

The Second Coming of Christ in Biblical Perspective
“What is the Sign of the Second Coming?”

Matthew 24:15-31

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September 15, 2002 • Sunday Sermon

This is our third study on the Second Coming of Christ as we look at what is called the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and 25. This is the Word of God. Matthew 24:15-31 says, [15] “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), [16] then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [17] Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, [18] and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. [19] And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! [20] Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. [21] For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. [22] And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. [23] Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. [24] For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. [25] See, I have told you beforehand. [26] So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. [27] For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [28] Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

[29] “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [30] Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31] And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord abides forever. By His grace may His Word be preached to you.

This series is trying to clear some of the clutter out that is in our day and time concerning this matter of the second coming of Christ simply by going to the texts that Jesus gave us to inform us of His coming – the prophetic Word so that we will be ready. Jesus said in Matthew 24:25, “Behold, I have told you in advance.” What has He told us in advance? That’s what we’re studying now. In this study we will be looking at the sign of the second coming. First of all, I want to give you five things in review of where we have been so that we’re all together.

The first one is that what we are studying is called the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and 25. There are six recorded sermons in the Bible of our Lord’s teaching in sermons. This is the sixth sermon.

The second thing is it’s important to understand the context because this sermon arises out of the fifth discourse. The fifth discourse was given by Jesus during Holy Week on Tuesday in the Temple, when He very powerfully condemns the self-centered religiosity and works salvation that Judaism had become, and the Pharisees in particular. That sermon ends with a

lament in Matthew 23:37-39 where Jesus cries out, [37] *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! [38] See, your house is left to you desolate. [39] For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”*

The context of Matthew 23:38 now gives us the arising of the sermon that comes in Matthew 24 that comes in response to a comment by the Disciples. After Jesus has finished His discourse of the Temple and He’s walking out of the temple, Mark and Luke tell us one disciple in particular comes up and says, ‘Look at all these beautiful buildings.’ Now you can see what He’s doing. ‘Jesus, You’ve just said that the house is going to be desolate. This is almost one of the eighth wonders of the world. People can’t help but come here and look at this and You’re telling us this will be desolate?’ Then Jesus answers them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:2). That’s an amazing statement when you realize that the temple was made of marble stones, gold plated building, silver plated around one gate which was 150 feet high, and the very stones weighing in 100 to 120 tons – it’s a marvel of how they ever got into place and Jesus says not one will be left upon the other for it will be utterly destroyed.

In Matthew 24:1-3 we see that they then leave the temple, cross out of the eastern gate, across the Kidron Brook and up the side of the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus as a Rabbi, takes His seat at the Mount of Olives, and now the disciples ask him another question. Once again, Mark and Luke, give us the information that it’s four disciples in particular that act as the spokesman for the others. They ask Him in particular in Matthew 24:3, “When will these things be, what is the sign of Your coming and the end of the age? So, the question then follows out of the context. So, we’re coming to the sixth discourse, we know the context that’s given, and then there is this threefold question.

Remember, Jesus has just said all these things are going to be destroyed and in this threefold question they’re asking for a timing and they have made a jump in their mind. This temple is so significant to the purposes of God, it’s so glorious and magnificent that the desolation and destruction of this temple must be the end of the age and the coming of Christ. So the threefold questions are when will the destruction of the temple, the desolation of the temple take place? What will be the sign of Your coming? That is His coming in power and glory and what is the sign of the end of the age? They have presupposed is that all of this must be together – the temple destruction, the end of the age, and the coming of Christ.

Then Christ begins to answer this threefold question and that’s the key to what takes place after Matthew 24:4. Matthew 24:4-14 is answering the question about the end of the age which is the third part of the question – when will the end of the age be? Matthew 24:14 says [14] *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Then, in Matthew 24:15-31, He’s dealing with another part of the question when is the sign of your coming? Matthew 24:27, 30-31 says [27] *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [30] Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31] And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* Then the third question He’s going to answer is when will the temple desolation and destruction occur and He does that in Matthew 24:32-35.

