

**A Synopsis on the End of the Church Age**  
**By Zin Yi, Date: 11/28/2002**

This article is to serve as an adjunct to “The End of the External Church” - available at <http://www.familyradio.com/cross/tract/church.htm> - and by no means is intended to serve as a comprehensive study on the vast and weighty topic of what is commonly referred to as the “Depart Out” teaching.

**Great Tribulation**

We are, at this very moment, living through the time of the “great tribulation,” discussed in the Olivet passages (“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives...”) - Mt. 24, Mk. 13, and Lk. 21. This would mean that indeed Satan, the “abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel the prophet” is standing in the “holy place” (Mt. 24:15), and “Jerusalem” has been “compassed with armies” (Lk. 21:20). That Satan would one day “stand in the holy place” was foreseen by God also in 2 Th. 2:4: “Who [Satan] opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that **he as God sitteth in the temple of God**, shewing himself that he is God” (cf. Isa. 14:12-15). The reference to his sitting “in the temple of God” is clearly a commentary on the “abomination of desolation” standing in the “**holy place**,” or, as we read in Mark 13:14, “**where it ought not.**”

**Old Testament church – a lesson for the New Testament church**

Parallel passages to the above recorded in the Old Testament direct us to carefully study the biblical history of Israel and Judah, the Old Testament “church” (Acts 7:38), in order to understand how God is to deal with the New testament era corporate body - for such passages serve to forewarn the true believers living in these the “latter days” of this most horrific of events (1 Cor. 10:6, 11):

But they set their **abominations** in the **house**, which is **called by my name**, to defile it. (Jer. 32:34)

Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast **defiled my sanctuary** with all thy **detestable things**, and with all thine **abominations**, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity. (Eze. 5:11)

He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the **great abominations** that the **house of Israel** committeth here, that I should go far off from **my sanctuary**?...**Therefore** will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them. (Eze. 8:6, 18;cf. vv. 5-18)

In Daniel 8 and 11, we read of a direct prophecy uttered against the New Testament church:

And it [little horn] waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and **the place of his sanctuary was cast down**. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the **transgression of desolation**, to give both the **sanctuary** and the **host** to be trodden under foot? (8:10-12)

And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall **pollute the sanctuary of strength**, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and **they shall place [nathan] the abomination** that maketh **desolate**. (11:31)

Christ in Mt. 24 reaffirms that the above prophecy is to take place sometime in the future, in New Testament era:

And Jesus went out, and departed from the **temple**: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the **temple**. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, **There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down**. (vv. 1, 2)

When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, **stand in the holy place**, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: (vv. 15, 16)

A look into Daniel 12, especially vs. 8-11 (noting vs. 11's reference to the "abomination that maketh desolate"), teaches us that the reign of Satan in the "temple of God" is that which is to occur in the last of the latter days of the New Testament era, and more specifically, during the time the Bible calls the Great Tribulation:

And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the **end** [*achariyth*] of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed **till the time of the end** [*qets*]. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the **abomination** that maketh **desolate** set up [*nathan*], there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

**Believers must flee the Holy Place now defiled**

What is God's direct instruction for the believer when such unimaginably horrific spiritual events are taking place? **“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto”** (Lk. 21:20, 21). As thus far seen in the varied passages, the terms “holy place,” “house of God,” “sanctuary,” “Israel,” “Jerusalem,” and “Judaea,” always refer to the people of God congregate (from their usage as situated in these contexts, we can learn by comparison that the phrase “where it ought not” of Mark 13:14 identifies with the same):

...and lest wrath come upon all the **people**: but let your brethren, the **whole house of Israel**, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. (Lev. 10:6c, 6d)

And the LORD said unto him...I have **hallowed** this **house**, which thou hast built, to **put my name there for ever**...But if ye shall at all turn from following me...but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off **Israel** out of the land which I have given them; and this **house**, which I have **hallowed** for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and **Israel** shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: And at this **house**, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this **land**, and to this **house**? (1 King 9:3, 6-8)

And he built altars in the **house** of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In **Jerusalem** will I **put my name**. (2 King 21:4)

...yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of **us**, and **we are called by thy name**; leave **us** not. (Jer. 14:9b)

Hear ye this, O **house** of **Jacob**, which are called by the **name of Israel**, and are come forth out of the waters of **Judah**, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. (Is. 48:1)

O **Jerusalem**, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? (Jer. 4:14)

Thus the command of Lk. 21:21 (comp. Mt. 24:16-18; Mk. 13:14-16) certainly is alarming for the true believers; for God is here teaching that not only will Satan be allowed entrance *into* and rule *over* the corporate, visible church, but that upon such an occurrence, the believers are to “flee” from this body that is void of the “light of the candle.”

### **Light of the candle removed**

This ominous expression as found in Jeremiah 25 was given as a death sentence in a time when the very corporate church of the Old Testament era was being told of their

certain destruction by the Babylonians, and the ensuing 70-year captivity (officially beginning with the death of Josiah in 609 BC). Note Jeremiah 25:1, 2:

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning **all the people of Judah** in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto **all the people of Judah**, and to **all the inhabitants of Jerusalem....**

And vs. 8, 10, 11:

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Because ye have not heard my words... I will take from them** the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the **light of the candle**. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

A very similar warning is found in Revelation 2:5, against the church at Ephesus:

Remember therefore from **whence thou art fallen**, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will **remove thy candlestick** out of his place, except thou repent.

