

The Sign of Great Tribulation

📖 Matthew 24:15–22

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We are studying the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24-25. I refer to this discourse as the Discourse on Kingdom Coming since it describes the events immediately preceding the re-establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The disciples asked in 24:3 two basic questions. First, “when will these things be”, referring to the destruction of the Temple. The answer was passed over by Matthew but recorded by Luke who said, “when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.” Jerusalem and the Temple were scheduled for judgment because that generation committed the unpardonable sin. The second question is, “what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age.” This may sound like two questions but it is really just one since the two aspects are tied together; Messiah’s coming will end the present age and usher in the messianic age. So far Jesus has not revealed the specific sign that will herald Messiah’s coming and the messianic age. What He has done in vv 4-8 is reveal the beginning of birth pangs as including many false Messiahs, wars and rumors of wars where nations rise against nations and confederacies of nations arise against other confederacies of nations as well as famines and earthquakes. These things all seem to be paralleled by the seal judgments in Rev 6 and so are within the first half of the tribulation. They are not the end but they are the beginning of birth pangs which continue into the second half in vv 9-14. The word “then” in v 9 signals the next event in sequence. The Jewish people who have been under the protection of the anti-Christ will now come under the persecution of the anti-Christ and all the nations of the world. The nations will deliver Jewish believers over to the police and military for interrogation. They will kill them. They will be hated by all nations because of the name of Jesus. This is ultimately Satan’s strategy in order to destroy every living Jewish believer from the planet so they cannot issue the messianic greeting that is required for Jesus to return. In v 10 there will also be division within the Jewish people. Many will fall away, meaning be ensnared by the anti-Christ and false prophet. Also many Jews will betray fellow Jewish believers. The parallel earlier in Matthew 10 says this will occur within families; fathers will betray sons and daughters will betray mothers. It will be a difficult time for the Jewish people and the division point will be the name of Jesus. As such v 10 says they will hate one another. The hate will arise because of the betrayal over the person of Jesus. In v 11 many false prophets will arise among the Jews in Israel and will mislead many Jews. Among these many false prophets will be the false prophet who is the propaganda machine for the anti-Christ. Many Jews will be led into the lies of these false prophets. In v 12

lawlessness in the land of Israel will increase because the anti-Christ, who is the man of lawlessness, will alter Jewish feast times and law. This will cause the love of many Jewish people to grow cold in tandem with the verse 10 hatred. There will be much despair. But v 13, the Jewish believer who endures to the end of the tribulation in loving his fellow Jew “will be saved,” meaning rescued from the persecution of the anti-Christ. In v 14 the good news of the nearness of the kingdom including the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the basis for entrance into the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations on the planet. According to Rev 14:6 this will be done by an angel who will fly in mid-heaven and proclaim the gospel. “Then,” Jesus says, “the end will come.” So v 14 takes us right up to the end of the tribulation.

We come to 24:15 and we read the word **Therefore**, which is *οὖν*, an inferential conjunction which means “denoting that what it introduces is the result of or an inference from what precedes...” and should be translated “*so, therefore, consequently, accordingly, then.*” In other words, seeing that in vv 9-14 the Jewish people will enter a very difficult time, what verse 15 does is reveal the sign that will initiate this time. **When you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).** The implication of the final clause is that Matthew intended his gospel to be written down and passed around so that it could be read and understood. There should have been nothing in this pronouncement that could not be understood by a Jew because they already had the book of Daniel and it spoke of the abomination of desolation. Wiersbe thought, “This statement indicates that what Jesus was teaching would have greater significance for people reading Matthew’s Gospel in the latter days. By reading the Prophet Daniel and the words of Jesus, these believers will understand the events and know what to do. This is another evidence that the Olivet Discourse applies to people during the Tribulation period.”¹ Jesus here reckons Daniel as a **prophet** and indeed from our study we have seen that Daniel received much revelation from God about the future. In particular Jesus picks out **the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet.** The **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** is spoken of three times in Daniel 9:27; 11:31 and 12:11. First, in Daniel 9:27 in the middle of the final seven years one will come on the wing of abominations who will make desolate. “And he (the prince who is to come/anti-Christ) will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” The “wing of abominations” is difficult to translate. The “wing” could refer to a particular location of the temple, such as a battlement apse. Or the Hebrew word could be translated “with” so that it means the anti-Christ will come with abominations that make the temple desolate. It is really difficult to tell. In any case, we know from this verse that the **ABOMINATION** will occur at the middle of the week. Second, Daniel 11:31 uses the expression **the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** as a prediction of what Antiochus Epiphanes IV did in 167BC. “Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.” Since this is now a part of history all we have to do to understand what “the abomination of desolation” will be in the future is read about

