

Sunday February 1st 2015
From Here To Eternity
Part Sixteen

1). Mt 24:21 *"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. 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.*

a). Our verses here from Matthew Chapter 24 are part of the Lord's response to His disciples' question concerning His return and 'the end of the age' – a question asked of Him privately while they were on the Mount of Olives together.

b). The opening verse sets a scene that we have become very familiar with, 'the great tribulation' – the intensity of which is so great that its days will literally be shortened, for the sake of Israel, otherwise 'no flesh would be saved' - Am 8:9 *"And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight;*

c). Then in v23-28 which follow we find a stark contrast drawn between the falsehood that will exist during the great tribulation at the hands of false christs and false prophets and the reality of Christ's actual return.

d). During the great tribulation claims will be made that Christ, Israel's Messiah, has come and that He can be found 'in the desert' or 'in the inner rooms'; claims that suggest that the return of the Lord happens in obscurity, almost in secret, whereas the reality of the Lord's return will be far from obscure.

e). We first see it likened to 'the lightning' that 'comes from the east and flashes to the west' – this imagery taken from the natural world shows us both the nature of the Lord's return and the timing of it.

f). As to its nature we understand it to be sudden and without warning, in the same way that lightning in the natural world cannot be predicted.

g). And with regards to its timing we must understand that the geographical location of the land of Israel means that in the natural storm systems move from the west to the east and so to picture the lightning coming from the east to the west shows that the storm is now past – and as we shall see in a moment, this is the passing of the storm as it relates to Israel with the days having been shortened, but not with respect to the Gentile nations – something we can see from the imagery of the eagles being gathered together over the carcass. A carcass is already in a state of corruption and the purpose of the eagles would be to consume the carcass thereby doing away with its corruption.

h). So, if we see the carcass as the Gentile nations, the nations who, under Antichrist, have corrupted the earth, then the image becomes clear. The eagles are Christ and His angels and upon His return Gentile world power will be utterly destroyed for all time – its corruption being eradicated. This is the same picture, but just using different imagery, as the stone cut without hands striking the image on its feet in Daniel Chapter 2 - *Da 2:45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold-the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."*

2). *Mt 24:29 "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."*

a). Then as we continue reading in Matthew Chapter 24 the Lord provides additional detail for us upon that which He has just said. In these verses we see the return of the Lord happening, 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days' – Now by comparing scripture with scripture we

know that the Lord's return to the earth is in response to Israel's national cry to the God of their fathers in repentance. The exact moment of Israel's cry is unknown, although it must come close to the end of the 7 years of the Tribulation, hence the sudden, unpredictable, immediate return of the Lord pictured through the imagery of lightning flashing in v27.

b). For Israel then 'the tribulation of those days' is finished, the time of Jacob's trouble is over; the terminal point signified through Israel's cry has been reached, the very reason for Jacob's trouble in the first place – hence the lightning from the east to the west confirming the passing of the storm also seen in v27.

c). But let's be clear, although the events that have been necessary to bring Israel to repentance have fulfilled their purpose, God's judgment upon the Gentile nations under Antichrist is by no means finished.

d). The intensity of the judgment seen through the trumpet and bowl judgments that come with the opening of the 7th seal are still to be fulfilled and reach beyond the time of Jacob's trouble.

e). And as we had seen last week, following the type given to us in Exodus, it is only after Moses' return to Israel, while Israel is still in Egypt, that the events of the 10 plagues come to pass, plagues that bring Pharaoh's kingdom into utter devastation, just prior to Israel's removal from Egypt and Egypt's power being totally eradicated in the Red Sea.

f). And in connection with Christ's return and His final dealings with the kingdom of Antichrist in fulfillment of the type, we also see reference in Matthew Chapter 24 to, *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*

g). This is the very same imagery that we see in connection with the opening of the 6th seal as seen in - *Re 6:12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

h). In both instances that which is pictured is shown through figurative rather than literal language and has to do with the devastation of Antichrist's kingdom prior to Israel's re-gathering to be followed by the complete eradication of Gentile world power for all time – and the response of those on the earth, as seen in v15-17, will be in response to the very visible return of Christ as seen in Matthew 24:30.