Now, I want to focus on where we are in this study by continuing to review a little bit here and giving you the fourth piece of review material. When Jesus teaches about the end of the age, He has heard their question, and He knows that behind their question is the assumption that when the temple is desolated and destroyed, it must mean the end of the age and the second coming. In Matthew 24:4-14 Jesus is going to disabuse them of two things. One is the idea that the destruction of the temple and the coming of Christ and the end of the age are immediately tied together in a complexity of events.

The second thing He's going to do is pastorally care for these His people, because He knows that the reality of the end of the age is going to raise up false teachers and false prophets, and they're going to use things to try to mislead people. These false teachers and prophets will say the end of the age is coming. How do we know? Look at the wars and rumors of wars. Look at the earthquakes, look at the famines. Look nations rising against nation. Look, there are false christs, false teachers, false teaching. Look, people are rising up against each other. Look at the lawlessness. Look at love growing cold. Look at God's people, at least the professing group of God's people, they're falling away and they're even turning on one another. Jesus says to them, clearly, these are not the signs. Don't let anyone mislead you. These things that He mentions – the six birth pangs that we covered in the last study – are misleading signs of the end of the age when people use them to tell you they have brought the end of the age.

The amazing thing to me is I pick up book after book and hear conference after conference where people tell us the end of the age is coming and guess what their reasoning is? Look at the wars. Look at the Middle East, look at this, look at that. Now, they are birth pangs, they're the convulsions of a broken world and like birth pangs, they will increase with consistency, intensity and insistency as we move toward them, but they are not the signs of the end. We have had 300 wars in Europe over the last 300 years and somebody will take one of those and say, 'That's it, Jesus is coming back, so sell everything, get ready and be indolent until Jesus comes again. Go climb a tree. You might get up first.' Or there will be those who say, look at the apostasy in the professing church folks. Those things have always been there. You had apostasy in the 12 Disciples for Judas was there. You've had people turning against one another and betraying one another in the professing church. The reason we have all these birth pangs is we are in a sin cursed world that is having the convulsions and until Jesus comes, they will always be here but they're not the sign of His coming yet and they will increase in intensity until He comes.

The fifth thing is the sign of the end of the age is the preaching of the Gospel to all the world. Now, He just separated the temple desolation and destruction with the end of the age, how? It is because the Gospel has to go out and it takes time to get the Gospel to the ends of the earth. So He's just disabused them that the notion that the end of the age will be tied to the destruction of the temple when it occurs because what's going to happen before the end of the age? The Gospel will be preached throughout the nations which will take time as the Gospel unfolds.

There are several things coming up in the life of our church here at Briarwood – we have a North American Missions Conference coming, a global missions conference coming up, our faith promise giving, there are people going out to missions. Do you realize we are doing what Peter says when we engage in missions? Peter says in II Peter 3:12 that we are hastening the coming of the Lord for what must take place before Jesus comes back? It is the Gospel going to all the nations – missions is that the heartbeat of the end of the age. We are hastening the coming of the Lord with missions. Now, that's where we have been in this study so now let's

take the next step. Where are we now? We're going to the second question. The first question is what is the sign of the end of the age and He disassociates it from the temple of desolation and He let's us know the sign is the Gospel going to the ends of the earth.

The second question He covers beginning in Matthew 24:15 – what is the sign of His coming? Matthew 24:15 says [15] *“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).”* That's an interesting comment. Let's look at Daniel 11. What is this that He's talking about? There is going to be an invasion of Israel. Daniel 11:31 says [31] *Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.* That is done in the context of a prophecy that the Lord has given. Daniel 12:11 says [11] *And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.*

What is this speaking of? I can't spend all of our time on the book of Daniel. Let me just connect Matthew 24:15 here because there's a key phrase that I want you to see there. They are wanting to know about the destruction and desolation of the temple. He calls to their mind a phrase from the prophecy of Daniel that by dating in Daniel has already been fulfilled. The abomination of desolation is passed almost two centuries earlier. In 165 to 170 B.C. before Christ came, Antiochus Epiphanes went in, stopped the sacrifices in the temple, put a pagan altar over the altar of God, and sacrificed a pig. That was the abomination of desolation that fits directly into the timing of Daniel with perfection.

