

Matthew 24:29-41

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- [0:00] Matthew 24, part three. Matthew 24, you will remember, is what's known as the Olivet Discourse. It is one of the most contentious passages of Scripture, I believe, in the whole New Testament.
- And it's one of the most misunderstood, and it's the source of confusion for many. And the reason I am taking my time over it is to point out that context is king.
- And if you understand the context, you won't be confused by what the passage says. The passage, in the passage, you need to apply the passage to the people to whom it was written.
- And in this particular case, this wasn't written to the church. It was written to the Jews. Now, you will remember, I just want to share a little story.
- And it's a very brief story, but it happened only the day before yesterday, I think. Or was it even yesterday? Well, I was asked a question. Somebody said, the question was roughly this.
- [1:06] The Bible says perfect love casts out fear. So does this mean that I should never be in fear? And that's a shortened version of the question.
- But what I said, what a great question, because it's another source of confusion that is eradicated only by paying attention to the context.
- So if we turn to 1 John, we'll get to Matthew in a moment. If we turn to 1 John and chapter 4.
- So 1 John chapter 4. We're going to quickly look at verses 18 and 19. In fact, 17, 18 and 19.
- The passage that contains this statement reads like this. It says, by this love is perfected with us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as he is, so also are we in this world.
- [2:11] There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves punishment. And the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love because he first loved us.
- If someone says, I love God and hates his brother, he's a liar. For the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.
- And this commandment we have from him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. Now, when you immediately think, and I've had this quite a few times in my Christian life.
- Does this mean I should never fear anything? And am I sinning if I fear? And how much sin does it take to keep me out of heaven? And all of that. And it all gets very confused. Well, what it says in verse 18.
- There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear because fear involves punishment. So what should we not fear?

[3 : 13] We shouldn't fear punishment. Well, how does that apply? Well, if we go back a couple of verses, it says in verse 17, By this love is perfected with us so that we may have confidence when?

In the day of judgment. So the thing you're told not to fear, assuming you have a right relationship with God, is his judgment, which is his punishment.

So it's not to do with being, I don't know, afraid you might get eaten by tigers or any of those things. It's don't fear God's judgment if you're born again is the message.

And it suddenly becomes very simple. So I'm so grateful for the question because it enabled me this morning to just give a little indication of how important context is.

So let's look at Matthew chapter 24. And we're going to hopefully cover verses 29 to 41. I apologize in advance if I don't get through it all. And we'll do it next week if I don't.

[4 : 16] Matthew 24. So just before we read it, just a reminder. What we have discovered so far in this chapter. First of all, we did a whole big introduction on the fact that the church and Israel are distinct from each other in the scriptures.

There's a lot that's written to Israel that tells them in these end times and in Matthew 24 tells them, watch out for signs. There'll be wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, et cetera, et cetera.

Watch out for signs. And then eventually there will be this abomination of desolation. So look for signs. Look for signs. When you see the abomination of desolation, run.

Go and hide yourself in the wilderness and pray that it's not on a Sabbath day. Well, who's bothered about traveling on the Sabbath day? Well, the Jews are, aren't they? This is addressed to a Jewish audience.

Audience. If you remember, also, the message to the church was a different message, which was you won't get any signs. You'll be changed.

[5 : 23] This is in first Corinthians. Ephesians 15 from verse 50 onwards. You're not going to get signs. You're going to be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye.

The Greek there uses the word atomos, an atom of time. So you're going to be changed like that, gone. No signs, no leader.

But no, now, having said that, we are supposed to be aware of the times in which we live. And then if you if you remember that the sons of Issachar were praised for knowing what was going to happen in their age.

So we've come to this part, which is verses 29 to 41, which we'll read. And then I'll do my best to unpack it.

But keep in mind context. It's written to a Jewish audience. Yes, we can learn from it. But we can use it to help us establish where we are in the great scheme of things.

[6 : 24] What comes next? To some extent anyway. But it's not written to us because we won't be there. And if you want to do a whole thing on the rapture of the church, we'll do that another day or you can speak to me privately.

