

The Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24 & 25
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Provocative Question:

Did Jesus actually give us signs of His return?

Why don't we hear about the signs of Jesus' return?

- We are in the Age of Scoffers as prophesied.
- Bible prophecy is not considered relevant for the here and now.
- Sensationalists and date setters have given Bible prophecy an unsavory reputation.
- Since we can not know the day or hour, why bother looking for signs?

Why is it important to be aware of the signs of Jesus' return?

- Jesus gave us signs to watch for and commanded us to watch for Him.
- While we cannot know the day or hour of His return, the signs help us get a sense for the season of His return.
- Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His day for not being aware of the signs of His coming...

Matthew 16:1-3 – Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’; and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.

The Disciples' Questions, Matthew 24:1-3

Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (NKJV)

What did Jesus say would happen to the temple?
That it would be utterly destroyed.

What questions did the disciples ask of Jesus?

- When would the temple be destroyed?
- What would be the sign of Jesus' return & the end of the Age?

What assumption were the disciples making by their questions?

- They assumed the destruction of temple would happen as part of the Lord establishing His kingdom on earth at the end of the Age.
- For them, the end of the Age they were in would mean the beginning of the promised Messianic Era when, *“the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed”* (Daniel 2:44).
- Note: They understood the Messianic Kingdom to be not just a spiritual one but a literal, physical one where the Messiah Himself would rule the earth from Jerusalem; as Isaiah 9:6 says, *“the government will be upon His shoulder.”*

What did the disciples not realize?

That there would be another Age between the Covenant of the Law and the Messianic Age.

- In between there would be the New Covenant also known as the Age of Grace or the Church Age. The Apostle Paul called the Church a *“great mystery”* in Ephesians 5:32 because it wasn't revealed to the Old Testament prophets.
- So, let's take a look at what signs Jesus gave us for the end of the Age...

The Escalating Signs, Matthew 24:4-8

Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And

there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

About what did Jesus say we should not be deceived?

- Many will come claiming to be God's anointed, that they represent the Messiah
- And many would be deceived.

Jesus lists a number of things that have characterized the human condition throughout history; so how are they signs?

What makes them signs is that they will increase in frequency and intensity: "*All these are the beginning of sorrows*" (Matthew 24:8). The Greek word translated into "*sorrows*" is "*odin*" which means birth pains.

How are birth pangs signs?

As birth pangs increase in frequency and intensity, so too will these signs that Jesus gave as we get closer to the Tribulation.

Are we seeing the signs Jesus gave us increase in frequency & intensity?

- **False Christs:** We have always had cult leaders claiming Messianic authority but the number and impact of these religious deceivers are increasing. The fastest growing religion is Islam... while the Sunni and Shiites have their disagreements, they are both expecting the Messiah called al Mahdi to unite the world under Islam. Some Muslims are saying that al Mahdi is already here, waiting in the desert until a great war between the nations where he can emerge... it is interesting that Jesus specifically warned us about those who claimed the Messiah was hiding in the desert per Matt 24:26.
- **Wars:** There have been more people killed in the wars of the 20th Century than all of human history up until then. So far the 21st Century has not been as deadly, but the Century is still young. Among the types of wars Jesus mentioned as signs are "*nation rising against nation.*" The Greek word translated "*nation*" in this passage is "*ethnos*" which refers to different ethnic people groups. I used to think we were beyond racial conflicts in this country but it looks like we have regressed in recent years and worse: the stage is being set for more racial conflict.

- **Famine:** We don't notice famines so much in our global economy but our recessions result in the same loss of wealth as famines did in the agrarian society of the 1st Century. Our recessions are getting worse and we can expect the next one that is looming to be very bad.
- **Pestilence:** It is certainly obvious that pestilences are increasing. There are many viral infections we thought we had eradicated in this country that are making a come-back like tuberculosis, scarlet fever, measles, and whooping cough. And we have new ones like Ebola and bacterial infections that are resistant to antibiotics.
- **Earthquakes:** Have you noticed that earthquakes are on the increase? The U.S. Geological Survey which archives earthquake data does document an increase in earthquakes but they blame the increase on Hydraulic Fracturing. However, their own map showing where the earthquakes occurred reveal they have been in diverse places including locations where no fracking is going on. Recently the number of volcanoes erupting monthly has been greater than the 20th Century's yearly average.

