

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 18 August 2025. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Greatest Revival in History

Matthew 24:9-14

In the late 1800's, a Baptist pastor named Albert Simpson was interviewed by a reporter from the *New York Journal*. The reporter knew of Simpson's heart for reaching the poor and neglected immigrants in New York City with the Gospel. He knew of his passion for sending missionaries to heathen lands. He also knew of Simpson's firm belief in the coming Rapture, followed by a seven-year Tribulation period, and then the return of Christ to earth to set up His 1,000-year Kingdom. For a while, the reporter asked Simpson questions about the missionary society that he had established; but then, he changed the subject, and asked Simpson the question that was *really* on his mind. He said, **"Do you know when the Lord is coming back?"** Simpson's answer was, "Yes. And I will tell you, *if* you promise to print just what I say, references and all." The reporter agreed, and got his pencil and notebook ready. Simpson said, "Put this down...**'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come'**—**Matthew 24:14.**" Simpson then asked, "Have you written down the reference?" The reporter said, "Yes. What more?" Simpson's reply was, "Nothing more."¹

The reporter thought about what Simpson had said; and then he asked a clarifying question. He said, "Do you mean to say you believe that when the Gospel has been preached to all nations, Jesus will return?" Simpson's reply was, "Just that." The reporter then said, "I think I begin to see...the motive of this movement." Dr. Simpson replied, "Then you see more than some of the doctors of divinity."²

Before Christ returned to Heaven, He commissioned His followers to take the Gospel to the uttermost part of the earth; and for 2,000 years, believers have been doing just that. Now, we cannot *make* Christ return any sooner than the time that God has appointed; yet, we do know that before Christ returns to earth, the Gospel *will* finally reach every last tribe and nation. The question is: *Who* will finish the monumental task of taking the Gospel to every last tribe and nation? Will it be the saints of this present church age? Will we have the privilege of being there when every last kindred is reached? No. It will be *another* body of believers, who will pick up where we left off. In the last seven years before Christ returns to earth, God will raise up an army of believers to take His Gospel throughout the world; and these believers will face the most horrendous persecution that the world has ever seen. Yet, through their faithful witness, the Gospel will finally reach every last nook and cranny of the globe.

This morning, we will be diving deeper into **Matthew 24**; and we will be learning more about the events that will unfold during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation period. Now, we who have come to know Christ during this church age will *not* be here during the Tribulation, because we will be raptured out of this world just before the Tribulation begins. However, this doesn't mean that Jesus' prophecies about the Tribulation period don't apply to us. As we will

see, they very much apply to us, because it is through *our* witness in this church age that those who follow us in the Tribulation period will come to know the Lord, and carry on the work that began 2,000 years ago. That is what we will be talking about in this morning's message, which I've entitled ***The Greatest Revival in History.***

Read Matthew 24:9-14.

I. The torture of believers (v. 9)

In last week's message, we saw what the Apostle Paul revealed about the Rapture. We saw, in **1 Thessalonians 4**, that in the twinkling of an eye, Christ will catch up all the believers of this church age to Himself. We then saw, in **Daniel 9, Revelation 11 and 12**, and **Matthew 24**, that there will be a time of great Tribulation immediately after the Rapture, which will last for seven years. We also saw, in **Revelation 6**, that the Tribulation period will begin with a period of global "peace," under the patronage of a charming politician called the Antichrist. However, this "peace" will be false, and brief. Soon, devastating global war will break out; and then global, economic collapse, and famine; and then deadly pestilence, which will kill ¼ of the earth's population. Then there will be a stupendous earthquake, which will rock the entire globe. Yet, all these judgments will be merely the ***"beginning of sorrows."***

Now, after such unimaginable calamities, one may wonder, "How could it possibly get worse?" However, it will get *much* worse; and for the believers who will be living at that time, it will be particularly severe. Let's read **verse 9** again. **(Read Matthew 24:9.)** In this verse, Jesus makes it clear that the persecution that Tribulation believers will endure will *not* be localised. There won't be some nations where the persecution is severe, while other nations are more peaceful. No, the persecution will be *severe, and universal*. Jesus said, ***"ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."***

