

Biblically Correct: Understanding the Great Tribulation

When Is the Great Tribulation?

Christian Zionism, which is not Christian but Zionism, is rising in America today, and in the world, I should say. As you mentioned in your letter, it is conning us into doing the bidding of Israel and Zionists in the Middle East. There are many things we could cover in that vein of thought that are biblically incorrect, so we want to try to be biblically correct. Thank you for sending that in. I hope that what you hear on this program going forward is edifying. Feel free to reach out anytime if you have questions.

I will admit it is kind of funny that ifcj.org popped up when you searched Christianame. For those who do not know, that is the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. I clicked on their website, and they are asking for money to send to the Jewish people. I noticed that on the front page they had Genesis 12:3, and it says, "I will bless them that bless thee." Then, in parentheses, it says, "the Jewish people."

For the record, this is one of those instances where this is biblically incorrect. Genesis 12:3 is not talking about the Jewish people. In fact, the Jewish people were not in existence yet. This was a blessing for Abraham, and the Judahites, that is, the descendants of Judah, were not even in existence yet. This is one of those examples that would put me on the outside of the mainstream, so to speak, in this interpretation of Genesis 12:3. It is not difficult to understand. You just have to read the Bible and read the context. That passage is not talking about the Jewish people, but they are using it to persuade people to send money to them for whatever the purpose is. Thank you for sharing that, Travis. I think that was a good example of what I was talking about.

In this broadcast, I am going to play an older program. When I say older, it is only about three years old. It has been a long week here, and I did not get the program recorded that I intended for tonight. So I decided to go back, pull this program, and play it this evening because it is connected to what we covered last week dealing with the rapture.

The program is about the Great Tribulation, or I should say the supposed Great Tribulation. I recorded this back in November of 2023, right after the turmoil in the Middle East happened. We have turmoil in the Middle East now, and of course we have people talking about how we are in the Great Tribulation, or about to go into the Great Tribulation. In this program, I take a look at the supposed Great Tribulation that is often pointed to in Matthew 24, and I compare it to Scripture to see if what is being taught is truly so.

I hope you will enjoy this program. I will also say that the sermon series I refer to in this program on Matthew 24 has been completed for many years. You can listen to the entire series on my YouTube channel, Christianamea Ministries, if you want to learn more on this topic. Thank you for listening.

Now, with the events in the Middle East involving Israel and Hamas, and before that Ukraine and all the rest, we have people thinking that we are in the Great Tribulation, or that we are about to go into the Great Tribulation. That is a big subject. We are going to talk about some aspects of it biblically in this broadcast and examine some of the Scriptures used for the quote, "Great Tribulation." Most of those come out of Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse.

I am currently doing a sermon series on Matthew 24 and the Olivet Discourse. We will be doing part two this upcoming Sunday. If you have not listened to those, I recommend it, because we are going to be diving deep into the Matthew 24 discourse and what that passage of Scripture truly means. I am convinced that it is one of the most misused and abused sections of Scripture in the New Testament, and probably in the whole Bible.

There have been entire empires built by false preachers misusing those passages: Blood Moon books, Hal Lindsey and The Late Great Planet Earth, 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Is Going to Happen in 1988, and then 89 Reasons Why the Rapture Is Going to Happen in 1989. People attach all these misconceptions and false beliefs to that kind of material. They build huge empires by selling books for billions of dollars. Think about all the books that have been sold in the past thirty or forty years on prophecies that never come to pass. Then the author says, "I miscalculated it. Let me write another book, and you can buy a million more copies, and we will go from there."

It is all because they misuse Scripture and take it out of context. In my series on Matthew 24, we have been diving into the context of Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse, and asking what the context allows. Many people take Matthew 24 and throw it far into the future. They say Jesus spoke these words and none of it has come to pass. I am of the belief that it has all been fulfilled. Matthew 24 is completely fulfilled. If you are shocked by that statement, I encourage you to continue, or to listen to my series, Matthew 24: The End of the World?, on my YouTube channel, and examine the Scriptures for yourself.