What are rumors of wars?

- Cold War – Ready to engage in combat at a moment's notice but no shots being fired.
- It is something of a recent phenomenon in the age of "low intensity conflicts" ...where we know that there is a war going on because of reports in the media but it doesn't really impact us personally (no rationing, no mobilization for production of war materials)

Jesus said we should not be troubled as we see these things... Why?

- Because God is in control and the end is not yet. The end will come, but for those who know the Lord, we don't have to fear the end.
- Indeed, the end includes our redemption to Him so we should actually look forward to the end. It will be an escape from a fallen world that sorely needs Jesus to make it right.
 - The Apostle Paul called our escape from this sin-sick world our "*blessed hope*" in Titus 2:13. It is not escapist to look forward to when we will be resurrected.
 - Colossians 3:2 says, "*set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*"

We would all be better off making our decisions with an eternal perspective.

Jesus Describes the Tribulation, Matthew 24:9-14

⁹ *"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, 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.*

What does Jesus reveal about the Tribulation here?

Jesus says it will be a time of intense persecution. In context, He is not just speaking of general on-going persecution which has occurred since He was first here. But that the persecution during "The Tribulation" would be world-wide with no place on earth to escape it.

Are we seeing any increase in frequency and intensity of Christian persecution today?

Certainly in places where Islam rules and that have had a growing influence of Islam there has been an increase in persecution of Christians. What is striking is the growing "soft persecution" of Christians in this country... seeking our Christian business people who would not recognize gay weddings, shadow-banning Christian ministries on social media, efforts to re-write the history of Christian influence on the USA, media negative portrayal of Christians, forbidding public expressions of faith such as prayer, etc...

V10 – What does it mean that many will be offended?

The time leading up to the Tribulation would be characterized by political correctness. People will take offence at the most innocent of comments that are perceived to be racist, misogynist, homophobic, or some other microaggression against some group.

Jesus also said that betrayal and hate would characterize the Tribulation. Are we seeing birth pangs of this?

- There has been a lot of betrayal associated with politicians especially since Trump became president.

- Hatred against president Trump and his supporters seems to be irrational and growing crazier by the day.

V11 – What did Jesus warn us about as He emphasizes deception again?

Deception will grow along with false prophets as we get closer to His return. As 2 Timothy 3:13 says, *"evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."*

Have we seen false prophets?

- Certainly, there are more cults today than at any time in history.
- We live in the era of fake news... You'd think the public would be wise to the mass media by now but people don't want to believe their trusted institutions are manipulating them to embrace harmful ideological narratives.

V12 - Jesus said that lawlessness will abound... How have we seen this?

The United States Constitution is being seen more and more as a "living document" that needs to be interpreted and updated for our times. The result is that rule of man is eclipsing the rule of law and the consequences of that will not be pretty. The rule of law is derived from God's Law and departing from it is what oligarchies & dictatorships do.

Jesus also said, the love of many will grow cold... Have we seen this?

The more people turn away from God, the less true sacrificial love of God we're going to see.

How is dropping birth rates evidence of love growing cold?

- Increasingly, people no longer consider having children as a blessing, instead it is seen as a financial burden.
- It has never been easier to kill the unborn during this era of easy abortions.
- Such hatred for children and the growing disrespect by the young for their parents and other older people reveals how close we are to the Tribulation...

Malachi 4:5-6 – Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the

hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

V13 – How will Tribulation people be saved?

By remaining faithful to Christ to the end of the Tribulation... this will enable them to enter the Millennial Kingdom. Of course, most who are faithful to Christ during the Tribulation will die for their faith as martyrs.

- Therefore, it would be much better to become a follower of Christ now during the Age of Grace.

V14 – When would the end of the Tribulation come?

