

PROPHECY OVERVIEW
"Part V: The Believer And Christ's Second Coming To The Earth"
(Matthew 24:15, 29-31, 36-41)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Our world is in great need of a righteous make-over!

(1) On an advertisement I have in my file, there is a photo of a man resting on a desert island under a palm tree in the middle of a blue lagoon. Across the water reads the name brand of a cigarette with the words "the refreshest" underneath it! Along the top of the ad run these words: "Surgeon General's Warning: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy." When I remember the people I have **known** who have **died** of lung cancer, something inside me really boils at such ads:

If the Surgeon General STATES that smoking cigarettes CAUSES these diseases and their ensuing deaths, HOW can our government ALLOW them to be SOLD?! That is so WRONG!

(2) The problem affects religious circles as well. Ari L. Goldman, an orthodox Jew who worked as a reporter for the New York Times, was sent by the paper to study for a year at Harvard Divinity School. As a result, Goldman wrote a book entitled, The Search for God at Harvard (Times Books/Random House, \$20).

Goldman's work shows that the **hardest** religious persuasion to find in Harvard Divinity School was the faith of its Evangelical roots! He notes of the school's "tendency to embrace religious relativism rather than religious truth."

Yet, Harvard was begun by the Puritan forefathers in 1638 out of a "dreading" of leaving "an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust." The school's "Rules and Precepts" of 1646 held that "Every one shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life." (Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, The Rebirth Of America, p. 41)

If Harvard was started to pass on the torch of the Gospel to keep the Evangelical faith alive, why is the SAVING Gospel so hard to find there NOW? How can this be corrected?!

(3) We can add to this a very long list of the current wrongs in government and home life that need correction but which seem to go uncorrected, and seem unchangeable.

What is the solution to the wrongs of this world?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "It is no secret that our world is very troubled. Lawlessness is often the norm, and economic and religious unrest is making the rounds. Is there any HOPE, and WHAT must we do about it all?!"

- I. **The Bible predicts that Christ will INVADE this world to judge its wrongs and set up a world reign of righteousness, 2 Thess. 1:6-10.**
- II. **Matthew 24:15-41 describes this cataclysmic event, and we can fill in its details with additional Bible passages as follows:**
 - A. When antichrist sets himself up as God in the middle of the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27), he will start to persecute believers and Israel, Mtt. 24:15ff
 - B. At the end of this 3 1/2 year time period, there will come terrifying changes in the heavens, Matthew 24:29.
 1. The sun will be darkened, not giving off its light, Mtt. 24:29a.
 2. The moon which reflects the sun's light will not give light (Mtt. 24:29b), but will turn blood red in view, Rev. 6:12d.
 3. Astral bodies will fall and the heavens will be shaken, Mtt. 24:29.
 - C. Then, Christ will catch the world off-guard as He begins to descend to the earth from heaven, Matthew 24:36-39.
 - D. He will appear in the sky with great glory, and as the earth revolves on its axis, all men will see what looks like lightening shining from the east to the west, 24:30a, 27. This will take some time, Acts 1:9-11!
 - E. Realizing that He is coming to judge them, those who had followed the antichrist will mourn Christ's impending invasion, Mtt. 24:30b,c.
 - F. Christ's angels will arrive on earth with Him (Mtt. 24:31) as His feet land on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem, Zech. 14:3-5. **Since the Rapture comes before the Tribulation, and the Christian is ALWAYS with Christ after that (1 Thess. 4:17), we Christians will descend from heaven WITH Christ onto the Mount of Olives!**
 - G. Then shall commence Christ's worldwide judgments as follows:
 1. Those who are still alive and believe in Christ will be rounded up by the angels and made ready for His Messianic Kingdom, Mtt. 24:31.
 2. On the other hand, antichrist and his false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire for eternal punishment, Rev. 19:20.
 3. Then all who do not believe in Christ will be removed from this earthly life to await eternal judgment, Mtt. 24:40-41; Rev. 19:21.