what Antiochus did in 1 and 2 Maccabees. Walvoord said, "One of the things he did was to stop animal sacrifices in the temple. He offered a sow, an unclean animal, on the altar in a deliberate attempt to desecrate and render it unholy for Jewish worship (cf. 1 Macc. 1:48). First Maccabees 1:54 specifically records that the abomination of desolation was set up, fulfilling Daniel 11:31. In the holy of holies Antiochus set up a statue of a Greek god. . . . In keeping with the prophecy the daily sacrifices were stopped, the sanctuary was polluted, desolated and made an abomination." Therefore, **the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** is an image that is set up in the Temple and pollutes the temple so that sacrifices can no longer be offered. Randall Price agrees saying, "In my own study of the phrase in the context of Temple desecration I discovered the phrase served as a technical reference to the introduction of an idolatrous image or an act of pagan sacrilege within the Sanctuary that produces the highest level of ceremonial impurity, Temple profanation." So Dan 11:31 establishes a concrete understanding of **the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** from history so that we know what the anti-Christ will set up in the future. Third, Daniel 12:11 tells us how long the idol will remain in the holy place after it is set up. "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days." Since **the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** will be set up at the mid-point of the tribulation and the second half of the tribulation is 1,260 days then when we read that the idol will remain until 1,290 days we come to understand that the idol will remain 30 days after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This means that when Jesus returns He will not immediately remove the idol. He will be busy attending to more important issues like regathering the nation Israel for their judgment and the Gentiles for their judgment. Then other issues like the removal of the idol will take place. It should be understood that the movement of the world from the times of the four Gentile kingdoms to the kingdom of God will involve a series of transitional things that need to be taken care of. The removal of the idol 30 days after Jesus' Second Coming is one of these transitional issues.

Putting together all we know about the abomination of desolation from Daniel; it is an idol that the anti-Christ will set up in the future temple at the mid-point which will desecrate the temple and remain until 30 days after Christ's Second Coming. Jesus adds in Matt 24:15 that it will be placed **in the holy place**. The **holy place** was the first room that one entered when they went into the temple proper. It housed the golden menorah, the table of showbread and the altar of incense. The most holy place was behind the inner veil, it housed the ark of the covenant. Jesus says the idol will be set up **in the holy place**, not the most holy place, so it will be placed in the first room one enters when they go into the tribulation temple proper. The reason it will be in this room and not the most holy place is because 2 Thess 2:4 says that the anti-Christ will take his seat in the most holy place and display himself there as being God. So the image will be right outside where he is enthroned. John added more in Rev 13:15 saying that the image that the anti-Christ has set up will be an image of the anti-Christ himself and that the false prophet will give breath to this image so that it could even speak and kill those who do not worship the image.

In any case, in Matt 24:15, when Jewish believers see the image of the anti-Christ set up then **those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains**. We isolate Jewish believers because only Jewish believers would consider

