



Matthew 24:27-51

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Tape #8024
By Chuck Smith

As Jesus is giving to the disciples the signs of His coming again, and the end of the world system of governments that are in rebellion against God. Way back in the book of Daniel as Nebuchadnezzar the king was one evening, wondering what was going to happen to the world. The Lord gave to him a dream in which He showed to him the future of the world. The kingdoms and governments of man that would reign over the earth. This dream was in the form of a great image that necessitated the interpretation by Daniel. And he told the king that the image with its different metals represented the various kingdoms that would rule. Beginning with the Babylonian kingdom and ending with the federation of ten nations that were related somehow to the Roman empire, iron and clay. When Nebuchadnezzar, while he was watching this image transfixed, he saw a stone come out of the mountains, not cut with hands and it smote the great image in its feet, or the final government of man, and the whole image, the world system, the world governments, collapsed. And the stone grew into a mountain that covered the earth. And in the interpretation that Daniel gave to the king, he told him that that stone was the time when the God of heaven would come and would reign over the earth, bring an end to the reign of man.

And so the disciples are wondering about this. What will be the signs of the coming of Jesus Christ and the end of the worldly governments dominated by Satan and his rebellion against God? So as Jesus is giving them the signs, and we looked at many of them last week, tonight as we begin in verse twenty-four, He is speaking of the false Christs and the false prophets. In the Book of Revelation chapter thirteen, we are told about the false Messiah, he is called the beast. And there is with him this false prophet who causes the world to worship the beast.

There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect (24:24).

Paul the apostle writing about this man of sin that is coming upon the earth, who will actually be the final world ruler in dictatorial power. As Paul writes about him in Second Thessalonians chapter two beginning with verse nine, Paul said, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders," notice Jesus said, great signs and 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 this false Messiah, coming with signs and wonders. As John writes about him in the Book of Revelation chapter thirteen, beginning with verse eleven, writing of the false prophet that shall arise after the antichrist to lead the world in worshipping him, he said: "I beheld another beast [that is, the false prophet] coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him, and he caused the earth and those that dwelt therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders [notice again, Jesus said great signs and wonders], so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceives them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had the 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. And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and he caused that as many as would not worship the image of the beast 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, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name " (Revelation 13:11-17). So this false prophet, doing miracles and wonders. Jesus warns that there'll be the false Christs, false prophets showing great signs and wonders.

The San Diego paper, the San Diego Union, this past week, had this article in the paper, it was written by Phyllis Avery and it was an article concerning Clinton's health plan. And in the article, she writes concerning this card that we will all be required to carry with us. In talking of the plan, she said if parents try to override the plan to get priority care for their sick child, they could be charged with a federal crime. This plan is based on coercion, pure and simple. But here is what is really behind the Health Security Act. You will be required to carry it at all times, your health security card. The card will have a microchip imbedded in it and it will contain your complete medical record. The health security card will be your cashless society debit card and it will be necessary for every purchase you make—no card, no purchase. It will be your travel card. You will be stopped and charged with an offense without your card. It will be your work card—no card, no work. It will be your new world order identification card. Getting close. Cause every man, both small and great, to receive a mark. No one can buy or sell without that mark. We're getting close.

I have here a little injector. Has a sharp needle, point on it. I have in it a little microchip that is, of course, too small for you to see, but this is the injector that they use to inject the microchip into dogs, or into animals. The microchip has a little transmitter in it, as well as information, and if your dog is lost they can actually find it with the micro transmitter that is here. And it can easily be inserted under the skin, you push this little lever and it injects in under the skin this little microchip here. We're getting close. Here's the thing, it's already prepared to just give everybody an identification. When they find that the cards can be lost or cards can be stolen, then they'll come up on another wise plan of just taking that microchip from the card and just inserting it in your hand or in your forehead. So we're getting close.

The antichrist, the false prophet will be able to do signs and wonders, miracles. Both Paul and John speak of their deceiving. And here Jesus said, if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. Now in verse thirty-one,

When Jesus sends his angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (24:31).

