

MATTHEW 24 - PART I

In Matthew 24 Christ discusses a most powerful prophecy which few understand. It is certainly an important chapter in the New Testament, the meaning of which has largely been shrouded in mystery until now!

We shall discuss this chapter almost verse by verse, so as to understand the deeper meaning that Christ conveyed through His message. Verse one of this chapter reads:

"Then Jesus went out and **departed** from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple."

In this opening verse we are told that Christ *left* the temple. Evidently, there is something important about this departure from the temple for it to be recorded in the gospels. Christ must have left the temple many, many times in His lifetime, so why record it this time? What was so special about THIS exit?

It is necessary to understand that there is something *different* about Him leaving the temple on this occasion. In this verse, we are also told that when Christ departed from the temple, the disciples ran up to Him and "showed Him the buildings". The indication is that the disciples stopped Christ in His tracks and pointed the buildings of the temple out to Him. Do you think they did this to point out the majesty of the buildings? The architecture perhaps? Possibly, but there is something much deeper to what is going on here. Presumably, when they were inside the temple, something must have been said about the temple. There must have been some sort of discussion inside the temple that led the disciples to stop Christ as He left and discuss the temple and, importantly, for this to be recorded in the gospels.

The last verses of Matthew 23 fill in these details. Notice:

"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: 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. Verily I say unto you, **All these things shall come upon this generation**. 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! **Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.**" (Verses 34-39)

There we have it! The above verses outline what Christ discussed in the temple prior to Him departing. The disciples must have been alarmed to one degree or another. They had questions. Clearly, on leaving the temple, the disciples petitioned Christ. Christ had just indicated that this would be the last time He would be leaving the temple. The disciples were in shock; preoccupied. We do know that this departure did turn out to be *the last* time that Christ left the temple before His death.

Notice Matthew 24 verse 2:

"And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all *these things?*'..."

Christ was effectively telling them, 'Do you not see what is going on? Do you not understand the prophecies that I am discussing and what will happen? Is it possible that you don't understand?' Importantly, Christ referred to 'the temple' as 'these things'. He didn't seem to put much importance on the physical structure. He referred to the building as 'these things'.

Verse 2 again:

"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.**"

Christ wanted to get their focus off the physical. He couldn't care less about the physical temple; the physical means nothing. The phraseology in verse 2 indicates that Christ was *righteously* angry. The language used tells us this. Christ wasn't saying that this temple was going to fall apart because it got old. He wasn't saying that it was going to fall apart because it needed maintenance. Christ said that the stones will be THROWN DOWN! This is *violent* language. In other words, the stones will be OVERTHROWN! Force was to be used.

What does all this mean?

Why would God do this? Why would He allow it?

Why is Christ saying that the stones of the temple will be THROWN DOWN?

How will they be thrown down?

When will they be thrown down?

What, exactly, is going on?

We'll answer these questions as we go along. And as we do this, we will see that Christ is using duality to convey an important message. Duality is often used in scripture. It is especially helpful to understand prophecy; there is physical and spiritual, former and latter and so on....

As a side note, many believe that a physical temple is yet to be built in Jerusalem in this end time. They believe that these words in Matthew 24 are a prophecy to this same temple being overthrown in the end time. It is clear that this reason, or anything remotely similar to it, is *human* reason and far from the Truth. Readers will be very surprised to know the exact meaning of this verse. Deeper study will reveal precisely what Christ was referring to.

Matthew 24 verse 3 continues:

"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?'"

This verse exposes the disciples's concern. By this point they started to comprehend that something monumental was about to take place. One could certainly hear and feel the urgency in their voice, through the questions that they asked:

WHEN will these things be? (i.e. When are they going to happen?)

and WHAT will be the sign of your return (as it should more clearly be translated in scripture)?

and WHAT will be the sign of the end of the age?