i). And that pictured through the darkness that is seen through the sun, the moon and the stars no longer giving their light is also found in foundation in Exodus immediately prior to the death of the firstborn, the 10th of the 10 plagues, recorded in - *Ex 10:21 ¶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt." 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.*

The darkness seen in these verses is of such a nature as to be described as 'thick darkness', darkness 'which may even be felt' – and it is this darkness portending the complete end of Egypt as the ruling power on the earth under Satan, typifying the complete end of the kingdom of Antichrist, the future ruling power over the earth, having received Satan's authority, that is being referenced in Matthew 24:29 and Revelation 6:12-13.

j). This all has to do with the death of the firstborn with a view to rulership – In Egypt Pharaoh's literal firstborn son was killed and then Egypt, Satan's 'firstborn' son, is utterly destroyed in the Red Sea, and in that future day, Satan's literal 'firstborn' son will be killed, cast into the lake of fire, and his kingdom utterly destroyed – but Israel we will note will have 'light in their dwellings', demonstrating the shift in governmental power.

k). And the darkness associated with this future day and Antichrist's kingdom can also be seen in - *Zep 1:15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,*
And - *Joe 2:2 A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations.*

l). The contrast between the darkness and the light with respect to the right to rulership will also be seen by comparing the way the kingdom of Antichrist is described - *the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its*

light – and the way Christ is described - *the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

m). Glory is described in the scriptures as light of the greatest intensity and is always referenced within the context of rulership – and so to see the kingdom of Antichrist in ‘thick darkness’ and the Christ covered in ‘great glory’ is the self-evident truth that we find in - *Re 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

Then pictured for us again in - *Re 19:11 ¶ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

n). Revelation 19:11-16, Revelation 11:15 and Matthew 24:27-30 all describe exactly the same thing.

3). We might also like to note that at the time God the Father judged sin in His Son on the cross darkness was also present - *Mt 27:45 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.*

a). The judgment of sin in the Son on the cross deals with the issue of sin in relation to the firstborn with regards to eternal redemption, for the purpose of rulership.

b). These 3 hours of darkness look back to the darkness seen in the kingdom of Pharaoh and prophetically anticipate the darkness yet to envelop the kingdom of Antichrist in the future – And all have to do with the removal of one system of rulership, characterized by darkness, to be replaced by the system of rulership characterized by light - *1Jo 1:5 ¶ This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

c). And then in association with the darkness we find this in –

Mt 27:51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

There is a great shaking of the earth.

d). And back in Matthew Chapter 24 there is also a great shaking in connection with the darkness - *and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* Both of these looking forward to the fulfillment of this combination of darkness and shaking which we see with the opening of the 6th seal in Revelation Chapter 16.

e). And as we consider this we might want to add into our overall picture that which we see in - *Ex 19:18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.*

f). And then go back even further to - *Ge 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 ¶ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.*

And what is the reason for the light in the midst of the darkness? To bring to an end the rebellious rule of Satan and his fallen angels, the great shaking of the powers of the heavens, so that God the Father and Israel and God the Son and His co-heirs should rule together in the 7th Day as a prelude to ushering in the endless ages of eternity where righteousness will dwell and sin will be no more, where darkness cannot be found.

