

Jerusalem Destroyed

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[0 : 00] Can you hear me now?

Okay. So Kelly and I did not coordinate that, but I thought, what a good reminder right before we go into this passage, more secure is no one ever than the loved ones of the Savior, if I got that right. But the security of the loved ones of the Savior is a great thought as we go into our text today. If you will, open to the Gospel of Matthew and chapter 24. Last week we began to look at the Olivet Discourse, and we're going to continue that today.

We read last week through the first 35 verses, and I admitted I had to break it in half to try to get through it. I made it another seven verses this week, and we're still not going to finish the verse 35. My hope really is, we're going to touch some on verse 34, but again, my hope is that one more week and we'll finish through the verse 35 and then move on into Olivet Discourse.

[1 : 10] But this week, my hope is that we can make it through verse 22. And so, again, we're going to read Matthew 24, 1 through 35. We'll get into large context.

I'll spend a little time reminding us of what we saw last week, and then we'll make some progress, Lord willing. So, look with me together at Matthew chapter 24. Jesus left the temple and was going away.

When his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple, but he answered them, you see all these, do you not? Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.

As he said 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?

And Jesus answered them, see that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.

[2 : 16] See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

All these are but the beginnings of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death. And you will be hated by all nations for my namesake.

And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come. So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place, let the reader understand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house.

[3 : 19] And let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas, for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days, pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

For then there will be great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now. No, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved.

But for the sake of the eulet, those days will be cut short. That if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ, or there he is, do not believe it. For false Christ and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the eulet.

See, I have told you beforehand. So if they say to you, look, he is in the wilderness, do not go out. If they say, look, he is in the inner rooms, do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

[4 : 33] Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather the eulet from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another. From the fig tree, learn its lesson.

As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near at the very gates.

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Let's pray together.

Lord, we pray, asking for your Spirit's help in the preaching of the Word, that you would be with us, that you would help us to understand this passage. Lord, we pray that you would even help us to be good students of the Word.

[5 : 33] Matthew here says, let the reader understand the reference of Daniel. And the reality is that many in the New Testament church just aren't good readers of Daniel. Lord, help us to understand how all of your Word fits together, and the message of your Word, that we might rightly interpret it here.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. So as I said earlier, I just want to go back over the big scheme of what we're looking at to try to make sense of the context and where we're moving in this passage.

So remember we saw at the very beginning of what we read today, God is leaving the temple.

Excuse me. God is leaving the temple desolate, as he proclaimed in chapter 23, verse 38.

And invisibly we see this represented with Jesus leaving the temple. And Jerusalem, he's going outside the city. They're walking up the Mount of Olives. They're going to stop at the top, and Jesus gives the Olivet Discourse.

Somewhere along the way, the disciples ask Jesus to look back. They get a good vantage point over. They see the temple. They ask him to look back at the temple. And Jesus tells them that the temple is going to be destroyed, that there will not be one stone left upon another.

[6 : 40] And we've said already in what we looked at last week, we'll continue to say this week, that Jesus is speaking of the destruction of the temple in AD 70. The disciples imagine that when the temple is destroyed, that's got to be the end of history.

Their expectation is still that there will be an earthly kingdom that Jesus will set up on this earth. He will rule from Jerusalem in the temple. And so the temple is destroyed. It's got to be the end of his kingdom and the end of the world.

And my argument from last week that we're continuing this week is that Jesus doesn't see it that way. It's not that way. They've misunderstood. They've confused things. And so Jesus is making a clarification.

He's saying, here's when these things, the destruction of the temple will take place, and then he's going to talk about his second coming and the end of the age. And I've argued already we haven't yet got into his speaking of the second coming and the end of the age.

So far he's only been talking about the destruction of the temple. He's trying to give them clues to know when the temple will be destroyed. And so what we've seen already, well, I'll come back to that in a second.

