



Matthew 24:1-26

Matthew 24:1-26
Tape #8023
By Chuck Smith

And so Jesus went out, and departed from the Temple: his disciples came to him showing him the buildings of the Temple (24:1).

One of the gospels tells us they were remarking at the great stones. Herod was a little guy but he was known for the great stones with which he built, the various buildings in Jerusalem. Today on the Temple Mount that Herod built, you can see stones that are eight feet thick, five feet high, forty-five feet long. And so no doubt in the building of the Temple itself, there were some of these great stones. They were covered with marble, covered with gold. Some of them weighing up to a hundred and sixty-five tons, the Temple was not even at this time complete—probably wasn't fully covered with the marble. And so the disciples were just remarking at these huge stones. And Jesus made a remarkable prediction,

He said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down (24:2).

Amazing prediction, I imagine that the disciples had a hard time actually conceiving of such a thing, these huge stones being thrown down. And yet forty years later, when Titus came in with the Roman troops and they destroyed the Temple, according to the historian Josephus, it was just as though there had never been a building there. "Not one stone was left standing upon another."

Today when you go to Jerusalem and you go to the area of the Western Wall, where the Jews still gather for prayer, there at the area where they are praying, you are actually standing some seventy feet above the floor of the Tyropian Valley where Jesus would have been walking. Some people say I walked today where Jesus walked. I walked to the Western Wall. You'd have to burrow seventy feet down to get to the Tyropian valley where He actually walked. This whole Western Wall area has been covered over. When the Romans destroyed the Temple, they pushed these huge stones over the wall, down into the Tyropian valley, onto that roadway that went along the bottom of the Tyropian valley. And as these stones fell onto the roadway, they crushed the huge pavement stones of the road of the Tyropian valley. And thus, you have about seventy feet of rubble and stones from the bottom of the Temple Mount from the Tyropian valley. And as you're going up from the Dung Gate to the Temple Mount area itself, on the left hand side, you can see the Western Wall with the Jews praying. On the right hand side they have done excavations down to the road of the Tyropian valley and they have left many of these stones in the position they fell when they were pushed over the wall by the Roman troops.

And so you get an idea of the destruction and the prophecy of Jesus, as remarkable as it was, was literally fulfilled within forty years when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple, this great Temple built by Herod, was utterly razed to the ground. And so from that Temple area, they went on across to the mount of Olives, Jesus no doubt had a favorite place there on the mount of Olives where He would be with His disciples, sort of away from the noise of the city and an opportunity to just pray with them and talk with them. We remember that in just another couple of nights, He'll be going over there again to this place on the mount of Olives and praying, and from that spot will be arrested.

So he sat upon the mount of Olives (24:3),

great view of the wall of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount area and all,

and the disciples came unto him privately, and they said, Tell us, when shall these things be (24:3)?

The "these things" being the destruction of the Temple that He had just prophesied. When is it going to happen? When is the Temple going to be destroyed?

and what will be the sign of your coming, and the end of the age (24:3)?

It is interesting that they are asking concerning the sign of His coming because at this point, they were really believing that the kingdom was still going to be immediately set up. And the idea of your coming, that is your coming into your kingdom, the end of the age is the end of the world governments. We are living in

what the Bible terms the “time of the Gentiles.” It began with the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the Jews going into captivity. From that time the Jews did not really exist as a nation until 1948 as a sovereign nation. They were always under the rule of some other power. And so this is what is known in the Scripture as the “times of the Gentiles” and the whole timeframe of the Gentile world-governing powers was laid out in the book of Daniel, both in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and the interpretation of Daniel’s vision. The whole Gentile world-power kingdoms were laid out from the Babylonian kingdom to the final kingdom of a federation of ten national powers that will then be ruled by the antichrist.

And so they are asking Jesus the signs of His coming, the end of the age, and asking for the time of the destruction of the Temple. So in the intervening discourse by Jesus, you have intertwined here prophecies of the events that will precede the destruction of the Temple, along with prophecies that will be the signs of His coming and the end of the age. And Jesus didn’t make a clear distinction always, and so they are intertwined prophecies with regard to the destruction of the Temple, prophecies with regard to the return of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you (24:4).

