



Isaiah 23-24

Tape #7252
Isaiah 23-24
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn now to Isaiah chapter twenty three, that we might continue our journey through the Bible. Chapter twenty three opens with the words...

The burden of Tyre (23:1).

Now the prophet has been dealing with several different countries, and that judgment of God that will be coming upon these different nations, as the result of this Assyrian invasion. Then, as a result of the later Babylonian invasion. Last week we saw the predictions upon Moab, or on Edom rather, the area of Idumea, and we saw the destruction that would come from Babylon upon the area of Saudi Arabia, as they moved down on the eastern side of the Jordan river.

Now in chapter twenty three, we have the prophecies of the destruction of this city of Tyre. Tyre was the chief city of the Phoenicians, and from your history books, you remember Phoenicia and how that the Phoenician navy ruled the Mediterranean for so many years. They were the merchants. They had the greatest navy of the ancient world. They plied the Mediterranean sea, the entire area, taking the grain of Egypt to the areas of Greece, and Rome, and they were just merchantmen, traders. They actually had a colony set up as far away as Spain. Thus they, they sort of ruled the Mediterranean, as far as merchandising and thus they were an extremely wealthy city.

The city of Tyre is a very ancient city. One of the most ancient cities of the world. They are, the claim concerning Herodotus, when he visited Tyre, 431, they said that the temple that was built there was built some two thousand years earlier. That's questionable and challenged, but we do know that the city of Tyre did exist at the time that Joshua came into the land, leading the children of Israel into conquest of the promised land.

During the time of David, Hiram, who was the king of Tyre at that time, had a great liking for David. He was an admirer of David. Later on, as Solomon built the temple, Hiram provided many of the skilled men to cut the trees of the forest of Lebanon, and bring the cedars down to Joppa, where they were brought then over land, to Jerusalem, where they were used in the building of so many of the great buildings there in Jerusalem, but especially the temple, at the time of Solomon.

Tyre a very wealthy city, ultimately became a very proud city. They had built walls around the city of Tyre that made it a strong, powerful city. The walls went right out into the harbor, into the Mediterranean. So when they closed the gates of Tyre, the only access into the city was by the sea. Because the Phoenician navy ruled the seas, though they attempted at times to conquer Tyre by the sea, it was never successful. Thus because they had the channel open to the sea, they could withstand long sieges. Because they could just re-supply the city from the sea.

Now Nebuchadnezzar finally conquered Tyre, but it was after a twelve year siege. It took that long. But finally the Tyre, the people of Tyre got tired of the siege of Nebuchadnezzar, and so they began to build a city on a island that was a mile off shore. So finally, rather than really being conquered, they just moved everything off shore to this island, and to the new city of Tyre, so that by the time Nebuchadnezzar came in and conquered it, the city was empty, and all of the goods, and the wealth was already transferred out to the new city, out there on the island. So though he had this long siege, it was an empty victory because there were no spoils when he finally took the city. The wealth and all, had been moved out to this island. Tyre continued to exist then, as a new city on this island about a mile off shore.

When Alexander the Great began his conquering, he came to the area of Tyre, he sent messages out to the city to surrender, or be captured, and they sort of scoffed at his demands. So Alexander tried to get together a navy, gathering the ships from Sidon and the neighboring areas, but he was thoroughly defeated by the navy of Tyre.

Then he struck on a new idea. The ruins of the old city that were still lying there, the rocks, and the wall,

the rocks (that were run to the wall and the building). With these rocks, he built a giant jetty, or causeway from the shore on out to this island city. Then he scraped the dirt, and put it on the rocks, and built these scaling type of machines that he moved on this causeway, out to the island. He actually, by building this giant causeway, was able to take the city of Tyre, and to conquer it. It is one of the marvelous annals of history, and one of the things that is often pointed to as the brilliant strategies of war.

So the city then fell to Alexander the Great. It did resist, and because of its resistance, he was very cruel and fierce in his destruction of the city of Tyre. He destroyed it so thoroughly that the city of Tyre became lost historically. In fact, there were even those who questioned the existence of Tyre, because it, they, they searched for the site of Tyre, and really could not find it.

