

The Tribulation of Those Days

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[0 : 00] I don't know if you noticed, but he mentions the word or the group, the elect, three times in the passage that I just read.

The elect. Oh, Jesus has not in Matthew or in the Gospels talked about the elect before this. Who are these elect?

He talks about verse 20, how they are the reason why God cuts this tribulation time short.

He mentions them in verse 22 that they are going to be difficult ones to deceive, but these false teachers will try to deceive even the elect.

And then we're told in verse 27 that the elect will be gathered at some point. So who are these elect?

[1 : 00] What is elect? Elect. Well, election, the Bible does talk about this word, and we have folks that don't want to hear about that.

Folks that are struggling with what that means, and it is a difficult doctrine. But basically what it is, is the elect are God's sovereign choice of his children before the foundation of the world.

Paul writes to the Ephesians, he says, you have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. You were chosen first before you chose him.

God goes first. And some people struggle with that. They say, well, that's not fair. Why does he choose some and not others? Well, it's not about fairness is actually the issue.

It's about mercy. It's about mercy. It honors God as the God who makes the sovereign choices, and it humbles us that we would actually be among his chosen.

[2 : 05] Spurgeon. Spurgeon. Charles Spurgeon, in 1860, was known as the Prince of Preachers. He was very well known in that time of the world, a preacher in England.

He was used mightily of God to bring many, many folks to salvation. And even today, 150 years later, his writings are still very popular.

A lot of people have his devotional, morning and evening devotionals. A very, very effective man. He writes of a time when he was preaching to a group of Methodist brethren.

He was not a Methodist, but he was preaching to Methodists. And in his own words, he gives an account of what transpired. He says, I was preaching a few months ago in the midst of a large congregation of Methodists.

The brethren were all alive, giving all kinds of answers to my sermon, nodding their heads and crying, Amen, Hallelujah, Brother. Glory be to God.

[3 : 14] Spurgeon says, He says, Now, my friends, he said, You believe it.

They seem to say, No, we don't. But you do. And I will make you sing Hallelujah over it. So I will preach to you that you will acknowledge it and believe it.

So I put it thus. Is there no difference between you and other men? Yes, yes, glory be to God. There is a difference between what you were and what you are now.

Yes, oh yes. There is sitting by your side a man who has been to the same chapel as you have, heard the same gospel, yet he is unconverted.

And you are converted. Who has made the difference, yourself or God? The Lord, the Lord has done that. Glory, Hallelujah. Yes, I cry.

[4 : 45] And that is the doctrine of election. That is all I contend for. That if there be a difference, the Lord made the difference.

And he made them say, Glory, Hallelujah. Here in Mark 13, Jesus uses this term, the elect, the chosen.

Twice in the passage we are going to look at. As I said, verse 20, he talks about these days of tribulation are cut short for the sake of the elect. And then in verse 22, that the deceivers will come and try to even deceive the elect, if that is even possible.

So, we have them described. Here again, it is part of Jesus predicting what is future. Giving his prophecy of the things ahead. We have seen four predictions so far.

Verse 2, he predicted the temple would be destroyed. That it would be level to the ground. We have read to you historical evidence that that was fulfilled in 70 AD.

[5 : 58] It was in fact leveled to the ground by Titus, the Roman general, who was serving under his father, the emperor. But the significance of the temple's destruction is what's more important.

The significance is that meant the end of sacrifices. It meant the end of the priesthood. See, the priest said nowhere to work now. There were no sacrifices. No offerings.

There was no way, essentially, to come to God. Because that was the way they came to God. They were to bring their offerings. And they were to come. They were to make atonement. They were to make sacrifices.

They were to worship God in those ways. They now had no way to do that. They still, today, have no way to do that. They have no way to deal with sin.

That was how they dealt with sin. And now they have no way to deal with that. That is incredibly significant. Jesus then went on in verses 5 to 8 to talk about other things that would happen in the future.

