

*“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:23-24)*

**I. The Middle of the Tribulation**

- a. During the mid-point of the tribulation period an event will take place that was prophesied in Daniel 11:31; 12:11.
- b. The “abomination that causes desolation”, basically means that what Christians hold as righteous and holy will be shamefully desecrated to spite Christ and the faith. Read (2 Thess; 2:1–12)
- c. The appearance of the “man of lawlessness (antichrist)” in God’s temple.
- d. The Jews may have wondered if the Daniel prophecy had been fulfilled when Roman king Antiochus Epiphanes slaughtered a pig on the temple altar, destroyed much of the temple, city of Jerusalem, and killed thousands of Jews. However, he was not the antichrist.
- e. During this period, God will care for His elect (Read verse 22). The *elect* are those Jews and Gentiles who believe and are converted during the tribulation. The *elect* does not refer to the church.
- f. *Let the reader understand.* Jesus knew that His words would be recorded and read by His followers. Do not turn back (vv. 16-20)
- g. Biblical prophecy is not intended to give us a detailed picture of the future, but to awaken our hearts in expectancy, so that we will ready ourselves for what is to come.

**II. Warnings for Awareness**

- a. The warnings that Jesus gives are not necessarily in chronological order, as we understand time, but they will occur.
- b. False prophets and lying preachers will rise-up and lead some people astray.
- c. As time progresses the *elect* will be physically persecuted and will be tempted to embrace seductive and attractive heresies. These have always been Satan’s weapons against the church.
- d. The final coming of the Son of Man in glory and judgment will be no private affair. It will not happen as Jehovah’s Witnesses claimed it happened, in obscurity in 1914 and 1975.
- e. Just as we notice gathering vultures circling a carcass from miles away, Jesus’s return will be like sheet lightning from one side of the sky to the other, it will be impossible to miss.
- f. Therefore, be warned! Jesus will not be hiding under a bush. He will not appear to a select few. He will not magically appear in a building built by man, Jesus will return in full glory for all to see.

**III. The Practical Application of God’s Word**

- a. What should we do in light these warnings? Be spiritually aware and prepared.
- b. Suffering and glory cannot be separated from salvation, sanctification, and glorification.
  1. Disciples will be called fanatics for believing the Bible. Peer pressure is a form of persecution.
  2. People in our work places will mock or disrespect the Christian faith.
  3. Disciples who seek reconciliation will be called cowards.
  4. A desire to maintain sexual purity will cause you to be called old fashioned and a prude.
  5. Disciples who love their enemies will be called unpatriotic and/or weak.
- c. May we all faithfully wait and look forward to Christ’s return. God must take you to something in order to take you *through* something.