One day a group of biblical archeologists were up there in that area, and they were watching some fishermen as they were spreading their nets on the rocks there, and they noticed that these rocks didn't seem to be natural. They began to study it, and they realized that these rocks were actually set there, and suddenly the whole picture came together. They had found the causeway that Alexander the Great had built. They thought that this was just a peninsula. They called it a peninsula. But actually they discovered that it was the causeway that Alexander the Great had built, out to the island city of Tyre. Of course it became a, one of those remarkable archeological discoveries that confirm the truth of the Bible.

Now Ezekiel, interestingly enough, in chapter twenty six, he wrote about a hundred years after Isaiah, Ezekiel wrote during the time of the Babylonian captivity. But Ezekiel, interestingly enough in chapter twenty six, describes the destruction of Tyre. It is interesting that he, in describing the destruction of Tyre, uses two pronouns. "And he, and he, and he", and then suddenly he changes, and he said, "and they, and they, and they".

As you read the prophecies carefully, you will realize that he is prophesying of both the destruction that would take place by Nebuchadnezzar, "and he will do this, and he will do that". Then he goes ahead even further into the future, to the time of Alexander the Great, and he describes him taking the rocks of the city and casting them into the midst of the sea, scraping the dust of the city, and casting it into the sea. He very graphically describes exactly how Alexander the Great took the city. It was almost as though Alexander the Great had the prophecy of Ezekiel, and said, "Wow this is a good idea! Why don't we do this?" It was predicted of course, by Ezekiel in a very interesting fashion. Again, God's marvelous word of prophecy that stands!

Now here in twenty three, and probably as the reference to the destruction of Tyre, by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Babylonians. Because he does speak of the Chaldeans in verse thirteen. This people was not. But at the time that Isaiah was writing, the Babylonians were not really a powerful nation at all. They had been conquered by the Assyrians, and were vassals to the Assyrians. They were not considered a world power, and yet he speaks of Babylon's power that shall rise. So, "The burden of Tyre."

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; [Tarshish is a community that was established in the area of Spain, by the people of Tyre.] for it is laid waste, there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them (23:1).

Now when Tyre finally fell, of course their navy was out continuing with the merchandising, and the trading on the Mediterranean. Chittim is the area, and was one of the major ports, in Cyprus. Thus in returning to Tyre, they would stop in Cyprus. As they are coming back, they received the reports there in Cyprus, in Chittim, the fact that it has fallen, that the city of Tyre no longer exists, that it has been destroyed. So the howling, they, there's no home to go to, as they are returning back to Tyre, there's no, there's nothing there. It's fallen, it has been taken. So it is laid wast, there's no house, no entering in.

Be still, ye inhabitants of the coast; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished (23:2).

And so the coast lands of Phoenicia, including Zidon. The wealthy area because of the merchandising over the entire Mediterranean.

And by the great waters the seed of Shihor (23:3),

Shihor is the river Nile, and the Nile delta, that very fertile area where so much grain was grown. Now the ships of Phoenicia, or Tyre, would take the grain from Egypt. They, and, and they would of course buy it in

Egypt, and sell it around the Mediterranean. Egypt supplied much of the food for the people of the Mediterranean. So he is talking about the problems in Egypt, as the result of the destruction of Tyre. Thus the demise of the Phoenician navy. “And by the great waters the seed of Shihor.”

the harvest of the river, [The river Nile] is her revenue; and she is the mart of the nation. [Or the marketplace for the nation.] Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: [The sister city of Tyre] for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, [I bring] nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins (23:3-4).

So the wasting of the city, no more children, no more young men, virgins. No more marrying and so forth.

As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre. So pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the coast. [It was a blow to all of the coastal cities of the Mediterranean when this great merchant navy was actually destroyed, because of the mother city being destroyed.] Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? [As we mentioned, Tyro's one of the ancient cities of the world.] her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honourable men of the earth? [He asks the question, “Who has taken this counsel to destroy her?”, and he answers in verse nine...] The Lord of hosts has purposed it, [So the destruction actually comes from the Lord.] to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring in contempt all of the honourable of the earth (23:5-9).

The Bible tells us that, “Pride cometh before destruction, a haughty spirit before the fall”. The Bible tells us that there are six things, yea, seven things that God, or six things that God hates, yea, seven are an abomination unto Him. One thing that is abominable to God is the pride of man. The pride of people being lifted up with pride. God hates that, and God has set Himself against the proud. “Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord”, the scripture says, “and He will lift you up. But the proud”, He said, “He will abase.” So because of the pride of these people, because they were trusting in their own strength, in their own wisdom, in their own power, the Lord allowed them to be brought down. Pride is a dangerous thing for an individual, it is a dangerous thing for a nation. So because of that pride, God will bring them into contempt.

Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength. He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the Lord has given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof. [So it's as though the Lord commanded the Babylonians to come, and to destroy this city.] And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, and pass over to Chittim; [And many of the people did escape, and move to Cyprus when Tyre fell.] but there also you will have no rest (23:10-12).

In some of the earlier sieges under Shalmaneser, when they fled to Cyprus, he pursued them there. They would have no rest.

Behold the land of the Chaldeans; [The Babylonians] this people was not, [At the time that Isaiah wrote, they weren't really powerful at all.] till the Assyrians founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; and he brought it to ruin. [So he's talking about the Chaldeans, or the Babylonians bringing it to ruin.] Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste. IT shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten for seventy years, according to the days of the one king: and after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as a harlot (23:13-15).

Now seventy years is often used in the Bible as an indeterminate type of a number. It's a figurative kind of a number that just speaks as an indeterminate number. You remember when Peter, feeling that he was really growing in grace, getting the message of forgiveness, beginning to understand how important it is to have a forgiving spirit, thinking that he was maybe stretching it a bit, but impressing the other disciples no doubt, said, “Lord how often shall I forgive my brother for the same offense? Seven times?” I'm sure Peter thought he was stretching it, but it would impress the other guys. “You know Peter, he actually thinks he can forgive a guy seven times for the same thing? Man that guys' really growing in grace!” And the Lord turned to him and said, “No Peter, seventy times seven.” The seventy being an indeterminate number. The Lord isn't saying four hundred and ninety times, and then wail on him, you know! Ha, ha! What the Lord is indicating is that forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics, it's a matter of spirit. We're to have a forgiving

spirit. But seventy is often used in the scriptures as a, as an indeterminate period of time.

So there is really nothing historically, that would help us to understand this seventy years that the prophet is talking about. It is possible that there are things in history that we do not know, and where in reality there was a seventy year span in which there was sort of rebirth. We don't know. As I say, it's one of those things that we don't have any clear historic light on this seventy years, of which the prophet speaks. "Forgotten for seventy years according to the days of one king, and after the seventy, shall they sing as a harlot."

But, in singing as a harlot, harlots often were entertainers. They would play guitars, or harps, and they would sing and, and they had their songs. They were sort of, oh, minstrel type of songs. They were story types of songs. They would sing of different events of history, different things.

So take the harp, and go about the city, thou harlot that has been forgotten; [Tyre] make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered. And it shall come to pass that after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, [So there is yet a future, after this indeterminate period of time, God is going to visit Tyre.] and she shall turn to her hire, and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise [And here's the interesting thing.] and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: [A real change in Tyre, as she uses the skills and abilities in merchandising for the Lord's glory.] it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing (23:16-18).

In other words, rather than enriching themselves, they will be doing it for others. It will be a thing where Tyre will shine out as a, as a city that is providing for the needs of the Lord's people, and not selfishly enriching for themselves, or hoarding for themselves. This probably will have its fulfillment in the kingdom age, as so interesting, the prophets so often deal with what is going on, the darkness, the bleakness, the, the, and all that, future, immediate future holds.

But always out at the end, in the day of the Lord, when He reigns in righteousness, then the glorious life. They never leave you in the darkness. They never leave you in despair. They never leave you in the, in the gloom of that destruction that is coming, that woe that is coming, but they always go on out to the light in the future, in the glorious day when the Lord shall reign over the earth. And, so with Tyre. The end, and the future, and the kingdom will be glorious!

Chapter 24

In chapter twenty four, he looks at the dark days that are coming upon the earth. The days during the great tribulation. The days when God's wrath is to be poured out upon the earth. The day when God is going to judge the earth for its iniquity. Putting together the whole pictures from many passages throughout the Bible, we know that God had determined seventy seven year cycles for the nation of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem. That sixty nine of those seven year cycles were fulfilled. From the going forth of the commandments, to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, to the time that the Messiah came, was to be sixty nine, sevens, or four hundred and eighty three years.