This is something that Jesus is quite concerned with. People being deceived by men who would offer themselves as the Messiah, who would declare themselves to be the saviors of the world.

For many shall come [He said] in my name, saying, I am the Messiah; and they shall deceive many (24:5).

[Verse eleven,] *Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many (24:11).*

[And then in verse twenty-four,] *For there shall arise false Messiahs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (24:24).*

In light of this warning of Jesus concerning the deception, it has to do basically with the coming of the antichrist and the false prophet as is predicted in the book of Revelation chapter thirteen, and in Second Thessalonians chapter two. And as we read these prophecies, Revelation 13:14, concerning the false prophet, “And he deceives them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” Jesus said, Beware, let no man deceive you, He talks about the signs and wonders that they will be showing, that if possible, they would deceive the very elect, and here he is able to deceive by the miracles and the powers that he is doing.

In Second Thessalonians 2:9, referring to the antichrist, “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

So the antichrist, when he comes, will have the powers of darkness working with him and he will be showing signs and lying wonders and will deceive all of those who will perish. And the reason why, because they did not have the love of the truth. In other words, God says and you can’t blame Him, you don’t want to believe the truth, then believe a lie. And He gives them over to be deceived.

So Jesus warns three times concerning this very important sign. The man who will come on the scene claiming to be Christ and having, it would appear, supernatural powers, the ability to do marvelous, wondrous feats that will astound the people and by those, deceive the people. And so that was a continued warning by Jesus through the message. Now He said,

You shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: but see that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, the end is not yet (24:6).

They, of course, did have the wars, the rumors of wars, the Roman troops coming, they besieged Jerusalem, they destroyed Jerusalem, but Jesus said, the end of not yet. “What will be the time of the end?” is one of the questions. This isn’t the end, this is the destruction of Jerusalem and all but not the end. But towards the end, prophecy of the end,

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom (24:7):

In the Greek this would intonate a worldwide state of war. Nations and kingdoms involved. Those we

have had too in this century, the World War I, World War II. It'll be interesting to find out if we will escape this century without World War III. There are a lot of troubled spots in the world today. I expect that we will be seeing tremendous trouble in South Africa in the next few weeks. I expect that it's going to break out into almost a civil war there and will then the western powers decide to move in and it's just really a tender place in the world. Of course, we have so many of the places, Bosnia, Rwanda and all so many places that are ready to erupt. So world wars will be a sign.

and then famines, pestilences, earthquakes (24:7),

We see pictures, we hear stories of famines through Africa. Relief programs sending relief and we have just experienced that tragedy in the area of Africa where we sent in our troops to try to somehow help these people and supply them with food, but how the whole thing just fell apart and now we're moving out and the problem is the same as it was before we entered.

It's famines, pestilences, the world has made tremendous advancements in medical science. We have miracle drugs, it's marvelous how the scientists have been able to develop so many marvelous drugs and ways by which we can prevent certain, what used to be, deadly plagues from destroying vast amounts of people. Diphtheria is something that is almost unheard of anymore because they were able to wipe it out with the vaccinations, immunizations. But yet interestingly enough, some of these things are returning, Tuberculosis is returning. It was practically eradicated in the United States but now, it is becoming a threat again. But I think the major pestilence that is plaguing our world today, of course, is the HIV virus, this retroactive virus that defies so far every endeavor of science to try to develop a cure or an immunity, and it is already mutating into so many different strains that if they can stop one strain, there are other strains that are already working. There are many scientists who declare that because of the complexity of it, there is really very little hope of any real cure. Pestilences.

And then, something that you folks in California don't know much about, earthquakes
in divers places (24:7).

I've lived in California all my life, and that's a long time, and I cannot remember, I remember some of the big quakes, I remember the 1933 quake in which Long Beach suffers tremendous devastation along with Newport, Santa Ana area. We drove down to see the buildings that had collapsed in 1933. I can remember some of the other shakers here in California, but I'll tell you what, I cannot remember as many earthquakes as coming as often as they have in the last few years. You could go years without any earthquake, but it seems that there is a general adjustment of the plates or whatever and we are finding more faults all the time. And we have found and discovered so many faults: the Sylmar fault, and now the Northridge fault, we have a Newport fault area, we have of course the big one, the San Andreas fault, the Landers fault, and whenever the earth begins to quake anymore, you just don't know whose fault it is. Earthquakes, divers places.