[7 : 12] But he called them signs that are not the end. They're false signs. They're things that, in general, will just keep happening. There will be earthquakes. There will be famines.

There will be false teachers. These things will happen. But they're not the end. They're simply the beginning of the birthplace. And then, in verse 9, he began to talk about how you, as disciples, you will suffer.

They will deliver you to the courts, to the councils, and beat you. And you will stand before governors and kings. So he talks about what the disciples themselves would go through.

And, in fact, those things were fulfilled, as well, in the book of Acts. They were beaten. They were taken to court. They were, Paul would stand before governors and kings.

Even Caesar, at some point. These things were fulfilled. All of these were general predictions of what would happen. They were things simply that were going to happen, and have continued to happen, since the first century till now.

[8 : 17] We have wars, and rumors of wars. We have earthquakes, and famines. We have persecutions of Christians. These things continue on and on. But then we come to verse 14.

His fourth prediction is this abomination of desolation. Now, notice he goes from general to specific. He's been talking about general things that are happening. Now, in verse 14, he says, But when you see the abomination of desolation, what?

Know this ahead of time. Watch and beware. Be on your guard. But when you see this specific event in Judea, run.

So he's saying, when you see the abomination standing where it ought not, some defilement of the holy place that brings desolation to the holy place, then run.

The zealots, the Jewish zealots themselves, stormed the temple, kicked out the priests, took over the temple mount, and made their barricade there. made their stand.

And they set up a false high priest in 67 A.D. to be their high priest. And the former high priest cried and said, this is an abomination.

And of course, those zealots also did, they brought criminals into the holy place, they murdered in the holy place. they committed acts of desecration.

[10 : 59] This was three and a half years before Rome finally came in and sent me A.D. and leveled the place. So is that the ultimate fulfillment?

Is that the ultimate abomination of desolation? I don't know. But it certainly is the initial fulfillment of that. And it is the sign that Jesus was asked to give.

Remember the disciples said, this temple's going to be destroyed? What's the sign? Well, there's the sign. You will see the abomination, standing where it ought not to be, this false high priest, these Jewish zealots, who are criminals, abominating the temple.

When you see that, which they saw in 67 A.D., three years later, the temple's destroyed. Now, Rome had already started their siege.

They'd already surrounded Jerusalem with armies in 66, when the Jews revolted. It's a long siege. They wait them out.

[12:03] They starve them out. They wait for the Jews to kill themselves off, which they did. They turn on one another. They run out of food. So by the time they come and tear the temple down, there's not a fight.

They're mostly already gone. That's the way Rome worked. They just wear you out. So in other words, there was a time frame.

It fits what Jesus said. When you see the abomination, someone standing in the holy place, who should not be there, then run. And so when they saw the false high priest elevated, they would have known, now it's time.

Because at the beginning of the siege, the Roman army, according to Josephus, allowed people to go ahead and leave. But by the time, about late 68, 69, they closed ranks and no longer let anybody leave.

So you had a small window to escape. And according to Josephus, no Christians were killed in that, in that, that desolation of 70 AD.

[13 : 13] Christians were gone. It was just the Jews there, barricaded. They, they thought that they'll, that God will protect his temple. But, but as Jesus predicted, no, God is done with his temple.

So we have that. And we saw, not only was it from Daniel, but it was a specific event that happened in Judea. Because look at, the end of verse 14, to let those who are in Judea flee.

So this was not a worldwide tribulation. This was a local, this was a local, this was a local, event. A specific, local event.

I believe this was fulfilled, initially, in 70 AD. But that doesn't mean that it still isn't, there isn't still another one yet to come. God can be there.

This could be the prototype. And yet there's still another to come. Because it appears, when you read the book of Revelation, and you read Paul later, talking about, in 2 Thessalonians 2, about the man of lawlessness, who must first come, before the end, appears that there's still more, that's yet to go.

[14 : 28] But Jesus' prediction, is fulfilled in 70 AD. The temple was 11. And it began with this abomination, of desolation. And now we see, from verse 19 now, he's going to talk about, the same days.