Now, persecution of believers is certainly nothing new. Jesus assured the Apostles that ***"in the world ye shall have tribulation."*** However, Jesus says that one of the distinctive signs of His return will be an *intense, universal* hatred of believers, such as has never been seen before. Why will it be so intense? Because when the Rapture happens, and the believers of this church age are taken out of this world, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit will be removed, as well. Now, please don't misunderstand: the Holy Spirit will *still* convict sinners of their sin, and draw them to Christ; but He will no longer restrain evil in the world, as He does now. If you think the world as we know it is evil, you haven't seen anything! In **2 Thessalonians 2:7** the Apostle Paul wrote, ***"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth* ("restrains") *will let* (or "restrain"), *until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed."*** Right now, the Holy Spirit is

restraining evil far more than we realise; but when He *stops* restraining evil, the world will go insane! Not only that, but ***“that Wicked”*** (the Antichrist) will then make his debut on the world stage.

And *that*, brethren, is what will make the persecution of believers so severe during the Tribulation—the presence of Satan’s man, the Antichrist. He will be Satan’s ***“seed”***—the one that God foretold all the way back in the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve fell. He is called by many different names in Scripture; and one of them is ***“the idol shepherd.”***

Read Zechariah 11:15-17.

In this passage, Zechariah foretold of a man whom he called the ***“foolish shepherd.”*** This man is also called the ***“man of sin,”*** the ***“little horn,”*** the ***“prince that shall come,”*** the ***“son of perdition,”*** the ***“Beast,”*** ***“that Wicked,”*** and the ***“Antichrist.”*** At first, the Jews will believe this man to be their Messiah; but he will *not* lead, guide, and protect the flock. Instead, he will rule with force and cruelty over Israel, and over the whole world. The Antichrist’s cruel character is chillingly revealed in **verse 16**, where Zechariah says that he will not ***“visit”*** the sheep that are ***“cut off,”*** nor ***“seek the young one,”*** nor ***“heal that that is broken,”*** nor ***“feed”*** those who are ***“standing still.”*** Instead, he will ***“eat the flesh”*** of the people of Israel, like a ravenous beast. He will also make war against believers in Jesus with fierce malignity, and will overcome them. He will be the most merciless tyrant that Israel (and the world) has ever known. He will be just the opposite of the Lord Jesus, who seeks the lost, heals the sick, binds up the broken-hearted, and sets the prisoner free!

Now, you’ll notice that in **verse 17**, the LORD calls the Antichrist by yet another name—the ***“idol shepherd.”*** He will be called ***“idol shepherd”*** because he will, at the mid-point of the Tribulation, erect an image of himself in the Holy of Holies of the Temple in Jerusalem, and demand that the world worship him as God; and because of his blasphemy, God will smite him in some way. Zechariah says that the ***“foolish shepherd”*** will suffer a serious wounding, in which his arm will be ***“dried up,”*** and his right eye will be ***“utterly darkened”*** (blinded). The word ***“dried up”*** has the idea of “withering.” This immobilising of the Antichrist’s right arm, and the blinding of his right eye, may be the result of an assassination attempt, from which he will recover. What we do know is that his recovery will be so remarkable, that it will appear ***“miraculous.”*** **Revelation 13:3-4** says, ***“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power***

unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

By the way, is it any coincidence that many Rock stars and celebrities all over the world cover their right eye with their hand, or with some other object, in their photo ops, music videos, and performances? This esoteric symbolism is also flashed by politicians, industrial leaders, and other rich and powerful elites all over the world. This is, undoubtedly, a coded statement of their allegiance to the coming Antichrist (whether they are fully aware of it or not). No wonder hatred of Christians is intensifying all over the world! Satan's minions are being groomed and prepared to make war against the saints during the time of the Great Tribulation!

II. The treachery of friends and family (v. 10)

(Read Matthew 24:10 again.) The Bible tells us, in **Revelation 13**, that when the Antichrist begins his reign of terror, he will ***"make war with the saints, and... overcome them."*** Bible believers will be considered enemies of the one-world government, economy, and religion; and they will be rounded up and murdered by beheading. We don't know for sure how early in the Tribulation the "mark of the Beast" will be mandated; but probably even *prior* to the implementation of the mark, believers will be arrested simply for believing the Bible. And where will this leave families? Families will be faced with a choice. Will they follow the Antichrist, and live? Or will they follow Jesus, and die? There will be no in between. Those who choose to follow Antichrist will be obliged to turn in their relatives who refuse to take the mark; *and they will* turn them in. It will be a time of betrayal such as the world has never seen. The prophet Micah foretold of this mass betrayal 700 years before Christ.

