

Session 13 Harmony of the Gospels

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 24:1. We're on transition fifty-two. "Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down'" (Mt. 24:1-2).

Jesus pointed to the temple and said, "Every single stone will be torn down and taken apart." 70 A.D. is the biggest date in Israel's history, in the first century after Jesus. Titus, a general from Rome, came and destroyed Jerusalem. He burned the temple. And because of the intense heat and the fire of the temple, all the gold in the temple melted into the stones. So they took every stone apart to get the gold, just like Jesus said. They took the temple apart one by one, stone by stone, to get the gold out.

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (Mt. 24:3).

Three questions. Jesus answers these three questions in three different ways. I'm not the final word on this chapter. As a matter of fact, if there was any teaching I've given in the Bible college that I would be most prone to do less dogmatically, it's this one. There's so much in these kinds of things. I'll study all the chapters like this, and then, three years later, I'll understand what really happened and say, "I totally missed that."

This is the type of chapter where I won't be surprised if in 1985 I get a lot more insight and think, "Man, I totally missed it." I feel like I have insight from the Lord in this, but I'm more shaky on this than anything I've ever taught on the end times. But I still feel relatively comfortable with it at the same time. I'm not dogmatic; I'm not positive. I don't think I have the final word on it. You have to be careful with the subject of the end times.

I see the chapter divided in three ways. From verses 4-14, He gives a general overview of events before the second coming. From verses 15-31, He gives the same overview, but with specific details. He goes from the beginning to the end again. From verses 32-41, He gives a warning to recognize the events. So He gives the general, then the specific, then the warning to recognize when these events come. Those are the three breakdowns of this chapter as I see it. Three different questions He answers three times in three different ways.

"TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU"

"And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you'" (Mt. 24:4). You can always, always learn from Scripture. Whenever there's a warning, there's the potential of that thing He warned you about happening. This tells me many will be misled or He never would have given this warning. This is a warning given to Jesus' foreknowledge of how much confusion would prevail on this subject. It's an exhortation to look strictly at the Word in order to avoid error. Why? Because many people would be misled on this subject.

There's one thing to which I made a commitment, and I want you to make the same commitment. It's this. Regardless of what your tradition says, regardless of your background, regardless of what anything says, if you

can't find it soundly in the Word, throw it out. That's a hard thing to do sometimes, but that's what you need to do on this subject. Jesus said there would be many, many people misled on this subject.

“For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Mt. 24:5). Lots of false Messiahs, lots of big gatherings. Lots of cults. That's what is happening right now.

DON'T BE AFRAID; BE FULL OF FAITH

“You'll be hearing of wars and rumors of wars” (Mt. 24:6, paraphrased). Here's the exhortation: “Don't be frightened” (ibid). This is a warning against fear, which is the same thing as unbelief. He said, “Don't get full of unbelief in the last days.” The saints will be tempted to take their eyes off of God as their source and to look to the world as their source; to yield themselves to fear instead of faith. Don't neglect this warning. In the end days, there's going to be a temptation to look at the world, to look at the price of gas and food. That's our source. We're going to get really frightened if that's our source, because God is our source. So don't be fearful; be full of faith.

That's going to be another big thing. People will be misled, and unbelief, or the temptation to unbelief, will fill the Church at times. That's why Jesus said, “Don't let that happen.”

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” (Mt. 24:7). Luke 21:9 adds that there will be plagues, terrors, signs from heaven, and great earthquakes. Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13: these are the three parallel passages of this account here. I've put them all together so you get one complete thing. Every detail is in the notes. I blend all three accounts so you'll miss not one detail.

Luke 21 adds that there will be plagues and terrors and signs from heaven and great earthquakes. These are merely the beginning of the birth pangs. Don't conclude the end is immediately at hand. The end isn't immediately at hand. That won't occur until verse 29.

“THEN THEY WILL DELIVER YOU UP TO TRIBULATION, AND KILL YOU”

Verse 9. “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and kill you” (Mt. 24:9). He says tribulation here, but in Luke 21 and Mark 13, He defines tribulation. Luke 21 says, “Before all these things, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They'll deliver you to synagogues and prisons. They'll bring you to kings and governors. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony” (Lk. 21:12-13, paraphrased).

