



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 51”

July 5th, 2009

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis

Family Life Baptist Church

909 West Saginaw Street

Lansing, Michigan 48915

Phone: (517) 882-0921

Email: info@familylifebc.com

Website: <http://www.familylifebc.com>

Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 51

Matthew 24:9-10, Mark 13:9, 11-13, Luke 21:12-19

Watch out! Beware of others, because before these things take place, they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death. They will arrest you and persecute you, handing you over to the synagogues and to ruling councils and to prison. They will whip you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged in front of governors and kings because of Me. Yet this will give you an opportunity to testify before them and the Gentiles.

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church. We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

One of my favorite movie genres is that of the disaster movie. In 1998, two disaster movies came out with virtually the same plot, which was that a meteor was on a collision course with the earth. The meteor was large enough to destroy the earth, and so, to save the planet, NASA sent up the space shuttle to land on the meteor, plant nuclear weapons in a hole in the meteor, and then remote detonate the nukes to blow up the meteor. In Armageddon, Bruce Willis played the leader of a team of deep core drillers that flew up in the shuttle to drill a hole in the meteor and plant the nukes. Of course, the remote detonator failed, and Bruce had to stay on the meteor to detonating the nukes manually while the shuttle got away. Bruce sacrificed himself to save his daughter, his daughter's fiancé, his buddies on the shuttle, and incidentally, the planet. In Deep Impact, Robert Duval played the commander of the shuttle crew that couldn't plant the nukes in the meteor, so they ended up flying the whole shuttle into a hole in the meteor and blowing it up, saving the planet while heroically killing themselves in the process.

The disaster movie scenario usually involves the death of the hero. This is because we live in a society in which the major cultural influence is that of Christianity, and Christianity is based upon the death of the hero, Jesus Christ.

John 12:23-25 tells us:

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

To truly be a hero, you have to put yourself in the position to give your life. When we think of the great heroes of our culture, we think of those people that have given their life for our country. The most revered places in our nation's capital are the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Lincoln Memorial, because they house the earthly remains of men that gave their lives for our country. Jesus gives us the purpose for Him giving His life in **John 12:31-33**, which says:

31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."

33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

Jesus gave His life so that when the devil, who is the sinful ruler of the world system, is defeated and cast out, we, the sinful human race, can be saved from sharing the devil's downfall. And as much as we desire to think of ourselves as good people, the fact of the matter is that none of us actually are, because none of us obey God completely. And we know, from our many forays into the book of Genesis, that God commands complete obedience, as we read that just one act of disobedience caused God to cast the man and woman out of the garden.

Our rebellion against the Word of God causes God to cast us away. Satan was the first of the angels to disobey God, and when God cast him out of heaven, Satan decided to facilitate rebellion against God among the angels, and then man. However, Satan and all the rebels, either angelic or human, will receive the due reward for their rebellion. **Revelation 20:1-3, 7-15** tells us:

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Satan has already been judged, found guilty, and is awaiting the execution of his sentence. Each of us, every human being, is going to be judged according to the works that we have done. Because of the universal sinfulness of man, the verdict for each of us is going to be that we are guilty of sin. There is none righteous, no, not one, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. In fact, the only people that are not going to be condemned are those whose names are written in the Book of Life, which contains the names of those of us that live by faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and are thereby saved from the due penalty of our sins that we so justly deserve. We refer to those of us that have accepted Jesus Christ as being saved, or having received salvation, as the sacrifice of Jesus Christ saves us from the penalty of our sins.

One of the most important concepts for those of us that are saved to keep in our minds is the fact of our personal sinfulness. The devil, the original sinner, refused to acknowledge his sinfulness, because of his pride. But **Proverbs 6:16** tells us:

16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

The list of things that God hates begins in **Proverbs 6:17**, and the first thing on the list is:

17 A proud look.

God, the creator and sustainer of all things, hates all those who live in pride. Pride is defined as a high or inordinate opinion of one's own dignity, importance, merit, and/or superiority, whether as cherished in the mind or as displayed in bearing or conduct. The devil, in his first temptation, tempted the woman to be proud, as he said, in **Genesis 3:5**:

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

The appeal to “be like God” was to tempt the woman to have a high or inordinate opinion her own dignity, importance, merit and/or superiority.

“The only reason that God can tell you what to do”, the devil communicated to the woman, “is that He has access to this fruit and you do not. Your eyes can see as well as God’s, but He will not allow you to open them. If, however, you have the courage to eat this fruit and open your eyes, you will be as able as God to administer the universe. God is not better than you, in fact, you are as good as He is; He just has an advantages that you don’t have. Here it is. Take it, and you can be His equal.”

