

Matthew Ch. 24 vs 15-51

We're still in the beginning stages of the Olivet discourse by which Jesus is instructing His disciples on things pertaining to the future. and What inspired this teaching was the disciples remarks concerning the temple and the massive stones that it was built with. and Jesus told them that not one of the stones that they saw would be left upon the other but rather that everyone of them would be thrown down. and Of course they associated that with judgment, which in turn caused them to ask the Lord a series of questions as He sat there upon the Mt. of olives.

What they wanted to know was when would all of these things happen? When would the temple be destroyed, what would be the sign of His coming again, and the end of the age by which He would do away with any other form of government and establish His rule and reign upon the earth? and Out of those 3 questions 2 He will address specifically and 1 He doesn't answer, He didn't tell them when the temple would be destroyed but He did speak to them about the signs of the end of the age what would be those things that would signal His 2nd coming. and The primary concern that Jesus seems to keep emphasizing is that we need to be careful that we not be deceived, those were the very 1st words out of His mouth and in those short 14 vs that we looked at last week, He repeated that warning 3 times. He will continue to emphasize the need for having your discernment sharpened as we read on this morning. and Over and over and over again we read in the bible the words "do not be deceived", "do not be deceived", and those warnings are there for a reason because believe me when I tell you that we can be easily deceived.

We have this tendency to think that heretics are all weird nutcases that are easily spotted and pointed out, but that's not the case, many times much of what they tell you is truth, and many times they'll even quote you the bible. and We think well if that's what the bible says, then it must be true, but you see so often they wrongly divide the word of truth or they'll pull scripture out of it's context in order to support they're own agenda. That's why we're told in 2 Tim 2:15 that we're to "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

How can we do that unless we are students of the word of God, taking in the whole counsel, having an intimate and practical working knowledge of the truth of the word of God, so that we might recognize the lie when we see it or hear it. But Jesus told them that wars would take place that famines, pestilences and earthquakes would be on the rise, but that didn't mean that the end would come right then, no, that was just the beginning of sorrows. He said that they would be delivered up to tribulation and kill, that they (they being I believe the Jewish nation) would be hated by all nations for His names sake, (and you can get last weeks tape for commentary on that.)

He said that lawlessness, or that word “lawlessness” could’ve been translated wickedness, iniquity, or unrighteousness, and He said that we would see an increase in these things and that as a result of the increase in wickedness that there would be a decrease in love and that the love of many would grow cold.

Surely we’re seeing these things today, but the good news is that the one who endures till the end, standing firm against the deception of false prophets, continuing to love and serve others in the midst of society that’s continually growing more and more wicked, will be saved. Because love and servant hood is an earmark of a true disciple of Jesus Christ That’s what the bible says, and so the lesson there is that those who remain true to Jesus Christ and to His word, those who know Him and are known by Him will be saved and they will stand true to Jesus in these times because as the bible says, “*for God is able to make him stand.*” You see none of us would make it on our own because Jesus said with out Him we can do nothing, nothing of any eternal worth anyway, but praise be to God that we can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens us.

Now in this next portion of text I believe that it’s apparent that Jesus is still speaking to the Jew, and remember this is in regards to His 2nd coming and the signs of the end of the age. Now don’t confuse this with the rapture of the church, the 2nd coming of Christ is a totally different issue than the rapture of the church. That could happen at any minute, there’s no prophecies that need to be fulfilled before Christ returns for His bride, but concerning His return to the earth to establish His earthy rule by which He’ll rule and reign in righteousness for 1,000 yrs, He’s telling us that these things will take place 1st.