“So don't worry about it. You may end up dying, but the whole house of Rome will hear.” It's really important that the government hears. I'm talking about the house of Rome like in Paul's day. I'm not talking about the Catholic Church. “Make up your minds not to prepare beforehand, not to defend yourself. I'll give you an utterance. I'll give you wisdom, and none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute what I put into your mouth.”

Luke adds that about tribulation. Mark adds, “Be on your guard. They will deliver you up to courts. You'll be flogged. You'll be whipped. If you're going to get whipped, you'll stand before governors and kings. The gospel must first be preached to all the nations. When they arrest you and deliver you up, don't be anxious about what you'll speak, because the Spirit of God will give it to you in that hour” (Mk. 13:9-11, paraphrased).

That's the definition of tribulation. Matthew only says *tribulation*. These go into much greater detail. Matthew 10 goes on and says, "They'll kill you." These other guys define what it means to be killed. "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls" (Lk. 21:16-19).

By persevering in the presence of God, that's how you'll be saved. Brother will betray brother (Mk. 13:12). Imagine natural brothers turning in their brothers to be killed. There's going to be some violence in the earth in these last days. A father will turn in his child to be killed, and a child will rise up against his parents and cause them to be put to death. Imagine the line that will be drawn, of righteousness on one side and iniquity on the other. Closest family relationships will be broken over this Man Jesus Christ in the last days. They will kill each other because of it. The one who endures to the end will be saved.

A UNITED EFFORT AROUND THE WORLD TO PERSECUTE CHRISTIANS

Verse 9. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake" (Mt. 24:9). It will be a united effort around the world to persecute Christians. All the nations together will hate us. You can't go to one nation from another. Even America will hate Christians and kill them. Jesus said, "Every nation will do it." It's hard to imagine that we can actually get to the place of legislating laws where they can murder us because of morality and Jesus Christ. It says every nation will do it. "At that time, many will fall away and many will betray one another. They will hate one another."

The result of the verse 9 tribulations is this: the "insincere saints," those that didn't have a real root in God, will fall away and betray their brothers in the Lord. Then—this is my insight; this may not be totally accurate. They'll hate each other, their fellow saints, due to guilt from falling away. Imagine someone in this church is a close friend of yours. They turn away and turn you in. They'll end up hating you just to silence their conscience: "He's wrong, he's wrong." They'll hate each other. He's talking about the ones falling away betraying the other ones. I think it's probably a result of guilt.

"THEN MANY FALSE PROPHETS WILL RISE UP AND DECEIVE MANY"

Verse 11. There will be a revival of false teaching in the earth. This is the single verse that motivates this Bible college—Matthew 24:11. We're going to have a people who know their Bibles, from Genesis to Revelation. My number one purpose is, I believe, this verse, and we aren't going to be a people prone to deception. We're going to know the gospels, we're going to know the epistles, and he isn't going to steal it away from our hearts. We won't be deceived.

There will be a great apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Thess. 2:3). Apostasy means falling away, or the great falling away right before the second coming. The Bible tells us there will be a great sifting out. There's going to be a great falling away from Christianity. If there are around 300 million in the United States, say fifty million go to church. Now of those fifty million, say twenty million are rooted in the gospel and the other thirty just go to church every week. I'm just making up these numbers. Those thirty million will fall away. Anyone who isn't true, it will be manifest that they're not for real. Anyone who's just along for the ride, they won't go for the ride. It won't be a nice ride anymore. That's pretty heavy. They have to be rooted in the gospel in order to stand.

Some of you are thinking, "Man, this is scary." That's the whole point of this chapter. It shocks you into the seriousness of what is literally in front of us. This isn't a fairy tale or a fantasy. This is real. One of these days,

we're going to be saying, "It's here. This is it." It will be happening in front of our eyes. We're in school training ourselves for the fiercest, most dynamic battle in the history of the ages coming up in this generation. You're not just here tonight for fun.