[7 : 49] Let me say first that I argued from chapter 23, verse 36, we see he says, Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. The judgment for all their sins and the killing of the prophets, that generation is going to be judged for the accumulated sins of the religious leaders of Israel throughout time on the prophets, even all the way back to Cain killing Abel.

And so all that's going to come upon this generation. Then in verse 34, I said that's the other side of the parentheses we want to imagine around this passage. In verse 34, chapter 24, we see, Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

And so, again, my argument is that the things that are contained within these is the judgment that Jesus is speaking of in chapter 23. He's now describing. That judgment comes upon that generation in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in particular and really the ending of Israel as a nation, a national people, and really and truly in some ways the unique people of God. We see the extension of the gospel to the Gentile nations and then being grafted into the tree, which is the church. And so there's not anything special, particularly about Israel as a people, as a nation, but that the blessing is upon the people of God, which I've argued all along, was a part of the national Israel, not all of national Israel.

But we see an end of the nation and a judgment upon them that comes in AD 70. Okay. So that's kind of our introduction to things. And then last week, we began to look specifically at our passage. [9 : 25] So we spent the bulk of our time looking at verses 1 through 14, 4 through 14 even specifically. And I argued in verses 4 through 14, Jesus is describing the normal course of events in the church age after Jesus' ascension.

What are things going to be like? And so he describes wars. There's going to be pestilence. There's going to be earthquakes. There's going to be false teachers. And what he said last week is, what I see Jesus arguing up to verse 14 is, he says, don't think that this means the end.

This doesn't mean the end. And so we said last time, signs that are not signs. I said, that's what Boyce describes it as. Events that aren't signs of Jesus' coming or, as I've argued in particular, the destruction of the temple.

These things will not tell you that the destruction of the temple is near. So last week, it's almost like a letdown. If you're looking for those signs, we didn't get to it last week. Good news for those of you who are ready to hear those signs because that's what we're looking at this week.

What I want you to see this week in verses 15 through 22 is that Jesus here gives us, here are the signs that you can know that the destruction of the temple is near.

[10 : 37] How can you know this? And so I want us to look at those today. And I've said already, as we think about, we were talking about the hymn we saw earlier, the security of God's people.

Why is God telling them when is this going to take place? Well, you see specifically, he tells them to flee. And so it's a mercy of God upon his people. But let's look at the signs that are given to us.

My first point, I really just tried to teach this passage. And again, I said last week, I'll say again, we're kind of chewing on some steak here. And so I'm doing a lot more teaching than I am application, but I think it's important that we understand this.

And this obvious application is we understand it. But my first point is just for us to try to grasp what Jesus means in verse 15 about the abomination of desolation. So let's look at verse 15.

So transition from what we saw before. When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place, let the reader understand.

[11 : 44] And so first, just some definition. Let me treat you like children. You may say I already know this, but okay. We don't oftentimes speak of abominations in modern day English.

And abomination just means something of hatred, disgust, or revulsion. Something that's revolutive. Something that disgusts you. And then you add to that desolation.

We talked about desolation means being made lonely or without existence in a place. And so the picture that's presented just by the phrase, the title itself, the abomination of desolation.

Something disgusting or revolting that's going to lead to desolation. Okay? So just understand the concept of what do we mean by abomination of desolation.

Huge title there. But all we're saying is this is something that's going to be revolutive, disgusting, and it's going to bring desolation some form of destruction.

[12 : 44] Now, it says, as spoken by the prophet Daniel. And so Daniel mentions this in four places. I quoted three of those.

I'm going to quote three of those for us. So, Daniel 9, 27. It says, He shall put an end to sacrifice and offering, and on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate.

And so, just beginning as we try to understand Daniel's description. And I've just jumped in the middle of the passage, but we did preach through Daniel some time ago. But what it says here is this person, this one who's going to bring on the wings of abomination, he will make desolate.

One of the ways he makes desolate is this. He shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And so, Daniel's speaking of one who's going to bring an end to sacrifice and offering. Now, before we go much further, let me just say, the prophecies in Daniel have already been fulfilled when Jesus is

speaking.