Today, in the world of churchianity, we have preachers who will take this book and preach a sermon similar to this:

Brothers and sisters, you know that the end of the world is near. Jesus talked about these things in Matthew 24. The apostles asked, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Then, in Matthew 24:4, Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you." In Matthew 24:6-7, it says, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars... For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Brothers and sisters, do you not know that in the Middle East right now, Hamas and Israel, God's chosen people, are in a war? Kingdom is rising up against kingdom. That is what Jesus spoke about in Matthew 24.

Then, in Matthew 24:7, it says there shall be famines and pestilences. Brothers and sisters, have you not heard about the factories, the food shortages, and the factories that burned down recently? Have you not heard about food shortages in America? And pestilence, brothers and sisters, do you not remember COVID-19? Is that not what Jesus was talking about? What about earthquakes? Do you know, brothers and sisters, that there are more earthquakes today than there ever have been in the history of the world? Matthew 24:8 says, "All these are the beginning of sorrows."

Then verse 9 says, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you." Brothers and sisters, He is talking to you. Jesus is talking to you. Matthew 24:14 says, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Brothers and sisters, has the gospel been taken to every part of the world yet? No, no, no, but it is close. There are still uncontacted tribes in Africa and on North Sentinel Island. Those people have to be reached in order for the end to come.

That is why you need to give your donations to our missionary fund. Brother Billy and Sister Susie are going to the deepest, darkest parts of Africa to make Jesus come back by taking the gospel of the kingdom to the entire world. When that happens, verse 15 says, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." Then we will

know that it is upon us, brothers and sisters. Verse 16 says, "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains."

And remember this, mothers and young couples. Before you have children, remember that we are in these days. Take heed to what Jesus says in verse 19: "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!" Young couples, you need to think very hard before you have children, because it says, "Woe unto you mothers in these days." Then verse 21 says, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time." Brothers and sisters, that time is upon us right now. We need to take heed to these passages. The end of the world is near. If you want to know more, go buy my book, *The End of the World, Part Six: I Got It Right This Time*, and then you will know everything you need to know about the Great Tribulation and the end of the world.

Is that not about how it goes? Of course, I was mocking this type of preaching. Hopefully those listening on the radio did not tune in during the middle of that, or they may have thought they were listening to Hal Lindsey or John Hagee.

Everything I quoted there, if you noticed, included places where I misquoted a lot of the Scriptures I pointed out. For example, Matthew 24:21 does not say, "There shall be the great tribulation." It says, "For then shall be great tribulation." Not "the" Great Tribulation. How many preachers have you heard say "the Great Tribulation," as though it is a named event? It does not say that, but that is what I said in the mock sermon, and many people listening would not have had an issue with it.

Now let us go back to Matthew 24 and examine some of the verses I pointed out in that little mock sermon, the sort of sermon many preachers will probably preach tomorrow morning. Matthew 24:3 says, "And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The word "world" there is the Greek word *aion*, which means age. It does not mean the end of the cosmos, the end of the universe, the end of the planet, or the end of the world in that sense. It does not mean that.

In order to understand what is going on in Matthew 24, you have to understand the context. In Matthew 23, Jesus gives a fiery sermon to the scribes and Pharisees of His day, who are of the house of Judah. He was casting judgment on them. In Matthew 23, you read the woes pronounced on their hypocrisy and on what they had done. They had put themselves in the place of Moses. They had started creating laws and traditions and saying those were God's law. They had taken something holy, the temple and the worship of God, and corrupted it to the point that they had made it of none effect.

Remember, context is everything. Matthew 23 is talking about the scribes, the Pharisees, and the house of Judah, on whom judgment was being cast. In Matthew 23:30-34, speaking to those people, Jesus says, "And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 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."

Let me stop there for a second. We know this is the house of Judah He is speaking to because He is the One who sent them the prophets, and they persecuted them and rejected Him. But do not be confused, because there was a house of Israel and a house of Judah. I do not have time to get into all of that, but the house of Israel was divorced because of their iniquity and sent into Assyrian captivity.

They scattered and multiplied throughout the earth, but they were promised redemption in the book of Hosea.

Often, it is falsely said that Hosea is speaking of non-Israelite people. But if you read the book of Hosea and 1 Peter 2:9-10, it is clear we are speaking to Israelites. They were to be remarried. The house of Israel was to be redeemed and bought back, but the house of Judah was to be cut off unless they repented. Many of the Judahites did repent and follow Jesus, but many did not. The corrupted scribes and Pharisees who did not repent are the people Jesus is speaking to, and they were judged for it.