The great falling away. The great apostasy. Verse 15. In my opinion, verses 4-14 take us from Jesus' first coming to His second coming. It's a general overview of what's happening before the end.

FOUR HUNDRED AND NINETY YEARS ARE ALLOTTED TO ISRAEL

Now He's going to start over and answer the question again with more specific details. "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation' . . ." (Mt. 24:15). Do you think you'll see it? ". . . standing in the holy place . . . then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (v. 15-16). Those people who reside in Judea—that's a special little verse just for them.

Daniel 9 tells us that there's a period of seventy weeks in which God will deal specifically with Israel. We're all pretty familiar with that. There's a period of seventy weeks in which God will specifically deal with Israel. A week isn't seven days in Hebrew prophecy. A week is seven years. There are going to be seventy weeks: seventy periods of seven years that God will deal with the nation of Israel. How many is that? That's 490 years that God would specifically deal with the Jews. It says in Daniel 9 that after seven weeks and sixty-two weeks—what's seven and sixty-two? Sixty-nine—after sixty-nine weeks, the Messiah will be cut off (Dan. 9:24-25). After 483 years, the Messiah would be cut off.

The interesting thing is they dated that time from the rebuilding of the temple, and it takes you right to 30 A.D. in April when Jesus was cut off. He was cut off in the very year, the 483rd year after the decree to rebuild the temple was given. He was cut off. The Messiah was cut off. Seven and sixty-two weeks comes right to the month.

Then, God said there would be one more week left. How much is a week? Seven years. There would be one more seven-year period. Because after sixty-nine years, then they cut the Messiah off. What did God do with Israel? He laid them aside and the Gentiles became God's chosen people. The Jews aren't God's chosen people right now. Some people say the Jews are. That's inaccurate. Right now it's the Gentiles, not the Jews. There will be one more period when God will fulfill the seventy weeks of Daniel. Does everyone understand what I'm saying?

So sixty-nine weeks have passed. There's been a 2,000-year gap. The last seven-year period is yet to come. Daniel talks about that. Daniel talks about a world leader who is going to make a covenant with Israel for one week. He's going to make a seven-year covenant with them. That world leader, the Antichrist, is going to cause the world to be at peace with Israel. They will be a city without walls (Eze. 38:11). A city without walls is a city that has peace at every border. That's what "a city without walls" means.

Jerusalem in the last day will be at peace with everyone. Why? Because the Antichrist will do that. He will make a firm covenant with Israel for that last seven-year period. But in the middle of that seven-year period—which is how many years?—he would break the covenant, and he would commit an abomination that would lead to the desolation of the earth. That's where we get the seven-year period. It's very, very biblical and sound.

Let me say one thing. The seven-year period isn't called the tribulation period. You know what the seven year period is called? The seven year period. It's never, never, ever called the tribulation. There's a very short period of time called "the Great Tribulation," which is a very short period, maybe a number of weeks or months inside that seven years. That's the tribulation. Nowhere in the Bible is that seven years called the tribulation—never, never, never. For the first three and a half years, it's not bad at all. There's a short period of time called a great, intense tribulation.

There are a number of things that aren't biblical terminology. The word *Trinity* isn't in the Bible. The concept is, but the word is not. Nor will you find the word *rapture*. Those aren't bad; just don't confuse them when you're looking for them. Those concepts are in the Bible, but not those terminologies. There's a handful more of them as well.

THE TEMPLE WILL BE REBUILT, AND THE SACRIFICES RESTORED

In the middle of that seven-year period, three and a half years in, this great world leader is going to break the covenant with Israel, with whom he made the covenant. He's going to commit the worst abomination you can imagine. In the last days—they're starting it now—Jerusalem is going to revive temple sacrifices. Right now, there's a very elite university for rabbis in Jerusalem. In that university, they're instructing the rabbis in how to have animal sacrifice from the Levitical law. They're preparing them to start animal sacrifices again. The whole temple will be rebuilt. The sacrifices will be going. God won't be in the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies will be empty, but they won't figure that out for a while. That's not funny; I'm just saying they won't realize it. There's no Shekinah glory in the Holy of Holies. It will be an abomination to kill animals after Jesus shed His blood. That won't be a thing that God blesses. God isn't happy with them rebuilding the temple. That's blaspheming the blood of the covenant that Jesus brought.