Now when He talks about this desolation and destruction of the Temple, He recalls the abomination of desolation. Is Jesus trying to tell us that the abomination of desolation hasn't really occurred yet and that it's going to occur? No. He is basically saying if you want to know when the temple is going to be destroyed, do you remember the prophecy of the abomination of desolation? When you see it again, you'll know that it's near. That's why the phrase 'let the reader understand' is there. In other words, this that has been fulfilled is also a foreshadowing of what's going to happen before the temple is desolated and destroyed. So Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled to the date the abomination of desolation, two centuries before Jesus came, and now the temple is going to be destroyed and it is going to be preceded by an event like The Abomination of Desolation in the Book of Daniel and that did happen.

The armies of Rome marched into Jerusalem and Titus erected the Roman gods and standards over the altar of God and desecrated the temple. Jesus is letting them know that the temple is going to be desolated and destroyed, but before it's desolated and destroyed it will be desecrated like the fulfillment of the abomination of desolation. That happened in 66 A.D. and finished in 70 A.D. and by 70 A.D., Jerusalem has been burned to the ground and the temple is gone, not one stone upon another. The thing that preceded it was Titus coming in and erecting the Roman pagan worship in the place of the Holy Worship of God – the Holy of Holies. Let's now look a little bit further into these events.

Matthew 24:16-20 says [16] *then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [17] Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, [18] and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. [19] And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! [20] Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.* What is He telling them here?

When this desecration occurs that precedes just by months and years the desolation and destruction of the temple, then will come a time of tribulation among My people. This desolation and desecration will be so great that they are told not to stay in Jerusalem, flee to the

mountains. If you're on your housetop, don't go down into the house. Don't go by way of the ladder into the house to get your cloak. Just go down the ladder outside and run as fast as you can. We see the pastoral concern of Jesus that in 66 to 70 A.D. there would be such horrendous tribulation there in Jerusalem that He's concerned for the pregnant women and those who are nursing babies that He says "O, that it would not be in the winter or on the Sabbath," because of all the obstacles to fleeing on the Sabbath ceremonially. O, that all of that would be gone.

So where are we? The first thing we've learned is this; the temple desecration will be preceded by a replay of the abomination of desolation. The second thing that we've learned is that this will be a time of tribulation for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and it's a time that pains Jesus in His shepherd's heart as He's concerned for those who have to run without their cloak, those who are pregnant, those who are nursing babes, and that their flight would not be in the winter and it would not be on the Sabbath with all of the problems that are there now.

Now, this is where we have to be careful. Let's continue in the text. Matthew 24:21-28 says [21] *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. [22] And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. [23] Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. [24] For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. [25] See, I have told you beforehand. [26] So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. [27] For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [28] Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.*

So, before the temple is desolate and destroyed, there will be a desecration and around that desecration will be a tribulation for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. That was called the Jewish Wars. If you read the fourth volume of The Works of Josephus, in it he describes that people were actually eating their young under the siege of Rome. It was an atrocious time yet it was not that which signaled the coming of Christ. That tribulation is a foreshadowing of another tribulation that's even greater. It's called the Great Tribulation and that will immediately precede the coming of Christ. This that you see in 66 to 70 A.D. is a tribulation, but there's coming one that's not been like this since the world began. There's coming a tribulation that is so difficult, so horrendous, so horrific that people will be crying out to be covered and Jesus says, "I will cut short the days for the sake of the elect in those days."

What is very clear is here is the Elector there – the people of God are there. They haven't been taken out and it's very clear this is not the 66 to 70 A.D. for as bad as that was, there have been things just as bad as what happened in the siege of Jerusalem. No, this is something of greater intensity, something that has never been seen, never will be seen except for this and it immediately precedes the coming of Christ like lightning. This is that which is the great tribulation.