Vs15- 18

In other words when this, “abomination of desolation” takes place, don’t linger around gathering up supplies or for that matter even your coat at the other end of the field but rather get out of town and I mean quick. He’s emphasizing the need for urgency when they see this to seek shelter, He’s basically saying it’s better to save your life, than your possessions, God will preserve you and supply your needs, you just get out of town. Now, Back in vs 15 Jesus speaks of the “*abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place*” and then Matt inserts this little side note (*whoever reads let him understand*), not in regards to the things said after that so as to say, whoever reads this let him understand that when these things happen it’s time to shag. But rather whoever reads what the Lord just said concerning this abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, that’s what you need to understand. That’s what’s going to be necessary that you’re able to discern this when it happens so that you can flee to safety or else it’s more than likely that you will be killed. Again in regards to the Jews that are there at that time, but it’s important to be familiar with what Jesus is in regards to here. Turn to the book of Daniel ch 9 look at vs 20-26

Vs 24

So 70 weeks or more literally 70, 7's in regards to 70, 7yr periods are determined for his people, who are of course the Jews, God has established 70, 7 yr periods by which He will deal with the nation of Israel in regards to all of these things we just read.

Vs25

This is of course how the scribes and Pharisees should've known that Jesus was the Messiah because from the time that Nehemiah was given the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah was to make His appearance in Jerusalem was 483 yrs. Which is 7, 7yr periods plus 62, 7yr that's the day that the psalmist was in reference to when he said this is the day that the Lord has made we will rejoice and be glad in it. The day that the Messiah would be revealed to the nation, God told them when He was coming to them and He made it so clear that there's no way they could've missed it if they were just up on their scriptures. Zech 9:9 told them, "*Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.*"

So 483yrs after Nehemiah received the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, (and you can read of the troublesome times that they rebuilt it in, with the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other). But 483yrs later on the day that the psalmist foretold of here comes Jesus riding into Jerusalem on what? A donkey's colt just as Zech had told them that He would, and yet they didn't even realize it, and instead of receiving Jesus as their King, they crucified Him saying we have no king but Caesar just as Daniel prophesied, that He would be cut off.

Vs26

So the Messiah would not receive His kingdom on His 1st visit, now in vs 26 here we see mention of another man called the "*prince who is to come*" notice that you don't see a capital "P" on that title as you did with Messiah the Prince. and This "*prince who is to come*" that Daniel is in reference to here has many names in the bible, he's referred to often as "the beast" or "the man of sin", maybe you've heard of "the son of perdition", or his most commonly known title of, "the antichrist." and We see him come onto the scene in Revelation ch 6 immediately following the rapture of the church in ch 4 and Jesus taking the title deed to the earth in ch 5 and then as He opens the very 1st seal up comes the antichrist who goes out conquering and to conquer. Now this man will be a very smooth political leader, and he will deceive the Jews so that they believe that he is their long awaited Messiah, because they're looking for a great leader like Moses, who will allow them to rebuild their temple and return to temple sacrifice and the Levitical codes. This man will claim to be an ally with the Jews and will make a covenant to protect them and allow them to live in peace and go about their temple sacrifices, which brings us back to Daniel. Because so far God has taken Israel through 69 of the 70, 7yr periods there's 1 left to go and that's the period that we refer to as "the great tribulation" period. and Why do we call it that, because Jesus did as we'll see.

Vs27

So 3 and ½ yrs into this last 7 yr period the antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and he will bring an end to the sacrifice. Why? Jesus alludes to it when He says, “standing in the holy place”, Paul the apostle makes it clear, leave Daniel and turn now to the NT to the book of 2nd Thess ch 2. Vs 1-4

So why will he stop the temple worship and sacrifices to God? Because he himself will enter into the holy place proclaiming himself to be God demanding himself to be worshipped as God. And at that point, the Jews eyes will be opened and they will know that they’ve been deceived. But what is it that hinders all of these particular things from happening, again not the rapture, but what is that’s hindering this deceiver known as the antichrist from rising to power? Look at vs 6-8

Who is it that is restraining? It’s the Holy Spirit moving through the church, but when He is taken out of the way and the church is removed (through the rapture) Rev 4:1-2 *“After these things I looked, (after what things, the things of the church age in ch 2-3) and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” “Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.”* Again ch 5 Jesus takes the title deed to the earth and then ch 6, the 1st thing that happens on earth after the removal of the church is the rider on the white horse, the deceiver known as the antichrist rises to power. You see how the bible makes it so clear, and so again (back to our text) Jesus speaking to the Jews so that they’ll know and understand what to do when this happens, says when you see this take place, run. Because as you study the scriptures you find that not only will he demand to be worshipped as God himself but he will place an all out assault on the Jews and will kill everyone who refuses to worship him as God.