Now that leaves a seven year cycle yet to be fulfilled. A seven year period in which God will deal again with the nation of Israel, even as God has dealt with them as His people in the past, God will again deal with Israel in this future seven year period of time. The last part of this seven year period of time, will be the time that is known in the scripture as the great tribulation. Many of the prophets spoke of this period of great tribulation. Daniel made reference to it, as well as Amos, as well as Nahum, as well as Isaiah, as well as Jeremiah, all throughout the old testament, there's a lot of references to this period of great tribulation, this three and a half year, it's a short period as far as man's history is concerned, but it is so packed with the judgments of God, that there, it takes up a major portion of the scripture, deal with this seven year period of time, or, three and a half year period of time. Especially the last three and a half of the seven years.

But a major portion of the scriptures deals with it. In fact, the majority of the book of Revelation, centers in on this three and a half year period of time. From the sixth chapter of the book of Revelation, through the eighteenth chapter, it zeros in on just a three and a half year period of history. So the events are so momentous, that much of the scripture is devoted to it. Jesus spoke about it in many places, especially in Matthew, twenty four, and Luke, twenty one.

So there is this great tribulation in which the earth is to be judged by God, and the wrath of God is to be poured out upon the earth, in cataclysmic judgment. Such as the world has never experienced before, or will ever experience again. Great cataclysmic judgment. So chapter twenty four, deals with this great period of God's judgment that will precede the glorious reign of Jesus Christ. The coming again of the Messiah to reign. Jesus, in talking about the great tribulation said, "And immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall they see the sign of the Son of Man, coming with clouds, and great glory." In fact, the coming of Jesus Christ, will bring an end to the great tribulation. And the great tribulation will end in that battle of Armageddon, which you've heard so much about. Perhaps it's sort of ambiguous in your mind just what the battle of Armageddon is all about, but that will culminate the great tribulation period. It will all lead up to the battle of Armageddon, and then, the return of Jesus Christ, in glory. So as we get into chapter twenty four, he tells us things that are gonna happen upon the earth during this great tribulation.

Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty (24:1),

Now John tells us that in the four seals, in the book of Revelation, chapter six, as the Lord opens up this scroll that has the seven seals, as He opens the first four seals, there is a corresponding judgment of God upon the earth. We read that in the opening of the first four seals, that one fourth of the earth's population will be destroyed. That's heavy! Over a billion people will be destroyed in just the beginning of this tribulation period. Later on in the book of Revelation, as these demonic hoards are unleashed upon the earth, some two hundred million, by these, one third of the remaining population of the earth will be destroyed, or another billion people. So that's just in two of the events, of which there are many, many events. So this great tribulation period will pretty much empty the earth of inhabitants. It'll pretty much wipe out mankind. There will be very few that will survive the great tribulation period.

If you're banking on survival, in the great tribulation period, good luck, you'll need it! People I know are, are building little survival places up in Oregon, and they've got food stored up for seven years, and they've got water, and, and they've got all of these supplies, and they have their M-16's and all too, because they figure that when everybody else runs out of food, they're gonna have to defend their supplies of food, and, and all of these survivalists. They're really making plans, and they write books on how to survive and so forth. Thank God I don't have to worry about that! I've got an escape clause in my contract with the Lord, that I'm not worried about surviving through.

As Jesus is talking about the great tribulation in Matthew, or in Luke twenty one, He said, "Pray ye always that you'll be accounted worthy to escape these things." He was telling what was gonna happen in the great tribulation. The sun darkened, the moon turned to blood, and these things. He said, "Pray that you'll be accounted worthy to escape these things, that you might be standing before the Son of Man."

In Revelation, chapter four and five, John is taken into the heavenly scene, and there he sees the throne of God, and he sees the scroll in the right hand of the one who sits upon the throne, and he hears the angel proclaiming with a strong voice, "Who is worthy to take the scroll and loose the seals!" John sees Jesus, as He steps forth and takes the scroll. He hears the praises when this takes place. "Worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll, and loose the seals thereof. For He was slain, and has redeemed us by His blood, out of every nation, and family, and tongue, and people, and He has made us unto our God, kings, and priests, and we shall reign with Him upon the earth!" That's the song of the church. Only the church can sing that song. It's not the song of Israel, the song of the church. I expect to be there singing the song! I've memorized the lyrics, I'm just waiting to get the tune. But I plan to be standing before the Son of Man, there in glory!

