

Day 1

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Philippians 2:5-11 ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

- ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
- ⁷ but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
- ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!
- ⁹ Therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every name,
- ¹⁰ that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on earth and under the earth,
- ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Amen]

Signs of the End of the Age

¹ As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

 About 500 years BC during Ezra’s lifetime (Ezra 6:14-15) the temple was built (again). In 15 BC, Herod undertook a massive temple renovation project, not because he worshipped God, but to appease the Jews. Herod’s renovation project was not completed until 64 AD. The temple had much inlaid gold and polished wood throughout. Supposedly, when the sun reflected from the golden dome of the temple, it was blinding. Majestic!

² "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

 In 68-69 AD, the Jews began to revolt against the Romans. The revolt resulted in unparalleled devastation, including the destruction of the temple in 70-AD, which fulfilled Jesus’ prophecy. The Romans left what is now known as the Wailing Wall as a remembrance of the former temple. Josephus, an independent Jewish historian, wrote that during the destruction of Jerusalem the Romans set fire to the city and killed every Jew they found. Blood was running so deep in places that it actually extinguished some of the fires.

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"

 Imagine that you are on a broad plain and in the distance is a great mountain range. As you look at the mountain range you see peak after magnificent peak, some are crowned in white snow, others are jagged peaks of soaring rock pinnacles. It looks from your vantage point as if the peaks are in a line together – one massive wall of mountains. It isn’t until you actually get into the mountains that you discover that between the peaks are valleys of fast-moving streams and white-water rapids, plateaus, sheer cliffs, mountain meadows, stands of pine and quaking aspen, and rock slides. From your vantage point on the plain, the valleys were definitely hidden.

 Jesus begins to teach about periods of time, some of which are still future to us. He does not present them in chronological order. You could say that He was presenting the events as one viewed a mountain range from the vantage point of an adjacent plain. Events (mountain peaks) are actually separated by a broad valleys of intervening time.

⁵ Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many.

Q1. Do we know of any people throughout history who have claimed to “come in my name”?

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 Examples: an article published by the New Zealand Herald in December, 2017 provided a biography for each of “Seven men around the world who each claim to be Jesus Christ” [<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/seven-men-around-the-world-who-each-claim-to-be-jesus-christ/2W27IHL7PIQLTO5SFAPPAMN5HM/>]

⁷When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

⁸Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

Q2. When labor begins, is the mother-to-be assured of a quick, pain-free delivery?

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Q3. Why do you think Jesus used this metaphor of “birth pains”?

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⁹"You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.

Q4. Do you know of anyone in the New Testament, for example, who was flogged? Or witnessed to kings?

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Acts 5:40-42 [Flogged] ⁴⁰ [Gamaliel, a Pharisee and teacher of the law] . . . persuaded them [the Jewish Sanhedrin]. They called the apostles [Peter and ‘others’] in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. ⁴²Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 11:24-25 [Flogged] Five times I [Paul] received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,

Acts 24:1-2, 10, 24-26 [Witnessed to kings] Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. ² When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before [Roman Governor] Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. . . .

¹⁰ When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. . . .

²⁴ Several days later Felix . . . with his wife Drusilla . . . sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."

²⁶ At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

 Paul then witnessed to Governor Porcius Festus (Acts 25), King Agrippa and Bernice (Acts 26), Julius a centurion of the Roman Imperial Regiment (Acts 27), and, presumably, Roman officials, including members of Caesar’s household [Philippians 4:22].

Philippians 4:22 [Paul added this greeting in his letter to the Philippian church in Philippi] All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

Day 2

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

Q5. Does this apply to us? Or only to the Apostles in the New Testament?

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Q6. It seems that during our present time, the Gospel of Christ Jesus has been preached to every nation or “people group” in the world. What do you think this statement means?

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¹¹ Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

Q7. Do you think that this comforted His disciples?

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Q8. Have you ever experienced the work of the Holy Spirit? How do you know?

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¹² "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ¹³ All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Q9. Thinking about the note following verse three, as we now move from verse eleven to twelve did Jesus change “mountain ranges”? Is He continuing to teach about the disciples’ near future? Or about the disciples’ far distant future, which could be our present day.

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Q10. Jesus says that we must “stand firm to the end”. What will be our reward, if we obey and “stand firm”?

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Q11. Can you think of anyone, today, who hates Jesus or His Believers?

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Q12. Do you think the persecution... the hate between family members... as foretold in verses twelve and thirteen could ever actually happen?

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Day 3

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

¹⁴ "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' [Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11] standing where it [or he] does not belong -- let the reader understand -- then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Daniel 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven' [year period]. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.

