

Matthew 22-04-10a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday Morning Services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 10th day of April 2022.

We're in the book of Matthew chapter 24, looking at what is known as the Olivet Discourse, the great apocalypse that is presented by Jesus as he sits on the Mount of Olives, looking at the city of Jerusalem, seeing the Second Temple, Herod's Temple gleaming in the sun, and answering the questions asked by four of his disciples, James and John, Andrew and Peter, which gives rise to this extended section of prophetic revelation, which coincidentally was delivered the same week upon which we are now embarking. We have Passover and Resurrection Sunday coming up, and it is this week in which Jesus spoke these words. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our study, and we'll begin.

Father, what a privilege it is to come before your presence because of the work of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, to enter into the holiest of places, to represent ourselves before your throne knowing that we are qualified in him. We have been washed, we have been sanctified, and we are able to call you our Father. We're so grateful for that.

We thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow and to be representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ as his body on this earth in his absence, and we pray that the portion of your Word that we look at this morning will enable us, empower us, cleanse us, and thoroughly equip us for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's read our passage. We have seen the first section. The questions that gave rise to the discourse upon which we now undertake to explore is in verse 3. Tell us, when will these things be? What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? The end of the age.

So Jesus begins, as we have seen, by first giving an exhortation, an imperative, take heed that no one deceives you, which tells us that the study of the latter days, the last days, the end times, is fraught with misunderstanding, and it is a lever by which many are deceived. Prophecy study fools a lot of us. And so Jesus says, I'm going to give you some answers to these questions, but let me warn you ahead of time that it is easy to be misled, and not just misunderstanding the timing.

Are we pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, post-tribulation? Are we amillennial, postmillennial, premillennial? Are we going to go through the tribulation or not? Is the church going up at the beginning, in the middle, at the end, or not at all? Is there a difference in the rapture and the second coming? That's really not what Jesus is talking about. What does it mean to be deceived? We are going to see that this morning. Oddly enough, we are going to see it in the Old Testament.

So, as we take note of that warning and then proceed, Jesus says, don't be deceived, take heed that no one deceives you, and the agency of this deception is not the abstraction of sitting down with your Bible and trying to figure out what is the sequence of prophetic events. Notice Jesus is very specific. Take heed that no one deceives you.

Many are going to come. This is human communicators, human false prophets, who are going to come and say things as they acknowledge Jesus. I can't find anybody that agrees with me, but I know enough Greek to be dangerous, and I am convinced, as I have said over the past weeks and in past studies, when we went through Luke and Mark, when Jesus says, many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ, He is saying that they are going to affirm that the historical Lord Jesus is the Messiah.

They are not claiming to be the Christ. They couldn't get away with that. Why would Jesus tell His own four disciples, whom He knows very well, and they know Him, don't let someone else come along and tell you they are the Christ.

They know. Peter gave the great confession. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus says, that's the foundation upon which I am going to build my assembly. Peter knows Jesus is the Christ. Who could fool Peter about that? Peter can be made afraid.

He can deny the Lord in terms of whether he knows Him or not, but he is not going to say that Jesus is not the Christ and be fooled by someone else. These are people who are claiming that Jesus is the Christ, and by this declaration, masquerading as an angel of light, seeming to be one among the sheep, wearing sheep's clothing, they are going to deceive many. Because people say, well, He is worth listening to because He believes in the same Jesus I do.

He believes in the same Christ I do. So these are going to come saying, I am the Christ. This is why Jesus uses the emphatic pronoun, ego, I myself.

They will say, I myself am the Christ, just like you are going to say I am the Christ, but they are going to deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that you are not troubled. They must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

And we've talked about this in detail, about the reports that are heard and observed. Pay attention to the reports, but do not be throeo, T-H-R-O-E-O. We have this in English as being in the throes of misery or in the throes of a disease or whatever.

T-H-R-O-E-S, we usually have it in the plural. That's the verb here. Don't get into the throes of worry or being troubled in mind or moved or shaken or blown about by winds of rumor and so on.

