

THE SECOND COMING

Matthew Chapter Twenty-four

The twenty-fourth chapter of the gospel according to Matthew is the story of the Second Coming of Jesus. The opening statement to this important chapter is when Jesus went out of the temple and was going on His way, the disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the temple.

Evidently they were impressed with the magnificent structure. They are no different than most of us today. We are impressed with buildings. If you were driving past a store front Church building in the inner city and it had a sign on it that said, "CHURCH OF CHRIST," you probably would not even slow down as you went past the parking lot. You are looking for a place to worship and you would be sure that place was where the holy spirit would meet and you would want nothing to do with it. Our judgement of the place would be made on the building. It might be that more gospel would be preached there than in a magnificent edifice out in the suburbs.

The temple must have been quite a sight to behold. It took forty-six years to build, we are told in the second chapter of John, and they were still working on it at this time. Josephus tells us that it was white limestone and some of the stones were 20 to 40 feet long, 12 feet high, and 18 feet wide. The Jews had spared nothing in their zeal to glorify their major place of worship. King Herod the great had adorned it with golden bunches of grapes. Some of the bunches of grapes were six feet tall. What a sight it must have been. No wonder the disciples pointed this out to the Lord.

However, the Apostles had been here before many times with Jesus and there is no mention that they ever pointed out the glory of the Temple before. Why would they do it now? The reason was because of what Jesus had just said. In the previous chapter, He told them your house is left unto you desolate. At this point, He walked out of the temple and the disciples went with Him.

Whenever the Lord leaves a house, whether it is the temple, a home, or a Church House, that place is desolate. You may have a home where there are a dozen people in it, but if there is no place for the Lord that house is empty. Empty! Empty! Empty! The temple with all its grandeur now was empty. Jesus had left. Whenever the Lord leaves the disciples will always leave Him. So they came to Him to show Him the temple. They could not understand how such a building could ever be desolate. Jesus then told them that the day would come when that great structure would be destroyed. Not one stone would be left on another.

Jesus then went out to the Mount of Olives and sat. The disciples came to Him privately and asked two questions. They came privately and asked two questions. Actually there were three, but they can be simmered down to two. They said, "When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming? And of the end of the world?" The temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD about thirty-five years from then. Obviously the end of the world is not yet. However the disciples connected such a terrible event as the destruction of the temple with the end of the world and the Second Coming of the Lord. Jesus would answer both even though one would take place in a few years and the other not for generations yet to come. Many questions had been asked of the Lord during His sojourn among men but to this question or questions, He gave the longest answer than to any other question that was ever asked of Him.

I like the opening remark of His answer. It is the most significant part of the speech. "TAKE HEED THAT NO MAN LEAD YOU ASTRAY." I would like to have a rubber stamp of that statement. Then I would like to have that stamp on every book ever written on this chapter. Every pamphlet, every sermon ever preached on it, every Bible school lesson ever taught on it. Then with all of them piled up before me, I would like to take that rubber stamp and stamp those words of Jesus on every single one of them: TAKE HEED THAT NO MAN LEAD YOU ASTRAY.

Those of you who have a millennium hang up are going to be disappointed with this message. I won't be talking about that. It has no place here. I like the words of the High Priest Caiaphas to the council in John eleven. He was a wicked man, but he said something by the power of God when he said to his gang, "YE KNOW NOTHING AT ALL." Are there any pre-millennialist listening in, historical or dispensation? YE KNOW NOTHING AT ALL! Are there any post-millennialist listening in? YE KNOW NOTHING AT ALL! Are there any amillennialist listening in? YE KNOW NOTHING AT ALL! Perhaps you say and what pray tell do you know? I KNOW NOTHING AT ALL, EITHER! Except of course what the word of God tells us, nothing more nothing less.

Some of the things that Jesus would say apply only to the destruction of the temple and some things apply to the end of the world and the Lord's return. So here are some of the things that He said.

FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS

One of the signs that Jesus gave was, "Let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains. And pray that your flight be not on a Sabbath Day" This obviously had nothing to do with the Second Coming. This was in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem. If it happened on a Sabbath Day they could only flee about seventh eighth of a day. The Pharisees had figured in their warped way of looking at it that a longer walk than that would be classified as work. I have never been to Judaea and have no plans to go. There is no way that I could flee into the mountains of Judaea. Of course, I could flee unto the Appalachians from Ohio, but that is not what the Lord said, He said Judaea. Besides at the Second Coming He comes again there will be no need to head for the hills. We read in Revelation that the day will come when men will cry for rocks of the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. When Jesus comes, there will be no place to hide. Of course their cry for the rocks to fall upon them will be granted. The rock of Ages will fall upon them. Jesus had said a few days before this at the Triumphal Entry, Whoever falleth on this rock will be broken in pieces and on whomever it shall fall it will scatter him as dust. So we repeat this warning about fleeing to the mountains, hopefully not on the Sabbath Day for the people in Judaea at the time of the destruction of the temple in 70 AD

HOUSETOP

The next thing that we will mention is the admonition of the Lord to not come down off the housetop to take the things that are in the house. This again could not be regarding the Second Coming, but the destruction of the temple. When the Lord returns there is no way that any of us will be able to say, "Wait, Lord, until I get my furniture packed. I've got a brand new microwave, a V. C.R., a brand new electric fridge. Wait till I load up then I'm ready to go to Heaven. Although some may think these are the most important things in life, I assure you when the Lord comes you will forget all about those things. If you are a Christian, you will have no use for those things in Heaven. The standard of living will be so high there the way we live here with all our gadgets will seem like the lifestyle of a caveman. If you are not a Christian, you will have your own built-in microwave where you are going. You won't need an electric fridge; there won't be any ice in hell. Of course, there will be no television just hellelevision.

