

Bible Study # 37
June 13, 1989
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The Gospels and Acts Series—Matthew 20:18—25:13; Mark 11:1—13:37; Luke 19:29—21:38; John 12:12—50

We are picking up six days prior to Christ's crucifixion in 31 A.D. We are picking it up at that point **and bringing it up to just before the crucifixion.**

Christ had been in Jerusalem in December at the Hanukkah celebration. He then went to Bethany, raised Lazarus from the dead and then went into the Judean Desert for a time. He did not come into the limelight until just a week before Passover. He used Bethany as a base of operations. He walked back and forth to Jerusalem each day. These trips began with His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the final cleansing of the temple that took place. The different factions of the Jewish leadership were trying to trap Him; He denounced them. His address at the Mount of Olives came next. That brings us up to the time of the crucifixion.

John 12:1-3, "Then six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, who had died, and whom He had raised from the dead. Now they had prepared a supper for Him there; and Martha was serving, and Lazarus was one of those who sat with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very expensive ointment of pure spikenard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the aroma of the ointment."

There was a supper prepared. It was the occasion where Mary anointed His feet. If He came six days prior to Passover, that would be on the eighth day of the first month. We are looking at a Thursday (probably that Thursday evening) when a big supper meal was prepared. He probably got there during the day. The next morning (Friday morning) was five days before Passover.

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem: John 12:12-19, Mark 11:1-10, Matthew 21:1-11 and Luke 19:29-40.

He left Bethany to start into Jerusalem. He gave them a job to do.

Mark 11:1-3, "And as they came closer to Jerusalem, into Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you: and immediately as you are entering into it, you will find a colt tied, which no one has ever

sat upon, When you have untied it, bring it here. But if anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it;' and immediately he will send it here.'"

'Tell them the Master has need of it and He will bring it back when He is finished.'

The people heard He was coming.

John 12:12-13, "...after hearing that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, took branches of palms, and went out to meet Him, and were yelling out, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel.'"

Verses 17-18, "The crowd that was with Him, when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, testified and witnessed about Him. On account of this also, the multitude went out to meet Him, because they had heard that He had done this miracle."

Just a matter of two or three months earlier, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Word had spread among the multitudes. Word had spread very widely. Lazarus was evidently a very prominent person and many had probably come to his funeral. How long do you think it would take for news like that to spread? Many people had seen it. It really stirred up a furor. There had been many miraculous healings. His teachings were well known, but when an event like this occurred, things were electrified.

A couple of months later, He came just a few days before Passover. People are ready to acknowledge Him as the Messiah. They didn't have any trouble acknowledging Him as the Messiah. What they had a problem with was that He didn't do things the way they thought He should.

The bulk of the prophecies about the Messiah related to the second coming. In the book of Isaiah, you would be hard-pressed to realize that there is about a 2,000-year break between the first and last part of the sentence. It wasn't even obvious to the disciples. They really hadn't grasped the time element nor did He clearly explain it to them. The people expected the Messiah as coming to heal the sick, etc., but also to chase out the Romans.

Isaiah 2:2-3, "...and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law...." The Law will go out of Jerusalem and all nations will go up to Mount Zion and the Messiah is going to rule at

Jerusalem. So they had it all figured out. The crowds came out to acknowledge Him.

John 12:19, “The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ‘Don’t you see that we are gaining nothing? Look, the world is going after Him!’” The Pharisees did not like this. Christ received this public acclaim in His entry into Jerusalem. Christ was not impressed with all the glitter and glamour and the things that they were impressed with, but He came with a realization of the destruction that was to come.

Luke 19:42, “...‘If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which are for your peace. But now they are concealed from your eyes, and kept secret.’”

Matthew 24:2, “...‘Truly I tell you, there shall not be left here one stone standing upon another stone, which shall not be thrown down.’” As Jesus looked at the city, He recognized the absolute total destruction that was going to come upon the city in the lifetime of many of those people. They didn’t grasp His message. He looked out and felt compassion for them.