Let's read it. So verses 29 to 41. But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give out its light.

And the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky. And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn.

And they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of the sky to the other.

Now learn the parable from the fig tree. When its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So you too, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near right at the door.

[7 : 40] Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will my words will not pass away.

But of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the sun, but the father alone. For the coming of the son of man will be just like the days of Noah.

For in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark. And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away.

So will the coming of the son of man be. Then there will be two men in the field. One will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken and one left.

So. This time. We can't even begin to imagine just how spectacular this is going to be. And you can you can think of the most spectacular weather systems, fireworks displays.

[8 : 43] It won't even come close to this. This is not only going to be amazing, but terrifying. And it's important to know that you see.

I'll get onto it in a moment. But the church is not there to experience God's wrath. This speaks of a time when God's wrath is poured out on the earth. So this pouring out of God's wrath is on all sorts of people, but not the church, which is why I don't believe the church will be there.

I realize there's a lot of different opinions about that. Happy to have the debate. But it speaks of this time when Jesus will come into the world at a time of darkness.

And we'll look at that more in a moment. Many Bible teachers would say that when Jesus comes back, he's going to come back as the light of the world. So if the world is in darkness and he comes back as the light of the world, you won't miss it.

And I think we had that conversation last time. We should expect that. If you remember, he warned us all. And he said, if someone says Christ is over there or Christ is out in the wilderness or Christ is in the back room or whatever, don't bother to go there.

[9 : 54] Because when he decides to come, you will not miss it. It will be impossible to be unaware of it, regardless of your beliefs. So in verse 29, the verse we started with, seems to tally with that, doesn't it?

It says, but immediately after the tribulation of those days, so the great tribulation, the seven-year period of turmoil on the earth, immediately after, it says the sun will be darkened.

And this is a quote from the Old Testament, right? The sun will be darkened. And the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of heavens will be shaken.

So everything goes dark, and everything goes haywire. In Luke's gospel, we also read that the seas are also going to roar, and that because of the roaring of the seas, men's hearts will fail them.

They will faint because of the terror that they're in. Now, if I was preaching this, knowing that we were going to go through it, I wouldn't actually know where to start.

[11 : 08] Because if you're going to go through this, what? I don't know. Bear with me. I think it devalues our salvation if when God pours out his wrath to this phenomenal extent on the earth, where the very seas are so huge that people are fainting and dropping dead out of terror, when everything goes black, when stars fall from the sky.

Imagine being hit on the head by one of those. And the whole earth shakes, and what we read is that the heavens themselves shake. This is part of the coming destruction of everything that exists as we know it, which then leads to the beginning of the establishment of Jesus' new kingdom on earth, the 1,000-year kingdom.

I'll mention this in passing. There are a lot of people out there that believe, Christians, that believe there is not going to be a 1,000-year literal rule of Christ on earth.

How they get to that using this book, I have no idea, and I'm not going to go into it. But please, it is error. And if you have misgivings about it, come and speak to me.

So, this idea that Jesus' second coming will be out of darkness is supported by many Old Testament scriptures. And I've put a list in the notes so that when you get the notes, you can look them up if you want to.

[12:41] But Isaiah 13, 10, 24, 23, Ezekiel 32, 7, Joel 2, 10, 31, 3, 15, Amos 5, 20, 8, 9, Zephaniah 1, 15.

All of those scriptures confirm that the second coming of Jesus will happen at a time when the world is in darkness, and then he comes as a blinding light. But we now know from reading this scripture that Jesus' return will be immediately preceded by global astronomical phenomena.

We read in a previous study, we read the verse that says, and men said at this time, this is taken from Revelation, the men cried out, rocks fall on us, because they were so terrified at what was taking place.

Once the wrath of God, there's a scripture, there's a reference to it, but I've already strayed from my notes, so it's fairly typical for me. There's a scripture that says, it's a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And the word terrible in Greek is the same word as terrifying. So this is not some clever fireworks display. It's not, well, we'll be all right.