[Now Jesus said,] *All of these are the beginning of sorrows (24:8).*

I believe that we are in the beginning of the end. "These are the beginning of sorrows." The famines, the pestilences, the earthquakes, this is the start, this is the beginning. It's not going to get better, and you can't escape it by moving to Missouri. It's going to get worse.

Reading in the paper a couple of weeks ago where they're expecting a huge earthquake most anytime up in the Oregon area. That the coastal area is rising quite rapidly, more rapidly than they have ever observed. And they feel that it is a precursor to a tremendous earthquake that will shake the Pacific northwest. The science of studying the earth faults and all is still relatively in a very early stage and we don't really know too much. They are trying to be able to predict earthquakes and they are still looking for some sure indication of an earthquake, but as yet there seems to be none that they can really predict with any real accuracy. They're starting to say within a month or within two months, but they've been wrong so many times they've almost quit that. Beginning of sorrows, this is the start of it. We're in it. We're at the beginning of the end.

Now Jesus goes back to the destruction of the Temple.

They will deliver you up to be afflicted, they will kill you: you will be hated of all nations for my name's sake (24:9).

That could possibly though also be in these days. It is interesting how that those of the New Age

movement and genre are trying to blame fundamental Christians for the antagonisms and the problems in our society because we are dogmatic as far as what is right and what is wrong. And when we say that a group of people are wrong for living a particular lifestyle, then we are encouraging hate crimes. And thus, more and more they're trying to blame the Christian community for the problems of our society. It is quite possible that it will be determined that one of the great enemies of this world peace that they are seeking to inaugurate will be identified as fundamental Christianity. Already they have begun their attacks against fundamental Christianity and they put us in the branch of fundamental Moslems, the Hamas and the terrorists. And so we have been categorized as possible terrorists and as such, a threat to society. So though this was directed towards the destruction of the Temple, there could be a twofold type of fulfillment of this prophecy where they will deliver you to be afflicted, they will kill you.

This is happening in China today. You see, China is fearful because they believe that the fundamental Christians in Romania, in Bulgaria, in Hungary, in all had a large part to do with the overthrow of communism. And so China has begun a new purge of the Christians and are beating them, killing them, because they see them as a threat to communism in China. "Hated of all nations for my name's sake." Jesus said, Don't marvel if the world hates you, they hated Me. The Bible says to be friends with the world is to be an enemy of God. So watch out, this shaking of hands and when the world is patting you on the back, you better repent and ask God what's wrong with you. Where are you compromising? Because if you really tell it straight, the world's going to hate you for it.

And then shall many be offended, and they will betray one another, and shall hate one another (24:10).

There is the works of Josephus who was a historian at about the time of Christ and shortly after the time of Christ. Josephus, in his writing of the wars of the Jews, because he was with the Roman legion that destroyed Jerusalem, gives very graphic and vivid accounts of the destruction of Jerusalem, the war with the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem. It's very interesting background historic reading of this particular time of history, beginning, he lived and began to write after the crucifixion of Christ but on through the destruction of the Temple. And he describes the conditions in the city of Jerusalem when it was under siege by the Romans. And of course, this business of many being offended, betraying one another, and hating one another came to pass literally. As you read the Wars of the Jews, the accounts of the pillaging, the destruction, the killing, the gangs, all of the things that were taking place in Jerusalem when it was under siege, and according to Josephus, more Jews were killed by the Jews themselves than were killed by the Roman troops. But then again, the warning,

Many false prophets shall rise, deceive many (24:11).

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold (24:12).