But I would argue there's an already-not-yet principle that Daniel prophesies about something that Israel experiences, that Jesus is saying, you're going to experience the same thing again. That was a pattern, it was a type for the reality that's about to come.

[13:59] Does that make sense? So we're going to talk about that reality in a second. Daniel 11, 31. Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress and shall take away the regular burnt offering and they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

Okay, again, we have another description. And you'll notice already this is a repeat. This is very similar to what we've already seen. There's going to appear one who will profane the temple. So when we think about why is this an abomination?

What is it that makes this an abomination? What is disgusting or revolting about it? He profanes the temple. So there's some profanity that's brought into the temple.

There's something that makes the temple no longer clean, would make it unclean or in some way defile the temple. Okay? And then he goes on even to say he will take away the regular burnt offering and then he mentions again he shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

Now Daniel 12, 11. From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up.

[15:06] So again, there's a connection between the burnt offering being taken away and the abomination that makes desolate being set up. Now, I argued back when I preached to Daniel and let me just say that almost across the board this isn't really up for a lot of discussion.

This is pretty much agreed upon that what Daniel is prophesying about is the abomination that brings desolation was Antiochus Epiphanes who came in 175 or who ruled from 175 to 165 BC and brought a destruction similar.

He profaned the temple. Specifically, in 168 BC, he killed 40,000 Jews and he robbed the temple of anything of value within the temple.

then in addition to that, and you think about this for a second, in addition to that, he sacrificed a pig on the altar, burnt offering, and then took the juice, the blood, whatever he could from the pig and splattered it all over the parts of the temple, the walls of the temple.

So for a second, you guys understand God's laws of cleanness. The ceremonial law said that a pork, pig, was not to be eaten.

[16:20] It was an unclean animal and so they weren't allowed to eat it. It could never be sacrificed. There were certain animals that were to be sacrificed. So by sacrificing on the burnt offering, the same one that Daniel mentions, by Antiochus sacrificing a pig on that, he defiles the burnt offerings.

He brings it into the burnt offerings for a time because it was defiled. He robs the temple. He profanes it. He spreads this unclean animal throughout the temple. Does that make sense? Then beyond that, he sets up an image of Zeus in the temple above the altar. And so he sets up a false god to be worshipped in the temple. Now, do you understand how this is revolting?

This is disgusting. This is an abomination upon God in his worship. Does that make sense? It's important we get this because this sets for us a pattern of what's to come.

And as I prayed earlier, the reality is we don't probably read Daniel and think about this a lot. You guys probably weren't meditating a lot on Antioch Epiphanes the last year. Right?

[17:23] That's probably not in the forefront of our minds. But it would have been for the Jews. This wasn't that long ago in their history. Jesus is speaking to them saying, remember what happened? He's saying, remember what you read in Daniel?

This is that, again. And so, again, my argument is Daniel is speaking of a specific instance that happened in the past and Jesus is saying that is a pattern for what's about to happen.

And so, if you understand the pattern, which I've tried to help you understand, if you understand that pattern, we can better understand what's going to happen. What is the abomination that makes desolate or the abomination of desolation? Well, it's something similar to what happened with Antioch Epiphanes.

So, Jesus seems to retell or foretell a repetition of this abomination. Again, we could argue a prophetic flattening is the terminology I've used of Daniel.

Daniel was speaking of one thing, but there's a double meaning of something that's immediate in the near future and something that's further off in the future. And Jesus is saying that what

happened with Daniel is a type of what's to come.

[18:27] And again, Matthew's writing to a Jewish audience. His expectation is that when he recounts those words of Jesus, they're going to know what he's talking about. Now, I think that's important because we go to the book of Luke.

So, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have the Olivet Discourse in it. And when we go to the book of Luke, Luke gives clarification to the meaning for Gentiles. And here's what Luke says in Luke 21.20. But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. So, that may not be a one-for-one parallel because I'm going to argue something that's a little bit more specific with the abomination of desolation.

