12:11).

- E. The Antichrist shall establish a *political* peace treaty with many nations including Israel and Middle East *Islamic* nations.

This peace treaty will be designed for a seven-year period. However, in the middle of the week or seven year period (after 3½ years), the Antichrist will break the treaty.

The result will be to bring an end to the Israel's religious activity in the Jerusalem Temple.

- F. This peace treaty will end the first prophetic time frame, called the beginning of birth pangs, in which the nations of the world will be fighting each other (Matt. 24:7-8).

- G. No one knows *when* the last seven-year period of natural history begins. However, we do know *how* it starts and how it ends.

It will start as a result of the Antichrist making a covenant with Israel and various Middle East nations (Dan. 9:27).

The angel Gabriel prophesied to Daniel of this last seven-year period (often called Daniel's 70th week) that will initiate this time of peace and safety.

- H. The Antichrist's credibility to establish his worldwide empire will come partially by being able to establish peace in the Middle East, which will be the most volatile place in history.

He will be seen as the man who ended the time of international conflict when the nations of the world rose up against each other in military conflicts (Matt. 24:7-8).

- I. The second prophetic time frame of peace and safety ends when the Antichrist and his 10-nation confederation break the covenant in making a sudden change in policy.

He will begin to go forth to conquer many nations, as seen in the First Seal (Rev. 6:2). The First Seal signals the aggressive pursuit of the Antichrist and his reign of terror.

When the nations are rejoicing in peace, then sudden destruction will come and none will escape.

- J. Israel will make a covenant with the *Antichrist* in the End Times. (Is. 28:14-18).

Hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men (leaders of end-time Israel), who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, 15 because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge (of the Antichrist) passes through, it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we

have hidden ourselves"...18 Your covenant with death will be annulled (Antichrist will betray his promises to Israel), and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it. (Is. 28:14-18)

- K. Israel will have a season of peace until they are *attacked* by the Antichrist (Ezek. 38:8-12).

The very man who seemingly brought them peace is the one who is now invading them. Israel's time of peace and safety is seen at this time, in that they have no walls for military security in place.

"In the latter years you (Antichrist) will come into the land (Israel) of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. 9 You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples (nations) with you." 10 Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: 11 You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls...' 12 to take plunder...to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited..." (Ezek. 38:8-12)

- L. This covenant will seem to "guarantee" the end-time *unsaved* political leaders of Israel, political, economic and spiritual prosperity and protection from the Antichrist.

Suddenly, the Antichrist will "take off his mask of kindness" and show his true hostility towards Israel.

- M. Today, the world is not enjoying the sense of universal peace and safety described by Paul (1 Thess. 5:3). The peace and safety will be established by Antichrist just prior to a sudden “coming of destruction” of the day of the Lord, but after an escalating “nation against nation” season with the beginning of birth pangs.
- N. The time of *counterfeit* peace and safety
1. Peace – comes after a season of military conflict, civil strife and terrorism of the period known as the beginning of birth pangs. This peace and safety will be for unbelievers. The prophetic Church will see through this as false.
 2. Safety – there is a reprieve from the beginning of birth pangs with wars, famine, economic collapse, disease, earthquakes.
- O. This will be a time when non-Christians are living without the turmoil of the first prophetic time frame (beginning of birth pangs), or the third prophetic time frame (the Great Tribulation).

Jesus described the people as occupied with “eating, drinking and marrying.” This expresses a sentiment of peace and safety which will be common after the beginning of birth pangs yet before God’s judgments arrive in the Great Tribulation (the final 3½ years).

The people will feel safe and at peace. In other words, it will be a temporary period of economic, social and military peace. Notice in this time frame there are no wars, economic problems, or diseases as described in the beginning of birth pangs.

*But as the days of Noah were, **SO ALSO** will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, **THEY WERE EATING AND DRINKING, MARRYING AND GIVING IN MARRIAGE,** until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, **SO ALSO** will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. (Matt 24:37-41)*

- P. The counterfeit peace and safety will be a noticeable and *distinct* time in history.

When the Church proclaims this period as being a counterfeit time of peace under the leadership of a demonized man called the Antichrist, then we will appear absurd and even dangerous.

- Q. Even some within the prophetic *prayer* movement will not clearly discern Satan's role in this time of counterfeit peace and safety.

Why? The Church will be praying against wars. Suddenly a time of peace will break forth that causes "wars and rumors of war" to cease.

What joy some will have as we pray and wars cease. This will clearly be seen as a righteous answer to our prayers rather than being a time of counterfeit peace and safety.

They will call the Church arrogant religious bigots who are intolerant of all others. This is the pressure that God will use to purify the Church to fill us with meekness and to make us worthy to rule the world with Jesus.

- R. The global pressures during the first prophetic time frame (beginning of birth pangs) will set up the situation in which the Antichrist will look *successful* as he appears to solve world problems.

During this time, he will take control of many governments in order to fix their economy, etc. He will appear to have the answers for a short time.

III. **PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS DURING THE TIME OF PEACE & SAFETY**

- A. The period of worldwide counterfeit peace and safety is for *unbelievers*.

This is a time of increased birth pangs for the Church. Yet, it is not the time of heavy labor (Great Tribulation).

The pressure during this season is focused on separating the true from the false believers in Jesus. It will be a time of persecution or increased birth pangs (Matt. 24:9-14, 36-41).

I saw the woman (mystery Babylon), drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus... (Rev. 17:6)

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended (at God and Christians), will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:9-14)

- B. The *falling away* will occur in the pressure of this spiritual conflict.

The world will be offended at Jesus and His standards of intolerance that are promoted by the prophetic Church. Some believers will rationalize the need to collaborate with the Antichrist's regime. This will open the door for betrayal between close relationships.

