

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life for week ending 07/27/03.

The Doctrine Of Separation
Matthew 24:15-18

Matthew 24:9-15 describes the “last days”: *“Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”*

The “abomination of desolation” is the image of the dictator of the revived Roman Empire in the Tribulation, the leader of world ecumenical religion. His statue is set up in all kinds of churches, in synagogues everywhere, and in the temple in Jerusalem, where this satanic system of religion is accepted. This image will be broadcasted throughout the world.

Many Jews living in Jerusalem at this time have responded to the message of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, **Rev 7:4**. They have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ by the thousands. They have been learning doctrine for several years, and they now have a very important message, the message of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, **Mat 24:14**, *“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.”*

Throughout the Old Testament, prophets received special insight into the future. The most profound vision of what was to come was given 2,000 years ago on a hillside outside Jerusalem. Here a small group of disciples had gathered around the Lord Jesus Christ, and the question they asked Him prompted a response that spans the centuries from then till now. We read in **Mat 24:3**, *“And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’”* Our Lord answered them with specific indicators to watch for. The term “the end of the age,” as used here, does not refer to the end of the world, but the end of the current reign of man on earth.

1. The universal means of communication, **Mat 24:14**. Our Lord said the preaching of His Gospel to all nations would be a specific sign that would indicate when the actual End would come upon the world. Never in the course of history has the Gospel been preached in all the world to all nations as it is currently—if not directly by missionaries, by the modern media of telecommunications. By some accounts, the

Gospel message has now been preached to over 4 billion people, in virtually every country.

2. The explosion of cults and the occult, **Mat 24:4-5**, “*And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.’*” Counterfeit spirituality is everywhere as in **1Ti 4:1**—false Christs, psychic phenomena, spiritism, Satan worship, witchcraft, nature worship, and the “New Age” movement.
3. The increase of wars, **Mat 24:6-8**. No period in all human history has witnessed the escalation of wars, as has the 20th century. The International Red Cross estimates that over 100 million people have been killed in wars in the last century alone. Since World War II, there have been over 150 major wars, as well as hundreds of armed rebellions and revolutions. The death toll in armed conflicts since the end of World War II is more than 24 million.
4. The increase of famines and diseases, **Mat 24:7**, “*For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.*” Over 50 million people throughout the world are living with HIV-AIDS, and famines affect one of six people on earth today.
5. The increase of earthquakes, **Mat 24:7**. A recent study shows a dramatic increase in worldwide earthquakes, just since the decade of Israel’s rebirth. The *Universal Almanac* tells us that there were only 21 earthquakes of major strength between the years 1000 and 1800. But between 1800 and 1900 there were 18 major earthquakes. Between 1900 and 1950, there were 33 major quakes—almost as many as in the preceding 1,850 years! Between 1950 and 1991 there were 93 major earthquakes, almost triple the number of the previous half-century—which claimed the lives of 1.3 million people around the world. Numerous scientists warn that we are currently entering a period of great earthquake disturbances.
6. Israel’s rebirth, **Mat 24:32-33**. As Jesus prophesied, the Jews were scattered during the Jewish-Roman war of A.D. 70, **Luk 21:24**. Also as prophesied, the nation of Israel (“God’s time clock”) was miraculously reborn on May 14, 1948.
7. Plummeting morality, **2Ti 3:1-5**, “*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.*” Studies show a shocking breakdown, just since the middle of the last century.
8. The explosion of travel and education, **Dan 12:4**. Two key conditions described about 2,500 years ago for the Second Coming are that “*travel and education shall be vastly increased.*” In all of history, the vast increase in travel has come just since mid-century with the explosion of both ground and air transportation and in the field of education, with the advance of science and computers. This phrase, “many will go back and forth” literally means “speeding about, here and there.” When you consider that people’s means of transportation had not changed substantially for thousands of years, the significance of this prophecy is apparent. Today we not only drive at enormous speeds and cover great distances in automobiles, but a jet can fly around the world in 24 hours, and a spacecraft circles the planet in 80 minutes! Knowledge

has increased in recent years almost beyond imagination. The equivalent of over 300 million pages of text is now sent over the Internet every day. Eighty percent of all the scientists who have ever lived are alive today, and every minute they add 2,000 pages to man's scientific knowledge.