That’s why Jesus says in vs 16-19

Vs19

Why, because if you’re pregnant or lugging a child around you’re easy prey, because you don’t move fast.

Vs 20

Winter, same thing, why the warning regarding the Sabbath? Because He's speaking to the Jews and if the day that this man enters into the Holy place and issues the decree to kill everyone who doesn't bow to him and worship him as God happens to be the Sabbath, 1 of 2 things will happen. They will either break the law in their flight to safety transgressing the limited bounds of travel on the Sabbath, thereby being easy to find because those traveling on the Sabbath would be in obvious flight to try and seek shelter from this world dictator. Or those who refuse to break the law would stay in their homes and so as these government officials storm into their houses forcing allegiance to the antichrist, and they not giving that allegiance would be slaughtered by the thousands if not 10's of thousands. and So Jesus says pray that the day that this takes place isn't during winter or on the Sabbath, because notice in vs 21.

Vs21

During that time there will be what? Great tribulation, such as the world has never seen or will ever see again, you think the holocaust was bad, and it was no doubt an epic tragedy, but it pales in comparison to the havoc that this man will reap. and How much more if it all starts on the Sabbath.

Vs22

In other words the destruction that's going to be taking place on the earth, if not stopped by God, would amount to the total annihilation of the human race. But for the elect's sake, again Gods chosen people, in this context, the Jews that have turned to Him God will shorten that time. and You can read the book of Rev and get a glimpse of the atrocious things that's going to be happening at that time. We don't have time to get into it and it could be another bible study of it's own, but you'll find as you study the scriptures that many times God will extend mercy to the wicked for the sake of the righteous, that's what's happening here. God is extending mercy to the evil, for the sake of the elect.

Vs23-

Another warning about not being deceived, no doubt in such turbulent times people will be looking for some relief which will in turn cause the season to be ripe for false Messiahs promising deliverance, Jesus says here don't believe them. Why?

Vs24

So the person who looks to supernatural signs and wonders as proof of godly credentials is really in a dangerous position. The bible says that *“faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* So when you’re looking to *see* signs and wonders and miraculous acts of the supernatural to substantiate godliness, you’re treading dangerous ground. Satan is a counterfeiter, we were speaking a few minutes ago concerning the antichrist and reading there in 2nd Thess, and Paul tells us there in that same ch that *“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.”*

You remember how when Moses was performing all the plagues upon Egypt by the power of God and Jannes and Jambres were able to counterfeit through occultic powers much of the same things that Moses was doing. So don’t put your stock in signs and wonders of the supernatural, no matter who’s name it’s being done in, you put your stock in the word of God and learn to discern by weighing things up against that. Because when the false prophet comes on the scene and causes everybody to worship the antichrist, you can read in Rev ch 13 that he’s going to be doing some pretty radical, supernatural signs so that he’s even able to make fire rain down from heaven and if it were possible even the elect of God would be deceived. Now it’s not possible because they know the word, but if it were possible, that’s how convincing it will be.

Vs25-26

That pretty much shipwrecks the Jehovah Witnesses claim that Jesus Christ returned to the earth in 1914 and is now ruling and reigning from the secret inner chambers through the means of their elders. Look at vs 27

Vs27

In other words no one is going to have to tell you when Jesus returns, it’ll be a public affair. Rev 1:7 says, *“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen”*

Vs 28

Now what does this mean? I’m going to be honest with you I’m not positive, there are a few different views concerning it, you’re free to believe what you’d like. In light of the context speaking of all the death and carnage that will be happening, (at this point in my walk and understanding) I lean toward the thought that it’s an allusion to the supper of the great God that's mentioned in Rev 19: 17 concerning the final battle of Armageddon where the birds of the air are invited to feast on the flesh of kings and men small and great due to their rebellion against God. But I could be wrong, that’s just my present persuasion.