Let’s understand about His entry into Jerusalem. There was significance to that. Remember what occurred on the tenth day of the first month? The lamb was chosen out of the flock, set aside and utilized at the Passover. What did the Jews do if that day came on a weekly Sabbath, which this year it did? Their practice was that they went out into the field and whatever physical work was involved, in terms of dealing with the flock and getting a lamb, they did on the Friday. They didn’t pen it up until the next morning, but the actual separation from the flock was done on that Friday. Who was the Lamb of God? –Jesus Christ! At the same time that the lambs were being selected from the flocks in the fields by the farmers, Jesus was being acknowledged as the Messiah by the multitudes who lined the road.

Matthew 21:9, “...crying out, saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.’” It’s interesting the timing of it. He finally came to the temple about the time of sundown, at the time when the lamb would have normally been pinned up.

Mark 11:11, “And Jesus came into Jerusalem, and entered into the temple; but after looking around at everything, the hour already being late toward evening, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.”

Jesus curses fig tree; casts out money-changers: Mark 11:12-19, Matthew 21:12-22 and Luke 19:45-46.

Mark 11:12-13, “And in the morning, after they had left Bethany, He was hungry. And from a distance, He saw a fig tree, which had leaves. And He went up to it, if perhaps He would find something on it. But as He came to it, He found nothing except leaves, because it was not the season for figs.” He spent the night in Bethany and early the next morning, on His way back, He saw the fig tree and cursed it. It was not the season for ripe figs. It was all green and leafy, but it was apparent that no fruit would be on it. It was not bearing fruit. It looked good from a distance. Since there was nothing but leaves, He put a curse on the fig tree. We will see what that symbolized.

Matthew 21:43, “‘Because of this I am telling you, that the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and it shall be given to a nation producing the fruits of the Kingdom of God.’” That fig tree was symbolic of the nation. Outwardly it had the appearance of being viable, of being the people of God. The people of God are compared to a fig tree. It had the appearance, but it didn’t have any fruit being borne. That tree was being shriveled up and would be replaced by a viable, living tree that would bear fruit. It was fulfilled, in the sense, when the Old Testament Church was replaced by the New Testament Church.

Israel and Judah had ceased to bear fruit. He cursed two fig trees. One did not wither immediately, but the other one withered immediately. On the way in, on the Sabbath, one tree was cursed and another one was cursed on Sunday morning. It was symbolic of Israel and Judah. Israel withered over a period of time. It was a more gradual decline that occurred. Judah, in a moment, was taken away with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. God does not want something that gives a deceptive appearance. If we are going to claim to be the people of God, we better *be* the people of God and yield Godly fruit in our lives.

Mark 11:15, “Then they came into Jerusalem: and after Jesus entered into the temple, He began to throw out those who were selling and buying in the temple, and He turned over the tables of the money changers, and turned upside down the benches of those selling the doves.” He entered the temple. What did He see there? He was absolutely infuriated by what He saw. He had probably taken note of it the evening before. He turned upside down the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those that sold doves.

You have to understand what a racket they were running. There was the necessity of offering sacrifices. The sacrifice had to be without blemish, approved and accepted by the priests. What had developed was a real racket. Some were not farmers and some Jews were dispersed all over the known world. They would come to Jerusalem. You brought your money and bought the animal there. But since it had to pass inspection (which put the priests in a position to run a racket), odds were they would find something wrong with it if you didn't buy it from them. And they commanded higher prices.

That was bad enough, but they also had moneychangers. What was on Roman coins? – Pagan pictures. They said they couldn't use this money in the temple. It had pagan insignias. They said, 'You can't use this money to buy an offering for God. We have a moneychanger table; we will exchange your pagan money for temple shekels. We set the exchange rate; you take the clean money and pay two prices for the sheep.'

They had a real racket set up here, and Jesus cleaned house. What do you do just before Passover? You clean house. Well, He unleavened His Father's House. He chased the cows and doves out. Some have misused this account for civil disobedience. He did not break the law. The priests were breaking the law, and they knew it. None of them went after Him. The only thing they did was to ask, 'What is the source of Your authority' (vv. 28-29)? But they didn't press that very far.

Verses 30-33, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? Answer Me!' And they argued among themselves, saying, 'If we should say, from heaven;' then He would say, 'Why didn't you believe him?' But if we should say, 'from men;' then we would be afraid of the people: because everyone was convinced that John truly was a prophet. And replying, they said to Jesus, 'We do not know.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Neither am I going to tell you by what authority I do these things.'"