But he says, here's a sign for you Gentiles. When the armies surround Jerusalem, the desolation is near. It's close. Matthew doesn't include that because he points to something that he probably sees as more concrete and more easily understood for a Jewish audience.

For us who have the blessing of having the full, word of God, we can put the two together and say there's some connection here. The desolation is near when the army surrounds Jerusalem.

[19:34] That's how we're to know it's near. And also, we, well, we haven't got in exactly the modern, or in their time, the contemporary Antioch Epiphanes.

Luke gives clarification. And together, we see that Jesus is speaking of Titus, who was the son of the Roman emperor, who brought the army to Jerusalem, surrounded Jerusalem, made one attempt to siege the city that he then withdrew from.

And then later, he renews that. He surrounds the city. There's a siege upon the city. And then he comes into the temple. He defiles it and destroys it. And I think I have details of that destruction and defilement later on in the message.

But for now, my argument is that the abomination of desolation is Titus, who is the Roman general who brings in the army, who surrounds Jerusalem, sieges it, causes the death and destruction in Jerusalem, and then goes into the temple and defiles the temple.

And ultimately, he actually destroys the temple, which is even a greater defilement of it. And again, maybe I'm going to get into this later, but think about the prophecy as well.

[20:44] For Daniel, it brought an end to sacrifice and offerings, specifically the burnt offerings. The destruction of the temple meant the end of sacrifices and offerings. To this day, those haven't restarted.

Nor should they ever, because it would be a false idolatrous worship at this point. You understand? Christ is that sacrifice. And so we see this even as a mercy of God, that God no longer allowed false worship to continue in that way.

He put an end to the sacrifices because the once-for-all sacrifice had taken place, which we're going to celebrate at the Lord's table in a little bit. Christ is that sacrifice. If you burn any animal at that point, in some way, it's a defilement.

It's wrong. Okay, then we see what's told to them. So, Jesus is saying, when you see the abomination of desolation, the thing I just described, the army surrounding the city, when you see Titus come into the temple or enter into the city, then you know that that's the end that was being spoken of.

Jerusalem is about to be destroyed. So, what are God's people to do? Why is he telling us this? Why is this important? I think this also is an important contrast when we think about the end times, if we want to call it, or that's probably not a good phrase, when you think of Jesus' second coming.

[21:58] And I've argued before, and we're going to see this now, Lord willing, two weeks from now. Jesus gives no signs for us to know of when Jesus is returning. He says, we're to eagerly expect it, we're to be prepared for it, but we're not to know the day.

And I think there's a reason for that. Because when Jesus comes, we'll mean the salvation of all the people. I mean, all God's people will be drawn to himself. There's nothing for Christians to fear in Jesus' return.

But, if you don't get out of Jerusalem when the abomination of desolation takes place, you're dying. Does that make sense? So, God's mercy to his people is, I want you to know when this day will take place so you can flee, which is exactly what we're about to see.

But you don't need to fear my second coming. That is the day we're eagerly to long for. So, in verses 16 through 20, we see the command to escape and the escape plan.

I'm only going to read verse 16 again for us. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. So, there's the order to escape. Everything after that says, basically, don't go back and get anything, you get out quickly.

[23 : 08] And we'll talk some about those things. So, the abomination of desolation was a sign to escape Jerusalem and the surrounding area. It says, again, verse 16, let those who are in Judea.

Now, Judea had a range of meaning throughout the Old Testament. Probably during Jesus' time, the area of Judea would have meant basically a 10-mile radius, 10 miles in any direction from the temple or from Jerusalem.

Jerusalem. Okay, so, a surrounding area that would have encompassed many miles. And especially, you think about on foot what that might look like. I know when we, today, 10 miles, that's nothing.

We drive 10 miles in 15 minutes to get to church, okay? That's not a big deal for us. But, in that day, anyone who's within a 10-mile radius of Jerusalem, get out of there. Flee to the mountains.