He's going to say, verse 19, for in those days, what days? The days he's just talking about. The days of this desolation. He said in verse 17, alas for the women, who are pregnant, and for those who are nursing infants, in those days.

In what days? The days when you needed, to get out of Judea. The days when the abomination comes, and you need to flee. In those same days. So verse 19, in those same days, there will be such tribulation, as has not been, from the beginning of creation, that God created until now, and never will be.

So, what I want to notice here, in these next verses, about this tribulation, I want to make two applications. And I've decided to approach it this way, to make the application first, instead of waiting until the end.

Because you can kind of, get through all this, and go, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, it's interesting, I don't know. I want you to know, there's an application, from the get go. Okay, that these things, are still significant.

[15 : 42] We can still learn from this. Even if it was fulfilled then, or might still be sometime, in the future, there's still an application to it. There's still something, we can learn.

There's still a promise. So, in verses 19 and 20, there's a promise. And then in verses 21 to 23, there's a warning. That we should still today, take Eden.

Okay, so in verse 19 and 20, it talks about these, these tribulation, in those days. This unique tribulation. And here's, here's the first application, which I believe is a message of hope.

The Lord delivers, his elect, through tribulation. The Lord delivers, his elect, through tribulation. Christians will suffer, Christians will, go through tribulation, tribulation, but they will be delivered, through it.

They will be delivered, from the judgment. And they will be delivered, through it. He's not saying, you do, be delivered, from tribulation. No. We know, as we read, the New Testament carefully, we go through tribulation.

[16 : 50] God desires us, to go through tribulation, because we learn, and that's how we bear fruit, and that's, how we learn endurance, this kind of thing. But the Lord, will deliver his elect. Because notice, what he says here, in verse 19.

First of all, we see, the event he describes, it's a unique, tribulation. There will be, such tribulation, as has not been, from the beginning, of the creation, that God created, until now, and, never will be.

So notice, the time measures, he puts on it. It's so unique, and unprecedented. It's a tribulation, the word means, to be pressed together, to be oppressed, and afflicted, or distressed.

But notice, it's unparalleled. This tribulation, that was going to occur, at the level, and intensity of it, had never happened, in the history of the world, yet.

From the beginning, of creation. So, in other words, that includes the flood, that includes, the different tribulations, that Israel, that Israel, has been through before.

[18 : 00] From, the beginning of creation, until now, and he doesn't stop there. He says, from the beginning of creation, until now, so Jesus is speaking, in 30 AD. And then he says, and also, it will be unprecedented, for anything, that happens afterwards.

And never will be. Which, by the way, implies, that the tribulation, Jesus is talking about, is not the final tribulation. It's not the end of the world. Because he's saying, this tribulation, that's unparalleled, that will happen, is unmatched, by anything before, and, will be unmatched, by anything that happens after.

Which implies, there will be more tribulations. This one is special, in some way. But it's not the end. Then he mentions the elect.

Why is it, that he will cut these days short? Verse 20, if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

For the sake of the elect. What's so special about this group? For their sake, he cut short the days of tribulation. And if he hadn't cut it short, then no one would have survived.

[19 : 23] In other words, this tribulation, would have been unsurvivable. For all flesh. No one would have survived. So he cut it short.

Why? For the sake of the elect. Which elect are those? Well, the chosen one. He said, he says, the elect, what? Whom he chose.

Okay, whom he chose. When do you find out you're elect? How do you know if you're elect?

He made the choice way back before foundation of the world, right? According to Paul, Ephesians 1. He made that choice way back then. In fact, the book of Revelation refers to a book that names are written in and that even the names are written down before the foundation of the world.

So he didn't just elect people in general. Well, there's going to be a special group. I don't know who they are yet. No, he wrote their names down before the foundation. So in other words, he knows so well, he knows the future because he's already glad in the future.

[20 : 34] the names are already written. So he knows. How do we know? Do I have a big D on my back?