Firstly, what “things” were they referring to? Were they referring to the stones of the temple being thrown down? Yes! But did they understand what 'these things' were? Importantly, do we understand what 'these things' are? It is important that we understand what Christ meant by the 'throwing down' of the stones of the temple! What are 'these things' that Christ referred to? Why was this such an important prophecy?

Of course, scripture must be our Guide. We must allow scripture to interpret, clarify and explain itself. Mark 8: 31 helps us to understand what 'these things' are. Notice:

"And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer **MANY THINGS**, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly."

There is no doubt, that when the disciples asked and wanted to know “when will these things be?”, they were referring to THESE THINGS that are discussed in verse 31 (above). 'These things' refers to the betrayal, rejection, the crucifixion and the resurrection! In the first questions that the disciples asked, they wanted to know when 'these things' would take place. Was it imminent?

Let us look at another few verses to confirm beyond a shadow of a doubt that 'these things' that Christ spoke of in the prophesy outlined in Matthew 24 referred the events leading up to Christ's death, His crucifixion and resurrection.

"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all **these things** which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, “What kind of conversation this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?” Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known **the/these things** which happened there in these days?” And He said to them, “**What things?**” So they said to Him, “**The things** concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. [*Editor's note: 'these things'*]. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since **these things** happened." (Luke 24:13-21).

Don't these verses in Luke 24 continue to give the clarity needed to understand, without a shadow of a doubt, what 'these things' referred to? Back to Matt 24:3:

“...as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will **these things** be?”

Wouldn't you agree that the disciples were clearly referring to Christ's death, the events running up to His death and His resurrection? Of course they were. They wanted to know when 'these things' would take place. The disciples knew that these events were close to be being fulfilled. Very close. This is what Christ was speaking about in the temple, before He departed and the disciples came up to Him to ask more detailed questions. The first few verses in Matthew 24 clearly had to do with events that would take place in their lifetime; Imminently! There is duality, which we will discuss later, but the disciples knew and began

to understand that the 'destruction of the temple' had to do with events that would take place in *their* lifetime - just as He said! All we have to do is believe the Word of God. Christ had spoken this prophecy to them, for them *in their generation*! Let us go back to Matthew 24 and begin in verse 1 again:

"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."

That's what Christ said, and they correctly connected what He said in this verse to the events that surrounded Christ's death and resurrection. Why is this deeper understanding? Because most believe that these verses only pertain to the end time! They do not only pertain to the end time. There is duality, yes! But these verses were a prophecy that very much pertained to the events that were to take place in the disciples's generation. When Christ spoke of the stones of the temple being **thrown down**, when He spoke about THESE THINGS being THROWN DOWN He was referring to the prophecies surrounding *and* leading up to *and* including His death and resurrection. These are 'these things' that Christ was referring to, and the disciples eventually understood Him, and they realised the urgency of things!

At this juncture it is important to emphasize that scripture reveals that Christ's Body was a 'temple'. His was the temple that would be 'thrown down'. Notice, Hebrews 9:11 states:

"But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and *more perfect tabernacle not made with hands*, that is, not of this creation."

The Amplified Version renders this scripture as:

"But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the good things to come [that is, true spiritual worship], He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not a part of this [material] creation.

This verse, and others, tell us that Christ's human body was a tabernacle. It was the temple Notice John Gill's Commentary on this verse and subject:

"...meaning the human body of Christ, which was greater than tabernacle of Moses; not in bulk and quantity, but in value, worth, and dignity; and was more perfect than that, that being only an example, figure, shadow, and type, this being the antitype, the sum and substance of that; and by it things and persons are brought to perfection, which could not be, in and by that; and this is a tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; which was reared up without the help, of man: Christ was not begotten by man, but was conceived in the womb of a virgin, under the power of the Holy Ghost; he came not into the world in the way of ordinary generation, but in a supernatural manner; and so **his human body is a tabernacle**, not of the common building, or creation, as the word may be rendered, as other human bodies are."

Jesus Christ's Body was a temple (or tabernacle); the temple that would be 'thrown down'.

