

END TIMES & THE REVELATION Part 4
THE FALL OF JERUSALEM AND THE END OF THE WORLD

The Lord's Day, 16th September 2018 – Reading: Matthew 24:1-39

In just a few months we come into what is known the whole world over as the 'holiest' season on the 'Christian calendar', but this so-called holy time has no basis in Scripture.

I am pleased to say that, by God's grace, we come together on the Lord's Day, every week, the first day of the week, the day of the week on which our Lord rose from the dead, and the day of the week on which His disciples first worshipped Him and have continued to worship Him ever since, that we come together on the only "holy day" mentioned in the Scriptures – it is The Lord's Day, the weekly Sabbath!

ONLY ONE HOLY PLACE AND ONE HOLY DAY UNDER THE NEW COVENANT: *The people of God gathered together to worship Christ, wherever they are, are the one holy place, for we are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16), and the Lord's day, when the Church comes together to worship Him, is the one holy day.*

'CHRISTMAS' IS NOT A HOLY DAY, BUT UNHOLY, IT IS MERELY A CONTRACTION OF 'CHRIST'S MASS', *which is a Roman Catholic Mass, allegedly for Christ, based on Pagan Rome's tradition of 'Natalis Invicti', the 'Nativity of the unconquered sun'. Even the Catholic Encyclopedia states that, "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church".*

The old Church of England, in true Protestant tradition, and in true adherence to the Scriptures, in its "THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF RELIGION", ARTICLE XXXI, OF THE OBLATION OF CHRIST FINISHED UPON THE CROSS, states that, "THE SACRIFICES OF MASSES, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, WERE BLASPHEMOUS FABLES, AND DANGEROUS DECEITS." All the Protestant Churches agreed, and those who are still Protestants (i.e. Bible-believers) today, still agree – the Roman Catholic Mass is blasphemy.

IN VIEW OF THIS, 'CHRIST-MASS CANNOT BE OTHER THAN A BLASPHEMOUS FABLE! *To add Christ's name to a Roman Catholic and Pagan superstition, a 'blasphemous fable', is to take the Lord's name in vain in a most aggravated way! And so, for a Protestant, a Bible believer, to mention the name "Christmas", in any positive way, let alone partake in the supposed 'holy'*

festivities of Pagan and Roman Catholic origin, is a great shame, and a deliberate rejection of the Word of God as our only rule and authority.

And so, let us rejoice today, to be giving glory to the risen and reigning Christ, and rather than join the Pagan festivities of Baal and Ashtoreth every year, of an idol which dies and lives again with the annual seasons, let us be studying the Scriptures which speak of both Christ's first and second comings.

*In our previous session on **The Coming of the Lord**, we dealt with the most important aspects of the doctrine of the Lord's return, that He will come at the end of this world, to raise all the dead, and to judge all men. This doctrine was gleaned largely from **The Revelation, chapters 1 & 22**, the first and final chapters, and of course, supported by various other Scriptures.*

THE LORD'S RETURN IS OFTEN CALLED HIS SECOND COMING OR HIS SECOND ADVENT, meaning that He came first when He appeared in the flesh as a babe in Bethlehem, the Only-begotten Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, when He came as "God manifest in the flesh" (**1 Timothy 3:16**), and "Emmanuel, God with us" (**Matthew 1:23**), and **HE PROMISED TO COME AGAIN – HENCE A SECOND COMING, NOT A THIRD OR FOURTH, AS POPULAR 'PROPHECY EXPERTS' WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE.**

From the time Jesus was still with them, teaching them from the Scriptures the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, the disciples looked forward to His return. Matthew recorded in his 24th chapter, this important discourse of Jesus, as He answered His disciples' questions about the future, a discourse which is very often thought to be a fairly definitive explanation of the Lord's return and all the events and so-called 'signs' which are to lead up to it, but is this really the case? What does the Scripture actually say?

LET US BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THIS DISCOURSE BY FIRST OBSERVING WHAT QUESTIONS THE DISCIPLES ASKED:

Matthew 24:1-3. "AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus 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.** 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

BUT FIRSTLY, NOTE THE STATEMENT JESUS MADE, WHICH PROVOKED THE DISCIPLES' QUESTIONS: “Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” *The disciples were showing Jesus the buildings of the temple, as if they were quite caught up in the glory and magnificence of those Old Covenant buildings! It was in response to this, that Jesus made this quite dramatic and shocking statement: “Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”*

*If only we would pause to let this sink in, and realize what a stupendous statement this was, the absolute finality of such an event, that **not one stone be left upon another**, and what an awful calamity it would be that would raze such a glorious and historic building to the ground, which was not just a building, not even just an important building, not even just a nationally important building, but **the very temple of God on earth** – if we consider this, we might be better placed to understand what Jesus was teaching on this occasion. In fact, so stupendous was this statement, that I suspect the disciples really had trouble believing that Jesus literally meant what He said!*

IT MAY SEEM OBVIOUS TO ALL WHO BELIEVE IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, BUT IT IS A FOREIGN CONCEPT TO MANY THAT, IF THE LORD HAS MADE A DECREE SUCH AS THIS, ABOUT THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF A CITY, A TEMPLE, AND A PEOPLE, THEN THERE IS NOTHING IN HEAVEN, ON EARTH, OR UNDER THE EARTH, WHICH CAN PREVENT THE FULFILMENT OF THE WORDS OF HIS DIVINE DECREE! *This is wonderfully borne out by the writings of the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, commenting on the all of Jerusalem in 70AD, who said that even the Caesar and the mighty Roman general, Titus, although he tried hard to prevent his soldiers from destroying the temple when they first set it on fire, he was powerless to stop their rage against the Jews, so that the utter destruction decreed by the Lord so wonderfully, was fulfilled to the letter!*

SO, WHAT WERE THE DISCIPLES' QUESTIONS?

1. WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE (I.E. THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM)?

*There can be hardly any doubt that the disciples couldn't imagine a world without their temple, which at first had been built by Solomon a thousand years before. So it stands to reason that they would see the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple as the end of the world – it would certainly be the end of **their** world, and the end of the world all Israelites had known since the*

days of Moses and Joshua, when they first entered the Promised Land. And let us remember that, as God's covenant people under the Old Testament, the Israelites were, in a real sense, the centre of the world. So, the end of the temple in Jerusalem, as far as the mind of any Old Testament believer was concerned, was the very end of God's dwelling place on earth!

BUT THIS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN OF ANY GREAT SURPRISE TO THE DISCIPLES, BECAUSE THOSE WHO WERE TRULY SPIRITUAL AMONG GOD'S OLD TESTAMENT PEOPLE, UNDERSTOOD THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS: E. G.

- *Stephen, the first Christian martyr, preached to the Jews at Jerusalem, Acts 7:47, “But Solomon built him an house. 48 Howbeit **the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands**; as saith the prophet, 49 **Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?** 50 Hath not my hand made all these things? 51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do ye*.” Stephen was stoned to death for this preaching of Christ and His heavenly kingdom, and (in the minds of the unbelieving Jews) vilifying their glorious temple, but Stephen was only faithfully preaching from the old prophet **Isaiah (Ch. 66)**.*
- *Likewise Paul, preaching to the ignorant Pagans on Mars Hill at Athens, preached the same message about the Living God, in contrast to their Pagan temples and idols, (Acts 17), “24 **God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands**; 25 **Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things**; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”*
- *Solomon had said in his dedicatory prayer after the temple was built, **1 Kings 8**, 26 And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. 27*

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? 28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: 29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: ***When the king who built the temple confessed that God did not dwell in an earthly temple, because even the heaven of heavens could not contain Him, how far astray are those Jews and Christians today who speak of a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, 2,000 years after Christ has come and gone back again to heaven's throne, and the unbelieving Jews banished for ever from their land just 40 years later in 70AD!***

- ***And Jesus had plainly said before: John 2:19, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them.”***

IT WAS THEREFORE WELL KNOWN, BY ALL SPIRITUAL PERSONS, EVEN IN THOSE DAYS, THAT THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM WAS NOT ACTUALLY GOD'S DWELLING PLACE, BUT THAT IT SYMBOLISED SOMETHING GREATER.