Something under the skin? I find out when I come to faith. I don't know. It's history.

And like I said, that honors him because he's the sovereign one. He can do whatever he wants. It's amazing that he would elect anyone. No one deserves it.

And it's not about fairness. It's about mercy. He doesn't. Paul explains it in Romans 9 and 11. It's about mercy. It's so that he can show his compassion and his mercy toward people who don't deserve it.

I don't know how it all works. Well, you don't have to. The election's not your business. It's God's business.

[21 : 41] Don't worry about it. He's got it figured out. How do I know if I'm elect? Well, is God working in your life? Are you seeing fruit in yours?

See, elect people, according to Jesus in Luke 18, the elect are the people who cry out to God day and night. They're the people who are always seeking God.

Are you a seeker of God? Matthew 22, he says, many are called, many are called, but few are chosen.

So it's not that God has not opened up the message to everyone. Many are called, many are told the good news, but few are chosen. Few accept the call.

How do you know if you're elect? You accept the call. You seek him. They are those who believe the gospel. They are those who recognize who God is.

[22 : 44] They recognize who they themselves are, who are unworthy. They recognize who Jesus is as their remedy for who I am. I'm not worthy. I am under debt.

I am in judgment. But God is a merciful God, and in Christ, God will forgive you and wash me and cleanse me and make me his child. And I receive all of that by faith.

Listen to how Daniel, in Daniel chapter 12, refers to this time of tribulation as well. He said, there shall be a time of trouble. Watch the language.

It's very similar. Such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. Same language. Such a time of trouble, such as has never been preceded before.

But at that time, your people shall be delivered. Whose people? Daniel's people. Who are Daniel's people? The Jews. Children of God.

[23 : 47] At that time, in that time of trouble, your people shall be delivered. Then he qualifies it by this. Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

There's that book. Same book that the book of Revelation refers to. There's a book with names written down. Those are the elect. As Spurgeon said, who are these elect?

There's a difference between people, right? Is there not a difference between you and other people? Who made the difference? Can you boast of why you are different than others?

And you say, oh, because I came to recognize the truth and I did this and I walked that aisle and I prayed that prayer and I did this and that. And so, glory be to me, I figured it out, right?

No, but you would never say that. Glory be to me. You'd say, no, no, no, the Lord showed me. He opened my eyes. He changed my heart. Yes, I responded.

[25 : 03] Yes, it felt like I was doing all, you know. I was responding. I was believing. I was praying. I was, yes, yes. And the reason you prayed is because He opened your heart. He pierced.

He opened. It's a miracle. When you're saved, it's a miracle. Because according to Paul, you were dead. And He made you alive even when you were dead. So obviously, you didn't do anything until you were made alive.

And then you did a bunch. Then you go, oh, yes, I believe. Yes, I want it. Yes. Right? And even for a period up to that point, even though you couldn't save yourself, you were still maybe under a period of conviction.

I was for years. I was under conviction. I believed it all, but I couldn't change my life. I did everything the pastor told me. I did everything Billy Graham told me to do. Bless Billy Graham.

I love him. I love him. I love him. I love him. But he said, you come up here, you cross that line, you'll be saved. And I went up and I crossed that line. I wasn't. I was still the same person the next day at school. Bless Billy Graham.

[26 : 07] I think the Lord did that to me so that I wouldn't encourage others to think they could do something that would make them saved.

Now, was God working in my heart all those years? Absolutely. Was he working through Billy Graham? Absolutely. I was fully convinced. But yes, Billy Graham's message was right on.

How did I get on the map? Oh, who did he like? So, another, so, so, so this tribulation where God cuts the days short because of the elect.

So, what's the expectation? What's the point of that? Well, the point is that God delivers his elect through tribulation. They will go through it, they will suffer, but they will escape judgment.

And so, God tempers his judgment by his mercy. He restrains his judgment because there are elect involved. In Timothy, Paul tells Timothy that God desires to save people, right?