Offenses will abound and escalate into hate. The Church must take a stand on the fact that this seemingly brilliant and dignified world leader will eventually demand to be worshipped as God.

He will not hide his ambition to be the only one worshipped as God. He will ban all other religions, even those previously allowed in the false one-world church; neither will the Antichrist hide his cruelty and wickedness in the final 3½ years before Jesus returns.

- C. Spiritual *deception* will be widespread through all the nations.

Prophetic believers will not see this as a good time of peace. The Antichrist's policies will be filled with deception, as he seeks to win many from their commitment to Jesus.

This period will witness new measures of spiritual resistance against the Kingdom of God. It will seem to be a positive time with international peace treaties, yet with new legislation against the Church and Israel.

- D. With peace established between Israel and the Islamic nations, they have a new common *enemy* in the Church.

Why? Because the Church will expose Satan's role in the counterfeit world peace. Imagine how hard it will be for unbelievers to understand this.

For the first time in history the world will be at peace. The Church will be viewed as elite, extreme, proud, and judgmental. This pressure will purify the Church (Dan. 11:33-35).

The Church will appear fanatical, extreme and dangerous to world peace. The Church will be opposed on several different points.

IV. THE BEGINNING OF BIRTH PANGS

All these are the beginning of sorrows. (Matt. 24:8 – NKJ).
All these are the beginning of birth pangs. (Matt. 24:8 – NIV, NAS).

- A. Jesus spoke of a *specific* period of time called the “beginning of birth pangs.”

The Greek word “birth pangs” is translated as “sorrows” (NKJV). It is to be compared with the increasing trauma a woman experiences during childbirth. This trauma will result in a new world order being birthed at the Millennium.

Paul spoke of creation as groaning before the Millennial earth.

The creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Millennial Kingdom). 22...The whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Rom. 8:21-22)

- B. My opinion is the beginning of birth pangs began in either 1948, when Israel became a nation, or 1967, when the city of Jerusalem came under Jewish control.

The premise for the timing of all events in the End Times is God's plan for Israel. Israel is the timetable for the unfolding of God's prophetic plans.

In other words, Israel is the reference point for understanding redemptive history past and future. It is the filter for interpreting the significant contributions to God's ultimate plans for establishing the Messianic Kingdom on earth.

- C. The three most significant prophetic dates before the Great Tribulation are:
1. 1948 (re-birth of the nation of Israel),
 2. 1967 (recapturing the city of Jerusalem) and
 3. The beginning of the seven-year period initiated by the Antichrist's peace treaty with Israel and other nations (Dan. 9:27)
- D. There are twelve major worldwide *trends* that are to be discerned and received as prophetic signs to help the Church prepare for the coming years (Matt. 24:4-8; Mark 13:5-8, Luke 21:7-18).
1. False christs – false leaders in the Church (Matt. 24:5; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:7).
 2. War – military and political conflict (Matt. 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9)

3. Ethnic conflict – civil disorder and racism as nation (ethnos) rises against nation (Matt. 24:7)
4. Economic warfare – economic related hostility and conflicts in kingdoms competing against kingdoms. (Matt. 24:7; Mark 13:8).
5. Famines – massive food shortages (Matt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11). Famines in Ethiopia and Sudan are well known today. Many of the 6 billion people on earth are underfed.
6. Pestilences – fearful epidemic diseases (Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11). Bio-technology and worldwide pestilence will rise. Tuberculosis, Legionnaires, AIDS and other diseases are becoming more resistant to manmade inoculations and drugs.
7. Earthquakes – various places (Matt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11).
8. Troubles – events that cause pressure (Mark 13:8)
9. Commotions – chaotic events (Luke 21:9)
10. Fearful sights – unusual (Luke 21:11)
11. Great signs from heaven – cosmic or atmospheric signs (Luke 21:11)
12. Persecution – (Luke 21:12-19). The significant increase of martyrdom of believers in Jesus. Rev. 6:9-11; 7:13-14; 9:21; 13:7, 10; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 2 Tim. 3:3 (brutal); Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:33-35; 12:7, 10; Mark 13:12:13; Luke 21:12, 16-17.

V. **THIRD PROPHETIC TIME FRAME: FULLNESS OF BIRTH PANGS (MATT. 24:15-31)**

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matt. 24:21)

- A. The third prophetic time frame is the Great *Tribulation* or the fullness of birth pangs or the heavy labor. It occurs during the last 3½ years of the seven-year period (Matt. 24:15-31; Rev. 6-19).

- B. This is the time when the Antichrist shows his hostility *openly* without needing to deceive unbelievers. The Antichrist requires all people on earth to *worship* him.

**VI. THE LAST 3½ YEARS BEFORE THE SECOND COMING:
SIX EXPRESSIONS**

Scriptures for the last 3½ years of this age use six different expressions:

42 months (Rev. 11:2; 13:5),

1260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6),

Time, times and half a time (Rev. 12:14; Dan. 7:25; 12:7)

Middle of the Week (Dan. 9:27),

Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:14)

Jacob's Trouble (Jer. 30:7).

NOTE: The 3½ year time period is designated in three different ways so as to render it impossible to spiritualize, thus making it symbolic of something other than 3½ years.

Session 6 Study Guide Questions

- What will happen during the three prophetic time frames? Why is it important for me to know these?
- Can we know the time of the end? Why is this important to me?
- What will it be like for me during the time of counterfeit peace and safety? Why is it important to prepare now and how can I begin to do just that?
- Consider the twelve worldwide trends that are to be discerned as prophetic signs. What sort of activity do you see in these arenas today?