So, Jesus is answering their question, when will these things be? He's telling them, this is what's going to happen and here's what you're to do. They're to urgently escape without hesitation and without turning back.

[24 : 15] Luke 21, 21 says, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains and let those who are inside the city depart and let not those who are out in the country enter it.

So, if you're in the surrounding area, get out. If you're in the city, get out. If you're outside of Judea, if you're more than 10 miles away, don't you dare even think about going back to Jerusalem for anything.

It's over for Jerusalem. You get away from there. And so, that's the warning to Christians.

Understand Jesus' words. Heed Jesus' words. Get out at this point. Now, again, this is important because I've argued Jesus is encouraging his disciples to stay in Jerusalem to that point.

Keep preaching the gospel until there's no hope left for us to keep preaching the gospel. Flee for your life when this happens but up until that point continue to minister there within Jerusalem.

And so, he tells them to escape quickly. They're not even to grab their possessions. They're not to go back for anything. Not even your jacket. You're just to get out. He mentions a few things that I would say just under the category of quick escapes can be hindered if you're pregnant or nursing.

[25 : 24] So, he says almost a pity for those who are pregnant or nursing in those days because you've got to get out quick and it won't be easy for you. I remember a time when we drove from Georgia to Pennsylvania.

This was when I did an internship down in Grace Baptist in Carlisle. So, this was about a year before we came here and we had a child who was four weeks old I think when we made that trip and was still nursing.

And I remember that trip because our normal what is now probably a 12 or 13 hour drive took us like 19 hours because we had to stop and sometimes we'd stop and we'd park in a parking lot and nursing could take 45 minutes.

We'd nurse we'd have to get them all back in the sea to get them going. Baby would cry. I mean, even in a car when a child's nursing it's difficult. It requires stopping and it requires special attention. In winter it says or it speaks of pray that it won't be in winter.

In winter the roads would be hazardous. Now, I know we relate to this. Snow probably would have been less of an issue for Jerusalem but we can understand what winter's like here, right?

[26 : 32] Some of you, I think, was it last week or the week before couldn't make it to church because of ice? We had some ice today on some of the roads so ice could have been an issue or snow but just in general mud would have been an issue in the unpaved roads around Jerusalem that time as well as cold.

Think about there aren't going to be hotels along the way. You're going to be camping out pray that you don't have to flee when it's cold and dangerous and difficult to get out. Or on the Sabbath he mentions on the Sabbath the gates would have been closed to the city so it would have been hard to get permission to be able to exit the city.

Buying and selling would have been prohibited on the Sabbath and so you could expect really no help from the Jews. The rest of the Jews aren't going to help you. You're on your own if you get out even you're not supposed to, I mean, again, this is almost pharisaical law but you're not supposed to travel more than a day's journey and they had defined what that was.

Jesus is saying get out and even realize that some people are going to have a problem with you traveling that much on the Sabbath. But he's giving us, he's telling us here's a sign when the abomination of desolation happens flee the city, don't go back for anything, get out. Now, I would argue although Lord willing we'll spend more time looking at this next week but that is the lesson for us from the fig tree illustration that Jesus gives in 32 through 35.

[27 : 59] And again, I'll talk more about this Lord willing next week but knowing when Jesus was there around the time of the Passover the fig tree probably would have been just starting to bloom or bud and so you guys know what it's like in winter coming out of winter the trees are dead you know, you can feel them they're tough and as they start to get that life back in them how they start to get a little bit more flexible and I don't think there's anything particularly important about there being a fig tree other than the fact that there were fig trees all over the side of the Mount of Olives he could have said an olive tree just as well but he takes that probably as an example there probably would have been a visual representation of this but Jesus is saying we know how to read natural signs you see buds on the tree you know what spring is near you start seeing the flowers on the tree spring is coming if you see the bud and you see the flower you know they're about to produce fruit this isn't difficult for us right we know how to read natural signs Jesus is saying from that learn how to read natural signs as well when it regards spiritual things so here's natural signs look a city an army surrounds the city and someone sieges the temple that's your sign get out right so Jesus is telling them to learn to read the signs now one thing that might be helpful for us to say is that how the early church understood

