

The Birth Pains

Matthew 24:1-14

Pastor John Miller

Matthew 24, beginning in verse 1, says, “Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’ Now as He sat 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?’” The aionios.

We begin this series, commonly called The Olivet Discourse. It is called that because in verse 3, it says Jesus “sat on the Mount of Olives.” Mount Olivet is just to the east of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. There is the Kidron Valley and then there is the Mount of Olives. From the Mount of Olives, Jesus gave His discourse.

This discourse is the last of three, major discourses given by Jesus in Matthew. There were many other discourses recorded in John and elsewhere. But in Matthew’s Gospel, the first one was the Sermon on the Mount. It covered chapters 5-7. That’s the most famous sermon that Jesus ever gave, starting with the Beatitudes. Then in Matthew 13, we have what’s called the mystery parables.” They describe the kingdom of God during this period. Now we come to the third discourse, in Matthew 24-25. Most everything in Matthew 24-25 is in red letters; it’s Jesus teaching us. It is also recorded in Mark 13 and Luke 21. These are the parallel passages that give the Olivet Discourse.

The Olivet Discourse is the longest that Jesus ever gave in response to questions or a question. In verse 3, the first question was asked, “When will these things be?” The second question asked was, “What will be the sign of Your coming?” The third question was, “...and of the end of the age?” Some believe there are only two questions; the English Bible has only two question marks. The two questions are, “When will these things be?” and “What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” The second would be one question with two parts. But it’s not uncommon to view them as three questions.

One of my goals in teaching The Olivet Discourse is that we will learn and understand what it means. We’ll take it in context. We’ll do what we call “sound interpreting” of this passage, in light of Bible prophecy. Jesus here is not answering the first question—“When will these things be?”—but He will be answering the second question—“What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”—which is the focus of Matthew 24. The first question is dealt with at length in Luke 21. It deals more with the destruction of Jerusalem.

I want to now ask the question, “Why study Bible prophecy?” Let me give you two reasons. First of all, it’s Biblical. What we do at Revival Christian Fellowship is we study the Word of God. Every church should study the Word of God. If a church doesn’t study the Word of God, what do they do? I don’t know why they call itself a church. We gather to worship, to pray, to

encourage one another but also to hear the Word of the Lord. So we read the verse, explain the verse and try to apply the verse to our lives.

The study of the subject of prophecy is Biblical, and prophecy is prevalent throughout Scripture. In the 260 chapters in the New Testament, there are 318 references to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ—that's 1 out of every 30 verses in the New Testament. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is actually all throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Second Coming or Second Advent is a popular theme of the prophets, it's in the Gospels, in the epistles and in the book of Revelation. But the rapture is only a New Testament revelation.

The second reason we should study Bible prophecy is that it's beneficial. It's beneficial for three reasons: number one, it cleanses us. 1 John 3:3 says, "Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." If you really believe, with all of your heart, that Christ is coming again, you will live a holy life. What would be your motivation to go into the world and live a sinful life if you believe that Jesus Christ is coming back? So we need to live for Him.

Secondly, it comforts us. In John 14, Jesus is speaking of the rapture, but in context, it's still the coming of the Lord. Verse 1 says, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions...And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Jesus makes this promise. So we are comforted by the fact that He is coming again to take us to heaven.

Thirdly, it compels us. In John 9:4, when Jesus healed the blind man, Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work." Do you realize that there is coming a time when you won't be able to work for God anymore? It will be because either the Lord will take you home personally—it's called "death"—or Jesus will come and take all the Christians home—it's called "the rapture." Either way, there is coming a day and time when our opportunities for service will be over. The more we believe and realize that Christ is coming again, the more it should compel us to do the work of Him who sent us "while it is day," because "the night is coming when no one can work."

I have also chosen to teach through this prophetic portion of Scripture not only because it is Biblical and beneficial, but, thirdly, because it is so misunderstood. One of the things that challenges me as a pastor is that I hear so much teaching that is wrong and not Biblical on subjects that I want to counter with true, Biblical teaching; I want us to come back to a sane interpretation of the Bible and of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. So I'm motivated to make clear what is misunderstood so commonly today. And it's fallen out of vogue; it's not popular to preach on prophecy anymore. A lot of churches have gotten away from prophecy.