Jesus said the end will come after the gospel of the kingdom is preached to all the nations. You could say that with the Internet and satellite communications, the good news of Jesus has already been declared to all nations. But the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will be during the Tribulation:

Rev 14:6-7 – Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.

What is the gospel of the kingdom?

- It is the good news that Jesus, the *Prince of Peace* is coming to fix this sin-sick world. This is good news for any time but especially for His followers during the Tribulation.
- The gospel of the kingdom refers to God's kingdom on earth. "*Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:10). This is yet future and will happen prior to the Eternal State as we have discussed.

How do we know the promised Messianic Kingdom is a physical kingdom on earth and not just the spiritual kingdom of the Church Age?

Right before Jesus ascended back to heaven in His resurrected body, the disciples asked Him, “*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*” (Acts 1:6). They were anticipating a real physical kingdom on earth as promised throughout the Old Testament. Jesus didn't correct their expectation but said the future kingdom would happen in God's timing; "*It is*

not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7).

The Abomination of Desolation, Matthew 24:15-22

¹⁵ “*Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place*” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ “*then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*” ¹⁷ *Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.* ¹⁸ *And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.* ¹⁹ *But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!* ²⁰ *And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.* ²¹ *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.* ²² *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.*

This is a very important passage because it ties the signs the Lord gave us to watch for with the timeline that the Prophet Daniel gave us.

So, by way of review, what is this "abomination of desolation"?

The Prophet Daniel mentions it four times. And from 2 Thessalonians 2:4, we learn that the Antichrist will enter the temple and declare himself to be God. This is what Jesus warned His future Jewish followers about... when they see the ruler of the world commit the abomination of desolation, it is time to get out of Jerusalem.

What did Jesus say would follow the abomination of desolation?

That "*there will be great tribulation.*" The whole 70th week of Daniel is called the Tribulation, but Jesus calls the second half of it, great tribulation that would result in the end of all life on earth if allowed to continue.

Why, upon seeing the abomination of desolation, should those who are in Judea immediately flee to the mountains?

The abomination of desolation will be the sign that the Antichrist has turned on Israel. And that he will be seeking to kill them as he has any who opposes his regime or has allegiance with the Son of God.

V20 – Why should they pray that their flight not be on the Sabbath?

Many will be orthodox Jews who would have a problem traveling on the Sabbath in accordance with the Law.

V21-22 – How did Jesus describe the Great Tribulation?

The worst time there has ever been for people on earth. So bad that unless it came to an end, there would be no one who survived.

V22 – What does it mean the days would be shortened for the sake of the elect?

Those who are destined to enter the Millennial Kingdom would survive the Tribulation.

Days would be shortened meaning that the Tribulation would have an end.

What ends the Great Tribulation?

Jesus ends the Tribulation when He returns to establish the Millennial Kingdom.

The Coming of the Son of Man, Matthew 24:23-31

²³ “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.

²⁶ “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸ For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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 His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

V23-25 – What did Jesus say would characterize the Tribulation?

- False christs: there will be an abundance of people claiming to be the savior of mankind.

- False prophets: there will be a lot of people falsely claiming to speak for God.
- Great signs & wonders intended to deceive people

What kind of deception do you think there will be during the tribulation?

- Things to explain away the rapture.
- Demonic activity to support the Antichrist regime
- Foreshadowings already present... we must unite and give up freedom to fight global warming, terrorism, etc.

V26-28 – How will people know the True Christ from the false christs?

Jesus will not return in secret. He will come from the heavens and all will see Him and there will a lot of people dying who gathered to oppose Him.

V29 – What signs will herald the coming of the Son of Man?

Unusual supernatural celestial signs, or...

- Sun & moon darkened – dust from nuclear weapons?
- Stars will fall from heaven – ICBMs entering atmosphere
- Powers of heavens shaken – fission & fusion of thermonuclear weapons (atom splitting, exploding)

A parallel passage in Luke adds some more detail...

Luke 21:25-26 – And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

What elements are added here?

- Distress of nations – the longed-for peace eludes the world
- Perplexity – thing happening just don’t make sense
- Sea & waves roaring – fearful weather events
- Men’s hearts failing – fearful developments will lead to intense stress

V30 – Why does Jesus refer to Himself as the Son of Man?