FROM ALL THIS, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM NEEDED TO BE DESTROYED, IN ORDER TO PUT AN END TO THE OLD COVENANT, WHICH THE JEWS REFUSED TO GIVE UP – Note that the early Christian Church at Jerusalem retained many of the ceremonial laws of the Old Covenant (as we read in Acts 15, where they decreed that even the Gentile Churches should appease the Jews by abstaining from things strangled and from blood). And the Jews had sown the seeds of their own destruction over many years of their rejection of the Word of God and the killing of God's prophets, and those stubborn, unbelieving Jews continued to persecute Christ's Church wherever it went – Just read in Acts the labours of Peter and Paul, and see how the Jews were the greatest enemy of Christ.

In view of this, it is only natural that the disciples would want to know when this temple would be destroyed.

2. WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING?

IF GOD'S TEMPLE ON EARTH WAS TO BE COMPLETELY DESTROYED, RAZED TO THE GROUND, THEN SURELY, SUCH A CATAclysmic EVENT WOULD REQUIRE THE RETURN OF THE LORD HIMSELF. *The disciples knew very well that even at the destruction of the wicked city of Sodom, the Lord was there in person, He spoke face to face with Abraham, and His angels literally went into Sodom to drag Lot and his daughters out, before the fire fell upon the city. Then how much more would the disciples expect the Lord Jesus to be personally presiding over the destruction of Jerusalem! So, naturally they ask, “What shall be the sign of thy coming?” It was just so obvious to them that, a matter so earth-shaking as the utter destruction of the Temple of God, would surely mark the return of the Lord Jesus! And Jesus had taught them to expect this very thing:*

JESUS TOLD A PARABLE OF A HOUSEHOLDER WHO PLANTED A VINEYARD AND LET IT OUT TO HUSBANDMEN AND WENT INTO A FAR COUNTRY. (Matthew 21), “34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*. 40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41 They say unto him, **He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.**”

THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PARABLE IS STRAIGHTFORWARD: THE TIME OF THE RETURN OF THIS HUSBANDMAN TO REVIEW HIS VINEYARD AND HIS WORKERS IS NOT A FUTURE JUDGMENT AT THE END OF THE WORLD, BUT THE VINEYARD IS ISRAEL, a people of God, which had been entrusted with God's Word and kingdom, and the time of review was when Jesus appeared the first time to walk among the Jews and see how His vineyard had been neglected since the times of Abraham and Moses. So the judgment for this neglect and this enmity against God by His own people, which was about to fall, was not the end of the world, but the end of the earthly kingdom at Jerusalem.

JESUS TOLD ANOTHER SIMILAR PARABLE: Matthew 22:2, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. 7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.”

CLEARLY, THESE PARABLES ARE TO TEACH THAT JERUSALEM WAS TO BE JUDGED FOR BREAKING THE OLD COVENANT, AND THE NEW COVENANT WAS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN PLACE OF THE OLD, the focus would shift from Jerusalem and its temple and chosen race, to people of all the nations of the world who would believe the gospel and receive Christ! Therefore, in order to bring to pass this change of Covenants, and this change from a shadowy, earthly kingdom, to a heavenly one, the Lord would need to destroy the unbelieving Jews and their corrupt system of worship which stood in the way. The Day of the Lord was about to come upon them!

A POINT OF INTEREST NOTED BY ALL COMMENTATORS, IS THAT JESUS GAVE JERUSALEM 40 YEARS’ WARNING, AND THE NUMBER ‘40’ IS WELL-KNOWN IN GOD’S ECONOMY AS ‘PROBATION’. Moses did 40 years’ probation in Egypt before he began to serve God, and then another 40 in the wilderness before he returned to liberate God’s people from Egypt, and yet another 40 years’ in the wilderness journeys before Israel went into the Promised Land – Moses’ whole life of service to God was three probationary periods, and he died without entering Canaan, thus signifying that the Law cannot save, but is a preparation, as Paul put it (Galatians 3), 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Jesus also fasted 40 days in preparation for His own ministry, when he was tempted of the Devil (Matthew 4), and so, in keeping with God’s established method of probation, He gave Jerusalem 40 years to consider its ways before the awful judgment of 70AD fell.

ACTUALLY, IT WOULD BE MOST SURPRISING TO THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN, WHO IS FED ON A STEADY DIET OF GOOD WORKS AND SELF-ESTEEM, TO REALIZE THAT MUCH OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY WAS A CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH AGAINST THE JEWS, AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF THE DAY. *In all His parables and lessons, He continually challenged and chided the Jewish leaders, so that Christianity, far from being 'pro-Israel', is actually, in one sense, anti-Semitic – because Christianity is not about this world, but the world to come, not about a temporal world and its nations, but the unseen world of the kingdom of heaven above. Christ “came unto his own” people and “his own received him not” (John 1:11). Then, after 40 more years of longsuffering, He came to destroy them, and destroy them He did, with the greatest tribulation known to man, even as He predicted (Matthew 24, 21 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”)!*

3. AND (THE SIGN) OF THE END OF THE WORLD?

I MENTION THESE MATTERS AS SEPARATE QUESTIONS, YET IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT ALL THREE QUESTIONS REALLY AMOUNTED TO JUST ONE, AS FAR AS THE DISCIPLES WERE CONCERNED. *I can't help but see in this part of the question, that the disciples thought the Lord's coming and the end of the world were the same thing – the way the question is asked, “What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?” And to take that thought a step further, I am sure the disciples thought that even all three events they asked about: the destruction of the temple, the Lord's coming, and the end of the world, were all one event. So they really were asking **when** these three things would happen and what **the signs** would be leading up to it all – hence the so-called ‘signs of the times that many Christian today try to squeeze out of this Scripture, are just pure fantasy, Matthew 24 has nothing to do with modern times at all!*

LET US REMEMBER, THAT WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, WE NOW KNOW, THE FALL OF JERUSALEM WAS IN 70 AD, BUT NOW, ALMOST 2,000 YEARS LATER, THE LORD STILL HAS NOT COME, *the dead have not all been raised (police still dig up bones to solve murders, don't they?), and all mankind have not yet appeared at the judgment seat of Christ, and so, the end of the world still has not occurred, but the end of that Old Covenant world did surely cease at 70 AD, just as Jesus and His servants had predicted so clearly! The questions asked here were all about the fall of Jerusalem, it's people, the repudiation of its temple and Old Covenant ritual, that Christ might have the pre-eminence.*

Continued, The Lord's Day, 23rd September 2018 – Text: Matthew 24

IN OUR PREVIOUS SESSION WE LOOKED AT THE QUESTION OF THE DISCIPLES: AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus 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.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, **Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?**