That is what Jesus is talking about in Matthew 23:35-38: "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 an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

He is speaking of the house, the house of God, the house of Judah, which was destroyed in A.D. 70, just as Jesus is about to predict and prophesy in Matthew 24. That is the context here.

Matthew 24:1 says, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple." Basically, the disciples were saying, "Wait, Jesus, look at the temple. Look how beautiful it is. Look how amazing that temple is." If you read Josephus, it was quite an architectural marvel. Herod had adorned it. It is said that he used 10,000 workmen to adorn and renovate the temple over a period of eight years.

Then Jesus responds in Matthew 24:2: "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Think about the magnitude of that. The disciples were trying to show Jesus this building, and He was saying, "Listen, boys, not very long from now, not one stone of that temple will be standing. It will all be torn down."

Then the disciples ask, in Matthew 24:3, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Not the end of the world, in the way people usually use that phrase, but the end of the age. Why do you think they asked those questions? Because Jesus had just dropped a bombshell on them and said the temple would be destroyed. The very next thing they ask is how these things will come about and when they will happen.

The disciples were not asking about something that was going to happen thousands of years in the future. They were asking about the temple because, in the context of the passage, Jesus said the temple was going to be destroyed. Then the next thing they asked was, "When?" We are not talking about something far in the future. We are talking about something then. That is what they were asking. That is the context of what we are reading.

Then Jesus goes on to tell them. Matthew 24:4 says, "Take heed that no man deceive you." He is telling them, "Do not let anyone deceive you." Verse 5 says, "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." He is speaking of things that would happen before the destruction of the temple.

Matthew 24:6 says, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." The end of what? The end of the age, which is what we were speaking about in verse 3. Why were the disciples asking when the end of the

age would be? Because Jesus had just said the destruction of the temple was going to happen, and that would have been the end of that age: the end of the old covenant age, the Mosaic covenant age, and the beginning of the new covenant age, because the temple would be destroyed. They understood this.

Jesus said they would hear of wars and rumours of wars, but they were not to be troubled, because the end was not yet. Matthew 24:7 says, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." He was speaking about the events leading up to the destruction of the temple.

Yes, these things happen today. Kingdoms rise against kingdoms, nations rise against nations, and there are wars and rumours of wars. But that is not what Jesus is speaking about. He is not speaking about those things happening in 2023. There were famines and pestilences. Read Josephus, Tacitus, and some of the Roman historians of the time. There was great turmoil in the Roman Empire and among the governments around that time. Kingdom was literally rising up against kingdom. In one twelve-month period after Nero killed himself, if I remember correctly, there were four Caesars. They kept killing one another, and there was great turmoil. There were famines and pestilences in the Roman Empire at that time. That is the context. It is not talking about COVID-19. There were also great earthquakes at that time, and they were seen by the world of that time. Jesus is not talking about our future, but the disciples' future.

Matthew 24:8 says, "All these are the beginning of sorrows." Verse 9 says, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you." Hold on. Who is the "you" here? The disciples. This is not speaking about Christians in 2023. That does not mean Christians are not killed in 2023, but that is not what Jesus is talking about. He continues, "And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." Christians today may be hated for Christ's name's sake, but that is not the context of what Jesus is speaking to here. He is speaking to the disciples, who were delivered unto kings, persecuted, and murdered. Context is everything in passages like this.

Matthew 24:10-11 says, "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." During the generation in which Jesus said this, from around A.D. 30 to A.D. 70, there were many false prophets and many false Christs, people claiming to be Christ, or Messiah. You had Simon Magus, Menander, who was a follower of him, and many other Gnostic-type sects that arose. Many of them were headed by men claiming to be Messiah, and they were trying to deceive the elect Christians.

Matthew 24:12-13 says, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The end of what? The end of the age. The end of the aion, not the end of the cosmos. The end of the Mosaic old covenant age.

Matthew 24:14 says, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The end of what? The end of the age. Many people use this verse falsely. In fact, this verse, by being preached falsely, has caused deaths. There was a man, not that long ago, I think in 2018, and there have been others, who went to North Sentinel Island. It is an island east of India. On that island is a tribe of people who are basically in the Stone Age, and they have been that way for thousands of years on that small island. I think the island is about the size of Manhattan.