Daniel 11:31 "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.

Daniel 12:11 "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days [about 3-½ years].

Q13. To what/whom is Jesus referring, with the phrase ‘the abomination that causes desolation’?

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Q14. Is Jesus referring to 70-A.D. (when Roman General Titus killed one million Jews and destroyed the temple) or 168-167 B.C. (when Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the temple) or a time that is still future to us?

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 “The *abomination* which caused *the desolation*, whereof Daniel prophesied, (Daniel 9:27,) signifies the Roman armies, with their standards, whereon the images of their idols were painted; which armies were an abomination to the Jews, on account of their idolatry, and caused desolation wherever they came. *Standing where it [does] not [belong]* — That is, in the territory of Jerusalem, generally termed holy ground. *Let [the reader] understand* — Let him who reads Daniel’s prophecy (for these seem to be the words of our Lord, and not of the evangelist [Mark]) understand, that the end of the city and sanctuary, with the ceasing of the sacrifice and oblation [offering] there predicted, is come. *Then let [those who are] in Judea flee to the mountains* — By Judea, here, we are to understand all the southern parts of Palestine, both the plain and the hill-countries, which, at this time, went by the name of Judea. By the mountains, we are to understand the countries on the east side of Jordan, especially those which, in the time of the war, were under the government of the younger Agrippa, to whom Claudius gave Batanea and Trachonitis, the tetrarchy of Philip, and Abilene, the tetrarchy of Lysanias. All these countries remain[ed] in their obedience to the Romans [and] the people who fled into them were safe.” [© Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments; <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/mark/13-14.htm>]

¹⁵ Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. ¹⁶ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.

Q15. It seems that Jesus is saying, “Run!” Why does Jesus suggest that the Jewish Believers go quickly?

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¹⁷ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!

Q16. Why will it be especially bad for “pregnant women and nursing mothers”?

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Day 4

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

¹⁸ Pray that this will not take place in winter, ¹⁹ because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now -- and never to be equaled again. ²⁰ If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.

Q17. Who are the “elect”?

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²¹ At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. ²² For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect -- if that were possible.

Q18. How would we discern a “false prophet” or a “false Christ”?

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1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵ and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

Q19. How can we tell if someone is a “false prophet” or a “false Christ”?

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Matthew 7:15-16 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them.

Q20. What did Jesus mean by “fruit”?

(Vs. Matt 7:16)

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2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

²³ So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

Q21. We who believe are saved by the gift of salvation through Christ Jesus. So, why would Jesus tell us to “be on your guard”?

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²⁴ "But in those days, following that distress, " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' [Isaiah 13:10; 34:4]

²⁶ "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

Q22. What does "gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens" mean to us?

²⁸ "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁰ I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

Q23. How would you explain the term "this generation"?

Day 5

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Q24. Is this a promise?

Q25. What does it mean to us and to the Bible?

John 1:1, 2, 14, & 17: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Q26. If you follow the progressive elaboration in the John passages, who is the Word?

The Day and Hour Unknown

³²“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

Q27. When a person in this world claims to know the date of the “end times”, should we consider his/her claim as truth?

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John 10:30 “I and the Father are One.”

Q28. If Jesus “and the Father are one”, why did Jesus say He did not know when He will return?

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³⁴It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁵“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back -- whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

Q29. In verse 35, who does “owner of the house” represent?

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Q30. Who do the “servants” represent? Who does “the one at the door” represent?

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Q31. If the “servants” and the doorkeeper represent Believers in Jesus, are we warned to never sleep?

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Q32. What is Jesus warning us to do?

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Day 6

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

 As Believers in Jesus, we are assured of eternal life in Heaven (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Q34. Are there daily preparations we can do to remain firmly anchored in Christ Jesus?

Q35. I thought that the Bible teaches that there is nothing that we can do to earn our way into Heaven. (Ephesians 2:8-9) What is Jesus teaching in this Mark passage? It sounds as if we are to continuously prepare? Is that the same as continuously earning our way?

Matthew 24:36-51

The Day and Hour Unknown

[Jesus is teaching,] ³⁶ "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

⁴⁵ "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Q36. Judgment! God is. Pure. Perfect. Pristine. Omnipotent. Omniscient. God cannot tolerate sin. Do we attempt to judge the Judge when we say ‘God is love’ and then wonder aloud at the loss of life depicted in the Old Testament?

Q37. Is it sinful for us to question the Bible? (How should a student-of-the-Bible resolve our questions?)

Q38. What is the role of Christ Jesus in this world?

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