The tribulation does not begin until chapter six, when He begins to loose the seals from this scroll. That's when things break loose. Actually, all hell breaks loose on earth. That's, that's more than figurative. But all hell will break loose on earth, before heaven comes to earth. Again, the end of the chapter, heaven comes to earth. So they always go through the darkness, but there's light on the other side. So there's, the chapter ends with the glorious reign of the King of kings, our Lord. So, "The Lord makes the earth empty."

he makes it a waste, he turns it upside down, he scatters abroad the inhabitants thereof. [So very few people surviving this holocaust that will come from heaven.] And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; with the servant, so with his master; with the maid, and her mistress; with the buyer, and the seller; with the lender, with the borrower; with the taker of usury, with the giver of usury (24:1-2).

In other words, it's gonna, it's gonna cross all, all segments of society. No one is going to escape. The rich will be in the same boat as the poor. It's going to effect everybody. No one, their riches won't be of any value, no one will be able to escape from these judgments that are coming. It'll happen to all of the people, regardless their background.

The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken his word. [And as we said, many places in the scripture has He spoken concerning this.] The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. [And then he tells you the reason for this great judgment.] For the earth also is defiled under the inhabitants [Or by the inhabitants] thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, they have changed the ordinance, and they have broken the everlasting covenant (24:3-5).

So these three things. "They've transgressed the laws of God, they've changed the ordinances of God." God has ordained certain things, they've changed those ordinances of God. God has ordained marriage, God has ordained a family institution. Man are, man is guilty of changing those ordinances of God. So the rebuke is coming because, they've transgressed the laws of God. Look at the world today! Look at our land which is given in appellation, which is truly a misnomer, a Christian America. Any resemblance is purely coincidental! We're so far from a Christian nation! Yes there are Christians in this nation, thank God for that! If you're not a Christian, you'd better thank God for that! Because you're living under benefits that have accrued because of the strong body of Christ in America. But, even here, we see more, and more, and more, the changing of the ordinances of God, and the breaking down of law, God's law. The breaking of God's everlasting covenant.

Therefore [Because of this] has the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left (24:6).

We read in Revelation about these stars that fall from heaven, and burn a third part of the earth. The trees that are upon the earth. We realize that God once judged the earth by water, and destroyed the earth with the flood. God promised that He would never destroy it with a flood again, but He didn't promise that He'd never destroy it! The next destruction of the earth will be by fire, not by flood! Thus, the reference to the earth being burned. "Few men are left."

The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, and all the merry hearted do sigh (24:7).

There's no more partying, everybody is in misery. You know, they, they talk about an atomic war, and how to survive, how to build a bomb shelter, and how to store the food and water. How to survive an atomic war. You know the people who will really be hurting are those who do survive. Should the earth ever see such a horrible holocaust as an atomic war, I hope I'm in the epicenter of the blast. Because to survive would be horrible! If you would go over to Russia today, and around Chernobyl, and you could see the devastation still, and you could see the horrible things that have transpired as the result of that melt down of that nuclear facility, you would realize that it is the survivors that really go through torment and suffering! So they shall not drink wine with a song, all the partying will cease.

The strong drink will be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in. There's a crying for wine in the streets; and all the joy is darkened, and the partying of the land is gone. And in the city is, [In the city is] left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done (24:9-13).

Now when they would pass, when they would, when they would shake the olive tree, when they would harvest their olives, they would shake the branches to shake the olives down. Now there would always be a few berries up you know, in the top branches, after they had gone through, and, and harvested the olives. There would always be a few, a few olives left, and the poor of the land could come in and take those few olives. But he's saying that, so there will only be a few inhabitants of the earth left. Just as few as there are a few olives left when, when the, when the tree has been harvested, or when the grapes had been harvested, they always forget, or leave a little bunch here or there. But just a very few in comparison with the, with the population that once was. Thus, they will, they will be like the gleaning. Just a few left upon the earth.

They shall lift up their voice, and they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, and they shall cry aloud from

the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the coasts of the sea. For from the uttermost part of the earth we've heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me (24:14-16)!

Or, "My pining", leanness is, is that pining away to death. So the prophet in seeing this, he is crying out, "My pining, my pining, woe unto me!

the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. And fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth (24:16-17).

Fear, pit, snare. The pit is often in the scripture, a reference to the abusso, and to those demonic beings that inhabit the abusso. Now the Bible speaks of Hades, which in Hebrew is, "Sheol". It is translated in your Bible, "hell", sometimes translated, "grave". The place of the dead, Sheol. The Bible tells us that Sheol is in the heart of the earth. The place of the incarceration of the dead. We realize that up until the death of Christ, all of the dead went into Sheol, into the grave.