[14:04] This is Jesus coming back to do several things. One, to engage his enemies militarily and to end their lives, but also to bring huge astronomical phenomena.

I mean, stars falling out the sky. Come on. That is, that's never happened before. And we have not a clue what that's going to be like, but it will be utterly terrifying. And so if there's anybody here that doesn't know Jesus personally, you can avoid all this by getting to know Jesus, but it's going to happen.

And it's going to happen. I would suggest to you on three groups of people. The first group is the Jews who up until this point have rejected their Messiah.

So God sends his son to the cross and the Jews reject him. And at some point he has got to punish that rejection. So there will be a lot of Jews who go through this.

There's also unbelievers who will go through this. And it's also true that those who are converted in the great tribulation period may well also go through this.

[15:32] But their end will be different because they will be preserved. They will be rescued. So. If you just turn briefly with me to first Thessalonians five.

And the key verse. Is verse nine, but we'll start probably in. Verse eight. Now, Paul is speaking to the Thessalonian church.

And if you remember, I said this before. Churches often avoid these awkward things. scriptures about end times because it's all too contentious. So they don't tackle it. But God didn't put it there for us not to tackle it.

And he was only with the Thessalonian church for about three weeks. Might have only been two weeks. Could possibly have been four. He was there for three Sabbaths.

And he thought it was important to make sure they were taught about the end times. A, as to what it meant for the church. And B, well, so that they could then relax and be comforted.

[16:38] As to what they would expect in the end times. But from it, they could also deduce what would happen to the Jews during this time. And he says this in verse nine, verse eight.

Since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So as part of his church, we are not destined for wrath. The whole of this tribulation period is an outpouring of wrath. We are not.

People argue as to whether the first three and a half years are not that, or they are. In any event, this period of time is about God pouring his wrath out on a completely disobedient, Christ rejecting planet.

And we don't belong there. So we are part of a group of people who are exempt from what we're reading. However, what we should be doing with what we're reading is looking at the progress we're making through history and kind of saying to ourselves, what's the logical progression from where we are?

[17:53] Where are we going to get to? And looking at some of the things that are happening and asking ourselves, does it look close? Does God pouring out his judgment on this earth look close?

You can look at the abortion statistics and know that it must be close because every other civilization that sacrificed their children on the altar of their own desires was judged and obliterated.

You can look at the move towards globalism and know that God is a nationalist. Globalism creates an environment where we can have a one world church and a one world government, which when you read Revelation is where we're going.

So when we, I'm not going to do a whole thing on end times. Well, I kind of am, but I'm trying to be selective. But the point is, these things are not for us to ignore.

We are to know where we're going, know what the season is. And if anything, it should lift our desire to evangelize those we love who stubbornly refuse to turn to Jesus, who the Bible tells us they know about.

[19:10] People who reject Jesus don't reject Jesus because they think God doesn't exist. They know God exists. They just don't want to assent to the fact that he exists.

So God has not destined us for wrath. And I could have picked other scriptures, but I've only got a fairly short time this morning. So as we read on in Matthew, turn back there, what we're told after the tribulation of those days, verse 30, then the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

Now, if God in his power can organize the sun to switch off, the moon to switch off, the stars to fall from the sky, the seas to rage, earthquakes to happen, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, and we're told that that's going to be followed by the sign of the son of God in the sky.

And many people ask, what's the sign? What's it going to be? What do I look for? Well, I'm going to suggest that the sign is the Lord himself coming in power and great glory.

He is his own sign. There is no other sign that's big enough, magnificent enough or powerful enough to take the place of him.

[20:45] I mean, it says he's going to come in power and great glory. Can we begin to even imagine that the power that has caused all of these phenomena on the earth is going to come in power and great glory that exceeds all of that?

There's nothing else that's going to impress us. After all that, there's nothing else that's going to capture the imagination of mankind after that. So I'm going to submit to you that in this time of darkness and mayhem and terror, the sign will be Jesus himself as the light of the world coming on the clouds and people's eyes will be diverted upwards.