See these things. He is not saying see to it that you are not troubled. He is saying see

the reports that you hear, but do not be threoo.

You have to supply an object and those words in italics, these things, it's just it must come to pass, but the end is not yet. This is a fascinating statement right here. It's amazing when you look at it how often it is presented in Scripture.

We're just going to survey what comes all the way down through verse 15, and then we're going to look at some of these places that talk about what must come to pass and what exactly is the end. What are the characteristics of the end? So nation is going to rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes, no pestilences here, from place to place, various places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you. You will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

Then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. A reiteration of the principle that Jesus opened this prophecy with.

Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. We looked at this last time, what happens when your love grows cold. Jesus talks about this in some of the last reading to be found in the New Testament in Revelation chapter 2. You've lost your first love, your love has dissipated.

He who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. Everything preceding verse 14b is before the end.

More about that momentarily. Then verse 15, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, whoever reads, let him understand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, etc.

So, Daniel the prophet. First of all, all of those scholars in days past who said Daniel was not a prophecy, it was something written late and was attributed to Daniel, but it wasn't really Daniel. You can't believe that Jesus is accurately quoted in the New Testament and hold that view, because Jesus says Daniel is a prophet.

He affirms Daniel, just as He affirms so much of the Old Testament. Daniel is a prophet, Daniel's words are a prophecy, not a history written after the fact. It's so detailed and so obviously true that people claimed that it had to have been written after the fact, especially before the Dead Sea Scrolls, and before they discovered copies of Daniel that were earlier than when they dated the book.

They said, well, this is long after Alexander the Great, and so on. And then they found scrolls, and they ended up with, as my old boss used to say, egg on their face. But Daniel

is a prophet, Jesus says so, that's good enough for me.

What does Daniel say about these times? Turn back to Daniel chapter 11. It's somewhat rare for people to turn to Daniel chapter 11, because it's a very difficult, detailed passage. But we've been through it before, we're just going to begin in verse 25 or so.

You can see that this is a prophecy about the movement of the King of the North, the King of the South, which begins back in verse 5 of Daniel 11. Many, many details, and these times many will rise up against the King of the South, many of your people will exalt themselves, they shall fall, the King of the North will do this, the King of the South will do that, this, that, and the other. It's quite a detailed prophecy, which was fulfilled in the days of the final King of Persia, Xerxes, on down to Alexander the Great, and then down to the various Antiochuses, Antiochese, Antiochai, the Antiochai, Antiochus, you know, first, second, third, and fourth.

And so on. So, we will start in the vicinity of verse 22, for our purposes, with the force of a flood, they will be swept away from before him and broken, the Prince of the Covenant, the league is made, he'll act deceitfully, King of the South, King of the North, King's heart shall be bent on evil. This, when it says he will stir up his power, in verse 25, and take his courage against the King of the South with a great army, I'm just going to pick up in the middle of the history.

We review this in detail when we did the book of Daniel in our Kings and Prophets study, and we did it in the book of Daniel, and we did the book of Daniel before that, so this is our third time through, but if you didn't hear that or don't remember it, we're in the middle of actual history prophesied by Daniel before it took place, and it's so detailed that people just can't believe it. It's one of the most detailed, fulfilled prophecies in all of scripture. And it just strains the credulity of liberal scholars who can't believe that God could know ahead of time this level of detail of what's going to happen in history.

But when it says he shall stir up his power and his courage against the King of the South, this is the defeat of Antiochus Epiphanes in his second campaign against Egypt. This is Antiochus Epiphanes. Remember, this means an epiphany is a revelation.

I just had an epiphany. Something has been revealed. Phanero'o is for something to appear, and Epi is upon, so it's the light bulb moment you have.

Well, Antiochus called himself Antiochus Epiphanes, which was the great revelation of Antiochus, but the Jews called him Antiochus Epimenes, which is basically almost a cuss word. It means, you know, Antiochus, sort of the fertilizer king, if you will. So that was his nickname in Israel.

But all of these details that you have in verses 25 through 28 were fulfilled. It says, those who eat the portion of his delicacies will be destroyed. This was fulfilled when Antiochus

IV was betrayed and done in by his own counselors.