We have two mentions of the elect here in the twenty-fourth chapter. The identity of the elect is very important. And if the elect here are the church, which Peter speaks of the church as elect of God, then it would put the church in the great tribulation period. But if the elect is the nation Israel, which I will attempt to show you when we get to verse thirty-one, then that gives the place for the rapture of the church and the church not being here during this time that the antichrist is revealed and the great tribulation is taking place upon the earth.

One of the first events, I believe, that will take place after the church is raptured will be the revelation of the antichrist. In Revelation chapter four, I believe that you have the place of the rapture of the church in the Book of Revelation, when John heard the voice as of a trumpet saying to him, Come up hither, and I will show you things which will be after these things. After what things? After the things of chapter two and three. What are the things of chapter two and three? The things of the church. The messages of Jesus to the churches. So what will happen after the church? A door opened in heaven, the voice like unto a trumpet saying, Come up hither, I'll show you things that will take place after these things. Immediately John was in the spirit, he was caught up into heaven, and there he saw the throne of God and heard the worship of the cherubim about the throne of God; saw the response of the twenty-four elders. He then saw the scroll in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne. He heard the angel proclaim with a loud voice, Who is worthy to take the scroll and lose the seals? And then he saw Jesus as a lamb that had been slaughtered as He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. And He heard the multitudes in heaven as they sang, Worthy is the lamb to take the scroll and lose the seals for He has redeemed us by His blood out of every nation, family, tribe and tongue, and He's made us unto our God kings and priests. That's a song that only the church can sing there in heaven in chapter five.

When Jesus begins to open the seals, the first seal brings forth, I believe, the antichrist, the white horse and his rider. It will be followed by the wars and the famines and the desolation of the great tribulation period, the four horsemen of the apocalypse. Paul the apostle in writing about the son of perdition, he said, "That which hinders shall hinder until he is taken out of the way and then shall he be revealed." That man of sin. But he cannot be revealed as long as the church is here, it's not until the church is removed that the

antichrist can be revealed. Thus the deception of the elect would be the elect of Israel, the nation of Israel elected by God and spoken of as God's elect in the scriptures. Told you I'd tell you about it when we got to verse thirty-one but I got a little bit ahead of myself. We'll hit that a little bit more.

It is interesting that in Second Thessalonians, God declares that He will give to them a strong delusion because they did not want to believe the truth, so God will give them over to a strong delusion that they will believe a lie rather than the truth. It's dangerous to reject the truth. It's amazing the weird things that people will believe once they have rejected the truth of God. They'll even believe things as weird as the evolutionary hypothesis. When you really look at that, it is absolutely absurd. It's the greatest hoax that has ever been perpetrated upon mankind. To think that this human body could result from matter acting on matter over billions of years of time is absolutely ridiculous. If matter acting on matter over a given or long period of time can produce anything, especially something as marvelous as the human body, then why do we have to make buildings? Why do we have to make cars? Why do we have to make watches? Why not just wait for them to evolve. Or they should have evolved a long way back on the chain of evolution because they're not nearly as complex as life; they haven't the capacity of reproducing. That's not, let's go on.

[So Jesus said,] *Now I've told you this before (24:25).*

And it's true, this is the third time that He's warned them about the false Christs and the false prophets who will deceive.

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).

It's interesting that the Jehovah Witnesses were predicting that Christ would come in 1917 and establish His kingdom upon the earth. They were certain of this date and they had even purchased a mansion down in San Diego. And they tried to deed it to Abraham and David, because they felt that the saints would be coming back with the Lord and David would, no doubt, like to live in San Diego. So they tried to deed it to David, but the county would not let them deed it to Abraham or to David, and so they took deed to it themselves. But in the Deed they made a clause that this was to be held perpetually for Abraham and David who would soon be appearing on the earth. Well, 1917 passed and David and Abraham didn't show up, nor did the Lord. But in order to cover their error, they said, Well, it was then that the Lord entered into a secret chamber and He is now ruling the world, He had set up His kingdom but ruling from this secret chamber through actually the Jehovah Witness organization, today. My Bible says that when the Lord comes, He's going to bind Satan, He's going to chain him and bind him and put him in the abussos, the bottomless pit. And if Satan is bound today, there is one problem, his chain is too long, he's got still too much freedom as far as I'm concerned! I still see his work in the world around us.