According to Mt. 5:15, the “candlestick” (*luchnia*, comes from *luchnos*, which is rendered “candle” or “light”) is that upon which is placed the lit “candle,” that it may give “light unto all that are in the house.” Further, Rev. 1:20’s plain statement, “the seven **candlesticks** which thou sawest are the seven **churches**,” demonstrates the truth that a “candlestick” is symbolic of a church which is recognized of God. Finally, we learn that the chief function, the characteristic expected of a God-validated assembly is that of Gospel witness: “And I will give power unto my **two witnesses**, and they shall **prophecy** a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the **two candlesticks** standing before the God of the earth” (Rev. 11:3, 4). Therefore, the removal of the “light of the candle,” or the “candlestick,” is a direct reference to a church whose witness is no longer. It is a dead organism.

In both Jer. 25 and Rev. 2, the eventual fulfillment as well as the initial cause of such a warning was due to spiritual apostasy (“Because ye have not heard my words,” “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent”), nationally/corporately for Judah, and congregationally/corporately for the church at Ephesus. In both instances, God had, of course, given ample warning in advance. We find a more explicit version of such a warning in Leviticus 26 (comp. also previously discussed 1 Kings 9):

**And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;** Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. **And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your**

**sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.** And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. (vs. 27-33)

### **Jacob flees to Egypt**

It is of much interest to us that God applies the phrase, “great tribulation” (*thlipsis megale*), rendered “great affliction” in Acts 7, to the events surrounding Jacob's migration to Egypt during the time of the famine:

Now there came a **dearth** over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and **great affliction**: and our fathers found no sustenance.

Jacob's eventual departure from Canaan, the Promised Land, was 215 years *after* God's promise to Abraham that Canaan would be an EVERLASTING POSSESSION to his seed. An unthinkable action it was for a descendant of Abraham, a patriarch no less, to leave, to forsake the everlasting inheritance *given by GOD*. Yet we read: “**So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers**” (Acts 7:15). God, in Jeremiah 16, makes reference to this land as that which Israel defiled, establishing the relationship between the House that they defiled (Jer. 32:34; Eze. 5:11; Dan. 11:31) and the Land:

And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have **defiled my land**, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their **detestable and abominable things**. (vs. 18)

The point should also be made that the primary cause driving the forced-departure from Canaan was that of severe famine. Having noted that God refers to that event as the time of “great affliction (tribulation),” we wonder if famine of any sort was to be experienced during the time of the great tribulation in the New Testament era, when the believers would be told to depart out of Jerusalem/Judaea - and indeed, we find this solemn prophecy in the book of Amos:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, **not** a famine of bread, **nor** a thirst for water, **but of hearing the words of the LORD**: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro **to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it**. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. (8:11-13)

### **The Eternal Church is the Bride for whom Christ died**

Of course, this does not mean that somehow, God has forsaken His people. What is the identity of His people? They are, of course, those for whom Christ came: “...and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21). Christ

is the Savior of *this* “body” (Eph. 5:23c). It is *this* church which Christ “loved...and gave himself for...” (Eph. 5:25). Is it in fact not **THE** “sheep” for whom the “good shepherd giveth his life?” (John 10:11) Since the Scriptures make it abundantly clear that as concerns God, He **hates** “**all** workers of iniquity” (Ps. 5:5b); and that even the elect of God, prior to salvation, are “by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (cf. Eph. 2:3), it would be certainly unbiblical, to say the least, to hold forth that God's love, even His giving of Himself in the ultimate expression of that love, was for the virtuous woman as well as the “harlot” (Eze. 16:35), she who “committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!” (Eze. 16:32), the woman “that breaketh wedlock” (Eze. 16:38). The biblical doctrine of Definite, Particular, or Limited Atonement will not allow for the understanding that Christ's atoning love was for the totality of the visible church.

Undoubtedly, His people are they whose “names are written in heaven” (Lk. 10:20), those who are “buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead,” they should also, in the “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). They are the “vessels of gold and of silver” made unto “honor,” in contrast to the “vessels of wood and of earth” made unto “dishonor” (2 Tim. 2:20; comp. Rom. 9:21-26). The *Elect of God* they are, with the name of God and the city New Jerusalem written upon them (Rev. 3:12). In fact, New Jerusalem itself is a figure which points to the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2), the “wife” of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7). This Church is the eternal “tabernacle of God...with men” (Rev. 21:3b). This is the invisible church, comprised only of those who experience the “first resurrection” (Rev. 20:5, 6). This is the “exceeding great army” (Ez. 37:10), into whom the Lord “shall put [His] spirit” that they may “live” (vs. 14). Comparing this with Ezekiel 36:25-27, in fact, teaches us that this is the *other* “whole house of Israel” (Ez. 37:11).