They didn't answer His question. 'If we say His authority was purely human, the people will be mad because the people accept John as a prophet. If we acknowledge to Him that this authority derived from God, He will say, "Why didn't you follow him?"' So they said they didn't know the answer. He had to do it authoritatively.

The people had greeted Him hours before and He had worked miracles. God had placed His stamp of approval on Him to the point of raising the

dead, and they had acknowledged Him just before He came in, took charge and really enforced the law. Everybody knew it was right. The people didn't have much love for the "shysters." They thought it was about time somebody did something about it. Even though many didn't understand His office, they did recognize that He was a prophet of God. The religious leaders did recognize Him.

John 3:1-2, "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that You do unless God is with Him.'"

Who were the "we"? Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin. There was no question of civil disobedience. He was exercising His lawful authority that God had placed His stamp of approval on—the authority the entire population had acknowledged hours previously. It was an exercise in lawful authority of a prophet of God and attested to by God. It set the stage for these events. He left, but there was tremendous resentment. After taking this authoritative action, He began to heal the sick.

Matthew 21:14-15, "And the blind and cripple came to Him in the temple; and He healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes observed the miracles which He accomplished, and the children shouting aloud in the temple, and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David;' they were indignant." They hated Him. They began to plot His murder.

Mark 11:18, "Then the scribes and the chief priests heard about it, and they began plotting how they would kill him: because they were afraid of Him, since all the people were amazed and astonished at His doctrines and teachings." They resented Him greatly, but they were not going to challenge Him openly. He drove the cattle out, but there is no indication that He hit anyone. He had a very commanding presence. He meant business and it was very obvious He meant business. They were mad because He had made them look bad.

John 12:20-21, as we continue you see, "And there were certain Hellenist Jews among those who were coming up so that they might worship at the Feast. Then these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee; and they asked him, saying, 'Sir, we desire to see Jesus.'" We find that there were Hellenist Jews who had come up and wanted to see Jesus.

Verse 27, “Now my whole being is filled with turmoil and anxiety and what shall I say? ‘Father, save and deliver Me from this hour’? But this is the very reason and purpose I have come to this hour.” He was filled with anxiety and turmoil because things were closing in. He prayed about it.

Verses 28-29, “‘Father, glorify Your own name.’ Then a voice came out of heaven: ‘I have both glorified My name, and will glorify it again!’ Therefore the people who were standing there, and heard this, said, ‘It has thundered.’ Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to Him.’” Some said they heard thunder or an angel spoke.

Verse 30, “Jesus answered and said, ‘This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.’”

‘This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes.’ God publicly backed up the authority of Christ and showed His support and approval.

Verse 37, “But even though He had done miracles and signs in their presence, they still did not believe in Him.” The people believed on a certain level. If they saw a miracle, then they would believe. There is a lot more to faith than simply seeing a miracle.

One of the most outstanding miracles that occurred in this era of the Church was back at a time in the mid-50s—one of the last things Mr. Dick Armstrong did prior to his death in an automobile accident. A man was a total quadriplegic, and to be baptized, his entire wheelchair apparatus had to be put down into the water. He asked for Mr. Armstrong to pray for him. Mr. Armstrong prayed for him; he stood up and was healed. He served on the faculty, etc. You would look at him and never believe that he had been a quadriplegic. It was a case of “rise up and walk.” And yet, sadly, at a later time, he eventually left the work and the Church. You would think that if you experienced something that dramatic, you would never leave.

In another incident, this young man called me up. His child was stricken with appendicitis. He was about 150 miles away. I told him I would pray where I was and he could pray. The child was healed immediately. About 12 unconverted relatives showed up at services that week. They were greatly impressed for about two weeks. I could recount event after event, many, many over the years, things that happened instantly and people who were greatly impressed for a short time. That is the point. Faith has to be anchored to something more than a physical sign. You can’t find something more dramatic than the Exodus.

Here the people were shouting, “Hosanna, praise to God”; a few days later they were shouting, “Crucify Him.” They had a shallow belief. They were impressed with what they could see, but there wasn’t any depth. Faith is the substance hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. They still didn’t really believe Him. They knew He was going to come and heal, but they also expected Him to send out the Romans and restore independence.