Here's what happens when the Antichrist breaks this covenant. He's going to walk through the outer court, right into the inner court. There will be the thick veil. He's going to move it out of the way. He's going to sit down on the mercy seat between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies, and he's going to declare himself to be the living God of Israel. That's the abomination the Bible is talking about. That's the greatest abomination that will happen. It says if you happen to be in Jerusalem when this world leader has gone into the temple, you had better leave quickly. Because he's going to turn in an instant and he's going to come out in a rage and begin to slaughter everyone in Jerusalem and Judea who won't worship him. If you're in Judea, you had better leave immediately when that happens. If you happen to be on a trip visiting the Holy Land and he does that, you had better get out of town.

ANSWER:

A: Yes, 70 A.D., like everything in the Bible. There's the initial fulfillment and then there's the large-scale fulfillment.

ANSWER:

Actually you're thinking of Antiochus Epiphanes, which was like 100 B.C. That's a little different. He's called the seed of the Antichrist. He went and killed the pig on the altar. That's not funny. He took a pig and killed it. He said, "I'm God."

ANSWER:

A: Yes, for seven weeks. It's a firm covenant, but he will break it in the three-and-a-half-year period. See, God's dealings with the Jews are described as a period of seventy weeks. The Messiah will be crucified after the sixty-ninth week. That left one week, one period of seven years, in which God was going to deal specifically with the Jews. Daniel 9:27 says the Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews for that seven-year period. In the middle of that week, he's going to break it. At the three-and-a-half-year mark, he will commit the abomination which will lead to the desolation of the world. That's how I like to say it: the abomination of desolation, the abomination that leads to desolation.

So that you understand what He's saying, the great abomination is when the Antichrist goes into the Jewish temple, walks into the Holy of Holies, and declares himself to be God. This will lead to worldwide destruction. This is when the Antichrist is revealed. This is his revealing. I'm sure we will know who he is, but he isn't "revealed" until he does that. Up until this time, he only seems to be a great world leader. I'm certain that the saints are going to know what is going on. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 perfectly describes how he exalts himself to be God and sits in the temple. Are any believers going to see that happen? That's what it looks like to me.

“PRAY THAT YOUR FLIGHT MAY NOT BE IN WINTER OR ON THE SABBATH”

Then those who are in Judea need to flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down and get things in his house (Mt. 24:17). He's talking and saying, "You had really, really better leave Judea." There's nothing spiritual about this; He's giving very practical advice here. "Don't even get your coat! Leave immediately. Don't even go back."

He says, "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath" (Mt. 24:19-20). If it's on the Sabbath day, all the stores and gas stations will be closed. Jerusalem is going to be practicing strict Judaism. On the Sabbath, things will be closed and they'll be making animal sacrifices. Pray that this isn't on the Sabbath or in the winter, because it will make your flight a lot more difficult.

If I had any intention of going over there then, I would take that prayer very seriously. I don't think that was an idle word. I think Jesus really meant, "If you want to be spared a little trouble, you pray and the Father will make sure he doesn't do this in the winter time." I don't know how many people take that verse seriously. If I lived in Jerusalem, I would take that verse seriously.

A TRIBULATION THE INTENSITY OF WHICH THE WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN

And then, what's the first word of verse 16? Of verse 21? Of verse 23? Of verse 29? "Immediately after." *Then*. It's giving us the time sequence. "Then this is going to happen... After that this will happen... Then this will happen. Immediately after that this will happen. Then this will happen." All these things are after the abomination of desolation.

"For then there will be great tribulation" (Mt. 24:21). If the tribulation is a seven-year period, how in the world can the tribulation be after the three-and-a-half-year mark? There's no such thing as a seven-year tribulation. The tribulation is a very short time after the abomination of desolation. There's only one other time in the Bible that it talks about the Great Tribulation. That's in Revelation 7. The next event is a brief period of intense tribulation. This tribulation wasn't fulfilled in Rome's destruction. Some people think that when Rome

destroyed Israel, that was the fulfillment. Jesus said it will be a tribulation the intensity of which the world has never seen. It's not just the desolation of one city; it will be the greatest tribulation period in the world.