[27 : 20] He desires for all to come to the knowledge of repentance. And that he's holding off the final day. Why? Because there's still people that need to be saved. So, why hasn't God entered the world yet?

Because he still has elect people out there that haven't recognized that there are elect people out there. They don't know.

He knows. You and I don't know. But that's why we share because sometimes we find out who they are. When we share, sometimes we find out. Of course, you know, it might be you sharing and then someone else sharing and then someone else sharing and then someone else sharing.

And the 18th person gets the reaping, you know. He says, oh yeah, see I saved him. No, he didn't. There was 17 people before you that shared with him. You're just part of it. It's a body of Christ.

Just giving a message. Hallelujah. Hallelujah, yeah. It's not about me closing the deal. God closes the deal. I just am faithful in giving the message.

[28 : 25] And maybe I'll only give one quarter of this. So, all Christians go through tribulation. Some go through worse tribulation than others.

But there's a promise to all of us. There's a message of hope to all of us that the Lord delivers and will bring comfort and will bring hope and reward to all who have been through tribulation.

I'm going to read from Revelation chapter 7. Yeah, we're going there. Revelation? Nobody understands that much. Except for the people that understand the whole thing. I used to be one of those people that understood the whole thing.

Revelation chapter 7. It follows Revelation chapter 6. I know that's a revelation. Revelation chapter 6 is the famous chapter where the seals are beginning to break.

Remember, there's a scroll that's been handed to the Lamb and the Lamb begins to break the seven seals on that scroll. So, before you can open and read the scroll, you have to break all the seals.

[29 : 33] Right? So, he breaks the first four seals and remember, those are the sending out of the four horsemen. So, the first seal, the first horse goes out, the second seal, so you have the four horsemen. Then, the fifth seal is the revelation of the altar of souls who are there in heaven crying out to God, how long, how long?

How long before you do justice to us? We suffer how long before we are vindicated? And they're told, rest a little longer.

Rest a little longer. And then, at the end of chapter 6, we see this vision of all people who are, well, the sixth seal that is opened and the sixth seal is this dramatic, the signs in heaven, the signs of the sun and the moon and the stars, which by the way, we get to in verse 24 in Mark 13.

A little similar there. And when those events happen, all, Revelation 6, in Revelation 6 tells us that all people are hiding.

They hide in the mountains, they hide in the caves. Why? Because they all recognize at that moment that the wrath of the land is coming. So, when Jesus does return for good, when Jesus does return with judgment, no one's going to question, is this the time?

[30 : 58] Everyone's going to know, yeah, this is it because I'm out of here. And Revelation talks about how people would be unrepentant.

Even though they recognize that it's Jesus, they will say, it's the wrath of the Lamb, let the rocks fall on me lest I repent. I don't want to repent. So, to the end, they're going to find it.

But, so, in other words, so it's describing that final time. And then, from out of that, in Revelation chapter 7, John describes about these 144,000 who are sealed.

He just hears about them, he doesn't see them. He just hears that they're, they're, they're sealed. And they're from different tribes of Israel. Which, by the way, if you read that carefully, there's a missing tribe.

Is it the same? No, anyway. And all the Gentile tribes are listed before the other tribes. So, it's just a little bit different. And then he comes to, in verse 9, he sees something.

[32 : 01] So, this is what I want to read. He sees something. He sees a multitude. So, Revelation 7, 9. After this, so after he saw, he heard about the 144,000.

After this, I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could count, that no one could number. From every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, they were standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands, and they were crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

and then, of course, the next couple of verses, the angels can't help it, they join in. It becomes a big worship time. Then down to verse 13, he goes on, he says, John's saying, then one of, in this same vision, he says, one of the elders addressed me, saying, who are these?

Clothed in white robes, and from where have they come? And I said to him, I don't know. No, he didn't say that, but he said, sir, you know. Please, I don't have the answer to that, you tell me that.