The devil tries to build up our pride so that we will reject God’s Word, believing that our thinking is as good as that of God. And proud people agree with the devil that their own thinking is equal to that of God. But this thinking was the devil’s downfall. **Ezekiel 28:12-14** speaks of the devil as it says:

12 “You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.

14 “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

But then God then describes the devil’s sin, in **Ezekiel 28:15, 17**
15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

17 “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you.

The devil’s heart was lifted up because of his beauty and his splendor. Once his heart was lifted up, the devil decided that since his thinking was equal to that of God, the one thing that he did not want to do was to bow down to God. But God says, as the prophet Isaiah tells us, in **Isaiah 45:22-24**

22 “Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

23 I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.

24 He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.

God is God, and there is no other. We have righteousness and strength only because the Lord has given it to us, and all who fail to acknowledge that will eventually come to shame. Your personal accomplishments should not bring you



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

pride; it is only in the Lord that you have the strength to achieve them, and if you become proud that you have done well, you are walking the devil's path awaiting your fall. Rather than being proud, we should be thankful to God for His mercy in allowing us to be successful.

It is, in fact, more relevant to recognize your failures than your successes. Think of life in terms of homework. When you answer a question correctly on our homework, whether you know the answer or guess the answer, you generally do not learn anything, because you usually don't research the questions that you answered correctly. If, on the other hand, you answer a question incorrectly, you have an incentive to take the opportunity to learn. That red ink on your homework paper can motivate you to explore the question that you missed in depth and learn things about the subject matter that exceed the question that was asked. The acknowledgment of failure is the jumping off point for more intense learning and, if you are a good student, your research will teach you more than just the answer to the question that you missed, but will give you a greater perspective on the entire subject.

But this learning is short-circuited by pride. When you have a high or inordinate opinion of your own dignity, importance, merit, and/or superiority, you resist learning, but rather look to find fault with the homework assignment. God calls our wrong answers on His homework sin, and the remedy for sin is an acknowledgment of our error and a resolve to learn to repent, meaning to improve our behavior with the help of the Holy Spirit, who is sent to us by Jesus Christ, who saves us from our sins. But the proud refuse to repent, because they refuse to acknowledge their own sinfulness. They, rather, find fault with the homework questions. In the Garden, God gave the man the homework question, in **Genesis 3:11**:

11 And [God] said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

The correct answer was, "Yes, I have eaten from the tree and I repent of my disobedience to Your Word." But the answer that the man actually gave is recorded in **Genesis 3:12**:

12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

After the man sinned, he exacerbated the sin through pride, saying, "It couldn't be my fault, God, so don't look at me. I would not have put down the wrong answer if You had not put this woman here to give me the fruit of the tree. So, God, it's really your fault, not mine."

The man's made his sin worse by not acknowledging his error and by blaming his error on God because of his high or inordinate opinion of his own dignity, importance, merit, and/or superiority.

But, God responded to the man's accusation, in **Genesis 3:17**:

17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.

“No, Adam”, said God, “It’s not my fault. Yes, I put the woman there, but the woman was part of the homework question. The fact that she tempted you did not make you take the temptation. The woman gave you the fruit of the tree, but she didn’t cram it down your throat. I told you to leave the tree alone, and you disobeyed willingly. Not only that, but you did not even acknowledge your disobedience, but tried to blame it on me. Regardless of your excuses, it is your fault.”

And, unfortunately, we all fall in the category of Adam, in that we are all sinners. The proud among us look for someone to blame for their sins, but in the judgment, the proud will find themselves in the situation of Adam, because they will have to face the fact that although there were circumstances and situations that tempted them to sin, the circumstances are part of the homework question, and God commands us to obey Him regardless of the circumstances that we may have to overcome to do so. To obey God, Jesus Christ had to overcome the Cross of Calvary, and He is our role model. Even if temptation is hammering nails in your hands and feet to fasten you to the Cross, you will not have an adequate excuse for committing your sin on Judgment Day.