But what if Christ told them some things they didn’t want to hear and weren’t prepared to believe? They expected Him to fit in with what they wanted Him to do. And when He didn’t do it, they became upset. You can’t put parameters on God. When He doesn’t dance to your tune, you get mad. They became disillusioned and upset with Him. They weren’t willing to change their ideas. Christ knew that their loyalty was very fickle. They didn’t have depth of faith; what they had was superficial. They were impressed with Him, but they became quickly disillusioned when He didn’t meet their expectations.

There are some lessons to learn in that. Faith and confidence must go beyond some physical manifestation. I don’t care how impressive it is—it will fade.

Luke 19:47-48, “And He was teaching day by day in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading people were seeking to destroy Him, but found no way that they might do it: because all the people were attentively listening to Him.” He came day by day into the temple. This was the problem. The people were paying attention.

Priests and Pharisees challenge Jesus’ authority: Mark 11:27-33, Matthew 21:23-27 and Luke 20:1-8.

Mark 11:28, “Then they asked Him, ‘By what authority do You do these things? And who gave you this authority, that You should be doing these things?’” They asked, ‘By what authority?’ That is when He asked them the question about John the Baptist. That was the response.

Verse 29, “And answering, Jesus said to them, ‘I will also ask you one question, and answer Me; then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.’” He answered them with a question about John the Baptist. He didn’t involve Himself in arguments. He just gave it back to them and left them on the spot.

We should answer people differently in different circumstances. If somebody asks a sincere question, they deserve an honest and sincere answer. But to ask a question to try to argue, you

never found Jesus involved in that. He would answer them with a question or respond in a way that would squelch the argument. He didn't bring it down to squabbling.

Matthew 21:28-31, “But what do you think about this? A man had two sons; and he came to the first one, and said, “Son, go work today in my vineyard.” And answering he said, “I will not.” But later he repented, and went to work. Then he came to the second son, and said the same thing to him. And answering he said, “Sir, I will go:” but he didn't go. Now then, which of the two did the will of his father? They said to him, “The first one.” Jesus answered them, “Truly, I am telling you, that the publicans and the harlots are going into the Kingdom of God before you.””

This was the example that Christ gave of the parable of the two sons. One said, ‘Yes sir, I am on my way.’ But he didn't go. The other said, “No,” but then felt bad and went. So which one did the will of the father? They had to acknowledge that it was the one that did it.

Verse 32, ““Because John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. But you, having seen this, did not repent afterwards to believe him.”” A lot of them changed their lives. They went the other way. They believed what He said. ‘The harlots and publicans will enter the Kingdom before you. They turned their life around, but you didn't.’ It became obvious which son they were, which son was the harlot and publican.

Parable of the vineyard: Mark 12:1-11, Matthew 21:33-44 and Luke 20:9-18.

Mark 12:1, “And He began speaking to them in parables. ‘A man planted a vineyard...and leased all of this out to farmers, and left the country.’” He leased it out to keepers.

Verses 2-5, ““And he sent his servant to the farmers at the harvest, so that he might receive from the farmers the vineyard's crop. But they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. Then again he sent another servant to them; but they stoned him, wounded him in the head, and, after insulting him, sent him away. And again he sent a third one, but they killed him; a great many others were also sent. They beat some, and they killed others.”” He sent his servants to collect the rent, and they robbed and mistreated them.

Verses 6-7, ““Therefore, he had one more to send, his own beloved son. Last of all, he sent him to them, saying, “They surely will have respect for my son.” But those farmers said

among themselves, “This is the heir. Come now, let us get together and kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.”” He sent his son, and they said, ‘Let us kill the son. He is the heir.’

Verses 8-9, ““So they seized him, and killed him, and threw his body outside the vineyard. What therefore will the owner of the vineyard do? [Now what do you think he is going to do?] He will come and will destroy those farmers, and will give the vineyard to others!”” He will slaughter them. ‘You are right—that is what he is going to do.’

Verse 10, ““Didn't you ever read this Scripture; “The stone which the builders rejected, this same one has become the head of the corner.””

Matthew 21:43, ““Because of this I am telling you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and it shall be given to a nation producing the fruits of the Kingdom of God.””

Verse 45, “But when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they knew He was speaking about them.”