But we also realize, from Jesus, Luke sixteen, that, "prior to His death, Sheol was divided into two compartments." Jesus tells us the story of the rich man, and Lazarus. How the poor man Lazarus died, after a miserable life in poverty, but was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Moreover, the rich man also died, and in Hades", hell, the Hebrew "Sheol", "he lifted up his eyes being in torment, and he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus there being comforted in Abraham's bosom. He cried and he said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus over here, that he may take and dip his finger in water, and touch my tongue, because I'm tormented in this heat!', Abraham said, 'Remember in the lifetime, your lifetime, you had the good things, Lazarus the evil. Now he is comforted while you're tormented. Besides that, between us there's a gulf, and it's impossible for those that are on this side to come over there, and those that are on that side, to come over here'." The inseparable gulf.

Now when Jesus died, He descended into Sheol, into Hades, and for three days and three nights, He was in Hades. When Jesus wrote, now He was in that portion where Abraham was, He wasn't on the other side, He was in the portion where Abraham was. He was preaching to those souls that were there in that prison. When Jesus ascended from the grave, He opened hell, that portion of hell. So that, Paul tells us in Ephesians four, "He who has ascended", Jesus, "is the same one who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth. But when He ascended, He led the captives from their captivity."

One of the prophecies concerning Jesus, in Isaiah sixty one, that, "He was going to set at liberty, those that were bound, and to free the captives from the prison." So that's exactly what Jesus did. So Peter tells us, "He preached to those souls in prison." And, he tells us also in Acts, chapter one that, "God did not leave His soul in hell, neither did He allow the Holy One to see corruption, but this same Jesus hath God raised, and has exalted in heaven on high." So that's Hades, Sheol, or hell.

Now the scripture tells us of another place called the abusso. It's translated often times, "the bottomless pit". The Greek word is "abusso". Now the pit, or this shaft, or bottomless pit, or abusso, is a shaft that goes from the surface of the earth, down into Hades. This abusso is the place of incarceration for fallen angels, or demonic spirits. In the book of Revelation, in this time of great tribulation, as Isaiah tells us here, "the pit is a snare, and the pit".

During the time of the great tribulation, this pit, this abusso is going to be opened. He saw an angel come from heaven with a key to the abusso, and he opened up the abusso, and these spirit beings, these demons, invaded the earth. He describes their grotesque form, and their power to torment men who dwell upon the earth. That's why I said it's gonna be hell on earth for awhile, during the great tribulation period, as these demonic forces come out and inflict their suffering and their pain upon mankind. John tells you more about that in the book of Revelation.

So Satan, and we'll get to this in a moment, but it'll give you background for the rest of the text here. When Jesus comes again, to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth, and what we call His millennial reign, when He reigns over the earth for a thousand years, with His church. We shall reign with Him, as kings and priests. When Jesus comes again to establish His kingdom, the Antichrist, the false, and the false prophet, the beast, and the false prophet, will be cast alive into Gehenna.

Now Gehenna is another place. It is the eternal abode of the unrighteous. Hell is not an eternal abode.

Hell will one day give up all of the dead which are in it, and stand before God at the great white judgment, and then they will be cast into Gehenna. Jesus mentioned Gehenna quite a bit, and it's important that you sort of dig into the Greek so that you'll know when the reference is to Gehenna, and the reference is to Hades. Because there is, there is a great difference between the two.

Now Satan will be bound. Took a great chain, and He bound Satan, and He cast him into the abusso during this thousand year period that Jesus will reign. Near the end of the thousand year period, in which Jesus is reigning, Satan will be released for a short time, from the abusso, and will go out to deceive the nations once more, and will gather together many from the nation, to try to overthrow Jesus in Jerusalem. It is at that time that Satan is put, with those that follow him, on into Gehenna, "into outer darkness", Jesus said, "where there's weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, where the worm dieth not, neither is the fire quenched." Out of the scene. Then there will be the new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. The former things will not be remembered, or brought into light, when we enter into that eternal, glorious realm of God's kingdom!