NEXT, LET US SEE HOW JESUS ANSWERED THE DISCIPLES' QUESTION:

1. **JESUS SEEMED TO ANSWER THE DISCIPLES ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN IDEA, AS IF ALL THREE EVENTS WERE REALLY TO BE JUST ONE.** *Let us observe,*

- *Firstly, the **end of the world** was not relevant to these men and their time and circumstances, it was the **fall of Jerusalem** which was the whole topic of discussion, and so, Jesus confined His answer to that topic.*
- *But Jesus knew full well that this earth would continue long after the fall of Jerusalem, and His people of all generations would need the comfort of His Word for their times as well, so it is very likely Jesus answered in this way to keep the Church ever mindful of His imminent return, even though it was at least 2,000 years away at that time.*
- *Another reason for this seemingly vague answer to the specific questions, is that the fall of Jerusalem and the final banishment of the Old Testament worship and scattering of the Old Testament people, (as with all things Old Testament), was all to be a **type and shadow of the end of the whole world**. Although the fall of Jerusalem would not be literally the end of the world, it would be the last great example of it which the Lord would perform. **The people of God, and even the whole world, had long known of the destruction of the whole world in the flood of Noah's day, and of the destruction of Sodom and the cities of the plain in Lot's day, and Jesus had even taught these things as special examples of His return at the end of the world, but Jerusalem itself would be the final and most bitter warning of the end of the world, known to man in all the history of the world.***

THE DETAIL OF JESUS' ANSWER IS ABOUT THE FALL OF JERUSALEM IN 70AD, BUT THE LESSON OF IT, IS A WARNING TO ALL GENERATIONS, OF THE END OF THE WORLD. Unless we approach the rest of Jesus' discourse with these facts and this background in mind, we will only be confused, as we read of the different predictions, as to how and when and where these things were to occur. But most Christians today are totally confused about this matter, and even most teachers and writers on the subject of end times prophecy today, are hopelessly confused about the general purpose and thrust of what Jesus is talking about to begin with, so they try to interpret the prophecy like just so many pieces of a shattered mosaic, and this typical disregard for context, is an integral part of most false teaching.

SPEAKING OF FALSE TEACHING, A NEWS ITEM HAS RECENTLY APPEARED IN THE SOUTH BURNETT TIMES, CLAIMING THAT A CERTAIN "RED HEIFER" IN ISRAEL IS A SIGN OF THE END OF THE WORLD, because it is, in the strange minds of some, a requirement for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the reinstatement of the proper animal sacrifices, in preparation for the coming of their Messiah. But this is an example of what Paul called "Jewish fables" (Titus 1:14), because the Jews rejected their Messiah 2,000 years ago, as John faithfully recorded, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). And so, Christ has destroyed the Jews' temple and raised a new one, and eternal one, His own body, even as He said, "Destroy this temple, and in two days I will raise it up. 21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." (John 2:19-22).

SCRIPTURE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT A REBUILDING OF AN OLD TESTAMENT TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM LONG AFTER CHRIST HAS COME TO ESTABLISH HIS NEW COVENANT – ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE, THE OLD COVENANT IS GONE, AND ITS TEMPLE AND UNBELIEVING PEOPLE ARE GONE WITH IT!

I wrote to challenge this heresy, and received an email response from the editor, whose first name, by the way, happens to be 'Christian', who said he is happy to print my comments as a 'letter to the editor'! (which he has done). I haven't had such a positive response from an editor in many, many years! Let us thank God that in this He has shown us a rare glimpse of His overruling, Sovereign, and Almighty Hand in this world. Let us give all glory to Him!

May His Words go forth mightily to overthrow all errors and liberate God's people everywhere!

So, Jesus answered the disciples exactly according to their threefold question. *Let us wholeheartedly believe, and live, in the light of His wonderful answer, and His glorious gospel, which that answer also promotes! We do not promote Jewish fables, but the gospel of Christ, which is what all the Scriptures are about!*

Therefore,

2. LET US OBSERVE THAT ALMOST EVERYTHING JESUS SAID IN HIS ANSWER RELATED TO THE FALL OF JERUSALEM IN 70 AD, NOT ACTUALLY TO THE END OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

Jesus mentioned many things to occur leading up to the fall of Jerusalem. Let us look at some today, and God willing, continue next week:

- a) **FALSE CHRISTS (24:4-5, 23-26) & FALSE PROPHETS (24:11).** 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, **if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.** 25 **Behold, I have told you before.** 26 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.** 27 **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.”** *The Lord made it very plain that, anyone who claimed Christ had come, would be a false prophet, because He contrasted this idea of looking for Christ in Jerusalem or in the desert, with a visible coming of Christ on the clouds, which all would see – Christ would not literally return to the Jerusalem they knew! Christ is not just “King of the Jews,” as the inscription said at His crucifixion, but “KING OF KINGS”, and Lord of heaven and earth! This statement, “Behold, I have told you before,” reinforces the relevance of the warning to those Jesus spoke to – just as we saw from the first and last chapters of **The Revelation**, that it was directed to the people of God at that very time, so here we find Jesus*

driving home the urgency of the message, that it must be heeded by that very generation He spoke to! **See verse 34: Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.**

PEOPLE TALK TODAY ABOUT THE RISE OF MANY FALSE PROPHETS AND FALSE CHRIST'S, AS IF THIS SOMEHOW PROVES SOMETHING ABOUT THE TIMES. This idea is tempting to many, because we even have a false Christ in our very own district, who claims to be Jesus Christ reincarnated! And another who claims to be a fourth Person of the Godhead! And you can also build quite a spectacular case for apostasy and deception and false prophets since about the 1850's, with the rise of evolution, textual criticism, liberal theology, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Atheistic Communism, Atheistic Psychology and Psychiatry, the ascendancy of Freemasonry, the Charismatic Movement, the Ecumenical Movement blending the historic 'Protestant' Churches with Roman Catholicism, and a multitude of other major cults in the world to this day, the Branhamites, we can hardly forget Jonestown, Waco, the snake handlers, the laughing revival, then you have Christadelphians, Spiritualist Churches etc, even Darby's Dispensationalism (the modern face of Futurism) dates from about 1830. **But none of this proves that Jesus' prediction of false prophets and false Christs has not been fulfilled long ago in the last days of the nation of Israel, which was completely wound up following the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70AD!** We quickly forget that 'history repeats itself', and we can also easily forget, or ignore the fact, that Jesus' whole discourse here was about the fall of Jerusalem!

b) **WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS (24:6).** Similarly, Futurists will tell you there are more wars now than ever before, but the prophecy of Jesus here is **nothing to do with the number of wars, but only that wars would come and go until the time He spoke of**, so the disciples were not to be swayed by wars, which had nothing to do with the end of the world anyway! But wars played a particular part in the lead-up to the fall of Jerusalem, as history records that the Jews continued an insane resistance to the Romans, which only made their own destruction far worse. And in the end of that war, something like three million Jews were slaughtered in the siege, something unheard of in the history of any people on earth! And didn't Jesus say in **verse 21**, “For then shall be **great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to**

this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” *There were “wars and rumours of wars,” but “the end was not yet,” but when the end did come, it was war at its worst!*