But we want to pick up here in verse 28. While returning to his land with great riches, his heart will be moved against the Holy Covenant, and he will do damage and then return to his own land. The vile person returned to his land, and it is said he will attack the land, the people, and the temple of Israel.

This was fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes returned from Egypt, bitter from his second attempt to take it and being defeated, and so he took it out on Israel. This is when he sold the office of high priest to the highest bidder, persecuted the Jewish people, and pressured them to conform to Greek culture. And he did not defeat Egypt, but the parts of it that he did capture, he took away a lot of loot.

So the great riches spoken of here in verse 28 is the stuff that he hauled away as sort of a consolation prize. He couldn't capture Egypt, but he did take a lot of their stuff. And I want you to note, and if you are one who marks their Bible, you will note that at the beginning of verse 29, it says, at the appointed time.

You may remember when we did these prophecies, and I know we're kind of diving into the middle, and I don't want to lose you, but just be aware that the prophecy in Daniel chapter 11 deals almost exclusively and was fulfilled almost entirely during the times after Alexander the Great, after the division of his empire, his conquests to the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, and so on. These details in the earlier part of Daniel chapter 11 are all history. But you'll remember, we saw this in Ezekiel, and we saw it in Daniel, that there is a point at which these prophecies, it always reminds me of a plane on a runway.

You'll remember me using this illustration over and over again. It's still talking about history, and there's still a historical fulfillment, but it begins to lift off from the runway and look to the future, and there are portions beginning at verse 29 that still pertain to Antiochus' epiphanies, but then there's other parts of it that do not, and it is an overlap. If you talked about the beast of revelation that we call the Antichrist, this begins to overlap with him, and parts of this only apply to the Antichrist, but Antiochus was a foreshadowing and a pre-echo, if you will.

He's an adumbration, an anticipation of what is going to come, and when you look at Antiochus, you see a preview of coming attractions that is going to be fulfilled in the latter half of Daniel's 70th week, which is the time of Jacob's trouble, the Great Tribulation. The marker for this, the whole reason I'm belaboring this point, the marker that we are about to see a change in this prophecy from near-term historical fulfillment. It was future for Daniel.

It is past for us. The marker is this phrase in verse 29, at the appointed time. In my Bible, I have a little star before that, and I have a little star after it.

At the appointed time is all one line in my verse 29, so I've just got a star on each side to mark it. This is where the planes' tires are starting to leave the tarmac here. At the appointed time, he shall return and go toward the south, but it shall not be like the former or the latter.

Ships from Cyprus shall come against him. These ships from Cyprus, Cyprus in the ancient Near East, when they talked about Cyprus or Kittim, it just meant the Northwest. Cyprus is just put for anything that's Northwest of Israel.

Well, this was fulfilled historically because Antioch's Epiphanes got naval assistance from the Roman Navy at this time. Now, this is before Julius Caesar and Rome really becomes the empire that it's going to be, but the Romans exist, and they are starting to make noise. They're starting to be a force to be reckoned with, and they see Antiochus, and so they send naval support for his campaign, and these are the ships from Kittim or Cyprus.

And he's grieved. He returns in rage against the Holy Covenant and does damage. He returns and shows regard for those who forsake the Holy Covenant, and this is his pressure to conform to Greek culture in Israel, to overthrow the worship of the God of Israel and to bring them culturally into line.

This is a mistake the Romans largely did not repeat. The Romans looked at the history of Antiochus and others and realized that you kind of cause resistance when you attempt to pressure people to forsake their traditions and their religious culture, and Antiochus is going to kind of learn this the hard way because he tries to get Israel to go pagan, if you will, but there is pushback, and this is why you have the Maccabees, that this is where their resistance movement came from. So, forces shall be mustered by him.

They shall defile the sanctuary fortress. They shall take away the daily sacrifices and place there the abomination of desolation. You probably remember that Antiochus set up an image of Zeus or Jupiter in the temple courtyard and tried to force everybody to worship that.