Jesus said if they say He's in the secret chambers, believe it not. I think that if I were they, I would have chosen something else than a secret chamber to have placed the Lord in my doctrine. Then Jesus going on to talk of His coming said,

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (24:27).

Just like a flash of lightning, just there, bang, brilliant.

For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles [or the vultures] be gathered together (24:28).

There is problems here in interpretation, there are those such as Watchman Nee, who interpret here the carcase as being the body of Christ and the eagles as sort of a supersaint. So wherever the body of Christ is, you're going to have the supersaints. And so those who try to identify themselves as supersaints usually attach the eagle to their names of their fellowships. And sort of following the Watchman Nee interpretation. But in the other places of scripture, that speak of the vultures and the bodies, the carcasses of man, Ezekiel 39:17, "And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God. Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice which I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh, and drink blood. And you shall eat the flesh of the mighty, you'll drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them the fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till you are full, and drink blood until you are drunken, of my sacrifice, which I have sacrificed for you. And thus you will be

filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, with men of war, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel 39:17-20).

Revelation 19:17, “And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken [that is, the antichrist], and with him the false prophet that wrought the miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh” (Revelation 19:17-21).

So Jesus is talking here of the great tribulation period and of the battle of Armageddon in which the Lord will invite the vultures to come and to feast on the bodies of the fallen armies who had gathered together to try to thwart the return of Jesus Christ in power and in glory. So wherever the carcass, the bodies are, there will be eagles or the vultures be gathered together. And then immediately after the tribulation of those days, the battle of Armageddon is the last event of the great tribulation period.

And immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (24:29):

Immediately after the tribulation, there will be great catastrophic, cataclysmic events taking place within the universe. “The sun is darkened, the moon will not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven.” It is interesting that in the Book of Revelation as He is giving details of the great tribulation period, He speaks of the sun increasing in its strength and scorching men upon the earth. Is it possible that our sun will go into a supernova? Perhaps so. Here it is turned dark and of course, because the moon is only a reflection of the sunlight, it also is darkened. “The stars will fall from heaven.” A tremendous meteorite shower upon the earth. “And the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

Revelation chapter six, verse twelve, “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the moon became as blood; the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken by a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places” (Revelation 6:12-14). Tremendous cataclysmic events changing really the whole geographical surface of the earth.

Isaiah 13:10, “For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. Isaiah 13:11, “And I will punish the world [the great tribulation, I will punish the world] for their evil [notice the purpose of the great tribulation is to punish the world for their evil], and the wicked for their iniquity. Now if you are righteous in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, then the great tribulation is not for you. It is for the wicked world to be punished for their iniquity. “and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and I will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible” (Isaiah 13:11). Joel speaks of it in chapter two, he said, “The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it” (Joel 2:10-11)? So as Joel speaks of these same events, he speaks of them in the light of the return of Jesus Christ. “The Lord will utter His voice before His army: His camp [that is, the church of Jesus Christ] is very great. Joel chapter three, verse fifteen, “The sun and the moon shall be darkened, the stars shall withdraw their shining. And the Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am Jehovah your God dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain: and then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah

shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim” (Joel 3:15-18).

And so the glorious coming again of Jesus Christ and a whole new earth, a new environment by His coming. Isaiah 24 said, “Then the moon shall be confounded, the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously” (Isaiah 24:23). So Jesus said “immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven, the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (24:29). And so He’s just sort of summarizing what Isaiah and Joel and the other prophets have told us.

And then [after this] shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (24:30).

Hallelujah! I can hardly wait. Daniel, writing of this in chapter seven, beginning with verse thirteen, said, “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with clouds of heaven, and He came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him [every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess Jesus Christ is Lord]: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14).

“And I will pour upon the house of David, upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” this is Zechariah chapter twelve, “the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10). Then they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. In Second Thessalonians chapter one, verse seven, Paul said, “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

Finally, Revelation 1:7, “Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all of the families of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, let it be.”

And he shall send [at this time] his angels (24:31)

when He comes again, He will send His angels

with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (24:31).