And he, the elder, said to me, these are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

[33 : 26] Therefore, they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple. And he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. Look at the promise and reward that comes to these people who come out of tribulation.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water.

And watch this, and God will wipe away every tear from their eye. what a picture of comfort.

These who have come out of tribulation, what do they have? They have reward. They shall hunger no more, they shall thirst no more, they shall be under the protection of the Lamb, they shall be sheltered, they shall be comforted, they shall be rewarded.

I want you to notice who they are. This is the only occurrence, by the way, of the word tribulation in the book of Revelation. So when Jesus talks about tribulation in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, this is the only occurrence in that future vision of future things where it occurs.

[34 : 54] And it's called there the great tribulation. Who goes through it? Who is it? Is it some limited group? Is it some limited location?

Look what he says. What did I see in verse 9? I saw a great multitude so big that no one could count. They're innumerable. And where are they from?

They're from ever. every nation. Every tribe, every language. Every people group is represented in these people.

In other words, there's a universal scope. The impression is that there's more than one single great tribulation.

the impression is that all Christians go through tribulation. Some much more intense than others, of course.

[36 : 08] We would say, well, I haven't gone through a tribulation like Peter and John went through, and I haven't gone through a tribulation like some of our dear ones in Afghanistan or in China.

Yeah. but we do go through tribulation. It might not be physical, but we do suffer, mocking, slander.

All Christians suffer, and all Christians will be rewarded. All Christians will receive the same comfort from the Lamb. When we stand before him, he will wipe the tears from our eyes.

he will shelter us under his wounds. We will rest from all that weary.

And the more you suffer for Christ, the more that will have meaning for you. So, this first application is a message of hope that the Lord delivers his elect through tribulation.

[37 : 15] he did then, in 70 AD, if that's when this tribulation that he's talking about that was unprecedented, if that's when that happened, he rescued them, delivered them.

If that tribulation in 70 AD is simply a prototype of another big one coming, which is most likely, he will rescue them as well. Then, verse 21 to 23, see another thing.

There's a warning here that we can apply. It's this, guard against deceivers with extraordinary signs. Guard against deceivers with extraordinary signs.

First, Jesus gives a warning, verse 21. He says, if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ, or look, there he is, what? Believe not.

Do not believe. Do not trust them. Just because they claim to speak for Jesus, or just because they claim to have special knowledge, special revelation, secret insights, and they accompany them with signs and miracles, don't believe them.

[38 : 34] Be suspicious. They may claim secret revelation. I know he's coming over there. Behold, Christ is coming over there.

They may tell you, oh, I figured out the end times. I know the date that he's coming. We've had that over and over and over again. I told you a few weeks ago about the book. I showed my youth group in 1988, or no, 1989, and it was a book that was called 88 Reasons Why Christ Will Return in 1988, and I showed it to my youth group in 1989.

They thought it was cool. See, don't believe these guys. We find out in the end of Mark 13, Jesus says, nobody knows the day.

Not even the Son knows the day, only the Father. So, who do you think you are if you presume that? Don't believe them. These do not trust them just because they claim to be Christian.

Why? Verse 22, for false Christ and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray if possible the elect.

[39 : 50] The wonders. What are those? Signs and wonders. Those are miracles. Jesus performed signs and wonders. The apostles performed signs and wonders.

Moses performed signs and wonders. Elijah performed signs and wonders. wonders. Remember when Moses performed signs and wonders?

Who else did? The magicians of Egypt. They would copy them or simulate them with their magic until they got to certain miracles which they said, that one's the finger of God, can't be that.

we don't have that kind of mojo. But they could copy many of the signs. Satan can imitate and can counterfeit the signs and the miracles and the wonders.

And notice how he says it, they will use, they will arise and they will use signs and wonders to do what? To lead you astray. That's the bait that they will use.

[41 : 00] That's the lure. they will attract you, they will wear you down, they will make you think that maybe they're from God because they can do miraculous things. When you see people who emphasize miraculous, extraordinary acts, be suspicious.

