

## “Urgency for the Hour” Matthew 24 & various passages

Sunday 1/12/20 – Billy Humphrey

**Mat 24:4-8** And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 "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. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 "All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9"Then they will hand you over to be persecuted and will kill you. You will be hated by all the nations because of my name. 10 Then many will be led into sin, and they will betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will appear and deceive many, 12 and because lawlessness will increase so much, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the person who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

### I. Urgency for the Hour

A. One of the distinctives of the New Testament authors was that they lived with an expectation of the return of the Lord. They preached, prayed, and pastored people with the Lord's return and the unfolding of the Kingdom of God in view.

B. Believers in every age are to be instructed by the apostle's example and similarly set our hearts toward the return of the Lord and the unfolding of His kingdom in fullness.

C. When we live with the same expectations that the first Church had our hearts are filled with urgency for the hour in which we live.

### II. Understanding Biblical Signs

A. In Matthew 24, Jesus identified seven specific global trends that He called the beginning of sorrows (birth pangs). These trends are the signs that denote the beginning phase of the birthing of His Kingdom in the earth in fullness.

B. In order for these trends to be identifiable as signs in any generation it is necessary that they would fulfill certain criteria.

1. They must be global in scale.
2. They must be identifiable over time.
3. They must be unique in effect.

C. According to Jesus the generation in which these trends are discernable is the generation that will see His second coming and the Kingdom of God birthed in the earth (Mat 24:34).

D. Based on the signs that Jesus gave us and the way those signs are now manifest in the earth, I believe that we are right now living in the time of the “beginning of birth pangs.”

### III. Birth Pangs as a Symbol

A. Just as natural birth pangs prepare the environment of a woman’s body to birth a child, these birth pangs prepare the environment of the earth to usher in the return of Christ and birth the Kingdom of God.

1. Each birth pang is specifically designed by the Lord and released upon the planet in order to cause the perfect natural and spiritual context for end time events.

2. By the time the Kingdom is birthed in the earth, righteousness and wickedness will have been revealed in amazing, stark contrast. Lawlessness and righteousness will manifest in clarity and opposition to one another. The necessity for the release of the justice of God will be easily recognizable in light of the manifestation of wickedness in the earth.

3. Just as with a woman in labor, the eschatological birth pangs will start off almost indiscernibly, but within a short period of time they become obvious and continuous. They increase in intensity while the intervals between them decrease. They are designed to create the proper environment for the child to be born.

B. Over the last 100 years the events that Jesus described as the beginning of birth pangs have become very discernable in light of the rest of human history.

C. The Bible promises that the Lord will “shake everything that can be shaken” in this age. This shaking will culminate with the Lord “overthrowing the thrones of all nations” and establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth (Heb 12:26-28, Hag 2:6, 20). The beginning of birth pangs are the tremors that signal that the “great shaking” is coming.

### IV. Four Admonitions

A. “Take heed that no one deceive you” – Jesus speaks directly to the church telling us that we must not allow ourselves to be deceived, specifically by those who come and claim to be Him. The safeguard to keep us from deception is to be grounded in truth. Those who will be swept into deception at the end of the age will have been susceptible because they did not love the truth (2 Thes 2:9 – 10, Rom 2:7-8).

B. "See that you are not troubled" – While the events of the world will be troubling and fearful and many will be adversely affected, Jesus' admonition to the church is to be stable and unafraid even in the time of the greatest crisis the planet will ever experience. This can only happen if our hearts are governed by His love and His peace.

C. "All these things must come to pass" – There is absolute certainty that the beginning of birth pangs will take place and will not be averted. They are guaranteed and therefore the people of God must prepare themselves to stand un-offended in the love of God and in unison with the Holy Spirit through this unprecedented time of trial and preparation.

D. "The end is not yet" – Though the birth pangs are difficult they are only a preparatory phase that will ultimately prepare the context of the earth for the Great Tribulation.