We must understand further what Christ was referring to when He said that 'these things' will be 'thrown down', besides the events that surrounded His death and resurrection. Something

deep was about to take place. Between the Old and the New, the physical was to be done away with and replaced by the spiritual. That is also what Matthew 24 verses 1-3 are about. In Matthew 24:1-3, Christ is recorded as saying that the OLD, or the PHYSICAL, was going to be "thrown down". Not one stone will be left upon each other of the physical 'ordinances' depicted by the 'temple'. The physical sacrifices, ordinances etc., were not going to matter anymore; the *spiritual* would! The old would be abolished the moment the death (or the 'throwing down' of 'these things') took place! In Matthew 24 Christ was saying that the stones will start to be thrown down the moment the condemning begins. The moment Christ received 'the kiss' of betrayal from Judas Iscariot, symbolically speaking, is the time when the stones of the temple would start to be 'thrown down', and the last stone would be thrown down the moment the veil of the temple was torn in two! That's what Matthew 24:1-3 is all about.

Let's continue in Colossians 2, focusing on verses 8 to 15:

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of ordinances/requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."

Clearly, the above verses from the book of Colossians clarifies what Matthew 24:1-3 is referring to! Christ was referring to the *throwing down*, the *breaking down* and the *wiping away* of the physical, which would not allow the focus to be on the (more important) spiritual. The physical was to be nailed to the cross! And in verse 3 of Matthew 24, when the disciples began to realise that Christ was metaphorically talking about His death, they wanted to know WHEN WILL 'THESE THINGS' BE?! Christ used this opportunity to get them to start to focus on the spiritual.

This is all tremendous understanding: "For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:1-3).

God, through Christ, opens up and gives the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Unless God *gives* understanding, unless *He* gives of the hidden treasures, man won't be able to find or understand them. Understanding is hidden until God opens our minds to it. But we have to be receptive, humble, obedient...

"Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so

walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." (Col. 2:4-7)

Back to the main passage that this study focuses on: Matthew 24. Within this text, Christ answered the disciples's question on 'when' would 'these things' happen. Notice:

"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! (Verse 32-33).

Christ is telling His disciples not to be naive; not to fall asleep. He's telling His disciples to 'read the sign of the times'. Christ gave them enough hints to indicate that His death was imminent! Verse 34 continues:

"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."

Isn't this all beginning to make so much sense? Isn't it all so clear? Christ told them that THESE THINGS -- the betrayal, crucifixion, death etc., -- would take place in *that* generation that *they* were living in. this is why Christ stated 'this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place'. Christ meant what He said. His Words become so easy to understand if we simply believe what the Word of God states!

MESSAGE 2

Let's go back to Matthew 24 today.

We'll read from verse 1 just to recap:

24 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? [*I've been with you for so long. You should get this. I've told you so many times....*] Assuredly, I say to you, [*Look... I'm going to tell you again!*] not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And [*...then...*] what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

We discussed these verses already the last time, but there is no doubt that there is a strong element of duality being played out. There is no doubt that there are 'first century and last century' parallels. There is 'former and latter' duality and so on. And we have to understand that if we are going to understand the deeper things being discussed in this Olivet prophecy.

Now -- here in this end time, there is NOT going to be a physical temple that will be built and will then be "thrown down". I don't believe so, anyway. Through these words of His, Christ wants us to understand the SPIRITUAL aspect – there should be no doubt about that. The Church, or the temple, in this New Testament age is *spiritual!*

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 3:16
(familiar scripture)

¹⁶ Do you not know that YOU are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? The spirit of God does not dwell in a physical temple! It dwells in you and me! It dwells in the members of God's Church... those who are baptised and have the Holy Spirit.

Let's go forward a few pages to 2 Cor 6:14:

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? **FOR YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD.**

YOU are the temple of the Living God. In the Church age, God and Christ don't care about the physical. They don't care about physical temples built with stone. They care about us – you and I. They care about those that have God's spirit. God's people make up His temple!