- This was one of Jesus’ favorite terms for Himself; He used it 69 times in the Synoptic Gospels.

- This term is also used in Ezekiel for God probably to contrast between the human condition of Ezekiel and the transcendent majesty of God.
- This title probably refers to the fact that Jesus was perfect humanity. He, as God, came down and lived among us as the perfect human being. By doing this, He fulfilled the Law of Moses and did what no other human being was able to do. By using this title, He is identifying with the people He had come to save.

What will the sign of the Son of Man be?

Not sure, but all the earth will see Jesus descending to earth in glory and power. Oh, and we'll be with Him! (the clouds of heaven... multitudes of white-clad saints riding white horses will look like clouds from a distance).

Why will all the tribes of the earth mourn?

- The return of Jesus to the earth will not be in secret or just seen by a few; everyone on earth will see Him return.
- They will mourn because they will realize they bet on the wrong horse and are about to die.

V31 – What else happens when Jesus returns to earth?

His angels will gather together His elect from all over heaven. So, the holy angels will be returning with us and Him as well.

The Parable of the Fig Tree, Matthew 24:32-36

³² “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. ³⁶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

What does the fig tree symbolize?

We know that the fig tree is a symbol of Israel per...

- Hosea 9:10 – I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season.

- Joel 2:22-23 – The fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God

Who will see all the things Jesus revealed about the Tribulation?

The generation that sees Israel preparing to bear fruit as a nation will be the generation that sees the return of Jesus.

When did Israel preparing to bear fruit as a nation?

The fig tree of Israel started sprouting leaves when it became a nation on May 14, 1948.

How is Israel becoming a nation after over 1800 years of The Diaspora a fulfillment of prophecy?

- One of the most prolific prophecies in the Old Testament is that the nation of Israel will be re-established back in their land prior to the Messiah's return.
- It is unprecedented in history that a race of people who has been dispersed from their homeland for multiple centuries would retain their cultural identity and come back together as a nation again.

What is “this generation” that Jesus refers to?

- Jesus told us that the generation of people who sees Israel put forth leaves in preparation for bearing fruit will be the generation that sees Him return.
- We are that generation! We are well into the season of Israel's leaf bearing which precedes the season of fruit bearing when God will resume working through Israel as his representatives on earth. This means that the Church Age is about to end.

V35 – Why do you think Jesus reminded us here that His words would not pass away?

- Jesus was emphasizing the importance of the truth He just revealed to us.
- Truth stands the test of time. We can count on what Jesus said would happen happening. The heavens and earth as we now know them will pass away but the truth that Jesus has revealed to us will always be with us.

V36 – What is it that no one knows the day or hour?

- “That day” – this has to be the rapture as the seminal supernatural event that initiates God working through Israel again as His representatives on earth.

- It can't be Jesus' return to earth to establish His Millennial Kingdom because he will return 1260 days from the abomination of desolation (see Rev 11:2, 12:6).

Why might people use this verse to justify ignoring Bible prophecy?

- If we cannot know the day or hour of Jesus' return, then why bother?
- But Jesus gave us signs to watch for so that we may know the season of His return as the Apostle Paul said we should know...

1 Thessalonians 5:1 – But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

No one knows the day or hour, Matthew 24:37-42

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. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

V36 – Can we know when Jesus will come for us?

No, only God knows and it is not for us to know this so we just need to be ready.

V37 – How will the Lord's coming for us be like the days of Noah?

Yes, there will be violence and depravity but in context here this is referring to how oblivious people will be to God intervening in the affairs of mankind.

V38 – What will people be engaging in during the days before the Lord returning for us?

Business as usual not expecting anything extraordinary to happen.

So, is Jesus making reference to the rapture here?