Jesus never highlighted his miracles. In fact, there were times he would not do. there were times he confronted the crowd and said, oh, you just follow me because your bellies are filled.

You saw the, you got the feeding. He went to his hometown and could hardly do anywhere, or hardly did anywhere.

It wasn't a show. It wasn't, it wasn't what he did to get people to come. though people heard of his power and came, but he wasn't a performer.

So beware. Watch out. They give miracles and extraordinary acts to lead people astray. Satan can counterfeit the miracles.

[42 : 14] So, then he says again, verse 23, therefore be on guard. Watch out. Be careful.

Pay attention. Beware there are wolves. And it's in the present tense, so it means keep on watching out. Keep being on guard. Beware that there are wolves out there.

Do not be naive. Do not think everyone, because they say they're Christian, are really true Christians. That doesn't mean you're negative, but it means you're just aware, watching.

We don't know someone's a true Christian until we see fruit. And so we know how fruit takes a while, so it takes a while. So, and then he says why be warm, before warm, verse 23, because I've told you all things in advance.

I've told you all beforehand. I've warned you. I've prepared you. I've told you everything ahead of time so that you can be prepared and know what to expect. All these predictions I've made to you are for practical value so you can be aware of what will come.

[43 : 32] You won't be alarmed. You won't be surprised. When you do see this one specific thing, though, run. But apart from that, beware. Watch. Be on your guard. How do you know when they're false?

You don't tell by the miracles. Because there are miracles. How do you know if those miracles are from a true prophet or a false man? Well, there is guidance from scripture.

God tells us all the way back in Deuteronomy 13 how to test a prophet. He says, if a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, same words Jesus uses, by the way, gives you a sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, in other words, he actually does a miracle.

Watch what he says. And if he says, let us go after other gods which you have not known and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams.

Why? For the Lord your God is testing you. Wait a minute, we're talking about the bad guys. You know, when the bad guys come and try to deceive you, God's using that to test me.

[45 : 08] He's testing you. What's this? He's testing you, what? To know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, you shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.

But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be, by the way, put to death. No more dreams. Why?

Because he has taught rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery. He's taught rebellion to make you lead the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk.

So you shall purge the evil from your death. That person who is deceiving you is evil. That person who is deceiving you is a rebel, is a rebel.

He is trying to cause you to leave the way in which the Lord has called you to walk. God so how do you know? You don't know because of the miracles they do.

[46 : 23] Now you might watch TV and see the miracles done. You might go, ah, ah, ah, I'm not seeing any limbs restored. Hey, they might, I don't know, they might be real miracles, I don't know.

How do you know if that person doing that is true or false? false? What do they say? What's their message? That's how you know. What's their message?

Yeah, they're not going to come out and say let's follow other gods. That'd be kind of giveaway. Although, there are some folks that do that. But, how do you know?

So what's another god? See, in those old days, they had lots of gods they believed in. You know, they had a pantheon on the end. So today, what are the other gods?

We don't, you know, our culture is too sophisticated for that stuff. So what are the other gods in our culture? Money, success, prosperity, big house, health and wealth, secrets to your family, perfect marriage for the family.

[47 : 38] Okay, I'll sign up for that one. How do you do that? Well, step one, leave. So what are the other gods?

Well, the gods are prosperity, success, pleasure. there are two directions that false teachers tend to go.

It tends to be one or the other. It tends to be either toward legalism and rules, that you need to do these things, and it's a shame-based system. Or it's toward license, it's the other way, swings the other way.

So God forgives you, grace covers all, God will always forgive you, so do whatever you want. So go after sensuality, go after pleasure, go after self-seeking. So the prosperity gospel preachers, they are guilty of feeding people's covetousness and greed.

They're encouraging people to covet more. You know that's what they're doing? You can be rich too, you can have the big house and the big car like I got. How come you are, by the way, the only one that has all that?

So help us to be discerning of the message. These things we pray in Christ's name.
Amen.