I want to outline our text. There are three main points I want to make. Verses 1-2 is the prophecy of the King. "Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple." What is this temple that Jesus departed from? It's called "Herod's temple." The Jews first built what's

known as "Solomon's temple." King David wanted to build God a house, but God told him he couldn't build Him a house, because David was a man of war. Solomon was to build God a house. But David gathered all the material together for the temple, but Solomon built it. It was an awesome temple. This was the first temple. Then the Babylonians came and destroyed that temple, and they carried all of Israel or Judah away captive for 70 years, just as Jeremiah prophesied would happen. They had turned from God, so He brought judgment on them.

When the people returned after the captivity under Zerubbabel, Nehemiah and Ezra, the priest, Nehemiah helped build the walls, and Zerubbabel helped rebuilt the temple. This was the second temple. This temple wasn't very big, beautiful or grandiose. When they were dedicating the temple, the older people who had seen Solomon's temple, wept and were sad, because it wasn't as nice as Solomon's temple. Since the young people hadn't seen anything like it, they thought it was awesome. They rejoiced and celebrated over it. The Bible says that the voices of the old people weeping and the young people celebrating blended together, so you couldn't tell what was going on.

You know you're getting old when you talk about the "good ol' days." Ask an old-timer what they talked about in the good ol' days, and he'll say, "We talked about the good ol' days." Always living in the past.

Zerubbabel's temple continued until the time of Christ. Along the way, King Herod embellished it and enlarged it. He took the foundation of the temple and enlarged it, with a retaining wall. He built a bigger, more beautiful temple. Some call it the third temple, but it's really the second temple that was added to by Herod. Then it became known as "Herod's temple." This second temple is the temple that Jesus is departing from in this text.

Verse 1, "And His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple." It was a big complex and grounds. The disciples were Galileans or country bumpkins; they hadn't been in the big city. They were gawking, awe-struck and amazed at the temple.

By the way, in context, in Matthew 23, Jesus had uttered His eight woes in a stern sermon against the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes. He called them "white-washed tombs." Then Jesus closed chapter 23 with verses 37-38: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate." Jesus is talking about their temple and nation being destroyed. "For I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" That's the Second Coming. So Jesus pronounced His woes. He said, "How often I wanted to gather your children together...but you were not willing! Your house is left to you desolate." They will be destroyed. They won't see Him again until He comes back in the Second Coming in power and glory.

Now, in chapter 24, as Jesus came out of the temple, the disciples came and said, "Look at these buildings of the temple." But Jesus isn't all that excited about the buildings. Instead, He

said, "Do you not see all these things?" He's referring to the temple and all of its buildings. "Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." This statement that Jesus made is prophetic.

Within just a few years, in 70 AD, Titus would come with the Roman armies and would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the temple. And not one stone was left upon another. That event was recorded by Josephus, the Roman historian, in his Jewish wars. He described that over a million Jews died of starvation. They were eating their own babies. They threw the bodies over the walls, and they piled up all around it. Somehow the temple caught fire, the gold melted and the temple was disassembled, one stone at a time, to get to the gold. So Jesus' prophetic words were literally fulfilled in 70 AD.

The Zerubbabel temple that Herod had embellished and rebuilt had the work started in 20 BC and was finished in 64 AD. So there were only six years that the Jews got to enjoy it before it was destroyed by Titus in the Jewish rebellion that was actually put down by Titus and the Roman armies.

Jesus is a prophet. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." Everything Jesus said was perfectly fulfilled. That's the prophecy of the King.

Verse 3 led to the second point. It's the question for the King, in verse 3. "Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be?'" We know who the disciples were who asked this question by looking at Mark 13:3. It tells us that Peter, James, John and Andrew were the disciples. These four disciples were the ones who asked Jesus "When will these things be?" and "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

I've already mentioned that the first question, "When will these things be?" is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem. The disciples couldn't believe it. They thought, How could these huge stones be thrown down?! Some of the stones in Herod's temple were the size of a train boxcar. Some were 40 feet long, 15 feet high and 15 feet wide. They were all quarried at the mountain of Jerusalem, shipped up and then locked into place. So this was blowing their minds. How could one stone not be left upon another?! It would take an earthquake or an opposing army to tear it down. The disciples were upset and worried. Jesus answers their question in Luke 21.

Now the second question is our focus in this series. "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

There are some things we need to understand first. When these disciples asked the question, "What will be the sign of Your coming?" the word "coming" is the word "parousia." That word has the idea of "presence." It is a common word for someone appearing or coming. Referring to Jesus' Second Coming, it means He would come and be present as the King, the Messiah

and the one who would reign on the throne of David.