Let's see another scripture. Come with me to Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:19-22:

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, ²¹ **in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,** ²² **in whom**

you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Christ's Church is the temple. Christ is the Chief Cornerstone we're told, and the apostles and prophets are the foundation of that temple while WE – God's people – those who are baptised -- comprise the rest of the building or 'holy temple' as it states there in verse 21. The Church, made up of those who are baptised, is the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. The Church is the temple.

So.... clearly.... the temple that Christ is referring to in Matthew 24 is NOT some physical structure!

Let's go to just one more scripture, then I think the point would have been sufficiently made.

1 Peter 2:5:

⁵ you also, as *living stones*, are being built up a spiritual house [Strong's = temple], a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The Church is made up of LIVING STONES – each stone being a Church member, each stone aspiring to become part of the holy priesthood. So when we see Matthew 24:1-2 in light of its end time parallel, [...we've seen the former, now we're looking at the latter...], Christ is evidently saying that the Church, the baptised and begotten members, are the temple.

Now, verse 2 of Matthew 24 has a serious prophecy for us here in the end time. I'm going to read it. Christ is saying that:

"not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Does this mean that we, the baptised individuals, the living stones of the temple will be 'thrown down'?

Well, this gives the clear indication that the Church is going to be split and splintered. But then, we know this because we're living it. And that demonstrates the times we are living in. It demonstrates the point that we are at in Church history. It should demonstrate the urgency of the times we are living in!

God's people are all over the place. Looking out there, how many "stones" [quote unquote] are there left upon another. Very few! The Church is fragmented! The Church is divided! Brethren are all over the place. And the last part of verse two is what really grabs my attention -- most of all.

Let's read the last part of verse 2 again:

"...Assuredly, I say to you, [*...in other words, I'm going to tell you AGAIN...*] not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall **not be thrown down**."

Again, this is language that indicates that the temple will be violently torn down! Keep in mind what we discussed last time regarding the phraseology being used in this last part of the verse. Again, the clear indication is that the temple does not simply fall apart or disintegrate. Christ is saying that the stones will be THROWN DOWN! Force is going to be used! The intent is that the temple is thrown down.

The question is, 'Why would God, why would Christ, "throw down" the temple?' Why would He 'throw down' the spiritual temple?

Let's see what we can learn from history that will help us to understand what is going on. Let's go to 2 Chronicles 7:

Verse 12:

12 Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 **When I shut up heaven and there is no rain,** [*in other words, 'when I shut up heaven and do not hear prayers, when I shut up heaven and give no deeper understanding, or blessings are reduced...*] **or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,** [*...so God does these things.... He allows them to happen even to His people..... He does send 'pestilence'...He does that...He sends 'destruction' as that word 'pestilence' connotes if you look into the original Hebrew and the meaning that Strong's gives for it. In fact that word 'pestilence' is 1698 in Strong's and it comes from the root word number 1696 which is rendered from the sense of 'destroying'! God allows destruction. He works on a system of blessings and cursings....]*

Verse 13 again:

13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence AMONG MY PEOPLE,

BUT! Verse 14:

14 if My people who are called by My name **will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and TURN from their wicked ways,** then [*...and only then...*] **I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin** and heal their land.

So God **does** these things. He allows these things to happen, even to His people. It's one of the ways He can get our attention! Verse 15:

15 Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer *made* in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and sanctified this house [*temple*], that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 17 **As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 18 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom,** as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man as ruler in Israel.'

So, if God's people walk before Him, if they keep His commandments, and keep His statutes and judgements then God will forgive and He'll bless! He will bless abundantly. That's what this is saying! Blessings and Cursings. We reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7).