In Revelation 7:14, John was in heaven and all the saints were there. John asked the angel, "Who are these?"

The angel said, "Who do you think they are?"

"Man, I don't know."

"These are the ones that came out of the Great Tribulation" (Rev. 7:14, paraphrased). They came out of the tribulation and were martyred, and this, that, and the other. The tribulation is after the abomination of desolation. There's a lot of sloppy terminology going around. You don't want to get confused with terminology that's not biblical. Jesus said, "Be careful, because many things will be flying around on this subject." We're sticking to the facts. I don't have all the conclusions. I know the tribulation period is short, and it's after the three-and-a-half-year mark.

ANSWER:

Absolutely. The Holy Spirit has to be, otherwise no one could get converted or dwell on the earth.

ANSWER:

It's a lot harder to walk through mountains in the winter than in the summer.

ANSWER:

No, just Jerusalem. That's a specific warning. Jerusalem will be the immediate focus of his wrath, because he's going to turn in that hour and probably put barricades on the roads and everything. I don't know that; I'm just making that up. Immediately he's going to do that.

ANSWER:

A: Yes, the Holy Spirit will be here. There are two different opinions. The one opinion is that the saints will be taken up immediately and a lot more people will get converted. Either way it goes, there will be saints here. Whether the saints go up or the saints go through, that will be debated until it happens. If the saints are here, there has to be the Holy Spirit or they wouldn't be saints.

ANSWER

I don't know. If you take verses 4-14, and you take verses 15-31, they just go together. I don't know exactly how they fit together. I don't know if this verse equals this verse. I don't know if the killings are the whole way through or after that. I just know it will all be happening. I'm trying not to make any conclusions that aren't found in the Scriptures. I don't want to read into things or else I'll be thrown into the big mess of people giving their opinions.

Verse 22. "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved" (Mt. 24:22). Those days will be shortened, or else the Antichrist would have murdered everyone. Jesus wanted to come back to some people. He cut those days short. He gave them a limited amount of time to have rage and anguish on the earth. Whether that's us or whether we've gone up and those are the ones converted after that, to me it's not the central issue.

The issue is that some saints will be here. If you're here, then you'll know it was that one. If you're not here, then you'll know it's the other one. Just get ready one way or another.

Everyone disagrees on that. I'm not interested in addressing that, really.

Verse 23. "If anyone says to you, 'Here's the Christ,' don't go after him" (Mt. 24:23, paraphrased). After this abomination of desolation, there's going to be a real spiritual revival going on. A lot of people will claim to know where the Messiah is. They'll say, "Behold, He's in the wilderness" (v. 26, paraphrased). No one is going to get a special revelation of Jesus. I'm not saying people won't have visions of Him. I believe many of us will have visions of Him. He isn't going to appear physically and set up His kingdom in some back room and just tell you and your prayer partner.

WHEN THE ANIMAL IS FULLY DEAD, THEN THE VULTURE SWEEPS TO DEVOUR

"As the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt. 24:27, paraphrased). The first time it was obscure. The second time, there will be no mistake. The first time was a spiritual deliverance. The second time He's coming to set up His kingdom, dominion, and reign whether the people like it or not. He will be in the clouds.

"For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together" (Mt. 24:28). This is a very well-known cause-and-effect proverb describing one who devours his prey at the right time. As the vulture is certain to attack the corpse, so God is certain to judge the world that blasphemes His holy name.

He's coming in the sky and He's like a vulture. Just like the vulture goes where the corpse is, God is coming to a world that blasphemes Him.

When an animal is fully dead—get the word *fully*—then the vulture sweeps to devour. Jesus is going to wait until the earth's cup of iniquity is completely full. Then like a vulture, judgment is coming to the full measure. The world will be totally hardened against God. They'll be spiritual corpses to the full degree. Then judgment is coming. That's what He means. Where the corpse is, the vultures will gather. Where there's total death, judgment will come. That's what He's getting at. In the sky He's coming.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Mt. 24:29).