‘Hey, fellows, you are the wicked husbandmen. You are the ones. You think God is going to let you get by with this? Every prophet God has ever sent, you and your forefathers have mistreated. Now you want to kill Me.’ They knew He was speaking about them.

Verse 46, “And they plotted against Him, to lay hold of Him; but they were afraid of the multitude, because they looked upon Him as a prophet.” They plotted against Him. They wanted to embarrass or humiliate Him. But they were afraid to come in with soldiers and arrest Him for fear there would be a riot.

John 12:42, “Although, truly, even among the rulers and leaders many believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it publicly, so they would not be excommunicated from the synagogue.” Many believed Him, but because of the Pharisees, they were afraid to confess it publicly.

Verse 43, “Because they loved the praise and flattery of men more than the glory and honor of God.” That was more important to them.

In Matthew 22:1-14, He compared the Kingdom of heaven to a wedding feast. Those who had first chance at the invitation didn't value that invitation; others were invited in their stead. It refers to the Jews who had the first opportunity and others took their place.

Spies are sent to trap Jesus: Mark 12:13, Matthew 22:15 and Luke 20:20.

Mark 12:13, “And they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, in order that they might trap Him in His speech.”

It was the Herodians that the Pharisees teamed up with. They were a political faction that backed Herod as king. Normally they were looked on as renegades. Herod was a descendant of Esau, an Edomite. He had “finagled” the throne. He had married the widow of the last Jewish king. There is a saying, “politics makes strange bed fellows.” They all saw their office and status threatened. ‘This Man is a threat to us. If He gets rid of the Romans, the Herodians will be out of a job, and the Sadducees will be out of a job. This Man is a threat to us.’

Render the things of Caesar to Caesar: Mark 12:14-17, Matthew 22:16-22 and Luke 20:21-26.

Mark 12:14-15, “...Now then, is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, or not? Should we pay it, or should we not pay it...?” The Pharisees put the Herodians up to ask the trick question. The Jews did not want to pay tribute to the Romans. The Jews said, ‘God gave us this land.’ They paid the taxes, but they resented it and didn’t like it. They thought it was illegal—it wasn’t right.

People didn’t like to pay taxes then and still don’t now. But they paid them. They had to. There were the Roman soldiers. The zealots were on the fringe of society. The trick question was that they didn’t want to do that. They didn’t want to lose favor with the people. Either He will make the people mad or the Romans will come in and arrest Him.

Verses 15-16, “Should we pay it, or should we not pay it?” But knowing their hypocrisy, He told them, ‘Why do you tempt Me? Bring Me a coin, that I may look at it.’ And they brought it to Him. And He asked them, ‘Whose image and engraving is this?’ And they replied to Him, ‘Caesars.’” Christ said, ‘Give Me a coin. Whose picture is on this?’

Verse 17, “And answering, Jesus said to them, ‘Render the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God.’ And they marveled at His answer.” He didn’t even define what belonged to Caesar and what was God’s. They let the issue drop. They were stunned at that answer. They didn’t know how to answer that.

Questions about marriage in resurrection: Mark 12:18-27, Matthew 22:23-33 and Luke 20:27-40.

Mark 12:18, “Then the Sadducees, who claim there is no resurrection, came to Him. And they questioned Him, saying...” The Sadducees

came. They didn’t believe in the resurrection. They liked to argue with the Pharisees about the resurrection. They knew He taught about the resurrection. They came up with this far-fetched story about the seven husbands (vv. 19-22).

Verse 23, “Therefore in the resurrection, when they shall be resurrected, which one’s wife shall she be? Because the seven had her as wife.” It wasn’t a question that bothered them because they didn’t believe in it.

Verses 24-25, “And answering, Jesus said to them, ‘Aren’t you therefore in error, not knowing or understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God? Because when they are resurrected from among the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels who are in heaven.’”

This is talking about the first resurrection. Since they didn’t believe in one, there was no point in going into the three. The fact is there is going to be a restoration of life.

Verses 26-27, “But concerning the dead, proving that they rise: haven’t you read in the book of Moses, in the section about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’ He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living...” That is why He speaks of them that way. That is why He brings it up that way.

So they said, ‘Maybe we better ask Him because the Sadducees and Herodians didn’t fare very well.’ So they decided to ask Him which was the most important commandment.

Two Great Commandments: Mark 12:28-34 and Matthew 22:34-40.