Read Micah 7:1-6.

You may remember, from our study of **Matthew 12**, that Jesus specifically quoted **Micah 7:6**, and applied it to the future Tribulation period. During the Tribulation, the ***"good man"*** will, truly, be ***"perished out of the earth"***; and demonic treachery will reign. The word ***"perished"*** is based on the Hebrew word *avad*, which can mean to "perish" or to "vanish." Millions of saints will literally vanish from the face of the earth just before the Tribulation begins; and those who place their faith in Jesus *during* the Tribulation will be hunted down and killed. Once the "mark of the beast" system is in place, the tracking, surveillance, and mind control of those who have taken the mark will be so complete, and so pervasive, that those who took the mark will literally have no *ability* to change their minds, and decide to follow Jesus; and

they will also have no choice but to betray their loved ones who have refused the mark.

Now, again, the betrayal of Christians by friends and loved ones is nothing new. For 2,000 years now, believers in Jesus have been betrayed by loved ones—especially in times of fierce persecution. Even in our free society, *all* of us have been abandoned, or emotionally “stabbed in the back,” by friends and loved ones who don’t share our faith in the Lord Jesus. However, the sobering reality is that if we were all placed into the Tribulation period right now, most of our unbelieving friends and loved ones wouldn’t just *emotionally* betray us; they would *betray us unto death*. Even in the most fiercely totalitarian countries today, there are still some friends and relatives who are sympathetic toward their Christian loved ones, and who won’t turn them in; but such will not be the case during the Tribulation. Those who take the mark, and follow the Antichrist, will show no pity toward their believing loved ones. But why? Why will people be so treacherous? Well, this brings us to the next point.

III. The trickery of false prophets (v. 11)

(Read Matthew 24:11 again.) As we have already seen, there will, during the Tribulation, be a great betrayal of Christians by friends and loved ones. But why will this betrayal be so pervasive? Why will there be a total lack of pity from those who have taken the mark? Because during the Tribulation, there will be *satanic deception* such as the world has never seen before. For one thing, the Antichrist’s right-hand man, the **false prophet**, will dazzle the world with satanic “miracles.” In **2 Thessalonians 2**, Paul said that the coming of that “Wicked One,” the Antichrist, will be ***“with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”*** Now, we know that multitudes *will* respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and *will* believe on Jesus; but the overwhelming majority of mankind will be sucked in by Satan’s delusions. When the false prophet says that the followers of Jesus need to be eliminated, the overwhelming majority of mankind will agree.

Read Revelation 13:11-18 / 14:9-11.

For many decades, the world has been being groomed for the deception of the Antichrist. For example, a Scottish occultist named **Benjamin Creme** claimed, for years, that a man whom he called Maitreya would soon appear as a “World Teacher,” and lead mankind into the age of Aquarius. He claimed that we *all* have a universal force in us, called the “christ spirit”; but he said that the Maitreya would be a *highly*

evolved soul—the *ultimate* christ—the “Jesus” of the Christians, the Mahdi of the Muslims, the fifth Buddha for the Buddhists, and the Messiah of the Jews. Although Creme died in 2016, his words were taken seriously by the media, and even by international leaders. It will undoubtedly be *this* kind of satanic lie that Satan will use to deceive the world. You’ll note that John said that Satan’s “prophet” will have **“two horns like a lamb,”** yet will **“speak as a dragon.”** In other words, he will say things that sound sweet and kind, somewhat like what Jesus would have said. He will *imitate* Christ; but his real nature will be like that of a “dragon.” In other words, the real power behind the false prophet will be the devil. Just as the crowds who listened to Hitler’s speeches were mesmerized, and only a few souls in the crowd were able to resist his spell, so relatively few will be able to resist the deception of the Beast, and his talking image. The **“image of the beast”** will undoubtedly be some kind of AI-generated robot, which will appear incredibly real, and sentient, and able to give commands; but it will be nothing but a demonic tool.

