

Episode #918 Matthew 24 Part 7-The False Christs

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord had set forth the truth of the coming “Great Tribulation,” which we believe is the testing of those who have lived through the premillennial kingdom on earth. Now, He goes on to say more about that time, and the false christs who will arise then.

III. The Great Tribulation. Matthew 24:21-28.

- A. Verse 22. “The elect” are those who hold a special place in God’s order and are a part of God’s government. We elect a man to be President, and God elects men to be part of His government. These elect men are to be out in the mountains during this time, where He commanded them to go earlier. If these days went on too long, all flesh would be destroyed. But the number of these days has been fixed: 1260 days. Because it has been fixed, the days will not be allowed to drag on indefinitely. Some have argued that the days are shortened to 16 hour days due to Revelation 8:12. Yet that is not what that verse says, and I do not believe that this is the case. That verse depends on the light not shining for 8 hours, 4 in the day and 4 in the night. If the days were 16 hour days and the light was there the whole 8 hours, then there would not be a third of the day and night with no light! No, these days are shortened because the time they will cover has been fixed to 1,260 days. They will not be allowed to continue, and so are shortened.
- B. Verse 23. These elect, led by the twelve apostles, have fled to the mountains at Christ’s command when the abomination of desolation was set up. They are in the place God has prepared for them, and they are perfectly safe as long as they stay in the mountains. Yet this will be a time of hardship for them, and they would like to see it come to an end. They will well know it will end with the Lord comes back, and so they will be anxious for His return. At this time, they will receive many lying reports claiming that the Lord has already come and is in this certain place or that certain place. The place does not matter so much, only this: that it is not in the mountains, and to go there to find “Christ” will mean to leave the mountains, the place of God’s safety that He has prepared for them. If they leave the place of safety, they will be vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy. They must not do it. They must not believe these false reports! They must believe God’s word to them: stay in the mountains! “Do not believe it” could also be “do not have faith in it,” since faith and belief are the same word in Greek. The unfaithful prophet in I Kings 13 is the warning.
- C. Verse 24. It seems these reports are not total fabrications. There are “christs” in these places, but false christs, deceiving people with lying signs and wonders. Zechariah 13:6 pictures these false christs, along with false prophets, admitting their deception once the tribulation period is over. They and their friends put marks of nails in their hands to simulate Christ’s and back up their deception. Zechariah 13:4-5 presents these false prophets admitting that they are farmers and not prophets, good only for farming. Signs are miracles that supposedly have a message. “Wonders” occurs only here in Matthew; once in Mark; and once in John. Then, after Luke does not use it in his gospel, he uses in nine times in Acts! And four times in Acts period letters. Wonders were characteristic of that time period. “If possible” means if there was

- inherent power to do so, *dunamis*. The implication is that it is not possible. Why not? Because the elect have already been warned against these false christs and prophets, and because the elect have fled and are in the mountains so as not to be deceived. For these reasons, they cannot be deceived. “Even” is the Greek *kai*.
- D. Verse 25. He has warned these twelve men, His apostles, well in advance. When the time comes, they will have every reason to reject these false reports. This is a simple sentence in Greek; only three words. “Behold, pre-warned you.”
- E. Verse 26. The “desert” is the wilderness or unoccupied place. They are in the mountains, but these want them to head out of the mountains into the desert. Meaning out of their place of safety in the mountains. Satan’s goal is to get them out where they are no longer protected. “Secret chambers” could mean a storage closet, as this was a place one would seldom go. The Lord said to pray in the secret chambers back in Matthew 6:6. Again, have no faith in that report, He warns them.
- F. Verse 27. Some say this has to do with the “lightening” of the sky at dawn: it begins with a trace of light, and there is very little for a while until it gets brighter and brighter and you get the full blaze of it. But this does not have to do with the dawn, but with the lightning. It is not just the sun rising slowly in the east; it is lightning that streaks across the sky. In their weather patterns in Israel their lightning was likely to come from the east. This does not fit with the ideas of some of a split coming, once for His church and once with His church. It does not fit with the idea of a “secret rapture” as His coming. But this is the way the Bible describes the Parousia: as a sudden, unmistakable event that blazes across the sky to be clearly seen by all. In Greek this is “from the rising to the setting,” “east” being the place of sunrising and “west” of sunsetting in Greek. (In Hebrew “sunrising” and “sea.”) “Flashes” is *phaneia*, to shine forth. “Coming” is the Greek *parousia*. This is the second time we have had this important word in this passage, the first being back in their question to Him in verse 3. This period does not end with a secret return of the Lord Jesus, or a humble return, like when He came the first time. He will not have emptied himself, so that one could miss the fact that He came. He will come as Who He is: God, and because of what He does: to rule and reign in power and majesty unparalleled.
- G. Verse 28. A “carcase” is a dead body. The body of the people of Israel are out in the mountains. Now the vultures want to come and pick their flesh. This is spoken somewhat satirically of these hovering vultures who wish to lead His people astray. If they listen to Him, they will not be fooled for a moment. They must not leave their place of safety, no matter how many message-carrying vultures try to urge them to do so. If they leave the place of safety, they will not find themselves going to the Lord’s presence, but to a place of death where the vultures will feed on them. Since eagles are not usually carrion, this is thought here to represent the vulture, rather than the eagle. “Gathered together” is *sunago*, from which came the word “synagogue.”
- IV. Conclusion: The false christs would be proclaimed in an attempt to get the disciples and those who follow them to leave their place of safety in the mountains and seek them out. They must not do it. They must not heed the false christs!