These disciples didn't know anything about the rapture. The rapture is not the Second Coming. The rapture is that New Testament mystery revealed first by Jesus, in John 14, when He will come and catch up the church "to meet the Lord in the air." It is when true Christians will be raptured or caught up. Paul reveals this in 1 Thessalonians 4:16: "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up..."—or "harpodzo" or "raptured"—"...together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

This will happen, I believe, before what we know as "the tribulation period," or seven years. The last three-and-a-half years are known as "the great tribulation." At the end of the great tribulation, Christ will come back in the Second Coming.

Simply stated, the rapture is the church getting caught up to "meet the Lord in the air." The Second Coming is the church coming back with Christ. It's a visible coming to establish the kingdom on earth for 1,000 years, as Christ reigns on the throne of David.

So when the disciples asked, "What will be the sign of Your coming?" it means Jesus' Second Coming; not the rapture.

Now this is my conviction—and if you understand it this way, the whole sermon makes more sense: nowhere in this discourse is Jesus teaching on the rapture. When Jesus says, "Two will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left," He's not referring to the rapture. When Jesus says, "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left," that's not the rapture. When Jesus gives us the parable of the fig tree, He's not telling us that the rapture is coming soon.

Everything we read in Matthew 24 and 25 is the answer to the disciples' question, "What will be the sign of Your coming?" What "coming"? The Second Coming. Not the rapture. The disciples didn't even know about the rapture. The rapture was a revelation that would come later. So all we will read in these two chapters is about the Second Coming or Second Advent of Jesus Christ, which, by the way, is recorded, when it takes place, in Revelation 1 and 19. "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." "His head and hair were white like wool...and His eyes like a flame of fire." "Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword." He comes in judgment. "His feet were like fine brass...and His voice as the sound of many waters." He's coming back in power and glory and majesty. How glorious that will be!

Then the disciples asked the second part of that question: "...and of the end of the age?" or "the world." In the Greek it is "aionios." You could translate that "era." So they're not talking about the literal end of the earth; they're talking about the end of this age or this time period. At the end of this period, we're going to have seven years of the tribulation, which are the "seven" of Daniel's prophecy, then the Second Coming and the 1,000 years of Christ's reign. So the

“end of the age” is the end of the era that the disciples were living in and that we are living in today, as well.

Now we move from the questions to the King, verse 3, to the admonition from the King, verses 4-14. In verses 4-14, Jesus gives the general characteristics of the age leading up to “the end of the age.” Remember they asked Him, “What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” Jesus will describe the kinds of things that will exist in the world that will lead up to this last, seven-year period of man’s history on earth.

Notice that Jesus describes these things in verse 8. He says, “All these are the beginning of sorrows.” “Sorrow” means “birth pains.” I obviously never experienced that, but I’ve watched my wife give birth to four children. I watched her go through labor. I was thankful I’m not a woman. But I appreciate her. I thank God for her hard work. She carried the baby all that time and gave birth to the baby. When women start labor, they have contractions. They’re painful and get stronger and stronger and stronger until they get one big pain. Many times during the process you want to change your mind; “I don’t want to have a baby! Take me home! Let’s get out of here!” But when the labor pains start, there’s no turning back. You can’t change your mind; it’s too late.

So these signs we’re going to talk about are like labor pains. They’ll get stronger and stronger and stronger. They’ll culminate in the tribulation. These labor pains that we’ll study are characteristics of the world we live in now, but they’ll culminate in the tribulation period. I believe that the church will be raptured before the tribulation. During the tribulation period, the Antichrist will be revealed, sign a covenant with the nation of Israel for seven years and all of these things will culminate, as God pours out His wrath upon a Christ-rejecting world, in Christ’s return to establish His kingdom.

I want you to notice that there are six, birth-pain signs of the present age. The first is deception, verses 4-5. We are going to live in a world in which there is spiritual and religious deception. There will be a lot of demonic activity that will deceive people. “And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed.’” When Jesus says “Take heed,” it’s a warning. That’s why I call it the King’s admonition. He’s warning us and instructing us to be careful. He says, “Take heed that no one deceives you.” We are living in a world today where many people are being deceived. “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.” The word “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Messiah.” It means “anointed one” or “meshiack.” He says, “I am the Christ, the anointed one.”

We know we live in a world, since the time of Christ, in which many claim to be Christ. Even in recent times, there was Jim Jones of the temple Guyana. There was David Koresh in Waco, Texas. There is a man in the Philippines right now who claims to be Jesus, and he has thousands of followers. A Philippine Jesus. People believe him and are following him. So Jesus said that many will be deceived and believe that the Christ has come. Many false religions claim that they have the Messiah.