Now listen to this....verse 19:

19 "But if you turn away and forsake (*5800 in Strong's = become loose or lax, fail or forsake*) My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and [as a result] go and serve other gods, and worship them, 20 **then I will uproot** [*...Strong's = 5428 = tear away, destroy. Same sort of language as we read in Matt. 24:2...*] **them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out** [*Strong's 7993 = throw down, cast down...*] **of My sight,** and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

God will 'cast out from His sight', He will 'throw down', He will 'tear away' and 'destroy' those who become lax, fail or forsake His ways. God is very clear. He's NOT wishy washy. There are no grey areas with God. If we think there are, then we don't know Him. This is serious business and He is building His spiritual Family; a family that will live with Him

forever. He doesn't want another Satan on His hands and He will not have another Satan on His hands. This is why He is so clear.

Verse 21:

21 "And *as for this house [temple]*, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and this house?' 22 Then they will answer, '**Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore HE has brought all this calamity on them.**'"

Notice the language used! God brought the 'calamity' on His people because they forsook Him.

That's it in a nutshell!

The language is identical to that used by Christ in Matthew 24:

Yes! God will *absolutely* 'throw down' His temple if and when His people forsake Him. God's people forsake Him through sin. And sin comes in many forms: intended and unintended, premeditated or not, intentional or not and so on. God will see the attitude and so on, He will no doubt look for true repentance and so on, but we must be aware of God's admonition. He does not leave sin unpunished. And if we think otherwise, we do so to our detriment. Sin will result in being 'thrown down', 'cast out' and so on. These are strong words that Christ used and we must be carefully not take them lightly. If we do... the repercussions will *still* be felt.

And sometimes.... we might feel negative repercussions... we might see things not going the way things should be going etc.... and when this happens -- with humility -- we should question our ways.... question whether we have neglected or forsook God in any way, shape or form -- at any level. We must be careful not to think that we are untouchable. (Pride comes before a fall). We must be careful, because God WILL correct wrongs. He will certainly get our attention to right any wrong doings, and we must be careful to take heed of the warning signs that He might send to us.

But let's continue with what Christ told His disciples, the words which were good for both them in the first century Church and for us today.

Back to Matthew 24.

Verse 4:

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

This is a warning that is repeated again and again and again throughout the pages of the Bible. (Rom. 16:18; Heb 13:9; Eph 5:6; 2 Thess. 2:3; Col. 2:8; 2 tim. 3:13-14; Luke 21:8; 1 Cor. 15:33; Deut. 11:16; Matt. 13:22; etc). God wants us to be very sensitive and aware of the fact that deceit is very prevalent in the world around us, and it comes in many forms and from many different corners. We can even deceive ourselves... that's how easy it is. This is why God keeps harping on about this. Humility is key! He wants us to be alert and sharp because a lot is at stake.

Let's take a look at verse 11 where Christ gives another warning on this same subject about being deceived. Another warning in this Olivet Prophecy:

11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

He repeats a THIRD TIME in this Olivet prophecy in verses 23 to 26. Let's read it:

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe *it*. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, *if possible*, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand.

26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; *or* 'Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*.

Christ speaks about deception three times here in this prophecy, and in verse 24 He emphasizes the fact that only the very elect cannot be deceived.

Let see that:

24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, ***if possible***, even the elect.

'If possible' it states.... meaning its NOT possible to deceive the very elect....or very unlikely. So.. what Christ is saying here is that we'd better be a part of the very elect?

How do we do that?

How do we form part of the very elect?

Let's read verse 11 again...

11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 **And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.**

We read also in verses 2 and so on. Being lukewarm. Beoming lax. Lawlessness. These are the things that we need to be careful of.

Lawlessness, Brethren, results in a decrease of love for the Truth, for God, and for doing the right. And at this decreased level of intimacy, it is easy to be fall into the trap of deception. EASY!

So Christ is making an appeal for us to ensure that we are spiritually sharp! And that we stay that way. He wants us to be spiritually awake! And THAT is what makes us a part of the very elect. They're spiritually awake and sharp and they can only be that way if they keep the law through faith.