In the beginning there was one government in the world, the government of God. The government of life and light. The universe was all in harmony with God. There was no dissenting voices. The whole universe worshipping God, in harmony with God. But one of God's created beings, one of the highest order, of His created beings, an angel by the name of Lucifer, whose name means "son of the morning", who was a governing cherub. The anointed cherub that covereth, or that governs, was lifted up in pride, and thought to exalt himself against God. Suddenly you had a second kingdom in the universe, a kingdom of death and darkness, opposed to God's kingdom of light and life.

A third of the angels followed with Satan in his rebellion against God. Thus you have the two spirit forces in the universe. Those of righteousness, following after God, faithful to God, and Satan, followed by those angels which kept not their first estate. Now many of these angels that followed Satan, are being reserved today in the abusso, for this day of judgment. When the abusso is open, they will come out upon the earth, in, in great numbers.

Now as Isaiah is, and with that kind of a background, let's go into it now, "Fear, and the pit, and the abusso, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth."

It shall come to pass, [who] that he who flees from the noise of the fear will fall into the pit; and he that comes out of the midst of the pit will be taken in the snare: [The trap] for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. [And then he speaks about this great shaking of the earth.] The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again (24:18-20).

So the destruction of this earth, and whether or not this is that final destruction that is recorded by Peter, or this is just part of the great tribulation when God shakes the earth up. Because we know, during the great tribulation there's gonna come a world wide earthquake. An earthquake of such magnitude, that everything that can be shaken, will be shaken until only that which cannot be shaken will be left. So the earth is broken down, clean dissolved. Peter speaks about the earth being dissolved with a fervent heat, the elements burning. The earth is moved exceedingly.

At the present time, the earth is tilted at twenty three and a third degrees in its axis, in its relationship to the sun. The tilt on the earth, of the earth's axis, is what causes us to have the summer and the winter seasons. It's the result of the earth being tilted as we are revolving around the sun, the tilt gives us in the summertime, a longer exposure to the sun, and in the winter time, a shorter exposure to the sun, in the relationship to the orbit, in which we are going around the sun. We're getting now, out to the end of that orbit, where we are getting the days shorter, and shorter, and by next Saturday, we will come to the shortest daylight of the year. Then, as we move away from that point, the days will start getting longer, and longer, and longer, until we come out to June twenty second, and we hit the other end of the spectrum. Then the days will start getting, but it's that tilt of the axis. So it gives us our winter season, our summer season.

Of course we know that right now, as it is, we're entering into the winter period. In South America, they're entering into their summer period. Some gracious, blessed soul, had the thoughtfulness to give to me,

some apricots this morning, that probably came from Chile. But you see, right now it's apricot season down there, and they, they know my pension for apricots, and so they've brought me some, and no doubt from Chile, and oh man did I enjoy them! I must confess, I hoarded them. I didn't share them with the family and all, I ate them all before I left the office. But, I guess my dream world would be to be able to live here, you know, during the apricot season, and then move South America, during the apricot season again. But, that's because of the tilt.

Now the earth's axis does change every once in awhile. About every five thousand years in fact. So that, what is now our north pole and south pole, were not always the north pole, and south pole. They're, the earth was not always tilted at twenty three and a third degrees. This axis does shift every once in awhile. So you read in the physics books of the polar axis shift. I believe that during the great tribulation period, there will take place a polar axis shift, and it could be that when the polar axis shifts again, that we will come into a truer alignment with the sun.

Now the effect of that would be tremendous climactic changes upon the earth. First of all, the polar ice caps would melt. It would give you more water, it would raise the level of the oceans, and thus there'd be less land surface, and more water surface upon the earth, which would bring more water into the atmosphere, which would bring more rain over the whole earth, and would cause a ceasing of the jet stream, and thus a more mild climate over the whole earth. Covered with a water canopy, and could very well bring about again, the conditions that existed during the time of the garden of Eden. Where the whole earth, the land surface would become just a verdant, glorious, garden, and even the polar areas would become beautiful again, tropical, lush areas, as they once were. We know that because of the charcoal deposits at the south pole, and the mammoths that have been found in the frozen tundra of Siberia.

So the earth, we read here is going to be moved, "reel to and fro". Gonna be removed like a cottage. There are other passages of scripture that refer to this. But with it there'll be this gigantic earthquake, that will just shake up everything upon the earth. Not just a local earthquake, such as we experience, and we're told we are going to experience when the San Andreas fault makes its correction. There's a slow, gradual you know moving of the tectonic plates of the earth, and it's going to make its adjustment they say, soon, and when it does, we're all gonna be shook pretty bad. But that's local, that only effects a small little segment. This is gonna be the whole earth shaking.

