

The **LAST** Generation

Prophecy Teaching Series

Pastor Dan Betzer / First Assembly of God / Fort Myers, Florida 2013
Part Four / January 30, 2013

1 **Matthew 24:34** Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass, till all these**
2 **things be fulfilled.**

3 – Jesus Christ
4

5 Review of Part One:

6 We discussed potential dangers in spotlighting prophecy:

- 7 • Always looking for “some new thing”
- 8 • Taking our eyes off the King, Jesus Himself
- 9 • Making prophecy conclusions the sole reason for fellowship among believers

10 We discussed the fulfilled prophetic scriptures which alone make the Bible unique and
11 supernatural among alleged “holy books.”

12 And, finally, we discussed the setting for Jesus “Mount of Olives Discourse on Prophecy”
13

14 Review of Part Two:

15 We discussed Jesus’ warnings in Matthew 24: Religious deception, wars, natural
16 disasters, hatred and betrayal and a cold, indifferent church. We also briefly discussed
17 the impending Rapture of the Church.
18

19 Review of Part Three:

20 And, in our last session, we studied Jesus’ warnings of the Tribulation period, seven years
21 of God’s wrath upon this world.
22

23 Today we study Jesus’ own prediction of His second coming, when He actually comes to
24 this earth.
25

26 (Remember the rapture and the second coming are two separate events, separated by the
27 Tribulation. At the rapture, we meet Jesus in the air. At the second coming, Jesus
28 actually and literally returns to this earth.)

THE CARCASS AND THE VULTURES

1
2
3 Before moving on to Jesus foretelling His second coming (advent), I feel I must touch on
4 a dramatic warning given by Jesus that we certainly are seeing come true in this
5 generation. Matthew 24:28 **For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be**
6 **gathered together.** The word “eagles” here is better translated “vultures.” They are
7 known in the Middle East as “carrion kites.) An ancient proverb, quoted in the Talmud,
8 said that a vulture in Babylon could see a carcass in Palestine. This is an exaggeration,
9 of course. But it is fact that these scavengers glide quietly through the skies looking
10 below for decaying carcasses upon which they may feed.

11
12 When the body of Christ, which is the Church, no longer contains divine life, when it
13 abandons the Living Word, when fountains of eternal waters no longer flow from within
14 it, when true signs and wonders have ceased, when liturgy replaces the ministry of the
15 Holy Spirit, it quickly dies—and the cultures come from everywhere.

16
17 The cults are unable to generate any life-giving attributes for society and able only to feed
18 on the dying or dead remains of something that once lived. Jesus said that shortly before
19 He returned, the vultures would gather around the carcass.

20
21 How does a cult begin? Why is it attractive to so many? And why is it so deadly? For
22 all my over half-century in the ministry, I have been passionately devoted to the fact that
23 the Bible is LITERALLY TRUE—that it is the inspired Word of God, the revealed mind
24 of God to mankind - complete within itself and requiring nor approving of any new
25 “revelation.” The apostles taught that God’s Word was valid. It was confirmed again by
26 the Church Fathers. The Reformers spread the Word again. Historic Christianity stands
27 upon this basic premise.

28
29 Those who doubt that concept become the carcasses for the vultures. A man who will
30 not stand for something is quite likely to fall for almost anything. The doubters become
31 mere ventriloquists’ puppets for Satan’s first lie, “Yes, hath God said?” (Genesis 3:1)

32
33 The centrality of Christ is the key issue. Life’s biggest question is still, “What think ye
34 of Christ? Whose son is He? (Matthew 22:42). Satan’s lie is that “all roads lead to
35 Rome.” That is just simply not true any more than my saying “Highway 41 will take you
36 to Immokalee.” Note Jesus’ claim in John 14:6: **Jesus saith unto him, I am the way,**
37 **the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

38
39 I am emphasizing this in this study for the following chilling reason: There is within the
40 ranks of evangelical churches in this country a subtle and steady drawing away from our

1 Lord's command to take the Gospel to the whole world. Even in our own Assemblies of
2 God fellowship this is true. I was recently asked to go to one of our large cities for a
3 missions brunch in which 29 Assemblies of God pastors were asked by their leadership to
4 come and speak about the world harvest - missions. Only 6 pastors felt it was important
5 enough to come. For the past five years, missions giving in our Assemblies of God
6 fellowship has been stalled at \$180 million (pathetic for nearly 13,000 churches coast-to-
7 coast). But last year (as I just learned last week) that figure dropped another 8.5 million
8 dollars! While our numbers are growing, faster than any other church in the nation
9 (speaking of our national fellowship), missions giving is plummeting.