The 'elect' are the 'selected', 'chosen', 'favorite', as Strong's tells us. And of course, to be a part of the selected few, to be a part of the favorite, we would need to run as far away as possible from infringing on the law....even in the smallest of ways.... because the moment we give in even to the *tiniest* of sins we are demonstrating that our love has began to wax cold. The deeper our sins, the more elaborate our sins and so on, the colder we are waxing towards God and His laws... and many times we can wax cold without even realising it. Let's keep in mind that the stones of the temple are "thrown down" with all the repercussions that that brings about, so we need to be careful that we don't remotely allow ourselves to even be candidates for that!

Let's go back to verse 4, as we piece all this together:

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. *[In other words, many will come saying they are representatives of Christ]* 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all [\[a\]](#) *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, [\[b\]](#) and earthquakes in various places. 8 **All these *['THINGS' as it should read] are the beginning of sorrows.***

All ‘these things’ are the beginning of sorrows. Interesting verse that is very revealing.

The word 'these' is 5023 in Strong's and is the same word that is translated 'these things' in verse 2. Now remember that last time we discussed the fact that 'these things' refer to the events that led up to Christ's death and the death itself.

When does the ‘beginning of sorrows’ commence? Has it started? If so when did it start? Is it yet to commence? If so, when will it commence?

I just want to show you something in Isaiah 53:3 as we discuss the phrase ‘the beginning of sorrows’.

Come with me to Isaiah 53:3:

3 He is despised and rejected by men,
A **Man of sorrows** and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Brethren, Christ was a **man of sorrows**. We need to think about this, in light of the phrase ‘beginning of sorrows’ in Matthew 24. The word 'sorrows' is 4341 in Strong's and means 'a man of affliction'.

We are told in Isaiah that Christ is a ‘man of sorrows’ and then we are told in Matthew 24 that the end time, the end of the age, commences with the ‘beginning of sorrows’.

Think about this for a moment. Do you begin to see a picture?

Have the ‘beginning of sorrows’ commenced? If so, when?

What do YOU think?

More importantly, what is the bible telling us about this?

And this is important because many are unclear about when the ‘Beginning of Sorrows’ commenced. They feel we are in that time, but cannot define a starting point, cannot be sure where exactly we are in Bible prophecy. But WE need to know. God’s people need to know, and I’m convinced that God is showing us!

Well, I believe it is safe to say, with Biblical support, that the 'beginning of sorrows' started from the fulfilment of ‘these things’. **The beginning of sorrows commenced from the kiss of Judas Iscariot.** A defining moment in history. I believe that we can actually pin point (with a great level of certainty, with biblical support) the exact moment when the beginning

of sorrows started: the kiss of Judas Iscariot. The kiss of Judas Iscariot marked the beginning of end-time events!

The 'beginning of sorrows' commenced the moment Christ became a 'man of sorrow'. It began when He began to be afflicted, which was marked by the kiss of Judas Iscariot.

Isaiah 53:4:

4 Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our **sorrows**;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and **afflicted**.
5 But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.

Christ was a 'man of sorrows'. Judas Iscariot's kiss marked the 'beginning of sorrows'. It marked the beginning of affliction for Christ, and the beginning of affliction for what was to become the Church. Again, what I am saying is that Judas Iscariot's kiss, marked the beginning of the 'end time'. I'll explain more of this as we go along!

Let's read in Matthew 24 again:

³ 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?"

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all ^[a] *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, ^[b] and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

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. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

All this being discussed here are the four horsemen of the apocalypse discussed in Revelation 6. Go and read Revelation 6 and see that for yourself. And again, all this was kick started with Judas Iscariot's kiss.

The time of the end began with the kiss. That kiss marked the commencement of the 'beginning of sorrows'. And all these things we just read, between verses 4 and 12 of Matthew 24 are covered by the 4 horsemen outlined in Revelation 6. They started then, and as time continues and get closer to second coming of Christ, they will increase in intensity.

Keep your place here in Matthew 24 and come with me to Luke 22 quickly, let's just see something there....

We'll begin reading in verse 39:

39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

[Of course... pray this because if you fall into temptation, lawlessness sets in and we begin slowly slowly to wax cold.]