A world that is abounding in iniquity. There are some who are hoping and praying for a worldwide revival and I am one of those. However, I do not believe that the church is going to go out in a blaze of glory, and I do believe that at the time of the coming of Christ, iniquity will be abounding on the earth, just as it was in the times of Noah. Again, as we were mentioning this morning, when the body politic gets so weak that it cannot purge the poisons from its system, the body is ready to die. And when there comes such a weakness in the judicial system that it can no longer bring judgment against evil, and no longer is bringing judgment against evil; because evil must be judged when man fails in the judgment of evil, then God steps in and He judges the evil. That's the way it was in the time of Noah. There was no real judgment of evil. Everyone was doing what was right in his own eyes and thus God intervened and God judged. Thus will be the case again. We are getting ready for the judgment of God. Man is not judging evil, so God will step in and God will judge evil and that's what the great tribulation period is all about. It is God's judgment against evil. As they cry to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, hide us from the face of the land, for the day of His wrath has come and who shall be able to stand? So, "iniquity will abound and as the result, the love of many will wax cold."

Sin has never been more available than it is now. All types of perverted sin is being accepted in our society today. First, the homosexuals and the lesbians sought acceptance and they have received acceptance by the general society. Just this weekend, big goings-on in Laguna as they had the Gay Week down there. And when they can walk down the street in their drag outfits and so forth and have people applaud them as

they walk by with their signs, that's a sick society. But now, the homosexuals having achieved their agenda, the next who are attempting now for general acceptance are the pedophiles. And they're beginning to parade in the homosexual parades. They're beginning to demand that they be accepted and that we begin to accept older men with young boys, twelve and thirteen, nine and ten, or whatever is the fixation in the pedophile's mind, the age that he likes, and they like them from six to eight, then they drop them at eight; and then there are others who have different ages, it's a weird thing and they're now seeking acceptance. And they have their own magazines, and they have their own types of lobbying programs just like the homosexual community did and they are working for acceptance. Acceptance of evil. A sick society that cannot purge the poisons from its system.

Sin has never been more readily available and because of that, the love of many has waxed cold. There are some who have gone back to the life of the flesh. But Jesus said,

He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved (24:13).

Hang on. Endure to the end. You say but what about he that doesn't endure to the end? There's no promise for them. There is a promise for the one who will endure to the end. And then Jesus declared,

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (24:14).

What will be the time or signs of the end of the world? One of them will be the gospel will be preached as a witness unto all nations. God is fair and God will give every man an opportunity and chance to repent and be saved. "For God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) And the message of the kingdom will be preached to all nations. Again, man may fail but God's Word will not fail. As a church, we may fail to take the Gospel into all the world. It may be that it's impossible to go into certain parts of the world with the Gospel and it may be that we will fail. It won't be because we didn't try. I was talking with Skip Heitzig just a week or so ago, and Skip was sharing with me that he just returned from India and a Pastors' Conference there and he said, Chuck, it's exciting what the Lord is doing among the native Indians there in India. He said we have over 300 Calvary Chapels now in India. They'll soon have more than we have in the United States. If the church fails, and I believe that for the most part, missions are pulling back rather than expanding, God is going to send His angels to preach the Gospel into all of the nations of the world.

It's told in Revelation chapter fourteen, and this is towards the end of the great tribulation just before Jesus returns, verse six, "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and family, and tongue, and people, and they are saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Revelation 14:6-7)." Angels proclaiming the Gospel in all the world, flying through the midst of heaven and challenging men to fear God, give glory to God, worship Him, the One who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and the fountains of water. "And the third angel," verse nine, "followed, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, or receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment will ascend [anabaino] from the ages through the ages: (Revelation 14:9-11)

So the everlasting Gospel will be preached to all of the world as a witness by the angels, and then shall the end come. That's it.

When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) (24:15).