Jesus' words or another way of asking that is did they follow Jesus' instructions did they understand Jesus to be saying this and is that what they did and I would argue that's exactly what they did Jerusalem was laid siege by Rome initially in AD 66 that was led by Simeon who was actually a I'm sorry I'm sorry that wasn't led by Simeon Simeon who was a cousin of Jesus at that time they were sieged by the city that lasted for a while then there was a withdrawal during the withdrawal the Christians fled and Simeon led a group in particular of Christians out of the city to the village of Pella which is in the mountainous region of Perea so flee to the mountains he did that exactly Perea is modern day Jordan and so as the crow flies that's how we'd say it in Georgia as the crow flies that's about 60 miles I used

Google Maps and it's about 90 miles by road today it could have been even longer for them if they're traveling on foot what they would have experienced what the roads how straight and how well they would have been but roughly did they take to account get outside that 10 mile radius yeah they went 90 miles away to a mountainous region and hid from the incoming Roman armies and so the Christians did that exactly Josephus' words Josephus said that the Jewish Christians fled Jerusalem like swimmers from a sinking ship that's how he described it when this happened you saw the Christians fleeing the city and then Sam Storm says by all accounts no Christians died in the Holocaust that engulfed Jerusalem shortly thereafter so there are no records of any Christian dying in this even though there were over a million Jews who were killed the Christians actually heeded the warning and left the city before the city was siege and the great tribulation happened so the next part is for us to actually look at the great tribulation that's described in 21 and 22 for then there will be great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now no and never will be and if those days had not been cut short no human being would be saved but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short so so

I would argue I am arguing that what Jesus is describing here is the actual siege by Titus and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and so those events would cover a time period of roughly April through September of 70 AD and so Josephus records events of this holocaust and again Josephus probably he was a Jew he wasn't a Christian he records events of this holocaust in roughly 200 pages in his book the wars of the Jews which he wrote in 75 AD so it still would have been fresh for him five years later he writes a book the war of the Jews which includes 200 pages on these events so in maybe 10 more minutes I'm not going to give you a lot of great detail I'll do my best some of you may say well maybe that's not convincing you're going to see it really was a horrific thing that the Jews went or underwent during that time so let me briefly try to communicate just a bit of that to you there was a siege of the city so the city was surrounded food could not go in people could not go out that resulted in starvation for many in addition that Romans were taking people out of the city or anyone who crucified according to records there were thousands who were crucified and sometimes as many as 500 a day that were crucified outside of

the city they did it so that from the walls of the city you could see the people being crucified you could hear their screams to encourage them not to flee or try to fight against them but nonetheless people were being crucified again the siege itself resulted in starvation Josephus summarizes he says neither did any other city suffer such miseries nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was from the beginning of the world so again think of Jesus words nothing like this has ever been seen one person who witnessed this who's writing of this says that's what happened there's nothing there's been nothing like this in the set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground and you and your children within you and they will not leave one stone upon another in you because you did not know the time of your visitation so for a second because

[34 : 50] Matthew has included this Luke 19 is Jesus entrance into Jerusalem this is before the triumphal entry he sees the city these are the words he says I think this is almost identical Jesus speaking of the same thing here as the Olivet discourse the language is the same you're going to be torn down to the ground no stone will be left you'll be surrounded by your enemies and so what we see actually taking place in the great tribulation is exactly what Jesus predicted in Luke 19 and what he predicts in the Olivet discourse surrounding them the army surrounding them increased the famine and that led to cannibalism by some there were bodies that were piled up in the street that produced a horrible smell and brought pestilence throughout the city Josephus records that the smell was so bad that those who were fighting against the Romans had trouble even lifting their swords and fighting because the smell was so bad they were disgusted so the whole city is reeking of dead bodies that are piling up Josephus reports that more than 1.1 million people died during the siege of the city again this is