You want to read some other verses. Verse 30 talks about His glory: flaming fire and the angels in the sky. It's really neat. Then after the sun and the moon do all those things, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.

In verse 3, the question was, "What will be the sign?" He answers the question in verse 30. "Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see Him in the clouds with power and with great glory" (Mt. 24:30, paraphrased). Imagine holy angels, the power and glory of the Father filling the entire atmosphere. Wow!

"He will send forth His angels"—plural—"with a trumpet. They will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Mt. 24:31, paraphrased).

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE AND THE NATION OF ISRAEL

From verses 4-14 He answers the question; from 15-31 He answers it. In verse 32, He's going to answer the question again, starting from square one. "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors" (Mt. 24:32-33)!

He goes on to say, "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Mt. 24:34-35).

The fig tree in verse 32 represents Israel. It's a very common symbol for Israel. Fig trees grew in Israel. A lot of nations in Hebrew prophecy were described by the agriculture of that nation. When the prophets, like Joel and Hosea, talk about the fig tree, they're talking about Israel. Everyone knew what He was talking about. "When it's tender and puts forth its leaves..." I believe that's its national independence, when it came to be a nation. When it was tender and reproductive. The summer, or the harvest, was very near after it became a nation. That's what I think it's saying. "When Israel puts forth its leaves and becomes a nation in 1948, then the harvest time is very near"—which is the summer time—"His second coming is very near."

I want to say this as a warning so you don't do foolish things. The word *generation* there, a lot of people take that word way, way too strongly and put way too much in it that Jesus didn't put in it. That word can be translated *generation*, it can be translated *race*, or it can be translated *age*. It can mean any one of those three. People say a *generation* is always forty years. That's not true. That's a non-biblical statement. It can equally be translated *race* or *age*. A lot of people say, "1948! He has to come in 1988!" To me, that's not respectable theology, to play around in those kinds of things. We want to be more honest with the Scriptures than that.

Don't throw something into it that's not there: force *generation* to mean "forty years" and make Him come in 1988. I remember back in 1971 and 1972 when I first started studying this stuff, people said that before 1981 He had to come. They told the world that. I mean, a lot of these were respectable men. "He has to come, because the Church has to go up before the seven-year period!" But 1981 came and is gone. We don't want to get into silly declarations like that. It's not greatly dishonoring to God; I don't believe that. Let's avoid anything that's not cut and dry. I believe people played with that in a dishonest way or in a way that doesn't show scholarship in the Word of God. I don't mind that, but I would just as soon stay away from that stuff.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Mt. 24:36). No one knew the day or hour, but we can clearly know the specific time period. I don't know when it's going to be. When the time period comes upon us more clearly, we will know. For example, the Antichrist will be revealed within the space of a particular day. Then we know the day of His return, because it will be 1,260 days after his revealing. It says that a number of times in the Scriptures. Three and a half years later, forty-two months later, 1,260 days later—it says it in three ways—then the Lord is going to come.

WHEN THE HOUR IS UPON US, THE TIMING WILL BE MANIFEST

Jesus said no one knew the day or the hour. I'm going to be kind of silly here. I don't think anyone did know the day or the hour. I don't think He did in 30 A.D. But in 2006, when the Antichrist sits in the temple, He didn't say, "In 2006 you can't know the day or the hour." He said that in 30 A.D. you would never know the day or the hour. I think that when the hour comes, a lot more of us will know what is going on then. Don't take that "you can't know in 30 A.D." and transport it to the very last hour that He's coming. It's very possible that we will

know. It will be 1,260 days after the revealing of the Antichrist. He will be revealed on a given day. When that day comes, we'll just start keeping a calendar. "Eighty-eight more days, He'll be here."