The only remedy for sin is to give the correct answer. “Yes, Lord, I have sinned, and I’m sorry I have disobeyed Your Word. Please forgive me, and grant me repentance, because I am trusting in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to save me from the penalty that I am justly due for my sins.” There is no other answer that will work before God on Judgment Day. Your accomplishments, of which you may be proud, are irrelevant, because, as God tells us, in **Isaiah 64:6:**

6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

The episode of Scripture that contains our text begins with a show of pride. **Matthew 24:1, Mark 13:1 and Luke 21:5** tell us, from the harmony of the gospels, Jesus Christ, the Greatest Life:

As Jesus was leaving the Temple, His disciples began to point out to Him its structures that were richly decorated with precious stones and consecrated gifts. One of His disciples exclaimed, “See, Master, what tremendous stones and what fabulous buildings!”

The temple in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus was known as Herod’s Temple. Although the Jews used the temple as the focus of their worship, Herod did not build the temple primarily as a sacrifice to God, but rather as a tribute to himself. His plan was to make his temple more magnificent than the temple that Solomon built. Herod’s efforts, however, did not impress the Lord. Jesus



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

answered his disciples, as the harmony of **Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21** continues:

“Are you looking at these impressive buildings?” Jesus said. “I tell you the truth, the days are coming when not a single stone of these buildings you admire will be left upon another. They will all be thrown down!”

The pride of mankind is like everything else that we build on earth. It is temporary. And the disciples want to know just how temporary things are going to be. The harmony of **Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21** continues:

Later, as Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across from the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to Him privately and asked, “Teacher, please tell us—when will all these things happen? What will be the sign when all these things are about to take place? And what sign will proclaim Your coming and the end of the age?”

The book of Daniel prophecies extensively about the end of the time. **Daniel 7:23-27** records:

23 “Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.

24 The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

26 ‘But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.

27 Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

The disciples know the prophecy of the everlasting kingdom, and recognize that Jesus is the Most High one that Daniel describes, so they ask Jesus when the prophecy of Daniel is going to come to pass. The harmony of **Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21** continues:

Then Jesus began to tell them, “Watch out so no one misleads you. Many will come in My name and say, ‘I am He,’ ‘I am the Messiah,’ and ‘The time is getting close.’ They will deceive many people. Make sure you don’t follow them!



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“You will hear about wars and rumors of wars, but when you hear such reports, don’t be terrified, and see to it you aren’t disturbed. All these things must take place first, but the end will not come immediately.

“Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and epidemics and great earthquakes all over the world. But even this is only the beginning of the agony. There will be frightening sights and great signs in the sky.

When Jesus Christ gave His life for us on Calvary, He was not ushering in the end of time, but rather, the beginning of the Church age. The Church age is characterized by wars and natural disasters, because the devil is not going to allow the testimony of Jesus Christ to exist in peace on the earth. There will be constant persecution of those that believe in the Christ during the Church age, and the church will have to stand in the face of persecution. Daniel specified that a king will rise during these times that will be different from the first warrior kings. **Daniel 7:25** says, of this different king:

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

There are at least two things that the king speaking the pompous, prideful words of which Daniel teaches will do. The king will, in his pride, deny the existence of the Christ. And, alternately, the king will, in his pride, declare himself to be the Christ.

In our culture, we have the rise of science which denies the existence of God. The theory of evolution, which is widely accepted and taught in our schools as fact, although there is no evidence to support it, is an example of the king that we know as science proudly denying the existence of the Christ.

On the other hand, we live among many false religions that are based upon writings and thoughts of men that claim to be in contact with God. This king of false religions makes up his own stories to declare himself the protagonist in the interactions of God with man while proudly denying the Christ of history. One prominent religion proudly declares Allah as God while denying the deity of Christ. Of all of the religious writings that form the foundation for a religion, only the Bible, which is the foundation of the Christian and Jewish religions, describe supernatural events such as the Resurrection of Jesus Christ that have actually happened.

So Jesus tells the disciples that the end is not immanent, but is an event for which they will have to wait faithfully while the pride of men and of the devil is fully exercised. It will be difficult to wait, because pride will incite the different kings to persecute those that hold fast to God and His Son Jesus Christ. The harmony of **Matthew 24**, **Mark 13** and **Luke 21** continues, with Jesus warning us:



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

Watch out! Beware of others, because before these things take place, they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death. They will arrest you and persecute you, handing you over to the synagogues and to ruling councils and to prison. They will whip you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged in front of governors and kings because of Me. Yet this will give you an opportunity to testify before them and the Gentiles.

Jesus Christ told the Jews what “thus saith the Lord”, and was persecuted and crucified because of His testimony. Likewise, the church will be persecuted for the testimony of Jesus Christ because Christ demands that men recognize their sin and become humble, and the proud in power cannot stand the idea that they are not gods defining their own destiny, but simply men that need to repent and improve. Even as in the disaster movie, we can only achieve heroic status by sacrificing our lives, and Jesus Christ is giving us the opportunity to be heroes in His army.