Vs29-31

Now don't be confused here, those who are of the post tribulation rapture theory lean heavily on this verse but again if we stay true to the context we're still speaking of the Jews. and I think that the confusion comes in because the trumpet that will sound to bring about the rapture is called in the bible, "the trumpet of God" mentioned in 1st Thess 4:16. But we read in the OT that the nation of Israel would know when to move by the blasts of the trumpet, Num ch 10.

The nation of Israel at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was scattered, but God promises in His word that He will again take back the Jews as His people and that He will bring them back into the Land and honor them once more. Deut 30:3-4 *"the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you."* Where did Jesus say that He would gather His elect from, from one end of heaven to the other. In Isa 27:12-13 *"And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem."* I believe that this is the trumpet that Jesus is referring to regarding the Jews. Again Isa 11:12 *"He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth."* Jesus mentions the winds, and so I see no problem leaving this as a reference to the nation of Israel.

Vs32-35

Again there are those who say that this is a direct reference to the nation of Israel becoming a nation in 1948 because the fig tree is often used in the scriptures as a symbol for Israel. and They say that even as the spring leaves are the 1st sign of life so the nation of Israel budding to life in 1948 signaled the last generation. Personally I feel that that's stretching the text just a bit and here's my difficulty with that, yes I agree that symbolically the fig tree is used to illustrate the nation of Israel, but we read in Luke's account of this same discourse that Jesus said learn this lesson from the fig tree and *all trees* so in that context what do the rest of the trees represent. Plus Jesus said when you see *all of these things*, all of what things? The false prophets and false Christ's, the lying signs and wonders, the abomination of desolation.

I believe that in this case Jesus is simply making a reference to the trees as an illustration of how when the leaves begin to bud, you know summer is near, and in the same way the generation that sees the abomination that causes desolation, the false prophet and the antichrist will also see the 2nd coming of Christ, because all of those things will happen within a 7yr period of time and so that generation will see the 2nd coming. Feel free to disagree with me in that you'll be in good company either way. and Of course heaven and earth will pass away, they'll change and the elements will melt with fervent heat, but God's word will never change and it will remain true throughout eternity.

Vs36-39

Again it's very interesting to study the days of Noah and compare how closely these times resemble the days of Noah. with the population explosion of his day, how God's estimation of man at that time was that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. and Surely we see the similitude's of that today, but again sticking strictly to the text Jesus doesn't make mention of any of those things. What He's saying is that concerning the judgment that came upon the whole earth in the days of Noah, they were completely oblivious of it right up until the day that judgment fell and the flood came and carried them all away. It was business as usual on planet earth, and when the people were warned they only mocked, yeah right Noah, my grandma's grandma thought that. and That's what Jesus is saying the attitude will be like in the end, people will be going about life like it's business as usual and not even realize what's happened until it's too late, that's the point He emphasizes in the next few vs.

Vs 40-41

Again 2 main views one says that those who are taken are the lucky ones escaping the wrath to come being raptured, which again to me seems to invade the context, but you're in good company if that's how you choose to see it. The other is quite the opposite and it states that those taken are the one's taken in judgment at the return of Christ and those that are left are the one's who will remain to enter the millennial kingdom which Jesus will establish when He appears. Again feel free to believe either side neither of them will any affect whatsoever upon your salvation. But Vs 42 through the remainder of the ch is what is relevant to all of us, we'll read them now but we'll wait until next week to comment on them because Jesus uses them basically as a lead in to the parable of the 10 virgins in ch 25. The bottom line is that you don't want to be here at that time anyway, you want to catch the 1st train out, and the good news is that you don't have to be, if you've received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, then you don't need to worry. Because you haven't been appointed unto wrath, "*but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ*" so you don't need to be looking for the antichrist, you need to be looking for Jesus Christ even as our Lord instructs as we close out this ch.

Vs 42-51