Now, what is He speaking of here? First of all, He's not speaking of the tribulation that every believer and every Christian always faces. What is this great tribulation? Let's go to that next part of our study here. This great tribulation is not the everyday tribulation, but the great tribulation of those days. Those days are the days that immediately precede the coming of Christ. What do we know about it? Let's look at John 16:33; (Jesus says) [33] I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Let's now look at I Thessalonians 1:4-7 which says [4] *For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, [5] because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. [6] And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, [7] so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.* The Thessalonians were being put to death for Jesus. That's why they're asking the question Paul here is answering their question of what happens to believers who die before Jesus comes back. They are in the great tribulation of dying for Christ. So believers have suffered in this world the cup of suffering for Christ, even to the point of death and martyrdom for Christ. This isn't an everyday tribulation. This is a "those days" tribulation.

The second thing that we learned about it is that God has said that pastorally, those days, great tribulation will be shortened for the sake of the elect. Once again, clearly the elect there or it wouldn't have to be shortened. They haven't been taken out. In other words, God is going to provide what they need to stand faithful and firm and endure to the end for Him.

Thirdly, we just read in the text about that great tribulation that it will be accompanied by false christs who will do great miracles and signs. That's why Paul gives us information on this in II Thessalonians 2:1-10 which says [1] *Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, [2] not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. [3] Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, [4] who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. [5] Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? [6] And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. [7] For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. [9] The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, [10] and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

In other words, Paul is saying that some people are telling you that Jesus Christ has come – the day of the Lord has come but it's not true because the man of lawlessness, not simply false christs, but the false christ, the Antichrist, has not risen up. There have been many, but there will be a personification of one in particular with a religious commitment to exalt himself, standing against Christ and calling for worship to himself and desecrating the very people of God, if at all possible. What will false christs in general and the false christ in particular use to mislead people? They will use great signs, wonders and miracles done with all power. I can't explain this because I know Satan can't do miracles beyond what God does and I know they're false miracles, but they are powerful. If you are building your relationship with Christ upon extraordinary experiences, you are in the snare of one like Satan and the Antichrist.

What is it that keeps the elect in those days? It is the love of the truth. Don't build your theology from experience. Build it from the Word of God to interpret experience. If you just build it from experience, I promise you Satan can and will amaze you and trap you. Here is one example. When I was at East Carolina University, I had the opportunity to serve the Lord by

doing a Bible study. I had just become a Christian. A number of athletes were in it and one athlete that was coming said, 'I want you all to come to my Bible study too when you all are finished with Ike' which was my nickname. I said, "Oh, great idea" and then I went to check out the Bible study. It was a cult called The Way and I don't know if it's still around now. One of the ways they got people to come to that Bible study was the punter for East Carolina had broken his leg in three places. They took him to the Bible study, prayed for him, pronounced him healed, and he played the next week. He was walking around punting and everything.

They did a final check and found out his leg was still broken. It was amazing what this cult satanic lie had performed to trap people into this "Bible study" of false doctrine with a thought, sign and wonder and the number of gullible people who didn't start with the truth to bring forth a theology faithful to God's Word, but were susceptible to an experience. That's exactly what will happen in these days as false christs and the Antichrist who will do, "great signs and wonders" in the midst of this tribulation and that may be more troubling than the martyrdom that would be involved for believers.

The fourth thing is there is a prophetic word of pastoral preparation when Jesus said 'I have told you this in advance, so you will be ready' (Matthew 24:25).

Then fifthly, in the great tribulation, we must be aware that there will be secret, second coming claims about Jesus – that Jesus is going to come back secretly and that He has a secret second coming. People saying things like, 'He's in the inner room. He's out in the desert.' Jesus tells us to reject every teaching that talks about a secret second coming, because His second coming is not a secret and we see that in the text. Matthew 24:26-27 says *[26] So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. [27] For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* The coming of Jesus is no more secret than the lightning of an evening thunderstorm in the summer, where that lightning flashes and lightens up and so does the coming of the Son of man in a darkened world.