REMEMBER HOW, WHEN JESUS WAS BEING TORTURED IN JERUSALEM, ON HIS WAY TO CALVARY, SOME WOMEN WEPT FOR HIM, BUT HE ANSWERED THEM IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY: Luke 23:28, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 29 For, **behold, the days are coming,** in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. 30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. 31 For **if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?”** **JERUSALEM WAS YET GREEN BY COMPARISON, BUT WITHIN 40 YEARS SHE WOULD BE SO RIPE FOR JUDGMENT,** *more than any people had ever been, and so her destruction which was looming, would be worse than anything ever seen on this earth, the supreme and final example of God's wrath on a people who wilfully rejected Him, even to the point of murdering God's Only-begotten Son.*

REMEMBER ALSO, THE PARABLE OF THE KING WHO INVITED HIS PEOPLE TO THE MARRIAGE OF HIS SON: *what did the king do to those who not only refused to come and murdered the king's servants? Matthew 22:7, “But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”* *As I say, the fall of Jerusalem was war at its worst – it was literally the war of God against His people! If that was the fall of Jerusalem, what will be the fall of the whole earth when Jesus comes again?*

c) **FAMINES, PESTILENCES, EARTHQUAKES, PERSECUTION, APOSTACY (24:7-12).** **EARTHQUAKES ARE A CLASSIC CASE OF HOW THIS PRESENT GENERATION IS SO EASILY MISLED ABOUT THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY:** *Many will say there is overwhelming proof that earthquakes have dramatically increased in the last few decades, and all the scientific proof is there, so this just has to be the time immediately before Christ's return, so they watch every news report with a morbid obsession. But that sort of nonsense has about the same level of real science in it as the current climate change mania. Earthquakes and wars as signs today are just as ridiculous.*

END TIMES MANIA TODAY (FED BY THE FUTURIST/DISPENSATIONALIST ERROR) IS EVERY BIT AS WILD, UNFOUNDED, AND FRENZIED, AS THE GLOBAL WARMING PROPAGANDA. We have seen already in our study of *The Revelation*, that from the first chapter to the last, it is all about Christ; it is called “The Revelation of Jesus Christ;” and it is the very gospel of Christ through and through, **but the Futurists would have us believe The Revelation has nothing to do with Christ and His Church, but is more about some fantastic future age of unbridled godless mayhem, followed by a revival of the Jews,** (and all this, after the Jews had rejected the Messiah at His first advent, continued to reject Him for 40 years, until He completely destroyed their city and temple and scattered them in 70AD, continued to reject Him for 2,000 years since then, a people these Futurists admit will still not be ready when Christ comes again), yet these Christ-hating Jews are to become the centre of all things for 1,000 years!??? **THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE FANTASTIC AND FOOLISH DOCTRINE IN ALL OF HISTORY! NO WONDER THE REFORMERS SO VEHEMENTLY DENOUNCED “JEWISH FABLES!”** But we have seen in our studies, and we know every day as we read our Bibles, that Christ and His Church are central to all things in heaven and on earth, and always will be – what the Bible teaches is exactly the opposite of the Futurist, pro-Jewish, pro-Roman Catholic propaganda, which came from the Roman Jesuits in the first place. Yet the proud perpetrators of this puerile propaganda, continue to strut their stuff, as if all wisdom belongs to them, and they are so blind and willful, that no man can teach them anything. Their Jesuit-inspired obsession has robbed them of any rational thought. **But where, in this wild Futurist speculation, is the risen, reigning and ruling Christ, Who Himself said, in comforting the faithful Laodiceans, (Revelation 3:21-22), “21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”** Do you hear what the Spirit has been saying for 2,000 years? That Christ is (already, even now!) “set down with His Father in His throne”? **That He is already ruling the nations, according to Revelation 2:26-27?** I was reading Ephesians the other day, and I noticed that the first two chapters are just full of the doctrine that Christ is exalted and reigning now. He talks in *Ephesians 1*, of God’s, “mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far

above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all *things* under his feet”, *and speaking of our salvation in Chapter 2*, “5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus”! *How can you read this glorious gospel and not see it as the culmination and fruition of all things in God’s eternal plan? How can you turn from such a gospel, and a reigning Saviour, to Jewish fables about earthly revivals of those who have rejected Him till the day He returns – this Futurism defies everything Jesus ever taught as gospel!*

THE FUTURISTS DO NOT PREACH A RISEN AND REIGNING CHRIST – THEY PREACH A RISEN CHRIST WHO IS YET TO REIGN – THIS IS HERESY! The risen and reigning Christ is nowhere to be seen in this Futurist nonsense! They preach a Christ who is in limbo, waiting till He can reign over the nations some day in the future, and then only for 1,000 years! God forbid such blasphemy, such belittling of the King of kings and Lord of lords! THIS IS THE RELEVANCE OF CALVIN’S VEHEMENT DENUNCIATION OF THE MILLENARIANS (OR CHILIASTS), WHO, HE SAID, “LIMITED THE REIGN OF CHRIST TO A THOUSAND YEARS.” He said, “Their fiction is too childish either to need or to be worth a refutation.” ISN’T IT AMAZING THAT A FALSE DOCTRINE, WHICH THE REFORMER THOUGHT DID NOT EVEN DESERVE AN ANSWER 500 YEARS AGO, IS NOW MAINSTREAM DOCTRINE AMONG THOSE WHO CLAIM TO FOLLOW THE REFORMERS! The Jesuits have done their work well, just as did the Serpent in the beginning, when he beguiled Eve.

THE WARPED MENTALITY OF THE HERETICS IS JUST ASTOUNDING AND THE REAL KILLER IS THE PRIDE AND STUBBORNNESS IN THE HEARTS OF MANY PASTORS AND TEACHERS – they throw honesty and reason to the four winds, in order to protect their heresies! I know a Reformed pastor who prefers the NIV Bible, and claims it is the best translation (Many were fooled by the NIV when it first came out, but hardly anybody believes this any more!), and when I challenged him by saying that the underlying text of the NIV came from the Church of Rome, he defended by saying that he had no problem accepting that God could use the Church of Rome to preserve His Word (NB: What he refuses to acknowledge is that, if God used the Church of Rome to preserve His

*Word, then that means the Protestant Churches have all been deceived for 500 years, and the Protestant Reformation was a mistake – you can't have it both ways – one lie leads to another, and the deception just gets deeper!). And in the same manner, those heretics who maintain the idea of a 2,000 year gap in the prophecies of Scripture, and a 1,000 year Jewish Millennium after Christ returns for His Church, simply refuse to hear you when you tell them, **that this heresy also came from Rome and her Jesuits. And again I mention, for the sake of those who may only hear this one message – look up Francesco Ribera, the Jesuit who began this Futurist heresy, the historical facts are there for all to see, but many false teachers refuse to see! But then the Scripture does tell us plainly that, “all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the Roman beast), whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”. (Revelation 13:8). It is therefore, high time, for God's people to look carefully at the shepherds tending the flock, and see what their fruits are! If they are men incapable of discerning between sound doctrine and Jesuit propaganda, when all the facts stare them in the face, then you must judge them for what they are – they are not “apt to teach”, as the Scripture requires all God's elders to be – they are fakes.***