A NEW SUIT

Next let him that is in the field not return back for his cloak. This again is in regards to the destruction of the temple. When the Lord comes there will be no one who will say, "Wait, Lord, I just bought a new suit, my car has a new mink coat and if I'm going to Heaven I want to have on my Heaven go to meeting clothes. Lord, let me to go in style."

The only garment you will be concerned about in that day will be the wedding garment of Christ. I hope you will hear the words of the Lord how He will say to some, "How camest thou in hither without having a wedding garment? You need to put on Christ and you need to put Him on now. Paul tells us how when he says in Galatians 3:27, "As many of us as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

Then He talked about pregnant women and young babies. But woe unto them that are with child and unto them that give suck. Obviously this is about the destruction of the temple. When Jesus comes again there will be no hardship for mothers with child unless it be because of unforgiven immorality. There will be no hardship for small babies. Jesus said of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Babies born or unborn, legitimate or illegitimate, all are sinless. They don't even need to be baptized, not that I would call a christening a baptism in the wildest stretch of imagination.

WINTER

Pray that your flight will be not in the winter neither Sabbath day. This again is in regards to the destruction of the temple. When the Lord returns, it won't make any difference what season it is, winter or summer. At this time there may be of difference to some about the weather. If it rains, no Church, if it snows no Church. If it hails, no Church. If it is hot, no church. On that day, I intend to be present just like at services on earth regardless of the weather. Those who were present assembly here regardless of the weather will be present that great meeting in the air regardless of the season weather. The chill factor won't matter. Neither will the humidity. When Jesus comes I'm going.

HIS RETURN

There were some signs that Jesus talked about that did regard the Second Coming. For one thing, He said that the sun would be turned into darkness and the moon would not give her light. The stars would fall and the powers of heavens would be shaken. Then would appear the sign of the Son of man. All tribes of the earth would mourn because of Him and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds with power and great glory. He will send forth His angels and they will gather together His elect.

His coming is literal so the rest of this must be literal too. Jesus knew the world was round. None of the people knew that at that time. They thought it was flat, but Jesus knew better. He knew that when He returned the sun would shine on one side of the world and the moon would shine on the other. He said the sun shall be darkened. When the Lord comes the sun will black out. Naturally the moon will do the same because it receives its light from sun. All will be dark and then the light will shine not the SUNLIGHT OR THE MOONLIGHT BUT THE SONLIGHT.

THE WORD

Jesus warned. Heaven and earth shall pass away but My Word shall not pass a way. The Word of God is more durable than the world and everything in it. The Bible will outlast the sun, the moon and the stars. One of these days you are going to die and your ideas are going to die with you, but the Word of God will abide forever.

THE DAY AND THE HOUR

Not only that, but Jesus said that no one knows the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh, neither the angels, nor the Son of man, but the Father only. I am glad Jesus said He did not know when He was coming again. If He had said He knew the day and the year and the hour, every preacher would examine every thing said about coming again looking for a clue and pounce on every verse and claim I've got it. I know the year, month, the week, the day, and the hour. Since Jesus said He did not know when He would come it makes a person who makes a prediction look stupid. If Jesus, while on earth with all his wisdom, did not know when He would return, I'm sure that no one else will be able to discern that day either. We can say however that we have some idea when the end will come, it will come either when Jesus comes again or, it will come for you to accomplish your intents and purposes at the end of your life. If you are 50 years old, you can fully expect to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in about 20 years, but it could be before that. You know your own birthday so figure out your own timetable. We are all saints and sinner headed for one grand, climatic meeting with Jesus Christ. You can count on it.

The Second Coming itself was likened to the condition of the world at the time of Noah. They knew not when the flood came and took them all away. All were taken away. The young as well as the old, the men as well as the women, the educated as well as the ignorant, the rich as well as the poor. There was no exception. They were all taken away. The last thing that Noah said before he entered into the Ark was when he turned to the crowd and said, "SOMETHING GOOD IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU," or perhaps he said, "I'm O.K., YOU'RE NOT." At any rate they were all taken away.

At the Second Coming one shall be taken and one shall be left. If we think of the end of the world as being the end of our lifetime, the Lord delaying His coming, it is true for the here and now, ONE SHALL BE TAKEN AND ONE SHALL BE LEFT. Here is a husband and wife, one shall be taken the other shall be left for a short while. Here are two Christian friends, one is taken one is left for a little while. Here is a young saint 20 a grandson 20years old young and an old saint a grandfather 70 years old, one is taken on is left for a little while. There are variables but it is true, as far as this life is concerned ONE SHALL BE TAKEN ONE SHALL BE LEFT FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

CONCLUSION

Now listen to the final warning of Jesus. He said, "Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom His Lord set over His household to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom His Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord tarrieth and shall eat and drink with the drunk, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he knoweth not and in an hour when he thinketh not and shall cut him asunder. There shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth."

This is a perfect description of the leadership of the Church. The elders have been set over the Household to give them their food in due seasons? My guess is that many are eating and drinking with the drunken. They may be sitting at home watching television. They may not be drinking booze. They are drinking perhaps something bland as pink lemonade and eating potato chips. Next door their neighbor has a six-pack and he is watching the same booze sponsored program. The elder is eating and drinking with the drunken even though the walls of the house is the only thing that separates them. A few of the saints are in the house of Worship eating the bread of life.

Hear what the Lord says, "HE WILL COME IN A DAY WHEN HE EXPECTETH NOT, AND IN AN HOUR WHEN HE KNOWETH NOT AND SHALL CUT HIM ASUNDER. THERE BE THE WEEPING AND THE GNASING OF TEETH."