I used to think so because this appears to describe people being taken away in the midst of times when it is business as usual. (And conditions will hardly be business as usual during the Tribulation.) But that interpretation has problems: (1) the context indicates

that the people taken are taken in God's wrath (the flood), (2) this message was not primarily addressed to the church but to Jews going through the Tribulation and (3) a parallel passage in Luke provides more details making what is being talked about even more clear:

Luke 17:34-37 – ³¹ “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. ³² Remember Lot's wife. ³³ Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. ³⁴ I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵ Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. ³⁶ Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.” ³⁷ And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?” So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

How do the disciples' question and Jesus' answer clarify what these people are taken to?

Jesus explained where the people were taken to as where the carrion-eating birds would gather. So those taken would be road-kill.

So, how do we reconcile the taken-in-wrath interpretation with it happening at a time of business as usual?

The time leading up to the Tribulation will be business as usual. And even during the Tribulation, there will be deception and enough business-as-usual at least to begin with that people not expecting God's wrath will not recognize it.

What is the significance of remembering Lot's wife?

Don't be so in love with the world that look back at it when the Lord comes for us.

What does it mean that, “whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it”?

If you are working for your salvation, you will discover that you have failed. Those who obtain salvation are those who yield everything in their life to Jesus Christ. He paid for us when He died in our place so that our sins may be forgiven. Therefore, we need to act like we are totally His.

V39 – How is the Lord’s coming likened to the Flood of Noah’s day?

It will rapidly overtake people by surprise. And there will be plenty of deception so that people will be in denial about what is really going on.

V40-41 – What description does Jesus give of the taking of people during the Tribulation?

Unlike during the wrath of the flood, the Tribulation will be characterized by some being taken in God’s wrath and others left to enter the Millennial Kingdom. The picture here is upon the Lord coming to earth...

Rev 19:17-21 – ¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, ¹⁸ that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, ¹⁹ free and slave, both small and great.”

¹⁹ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

V42 – What is the summary of what this means for the Jews going through the Tribulation... and for us believers during the Church Age?

- Jews – watch for the Messiah & be ready for His coming ...So, be ready by trusting in Him!
- Church Age believers – Watching for Jesus... living in expectation that He could return for us at any moment ...So, be ready by trusting in Him!

A parallel passage in Luke adds something else...

Luke 21:36 – Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

Why should people pray that that they may escape all the things that will come to pass?

This is directed at those in the Tribulation but there is a principle that applies to us... we too should pray that we may escape the birth pangs in this current Age and also the Tribulation to come.

What do the days of Noah reveal about what it will be like what the Son of Man returns?

- In context here, the aspect of the days of Noah that is most relevant is that people were oblivious to the coming wrath of God.
- Certainly there will be other similarities...

Gen 6:5 - the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually

Matthew 24:12 - because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold

Gen 6:11 – the earth was filled with violence

2 Tim 3:1 – In the last day perilous times will come

So, as the fallen angels mixed it up with mankind in the time leading up to the flood of Noah’s day, we might expect that in the timeframe of Jesus’s return...

Gen 6:4 – There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

It was likely that the fallen angels were doing something to corrupt the human genome resulting in giants and other abominations. This idea was supported in the reasons why God chose Noah...

Gen 6:9 – Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.

What does it mean that Noah was perfect in his generations?

- Probably that his human genome was intact and unadulterated by the fallen angels mixing it up with mankind.
- This needed to be the case to preserve the bloodline from which the Messiah would be born.

So how will fallen angels mix it up with mankind in the time leading up to the return of Jesus?

Certainly, they will be possessing people and empowering them to do deceptive signs...

Rev 13:2 – Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. They will also be appearing to people maybe posing as “helpful” extraterrestrials to goad them into opposing God:

Rev 16:13-14 – I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Why are they described as looking like frogs?

Big eyes, smooth features, no nose, head shape... how would the 1st Century Apostle John describe what is commonly depicted as an alien grey in our day?

Some say that manipulation of the human genome will somehow play a role in Tribulation events. They speculate that this might have to do with the mark of the Beast. The only scriptural support I've seen for this is wildly speculative and bad hermeneutics. For example, in describing the iron/clay mix of the government of the Antichrist:

Dan 2:43 – As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

Some say the iron not mixing with clay describes fallen angels ruling alongside humans. I think it more likely that the fallen angels mixing it up with mankind are possessing humans. And such an interpretation is making a category error; as iron represents a human regime, so does the clay.