Matthew an inspired record. Jewish believers in other places throughout the world will not be in immediate danger from the anti-Christ but Jewish believers **who are in Judea** will be. With **the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**, the anti-Christ's policy of protecting the Jews in the land will turn to persecuting them. Therefore, the one command for Jews who believe Matthew is the word of God is to **flee to the mountains**. The particle **must** is $\delta\epsilon\iota$, a particle of necessity. They **must flee** because if they don't they will be captured and killed. The location they should flee to is **the mountains**. When one studies the topography of the region there is a great rift valley that runs north and south through the Jordan River valley. Both the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea are within this valley. They are the lowest fresh lake and saltwater body on the face of the earth. On either side mountain ranges run parallel tracks north and south, in the West in Israel and in the East in Jordan. Since **Judea** is in the mountain range in Israel then obviously they will need to flee that mountain range to the one in Jordan, on the other side of the Dead Sea. The OT passage of Micah 2:12 taught that they would find for themselves a place of refuge in Bozrah, which is known today as Petra. "I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold [bosrah = Petra]; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture They will be noisy with men." The Hebrew translated "like sheep in the fold" is *bosrah* and is a reference to Petra. The OT passage of Isa 41:17-20 taught that there He would miraculously provide for them as He did in the wilderness wanderings. "The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, And their tongue is parched with thirst; I, the Lord, will answer them Myself, As the God of Israel I will not forsake them. ¹⁸I will open rivers on the bare heights And springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water And the dry land fountains of water. ¹⁹I will put the cedar in the wilderness, The acacia and the myrtle and the olive tree; I will place the juniper in the desert Together with the box tree and the cypress, ²⁰That they may see and recognize, And consider and gain insight as well, That the hand of the Lord has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it." Thus, God will miraculously provide for the Jewish remnant who escapes. Rev 12:14 agrees saying, "But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent." Since the serpent is Satan it is evident that he is the personage behind the anti-Christ leading the persecution against the woman, who represents Jewish believers at this time. The previous verses said that he had just been cast out of heaven. This will also occur at the mid-point of the tribulation. Therefore, when he is cast out of heaven he will enter into the anti-Christ and through him try to annihilate the Jewish believers. Rev 12:14 says "two wings of the great eagle" will be given to the Jewish believers "so that she could fly into the wilderness to" the place God has prepared for her, which place is Petra. The wings of the great eagle are not the Israeli or US Air Forces but a figure of speech depicting miraculous assistance. The expression "bore you on eagle's wings" is used in Exod 19:4 for God's miraculous assistance of Israel against Pharaoh and his armies at the Exodus. It's use here means that God will provide such miraculous assistance again, this time from anti-Christ and his armies. The Exodus is closely paralleled by the Tribulation and the two should be studied together.

In order to enjoy this miraculous assistance, Matt 24:17 says that Jewish believers must get out of Judea immediately. **Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house.** In other words, he should not take travel provisions. If he were to go down and pack a suitcase it would be too late, the anti-Christ would apprehend him before he could get away. Further, such a suitcase and its contents would be unnecessary since as stated before, God will miraculously assist them both in their escape and in the place He has prepared for them at Petra. Such provisions would certainly include shoes and clothing. God will provide all these things for them as He did for ancient Israel.

24:18 furthers this line of thinking, **Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.** A **cloak** is what one used to cover himself at night to keep warm. To **turn back to get** one's cloak would seem to be necessary but to do so would result in one being caught by the anti-Christ and put to death. Therefore, he should not **turn back**. Further, a **cloak** will not be necessary to keep warm at night because God will provide the warmth miraculously as they flee as well as at Petra.

Thomas Ice summarizes it this way, "Putting the pieces of the puzzle together, it appears that the Jewish Remnant can flee Jerusalem without concern for provisions, since God will nurture and care for them as He did the Exodus generation through miraculous means. Very likely the Lord will provide food (perhaps manna), water, and clothing for His Remnant that will be on the run and in hiding so as to escape the persecution of the dragon during the final half of the tribulation."²

24:19 pronounces **woe** on those who are pregnant in those days. **But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days.** **Those days** refer to the days of the second half of the tribulation when Jews in the land are under persecution by the anti-Christ. A pronouncement of **woe** was a pronouncement of great "pain" and "suffering." Those days will be particularly difficult for women who **are pregnant or nursing babies** because such conditions will limit their ability to flee quickly. Though not stated explicitly, anyone with a physical disability will be in a particularly difficult situation trying to flee.

In 24:20, **But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.** In my thinking the fact that Jesus prompts them to **pray** for these things means that God intends to answer this prayer. God has conditioned some things in His plan on human prayer such that we may even say that if they do not pray this prayer then their flight will **be in the winter or on a Sabbath**. But I suppose that because they are told to **pray** these things then their **flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath**. The reasons are obvious. **In the winter** travel conditions can be precarious in Israel. Jerusalem is an elevation of ~2500 feet. On occasion it does receive snowfall. I have seen pictures of Jerusalem covered in a blanket of snow twice in the last five years. It is a beautiful site to see but it would not bode well for a hasty departure. Nor would **Sabbath** be a good day for travel for believing Jews because observant Jews would try to restrict travel on that day.

In 24:21 Jesus describes why they need to flee so quickly. **For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.** The word **For** signals that this verse is an explanation of what preceded. That is, it explains why Jewish believers must depart immediately when they see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. The reason is because **then there will be a great tribulation.** The degree of difficulty is then described by Jesus as **not having occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.** The word **since** does not imply a previous similar great tribulation at the beginning of the world but simply means “from” that time and never again will there be a period so difficult. Therefore, the verse means that Israel will enter into an unparalleled time of difficulty when the abomination of desolation is seen standing in the holy place. Two OT passages also describe a period of unparalleled difficulty for Israel. The first is Jer 30:7, “Alas! For that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s distress, But he will be saved from it.” Note the pattern. A time of distress for Israel followed by their salvation from it. Second, Dan 12:1, “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.” Same pattern; an unparalleled time of distress for Israel followed by the remnant of Israel being saved from it. Matt 24 follows this same pattern. “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.” Verse 13, “but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.” And verse 31 describes the salvation at the Second Coming, “And He will send forth His angels and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.” So the pattern of Dan 12:1; Jer 30:7 and Matt 24 are all the same. Each describes a period of unparalleled difficulty for Israel followed by Israel’s salvation.