There was a man, John Chau, if I remember correctly, who went there because he wanted to preach the gospel to those people to fulfill this verse. He, along with others who ended up on that island trying to witness Christ to those people, did so because they had not understood this verse correctly.

He was murdered violently on the beach because he was trying to fulfill what he thought was a command. But he did not understand what was being said here. This is a sign; it is not a command. We are commanded to preach in Matthew 28, but here Jesus says, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

People read that and say, "In order for Jesus to come back, the gospel has to be preached in all the world." So they say Christians must go to all the uncontacted tribes in Africa, South America, and India in order for Jesus to come back. That is how many missionary services begin. But the word "world" here is not kosmos. It is not aion. In Matthew 24, in the King James and in most translations, the English word "world" appears three times, and all three times it is a different Greek word. The first, in verse 3, is aion, meaning age. Verse 14 uses oikoumene, which means the Roman Empire, the current world empire, or better stated, the known world at the time. Verse 21 uses kosmos. Three different Greek words are translated as "world" in English.

Most modern translations have corrected verse 3, but I think the majority still have "world" in the last two. I did find one translation that, in my opinion, translates aion, oikoumene, and kosmos more accurately, and that is the Ferrar Fenton translation. Ferrar Fenton was a man in the late 1800s who spent, I think, fifty years translating the Bible into a more modern translation.

In Matthew 24:3, Fenton translates it this way: "And afterwards, when he was resting upon the Mount of Olives, his disciples approached him privately, asking, Tell us when this will be, and what is the signal of your presence and the completion of this age?" To me, that translation is much clearer on what is being said in the context.

Now look at verse 14 in that translation: "The good news of the kingdom, however, shall be proclaimed throughout the whole empire as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come." The end of what? The end of the age, which he spoke about in verse 3.

Then, in verse 21, it says, "For there shall then be widespread affliction such as has not been known since the beginning of the world until now, nor will there ever be known again." In those verses, Fenton translates the Greek more accurately, in my opinion.

This passage in Matthew 24:14 speaks of the gospel of the kingdom being preached in all the world, but that word "world" is oikoumene, and it is speaking of the Roman Empire, which stretched from lower Egypt up to Britain and Hadrian's Wall, through Europe and the surrounding regions. We know through history that this is exactly where the gospel went. It filled the lands around Palestine and Judea, and it went northwest through Europe all the way to Britain.

This is understood even by Adam Clarke in his commentary on this verse, though I do not have it in front of me. He mentions that the gospel was taken throughout the whole oikoumene before A.D. 70, and he even mentions that Paul, along with many others, is believed to have gone all the way to Britain to preach the gospel to those people at that time. That was the known world.

I am going to touch on this in much more detail in a few weeks when I get to this verse in my series, but let us turn to Romans 10:18 and consider something. Romans 10:18 says, "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." What is he talking about? Let us back up a little bit.

Romans 10:15-19 says, "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes

verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you."

What is Paul saying? He is saying that the gospel, the good news, had already gone to all the earth and the ends of the world. This was written before A.D. 70. What is he talking about? He is speaking of all the oikoumene, all the empire. It had been spread through the entire empire before A.D. 70, and Paul confirms that. That is something people overlook. It is not talking about the entire cosmos, the entire universe, or the entire planet. It is talking about the oikoumene of that time and age.

The gospel would be preached to the oikoumene, introduced to the oikoumene, before the end of the age. That is significant. It is not talking about the deepest, darkest parts of Africa in 2023. Think about that. Not to mention, is it even possible to preach the gospel to every living creature throughout all history and all time, with babies dying, people dying, and babies being born constantly, especially when you consider some of these uncontacted tribes?

It would be interesting to know how many missionaries have died because they were trying to make Jesus come back by fulfilling this verse out of context, by falsely misunderstanding what Jesus was actually saying, who Jesus was talking to, and what end of the age He was talking about. If you read verse 3, it is speaking of the end of the age. Then, in verse 14, it says, "and then shall the end come." The end of what? The end of the age. The end of the old covenant age. The end of the Mosaic age. We are not in that age anymore. We are in the new covenant age. Read Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8. That age started at the cross, and the old covenant age faded away until A.D. 70, when the temple was destroyed. That is significant. This verse being taught falsely in churches has resulted in people dying. It is that serious.