- As iron in the feet & toes is the revived Roman Empire, clay is the revived Ottoman (Muslim) Empire

I also find it wildly sensational and way-too speculative that fallen angels were manipulating the human genome by mating with human women. We know today that there are techniques to change genetic make-up without having to mate. All angels, fallen or holy are non-corporeal spirit beings. They do not have physical bodies. They can appear to have physical bodies but this is only to reveal themselves to us physical beings.

Heb 1:7 – And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire. When Jesus revealed His resurrected body to His disciples, He said...

Luke 24:39 – Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

V42 – Finally, Jesus said that we should, *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. Is there significance to Jesus saying we should watch for Him? Why didn't He say we should wait for Him?*

Waiting is passive, watching is active. Jesus gave us signs to know the season of his return; in order to watch, we need to be familiar with what to watch for and be looking for the signs He gave us.

So, what does watching for Jesus to return look like?

He wants us to live ready for Him to return. It is all too easy to put off growing in our relationship with Him, but as we see signs of His soon return, this should give us a sense of urgency to learn all we can about Him...

How does studying Bible prophecy help us grow in Christ?

Studying Bible Prophecy facilitates learning about Jesus, *"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"* (Revelation 19:10). Bible prophecy does not lend itself well to just a superficial treatment; As you go deep in God's Word, you find yourself going deeper into a relationship with the Lord. The more we know about God and His ways, the better decisions we'll make in the here and now.

What will active watching for the Lord's return give us a sense of urgency about?

We should also have a sense of urgency to get on with whatever God is calling us to do. We have a window of opportunity to lay up treasure in heaven that will soon close. As Jesus said in John 9:4, *"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work."*

How can Bible prophecy aid in evangelism?

It proves that the Bible really is from God since only He can declare the end from the beginning per Isaiah 46:10. There is nothing more relevant to our world today than Bible prophecy. The more we are watching

for Jesus, the more we can help ourselves and others see how the Bible helps us make sense of the crazy trajectory this world is on.

The Faithful & Evil Servant, Matt 24:43-51

⁴³ *But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

⁴⁴ *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

⁴⁵ *“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?”* ⁴⁶ *Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.*

⁴⁷ *Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.* ⁴⁸ *But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’* ⁴⁹ *and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,* ⁵⁰ *the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of,* ⁵¹ *and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

V43 – Who is the master of the house?

It is a steward... someone whom the owner has left in charge of the house to care for it while he is away.

How could watching for a thief thwart the robbery?

Thieves do not want to get caught and will leave if the find their target property is protected by a caretaker.

V44 – How is watching for a thief a good analogy for our watching for Messiah?

If you don't know when the thief will be coming you just need to always be ready. Likewise, we need to always be ready for the Lord returning for us.

How can we always be ready for the Lord's return?

Know Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

Be a good steward of what He has entrusted you.

V45 – What should a good steward be doing?

Feeding those the Lord has given us charge over... helping others know Him, encourage them in their relationship to Him and help them to also be ready for the return of the Master.

V46-47 – How will the faithful servant be blessed?

He will bask in the good pleasure of the Master and there will be the reward of more responsibility.

So, how is more responsibility a reward?

It will be when the curse is removed... the more we get to participate in what the Lord is doing, the greater our blessing.

V48-49 – What does an evil servant do?

Does not expect the Master to return today so he abuses his fellow servants, gets drunk and lives like he has no responsibility to the Master.

V50 – When will the Master return?

On a day and at a time when the evil servant does not expect.

V51 – What will become of the evil servant?

- Cut him in two – he will be killed
- Appoint him his portion with the hypocrites – he will receive what hypocrites receive, no reward, only punishment
- Weeping & gnashing of teeth – a euphemism for hell

Alright... so what? What application should we see in the Parable of the Faithful & Evil Servant?

- Be ready for our Master to return by expecting Him at any time.
- Be doing what pleases the Master at all times
- Don't abuse our fellow servants
- Don't waste our time; everything we do should have some eternal value.
- Be alert and watch for the master's return.