10
11 Why? There is in our fellowship a "me-me-me" concept. We once had a "Women's
12 Missionary Council" encompassing the ladies of the Assemblies churches. The word
13 "missionary" has been replaced. The national leader explained, "We are now going to
14 minister to ourselves!" Shocking!

15
16 I will tell you that one of the most dramatic signs that this could be the last generation is
17 this: **THE VULTURES ARE FEEDING ON THE CARCASS OF WHAT WERE**
18 **ONCE WORLD-CHANGING CHURCHES AND THOSE CHURCHES ARE**
19 **BECOMING RELIGIOUS CIVIC CLUBS.** Mark my words on this: this is the most
20 dangerous thing now facing the Assemblies of God!

21
22 Now, let's hear what Jesus said about His second coming. Hundreds of years prior to
23 Jesus' teaching on the Mount of Olives, the great Old Testament prophet **Zechariah** gave
24 a dramatic prophecy regarding Jesus' return:

25
26 Zech. 14:1-4

27 **Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of**
28 **thee. [2] For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall**
29 **be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go**
30 **forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.**
31 **[3] Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought**
32 **in the day of battle.**

33 **[4] And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before**
34 **Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof**
35 **toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half**
36 **of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.**
37

1 I have had the privilege of spending a lot of time - perhaps as much as thirty days - during my lifetime on the Mount of Olives. When you consider the Mount of Olives, don't think of a mountain such as Everest or Pikes Peak. This is a flattened, rounded ridge just east of Jerusalem rising to about 2600 feet above sea level. It is about a mile in length (from north to south). Near to the foot of the ridge, on the western side, one will find the Garden of Gethsemane, flanked against the Kidron Valley, which separates the eastern wall of Jerusalem from Olivet. (The Kidron Valley is also known as The Valley of Jehoshaphat.) The Mount of Olives is a substantial ridge and to think it will split in half (north and south) is a mind-boggling thought to those who have explored it.

2
3 Here are Jesus' own words concerning the day in which He physically returns to earth:

4
5 Matthew 24:29-44

6 **Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the**
7 **moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of**
8 **the heavens shall be shaken: [30] And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in**
9 **heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of**
10 **man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31] And he shall**
11 **send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his**
12 **elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. [32] Now learn a**
13 **parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye**
14 **know that summer is nigh: [33] So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things,**
15 **know that it is near, even at the doors. [34] Verily I say unto you, This generation**
16 **shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. [35] Heaven and earth shall pass away,**
17 **but my words shall not pass away.**

18 **[36] But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but**
19 **my Father only. [37] But as the days of Noe (Noah) were, so shall also the coming of**
20 **the Son of man be. [38] For as in the days that were before the flood they were**
21 **eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe**
22 **entered into the ark, [39] And knew not until the flood came, and took them all**
23 **away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. [40] Then shall two be in the**
24 **field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [41] Two women shall be grinding at**
25 **the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.**

26 **[42] Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. [43] But**
27 **know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief**
28 **would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be**
29 **broken up. [44] Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the**
30 **Son of man cometh.**

THE "SIGN"

Verse 30, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven..." The phrase "Son of man" has to do with the fact that God became a man and dwelt among us for 33 ½ years - Jesus Himself. But what is the sign? J. Vernon McGee has an interesting observation on this:

"I speculate. Back in the Old Testament, the nation Israel was given the glory, *the shekinah presence* of God. No other nation or people have ever had that, nor does the church today have it. The *shekinah* glory rested over the tabernacle and later the temple in Jerusalem. But because of Israel's sin (idolatry), the *shekinah* glory left the nation. When Christ came the first time (2000 years ago), He laid aside, not His deity, but His prerogative of deity, His glory. Although John says, "...we beheld His glory..." (John 1:14) because there were times when it (the *shekinah* glory) broke through. However, at His second coming, I believe the *shekinah* glory will hover over the earth before He breaks through, and that will be the sign of the Son of man in heaven."