Now the antichrist is, if possible, deceiving the very elect. Here when Jesus returns, He sends out the angels to gather together His elect from the four corners of the earth. There are those who say that’s the church, the Lord’s going to gather then the church. But in the Old Testament, this very event is prophesied but it is prophesied not of the church but of the nation Israel. Much confusion has been created by Bible teachers who spiritualize Israel in the New Testament to be a reference to the church and they say that the nation Israel is through, as far as God is concerned. All of the prophecies that related to Israel are now applicable to the church, or all the promises are applicable to the church and it has created a great confusion especially in the understanding of biblical prophecy.

Now you see if you interpret this as the church, then the rapture takes place after the great tribulation period, and that’s where you get your post-tribulation rapture ideas and these are the scriptures that they use to prove it. However, in Isaiah chapter eleven, verse twelve, “And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah [from where?] from the four corners of the earth.” What did you just read here? He shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Very obvious, a reference to the passage in Isaiah chapter eleven. Isaiah 27:13, “It shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come, which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, the outcasts [notice a great trumpet will be blown, the outcasts] in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.”

Jeremiah twenty-three, “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries whither I have driven them, and I will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jeremiah 23:3). Isaiah 45:4, “For Jacob my servant's sake, and [here is the elect] Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

And then Isaiah 65:9, “I will bring forth a 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 65:22, “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.” And so the promise is a reference to Israel, not the church.

Now as we get into verse thirty-two, we switch gears and Jesus has given them the signs, these are the signs, and He takes you right up to His coming in clouds and great glory to establish God's kingdom upon the earth. But now a digression, we're going to talk about something else for a moment.

Learn the parable of the fig tree (24:32);

Now in a figurative sense in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was likened to a fig tree. Hosea chapter nine, verse ten, “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves.” In Jeremiah, the basket of rotten figs, the nation of Israel that had become rotten and unpalatable by God. In Joel 1:7, God laments, “He hath laid my vine waste, and he has barked my fig tree: he has made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.” And so the nation of Israel has been likened unto the vine, the vineyard, and also likened unto the fig tree. Now learn of parable, Jesus said, of the fig tree.

When his branch is yet tender, and it putteth forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh (24:32):

Look at a fig tree. When it starts to put forth its leaves, you know that summer is coming, it's just a sign that summer is near.

So likewise ye, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors (24:33).

The budding of the fig tree, the leaves. Now the fig tree being the nation of Israel, and you remember when Jesus cursed the fig tree, typical of the nation of Israel, failing to bring forth fruit, cursed, withers, dies, and God chooses from among the Gentiles, His church, to bring forth the fruit that the Lord desires. But the fig tree is beginning to bud. In 1948, Israel was against all odds born again. That which was dead, the valley of dry bones that God said to Ezekiel, Can these bones be made to live? And he said, Oh God, you know. And he saw the bones come to life, he saw the flesh come on them, the body, the sinews and all, and he saw the rebirth of the nation. 1948, we saw it, 2500 years after the vision of Ezekiel we saw the fulfillment of that vision in the rebirth of the nation of Israel. In 1967, we saw Jerusalem again come under the control of the Jewish nation. When Israel first became a nation in 1948, Jerusalem was a divided city, the Jordanians occupied half of the city, the Israel, the other part of the city; but in the war of 1967, the entire city came under Jewish control, no longer trodden under the foot of the Gentiles, for the first time actually since Nebuchadnezzar's captivity of the city. And Jesus said, Jerusalem will be trodden under the foot of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The fig tree obviously budding forth. What does it tell you? Summer is nigh, it's close. It's even, Jesus said, at the doors.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled (24:34).

The word “generation,” the Greek word “*genea*” usually refers to a national kind of an ethnic group and so what Jesus is prophesying is that the Jews would not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Now the Jewish nation, the fact that it remains and they remain as an ethnic group of people, is a miracle unparalleled in the history of man! No ethnic group has been able to maintain its national identity without a national homeland for more than five generations. In all of history, it never happened that without a homeland people were able to maintain an ethnic identity. How many Hittites have you met lately? Or Amorites? Or Jebusites? I doubt if you've met any lately. They were just sort of swallowed up into the nations where they were dispersed when they were taken captive. But the Jews have maintained their national identity all over the world wherever they have been scattered. They maintained their national identity, those that were scattered to India, to China, those that were scattered to South America, those that were scattered through Europe, those that are in the United States, they've maintained for 2500 years a national identity without a homeland! A miracle of

God, unparalleled in history. And thus, the prophecy of Jesus has been fulfilled, the generation, the “*genea*” did not pass until all these things be fulfilled. And we’re in the process of seeing them fulfilled now. The fig tree is budding, summer is nigh, even at the doors. There are others who interpret “generation” as a period of some forty to fifty-seven years, according to various calculations, and they started counting the generation in 1948, others have started counting in 1967 when Jerusalem was no longer under Gentile control. And they say that the generation living to see the budding of the fig tree would be the generation that would not pass. Possible but stretches a bit.