That's a challenge by Jesus, you read it, now He challenges you, understand it. Understand what is referred to as the abomination of desolation that was spoken of by Daniel the prophet. To understand it, let's go back to Daniel chapter nine. Now remember Jesus commands you to understand it, so let's see if we can. In chapter nine, we have the seventy seven-year periods that are determined upon the nation of Israel. Sixty-nine of those seventy years will transpire between the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, to the

coming of the Messiah. And it is true that from the time of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem by Artaxerxes, 445 B.C. to the coming of the Messiah was 483 years. Now that leaves one seven-year period remaining. The Messiah will be cut off, Daniel prophesied. The people will be dispersed. That took place. Jesus was cut off, crucified; the Jews were dispersed. That was the stopping of God's timeclock, so to speak, because the Jew is God's timeclock. Prophecy centers around Jesus Christ and the Jewish nation. And with the Jews dispersed, the timeclock was stopped and will not be started again until God begins to deal with the Jews once more at the beginning of this final seven-year period. So, talking about the seventieth week, in verse twenty-six, Daniel nine, "After the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off, but not for himself [that is, receive nothing for himself, will not receive the kingdom]: the people of the prince that shall come will destroy the city [that was Titus and the Roman troops] and the sanctuary [as Jesus said, not one stone will be left standing on another]; and the end thereof [that is, of the people] shall be a flood [the Hebrew is dispersion, the people will be dispersed], and unto the end of the war [or the age] desolations are determined. Now he [that is, the prince of the people that shall come, and in this case, it is now the antichrist and you're out some 2,000 years]. And he [the antichrist] will confirm the covenant with many for this final seven-year period: and in the midst of that seven-year period he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblations to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the end, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:26-27).

So, the Temple is going to be rebuilt. Probably this covenant that he makes will grant to them the rights of the rebuilding of the Temple. He will be hailed by many of them as the Messiah, though Jesus warn of these false prophets and false Messiahs, don't be deceived, they're going to be deceived, because they have not the love of the truth. Who's the truth? Jesus Christ. "I'm the way, the truth and life." And because they did not have the love of the truth, God gives them over to a strong delusion, to believe the lie of the antichrist. And they will rebuild their Temple and they will begin again the daily sacrifices and prayers. But at the middle of this seven-year period, after the Temple worship has been reinstituted, this man of sin will come to the Temple of God and demand that they stop the sacrifices and the prayers.

Now let's turn to Second Thessalonians chapter two to get another side, keep Daniel too if you haven't turned away 'cause you're coming back to Daniel, Second Thessalonians chapter two, the warning about deception, verse three, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day of the Lord shall not come, except there is a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, Satan, the son of perdition; Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God [notice now] sits in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). So he comes and he sits in the Temple of God and shows that he is God, and demands to be worshipped as God. This is the abomination which will bring the great tribulation. Desolation, when the world will be made desolate by the wrath and the judgment of God. This is the trigger, this is the straw that breaks the camel's back. This is the last blasphemy of man that God will tolerate. It's over, God's judgment now will fall in a heavy hand upon the world when this event takes place--when this man of sin, the son of perdition, comes to the rebuilt Temple, stops the daily prayers and sacrifices, sets himself up in the holy of holies, and declares that he is God.

One further verse, Daniel chapter twelve, verse eleven, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waits, and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-fifth day" (Daniel 12:11-12). So from the time that this takes place, the abomination that makes desolate, that is, the antichrist standing in the Temple, declaring himself to be God, demanding to be worshipped as God, it will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days until Jesus comes in clouds of glory to establish God's kingdom upon the earth.

In Revelation chapter thirteen, verse fourteen, "And he deceived them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the antichrist; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and did live. He had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast that they should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, in their foreheads: No

man could buy or sell, [without the mark and so forth]" (Revelation 13:14-17).

According to Jesus here in Matthew 24, this "When you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place [that is, standing in the holy of holies of the new Temple], let him who reads understand" (24:15).

Then let them which be in Judaea flee to the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes (24:16-18).

In other words, get, get fast, go! Do not pass, I was thinking of monopoly, you go to jail, do not pass, do not collect 200 or whatever, get! Don't try and take anything with you. Just get out of there! This is the warning. When you see this take place, then flee. Now according to the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation, God is going to give to the Jews wings of an eagle whereby He will transport them to the wilderness place that God has prepared for them, where God will take care of them, watch over them, protect them, for three-and-a-half years until the whole great tribulation period is over.