Verse 41:

41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, *[...this is what His elect do...they pray...]* 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." 43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.[e]

45 When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46 Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

[...again, this is what His elect do...they pray to keep in close contact with their Creator....to keep a strong relationship with their Creator, because without a strong relationship, without that close contact we fall into temptation and lawlessness sets in!...]

47 And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, **"Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"**

This was a momentous event that triggered a number of prophecies!

Verse 49:

49 When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

51 But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53 When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, **and the power of darkness.**"

THIS, Brethren, marked the 'beginning of sorrows'. It also marked the beginning of the 'end time' events in Bible Prophecy. It marked the time when the four horsemen of the apocalypse began their ride. They began their ride, and their ride increased in intensity as the time went by.

Let's go back to Matthew 24.

We'll read beginning in verse 9:

9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation (afflicted) and kill you, and you will be hated

by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Here we see duality. We see a message that is directed at the disciples of Christ's time and it's directed at every individual that came after that time right up until the second coming of Christ. It is certainly directed at us here in this end of the end time.

The disciples and apostles were delivered up to be afflicted, weren't they? Didn't they imprison some of them, Paul included? Weren't they afflicted? Absolutely. Weren't they hated? Of course they were. Wasn't there betrayal back then? Yes! And that went on throughout Church history and will continue going on till the return of Christ. To this day we see betrayal. To this day we see Brethren getting offended, maybe because we don't see things the way they do. To this day we see Brethren hating each other. To this day we see false prophets. This has happened throughout this end time, which period began with that kiss.

Those in some of the other groups, who prove things and voice what they prove to others within their group, will be turned in. They will be "delivered" to the their ministry. They will be afflicted and imprisoned. They won't be allowed to speak! They'll be blacklisted and put out of the congregation. Do you want to tell me that not speaking to, and shunning and threatening and even worse to individuals who stand up for the truth is not affliction? Is it not imprisonment? People who are chucked out of a congregation for standing up for the Truth and abandoned, and shun, and bullied and so on... are they not vilified? Are they not spoken ill of? Are they not slandered? Families are torn apart and so many other terrible things have happened as a result.... people have even taken their lives because of the way they were treated...

Verse 9:

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. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another

People who stand up for the Truth in other groups are 'delivered'. They are delivered to their ministry. They are chucked out of their congregations. Many lose out, spiritually speaking, because they start to doubt and turn their backs on God because they can't believe how they were treated by the so-called ministry, by their Brethren who betrayed them. And when someone stands up for the Truth, and it goes against the grain, don't Brethren get offended? And the sad thing is that this treatment has literally 'killed' (physically and spiritually speaking)....it has killed so many individuals.

Haven't you and I been betrayed by so many? In some cases even by family members because of 'Christ's name sake'?

Brethren, these scriptures are being fulfilled. Perhaps some are waiting for these scriptures to be fulfilled by the authorities of the land.... by the law of the land. Perhaps they will, but perhaps we're seeing it all already happen. Perhaps we're further along than we think.

Verse 9:

9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation [*to be 'afflicted as it correctly puts it in the King James version'*] and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.
10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Aren’t we living this? Didn’t the early church live this? Men would come up claiming all sorts of things and all sorts of titles and so on...

¹³ But he who endures [*...5278 from 5259 and 3306 = remains, bears trials, persevere, abides, patient, has fortitude...*] to the end shall be saved [*...4982 = delivered, protected, preserved, made whole...*]. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

This ‘gospel’, this ‘witness’ is essentially about Christ. About His life. What He lived for. What He represented. This ‘witness’ that will be ‘preached’ in all the world refers to Christ life, death and resurrection. It refers to Christ the person, and who He was. And hasn’t this been done? The whole world isn’t going to know that we were born to have the potential that we have. The whole world isn’t going to hear about the millennial reign and so on. The gospel of the kingdom and the witness is preached through Christ’s sacrifice and THAT is what will be preached in all corners of the world. And again I ask, hasn’t this been done?