Heaven and earth [He said] shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (24:35).

This is sure, Jesus said. He’s been talking about heaven and earth, that it’s going to be a great shaking, the stars falling, they’re going to pass away. But My words are going to abide, Jesus said. They’re not going to pass away. The Word of God remaineth sure.

But of that day and [now please note] hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (24:36).

Would you underline that in your Bible? It’s sad but there are always these books coming out trying to give us the year or the day or the hour! Well, it says day and hour but we know the year. And Edgar Wisenut, just the name ought to give you a hint, wrote the book, “Eighty-eight Reasons Why Jesus Is Coming In 1988.” And now, there are books that you can buy now and they’re trying to get people all excited that He’s coming in 1994. And every year they revise their books and just move it up to the next year and keep selling the books, but no man knows the day or the hour. Let me just say this. Whenever a book spends the first chapter explaining why God didn’t mean what He said, you don’t need to go any further. Jesus said no man knows the days or the hour. No man knows. It’s just that we don’t know. He could come at any time. Some are saying He’s going to come during the feast of Pentecost this year. Great things are going to happen. Lot of excitement being stirred. Evil’s going to be driven from the world in Pentecost, in June this year. Would to God it were true, but no man knows the day or the hour. Jesus said that.

But as it was in the days of Noah or as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days of Noah that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away (24:37-39);

You see, no man knows the day or the hour! It’s going to be a surprise like in the days of Noah, the people were surprised! Though Noah had been a preacher of righteousness, building the illustrated message, building the ark before them out there in the Babylonian plains, and they were saying you’re crazy, and it wasn’t until the flood actually began that they then realized too late that Noah was correct. Now in the days of Noah, as the days of Noah were, basically the illustration that Jesus is giving here is the suddenness and the surprise of His coming. No man knows the day or the hour. The world is not expecting it. The world will not expect it. It is not until the church is removed and the judgment of God begins that the world will realize that God’s Word is true. But as the days of Noah were, the days of Noah in Genesis 6:1, we read, “It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them.” The days of Noah were days of rapid population growth. There was a population explosion in the days of Noah. Genesis 6:5, “And God saw the wickedness of man was great on the earth, every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” So it was a time when men’s minds were polluted with evil thoughts. “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked upon the earth, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth” (Genesis 6:11-13). So it’s a time of corruption. Time of violence. Time of wickedness. Time of population explosion. We see those things today. Population explosion. The minds of men polluted and corrupted by sin and by evil. Wickedness exceedingly great. Violence filling the earth. And people are unaware that the coming of the Lord is at hand. They knew not until the flood came and took them away.

so also shall the coming of the Son of man be. [And then Jesus said] There will be two in the field; one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for you know not what hour your Lord doth come (24:39-42).

So I believe that this is a reference to the rapture of the church, that we don't know what hour the Lord is coming, the rapture could take place at any time, and there will be a sharp division. Two in the field, one raptured, the other left for the great tribulation. Two grinding at the mill, one taken, the other left. Watch therefore, and this is really the key word of Jesus in this latter portion of the chapter, it's, you don't know when it's going to happen so be ready. You don't know when it's going to happen so watch, be on watch! Don't be lethargic! Don't sleep! In Luke's account of this same message of Jesus, he warns against getting caught unaware. Be careful that you are not ensnared by the enemy's traps, the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire of other things so that that day catches you unaware. So here the Lord says, watch ye therefore. Why? Because you don't know the hour that your Lord doth come.

But know this, if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man cometh (24:43-44).