THOSE WHO WALK IN THE LIGHT WILL KNOW THE TIME OF THE END

Now, let me say this. There are many verses which I've written here to show you that the saints will know. For the unbelievers, the Day of the Lord will come like a thief to the world (1 Thess. 5:3). But those who walk in the light will know the time of the end. Don't believe or think that we can't know the very close season. We can. Jesus said we would; Paul said we would. We'll know that summer is near when the signs are fulfilled. I don't know if we'll know the day or the hour. I don't know if that 1,260-day thing is going to work, but we will certainly know the very, very, very more-than-general period. Once the Antichrist is revealed, we know it won't be any longer than another three and a half years. It can't be more than three and a half years. You can get more specific at that time. Before that time, we're in a conjecture, but once he's revealed, to me it's a piece of cake.

Turn to 2 Thessalonians 2:1. "Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come" (2 Thess. 2:1-2).

To be gathered together is to be caught up. Paul says, "We want to talk about the coming of the Lord and the catching up, the gathering to Him, the rapture. We don't want you quickly shaken from your composure about this issue."

In other words, "Don't lose your peace over it. Don't be disturbed, either by an angel or a prophecy or a letter some sort as though from us to the effect that the Day of the Lord has come. Don't get all disturbed about that kind of thing."

I'm going to tell you something a little tricky here. You don't have to believe this, but you can check it out yourself. I've done a thorough study on this and am convinced that it's true. The Greek word for "has come" has three meanings. You can translate that verb three ways, and it's been translated in the Bible in all three ways. If you don't know Greek or study it, I'm just saying words to you. That Greek word "has come" can mean "has come." Second, it can mean "is present." Third, it can mean, "It is imminent"—or very, very soon. To me it's strange that a verb would have that kind of latitude to it—past, present, and future—but it does. You can find that verb translated all three ways in the Bible.

When they translated this from Greek, they had to figure out which one it meant. The NASB put "has come." Another version says "is imminent." Another version says "is present." They have to fill in the gaps because they don't know which one it is. No one knows. My opinion is that "has come" is a wrong translation. I believe that what Paul was saying is that it's imminent. Why would he write them a letter saying, "Don't be disturbed if you get a letter saying that the Day of the Lord has already come?" That contradicts itself. If I wrote you a letter and said, "Hey, the Day of the Lord hasn't come," that should be obvious because I just wrote the letter. "Don't be disturbed if you get another letter from me: I'm up in heaven, saying, 'The Day of the Lord has come; I wrote you a letter.' The Day of the Lord has come, South County. Sorry!"

If I wrote a letter, I can't be up there. I don't believe it's, "The Day of the Lord has come," or else they wouldn't be disturbed by a letter that it has come. He was saying, "Don't be disturbed or quickly shaken from your

composure to the effect that the day of the Lord is very, very imminent.” That’s what I think he’s saying. The other one doesn’t make sense.

“THAT DAY WILL NOT COME UNLESS THE FALLING AWAY COMES FIRST”

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thess. 2:3). In other words, “Don’t think it’s coming any minute.”

People were preaching, “Man, we could go up today. We could go up this hour!”

Paul says, “Don’t listen to that kind of stuff, because the apostasy has to come first. I’ve told you that a dozen times. Don’t be deceived when people tell you differently from that. Also, the man of lawlessness must be revealed, and the abomination that makes desolate.”

“. . . who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thess. 2:4). “The apostasy has to come, he has to enter the temple, he has to be revealed. Don’t let anyone deceive you as to the Lord’s coming any minute.”

If you’ll read in 2 Thessalonians 3, Paul never rebuked them. The only rebuke he ever had for them was in chapter 3:6-12. He was rebuking the Thessalonians; they were the most noble-minded people, but he’s rebuking them because they were quitting their jobs and going to the mountains. He says, “If you don’t work, you’re not eating. Get back there and get back to work.” That’s the only rebuke he gave these noble-minded people. They were copping out on life and heading for the mountains.

Why do you think they were doing that? I think they had messages, prophecies, and letters that the Day of the Lord was coming any moment. He says, “What are you doing losing your mind and quitting your jobs, and waiting for the Lord any minute? I told you it’s not coming until the apostasy comes and the abomination of desolation. So what are you guys doing?” I believe he’s rebuking them for that.