Mark 12:28, “And one of the scribes, listening to them discussing this together, and perceiving that He answered them perfectly, began questioning Jesus, asking Him, ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’”

Matthew 22:36, “Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”

Verses 37-40, when they asked Him, Christ said, “And Jesus answered him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second one is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Upon these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.’” He summarized the whole thing.

Mark 12:32-33, “And the scribe said to Him, ‘Correct, Master, You have spoken according to the truth, that God is One, and there is not any

other God besides Him at all. And loving Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the being, and with all the strength, and loving one's neighbor as himself, is greater than all the burnt offerings and the sacrifices.”

Verse 34, “And when Jesus observed that he answered Him intelligently, He told him, ‘You are not far from the Kingdom of God....’” Christ took note of that man's attitude. ‘That is right; that is the most important. You have really answered well.’ Christ told him, ‘You are not far from the Kingdom of God. If you keep that attitude of being impressed with the truth, you are heading in the right direction.’

Verse 34, “...And no one had enough courage any more to ask Him questions.” This took the “starch out.” Nobody wanted to ask the next question.

Some try to say that He replaced the Ten Commandments with the two—the principles on which every commandment hung. The first four tell you how to love God; the last six, how to love your neighbor.

Christ is son of David: Mark 12:35-37, Matthew 22:41-46 and Luke 20:41-44.

‘You guys have been asking Me questions.’

Mark 12:35-37, “Then Jesus asked, while He was teaching in the temple, ‘How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? Because David himself said, inspired by the Holy Spirit, ‘The Lord said to My Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet.’ Therefore if David himself calls Him ‘Lord,’ then how can He be his son?’ And the great multitude gladly listened to Him.”

Matthew 22:46, “But no one was able to answer Him a single word, nor did anyone dare to question Him any more from that day on.” They couldn't respond to that.

In Matthew 23, He begins to say, ‘woe unto the scribes and Pharisees’ over and over. He really begins to “nail their hides to the wall.”

Matthew 23:24, ““You blind guides, who filter out a gnat, but swallow a camel!””

Verse 33, ““You serpents, you offspring of vipers, how are you going to escape the judgment of Gehenna?”” ‘You are snakes’; He really told them what they were. ‘You are going to burn like fire.’ He “pulled no punches.”

Verse 35, ““So that upon you may come all the righteous blood poured out upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous, to the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”” He summarized who was slain on the altar. They

really became guilty of the murder of every righteous man because they stood ready to murder the One who sent all the others. He gave this scathing denunciation of the Pharisees and then He left.

Olivet prophecy: Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

Matthew 24:1-2, “And walking out, Jesus went away from the temple; and His disciples came to Him, and pointed out the buildings of the temple to Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘Don't you see all these things! Truly I tell you, there shall not be left here one stone standing upon another stone which shall not be thrown down.’”

Verse 3, “And as He was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, asking, ‘Tell us, when shall these things take place? And what is the sign of Your coming, and of the completion of the age?’”

‘We want to ask You about that. When is that going to be, the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?’ They thought this addressed the same subject, but in reality they asked Him two different questions: (1) Jerusalem would be destroyed and (2) then the end of the age.

Verses 4-14, “And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Watch out, and be on guard, so that no one deceives you! Because many are going to come in My name, saying “I am the Christ;” and they shall deceive the vast majority of people. But you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you be not afraid: because it is necessary that all these things occur, but the end is not yet. Because race shall rise up against race, and nation against nation, and there shall be famines, and plagues of diseases, and earthquakes in different places. But all these things are just a beginning of sorrows, devastations, and upheavals. Then they will deliver you up into tribulation, and will kill you. And you will be hated by all the nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, and they will betray one another, and will hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will deceive the majority of all people. And because of lawlessness and sin shall be multiplied, the love of the majority of all people will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the habitable earth for a witness and testimony to all the nations; and then shall the end come.’”

The Olivet prophecy was spoken to the disciples. Verse 34, ““Truly I tell you, it is not possible for this generation to perish or die out, until all these

things have taken place.” Clearly, the generation to whom He was speaking did not live to see His return. The generation that is being addressed is the generation in whose lifetime these events were going to occur.

Verse 14, ““And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come.””