What a shock that would be to this earth's way of living. There seems to be no "bottom" to the pit of iniquity in this world system. Remember that before Jesus returns to this earth, there will have been SEVEN YEARS OF TRIBULATION, during which man's depravity will have sunk to even deeper and humiliating lows. Then, suddenly, something changes in the atmosphere. There will apparently be an awareness of the human condition and a looking for hope. It will be too late for fallen mankind, of course, but then at the Battle of Armageddon something earth-shaking takes place:

Rev. 19:11-16

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. [12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. [13] And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. [15] And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [16] And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

This passage sets forth the beginning of the second coming of Christ to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. He comes from Heaven as the Warrior-Messiah (2 Thes. 1:7-8)

1 **And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed**
2 **from heaven with his mighty angels, [8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them**
3 **that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:) to**
4 **establish truth and justice (Psalm 96:13 Before the Lord: for he cometh, for he**
5 **cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the**
6 **people with his truth.), to judge the nations and to wage war against evil (John 5:30**
7 **I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just;**
8 **because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.)**
9 **This is the event for which the faithful of all generations have waited!**

10 11 THE ARMIES

12
13 Verse 14. The armies who return with Christ include ALL the saints who are already in
14 heaven. Their white clothing reveals their heavenly status.

15 16 CHRIST'S ANGER

17
18 While I love songs with such phrases as "gentle Jesus, meek and mild," and "let the
19 beauty of Jesus be seen in me," I am always cognizant of the fact that, like diamonds,
20 Jesus has MANY FACETS TO HIS PERSONALITY. One of them is incredible anger -
21 anger which He will most certainly demonstrate when He returns. When He returns to
22 this earth, He will punish the wicked nations. To "rule them with a rod or iron" means
23 He will simply destroy them (Psalm 2:9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
24 thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.) "He treadeth the winepress"
25 indicates the awful extent of His judgment:

26
27 Isaiah 64:1-2 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come
28 down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, [2] As when the melting
29 fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine
30 adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

31
32 Rev. 14:19

33 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and
34 cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

35 36 WHAT IS "THE SUPPER OF OUR GREAT GOD?"

37
38 Rev. 19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice,
39 saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves
40 together unto the supper of the great God;

1 This is such a graphic image portrayed in holy writ: This refers to the finality of the
2 Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in
3 the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.) The destruction of God's enemies will be so great
4 that it will require a multitude of birds to clean up the battlefield. (Remember that Israel
5 is part of the birds migration annually - multiplied millions of birds fly back and forth
6 over the Land). This is called "the supper of our great God" for God will provide
7 abundant food for birds of prey. The scene is one of judgment against the terrible cruelty
8 and evil of this world.
9

10 Jeremiah, perhaps more than any other sacred writer, gave us some comprehension of the
11 enormity of God's anger when He pays back those nations who perpetuated Islam in the
12 last days:
13

14 Jeremiah 51:33-44

15 [33] For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is
16 like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her
17 harvest shall come. [34] Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he
18 hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a
19 dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out. [35] The
20 violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion
21 say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say. [36]
22 Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance
23 for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry. [37] And Babylon
24 shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing,
25 without an inhabitant. [38] They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as
26 lions' whelps. [39] In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them
27 drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the
28 Lord. [40] I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he
29 goats. [41] How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth
30 surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! [42] The sea
31 is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.
32 [43] Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man
33 dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby. [44] And I will punish Bel in
34 Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up:
35 and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon
36 shall fall.
37

38 It is difficult for me to comprehend how some of my good Christian friends still believe
39 the Church of Jesus Christ is going to go through this incredible time of God's anger.
40 This is not the "blessed hope" of which Paul wrote to Titus! Thank God for the truth of

1 the pre-tribulation rapture of the saints of God! I am looking for that “blessed hope”
2 even in these waning years (or less) of my lifetime.

3
4 **BE ON THE WATCH!**

5
6 Matthew 24:36-44

7 **But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my**
8 **Father only. [37] But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of**
9 **man be. [38] For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and**
10 **drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the**
11 **ark, [39] And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also**
12 **the coming of the Son of man be. [40] Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be**
13 **taken, and the other left. [41] Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall**
14 **be taken, and the other left.**

15 **[42] Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. [43] But**
16 **know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief**
17 **would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be**
18 **broken up. [44] Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the**
19 **Son of man cometh.**

20
21 Yes, I am fully anticipating the Rapture of the Church - but I am not about to attempt to
22 set a date for it. Look carefully at the above scriptures. Jesus said only God Himself
23 knows the date and time. But let us remember this passage is not specifying the time of
24 the Rapture. It also refers as well to THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