Isaiah speaks about it in chapter thirteen, I believe it is, Come ye in to the secret place where I will cover you and so forth until the indignation be over past. This is now going into the future, it really doesn't have anything to do with the church at this point, it's signs of the second coming of Jesus Christ. At this point, I believe the church will already have been raptured and out of the scene, Jesus is basically talking to the Jews because He says to them,

Woe to those that are pregnant, and to those that are nursing! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, neither on the sabbath day (24:19-20):

Wouldn't bother us to have to flee somewhere on the Sabbath day but to the Jew, it would be a difficult thing. Because Jesus then says,

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (24:21).

The world has never seen anything to equal this. Never in the history of man has there been anything to equal what is going to transpire when God begins to judge the world in righteous judgment because of all of the things that man has done in rebellion and in defiance against God from the time of Adam to the present day; but it is culminating in our society. You are seeing it, you're being exposed to it. And it is imperative that you stand against it if you are going to escape these things that are going to come to pass upon the earth. Great tribulation such as the world has never seen before, or will ever see again.

And unless those days were shortened, there would be no flesh saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (24:22).

Now we're going to have mention of the elect here in Matthew 24. And it is important that we define who the elect are that Jesus is talking about because here is where a great deal of difficulty comes in understanding Bible prophecy. For there are those who identify the elect as the church of God. And if the elect in this case be the church of God, then there is strong argument for the church being here during the great tribulation. Though that does not really coincide with the nature of God.

You remember when the Lord was on His way to destroy the city of Sodom because of the sin, the blatant sin, it had gotten so bad the homosexuals were parading in the streets in Sodom. And God said that's enough. And when they talked to Abraham, Abraham said, Should not the Lord of the earth be just? Would you destroy the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in Sodom? The Lord said, If there are fifty righteous people, We will spare the city. What if there are forty righteous? If there be forty found who are righteous, We will spare the city. What if there are thirty? If there are thirty found, What if there are ten? If we find ten righteous men, We will spare the city. What happened? They found one righteous man and they said to him, Get out of here. We cannot destroy the city until you are gone. Why? Because when God's judgment falls, it doesn't fall on His people. God's judgment falls on the ungodly. And God is righteous and He would not judge the righteous with the unrighteous. And so as Peter is giving us a commentary on the story of Lot, he said that God delivered that righteous man, Lot, who was vexed by the way people were living around him. Do you find your righteous spirit vexed by the things that are going on in the world in which you live today? Then you're in company with Lot. That's exactly how he felt. When

he heard of the things that were going on, when he saw the things that were going on, his righteous spirit was troubled, he was vexed over it. And then Peter adds his commentary, For the Lord knows how to deliver the righteous but to reserve the ungodly for the day of judgment. So it's important that we define the elect.

Turning to Isaiah chapter forty-five, the Lord said, "For Jacob my servant's sake, and for Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name" (Isaiah 45:4). Israel, mine elect. Isaiah sixty-five, "And I will bring forth the seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there" (Isaiah 65:9). Descendants of Judah and Jacob. Isaiah 65:22, "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." So God declares that Israel is His elect.

It is true that Paul in his writings to the Colossians refers to them as the elect of God, and it is true that the church is elected by God, divine election. But the elect here is a reference to Israel. And if you can see that, then you'll have no problems. If you try and make the elect the Christians and all, then you're going to have the Christians in the great tribulation, you're going to have God acting against His nature of judging the righteous with the wicked and all of these things. So, "for the elect's sake, those days will be shortened" (24:22).

Then if any man says unto you, Lo, here is the Messiah, or there; believe it not (24:23).

For there shall arise false Messiahs, false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect (24:24).

Behold [He said], I have told you beforehand [I've warned you] (24:25).

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not (24:26).

So now we come to the very coming again of Jesus Christ. And the manner of His coming and time is up for the evening so I didn't think we'd make it through twenty-four. I didn't see how we could. We'll finish it next Sunday night, the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew.

Father, we thank You that You have told us, that You have warned us. And may we Lord be wise to heed the warning. And may we walk Lord daily in righteousness, in holiness, in purity, as we await Lord the glorious day of Your coming and as we look forward to the establishing of Your kingdom upon the earth. Lord you said that if we read it, we should understand it. And so we ask for the help of Your Holy Spirit, give us understanding, understanding of Your ways, understanding of Your will, understanding of Your purpose for our lives. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.