Now let us go to verse 15. Matthew 24:15 says, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)." This is a big subject, one I am not going to be able to dive into in detail here. I have done messages on it before. This passage is talking about Daniel and the abomination of desolation mentioned back in Daniel 9:24. Many people stretch this and make it out to be something it is not. Daniel 9 is speaking of the events of Matthew 24. That is why Jesus mentions it here, and it was fulfilled in A.D. 70.

If you want to know what the abomination of desolation is, all you have to do is read Luke 21, the parallel passage. Luke 21:19-20 says, "In your patience possess ye your souls. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." The desolation is near. The desolation was the destruction of the temple and the sin that happened there. As I said, I will go into that in more detail when we reach it in the series. But Jesus is saying the desolation is near when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies and destroyed.

When was Jerusalem compassed and surrounded by armies? In A.D. 70, the Roman Empire came and surrounded it, just as Jesus is speaking about. We are not talking about something in 2023, 2024, or thousands of years in the future. We are talking about something that happened when Jerusalem was surrounded with armies.

This week, as an example, I saw a meme going around on Facebook that many people shared. It falsely quoted a verse out of Luke 21:20. The meme said, "Jesus said, When you see Israel surrounded by enemies on all sides, look up; your deliverance is near." It claimed that was Luke 21:20. I am not sure what translation they were claiming to use, but the people sharing it had Israel in the Middle East in mind right now. They were saying, "Israel over there is surrounded by armies or

enemies," and of course they were equating Israel in this passage with Israel in the Middle East today, surrounded by Hamas and other enemies.

But the passage does not say that. It says, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Not the deliverance, but the desolation. Think about that. By misquoting and mixing up that verse, it can make someone who is uneducated on these matters think we are talking about something going on in 2023. But we are talking about the end of the age in Matthew 24, the end of the age that happened in A.D. 70.

Matthew 24:16 says, "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." Think about this. If this is a worldwide event, why is Jesus saying, "Let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains"? Why just Judea? If this is not a localized event speaking to a certain group of people in a certain period of time, why is Judea brought up? Because that is what He is talking about. Where was Jerusalem located? In Judea.

Matthew 24:17 says, "Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house." Let me make a minor note here. Housetops in the Middle East during that time, and even today, were places people could sit because of the way the architecture was designed. They did not have a lot of rain. A housetop was basically their version of a deck. You could not do that in South Louisiana, at least where I live. We do not have housetops that you can sit on. It is very uncommon in most of the world. So if this is a worldwide event He is speaking about, why is He saying that?

Matthew 24:18 says, "Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes." Let us ask a question here. What field, and where is that field located? I would be willing to say it is probably Judea, since verse 16 says, "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." So, let him who is in Judea and on his housetop not come down to take anything out of his house, and let him who is in the field of Judea not return back to take his clothes.

Basically, Jesus is saying that when these signs start appearing, do not stop to take your things. Get out, because the destruction, the desolation, is near. He is speaking about Christians there in Judea and Jerusalem and the destruction that was coming. He is saying, "It is going to be so bad that you must not turn back to get your coat. Run to the hills. Run to the mountains." He is not speaking to people in Colorado, Louisiana, Australia, or Canada. He is speaking about people in the land of Judea before the end of the age in the first century.

Matthew 24:19 says, "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!" I have heard ministers use this verse to promote young couples not having children because the world is getting worse and worse. They say, "Do not have children. Jesus is coming back soon." Those people, my friends, are adversaries. That is not what Jesus is saying. He is saying that during those hard days, if you are a nursing mother with small children, it is going to be hard on you. That is what He is saying. He is not saying, "Stop having babies." Absolutely not.

I have heard many people use it that way. I have known people who believed it that way. They did not want their own children to have children because the end was near, because of some doomsday prophet they were listening to or some book they read. What kind of destruction has that caused? Simply by not reading the context of the passage, by quote-mining and taking verses out of context.

Matthew 24:20 says, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day." Think about this. If this is a worldwide event, it is winter somewhere at some point in the world, is it not? Different parts of the world have different climates and seasons at different times. How can that apply to the whole world? It cannot. It applies to the land of Judea at that time, and more broadly to

the oikoumene of that time. It is specifically talking about that area in Judea where the desolation and destruction would be focused.

