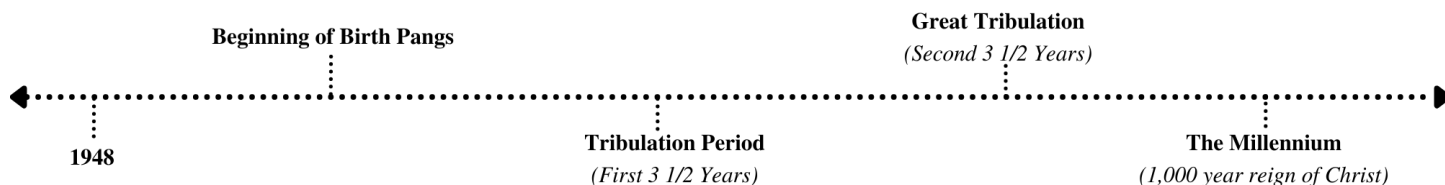


The Beginning of Birth Pangs

I. Review

- a. The Bible categorizes 4 main distinct time frames or “seasons” related to the end times. The last 7 years of this age is made up of 2 distinct time periods that each last 3 1/2 years. Each season has signs that serve as indicators of that time period.



1. The Beginning of Birth Pangs (*The Beginning of Sorrows*) – Takes place over several decades.
 2. Tribulation The First 3 ½ Years (*Counterfeit Peace & Safety - Increased Labor Pangs*)
 3. Great Tribulation - The Second 3 ½ Years (*Unprecedented Destruction*)
 4. The Millennium (*1,000 year reign of Christ*)
- b. There are 4 main prophetic signs of the times
1. **Sign Events** – Actual events predicted in scripture.
 2. **Sign Trends** – Realities woven through the fabric of the end time drama.
 3. **Cosmic Signs (Signs in the Heavens)** – Unusual signs that include dramatic weather and cosmic events.
 4. **Personal & Corporate Signs** – Subjective prophetic encounters meant for individuals or specific communities.
- c. Significant signs related to Israel
1. The reestablishment of the state of Israel in 1948
 2. Israel’s control of Jerusalem in 1967
 3. A future rebuilt temple in Jerusalem
 4. The salvation of Israel

II. The Beginning of Birth Pangs - Trouble That Alerts The Praying Church (*Matthew 24:4-8; Mark 13:5-8; Luke 21:7-19*)

- a. In the synoptic gospels, Jesus characterizes the first prophetic season and calls this time frame: The Beginning of Birth Pangs (*Matthew 24:8; Mark 13:8*). These birth pangs will take place over several decades. According to how Jesus describes this period of time, we believe that we are currently in this stage. *I wouldn’t be surprised if this stage “officially” began in 1948 when Israel became a nation or in 1967 when Jerusalem came under Israeli control.*
- b. The Greek word for “birth pangs (pains)” is “*Odin*” which means: pain, sorrow, or travail. This prophetic time frame is also referred to as “The Beginning of Sorrows”. Jesus compared this prophetic time frame to the dramatic trauma a woman experiences leading up to childbirth. The “baby” that is birthed is a new and

glorious age, but the process to get there will not be so easy; it will be painful and difficult as dramatic events and trends take place with increasing frequency and severity.

- c. The intensity of the labor pains before birth are not something to romanticize and neither are the prophetic birth pangs at the end of the age. Jesus was clear that this time would be a time of sorrows. The world will be rejoicing in wickedness as fear, offense, lust, and deception escalate to an all-time high. The Kings of the earth will begin to take their raging and restless stand against The Lord and cast off biblical morality. This all takes place while earthquakes, natural catastrophes, and wars rage. In the midst of worldwide global corruption and shaking, the praying church will weep and mourn because we will discern the urgency of the times and nature of the coming storm.
- d. All of these events are “just the beginning”. Though many will be gripped with fear in this hour of history, Jesus admonishes believers to not be afraid or troubled despite the painful contractions. Though the “birthing” process is painful we can stand unafraid because we know that when the new age is birthed, we can rejoice with gladness.

(Matthew 24:6, 8 NASB), “See that you are not alarmed, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end...But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains.”

(Luke 21:9 NASB), “And when you hear of wars and revolts, do not be alarmed; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.”

(John 16:20-22 NASB), “Truly, truly I say to you that you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy! 21 Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one is going to take your joy away from you.”

“The Bride of Christ in her fullness will be meek and lowly, simple yet lovely, and possess a passion and power that comes from voluntary weakness and God-given purity. To know Jesus fully, she must first drink from the cup of hardship and suffering to learn self-denial and sacrificial love.” - David Sliker “End Times Simplified”

III. Jesus’ 15 Trends Related to the Beginning of Birth Pangs

- a. Matthew identifies seven trends that characterize the beginning of birth pangs. Luke adds three more, resulting in 10 trends to specifically happen within this prophetic time frame. There are also five additional trends that begin with the birth pangs but will characterize the final 7 years of this age.

(Matthew 24:4-8 NASB), “And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will mislead many people. 6 And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains.”

(Luke 21:9, 11, 25 NASB), “And when you hear of wars and revolts [commotions], do not be alarmed; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately. 11 and there will be massive earthquakes, and in various places plagues [pestilence] and famines; and there will be terrible sights and great signs from heaven. 25 “There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves””

(Matthew 24:9-12 NASB), “Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 And at that time many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will rise up and mislead many people. 12 And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will become cold.”