Josephus he writes Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple and it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited so Josephus report is that the way the Roman empire went about destroying this was to actually dig up the temple in Jerusalem in such a way they dug it down to the foundations they covered it back over with dirt and so you couldn't even tell where the temple used to be again think of Jesus that day again in 24 2 earlier in our passage we saw Jesus say there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down again in 19 Luke 19 he said the same thing they will not leave one stone upon another in you that's exactly what Josephus reports that the Roman army actually did Josephus goes on he says accordingly it appears to me that the if they be compared to these of the Jews were not so considerable as they were and so take everything that's ever happened before no one suffered like the Jews is his report in my opinion that confirms what we see in verse 21 for there will be great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now no and never will be there are some we're not getting a lot into varying views but there are some who hold that this part of the passage is meant to be extracted from the destruction of Jerusalem in 80 70 and says that this is a future event this is something that's going to happen in the future but just take for a second even the language here it says for there will be great tribulation of the world and

I'm sorry for there will be great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now no and never will be if this is referring to Jesus second coming and the end of the age there can be no comparison with the future you can't say there's never been suffering like this and there never will be again because there's nothing to come after that does that make sense and so it seems clear to me that Jesus is speaking of this it corresponds to what we see happening I think we have to take into account that there also is a way in which these kind of events are spoken in hyperbole so one argument that's made against what I'm presenting is that what about the Holocaust well there were more people who died during the Holocaust more Jews even who died how is that not worse than what was faced by Jerusalem in that day well I think I could argue that when it truly was bad we ought to read more about it to see just how bad it was again the Holocaust is much more closer to our time so we're more familiar with it but what Jerusalem faced truly was bad and arguably quite comparable if not worse and if we think about in terms of a single city there's probably no city that's faced quite the same level of destruction where people are killed quite universally everyone within the cities put to the sword or taken as slaves and so though the amount of people who died was greater it was spread out and not so severe on any city is what Jerusalem faces as a single city but I think we can say as well if we look at the Old

Testament and again I think we're not real familiar with Old Testament which is one reason we read this and say we take it very literally and say well is there anything that could compare to this or not but I think if we are familiar with Old Testament this is the way Old Testament regularly speaks of great tragedy we might call it prophetic hyperbole so for example some of you probably aren't buying this yet okay so for example the pleads of Egypt in

[40 : 05] Exodus 10 14 the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before nor ever will be again again that's that same language there's never been before there never will be again and says 11 6 there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt such as there never has been nor ever will be again or the Babylonian captivity in Ezekiel 5 9 and because of all your abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done and the like of which I will never do again and yet arguably what we see happening is somewhat of a repetition of the same thing that happened with the Babylonian captivity very similar in fact to what happened with the Babylonian captivity and so I think if we want to be very literal with this I think there's ways in which we can say there's some truth to this this city suffered in ways that has not happened since then or ever did before I think we understand in terms of there were four more examples but I didn't want to just keep reading examples but there are numerous

Old Testament examples where we see this kind of language used to indicate how great tragedy will be without it having to be exactly comparable especially when we see certain things being repeated Assyrian captivity Babylonian captivity now the destruction Jerusalem these things are repeated and yet they're said nothing like it before I could have I didn't quote this but I could have given you positive examples as well Josiah and Hezekiah the same language is used for both of them where it says who was first Hezekiah was first then Josiah so for Hezekiah it says there was never a king in all of Judah or Israel like Hezekiah before him nor ever will be again and then that same thing is said of Josiah just a few years later and so positively and negatively we see that same kind of language used and so I don't think we need to make so much of that but understand that it's just describing that there was a great destruction and then it says that