The Day of the Lord can’t come until that happens. I’m not really scared about the Day of the Lord coming tonight. Someone says, “The Day of the Lord is tonight!”

“No, that’s impossible.”

“You don’t know! It could be any minute!”

“No, it won’t be any minute. The Day of the Lord won’t be for at least three and a half years, and that’s if the guy walks in the temple tomorrow. There’s no way he’s coming in the next five years. There’s no way, unless in the next year and a half he gets into the temple—which I seriously doubt because they haven’t even built the thing yet.” It will take them at least three to four years to build. That thing is a major temple. He isn’t coming tonight. He isn’t coming tonight and He isn’t coming in the next five years. If He does, you can yell at me in heaven, but mark my words, you’ll be here in 1987. He won’t come until three and a half years after he walks into the temple and that will be a while.

A CHURCH THAT’S SPOTLESS, WITHOUT BLAME, AND FULL OF GLORY

Isn’t that right, Gary? Gary has been telling me for a while, “Hey guys, we have more time than you think. The glory of the Lord has to fill the earth. The Church has to be where the early church went and way beyond it. It has to have a double portion of the early church.”

We have some work to do. The glory of God is going to fill the earth, and Jesus says in Ephesians 5:27 that He’s coming to a church that’s spotless, without blame, and full of glory. The Church isn’t full of glory right now. We get six or eight good prophecies and eight or ten people slain in the Spirit, and we’ve had a great meeting. We aren’t full of glory yet. We have a long way to go. He isn’t coming tonight. Jesus won’t be unequally yoked. He won’t be unequally yoked. Right now, if He came to the Church, the Church would be unequally yoked.

Here’s what I think I’ll do: I’ll look through this really quickly and tell you what’s in here. Matthew 25: let’s follow the notes to the end of page four. Three parables warning the Church not to be negligent.

Luke 21 on the bottom of page five. Satan puts into the mind of Judas to betray Jesus. I thought that was interesting, because Satan dropped that thought into Judas’ mind. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira lied and died. The devil put that into their mind.

The devil can do that. The devil put something into Peter’s brain when he said, “Jesus, don’t die.”

He said, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (Mt. 16:23, KJV). It’s a biblical thing that the devil puts things in people’s minds.

“IF I DO NOT WASH YOU, YOU HAVE NO PART WITH ME”

In John 13, Jesus talks about His departure out of the world to the Father. I thought that was a great way to say “physical death.” Look at verse 8. Here’s where I’m going. This is the place where Jesus comes to Peter and says, “Peter, let Me wash your feet.”

Peter says, “You’re not washing my feet, I’m washing Yours!”

Jesus said, “If I don’t wash your feet, you don’t have any part in Me.”

He says, “Oh wash my hands, my toes and everything else.”

Jesus says, “No Peter, your feet are enough. You’re already clean in the other parts. Don’t worry” (Jn. 13:10, paraphrased)!

Here’s the point, and it’s very significant. Jesus said, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me” (Jn. 13:8). “Peter, unless you become humble enough to allow Me to remove your dirt, you can’t be clean.” It took as much humility on Peter’s part to receive the cleansing as it did on Jesus’ part to provide it as the Lamb of God. Jesus humbled Himself to give. You must humble yourself to receive. His cleansing work can only help you, it can *only* help you if you receive it without any effort to earn it or establish it yourself.

Jesus said in John 15:3, “I’ve given you My word and you’re clean” (Jn. 15:3, paraphrased). God has given you His word and you’re clean, but every now and then you blow it. If you try to make amends for that yourself and try to establish favor in God’s sight, you’re trying to wash your own feet. Jesus said, “Peter, if you’re not humble enough to receive it from Me, you have no part in Me. You’re either in the whole thing by grace or you’re in it on your own.” We’re never to exert self-effort to gain God’s favor. Have holiness of heart and all that stuff. We aren’t gaining God’s love. God loved you while you were a sinner. While you were an enemy He loved you, and now you’re a son. Some of us have a problem of seeking to wash our own feet when we need to be humble and allow Him to. We don’t have any part in what He’s doing if we don’t do that.