4. All Old Testament era believers up to the Church that began in Acts 2 will be resurrected to reign with Christ, Dan. 12:11-13. [I believe that those who died after Acts 2 as believers in Israel's God but before they could hear Christ's Gospel will be then raised along with Old Testament believers, cf. the implication of Acts 19:1-5.]
 5. Also, all who believed in Christ and who died during the Tribulation since the Rapture will be raised to reign with Christ and these Old Testament saints in the Messianic Kingdom, Revelation 20:4b, c.
 6. **Glorified Christians of the Church era who return with Christ to the earth will reign with Him!** (2 Thess. 1:7-10)
 7. Thus, Christ will *start* His reign with **only believers**: (a) **glorified** Old Testament believers, Tribulation believers and Christian believers will be assigned to reign over (b) **unglorified** believers who came to believe in Christ during the Tribulation.
- H. After His return, Christ's **pre-kingdom judgment** will last **30 days**:
1. The prophet, Daniel was told by God's angel that following the antichrist's desecration of the Jewish temple when he breaks his peace treaty of Dan. 9:27, there would be 1,290 days, Dan. 12:11.
 2. Since a Jewish month is 30 days long, this 1,290 day era amounts to 43 months, or 3 1/2 years **plus** another **30-day Jewish month!**
 3. As Christ comes at the end of **forty-TWO months** when the 3 1/2 years of antichrist's desecration is completed, the **extra 30 days** in Daniel 12:11 must refer to a time of judgment on the world's evils.
- I. Following this judgment, there are **45 ADDITIONAL days** scheduled to organize and establish the Messianic reign, Dan. 12:12.
1. The angel told Daniel that one needed to wait for **1,335 days** to be **blessed** by Messiah's reign, Dan. 12:12 (Ryrie Study Bib., KJV, ftn)
 2. Since this 1,335-day period begins when antichrist first desecrates the temple (Dan. 12:11), and is 45 days longer than the time needed to finish the judgments (1,335 - 1290 = 45), there exist **45 days after judging** in which Christ will **establish** His Messianic reign.

Lesson Application: *As the Bible predicts that world events will ONLY yield ever increasing doses of MORE EVIL and MORE TROUBLE until Christ RETURNS to earth as its Prince of Peace to set up His Kingdom (Isa. 9:6), we must (1) believe on Christ as Savior to be included in the Rapture and escape the Tribulation Period to come, Jn. 3:16; Tit. 2:11-13. (2) Then, we should live for Christ (a) by the Spirit's power (Gal. 5:16ff) and (b) cleansing by confession of sin as needed (1 Jn. 1:9), (3) turning (a) optimistic and (b) opportunistic as world events unfold: we have the OPTIMISTIC hope of being rescued out of this world by the pretribulation rapture, and we must thus OPPORTUNISTICALLY get involved in the spread of Christ's Gospel to needy unbelievers!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Last Sunday, October 25th, Claudia and Bob Toth met me in the Fellowship Hall and reported about the death of a lady we knew as "Debbie." Debbie died of cancer, possibly in part caused by the difficult life she had lived. Her life was full of hardship and turmoil.

But, Debbie died in hope.

Earlier this year, Claudia had brought Debbie in to talk with me about accepting Jesus Christ as her Savior. Debbie was afraid of Church as it was so foreign to her background and difficult life. Nevertheless, she was dying of cancer, and was willing to talk with me.

I saw that Debbie would not respond at all to pressure, and so handed her a little booklet put out by Evan Tell, Inc. from Dallas. It starts with the words, "May I ask you a question?" When one opens the book, he reads, "Has anyone ever taken a Bible and shown you how you can **know** for sure that you're going to heaven?"

Debbie was interested, so we went through the book with her.

She liked what she saw but was stalled at making a commitment to Christ in the office, so I gave her the booklet and encouraged her to re-read it privately in her own home.

She did, and there Debbie accepted Christ as her Savior.

Warm and **gentle** in her demeanor -- a new creation as 2 Corinthians 5:17 says!

Debbie died last week, but she is with the Lord. Debbie will return to rule and reign with Christ in a new world of great blessing! No more will she be used or abused by others, or face tragedies that knocked her around in her hard life. She will only know blessing!

We must focus on the spread of the Gospel when facing the discouraging evils of today's world, and their tragic influences on the lives of those we know. Our hope is to get people into right relationship with Christ by faith in the Gospel so that they can rule and reign in a new world of righteousness with the return of their Prince of Peace!