The harmony of **Matthew 24, Mark 13** and **Luke 21** continues, with Jesus saying:

“When they hand you over and lead you away and bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and authorities, don’t worry beforehand about how or what you should say in your defense.

You are to say whatever you are given at that moment. The Holy Spirit will teach you what to say. It isn’t you who will be speaking but the Spirit of the Father who speaks in you. So settle it in your heart not to ponder beforehand what you should say. I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to answer or refute.

The difference between Christianity and the other religions is that Christianity is true. Jesus Christ was an actual person, who lived and died and rose from the dead physically. When the facts of history stand before the imaginations of men, imagination has no argument, because the truth can defeat all imagined argument. However the imagination of man has strong defenses, which are ridicule, hatred and persecution of the truth, and imagination will defend itself intensely because the proud hate to be made to look like fools, especially when they act foolishly. So, as the harmony of **Matthew 24, Mark 13** and **Luke 21** continues, Jesus warns us:

“You will be hated by everyone for the sake of My name. Many will be led into sin and will betray one another and hate each other. Brother will hand over brother to death, and a father will do the same to his child. Children will rebel against their parents and put them to death. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends. Some of you they will kill, and you will be hated by everyone for the sake of My name. Yet you will not lose even a single hair on your head. Through patient endurance you will gain your souls.



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

Jesus Christ excited overwhelming persecution because He challenged the pride of the Jewish religious leadership. Last week, I mentioned the episode of the blind man, who was given his sight on the Sabbath day when Jesus Christ anointed his eyes and sent him to the Pool of Siloam to wash. We left the episode as the blind man's parents were being interrogated by the Pharisees, and who told the Pharisees to ask the man himself about his experience with Jesus Christ, as they had no direct knowledge of it. The episode continues, in **John 9:24-25**:

24 So [the Pharisees] again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man [Jesus] is a sinner."

25 He, [the formerly blind man] answered and said, "Whether [Jesus] is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

Just as Jesus told us in the prior passage, we will not have to think about what to say when we are faced with persecution, because the truth and the Holy Spirit will be on our side. All we will have to do is speak the truth, as the Holy Spirit has come to lead us into all truth. The episode continues, in **John 9:26-29**:

26 Then [the Pharisees] said to [the formerly blind man] again, "What did [Jesus] do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

28 Then [the Pharisees] reviled [the formerly blind man] and said, "You are [Jesus'] disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.

29 We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from."

When the Pharisees are faced with the facts and have no answer, they turn to reviling. Reviling is not a logical argument, but just a name calling session. Although the Pharisees have no logical argument, the man does, as **John 9:30-33** records:

30 The [formerly blind man] answered and said to [the Pharisees], "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where [Jesus] is from; yet He has opened my eyes!

31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.

32 Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.

33 If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

You will not need to think about what to say in the persecution; you will only need to speak the truth that you know. The formerly blind man does not have to develop an eloquent argument in defense of the Christ; all he has to do is state the facts. And the fact of the matter is that he was blind, but now he can see. The Pharisees should never have taken the position that Jesus was a



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

sinner, because it was obviously that that which Jesus did was not sinful, but righteous. It was obvious to the formerly blind man, it was obvious to the people that brought the blind man to the Pharisees, and it was obvious to the Pharisees as well, although their pride did not allow them to accept it. It was so obvious to the Pharisees that their only answer was to persecute the man by making a foundationless charge against him and condemn him for no reason, as **John 9:34** records:

34 They answered and said to him, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they cast him out.

The world must persecute righteousness, because righteousness threatens to destroy the pride of the world. And as the world continues to rebel against God, it must persecute those that are in line with that which the Word of God says. Jesus Christ was crucified because of the pride of the world; He submitted to the persecution and sacrificed His life so that we can be saved from the penalty of our pride and the sin of the world, as **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

So let us reject the pride and the sin of the world and espouse humility before Christ, let us reject the arrogance of the world to espouse faith in Christ, and then, let us endure the persecution of the world, because of our testimony of the deity of the Christ. The kings will come against us, and the world will persecute us, but it is only by giving our lives in defense of the Christ that we can become victorious heroes in the army of the Lord. So, as we go down from this place, let us, as did the formerly blind man, defend the truth of the gospel of the Christ heroically.

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis
Family Life Baptist Church