He defiled the altar of God with pig's blood. He slew some Jews and defiled the altar with their blood and did all kinds of heinous things to try to trash out the worship of the God of Israel, but it sort of had the opposite effect because it created resistance, and over time, the forces of evil have learned to listen to the strategy of the indirect approach. You've heard me talk about that book by Liddell Hart.

That's a wonderful military strategy book that I got when I was a midshipman, and I've read through it several times, but really smart attackers will not attack a point of strength. They attack a point of weakness. They may demonstrate and act like and look like they're going to attack one place, but it's a faint, F-E-I-N-T.

It is a fake, and they, being cagey, hit them where they ain't. They will cause someone to

mass on one border and then attack somewhere else. This is flanking and crossing the T in naval warfare and so on, and Antiochus is one of the last examples of someone who just sort of threw himself right at the identity of Israel itself in Jerusalem at the temple with the altar, and in doing so, he created this huge resistance that ultimately succeeds, and you've probably read, you can read 1 and 2 Maccabees, and Judas Maccabeus, and so on.

Anyway, that's what this is talking about. However, we know that starting with that phrase at the appointed time in verse 29, there is liftoff because, keep your finger here, and go briefly back to Matthew 24, we saw Jesus say in verse 15, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place, time to pack up and flee to the hills, right? So, the historical fulfillment by Antiochus' epiphanies is not fulfilled and were done with Daniel chapter 11, right? There is another abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet that is yet future to the Lord Jesus. Antiochus was some centuries before the Lord Jesus.

He says there's another one coming and you disciples and you who read the words of the book need to be prepared. So, this is where we have this overlap. Yes, there is some history, but it is starting to look into the future and tell us that Antiochus is a foreshadowing of bad things to come.

You know, the law was a shadow of good things to come. This prophecy is a shadow of bad things to come. And even though it is historically fulfilled, the primary fulfillment now is going to be future and that's what Jesus tells us in our passage.

Well, we have an application for this that is coming up. But they take away the sacrifices and place the abomination of desolation. Now we come to our grist for the mill this morning.

Look at verse 32 of Daniel chapter 11. We have laid the foundation that people future to Jesus need to be paying attention to this part of Daniel chapter 11. Right? Jesus said it is future to him and it is future to us.

There has not been an abomination set up. People try to say Daniel was all fulfilled in 70 AD. There was no abomination set up in the temple.

The temple was knocked down with not one stone upon another. And there hasn't been a functioning altar there since. So this is future to Jesus and it's future to us.

Look at verse 32. You would think that you would have more detail about what's going on in Jerusalem. But now the prophecy, Daniel's prophecy turns itself to people and what's in their hearts.

Those who do wickedly against the covenant. If you look back in verse 28, Antiochus Epiphanes while returning to his land with great riches, his heart was moved against the

Holy Covenant. His heart is moved against Jerusalem and the temple.

This is the place of God's covenant. What was the only thing left in the Ark of the Covenant when it was still in the Holy of Holies? Aaron's rod that budded is not there anymore. The pot of manna is not there anymore.

What was still in the Ark in the latter days? We know this. I don't have time to give you the passage, but we've seen it before. What was the only thing left? The tables of the law.

The organic stuff had perished, but the tables are stone and they're still in it. What do those stones represent? The covenant. The covenant is in the box.

The box is in the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is in the temple. The temple is in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is in Israel. So when you say the covenant, now by this time, the box is not in the Holy of Holies. We know that it disappeared in the days of Jeremiah.

Very interestingly, I think it's going to reappear. I think God knows exactly where it is. And I think Israel is going to find both that and the throne of David for reasons I've talked about in other days.

But the covenant, the Holy covenant is put for the temple, which is in Jerusalem, which is in Israel. And so when he is moved against the Holy covenant, it's not just that it's a desirable piece of land. He is moved because they are the people of God.

And Antiochus Epiphanes, as the beast will be in the 70th week, is satanically inspired to attempt the destruction of God's people. There is more going on here than isn't this a convenient piece of land to hold. He has moved against the covenant and he's moved against the covenant because he is moved by Satan against the people of God.

