

Matthew 24 Series - Matthew 24:21-22

Part 4 in the Series - But for the Elect's Sake

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Well good afternoon, everyone. First, I'd like to say thank you for tuning in to today's broadcast. I hope these messages have been a blessing, an encouragement and a joy to actually see the beautiful harmony that exists in the Word when we see it and read for simply what it is.

This series of messages - and in fact - everything that I have preached for the last 30 years revolves around the understanding that the Kingdom of Christ - *now listen* - **in its fullness - has been established on earth - for 2,000 years.**

One might say, "Well what about ruling with a rod of iron?" Do you mean, as C.I. Scofield wrote in his book, ""What do the prophets say?""it is the age where no matter what the inner thought of a man may be, he must do right or die." Is that what you mean?

Do you mean "what about the age where a jewish-non Christian 'messiah' rules the world from Jerusalem in a one-world government?"

Jesus said - 2,000 years ago - "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God..." Do this first. Before anything else, do this first. Yet, we have allowed the modern 501(c)(3) government approved 'preacher' to convince us that the Kingdom of God is yet in the future. And it will be established by a 'coming messiah.' Think about it. If Christ is not King - today - then who is? The 501(c)(3) government approved church is there to promote men's governments and to do so - it MUST - teach that the Kingdom of God is not for today.

If you were to ask 100 Christians today, "Is Christ King?" You would probably get 100 "yesses." But if you were to really pin them down as to "Why, if Christ is King now, are we commanded to obey earthly kings?" their responses would quickly change to, "Well, He's King now - in heaven - but He's a coming King." And this is where the problem is.

This is why evil flourishes and righteousness pales year by year - and recently - it seems as if it is day by day. Of course, the modern preacher has convinced a huge segment of the population that evil proliferates because that's the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. In other words, God INTENDS IT TO BE SO. And if what we are seeing today is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, then not only is there anything you can do about it, but there is nothing you should do about it - because to resist the fulfillment of Bible prophecy would be to resist God Himself.

Can you see what's happening today? And why?

In Hal Lindsey's book called, "There's a New World Coming," listen to what he says beginning on page 64:

“Since the Bible teaches the Rapture is going to occur before the Tribulation period begins, and since there are increasing signs that this time of God's judgement is nearing, it would be good to briefly summarize the major signs that Jesus and the prophets said would herald the Tribulation and the return of Jesus to this earth.”

Note the usage of the word “Rapture.” Once again, here is a word that doesn't even appear in the Bible. Also note that he says that the so-called “Rapture” is going to occur **BEFORE** the Tribulation period begins. Note he puts the word "before" in italics for emphasis. There is a very important reason why he does this.

He says that the world is nearing God's judgement. In other words, the time is nearing where God is going to pour out all types of terrible things on the earth and there is going to be tremendous suffering on the earth - that will culminate in a One World Government ruled by “Jesus.” But before the terrible things are unleashed on the earth - the “christian” is going to be rescued - delivered - they won't have to face any of it. Lindsey goes on to make a list of all the things that we are seeing as fulfilled Bible prophecy in our lifetimes. The list goes like this:

1. The return of the dispersed Jews to Israel to become a nation again in 1948.
2. The Jews' recapture of the Old City of Jerusalem in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.
3. The rise of Russia as a powerful nation and enemy of Israel.
4. The Arab confederation against the new State of Israel.
5. The rise of a military power in the Orient that can field an army of 200 million soldiers. (Red China alone boasts that she has this number of troops!)
6. The revival of the old Roman Empire in the form of a ten-nation confederacy. (I believe the European Common Market is ultimately going to be this power.)
7. The revival of the dark occultic practices of ancient Babylon.
8. The unprecedented turn to drugs.
9. The increase of international revolution.
10. The increase of wars.
11. The increase of earthquakes.
12. The increase of famines through the population explosion.
13. The coming of plagues.
14. The increase of pollution.
15. The departure of many Christian churches from the historic truths of Christianity
16. The move toward a one-world religion.
17. The move toward a one-world government.
18. The decline of the United States as a major world power.
19. The increase of lawlessness.
20. The decline of the family unit.