Do you think the Lord is coming tonight? I think He's coming soon but not tonight, to be honest. I mean, if I really thought He was coming tonight, I don't know what I would do at this point. I believe He's coming soon but the very fact that I don't believe He's coming tonight makes it a very real possibility. For in the hour that you think not, the Son of man is coming. Therefore, be ready.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season (24:45)?

Who is that wise and faithful servant God has put over His household, over the church, to give them their meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing (24:46).

Jesus said occupy till I come. Blessed is the servant that the Lord when He comes finds him doing the work of the Lord, giving meat to the household of God in due season.

But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delays his coming (24:48);

I believe that the Lord intended that the church should be expecting His coming any time even from the apostolic period. The apostles were expecting the Lord to return at any time and I think God designed it that way. Because you see, that expectancy of the Lord coming at any time has a tremendous way of keeping us in focus. It's so easy to get caught up in worldly things, in material things. And so God wanted us to just live in the state of expectancy, letting our contact with the world be just as light as possible because the Lord is coming soon. He could come tonight! And I believe that that is exactly what the Lord intended. John in writing of the coming of the Lord said, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, it doesn't yet appear what we're going to be, but we know when He appears we're going to be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And he who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure. It's a purifying hope in the church to believe that Jesus is coming at any moment, at any time.

If the servant says, well the Lord is delaying His coming, and the moment you put any event before the rapture of the church; in essence, you are saying, the Lord is delaying His coming. The Lord isn't going to come until the mid-tribulation period. And there's a lot of mid-trib kind of books being written right now and a lot of people are gobbling up on this mid-trib theory, but He's going to come before the rap, you know, we'll have to go through the revelation of the antichrist and so forth. But wait a minute, if we have to go through the revelation of the antichrist, then what is that doing to us? Taking away from the eminent return of the Lord and it's putting it now down, He's going to delay His coming until the antichrist is revealed. So, what an interesting trick of the enemy because now I'm looking for the antichrist, who is he, Kissinger? Hillary? I'm looking around wondering. But what a sly thing, what a sly thing. Rather than looking for Jesus Christ, I'm looking for the antichrist. Oh, not me, I'm looking for my Lord! I'm looking for His coming, coming for me, any time to take me up! And the sooner, the better, as far as I'm concerned.

That evil servant who said the Lord delays His coming, what is the effect of that? A slovenliness in the things of the spirit. Oh well, we've got time, have to wait for the antichrist to be revealed and these events are going to be taking place. Maybe we'll be martyred because we refuse to let them insert that little thing in our hand, but the effect of the idea, well the Lord is going to delay His coming until, Jesus said, had a tendency towards the slovenliness of the servant.

And he began to smite his fellowservants, he began to eat and to drink with the drunken; and the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (24:49-51).

So it's really a dangerous concept to say that the Lord is delaying His coming! It's important to realize that in such a time as you think not, He's coming. He's coming any time. And therefore, you watch and you be ready. How many more things must God do before we wake up to realize, Hey we're at the end of the road? This health care system that they're going to force on us, these cards that they will use for identity cards, and for buying and selling, debit cards, travel cards, how much closer do we have to get until we wake up and realize our Lord is coming soon at any time? Therefore, be ye ready, He said. Watch and be ready!

As we get into chapter twenty-five, we will get more parables, whose thrust is to watch and be ready, and then Jesus will tell us of the things that will transpire when He returns. Those immediate things that will take place when He comes back to the earth. So you'll find chapter twenty-five also equally as exciting as chapter twenty-four, as we continue to deal with the return of Jesus Christ to establish God's kingdom upon the earth, and the events that will precede this coming of our Lord. And the important thrust to us, watch and be ready!

Father, we thank You for Your Word. Oh Lord, it's so rich. And we thank You, Lord that these truths are not just isolated in one part of the Scripture, but it's part of the total composite, the picture that You put together both Old and New Testaments. These things that are coming to pass upon the earth, spoken of Lord by the prophets of old, spoken by You and by Your disciples. Lord, we ask that Your Holy Spirit will stir our hearts, stir us from lethargy, from the slumber and the sleeping, and Father, may we watch and may we be ready knowing Lord that You're coming at any time, just when we don't know, but we know it's soon. So Lord, help us that we might be as the faithful steward, the faithful servant. When You come, may You find us, Lord, faithfully serving You. In Jesus' Name, we pray Father, Amen.