Satan is always moving something or someone against the people of God. So the details that are given to the people of God by Daniel here, and the fate of those who either fold, cave and give into this pressure or resist and maintain their dedication to their covenant is pertinent to us. We are people of a new and better covenant founded on new and better promises, but we are still people in a Holy covenant with God.

It is the covenant of the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. What did he say this coming week, the night before he was arrested, tried, crucified and laid in the tomb? What did he say? This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This is my body, which is broken for you.

What happened to the first set of tables of the law? By no accident, the tables were broken and had to be replaced. The body of the Lord Jesus was broken and had to be

replaced. What's the replacement for the broken body of the Lord Jesus? Look around the room.

We are the body of Christ. His body was broken for us. We are the new tables.

The law no longer written in stone, but the fleshy tables of the heart. That's us. We are the people of the covenant.

So when this says he is moved against the Holy covenant, this is not just the world, not just the flesh, but the active resistance of Satan and the principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age actively opposing you. And me. So look at verse 32 now in Daniel 11.

Those who do wickedly against the covenant, he shall corrupt with flattery. What happens when we do not value being New Testament people, being body of Christ, being those who represent God on this earth and the opportunity to enter into relationship with him through Christ. What happens when we lose sight of that? We no longer pay attention to our role in God's plan.

It is an important assignment. You think the Ark of the covenant was important? You think the tables of the law that Moses brought down from Sinai, written with the finger of God were important? You and I are no less important. God has written with his finger in our hearts on the fleshy tables.

Covenant, relationship, covenant, opportunity. But those who do wickedly against the covenant get corrupted by pleasing words, by flattery. Make me feel good.

Make me feel good about myself. I can accept myself as I am. I don't need change.

I don't need my heart cleansed. I don't need my ways to change. I don't need to repent.

How important is repentance throughout scripture? But the social gospel today is you don't need to change. Be proud. Be loud and proud of your flaws, your failure to conform with the moral, ethical, and spiritual principles that God has communicated.

We are supposed to be a walking copy of the righteousness and holiness of God. A light to shine where there is darkness. Why do men love darkness rather than light? Their deeds are evil.

But you can get corrupted by pleasing words, flattering words, corrupted and deceived. I am okay. You're okay.

You don't need to change. Hath God really said you can't eat of this tree? He just knows that you'll be an even better person if you eat of the tree. It's as old as the words in the mouth of the serpent.

God's not giving you the whole truth. Let me fill in the blanks here. He knows if you eat this fruit, you're going to be wise.

You'll be like God. You'll be better than you are if you break your covenant. Words of flattery.

Words of deceit. All around us today. But the people who know their God shall be strong.

I'd cut that out, stick a magnet on the back, and put it on the fridge. Tie a string to it, hang it on my rearview mirror. The people who know their God shall be strong.

Notice *great exploits* is in italics. Just scratch it out. People who know their God shall be strong and will function.

They will carry out whatever it is they're supposed to carry out. Whatever their assignment is. It may not look like a great exploit.

It might be not giving in to fear. Not giving in to worry. Not compromising truth.

Not compromising spiritual standards. Not entering into or cooperating with evil. Resisting the corruption and the flattery that may be all around us.

People who know their God will be strong and will carry out whatever it is. Large, small. He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is much.

It is a little bit deceptive to put *great exploits* here. Because you can say, well, I ain't doing any great exploits in my life. Doesn't have to be great exploits.

Just scratch it out. Carry out whatever. What is the assignment? Assignment of Cyrene carried Jesus' cross.

Participated in a humiliating parade just a few days hence from today. But He did it. Large or small.

People who know their God. Look at verse 33. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many.

When we are given the grace from God to understand, and we can speak the truth to one another in love, it strengthens, it unifies, it brings us together as body of Christ. We don't want the body of Christ to be divided, scattered, ineffectual. Remember what Paul says in Ephesians about being knit together by that which every joint supplies? I love that part about the joints because that's what makes a body work.