4). Now if we return to Revelation 19:14 for a moment we see 'the armies in heaven' accompanying Christ on His return to the earth and these armies would be the same angels that we see in - *Mt 24:31 "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.*

a). However, before the angels gather together the elect from the 4 winds, from one end of heaven to the other with the great sound of the trumpet, certain other events must first transpire.

b). We had begun to look at this last week and if we return to where we finished last time, in the type in Joshua Chapter 5, we will hopefully see that which we now already know - *Jos 5:1 ¶ So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children*

of Israel. 2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time." 3 So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. 4 And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. 5 For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. 6 For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD-to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey." 7 Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. 8 So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. 9 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day. 10 ¶ Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. 12 Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year. 13 ¶ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" 14 So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" 15 Then the Commander of the LORD'S army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

c). Now, we will remember that what we see here in Chapter 5 is a prelude to the destruction of the city of Jericho which itself forms a type for us of the total eradication of Gentile world power seen in the battle of Armageddon.

d). And so the events that we see here in Joshua Chapter 5 come before the destruction of Jericho, leading us into that destruction, picturing for us

events that come before Armageddon, leading us into the day of this battle. And all have to do with Israel – the nation with the rights of the firstborn.

e). To begin with, in the opening verse, we see the Amorites and the Canaanites in a state of disarray - *their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel*

And we see that they are in this state of disarray ‘because of the children of Israel’. We can then make the connection here with the state of the Gentile nations as seen in association with the opening of the 6th seal, which we had looked at a short time ago, in Revelation Chapter 6:15 *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*

Why are the Gentile nations in this state? Simply ‘because the great day of His wrath has come’ – And why has ‘the great day of His wrath come’? Because of the children of Israel – God’s firstborn son.

f). As we continue through the verses that follow we must see the whole section on circumcision from a spiritual perspective, and although the verses we are about to look at relate particularly to Christians that seen in them describes the intent of what we see here perfectly - *Col 2:11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,*

It is exactly the same thing that is prophesied by Ezekiel in - *Eze 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

The whole idea then has to do with repentance, Israel turning from their wicked ways.

g). And the detail of the second generation not having been circumcised ‘on the way’ would picture Israel over the centuries in disobedience and unfaithfulness on the way to their restoration, void of the circumcision of the heart.

h). And it will be because of Israel’s future ‘circumcision’, because of her repentance at the conclusion of the Tribulation that the fulfillment of that said in Joshua 5:9 will take place - *Jos 5:9 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you."*

i). We see that following their circumcision Israel stays ‘in their places in the camp till they were healed’ and whilst still in the camp they keep the

Passover – we know from Exodus Chapter 12 that Israel kept the first Passover while still in Egypt and so following the types we see here we know that Israel yet future, circumcised and healed, will fulfill the Feast of Passover while still scattered amongst the Gentile nations, before the complete overthrow of Gentile world power can take place.

j). It was the keeping of Passover in the types from Israel's history, a feast that has everything to do with the death of the firstborn, that made certain the destruction of Egypt in the Red Sea and the destruction of Jericho and it will be in the fulfillment of Passover yet future that the destruction of Antichrist's kingdom and the removal of Satan and his angels are seen as inevitable – this is why the keeping of Passover in Joshua Chapter 5 can move seamlessly to the destruction of Jericho in Chapter 6.

k). At the end of Chapter 5 though, I am sure we have noted Joshua's encounter with 'the Commander of the Lord's army' – so what is this encounter all about? Simply, to show that even though Israel is seen destroying Jericho with the edge of the sword it is really accomplished by the power of God pointing to that future day when it will be the power of God alone that destroys the Antichrist and his kingdom at Armageddon.

l). And we will remember that Christ is seen with 'the armies in heaven', as their Commander, as He returns to the earth in Revelation Chapter 19.

5). Because of the relationship between the Passover and the death of the firstborn with respect to rulership it provides the key to the final events that bring us to Armageddon.

a). And this is because Passover is the first of 7 feasts given as a prophetic calendar to Israel – a calendar that begins with the death of the firstborn and ends with the Millennial Kingdom, as pictured in the feast of Tabernacles.

b). And so the fulfillment of the feasts between Passover and Tabernacles must be completed within the additional 75 days seen at the end of Daniel Chapter 12 leading us to the complete end of 2600 years of Gentile domination and on into the Millennial Kingdom.

c). The detail of this though will have to wait until next time – if the Lord is willing.