Let's look back to the paragraph where Lindsey was talking about the “Rapture”

occurring before the Tribulation period begins. After Lindsey says that it would be good to briefly summarize the major signs that Jesus and the prophets said would herald the Tribulation and the return of Jesus to this earth....

He goes on to say:

“Even though many of these signs are appalling in themselves, their tremendous significance should gladden the heart of every true believer in Christ.”

Wow. All these terrible things are supposedly the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, but don't concern yourself with any of this - all this should make you happy!

Now, there is nothing in the words of Christ to make us or His disciples, or any other readers from the time He spoke those words in Matthew 6:33 to now - to lead us to believe in anything but a full and complete implementation of His Kingdom. There's no partial fulfillment or as Scofield tried to convince with this statement, "For the thought and word of God have ever an inner and vaster content than appears on the surface. There are perpetual surprises in the interpretation of Scripture by Scripture as the student follows the progressive unfolding of the Divine will."

There's really no surprises. God has always wanted a people for Himself. He has repeatedly asked for His creation to learn His Laws and Commandments and follow them. When the children of Israel rebelled against Him as described in I Samuel 8, God allowed it.

Why? So that after a time of having the fruits of their labors taken from them. Having their sons and their daughters killed in war after war from the petty disputes among earthly kings. From suffering under the result of man's laws that lead to death and misery - at the time appointed God would send His Son to redeem mankind from this folly and reestablish His Kingdom as it should be prior to the days of I Samuel 8.

This Kingdom and Christ the King are available to each and every man, woman, boy and girl who will allow His reign in their lives today.

Sadly, this is rarely happening today because the 501(c)(3) government approved preachers have "taken the key of knowledge" - that is "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God..." and have relegated that kingdom to a future Jewish one-world government ran by a despotic false messiah whose aim will be total conquest and enslavement of the entire world.

I showed you in previous messages the significance of the genealogy of Christ as found in Matthew 1. We discussed the three times the phrase 14 generations is used in relation

to the birth of Christ.

Let me remind you of the words in the book of Daniel which is possibly the most important book in the Old Testament as it relates to the timing of the establishment of the Kingdom of God. In chapter 12 verses 9-10, here's what is said to Daniel:

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

[10] Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Again, the words are closed up and sealed - TILL THE TIME OF THE END.

At the time of the end - verse 10 - "and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Look with me please to Matthew 2:

[1] Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, **there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,**

Ha! Harmony #1 in total's message! Daniel says Who? is going to understand at the time of the end? How many years would it took for the Messiah to be born and lay claim to the throne of David? Here it is. That exact time period had been completed and now we have WISE MEN coming and asking:

[2] Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Wow! If that doesn't send chills up and down your spine - you better check your chiller. These verses are just spectacular. They knew the time had been fulfilled. Fourteen generations had passed from the carrying away into Babylon and the time of Christ was upon them. SO THE WISE MEN came looking for Him.

In Luke 1, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist says this:

[67] And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

[68] Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

[69] And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

[70] As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

[71] That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

[72] To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

[73] The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

[74] That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

[75] In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

[76] And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

[77] To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

[78] Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

[79] To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

[80] And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

When John the Baptist began his ministry, his message was, in Matthew 3:

[1] In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

[2] And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[3] For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

After John was put in prison for preaching the Kingdom of heaven is at hand, the Lord Jesus continued that message. Mark 1:

[14] Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

[15] And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

When the disciples began to come to Christ at the outset of His ministry, one such occurrence is presented in detail in John 1 it was said concerning Andrew:

[41] He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

[42] And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art

Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

[43] The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

[44] Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

[45] Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

[46] And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

[47] Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

[48] Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

[49] Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Nothing, absolutely nothing in the messages of John the Baptist and from Christ would lead ANYONE who decided to follow Christ at that time to the conclusion - "Well, He's King, but really He's a King to come." Certainly not 2,000 years in the future.

In our previous messages, we looked at the vast importance of understanding the generation that saw the birth, the life, the ministry, the execution and the resurrecting from the dead of the Lord Jesus.