SO, IN THE CHURCH AT LARGE, THE APPALLING LACK OF RATIONAL THINKING, THE EQUALLY APPALLING LACK OF ANY KNOWLEDGE OF CHURCH HISTORY, AND THE APPALLING LACK OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT AND INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND PLAIN SCRIPTURE, COMBINE TOGETHER TO CREATE A FALSE MANIA ABOUT THE SO-CALLED 'SIGNS OF THE TIMES' IN OUR PRESENT DAY. *And the whole idea has no more foundation and structure than a sand castle! People just add one and one and two and two, until they have a fantastic sum of millions! They say, “Look at all the wars, and all the earthquakes, and all the false prophets,” and presto! They have the Lord returning in a few weeks for an absolute certainty! And I am not even exaggerating when I say this! I have known people who have taken this mania to its extremes, but I also know there are thousands, like children following the Pied Piper, who know nothing else but these errors, because they have never been taught faithfully from the Word of God, and so they are inoculated against the plain Truth of God's Word – “blind led by the blind.” **I SPEAK OF THE IGNORANCE OF CHURCH HISTORY, AND I MUST QUALIFY THIS** by*

pointing out that it is not only the Jehovah's Witnesses (Charles Taze Russell's 1914 prediction of Christ's return), or Seventh Day Adventists (William Miller's 1844 prediction), or modern day Baptists and Pentecostals, who have been making repeated false predictions of the time of the Lord's return, or the supposed nearness of His return, **BUT ALL THROUGHOUT CHURCH HISTORY, THERE HAVE BEEN THOSE DELUDED BY A PRESUMPTUOUS FALSE INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHECIES**, so that people have expected Christ to return at many stages – **RALPH WOODROW IN HIS BOOK CALLED “HIS TRUTH IS MARCHING ON”, POINTED OUT THE MANIA OF FALSE PREDICTIONS OF CHRIST'S RETURN:** in 381 (by Tychonius), in 500 (Hippolytus & Lactantius), in 1,000 (by many who sold their houses), in 1009, in 1033, in 1260, 1294, 1356, 1572, 1533 (by Stiefel, a friend of Martin Luther), 1648 (certain Jews), 1666, 1715 (Isaac Newton & William Whiston), 1734 (Whiston again), 1766 (Whiston again, but he didn't live to see it proven wrong), 1836 (Johann Bengel & John Wesley), etc. etc., 1977 (William Branham), and it just goes on and on! From other sources I have also gleaned the following: Herbert W Armstrong (1935, 1943, 1972, 1975), Hal Lindsay (1988), Benny Hinn (1992), Lester Sumerall (2000), Harold Camping (2011). **ISN'T IT JUST AMAZING THAT ALL THESE PEOPLE DON'T SEEM TO SEE ANY RELEVANCE TO THE WORDS OF JESUS (MATTHEW 24:36), “BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN...”?** Or, **2 Peter 3:7**, “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that **one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;** in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” *Jesus is saying that nobody has a clue about the time of His return, and Peter is saying that the timing of it is so well hidden from us, that we could easily be 1,000 years out in our estimation (if we were foolish enough to try to make predictions).*

BUT NOTHING OF WHAT JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES IN MATTHEW 24 HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH SIGNS OF THE END OF THE WORLD! HE SPOKE ENTIRELY OF THE END OF JERUSALEM, WHICH IS ONLY A TYPE AND A WARNING OF THE END OF THE WORLD. Remember how He laboured to get the message through to those of His own generation, even underlining all that He said with these words, (verse 34), “Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.**” Some have construed this to mean, “This *world* shall not pass,” but that is not only a very strained interpretation, but it doesn’t make any sense (like – This world won’t end until all the things to happen in this world have happened! Jesus is not a fool! Why would Jesus bother to say this? It is those who twist His Words, and even change His divine Words, who are the fools!) – **THE TRUTH IS, JESUS SPOKE NOT OF AN AGE (AION) OR PHYSICAL WORLD (KOSMOS) BUT OF A GENERATION (GENEA).** Clearly this was literally that present generation of Jews, just as His Words say. **The easiest way to pick a false teacher is that he will always resort to changing the Words of Scripture to suit his own false doctrine!** The changing of Scripture should not be taken lightly, it is the most grievous error that man can commit against God! **NO MAN WHO TAMPERS WITH THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE SHOULD BE GIVEN A TEACHING ROLE IN THE CHURCH!**

COMING BACK TO THE “FAMINES, PESTILENCES, EARTHQUAKES, PERSECUTION, APOSTACY ETC.”, THE FACT IS THAT ALL THESE THINGS PREDICTED DID OCCUR IN THE YEARS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE APOSTLES, even to the point where most of the apostles lost their lives through persecution, being crucified, beheaded, burned etc. These things are recorded in **Foxe's Book of Martyrs** and the writings of Jewish historian, **Josephus**. I won't take the time to quote – these are well known and reputable works, and Foxe's Book of Martyrs should be read and cherished in every Christian household, to stem the tide of the gross ignorance prevailing in the Church today on these matters. But then, **many Evangelicals today, through false humility and false piety, are too squeamish to read about the burning alive of men and women and children for their faith, yet they will readily agree with the false doctrines of that “harlot” Church which burned them, false doctrines which send those deceived by them to an eternity of hell fire.** Why are they not squeamish about this, and their own sins of neglect of sound

doctrine, which are far more gross than the honest viewing of our real history, which made many of our forefathers better believers than we are today? Hence when we come to persecution and apostacy in the Church, it is easy to see that all these things were soundly fulfilled in the latter days leading up to the fall of Jerusalem. It is the apostacy, the backsliding of the Church, which allows the false teachers and false prophets to gain a strangle-hold on the people.

JUST READ CORINTHIANS, AND JOHN'S EPISTLES, AND PETER'S AND JUDE'S, AND YOU WILL QUICKLY SEE THAT GROSS APOSTACY WAS UPON THE CHURCH EVEN IN THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES: 1 John 2:18-19, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." *Jude sounded the alarm in those very days: Jude 3-4, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." So the backsliding was well under way before the apostles died.*

THAT IS APOSTACY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, BUT I HASTEN TO ADD THAT THE CITY OF JERUSALEM ITSELF WAS ALREADY IN THE MOST DREADFUL STATE OF APOSTACY, TERMINAL APOSTACY, having committed the crowning act of rebellion against her God, by crucifying the Saviour and persecuting His apostles!

d) ***THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL TO THE END (24:14).*** *Never has there been a greater gospel work than the missionary works of Paul and his companions of that day. Paul's greeting to the Colossians reveals this: Colossians 1:3-6, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, 5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 6 Which is come unto you, as it is in*

all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth.” *Likewise in Romans 16:25-26*, “25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations** for the obedience of faith.”