9. The New World Order, **Mat 24:15, Dan 7-12**. Increased centralization of world financial and political power is a prelude to the soon-coming world power system in the hands of "Antichrist," who will be the incarnation of Satan and who will deceive most of the world.
10. The increase in apostasy, **2Th 2:3-5**. The Bible predicts that in the last days there will be "a form of godliness, although they have denied its power." Today many churches deny the eternal truths of Scripture and power of the Holy Spirit, replacing them with ungodly, temporal, and "politically correct" values.
11. A world "filled with violence," **Gen 6:5,11; Mat 24:37**. Another condition that the Lord Jesus Christ said would be prevalent just prior to His return would be unrestrained violence. In **Mat 24:37-39**, our Lord said, "*For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.*" In Noah's days, "the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence." Today's headlines are full of tragic stories of senseless violence. In the past 30 years alone, suicide and murder have claimed the lives of over 1.2 million Americans, more than all the men killed in all the wars in the history of the U.S.
12. The coming of the Antichrist, **1Jo 2:15-18**. An important and final sign of the end, to which the Bible devotes numerous chapters, is the rise of a one-world government led by a tyrant known as the Antichrist or "the Beast." The Book of *Revelation* says that the whole world will worship Satan in the person of this bestial world leader. The Bible tells of an ingenious seven-year peace agreement or "covenant" which will be pivotal to the Antichrist's claim to world leadership. This pact will temporarily resolve the Middle East crisis by working out a compromise between Israel and her Arab neighbors. Jerusalem's Mount Moriah, where the Jew's ancient temple once stood and where the Muslim Dome of the Rock stands today, will be a focal point. Three and a half years after the enactment of the Antichrist's covenant, he will revoke it and make Jerusalem his international capital, and outlaw all religions except the worship of himself and his mystical image. This image will somehow be empowered to both speak and cause those who refuse to worship it to be killed, **Rev 13:14-15**.
13. The mark of the Beast, **Rev 13:16-17**. Two thousand years ago a simple fisherman, the Apostle John, predicted a global economic system in which everyone would be forced to take a number, without which they will not be able to buy or sell. It is only since the advent of computers and electronic banking that this could happen.
14. Our Lord's Second Coming, **Mat 24:31**, "*And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.*" The world's darkest hour will abruptly end with the dawning of the brightest day when Jesus Christ returns. The judgment of God will fall upon the Antichrist and his followers, culminating with Jesus Christ's return to earth to destroy the one-world empire at the battle of *Armageddon*. Then will begin the Millennium, 1,000 years of peace and plenty and paradise for all (**Rev 19:11-21, 20:1-4**). For anyone who is not prepared for these earth-shaking events, they must get prepared by simply believing

on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Remember that He loves you, and will be with you and guide you through whatever perilous times you may face.

In **Rev 12:6**, “*The woman [true Israel, believing Jews], fled into the high desert country where she had a place prepared by God.*” We are given a further description in **Mat 24:15-18**, “*Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak.*” The lesson here is that even though you are enjoying yourself upstairs on the roof, do not go downstairs and pack up—just **go**. Even though you may be enjoying a time of prosperity, do not go back down to the cosmic system and try to salvage what you accomplished there. There comes a time that you have to “get up and get out.” This is a spiritual principle that also works in the natural realm, **Deu 22:9** “*You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest all the produce of the seed which you have sown, and the increase of the vineyard become defiled.*”

Believers have to learn that there is a *time to separate*. The last thing you need, with the struggles you are already facing in the spiritual life, is to be around the *wrong kind of people*. A lot of believers have enough problems with their own weaknesses, and cannot afford to stay around others who are negative. **There comes a time when God’s people need to learn the importance of separation.** Separation is the application of doctrine to relationships in life. It is the technique of switching from *personal love* to *impersonal love* when dealing with loved ones in the cosmic system who distract you from God’s calling. Separation is based on the perception of Bible doctrine by which one establishes priorities in life and the application of doctrine to relationships with people.

1. “*Separation unto*” is the principle of *perpetuation of momentum* in the predesigned plan of God. You are to separate yourself unto God’s plan, and not let anyone or anything take you away from that plan. It is momentum that comes from metabolized doctrine and personal love for God as the basis for establishing priorities in life.
2. “*Separation from*” is applied to *believers and unbelievers in the cosmic system*, especially those who influence you to leave God’s plan.

Separation has two connotations (mental and physical).

1. **Mental separation.** If you do not keep yourself mentally separated from those involved in the cosmic system, you will eventually develop mental attitude sins toward them and others. No one is worth losing your fellowship with God. They may be antagonistic toward you but do not become antagonistic in return. Remember what our Lord said in **Mat 10:34-38**, “*Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.*”
2. **Physical separation.** There are some cases where switching from personal love to impersonal love will not be enough. For example, when you are getting false doctrine in a church, you must physically leave under the principle of impersonal love. And

when a wife is beaten by her husband, she should leave. However, the most basic reason for physical separation is to avoid the compromise of doctrine. It means to avoid any personal contact with an individual under any circumstances. This means severance of all relations of any kind with that person. Physical separation is sometimes needed to maintain one's priorities and remain in the predesigned plan of God.

Pro 13:20 advises us that *“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”* **2Th 3:14** gives similar advice: *“If anyone does not obey our doctrinal teaching in this epistle, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame.”* Separation from unbelievers in the cosmic system is taught in **2Co 6:14-17**, and the importance of separation in social life is taught in **Jer 15:16-17**, **1Pe 4:3-4**. By switching from personal love to impersonal love you discard your illusions about people you love. A close relationship with something or someone in the cosmic system is a partnership with the cosmic system. There comes a time, as the believer grows spiritually, that his first decision must be to separate from the crowd that leads him in the wrong direction.

Our Lord is giving a vital warning in **Mat 24:15**, *“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak.”* Do not go home to get anything. As soon as you hear the message, get going, get out, and don't rationalize or evaluate or procrastinate, just get moving. Move with promptness, for this is the signal to leave, and those who remain will die. However, the believers who go forward in obedience to the Word of God, making the right application, are going to make it. However, those who reject the message are going to die in the second half of the Tribulation.

Many will be saved through the two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, the two heralds, and they will live if they obey. However, in their case, the instructions are to fight or die. Here we see the importance of flexibility, of knowing one's place in history, and of understanding God's plan for your life and your personal sense of destiny.

For a more detailed study, order tapes IA11-292 to IA11-294.