I showed you how the phrase the "end of the world" means the "end of the Old Covenant age." I showed you where in Hebrews 9:26 - it can't be any clearer - that Christ's sacrifice was done - in the end of the world - meaning this - if you do not believe that the "end of the world" has already taken place - then Jesus Christ was not the Messiah.

I showed you how Christ told His disciples that the gospel would be preached as a witness to all the nations, then the end would come - and I showed you from Colossians 1:23 - before the completion of the New Testament was over - that the writer said - as plain as can - "the gospel WAS PREACHED - WAS PREACHED - that's past tense - TO EVERY CREATURE WHICH IS UNDER HEAVEN." It can't get any clearer than this.

I showed you from Matthew 24 where Christ told His disciples THEY would see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

I showed you how the angel told Daniel to SEAL UP his prophecy until the time of the end. Then, we find the Wise men from the east - we find the disciples Reading AND

Understanding Daniel - and we find the angel telling John in Revelation 22 NOT TO SEAL UP HIS book - because the time was at hand.

I showed you where in Luke 21:22 where Christ told His disciples - 2,000 years ago - [22] For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

If you've been following along in your Bibles and you've never seen these things before, you must be scratching your head and asking why?

Now, let's take our Bibles and go back to Matthew 24:16. In this passage, the Lord Jesus is telling His disciples how to escape the terrible things that are getting ready to happen to the generation - to the time period and to the period that killed the Son of God.

[16] Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

[17] Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

[18] Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

[19] And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

[20] But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

[21] For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

We cannot read this verse without comparing it again to the words of Daniel in his description of the end times:

[1] And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

It does not take 4 years of Bible college and 2 years of seminary for someone to see the almost WORD for WORD usage in these 2 passages of Scripture. There are no perpetual surprises here. It's plain and simple. One is the prophecy - the other is the fulfillment. Totally awesome harmony in the Word of God.

Back to Matthew.

[22] And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: **but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.**

[23] Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

[24] For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

[25] Behold, I have told you before.

There should no real argument as to when Christ walked here. It was roughly some 2,000 years ago. Some people believe his birth was around 3 or 4 B.C. It would be nice to know exactly, but I don't think it's imperative. We do know from the Scriptures that Christ's ministry lasted approximately 3 and a half years and he was about 33 and a half years old when He was murdered by the state at the behest of the religious leaders.

So, we have the words recorded in Matthew 24 somewhere around the year 30 A.D. History tells us - and I realize that's a great stretch - but history tells us that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple occurred at 70 A.D.

So, we should be able to agree that approximately 40 years passed from Matthew 24 to the destruction of Jerusalem as recorded by Josephus - where he said - that there was little left of Jerusalem for passersby to even think the city had ever been inhabited.

The book of Thessalonians was written somewhere in this time period. Again, the exact time and date really isn't necessary, although some real close analysis of the Scripture could give us an indication. But, I've not found anyone, anywhere, that says the book was written after 70 A.D.

With that in mind. Look again at verse 22 of Matthew 24.

[22] And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

But for the elect's sake.

A few minutes ago, we saw great harmony from the Daniel 12 concerning the wise men and compared that to Matthew 2 with the wise men discerning the birth of Christ.

Go with me now to I Thessalonians chapter 1.

[1] Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2] We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

[3] Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

[4] Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

[5] For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

[6] And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

[7] So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

[8] For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

[9] For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

[10] And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

What are the obvious things here? Who was this book written to? It was written to the ecclesia of the Thessalonians - 2,000 years ago. Listen - please - this book was not written to you and me. This book was written to those people - 2,000 years ago - and they are clearly identified as being elected of God.

These are the exact same people that Christ was referring to in Matthew 24:22 when He said, ..."the days would be shortened for the elect's sake".... Exact same people - make no mistake about it.

Look at verse 6:

[6] And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

What did Christ tell His disciples in Matthew 24:

[8] All these are the beginning of sorrows.

[9] Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

[10] And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Verse 8 of I Thessalonians:

[8] For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

Why did he say, "so that we need not to speak any thing?"

Matthew 24:[25] Behold, I have told you before.
Christ had already told them. Paul was simply reaffirming.

I Thessalonians 1:

[9] For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

[10] And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

What does verse 10 say?

[10] And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Matthew 23:

[34] 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:

[35] 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.