10 Trends That Characterize the Beginning of Birth Pangs (Matthew 24:4-8; Luke 21:9, 11, 25)

1. **Deception & False christs**: The birth pangs set the world up to desperately need of a savior. Many will come saying they are the savior and will deceive many. People will be dramatically deceived by one man (the antichrist), who convinces the multitudes that he is God.
2. **Wars & Rumors of Wars (Political Conflicts)**: Though there have always been wars, over the last century there have been over 100 major wars with millions perishing as a result. Even right now, we are currently seeing the world experience wars and hearing rumors or wars.
3. **Ethnic conflict (Nation Will Rise Against Nation)**: The Greek word for Nation is “*ethnos*” meaning: ethnic group, a multitude, tribe, or race. We will see racism and ethnic conflict manifest all the way up to potential genocide. This type of conflict goes beyond what we currently see in America. There are millions that have died in ethnic wars across the Globe.
4. **Economic Warfare (Kingdom Will Rise Against Kingdom)**: Aside from actual warfare, economic-related warfare will manifest between the kingdoms of the earth. Sanctions between nations will be fueled by hostility, aggression, greed, and lust for power.
5. **Famines**: Under current world circumstances, it’s estimated that around 9 million people die from hunger and hunger-related diseases every year (of that 9 million, 3.1 million are children). How much more will famine increase when wars, ethnic conflicts, and economic warfare rage on?
6. **Earthquakes**: Though there hasn’t been a dramatic increase in earthquakes in recent history, the destruction earthquakes have caused in recent years has certainly been dramatic and has made the world headlines. Make no mistake, massive earthquakes across the earth will only increase as the contractions increase.
7. **Plagues (pestilence)**: Epidemic diseases such as the Bubonic Plague, the Spanish Flu, & Covid-19 will increase across the earth during the “Beginning of Birth Pangs”.
8. **Revolts (commotions)**: The Greek word for revolts, “*Akatastasia*” suggests there will be commotions (other than wars and ethnic conflict) related to confusion, instability, and disorder. I believe this includes terrorism, drug wars, border disputes, socialist practices, sexual depravity, and religious conflicts.
9. **Terrible Sights & Great Signs From Heaven**: Weather patterns and cosmic disturbances will dramatically shift and natural disasters will impact the nations. These “terrible (fearful) sights” will strike hearts with fear at a greater level than we’ve ever seen. The Greek word used for terrible is “*phobetron*” where we get our word for “phobia”.
10. **Perplexity At The Roaring of the Sea and the Waves**: The Sea will be impacted during this time in history. Water levels will likely rise and cause issues on the coastlands. Raging waves such as tsunamis or hurricanes will destroy islands and coastal cities, while ocean travel becomes increasingly difficult and deadly.

5 Trends That Will Begin With The Birth Pangs & Continue Through the Final 7 Years of This Age (Matthew 24:9-12)

11. **Persecution & Hatred Of Believers**: Throughout history it has been relatively common for Christians to be persecuted. It is rare for the Church to live in a state where she is not persecuted. In many nations right now persecution is a reality for believers. Persecution and martyrdom of believers is going to dramatically increase.
12. **Social Anarchy (Betray One Another & Hate One Another)**: Offense and betrayal will increase across the globe. Families and communities as well as regions and countries will operate in bitterness, offense, and betrayal.
13. **False Prophets**: False Prophets (different than false christs) will be demonically empowered people who will speak deceptively and demonstrate works of power in order to deceive many.

14. **Lawlessness Abounding:** Sin will reach its fullest expression. Evil will be called good, and good will be called evil. People will be fully given over to sin and by the time of the 6th bowl of God’s wrath, there will be Global blasphemy of the Spirit.
15. **Love Growing Cold:** The Greek word for “growing cold – *psycho* (psoo-kho)” means to breathe voluntarily but gently to chill something. Overtime the love inside of people will slowly and tragically grow cold because of abounding lawlessness. Love growing cold doesn’t happen in a moment, it happens in a subtle way over long periods of time.

IV. Jesus’ Two Main Encouragements Despite The Shaking

(Matthew 24:13-14 NASB), “But the one who endures [persevere] to the end is the one who will be saved. 14 This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

- a. **The one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved** - Through all of the shaking we must remember that God is not taking out His anger against believers. He wants to capture the attention of the most amount of people and bring them into the fullness of His love and will use the least severe means to do it. Jesus calls us to persevere in the midst of the shaking. Though we might have to endure persecution and the ripple effects of these signs of the times, we can thrive in the hour of shaking and be victorious. Our victory is not defined by eluding these events, but by enduring the shaking. *The rewards for those who persevere far exceed the pain that must precede the victory.*
- b. **This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world** - In the midst of all of the shaking, the gospel of the Kingdom will advance rapidly throughout the whole world. We’re not talking about the gospel of prosperity or the self-centered gospel; we’re talking about the gospel of the KINGDOM. The World will know that a KING is coming and so is His KINGDOM. When the Kingdom comes, so do the power dynamics of that Kingdom. That Gospel will be sent to the ends of the earth before He returns.

Questions For Discussion

1. Do you find yourself confronted with the “sorrow” that accompanies this prophetic season of time? How do you keep your heart from growing cold?
2. Which of these trends sticks out to you the most? And Why?
3. How should we practically prepare to “persevere” despite the current and coming shaking?
4. What is a concept that was covered tonight that challenged you?