Then He makes a statement taken from Proverbs 30:17 in Matthew 24:28 which says *[28] Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.* What is He saying here? He is basically telling us that we'll know when it is time for Him to come. Not only will there be this great tribulation that I will carry My people through and protect them through it, as the coming of the Son of Man will be visible, not secret, but this culture will be so decayed, it will be like vultures drawn to decaying meat. Have you ever been driving along, see a dead animal in the road as 30 vultures surround it and think how did all those vultures find that one animal in the road? So it will be that the decay of this culture will be so great, that we will know it must come to an end. There is no secret coming at all, not in any way whatsoever.

Let's continue in the text. Matthew 24:29-31 says *[29] "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [30] Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31] And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

The sign of the coming of the Son of Man is Christ Himself. How do we know the second coming is coming? The first thing is the sign of the second coming is Christ's appearance in glory and it will be sudden, visible, universal, not in secret and it will be after the tribulation of those days. All the tribes shall see Him. All the nations shall gaze upon Him.

The second thing we learn in the text is that there will be, at His coming, a conflagration that will issue forth in a transformation – sun, moon, stars. Have you ever been in a rough plane ride? I have. I remember one I was in and a pilot in our church told me, ‘You all were dropping about a thousand feet.’ I will confess that I was dealing with the Lord up there saying to Him “If you'll get me off this thing, if you'll get it down before for I have to go up...”, I was dealing with the Lord the best I could and I'll never forget when I got off the plane, the first thing I did was sit in a chair that didn't rock and just held – it was on firm ground. The day when Jesus comes, it will all shake to pieces. Similar to an earthquake, just those shaking for a few seconds and all the damage that comes in those few seconds.

II Peter 3:10 says [10] *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.* It will be consumed like a fire. Hebrews 1:12 tells us it will be rolled up like an old cloak. Then comes a new heavens and a new earth, where in His righteousness, forever. That's what happens when He comes in conflagration for the transformation.

The third thing is there will be a universal judgment. All the tribes and nations shall stand before Him.

Fourthly, there will be a great trumpet. I Corinthians 15:52 says [52] *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.* It's not the first trumpet, not the second, not the third, not the fourth, fifth or sixth but it's the last trumpet will sound and then He comes and it is the end of the age. The temple desecration tells you the desolation is coming. The tribulation around that is a slight picture of the great tribulation of those days that will immediately precede the second coming of Christ in which God will carry His people through it and will sustain them, even with the picture of the days been shortened. Then will come the Savior like lightning and all will be brought to consummation.

We will get to that left behind part in the coming studies but here are a few takeaways from this study. This is kind of like a recap. The first thing is the temple desolation and destruction will also include a temple desecration that's like the abomination of desolation. That happened in 66 and 70 A.D.

Secondly, is that the temple, desolation, destruction and desecration will bring tribulation – the tribulation of those days were in 66 A.D. to 70 A.D when Titus came and the Jewish wars and Roman domination.

Thirdly, the tribulation in that day foreshadows the great tribulation of those days prior to the second coming of Christ, the return of Christ.

Fourthly, the great tribulation of those days will immediately precede the second coming of Christ.

Fifthly, the sign of the second coming is the sudden and visible appearance of Christ. Nowhere here has Jesus said to us, or in any other text indicated to us that there has been a pre secret second coming that takes us out. On the contrary, He takes us through it until He comes again if we are here.

Sixthly, the need for the second coming will be obvious, like vultures coming to the dead, carrion.

Seventhly, the second coming of Christ brings about the end of the age, the new heavens, the new earth, as it is all rolled up and there is the ingathering of God's elect.

Then finally, there's a pastoral Word in this text where Jesus told us He is telling us of these things in advance (Matthew 24: 25). Remember, the prophetic Word is not for curiosity and not to set dates because He's already told us we don't know the time. The prophetic Word is to prepare us, to fortify us, to strengthen us for as your days are from Him and so shall your strength be. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to study our way through this text. Lord, we want to be careful. We don't want to read in or take out or read it through our schemes and we don't even want to develop a scheme out of it. We just want to understand the truth – what You have done that foreshadows what is going to happen, what You will do, and Jesus is our hope. Finally, Father, because of this prophetic Word, I ask one thing and that is that we will ever be mindful that our Savior is coming. May we be found faithful even to the end for I pray this in Jesus's Name, Amen.