[36] **Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.**

[37] 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!

[38] Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

The people who were receiving this letter in I Thessalonians were the same people - the same time - the same people who were living during the generation that Christ prophesied to in Matthew 23 and 24.

Look at I Thessalonians chapter 2:

[1] For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

[2] But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of

God with much contention.

Here again. Notice the sufferings they encountered preaching the gospel - but no matter what - they would not stop preaching. Why? In the face of suffering and persecution would they not stop preaching? Because they had encountered the King of kings and Lord of lords. There was no doubt in their minds - after the resurrection of Christ - that Jesus Christ was the Messiah - He was the King of Israel and those men took their orders from the King and nothing was going to stop them.

Today's powerless preachers take their orders from their corporate papers and their lawyers and their bankers and their politicians they elect and the gospel they preach is a future messiah - and it's not the Jesus Christ of this book. The gospel they preach doesn't even remotely resemble the gospel that those men believed 2,000 years ago that in the face of all persecution and even death for some - could not silence them.

Verses 9-12 of I Thessalonians 1:

9] For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

[10] Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

[11] As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

[12] That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Continuing in verse 13:

13] For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

[14] For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

[15] Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

[16] Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

[17] But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

[18] Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

[19] For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

We referenced this passage in earlier messages in greater detail. Verses 15-16 are almost word for word the fulfillment of Christ's words in Matthew 23.

In the face of all the persecutions they were going through, look at verse 19:

[19] For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Matthew 16:28 - Christ - to His disciples 2,000 years ago:

[27] For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

[28] Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Knowing the sufferings and the persecutions that these first century believers were going through, are we really prepared to say that the promise of deliverance, the promise of them seeing Christ coming in His Kingdom was just false hope to keep them on board the ship? Why? Seems very cruel to me to tell these people something that the writer or the speaker knew full well was not the truth.

Chuck Swindoll from Insight for Living Ministries has this to say about I Thessalonians:

What's the big idea?

Impressed by the faithfulness of the Thessalonians in the face of persecution, Paul wrote to encourage the Christians in that community with the goal that they would continue to grow in godliness. Paul knew that the people had been exposed to errant teaching from those in opposition to the way of Jesus Christ and the grace of God. And Paul also understood that unless the young church continued to mature in its faith, the danger would only increase over time.

With that in mind, Paul taught the people that any spiritual growth would ultimately be motivated by their hope in the ultimate return of Jesus Christ. Paul was never interested in simply telling people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, for he knew that what ultimately inspired change was a life of consistently walking in the power of God's Spirit. And so to a group of young Christians with questions and uncertainties, Paul offered the hope of Christ's return, providing both comfort in the midst of questions and motivation to godly living.

If the promise was not fulfilled to those persecuted saints - then they everything they did was operating under a false hope. I simply cannot accept this - and I hope you can't either.

When you understand from the Scriptures, from the words of Christ, that you cannot separate His coming again from His Kingdom - then you will clearly see "What's the big idea?"

Go to I Thessalonians 3:

[2] And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

[3] That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

[4] For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

Can we not plainly see that Paul's words here are exactly the same words of Christ from Matthew 24? Christ had told them in Matthew 24 that many of them would be afflicted,

persecuted and SOME would even be killed for His name sake. None of this was surprising to the Christians to whom the books of the Thessalonians were written to.

The words in Thessalonians and Matthew are almost identical. There are NO surprises here. What the Thessalonian Christians were going through was exactly what Christ said was going to happen.

Verses 7-8 and 12-13:

[7] Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

[8] For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

[12] And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

[13] To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Matthew 24:[13] But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

These believers were the fulfillment of many of the prophecies in Matthew 24 - because they were in that generation. They were in that time period and they were part of that people.

Now let's get to that most famous chapter - I Thessalonians 4 and let's go straight to verse 13:

[13] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

[14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which

sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

[15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

[16] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

[17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Now, just as we did in Matthew 24, let's circle the pronouns. Let's look closely at the I's and the We's and the They's.

Verse 13. Who is speaking? Paul. Who is he speaking to? When did he speak these words? No one can honestly say that these words were spoken to those suffering yet faithful saints - 2,000 ago - and that the words were not intended for them. The language is as clear in this passage as it is in Matthew 24.