1 John 4:3 says, "Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world." The word "Antichrist" means a couple of things. It means "against Christ" and it means "instead of Christ." Today we have many religions that are antichrist. They use the name of Jesus, but they don't really believe in the Biblical Jesus. They don't believe He's the second person of the Godhead. They don't believe He came into the world through the womb of the Virgin Mary. They don't believe He lived a sinless life. They don't believe He's God in the flesh and died a substitutionary death. They don't believe He rose from the dead. They don't believe He ascended into heaven. They don't believe he sits at the right hand of the Father. They don't believe He is the only way to heaven. They don't believe He's coming again. They make up their own Jesus. So it's an antichrist.

"Antichrist" also means "against Christ." There are a lot of people today who are against Christ. If you just mention His name, people freak out. You can use His name in a swear word or a cuss word, but if you use His name in adoration or love, people put you down. So there will be deception.

Secondly, there will be division or wars, verses 6-7. "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars." "Wars" are full-blown wars of nations. "Rumors of wars" are smaller, regional wars. He says, "See that you are not troubled." The reason I point this out is that so many Christians freak out today when there is a war starting, and they think Jesus is coming right then. We should live in constant expectation of the rapture. We could get raptured right now. But you don't need a war to tell you that Jesus is coming. He continues, "For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." My own translation here would say, "Don't freak out!" This is just part of the epoch that we live in. He explains, "For nation will rise against nation..."—we get our word "ethnic" or "race" from the word "nation"—"...and kingdom against kingdom." So there will be ethnic cleansing.

So Jesus says that sign number one will be deception, and sign number two will be divisions or wars. We have lived in a world of wars for as long as mankind has been on planet earth. Constant fighting. Jesus said that will happen. We've had two world wars. World War I was from 1914-1918. World War II was from 1939-1945. Do you know that we'll have World War III? We don't know when that will be, but it will be at the end of the tribulation. The tribulation starts after the rapture and the Antichrist comes and makes a covenant with Israel. It could happen at any time. All the nations of the world will gather together again in battle.

The third birth pain or sign will be disasters, verses 7-8. This is one we hear about the most. "And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." That's the beginning of the labor pains. As labor pains lead to the birth of a child, these labor pains lead to the birth of the kingdom age, the new age when Christ will reign on the earth in righteousness.

So war many times results in famines. We live in our world today, even in our modern era, that is able to grow food when there are famines. Then there is pestilence. There is the AIDS virus

and Ebola. I was shocked to hear a couple of weeks ago that there is an outbreak of Ebola in the United States. That virus has come to America. They are able to contain it, but what a frightening thing. Then there are earthquakes. We live in California, near the fault line. We know what it's like to have the earth move under our feet. During the tribulation, there will be many earthquakes, and cities will be completely leveled. Can you imagine New York City or Hong Kong flattened?

I've been to Hong Kong about five times, and it amazes me how densely populated it is with all the high rises. Can you imagine that whole little island of Hong Kong being leveled by massive earthquakes? We see the intensifying of earthquakes in the world today. These are the birth pains.

The fourth birth pain or characteristic of our age is defamation, verses 9-10, or persecution of Christ's followers. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another." In context, Jesus is talking to His disciples. All the Apostles died martyrs' deaths except John the Apostle; they were all murdered for their faith in Jesus Christ. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. It's the church's long history of martyrdom and persecution.

It's sad that so many times Christians are put to death for their faith. We see a rise of anti-Semitism today in the world. And we see this anti-Christian mentality, a hatred of Christianity and the things of God.

The fifth mark or birth pain is apostasy or a departure, verses 11-13. This is the one that really concerns me. "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because..."—here's the reason—"...lawlessness will abound."

I was talking with a highway patrolman, and he was talking about how people treat him as a police officer. There is a spirit of lawlessness in our culture today; the way we are opposing our police departments, putting them down and slandering them.

So because "lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." I believe that's not talking about the saving of our souls but the preservation of our lives as we trust God; He will take care of us.

I want to talk about the fact that many will fall away because of deceivers and false prophets. So we have false Christs in verse 5, and in verse 11, the age in which we live, will be characterized by "false prophets." In recent years we've seen the birth of The Church of the Latter Day Saints, called the Mormons. A lot of people believe that Mormonism is Christianity. It's not. You say, "Well, that's not nice, Pastor Miller. You shouldn't cap on the poor Mormon people." There are Mormons who are sincere and nice, but the doctrine of Mormonism is not Christianity. They want you to believe it's Christianity, but it's not. It's not the Jesus of the Bible.