The question arises as to whether the expression **great tribulation** is a technical term for the second half of the Tribulation. The expression used is *θλιψεις μεγάλη*. This expression is used four other times in the NT in a limited sense. First, in Acts 7:11 Stephen used it in his speech to the Sanhedrin to describe the time in Genesis when there was famine in Israel and Egypt which caused great tribulation. “Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great tribulation with it, and our fathers could find no food.” This great tribulation related to the difficulties caused by famine. Contextually it is a historical and local usage. Second, in Rev 2:22 it is used in the accusative case by Jesus in His letter to the Church at Thyatira where He warns that those who tolerate the woman Jezebel in her idolatry and sexual immorality will be cast into great tribulation. “Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.” The great tribulation here is taken by some interpreters to be a reference to the dangers of false professors being cast into the future great tribulation. However, it seems better to understand it as a specific warning to believers of being cast into severe divine discipline for idolatry and sexual immorality. Third, a similar, though not identical expression *της θλιψεως της μεγαλης* is used by an elder in Rev 7:14 of the martyrs under the fifth seal. In 7:13 “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?" "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." The substantive participle "the ones who come" is a present tense referring to their still coming into heaven out of the great tribulation. The martyrdoms were continuing. Since these martyrs are those who will be coming into heaven under the fifth seal which is in the first half then the expression "the great tribulation" here most naturally refers to difficulties these believers face during the first half of the tribulation. If that is the case, then the expression **great tribulation** cannot merely refer to the second half of the tribulation. Some like Robert Thomas try to get around this by saying that the preposition εκ, translated "out of" can be translated "away from" in the sense that they will be taken away from earth before the great tribulation begins in the second half. This is possible grammatically but it does not seem likely contextually. Others like Arnold Fruchtenbaum have concluded that **great tribulation** is a title for the entire tribulation and not just the second half. I don't know for sure but I think it is difficult to argue that the martyrdom these believers face is not a perfectly normal use of **great tribulation** as it is used in other passages such as Acts 7:11 where it was used of the resulting difficulty arising from the famine in Joseph's time. It can be concluded from these usages that **great tribulation** is not a technical term for the second half of the tribulation simply because to be a technical term it must always refer to the same thing. The varied usages show otherwise.

However, the expression **great tribulation** in Matt 24:21 does seem to refer to something more than a period of unparalleled difficulty for Israel. V 22 seems to extend the difficulty to the whole world when it says, **Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved.** The word translated **life** is σαρξ and is usually translated "flesh." It can refer to merely human flesh or it can extend to include human and animal flesh. In either case it seems to refer to a period of unparalleled difficulty for all flesh on the planet and not just the flesh of Jewish believers. The last phrase of verse 22 seems to connect the survival of all flesh on the planet with God's plan for Jewish believers. **but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.** In a very real sense, the survival of the human race depends on Jewish believers in that time. I am limiting **the elect** to Jewish believers because of the context and its usage again in verse 24 and verse 31, which in particular refers to a regathering of Jewish believers. For now, it is interesting enough to conclude that verse 22 teaches that the survival of the human race depends on Jewish believers living at that time. This means that the expression **great tribulation** as it is used in Matt 24:21 includes not only the persecutions against Israel by anti-Christ but also the catastrophic global judgments God is sending on the earth during that time.