Now if you want to be like Scofield and say that the passages have dual meanings and interpretations - then I guess that's every man's prerogative but to do so requires twisting the Scriptures into something they simply do not say.

If all this is new to you - then hopefully you've got a thousand questions going through your mind right now - and I'll assure you - that when taken with the clear, simple meanings of the Scriptures as they are written - with the understanding that not one word of the book was written to us - but every word was written for us - an answer that makes sense - can and will be provided.

No. There are not perpetual surprises to the unfolding of the Divine will of God. Christ spoke in parables many times to the unbelieving who did not have ears to hear or eyes to see - but when He spoke to His followers - make no mistake about it - He said what He said and meant what He said and they understood Him.

In conclusion, let's now go to I Thessalonians 5.

Verse 1

[1] But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

[2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

[3] For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

[4] But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

[5] Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Paul says concerning these times and seasons, I really don't even need to write unto because yourselves know PERFECTLY that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Matthew 24:

[24] For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very

elect.

[25] Behold, I have told you before.

They knew perfectly because Christ had already told them before. Paul was simply reminding these Thessalonian believers of what they had already known. Giving them assurances to support and encourage their faith considering all they were going through.

In Matthew 24: 43 - Christ talks of His coming as a thief in the night. Again, word for word. Christ's prophecy in Matthew 24 - the fulfillment in I Thessalonians.

I Thessalonians 5:

[4] But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

[5] Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

These believers were not in darkness. They were the elect of Matthew 24. Christ told them, "When YOU therefore shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

This is why the book of I Thessalonians is filled - over and over - with direct reassurances to those believers that THEY would be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. Then WE which ARE ALIVE and remain unto the coming of the Lord. There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom.

ALL of this, was fulfilled in the generation in which Christ spoke the words. All was fulfilled from the approximately 30 A.D. to 70 A.D. All of it.

I Thessalonians 5:

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[24] Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Some will no doubt continue to say, "I just don't see it that way." We MUST stop twisting the Scriptures into something they do not say. We MUST stop trying to force meanings out of the Scriptures into meanings that just aren't there.

When we allow men to take these Scriptures and twist them into making the full implementation of the Kingdom of God a future, jewish messiah kingdom, we are allowing them to twist the Scriptures into our own destruction.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ as a present-day reality - is the only hope for America. It is the only hope for the world. The salvation of mankind - past, present and future depends on what we do with the understanding of Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.

To speak of the words of Christ and the apostles in terms of dual interpretations and dual prophecies is what ends up giving us lunatics that constantly talk of rapture dates that come and go. End of the world theologies that have no basis in Scripture. Future temples where God ordains the sacrificing of lambs. And ultimately, where man believes that God has ordained him to determine good and evil. To teach men to despise the Laws of God in favor of the traditions of men. This is where we are today.

Unless and until God's people wake up to the simple, clear truths contained in the Scriptures - and begin to walk accordingly - things are not going to get better. Jesus is not coming back here on a white horse to fix it. That's a false hope! That's a lie created for the sole purpose of keeping men in darkness and it has worked exactly the way the framers of that lie intended.

Is there hope? Absolutely. In fact, I believe that the whole world could once again be turned upside down - very very quickly - if we would just grasp the same faith and preach the same gospel once delivered to the saints.

Jesus Christ is still King - right now. By preaching and living as the Apostles did as described in Acts 17:

[5] But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

[6] And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

[7] Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

[8] And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

When was the last time in America that the people and the rulers of the cities were troubled by the preachers?

I'm telling you today that if the same things were said about God's people today that were said about the Apostles in Acts 17 - it would take no time at all to "turn the world upside down." How much time had passed from Acts 1 to Acts 17? Months? Days? Years? Not long ago. All it takes is the obedience of men and women boys and girls to the teachings of Christ and God will bring about the change.

In order to see this happen, we've got to start tearing down some idols. Undoubtedly the biggest idol in false worship today is the future rapture and future kingdom theology. When that false idol is thrown down - men will see what's left standing - and that is the present day reality of the Kingdom and the Kingship of Christ.