Verse 22, ““And unless those days of tribulation had been shortened, there would not be any living thing left alive....”” Now He is talking of events that are going to culminate in His return.

Verses 31-34, ““And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. But learn this parable from the fig tree: when its branches have already become tender, and the leaves are budding out, you know that summer is near. In exactly the same way also, when you see all these things taking place, know that it is near, even at the doors. Truly, I tell you, it is not possible for this generation to perish or die out, until all these things have taken place.””

This is in the context of His return. The generation that sees these events will culminate in the lifetime of a single generation. It will occur quickly and not stretch out over centuries. It will happen in the lifetime of a single generation.

How long is one generation? Is your generation passed? It hasn't entirely; you are here. Whether you are 20, 40, 60 or 70, your generation has not passed because you are still here. It will be occurring in a lifetime of a single generation. We are simply looking at things that will not stretch out on toward the end of the next century. Things have been building.

When did the gospel go forth as a witness to the whole world—a worldwide impact? The true Church continued to exist, but the Gospel of the Kingdom did not go forth to the world in power until Mr. Herbert Armstrong was raised up. It didn't really begin to reach the world with worldwide impact until the 50s. It had begun to go out, but had not reached the world previously.

Verse 22, ““And unless those days of tribulation had been shortened, there would not be any living thing left alive....”” That was not possible until the advent of the nuclear age. Until it became possible to annihilate life off the planet, it was a meaningless statement. Disease epidemics, earthquakes, etc., the other things have been characteristic of many times. They are not unique to prove that this is the end time. But this generation, the Gospel has gone out to the

world for the first time and the ability to annihilate man off the planet—those are things unique to this generation. It will culminate in the lifetime of one generation.

Matthew 24:3, ““And as He was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him, asking, ‘Tell us what is the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’”” He gave these signs for the disciples. The world would not understand.

Luke 21:36, ““Therefore keep watching at all times, praying that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things which are about to come to pass, and that you may be able to stand in the presence of the Son of Man!””

There are two types of salvation: physical and spiritual. (1) Pray that you may be accounted worthy to escape, to be saved physically from the tribulation and (2) to ultimately stand before the Son of Man. Christ warned of what would happen. The tendency was going to be to “go to sleep at the switch.” Over and over the warnings are that the tendency at the end time was to slow down and lose any sense of urgency.

We need to focus on the warnings because the warnings are for us. We need to see what is the likely tendency and that it doesn't have to happen to us. This age is going to be a lot more suited to producing Laodiceans than Philadelphians. We have a lukewarm, watered-down society, and the Church has always had the tendency to reflect the society around and its problems. Our society is a liberal, lukewarm, watered-down society—we have to be on guard against those influences.

Matthew 25:1, ““Then the Kingdom of heaven will be compared to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.”” The virgins typify the Church.

Verses 2-5, ““Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps, but did not take oil with them. But the wise took oil in containers with their lamps. But while the bridegroom delayed his coming, they all became drowsy and went to sleep.”” They all slumbered and slept. The Church “went to sleep at the switch” in the first century.

Verse 6, ““Then at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! The bridegroom is coming! Get ready to meet him!’”” That was the beginning of the “midnight cry” when God raised up Mr. Herbert Armstrong back in the 20s and 30s.

Verses 7-8, ““Then all those virgins got up, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; because our

lamps are going out.” There is a distinction of those who are wise and those who are foolish.

Verses 9-10, “But the wise answered, “No;” explaining, “Perhaps there may not be sufficient for us and you: but go instead to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.” But as they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast: and the door was shut.” They ran out of oil.

Verses 11-13, “Then afterwards the other virgins came also, crying out, “Lord, Lord, open to us.” But answering he said, “Truly I tell you, I do not even know you!” Therefore watch, because you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes.” We have a responsibility to lay in a proper supply of God’s Holy Spirit.

We will break here. This brings us down to late Sunday afternoon prior to Christ’s observance of the Passover on Tuesday afternoon. Notice all the events and actions; the culmination of things came to a head very quickly. Ultimately, that will be so with this world. Things will come to a head and come to a head quickly. We are in a time that we’d better take advantage of. If we don’t use the opportunity to get spiritually prepared for the events ahead of us, we will be caught in a bad way. These examples are admonitions and they are there for our benefit.