However, the scariest part about the satanic delusion of the Antichrist is the mark itself. As we saw in **Revelation 14**, there will be no going back for those who take the mark. They will be irrevocably damned. But why? First of all, because the Holy Spirit will no longer draw or convict them. They will have made their choice to follow Satan; and God will confirm that decision. It may also be that the “mark” will be a microchip under the skin, which will subject them to a “mind control” so powerful, that they will no longer be able to reason together with God. Worse yet, it may be that the genetic codes of those who take the mark will actually be altered, so that they will no longer be fully human! For years, transhumanists have been pushing to do a “humanity 2.0” upgrade, by mixing animal DNA with humans; and many have proposed to do this by way of an injection and microchip. If this be the case, those who take the mark will not be redeemable, since Jesus died to redeem *men*, not human-animal hybrids!

My friend, if you have not been saved, and you are putting off receiving Christ as Saviour, don’t flatter yourself that you will receive Christ *after* the Rapture. The deception of the Antichrist will be extremely strong, and difficult to resist. Believe on Christ today, while you have the chance! **“Now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation.”**

IV. The turpitude of society (v. 12)

(Read Matthew 24:12 again.) In Psalm 2, King David gave us a description of the future Tribulation period when he said, **“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed** (Christ), **saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”** During the Tribulation period, mankind will finally get what he has

always wanted—and that is a society without God! God will remove His hand of restraint, and will let men embrace their sinful desires wholesale, without His interference. However, men will soon find how horrible a society without God really is! People will become unspeakably fierce and cruel, like Satan himself. The Apostle Paul prophesied that as Christ's return draws nearer, men will become increasingly fierce.

Read 2 Timothy 3:1-7, 12-13.

In this passage, Paul describes the last days as ***“perilous.”*** By the way, the Greek word for ***“perilous”*** is also translated as ***“exceeding fierce”*** in **Matthew 8:28**, to describe the maniac of Gadara. Other words that could be used are "dangerous," or "furious." The idea of the Greek word *chalepos* is that someone is “out-of-control,” demon-possessed, or full of fury or insanity. This is an apt description of our modern society, is it not? Our world is becoming more insane by the day. People delight in watching movies and video games in which cold-blooded murder is portrayed; and every day, more people are carrying out their murderous fantasies. Yet, as heartless and cruel as society is becoming, we are seeing only the tip of the iceberg. Lost men will reach their peak of fury during the Tribulation period. Already, we are seeing shocking selfishness and callousness in our society; yet, what we are seeing now is but a gentle prelude to the Tribulation. During the Tribulation, people will commit the grossest, lewdest acts without a wink of conscience. Average people will commit murder (or consent to murder) with shocking coldness. Men's consciences will be seared, and utterly insensitive to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, or their own consciences.

Folks, we may not be living in the Tribulation; but there is a clear warning for us here. To reject Christ, and to love self instead, is to slouch toward chaos, cruelty, and insanity. There is no love or soundness of mind without Jesus Christ, because He *is* Love and Wisdom incarnate. Don't buy into the "self love" lie! Love of self, and love of sin, literally drives people toward mental illness and insanity; and it makes even the hearts of Christians cold toward God and others. Christian, love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength! And if you aren't saved, run to Christ, and place your faith in Him!

V. The trial of believers (v. 13)

(Read Matthew 24:13 again.) Brethren, what we've just read applies not just to saints who will be living during the Tribulation, but to every believer in every age. Enduring to the end has always been an outward evidence that a person is a true child of God. It doesn't matter if you have to go through the peril of hardship and persecution, or through the “peril” of ease, comfort, and sinful pleasures: either way,

you must resist the world, and follow Christ. Enduring to the end is not a “good work” that *earns* you salvation; it is simply the preserving work of the Holy Spirit of God in your life. Every true believer *is* an “overcomer”!

Read 1 John 5:4-5.

My friend, if you are born again, you *are* an overcomer. That is your position. Judicially, you have *already* overcome the world, because Christ has freed you from the penalty of sin, and placed you in God’s family. However, “overcoming” is also a daily practice. *Because* you are an overcomer in position, you are now able, *in practice*, to overcome sin. This doesn’t mean that Christians never sin; but it does mean that Christians have the *ability* to overcome sin. By and large, a Christian’s life *will* show a pattern of overcoming sin. In contrast, a lost person cannot overcome, because he has no position in Christ, and no power of the Holy Spirit. During the Tribulation, false Christians will show their lack of faith in Christ by taking the mark: yet, even now, many people who profess to be saved often reveal their lost condition by throwing aside their mask of Christianity, returning to the world, and never looking back. My friend, does this describe *you*? Do you have only an empty profession of faith, which will not endure? Or do you have true faith in Christ, which gives you power to endure for Him?