WHILE THE CITY OF JERUSALEM WAS DEEPENING HER APOSTACY AND REBELLION AGAINST GOD, PAUL AND OTHERS WERE TAKING THE GOSPEL TO THE NATIONS – THIS SCRIPTURE WAS WELL AND TRULY FULFILLED IN THE FIRST CENTURY! *But you will hear the 'missionary' kind today say that Christ can't come back till all nations, every people group and every language group, have heard the gospel. The Scriptures say no such thing! How many times do the nations have to hear the gospel and then backslide and reject it again? THE GOSPEL HAS GONE ROUND AND ROUND THE GLOBE. THE WHOLE WORLD IS WITHOUT EXCUSE!* *Christ could come at any moment! Take a look at Sudan, Nigeria, Rhodesia, South Africa, India, and many more around the globe – nations which have had great gospel privileges for hundreds of years! I mentioned before, how, just when Jerusalem was deepening her apostacy and rebellion, the apostle Paul and his friends were taking the gospel to the world, well here is a parallel: IN THE EARLY TO MID 1800'S, THE VERY PERIOD WHEN THE CHURCH IN THE WESTERN WORLD WAS BEGINNING HER SLIDE INTO AWFUL APOSTACY (remember all the cult groups, including the Textual Criticism, and the Jesuit-inspired Futurists, which were spawned in the mid 1800's), MEN LIKE ROBERT MOFFAT, DAVID LIVINGSTONE, AND WILLIAM CAREY, CALVINIST MISSIONARIES, WERE TAKING THE GOSPEL TO THE DARKEST PARTS OF AFRICA AND ASIA!* *History records the amazement of the natives who saw those missionaries come into their land carrying their own coffins with them, never expecting to leave, except in a box! That was the dedication and conviction of those Calvinist missionaries! And what is Africa today? No doubt there is some remnant of Christianity there, but the general thrust is Marxist rebellion, with 'Black Power' as it goal. The revolutionary, Mandella, is perhaps the most popular man on earth today, rivalling even the Pope, but MANDELLA APPARENTLY WAS*

EQUALLY AT HOME WITH ROMAN CATHOLICISM, ISLAM, MARXISM, AND TRIBAL PAGANISM! WHERE IS THE REFORMED FAITH OF THE PRECIOUS SEEDS PLANTED BY LIVINGSTONE? It seems it has been choked out by these carnal and humanistic weeds. Don't tell me Africa has not heard the gospel. Africa has been abundantly blessed with the gospel for 200 years, (AND LONG BEFORE THIS, THE BIBLE RECORDS THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH WHO BELIEVED THE PREACHING OF PHILIP), but Africa has turned her back on Christ, and is slaughtering white Christians like cattle, as we speak, and the same can be said for other nations such as India and China. **AND WHAT ABOUT AUSTRALIA?** We continue to pray for revival, and so we should. The Lord may have mercy on this nation, and then again, He may not!, for we too have rejected the gospel we once believed, and have gone after false prophets and false Christs ourselves! and false doctrine too, as religion becomes less about Christ and more about man! **DON'T LET THE FUTURISTS BEGUILÉ YOU WITH THE IDEA THAT THE WORLD HAS NOT HEARD THE GOSPEL – YOU SEE, THE FUTURISTS, AS I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED, ARE ALSO ARMINIANS: i.e.** They compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and then teach him their heresies, they believe God loves everybody and is desperately trying to save all people and all nations and even every individual soul, and that we just need to try harder and the world will be converted. This is not a slight difference of interpretation! It is heresy! Let every man go where God calls Him, and let every man continue where God calls him, unless he is guided otherwise, but it is not our duty to compass land and sea (like the Pharisees) to win every nation by every humanistic effort known to man, but we are commanded to preach the gospel and warn the wicked, and **SOMETIMES IT IS EVEN OUR DUTY TO SHAKE THE DUST OFF OUR FEET WHERE THE GOSPEL IS REJECTED, EVEN AS THE APOSTLES THEMSELVES DID.** Preaching the gospel is not about saving the world but about magnifying Christ and the Word of God!

AT 'CHRISTMAS' TIME, THERE ARE ALWAYS VARIOUS MENTIONS OF THE MESSAGES FROM THE CATHOLIC AND ANGLICAN CHURCHES (practically nothing is reported from the Evangelical Churches, those who actually preach the gospel), however, even in the very weak mixture of religion which is in the so-called 'Christmas tradition,' it is at least good to see that Christ is being proclaimed to some extent – at least He is put forth as the Son of God, at least the miracle of the virgin birth is still being

loudly proclaimed, and because Roman Catholicism, as wicked and compromised as it is, is still a world-wide religious force to be reckoned with, the whole world, (and I mean literally the whole world), at least at Christmas and Easter, hears again and again of the incarnate Christ and the crucified and risen Saviour! This also shows the sovereign and almighty power of the reigning Christ, who rules the nations, because even Christ's arch-enemy on earth, the Roman Antichrist, even while he is preaching heresy, is in some measure preaching Christ also! So, what I am saying in this, is underlining the fact that the whole world has heard the gospel over and over, (at least the bones of it), so that AFTER 2,000 YEARS, THE WHOLE WORLD HAS HAD CHRIST PREACHED TO IT, BOTH BY HIS FRIENDS AND HIS ENEMIES! GLORY TO GOD ALONE! That is no reason to stop preaching, but it does mean the world is doubly without excuse! Because the world wilfully sins, and also wilfully rejects Christ the Saviour of sinners. And Christ really could come at any time – He owes this world nothing but judgment. So what can you and I say? Come Lord Jesus, and please, be merciful unto me, a sinner, and to my house! Amen.

Continued, The Lord's Day, 30th September 2018

Reading: Mark 13 (Mark's account of the matter recorded in Matthew 24)

*Firstly, just note that the question recorded by Mark omits specific details, such as, the end of the world (4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when **all these things** shall be fulfilled?). Remember, we saw in studying that threefold question in Matthew, that it was clearly all about one event – the fall of Jerusalem. And so, Mark's account omits details which really doesn't change anything.*

- e) **THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION (24:15-18)** – *an exhortation to Judaeans to flee to the mountains and not delay. The Scriptures identify clearly what this event is, e.g. in **Luke 21:20**, “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains...” Matthew and Luke are describing the same events predicted by Jesus, but each is recording it in slightly different words, so that when we compare the two accounts, we get a clearer picture (**A GREAT LESSON IN UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE – LET SCRIPTURE INTERPRET SCRIPTURE, DON'T TRY TO INTERPRET IT YOURSELF!**). In this case, instead of speaking about the “abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel,” as Matthew records it, Luke plainly describes it as “Jerusalem compassed with armies” – **HENCE THE “ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION” IS NOTHING MORE OR LESS THAN THE ARRIVAL OF THE PAGAN ROMAN ARMIES, PREPARING TO BESIEGE JERUSALEM, WHICH OCCURRED IN 70AD.** Details of these events are well enough recorded by Josephus the Jewish historian, but **it is not even necessary to quote Josephus' history, when Scripture itself abundantly identifies what Jesus was speaking of.** Nevertheless, Josephus was an eyewitness to these events when they unfolded, and so we find remarkable detail indicating that the fall of Jerusalem happened just as Jesus predicted, even to the point of seeing signs and wonders in the sky. This is standard historical information the Church has known for centuries, but today's generation seems to have little interest in the plain and obvious facts – the reason of course is that so many just are not willing to give up their 'pet' false doctrines.*

MANY FALSE INTERPRETERS MAKE MUCH OF THE “ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION”, SUPPOSING IT IS SOME FUTURE DESECRATION OF A

REBUILT JEWISH TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM, but it is interesting that the temple has still not been rebuilt after all this time, and if you believe the words of Jesus, it never shall be rebuilt. You only have to consider the finality of Jesus words in the beginning of this very discourse: “There shall not be left here one stone upon another.” He said nothing about rebuilding it!!!!

AND REMEMBER, JESUS OPENED THE SUBJECT WITH THIS STATEMENT, as if to get it through to the disciples at the outset, that this temple, and this nation, and all of the Old Testament traditions would be ended!