25
26 But there are signs, He said. What are the days of Noah? There is a two-fold meaning
27 here: In the days of Noah people were pursuing normal life (eating, drinking, marrying
28 and giving in marriage). But Genesis also reminds us of the iniquity of the people:

29
30 Genesis 6:11-13

31 **The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. [12]**
32 **And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had**
33 **corrupted his way upon the earth. [13] And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh**
34 **is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I**
35 **will destroy them with the earth.**

36
37 People were blasé about life - eating, drinking (this speaks of consumption of water to
38 hydrate the body, not boozing it up), marrying, etc. Nothing wrong with those things
39 certainly. But they were also violent. The current battle in this country over gun
40 control is one of the evidences of violence in the land. (I do not write here of favor or

1 dis-favor over the issue.) Even in our neck of the woods, murder is common - two a
2 month at the current rate, plus the fights, domestic battles, rapes, etc. We certainly live
3 in a violent land. **BUT IT IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE VIOLENCE THAT**
4 **WILL OCCUR JUST BEFORE THE SECOND COMING.**

In Noah's day, life went on as normal even as Noah was building the massive ark - the only way of escape or redemption. One of my all-time favorite cartoons - which unfortunately I could not find for these notes - shows two dinosaurs watching Noah's ark floating away. One of the dinosaurs turns to the other and says, "Oh man, was that today?"

5 The word "watch" employed here by Jesus is the Greek word "gregoreo" which is a
6 present imperative, indicating **A CONSTANT VIGIL AT THE PRESENT TIME.** My
7 friend, we do not know when the rapture will happen. We just simply must not assume
8 for any reason that it could not happen now - today! Jesus explicitly states that His
9 coming for the saints living before the tribulation will be at an unexpected time and
10 without warning. He declares that they will not "know not" about the actual time, but
11 that He will return at a time when they "think not that the Son of man cometh - vs. 44.
12 This clearly points to an element of surprise, amazement, and unexpectedness for the
13 faithful at this particular return of Christ.

14
15 As far as the Second Coming is concerned, Christ's return to earth will be as unexpected
16 as the coming of a thief who breaks into a home. **THUS THE DEVOTED DISCIPLE**
17 **OF CHRIST MUST BE READY AT ANY TIME FOR THE LORD'S APPEARANCE.**

18 19 **THE WISE CHRISTIAN TODAY**

20
21 Matthew 24 closes with our Lord's parable (an earthly story with a heavenly and eternal
22 meaning):

23 24 Matthew 24:45-51

25 **Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his**
26 **household, to give them meat in due season? [46] Blessed is that servant, whom his**
27 **lord when he cometh shall find so doing. [47] Verily I say unto you, That he shall**
28 **make him ruler over all his goods. [48] But and if that evil servant shall say in his**
29 **heart, My lord delayeth his coming; [49] And shall begin to smite his fellowservants,**
30 **and to eat and drink with the drunken; [50] The lord of that servant shall come in a**
31 **day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, [51] And**

1 shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall
2 be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

3
4 Any professed believer, living in un-repented sin, who believes that Christ will delay His
5 coming for a few years can be compared to the wicked servant. Such a person will feel
6 no impending threat that the Lord's return will overtake him or her. It is significant that
7 Jesus associates unfaithfulness and hypocrisy with the belief and desire that Christ will
8 delay His return.

9
10 A wonderful old song has this lyric:

11
12 *In these the closing days of time, what joy the glorious hope affords,*
13 *That soon, O wondrous truth sublime! He shall reign King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*

14
15 *He's coming soon, He's coming soon! With joy we welcome His returning.*
16 *It may be morn, it may be night or noon; We know He's coming soon.*

17
18
19
20

(Next week, I regret to tell you, I will be in Ohio where I will address the Assemblies of God ministers and staff workers of that district at their annual Ministers' Retreat. It will be held in Sandusky, where Darlene and I lived and pastored for nine years. While it will be a joy to see that place once again, and renew old acquaintances, I will miss being here. On Wednesday night, February 13th, we will resume with Part 5 of "The Last Generation." Matthew 25 will be our centerpiece. Jesus' words here regarding the Ten Virgins - Five Wise and Five Foolish, and His story of the responsibilities of us until He comes are just stunning. See you then.)