VI. The teaching of the Gospel throughout the world (v. 14)

(Read Matthew 24:14.) So far, everything we’ve talked about this morning (and in last week’s message) has been very dark. The Tribulation will be an exceedingly dark time, in every way. Yet, there will also be a gleam of brilliant light during the Tribulation. Jesus says that during the Tribulation, the Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world. This is the same truth that Jesus conveyed in the parable of the mustard seed.

Read Matthew 13:31-32.

What is the meaning of this parable? Simply this: between the time of Christ’s first coming and His second coming, the **Gospel message** will grow, and spread to every last corner of the earth. It started as a small seed, when John the Baptist began to

preach the Gospel, and point people to Jesus; and its branches will continue to spread throughout this church age, and through the Tribulation period, until it has reached every last corner of the earth: and then Christ will come. Now, perhaps you're thinking, "Wait a minute, Pastor. What about the Rapture? If we Christians will disappear in the Rapture, how will the Gospel message be carried on during the Tribulation?" That's a good question: and God's Word gives us the answer. In **Revelation 11**, we are told that God will raise up two witnesses to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem for 1,260 days, right up to the mid-point of the Tribulation. Now, if their ministry will be exactly 3 ½ years (and it will), then there is only one conclusion: these two men will receive Christ as their Saviour *immediately after* the Rapture, and will be *immediately* commissioned by God to preach the Gospel. Like Saul of Tarsus, they will be rejecting Jesus one day, and become flaming witnesses for Jesus the next. But that's not all. God will also raise up an army of 144,000 Jewish men to preach the Gospel throughout the world. These men will be the "**firstfruits**" of God's harvest of souls during the Tribulation. In other words, they will be the first ones to believe on Christ during the Tribulation.

Read Revelation 7:1-10 / 14:1-5.

Brethren, we've learned much about the Tribulation period this morning; but what is the takeaway from all this? We won't be here during the Tribulation; so do these truths apply to us? You'd better believe it! You see, those 144,000 witnesses (and probably many other people, as well), won't get saved out of a vacuum. The reason they will *know* that Jesus is the Messiah, and that they just missed the Rapture, and that they need to repent and believe on Jesus, is that Christians had been faithfully proclaiming the Gospel message *before* the Rapture. When millions of Christians disappear from this earth, people all over the world will remember the things that they had heard about the Gospel, and about the Rapture; and they will finally believe, and be saved. God will then use these 144,000 men to lead the greatest revival in history. Christian, your labour for Christ is never in vain. God may use your witness not only to save some souls on *this* side of the Rapture, but on the *other* side of the Rapture, too. Don't be weary in well doing! In due time, you will reap, if you faint not.

Conclusion: Folks, the Gospel that will be preached during the Tribulation is the same Gospel that is being preached today. The "Gospel" is the "good news" that Christ died on the cross for our sins, and was buried, and rose again the third day, conquering death for us, so that we might be saved. It is not by any good work of our own that we are saved; it is only by the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. This reminds me of something that happened on Valentine's Day in 1985, when I was in second class. On Valentine's Day that year, my class had a contest to see who could make the most creative Valentine's Day card box; and I won first prize. However, it wasn't *my* work at all. You see, my older brother (who is an artist) had stayed up late the night before to *make* that box for me. It was *my big brother* who took an old

box, and made it to look like an old-fashioned post truck; and it was *his* work that won me that prize! I just had to claim it as mine, and present it to the teacher. And so it is with salvation. You can't earn the "prize" of eternal life by being a good person, or by being religious; you must *receive* the work that your elder Brother, Jesus Christ, did *for* you on the cross, by repenting of your sin, and placing your trust in *Him*. He paid the price of your sin; and if you will receive His gift of salvation, and claim it as your own, He will give you eternal life. If you've never believed on Christ, please do so today!

¹ Robert J. Morgan, *Preacher's Sourcebook of Creative Sermon Illustrations* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007), p. 687.

² *Ibid*, pp. 687-688.