As a side note, in the first century, the only people who survived Jerusalem when it was destroyed were the Christians who heeded these prophecies. They fled to the city of Pella. Josephus points out that the only people who survived were those who believed Jesus and left. What did they do? They fled to the mountains. They were in Judea, and they fled to the mountains. They probably did not come down and gather everything up quickly either.

Another thing that is interesting is that many Christians in the land of Judea sold everything they had. They sold their houses and land because they believed what Jesus said. They believed it enough to say, in effect, "This property is going to be worthless. Let us sell it while we can and get out, because we believe our Master."

One more point: Matthew 24:20 says, "neither on the sabbath day." Think about this. The Sabbath day was a Hebraic thing. The Hebrews followed the Sabbath, and Christians observed Sabbath. In Judea during the Sabbath day, everything was closed down. The gates were shut. It would have been harder to move on the Sabbath. That is not the case today, in the whole world. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Whether you observe Saturday or Sunday as Sabbath, it does not really matter; you cannot really tell the difference out in the world. Traveling is definitely not restricted. So that is another minor point.

Matthew 24:21 says, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Note that it does not say the tribulation is worldwide. It only says it is the greatest tribulation since the beginning of the world. This is like saying that a bad hurricane was the largest or worst in the world at that moment in time. It does not mean that the hurricane encompassed the entire world. It means that, at that moment in time, this was the largest or worst hurricane we had witnessed.

That is what Jesus is talking about here. He is saying that the things about to come upon Judea, this great tribulation, would be the greatest thing the house of Judah had ever endured since the beginning of the world: their world, their kosmos, their orderly world, figuratively speaking. It was the destruction of the temple and the slaughter in Jerusalem. It was the greatest destruction those people had ever experienced. Then, if you add the spiritual aspect of them being spiritually divorced from God, that is even bigger.

This is often used to create the doctrine of "the Great Tribulation," but keep in mind that Matthew 24 does not say "the Great Tribulation" in this passage. Parallel accounts cannot contradict this passage. If you read Luke 21, it is called great distress. In Mark 13:19, in the King James, it is called affliction, not "the Great Tribulation." It speaks of great tribulation upon that generation, upon that time, and upon that region, in the context of what Jesus is talking about. The context is the land of Judea, Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple, which is what the disciples had asked Him about.

We are running out of time, so I do not have much time to go into more of these verses. This is a bird's-eye view of Matthew 24 in this broadcast. If you want to learn more about this, I recommend that you listen to my current series. Part one was uploaded last week, and part two will be uploaded in a couple of days. I do not know how many parts it will be, but we are going to go through it and talk about these different verses. Last week, we spent the entire message in Matthew 23 looking at the context. This week, we are going to jump into the first couple verses of Matthew 24. Then, in the following weeks, we are going to go through all these verses, week by week. We are going to touch

on the rapture doctrine, Daniel's seventy weeks, and all of it, and break down some of the things being falsely taught in churches today.

Before we close, I want to touch on one of the biggest points in Matthew 24. Matthew 24:29-30 says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven... And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven... and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." That is probably the hang-up for a lot of people. They think this is speaking of the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world. But what Jesus is using here is prophetic language to describe judgment upon a people. Figurative may be a word for it, but prophetic is a better word. It is Old Testament language.

For example, in 2 Samuel 22, David says, "And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: And he said, The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies. Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled. The Lord thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them."

I want to stop there for a second. Is David being literal? Did God really come down and literally ride upon a cherub and fly, and was He seen upon the wings of the wind? Or was David using prophetic and figurative language?

I am running out of time, so I do not have much time to go to all these verses, but I want to give them to you. Read 2 Samuel 22, Psalm 97:2, Isaiah 19, Daniel 7:13, and Exodus 16:10. These verses and chapters speak about God coming down in prophetic ways: riding on clouds, riding on cherubim, smoke coming out of His nostrils, and similar images. All of these are symbols of destruction upon enemy nations. Even Israel is known as God's battle axe. Is Israel literally His axe? No. God used enemy nations to punish Israel. Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and, in this case, Rome were all used as instruments of God's judgment upon Israel. That is what Jesus is speaking about.