NOTICE ALSO WHAT JESUS SAID TO THE JEWS AFTER THEY HAD ACCUSED HIM WHEN HE CLEARED THE TEMPLE: (John 2:19-22), “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” “20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.” Again, we see Jesus pointing out to those who had ears to hear, that **the Old Testament temple, and all the ritual that pertained to it, was to end, and a New Covenant was to supersede the Old, and the New would be spiritual, as opposed to material and ritual, and God would be worshipped in “spirit and in truth,” not on the Mount of Jerusalem or the Mount of Samaria! As He also said to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). But the Jews were carnally minded, and could never give up their temple. They still can't, even today! Unbelieving Jews still wail at the wailing wall (a mere piece of the foundation of the temple that remains), stubbornly continuing to rebel against the Word of the gospel of Christ. But the saddest thing is that so many Christians promote and admire this dogged unbelief of the Jews, rather than receive the wonderful, straightforward instruction of our Lord about the kingdom of God! Let the Word of God speak, and let every false prophet and false teacher be silenced before it!**

SPEAKING OF THE CARNAL NATURE OF THESE ERRORS, I HAVE MENTIONED FUTURISTS AND DISPENSATIONALISTS AS BEING ONE OF THE MAJOR SCHOOLS OF ERROR ON END TIMES PROPHECY – LIKE THE JEWS, THEY ARE CARNAL IN THEIR APPROACH TO SCRIPTURE, NOT

SPIRITUAL. *When we mention a spiritual truth from Scripture, they accuse us of ‘spiritualising’ – this is because they are bent on carnal interpretation! It is interesting that one of the major perpetrators of this error, the **American Baptists** (including Southern Baptists and Independent Baptists), not only major on the doctrines of **Dispensationalism**, which put a carnal and forced literalist spin on the prophecies, but the same people major on the **Arminian doctrine of salvation**, which focusses almost entirely on what man must do to be saved, rather than attributing all things to God's sovereign grace. **Both concepts are very carnal in their view of the Scriptures**, so that those deceived by it simply cannot accept that, very often, Jesus and the apostles and prophets spoke in figures, that His words so often carried spiritual meaning, not literal. But this Futurist system of belief is not merely a smattering of errors here and there, it is a fundamentally flawed system of interpretation, **not just error, but hard-headed heresy, ingrained so deep that it stands beside all the major cults for its deceptive and binding power over its victims! This is why we must continue to expose it, just as Jesus continually exposed the Jews and the Pharisees for the self-same carnally minded approach to the Scriptures.***

IN A NUTSHELL, DISPENSATIONALIST OR FUTURIST VIEWS OF END TIMES PROPHECY, GO HAND IN HAND WITH A CARNAL VIEW OF THE GOSPEL, A MAN-CENTRED VIEW, WHICH FOCUSES ON MAN'S WILL AND MAN'S DECISION, NOT GOD'S SOVEREIGN GRACE. *Some carry this carnal emphasis to such extremes, that they will even lie and manipulate people into making that all-important ‘decision’ – they literally think that if they can even trick a person into accepting Christ, at least he will be saved and the rest can be sorted out along the way, but this is a great deception, because such dishonest foolishness does not accompany salvation at all, because Jesus doesn't work with liars and deceivers. Hence, many who think they are saved are not saved at all. **THESE ERRORS AND THEIR TEACHERS MUST BE AVOIDED.** It is far too late in the day for us to pretend that they merely differ with us on insignificant points, or to entertain the vain hope that we might correct them – they oppose fundamental aspects of the true gospel, and corrupt the whole Church in the process, and so they fill the churches with unconverted sinners – no wonder the churches are a mess! But*

apart from those hard-headed false teachers, many of God's people are not wilfully ignorant like their teachers; they simply need to be taught properly, but those who have sold themselves to a dogged pursuit of what Paul called, **“another gospel” (Galatians 1:6, 2 Corinthians 11:4)**, who are unwilling to reconsider their position, and those who teach that false gospel to others, we ought to avoid: **Romans 16:17**, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

I AM COMMENTING HERE ON THE “ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION”, which Jesus said was to be a sign to His disciples to flee from the city of Jerusalem. When you simply read the Scriptures and see that this “abomination” was the Roman armies ready to besiege the city, then the whole thing is as simple as ABC. And flee they did! History records that although millions perished in that siege, not a single Christian perished, so wonderfully were the Words of the Lord Jesus fulfilled! **I QUOTE BRIEFLY FROM JOHN GILL, 1809**, He said, “...it is remarked by several interpreters, and which Josephus takes notice of with surprise, that Cestius Gallus having advanced with his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it, on a sudden without any cause, raised the siege, and withdrew his army, when the city might have been easily taken; by which means a signal was made, and an opportunity given to the Christians, to make their escape: which they accordingly did, and went over to Jordan, as Eusebius says, to a place called Pella; so that **when Titus came a few months after, there was not a Christian in the city.**” (John Gill’s comment on Matthew 24:16). Think about this! Jesus gave them specific warning about their flight from Jerusalem, and then, when He sent the Roman armies, He gave them clear space to make their escape! We ought to give glory to God for such wonderful fulfilment of prophecy – not look for some fantastic future fulfilment of that which is already known to be fulfilled in 70AD!

THE GENEVA BIBLE NOTES ON Revelation 12:14, attribute this flight of the Church into the wilderness as the 3 ½ year period mentioned there. “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” The “great tribulation” Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 24**, was

all about the fall of Jerusalem, which modern futurists deny, but it has nothing to do with the future or the end of the world! This was the understanding of those Reformers who wrote the notes to the Geneva Bible, men like John Calvin, John Knox, Miles Coverdale, and others – the Futurist propaganda of the Jesuit, Ribera, was to emerge only a few years after these Reformers, but it took over 200 years before it influenced the Protestants.

- f) **“GREAT TRIBULATION, SUCH AS WAS NOT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD TO THIS TIME, NO, NOR EVER SHALL BE 22** And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” **(24:16-22)**, *such a great persecution that if the believers did not escape, and if the time had not been shortened, none of them, neither Jew nor Christian, would have survived. If the Lord had not carefully measured and confined this carnage inflicted by the Romans, if He had not intervened and caused the Romans to withdraw in the first place, the elect would have perished in Jerusalem with the rest, or the rage of the Roman army would have pursued them until none were left, but the Lord had a perfect plan. **This prophecy is all about the fall of Jerusalem, as Luke's comments make quite clear: Luke 21:24,** “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and **Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles,** until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” (i.e. The Romans would continue to occupy Jerusalem until their work was fully accomplished, until there was nothing left that could be called a city, a religion, or a people – literally, until the Old Covenant and all that pertained to it was removed from the world's view)! Remember Jesus' words at the beginning, about the complete and utter ruin of Jerusalem and its temple! The “great tribulation”, which there is so much talk about in relation to a supposedly future Antichrist, who has not yet appeared, is so soundly proven false by this Scripture! **The “great tribulation” in Matthew 24 is all about the fall of Jerusalem, not the end of the world!** The Futurists keep harping on the idea that there is going to be such a tribulation like the world has never seen before, so it has to be worse than the fall of Jerusalem, (actually most of them don't even know about the fall of Jerusalem, nor do they want to hear about it, they are so caught up in the hype of Futurism!), but it is only in their own minds that there has to be something worse yet*