We now have to deal with the word **cut short** in 24:22, **Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.** The translation **cut short** has confused many Bible students into thinking that either the length of the days in that time period will be shorter than 24 hour says or that the time period itself will be shorter than previously determined, that is, shorter than three and one half years. However, the word κολοβω can refer to a "sudden termination." That this is the best understanding is indicated by the context in verse 27 when that time period comes to a sudden termination

with Christ's Second Coming which will come like a lightning strike. Barbieri said, "This meant there will be a termination of this period of time, not that the days will be fewer than 24 hours."³ So "unless those days had been suddenly terminated no flesh would have been saved" is a better translation. The length of the days will not be shortened from 24 hours, nor will the length of the tribulation be shortened. The calendar of Daniel's seventy weeks set the full time period as seven years, each year constituted by 360 days. This is a set period of time. It will not be cut short in any other sense than it will suddenly be terminated by Christ's return. The point is that if it were not suddenly terminated at that point the catastrophic global judgments would continue and **no flesh** on the planet **would have been** preserved alive on the planet. The bowl judgments affect the entire earth in ways unfathomable to the human mind. The second bowl judgment will turn the entire earth's oceans into blood and every living thing in the earth's oceans will die. The fourth bowl judgment will impart scorching rays from the sun that will cause immense pain. Jesus' point is that if judgments like these continued beyond the designated time period, no life would remain on the planet. However, He says at the end of the verse **but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short**. The expression **for the sake of** is *δία* with the accusative and means "because of." Because of the **elect of those days** the human race will not be exterminated. Since Jesus already said in Matthew 23:39 that He would not return until Israel said "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD," then it stands to reason that the judgments stop because the believing remnant of Israel will say these words. Technically the translation **elect** is a transliteration of the Greek word *εκλεκτος* because translators did not know what to do with it. The word study shows that the predominant usage in both the OT and NT relates to the quality of an object, either a distinguished or a choice object. In Matthew it is always used of a choice object. The believing remnant of Israel are choice because they are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. It does not refer to the Church because only the believing remnant of Israel can precipitate the return of Christ by saying Matt 23:39, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD." When they do Christ will return as the following verses describe and He will bring an end to the catastrophic judgments so that the human race is preserved.

In summary, 24:15 when the Jewish believers see the abomination of desolation which was predicted by Daniel the prophet to be erected in the holy place at the mid-point of the seventieth week those in the region of Judea must of necessity flee to the mountains. These mountains will be in the region of modern day Jordan where God will miraculously protect and nourish them as in the wilderness wanderings. In 24:17, Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house because he would be caught and such provisions are unnecessary. In 24:18 Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak because he would be caught and a cloak will not be necessary. In 24:19, much pain and suffering will be in store for those who are pregnant and nursing babies in those days because they will limit their ability to flee with haste. In 24:20 the believing Jews are commanded to pray that their flight will not be in the winter because harsh weather will make escape difficult. They are also to pray that their flight not be on a Sabbath because orthodox Jews will try to enforce Sabbath travel restrictions. The reason they are told to pray is because God intends to answer this

prayer. Some things God conditions on human prayer, this is one of them. In 24:21 gives an explanation for why they must immediately flee Judea when they see the abomination of desolation. The reason is because a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will, will begin. This great tribulation is an unparalleled time of difficulty for Israel and the whole world. In 24:22 unless those days were suddenly terminated, no flesh on the entire planet would be preserved; but for the sake of the choice believing remnant of Israel who will issue the Messianic greeting, those days will be suddenly terminated and Messiah will return as described in the following verses.

In conclusion what can we say? In the last 100 years four major events have set the stage for these things to take place. First, the regathering of Israel in unbelief. This passage presupposes a regathering of Jewish people in the land with a formidable presence. The OT predicted two regatherings of the Jewish people. The first regathering is in unbelief in preparation for the tribulation. That regathering has been taking place for over 100 years now. Second, the formation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. This led to the rapid migration of Jews from around the world to Israel which continues to this day. Third, the 1967 Six-Day War resulted in Jerusalem being captured from the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. This set the stage for a decision about the temple mount. Fourth, the decision to allow the future of the temple mount to be decided by an international political body. In 1996 the Israeli courts decided that the sensitive issues concerning the temple mount would not be decided by Israeli courts but by an international political body. This paved the way for the future rebuilding of the temple. These four major events set the stage for the things described in Matthew 24 to take place. Sometimes people ask me, how long will it be until these things? Can't it be another 2,000 years? I do not think that is a possibility. If it took less than 100 years for God to set the stage, then it will not take much longer for Him to start the drama. Walvoord used to say that once God starts moving in a direction He does not pull back. There really is nothing standing in the way of these things taking place except the presence of Christ's Church on earth. The removal of the Church is and remains the very next event on God's timetable. When the Church is removed Matthew 24 will begin to unfold very rapidly. Peter's application of such things is to say, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless...be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This is the simplicity to which He has called us.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 88.

² <http://www.pre-trib.org/articles/view/an-interpretation-of-matthew-24-25-part-14>

³ Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., "Matthew," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 77.