You can't walk if your joints don't bend. You can't do work if your elbows and your wrists and your fingers and your shoulders don't move. The joints give the body the ability to accomplish work.

Joined together by the joints. And the joints give direction. They give purpose.

They give strength. They give leverage. They give unity.

And without joints, we're just a bunch of segments. Those of the people who understand shall instruct many. Yet, here's the scary part.

Verse 33. Or it can be if you don't stop and think. Yet, for many days they shall fall by sword and flame by captivity and plundering.

Those of the people who understand and are sharing the truth, Daniel's prophetic word here is, there is a period of time measured in days where they will fall by sword, flame, captivity, and plundering. These are decreasing levels of severity, right? Sword, you're slain violently. Flame, you're burned, perhaps badly burned.

Captivity, you're taken prisoner and held captive. Plundering, you just lose all your stuff. None of these do we stick our hand up in the air and say, Oh, me, me, I want to be a martyr.

I want to be burned. I want to be in prison. I want to be plundered.

But do we want to be the former? Do we want to be ones who know their God and are strong and carry out our assignment? Do we want to be those who understand and are able to share the truth and love with others who are interested in truth? We do. Yet, we have to be ready for this sword, flame, captivity, and plundering. Look at verse 34.

When they fall, they shall be aided with a little help, but many shall join with them by intrigue. Even in the course of their persecution, they're going to be infiltrated. They're going to be betrayed by their familiar friend, by members of their own household.

The one who shares my table has lifted up his heel against me and so on. Even in the course of their persecution and plundering and captivity and flame and sword, there are those who are going to join them falsely, under a false pretense, and join with them. And look at verse 35.

Those of understanding shall fall. See, it says some. It basically says, and those of understanding shall fall.

It says in verse 34 they're going to fall. It says in verse 35 they're going to fall. Wait a minute.

I thought if I did the word of the Lord and the will of the Lord and was understanding and strong and doing my assignment, I'd be nine feet tall and bulletproof. Daniel says here, these people are going to fall. Fall in 34.

Fall in 35. Why? To refine them, purify them, and make them white. Until the time of the

end.

This is what Jesus is talking about in Matthew 24. The time of the end. That's our subject.

So, what about this? Do we have to steal ourselves for martyrdom? Should we start practicing enduring pain and being plundered and so on? Can we anticipate? There is a great key here. Pay close attention. Because when we come back from the break, we're going to look at it.

What is the purpose of the sword, flame, captivity, plundering, and betrayal by those who join using intrigue? There's a little two-letter word right after fall in verse 35. What is it? To. In order to.

For the purpose of. There is a purpose in this falling. There is a purpose in this great hardship.

To refine. To purify. To make white.

Notice until isn't even there. To refine them, purify, and make white. The time of the end.

The time of the end. Because what? Still for the appointed time. Remember I had you put two stars back there in verse 29? Here's your closing bracket.

The appointed time. There is an appointed time. Oh, we have so much more to say about this.

But I will quote the Lord Jesus in John 14. I will quote the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24. Let not your heart be troubled.

Don't get into throws when you look at this prophecy. And the potential for those who are faithful and obedient to be tried. We have not seen the full picture yet.

So do not be troubled. Don't be downcast or disheartened. There is a wonderful light to be shed on this that we'll see when we come back from the break.

But God knows ahead of time. There are times appointed. All of these things are in the control of God.

In the same way that His two faithful witnesses in Revelation will prevail for a time and then be overcome at a time. In the same way that the Lord Jesus accomplished His earthly ministry for three and a half years. And then was overcome and was crucified.

It is a necessary thing. Do you think Jesus would go back and do it different? Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame. Where is He now? Seated at the right hand.

The Apostle Paul. This momentary light affliction works for us an eternal weight of glory.

You remember my quotation from Cicero about the relationship between pleasure and pain.

Who would not endure a little pain to obtain a great pleasure. And those who foolishly go directly after pleasure end up inflicting upon themselves great pain. Because they do it unwisely.

Well, much more to say about this when we come back from the break.