– read Josephus' account of the fall of Jerusalem, and you will be utterly amazed at how terrible it was – the brutality and murder, the starvation, the people eating their own children! **BUT AGAIN, LET'S NOT RELY ON SECULAR HISTORY, EVEN IF IT MAKES THE PROPHECY'S FULFILMENT AS PLAIN AS THE NOSE ON YOUR FACE; LET US SEE WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT THE VERY FALL OF JERUSALEM, EVEN IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER: Matthew 23:29-38 (This is perhaps the most enlightening of all Scripture on the subject),** “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ... ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 **Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.** 33 *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:* 35 **That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.** 36 **Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.** 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” *And Luke's account also, (Luke 21:20-22),* “20 And **when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.** 21 Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 **For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.**” **HOW MUCH PLAINER COULD IT BE? AND HOW COULD ANYTHING FUTURE BE MORE TERRIBLE THAN A CITY WHICH, JESUS SAID, WAS TO BEAR THE GUILT OF ALL PREVIOUS GENERATIONS?** Jesus was literally saying that the generation of Jews He was speaking to, had been singled out and set up by God, as an awful example to the world, to bear the brunt of the punishment of all generations before – how terrible then was this fall of Jerusalem to be! And this agrees with Jesus' discourse in our text, as, after He had outlined all these things, He said plainly of it all,

(Matthew 24:34), “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” *And Mark’s words are almost identical – “this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done”.*

NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT THE TRIBULATION MENTIONED IN REVELATION 7:9-17, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **THESE ARE THEY WHICH CAME OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

I WON'T GO INTO DETAIL ON THIS SCRIPTURE AT PRESENT, BUT THIS GREAT MULTITUDE THAT NO MAN COULD NUMBER IS UNDOUBTEDLY ALL THE SAINTS, all the saved, all those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. And their tribulation has spanned the whole New Testament era until the end of time, until the resurrection. This is not the “great tribulation” at Jerusalem, the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, which was never equalled in the history of the world – this is the great tribulation of all the saints, because all true believers go through great tribulation, as we read in Acts 14:22, that Paul had been stoned for preaching the gospel at Lystra, and the disciples returned to those cities, “exhorting (the Churches) to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” But that “great tribulation” of Matthew 24, was the vengeance of God upon unbelieving Jerusalem – nothing could ever equal that!

- g) ***THIS AWFUL TIME OF GREAT TRIBULATION FOR JERUSALEM, WHICH WOULD SEEM LIKE THE END OF THE WORLD TO THOSE INVOLVED, JESUS STRESSED, WAS NOT THE TIME OF HIS BODILY RETURN (24:23).*** In 24:6 the same warning was mentioned, that despite the wars and awful turmoil, ***the end was not yet.***
- h) ***MORE FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS (24:24-28),*** and a solemn warning not to be fooled by them, and not to believe that Christ had come, because His coming at the end of the world would be so visible and so glorious that they could not mistake it.
- i) ***THE SUN DARKENED:*** “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened etc.” (24:29). Because this is “immediately” after the siege of Jerusalem, it is clear that the symbols of the “sun” etc. refer to the fall of the nation – although the sun was literally darkened by fire and smoke, after that, ***Jerusalem fell, never to rise again.***

REMEMBER JOSEPH'S DREAM: (Genesis 37:9-10), “Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, **the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.** 10 And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?” ***Even Jacob knew that “the sun and the moon and the eleven stars” were Jacob, his wife, and eleven sons (Joseph being the twelfth).*** These symbols together represent all Israel. The heavenly bodies speak of powers or authorities.

THE PROPHET MALACHI PREDICTED THIS ALSO: Malachi 4:1-2, “FOR, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2 **But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.**” By contrast to the darkness of the Day of the Lord upon Jerusalem, the personal and spiritual visitation of the Lord Jesus is compared to the Sun, giving light and life to all who receive Him.

MANY COMMENTATORS ATTRIBUTE THE NEXT FEW VERSES TO THE END OF THE WORLD, EVEN IF THEY AGREE THAT THE PRECEDING ONES SPEAK

OF THE FALL OF JERUSALEM, BUT THE WORD “IMMEDIATELY” WHICH CONNECTS THEM MAKES THAT CONCEPT IMPOSSIBLE. Remember how, earlier in our studies, we observed that “the day of the Lord” or the “coming of the Lord” has been spoken of by the prophets in describing the fall of various nations and empires – the same is true here, (even though the prophecy seems to drift on into the actual coming of the Lord as well), He is continuing the same discourse, the same subject, the same fall of Jerusalem, even as He speaks of His coming, it is His coming in judgment upon Jerusalem, because the Lord ties all this together again at the end of His statement, by saying “This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” There simply isn't any way to escape the fact that Jesus is talking about the fall of Jerusalem in this whole discourse, and of course, that that was the very thing the disciples asked Him about! Note: “29 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: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and 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. 31 And he shall 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. 32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Josephus records some amazing visions and phenomena at Jerusalem in those days, which indicate a complete fulfilment of “all these things”: “a star resembling a sword, a comet, a bright light shining around the altar and the temple, a vision of chariots and soldiers running around among the clouds, a quaking, a great noise, The sound of a great multitude saying, 'Let us remove hence.'”

So all these things, quite clearly, and reasonably, refer to the fall of Jerusalem, including the Lord's coming again, for the particular purpose of carrying out that judgment upon His enemies, even as He said in His parables, that He would do.

3. **BUT WHAT ABOUT CHRIST'S RETURN AND THE END OF THE WORLD?** *Well, to put it very simply, that day will not come with signs preceding it, as did the fall of Jerusalem. Those signs pertained to the fall of Jerusalem, just as the disciples' questions dictated, and just as Jesus' answer provided according to their question – there they needed warning so they could flee to the hills – but “that day” (the great day of the judgment of all the world) will come suddenly, unexpectedly, and “that day and that hour, no man knoweth!” In Jerusalem's day, the saints, who were already saved, needed to heed a warning of physical danger in connection with the destruction of a physical city, **but at the end of the world, when Christ literally returns, the preparation is not physical, but spiritual – we must be already in Christ before that day!** We must have already fled to Christ alone for refuge before that day, or we will perish in that final and awful judgment of the whole world. The Christians facing the fall of Jerusalem, fled to the earthly refuge of Pella, for earthly shelter from the Roman armies, but the warning to prepare for the judgment of the whole world, is to flee to Christ, the Rock of Ages, for the spiritual shelter of eternal salvation. As Toplady said, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee!”*

*God willing, we shall study this matter further, and there are some general signs leading up to the end of the world, but they are not specific and detailed like those given about the fall of Jerusalem, and therefore they give us really no definite idea how close that day may be, so let us be ready at all times – and let us remember Jerusalem, the city which rejected her God. Let us, by God's grace, not be like them, and so let us warn this generation also. We read in **Matthew 24:42-43**, “42 **Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.** 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched,” And in **Matthew 25**, in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Jesus repeats this warning with almost the same words: “13 **Watch therefore**, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” In Luke's account of this same discourse, Jesus' words are, (**Luke 13**), “32 But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33 Take ye heed, **watch and pray:** for ye know not when the time is.” Then He goes on and repeats Himself again: “34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and*

commanded the porter to watch. **35 Watch ye therefore:** for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: **36** Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.” *And then He closes with this very succinct warning repeated yet again: “**37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.**”* *In relation to His return, the Lord uses the term “watch” three times in this short, closing statement, and the third is interesting and unique: “**37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.**”* *While we can be sure that everything the Lord spoke of in this whole discourse about the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple and His coming in judgement upon that city, was all fulfilled in 70 AD, these final words are also a message to the whole world about the return of Christ, so that, what He said to His disciples at that time, He also says to all Christians, as they do not know when the end of the world will be, and when Christ shall come. Let us hear the Word of God and look eagerly for that day as we serve Him, and not be drawn away by popular heresies. Amen.*