### **The Church of the Firstborn**

In fact, Hebrews 12 distinctly sets apart the eternal body of Christ with this most descriptive of language:

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the **heavenly Jerusalem**, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and **church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven**, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (vs. 22-24)

It would require utter exegetical gymnastics to somehow turn the above into a description of the visible, corporate church. As we saw in the previous references in Revelation, the “heavenly Jerusalem,” by definition, is the antithesis of the “Jerusalem which now is” (cf. Gal. 4:25).

Indeed, **all** the “children of promise,” as “Isaac was,” belong to the “**Jerusalem which is above**” – she being the “mother of **us all**” (cf. Gal. 4:22-31). They are not “born” [*gennao*] after the flesh,” but “by promise” (Gal. 4:23).

### **Judgment is to the Jew first**

The bible teaches that the Jews were a people unto whom were “committed the oracles [sayings] of God” (Rom. 3:1); before any other nation, the descendants of Abraham were brought into existence and given His word, His gospel:

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the **word of God** should **first** have been **spoken to you**: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. (Acts 13:46, cf. 17:2)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; **to the Jew first**, and also to the Greek. (Rom. 1:16)

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. **Unto you first** God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. (Acts 3:25, 26)

Because of the Jews’ “first” position as regards God and His word, the Bible teaches that they are those God will “first” judge:

Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, **of the Jew first**, and also of the Gentile; (Rom. 2:9)

Surely, we are living in a time when we are witnessing God’s preparation for the Last Day unfold, as God will no longer forbear the sins of the “great house,” in which the vessels of honor and dishonor of 2 Tim. 2:20 reside. Indeed, He is judging “between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats,” “between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle” (Eze. 34:17, 20); for she who ought to be the “virtuous woman” (Prov. 31:10), “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any other such thing...holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27), has become as “women that break wedlock” (Eze. 16:38). “Jerusalem,” Lam. 1:17’s harsh language declares, “is a menstruous woman among them;” her “sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities (Rev. 18:5):

For the time is come that **judgment must begin at the house of God**: and if it **first** begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (1 Pet. 4:17)

And,

And the LORD said unto him, **Go through the midst of the city**, through the **midst of Jerusalem**, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the

others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and **BEGIN AT MY SANCTUARY**. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city. (Eze. 9:4-7)

### **The warning is for the church**

The above Old Testament reference comes from Ezekiel, a prophet who was called for the most specific purpose that he would be instrumental in warning “**NOT...a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, BUT...the house of Israel**” (Eze. 3:5). In chapter 5 of Ezekiel, God tells us in vs. 5 that He has Jerusalem in mind – “**This is Jerusalem**” - and declares that He will “do in thee that **which I have not done**, and whereunto **I will not do any more the like**, because of all thine **abominations**” (vs. 9). The language of this warning, of course, brings us directly to chapter 24 in Matthew, where the Lord Jesus, speaking of the Great Tribulation, declares, “For then shall be great tribulation, **such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time**, no, **nor ever shall be**” (vs. 21). The cause? Ezekiel 5:9 told us that it was “because of all thine abominations.” What are the “abominations” God has in view? Verse 6 through 8 describes the nature of Jerusalem’s abominations in detail:

And **she hath changed my judgments into wickedness** more than the nations, and **my statutes** more than the countries that are round about her: for they have **refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them**. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; **Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations**.

As the unrestrained rebuke above was in the face of the sins of “house of Israel,” i.e., “Jerusalem,” with the sentence articulated in vs. 9 paralleling that of Mt. 24:21, so too the Great Tribulation of the New Testament era focuses entirely on the Corporate Church.

### **God’s judgment is upon the totality of the visible church**

Would the House of Israel take heed? Can we accurately say that Judah did really know what her end was to be? An example of such a prophecy is found in 2 Kings 20:

And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that **all** that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: **nothing shall be left**, saith the LORD. (vs. 16, 17)

As well, God tells us in Ezekiel what the end of the house of Israel, so forthrightly warned, would be: “But the house of Israel will **not** hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for **all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted**” (Eze. 3:7). Is it a mere hyperbolic expression on God's part, or could it actually be that “**ALL** the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted”? Ezekiel 8:10, 11 tell us that this is so:

And there stood before them **seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel**, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, **every man in the chambers of his imagery** [idolatry]? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

Jeremiah 9:26 identifies the house of Israel with the heathen nations, emphasizing the comprehensive, nation-wide corruption of the people called by the name of God:

Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and **all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart**. (comp. 32:23)

We know, of course, that Israel and Judah, together the corporate body of the Old Testament, were utterly destroyed by the Assyrians and the Babylonians, respectively. They were destroyed utterly because as nations, they were utterly corrupt; indeed, they were **ALL** uncircumcised in heart. Their comprehensive destruction is amazingly echoed in the New Testament. In Mt. 24:2 we read the following:

...See ye not **all these things**? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here **one stone upon another**, that shall not be **thrown down**.

In Mark 13:2:

Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left **one stone upon another**, that shall not be **thrown down**.

And,

As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left **one stone upon another**, that shall not be **thrown down**. (Lk. 21:6)

Not *one* stone, our Lord declares - will we heed the warning?