Then we have Jehovah's Witnesses. We have many cults that are on the scene today. They try

to push their heresy and false doctrine, this other Jesus that is not in the Bible.

By the way, when you want to detect a counterfeit bill, you put it up against the real thing, so you'll detect the false. You want to know what false doctrine looks like? Study right doctrine. Study the Word of God, then when something false comes along, you'll be able to detect it.

In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul says to Timothy, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith..."—they will apostatize—"...giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." In Jude 3, it says that we should "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

I've been preaching for over 40 years and I have a greater desire than ever before to preach sound doctrine, to preach the truth of God's Word. One of the reasons why is because there is so much false doctrine in the world today. There are false Christs and false doctrine, so we need to know the real doctrine of God's Word. What does the Bible teach about God? About the Trinity? About the deity of Christ, the Holy Spirit and salvation? The Bible teaches we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. "Not by works, lest anyone should boast." We need to understand that.

All the cults will deny salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. They will deny either the deity or the humanity of Jesus Christ. Even professing Christians today are denying that He is coming back. If the prophet said He would come the first time, and He did, don't you think He'll come the second time? And He will. We can live by that and believe that. Jesus is going to predict His Second Coming in this Olivet Discourse.

In Acts 20, when Paul met with the elders at Ephesus and then they knelt with him on the beach at Miletus, they cried, prayed and wept and hugged each other. Paul said that out of their midst, out of their own churches wolves will arise and not spare the sheep. They would seek to lead people astray. So watch and be ready. Even Jesus said to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing. They look like a sheep, smell like a sheep, talk like a sheep, but they're wolves.

False prophets many times have the same vocabulary but from a different dictionary. A lot of them are on TV. A lot of them are writing books being sold in Christian bookstores. Be careful; don't be deceived.

The reason this is important is because it is one of the signs of the times. It will culminate in the Antichrist. He will oppose Christ and take the place of Christ. He will be demonically, satanically empowered. He will be a dynamic, world ruler who will bring all the world under his influence, and the world will become one. There will be a one-world government under one man. He will have a false prophet, a religious leader who will be his sidekick. What an amazing thing! Jesus said this will happen.

So what we see with all this deception—a false Christ, false prophets and teachers—is mind conditioning for the end of time. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Paul says, "Let no one deceive you by

any means; for that Day..."—the Day of the Lord—"...will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition" or "the Antichrist."

The last thing that Jesus said will characterize our time is declaration, verse 14. So there is deception, division, disaster, defamation, departure and declaration. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." The disciples asked, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" It will be the end of the age when we see that the Gospel has gone all over the world, and we see that right now.

There are some people groups and some tribes and groups working to get the Bible translated into their own language. But via the Internet, the world has become one. With just a click of a button on your computer, you can hear the Gospel preached from anywhere in all the world. We have people listening to our services in other countries. On Sunday mornings, we are joined live by people in other countries. We have Bible study groups in states across the United States where they listen to Revival gathering together. All around the world. Through all the other preachers on radio and TV and on the Internet and in books, the Gospel has gone out. We are living in the end of time.

Some people misinterpret this statement and say that Jesus won't come back until everyone hears the Gospel. Even during the last of the tribulation, angels will be preaching the everlasting Gospel. "Repent, turn to Jesus and believe in Him!" But right now we see a world in which the Gospel has gone out. It's called "The Great Commission."

So you ask, "Okay, John, how does all this relate to me?"

Let me conclude. Number one, the world will get darker, not brighter. There are some segments of Christianity that teach that the world will get better and better as the church has its influence in the world. We are "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth," but I believe that when the rapture takes place, the light and salt will go, so the world will get dark and corrupt. But even now it's getting very dark and corrupt. We live in a very dark and wicked world. We are called by Christ to shine as lights "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation."

Number two, you can trust God's Word. Jesus said it, so I believe it. Jesus said, "Not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Since that happened within just a few years, in 70 AD, then I believe the words of Jesus. Whatever God has said in His Word will come to pass.

Number three, we learned that Jesus Christ will come again. We are living for that blessed hope, looking for His glorious occurring. The world gets darker, but our hope shines brighter.

Lastly, we have a job to do. Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel...and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." That's our job.

Amen.