Now it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high (24:21),

Now these high ones that are on high, are a reference to the demonic forces that are in control of the world. Men guided by these demonic forces. You remember Paul the apostle said, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places." He's talking about these spirit entities, spirit forms. God's gonna punish them.

also he will punish those kings who have been inspired by these demonic forces (24:21).

Hitler was inspired, and governed by demonic forces. Hitler was under the influence of men who were called, "the white masters". Men who were in league with demonic forces and powers. These demonic forces are governing, and controlling so many of the governments of man. You wonder, "Why can, why can't they see what they are doing to the world?" Maybe they can't, and maybe it is deliberate. We know that it is being set up for the Antichrist. We know that we have this anarchy that's growing throughout the earth. They'll be punished.

The Supreme Court, boy how they will be punished, because of the damage that they have done to our nation spiritually! Those decisions by which they have ruled the Bible out, and pornography, in. Those decisions by which they have spared the lives of the murderers, but they have caused the murder of thirty million babies. The fallacy, and the idiocy of the judgments that have been made, and of the laws that have been enacted. If you destroy an eagle's egg, you can be fined a thousand dollars, and you can spend a hundred days in jail, if you break an eagle's egg. It's just protected by our laws. Weird laws that will protect an eagle's egg, recognizing that there is life potential there. When does an eagle become an eagle? Ha, ha! When does a baby become a baby? So we find the inconsistencies, and God is gonna judge.

And they shall be gathered [verse twenty two] together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, [Satan will

be bound, and cast into the abusso.] *and they shall be shut up in this prison, [In the abusso.] and after many days they shall be visited (24:22).*

As we told you, at the end of the thousand year reign, Satan's gonna be released for a short season. Well if God has him bottled up, why does He let him out again? Why would, why would God allow Satan to be loosed at the end of the thousand years? Because during that thousand year reign of Christ, there will be many people who will be born during that period of time, by those who have survived the great tribulation, and allowed to live into the kingdom age, so that by the end of the thousand years, the earth's population will be quite large once again. Because they will be living in an ideal situation. Longevity of life, such as the time of Adam will be restored. The earth will be restored. The living conditions will be ideal. There'll be no sickness, no colds and that kind of stuff. So it's gonna be ideal living conditions during this thousand year reign.

But, all of the people on the earth will be forced to be righteous. We will rule with a rod of iron. The reign of Christ will be an iron rule reign. He will break in pieces those that would defy the laws. It'll be an iron clad reign of Christ, so that the people will serve the Lord yet, because they'll be forced to. But whether or not they are really serving in his heart, in their heart, we do not know. We will not know until Satan is released and then, those who are rebelling in their hearts against the Lord, will follow after Satan, in this final rebellion, in which God will never be challenged or questioned in His judgment again, of unrighteous men.

Then the moon shall be confounded, the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign (24:23)

What that is saying is the brightness of the glory of Jesus, as He reigns, will cause the, the moon, and the brightness of the moon and sun to just pale, in the glory of the brightness of Jesus. You remember when Peter, and James, and John were there on the mount of transfiguration? "And His face did shine like the sun." Read the Revelation, chapter one, the description of Jesus again. The brightness of the glory of Jesus will be so bright, that the, that the sun will pale in, in contrast with the brightness of Jesus.

when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously (24:23).

So the Lord will come with ten thousands of His saints. Abraham, David, Samuel, Daniel, Paul, Peter, you and I, coming again. The ancients, our fathers in the faith, here upon the earth, dwelling upon the earth at that time, with Jesus, as He establishes God's kingdom here upon the earth, and rules and reigns over the earth, with the ancients, reigning gloriously!

So again, dark days? Oh yes, but, there's light on the other side! The Lord always brings you into the hope of the light! Never leaves you in the darkness. Only the world does that. Looking at the world today, it's dark, and I don't see any light for the world, or in the world, apart from Jesus Christ, the glorious Light of the world. May we walk in His light.

Father we thank You again tonight, that You have given to us the score, whereby we can follow the events, and we can see where they end. Lord, we pray that we might, O God, put our lives, and our values in things that are eternal. May we not be caught up Lord in this temporal world that is going to perish, but may we Lord invest, and lay up our treasures in heaven. Eternal treasures, with You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.