God shortened the days so that some would be saved because of the elect now there are multiple ways we could read this it may be what I just said already he allowed the elect to escape and flee that they might be saved that seems a very obvious and immediate example of this he shortened the days he stopped the first siege he gave a break in the first siege before the second siege so that some could flee or there be this is the kind of thing that could take place all over the face of the earth he didn't allow that because there is elect to come in future generations the world didn't come to an end by war God allowed the world to continue that he could bring his elect in not sure I'm okay with either way it doesn't I think make a great difference to us but what we understand is God's mercy upon his people I see that specifically expressed in Jesus telling them get out of the city flee the whole region when you see these signs so we see God's mercy upon his people in terms of giving more time for the elect to come in one way of viewing this is that

God mitigates wrath for the sake of the elect that is what we saw in the world to continue on even though almost everyone in the world was against him everyone had followed Satan everyone was not a part of the remnant and yet God for the sake of the elect mitigated his wrath it could have been universal it wasn't and so the same idea could be communicated to us here the wrath of God could have been poured out not just on Jerusalem but all the world for the way they so they mitigate it maybe again to get more time for the elect to be brought in so application there's not a lot I really just want to teach this and try to get through it but let me try to make some application first maybe this is a summary of what I've already said but the great tribulation

I see described in verses 21 22 it's called the day of vengeance in Luke 13 19 I believe are the events of AD 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and of Israel so that's my first application which that may sound like more teaching but really that's great application for us because we need to understand that partly because what we're going to see Lord willing next week is Jesus again says don't be misled by false teachers when they say that the Christ Messiah when the Messiah hasn't come and we're going to see that application more Lord willing next week secondly I think this is important we get a sample of the wrath of God against human sin in this great tribulation this is a taste of it this is mitigated wrath it could have been worse if God had not cut it off if God had not shortened the days the whole world could have been ended where does that leave us

[45 : 31] I think anytime we see examples of this the Babylonian destruction of Israel the Babylonian captivity I've already mentioned Noah guys when we see the wrath of God poured out does it not make us want to hide flee to the mountains and hide from the wrath of God being poured out but where do we go it's not Perea it's not Jordan it's not those mountains we go to Christ who is our rock of salvation our fortress and so in a little bit we're going to sing rock of ages cleft for me because I think that's where I want to point you guys to the wrath of God ought to encourage us to go to Christ our only source of salvation and though this is a physical judgment upon the people of Israel God does save his people in this instance he gives them a warning they flee the city they don't actually undergo the death and the tragedy that faces the others and so we see even a physical visible example of this that ought to encourage us as we think spiritually there's coming a day when the wrath of God will be poured out on all who have rejected

Christ that is the great sin in this instance they rejected the prophets you remember what you read of Luke if only Jerusalem would have known that this was the day of their visitation what visitation is he speaking of the visitation of the Messiah the visitation of the Christ the visitation of the kingdom of God upon them that they reject and so because of that rejection of Christ the wrath of God poured out on them do any of us imagine it will be different for any of us do we think that if we reject the Christ we'll somehow avoid the judgment of God no and in fact this is a small taste of what will be far worse in the final judgment of God when he will condemn those who rejected Christ to hell eternally that will be far worse and so again my encouragement is flee to Christ may Christ be your refuge from the judgment of God let's pray together dear heavenly father we thank you first that you graciously gave a warning to your people in that day your disciples but Lord we come also acknowledging that you have given a warning to us in the gospel in the truth of your word Lord those who followed you heeded that warning and fled and you showed mercy upon them oh Lord we pray for those in this room that they would flee to Christ that we go to him for our refuge that we look to the gospel that we would believe in Christ who died for our sins and by his blood covers that sin that we might have forgiveness and dwell in your presence forever Lord we pray that all in this room would put their hope in Christ and Lord even though there's wrath poured Lord we and we thank you for you thank you for your mercy that you put an end to false worship that there isn't a temple anymore and we thank you for that but rather Lord that you have made it so that we worship you now in spirit and truth as you said as Jesus said before the cross there's coming a day when my followers will worship me in spirit and truth don't have to take pilgrimages to Israel to sacrifice at some temple. That we don't have to lay our hand upon an animal and watch it die under our hand. But that Lord Christ has done that for us. So we thank you for our great Savior. We pray this all in his name. Amen.