He is the sign. I'm happy to accept any other better definitions, but I defy you to find one. So. These spectacular signs, by the way, I gave you a list of prophecies, but just let's just look at one, which is in Daniel chapter seven.

One of the things we read in a previous study is that God comes from the book of Amos. God doesn't do anything without first telling his prophets, his servants, the prophets.

So things that come upon the earth that are of God, God will have told us about in prophetic scriptures. And so in Daniel.

[22:14] Seven and verse 13. Daniel is. Having visions and he says, I kept looking in the night visions and behold, with clouds of with the clouds of heaven, one like the son of man was coming.

And he came up to the ancient of days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion, glory and the kingdom that all peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which will not pass away. And his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. Praise God for that.

So he's coming in great glory. And what that. If you remember in the times of the, when the glory of God came upon the temple, the priest could not stand.

The glory of God was so powerful. That it pushed people to their knees and then onto their faces because you just couldn't stand in the presence of it.

[23:24] And he's coming back with great power and great glory. I've forgotten the name of the comedian, but it was a comedian. He said, he said, I'm going to, when I meet him, if God exists, because he's an atheist or claims to be, when I meet him, I'll have a few things to say to him.

You won't, you won't even be able to speak. And you won't be able to square up to him because the glory of God will have you on your face.

And all you'll be able to say is have mercy on me, a sinner. Because your imperfection is going to be presented face to face with the perfection of almighty God.

And it won't stand. You'd be lucky if you don't just shrivel on the spot. So what we should note is it says all the people were mourning.

So this appearance of Jesus hasn't produced happiness. It hasn't produced, Oh, Jesus, happy, clappy. You're here. Well, Hey, it hasn't produced any of that.

[24:34] What it's produced is mourning. I would describe it as it's a kind of a, Oh no moment. What have we done? That suddenly the God they've been rejecting for all of these years, possibly decades, uh, as a nation, possibly centuries or even millennia, the God that they've been rejecting is now there.

And instead of, Oh, it's lovely to see you, Lord. It's, Oh no, I'm going to be judged. This is another reason why the church is not really included in this because we've already been judged and Jesus has paid for our sins.

So we don't have a judgment to face, but the world at this time does have a judgment to face. So the emotion is one of mourning. They're bereft at the idea that God has just turned up.

It's in Luke's account. I won't turn there, but chapter 21, verse 26, that tells us that men's hearts will faint before him or another way of putting it an equally, um, um, creditable or credible translation of the Greek is their hearts will fail them.

If we turn briefly to revelation six, revelation six and verse 16, we've already made passing reference to this, but we'll start in verse 15.

[26:03] Then the Kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders of the rich and the strong and every slave and free men, uh, every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, fall on us and hide us from the presence of him who sits upon the throne and from the wrath of the lamb for the great day of their wrath has come.

And who is able to stand clearly these people who are sitting under this judgment, when God has just shown up, they are, they know who they're dealing with.

This isn't, you know, what about the guy on the Island? He might not know Jesus. You know, we all know that there's a God Romans one 18 and following will tell you that every man is without excuse.

They know that there is a creator God. They just choose to ignore it if it doesn't suit their moral code or whatever. These people described in revelation six, they know who they're dealing with.

[27:10] If we, at some point we will do a study of revelation from start to finish. And one of the recurring themes of the book of revelation is judgment is poured out on them and they know it's God, but they refuse to repent.

And you, you finish up as you're reading it saying, why, why, why don't you give in? Why don't you just, all right, stop this.

I'm sorry. But there's none of that. There is a rebellion in the heart to which according to Romans one, they've been given over and they reached the point where repentance is just not available to them.

But the point is they know who they're dealing with. And so. They know that they're faced with a moment of reckoning from which there is no way back.

It was Hebrews 10 verse 31 that says it's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. I'm just going to go through a list of scriptures.

[28:16] If I stop on any of these, what we'll do is we'll finish up still being here tomorrow. So Amos three verse seven tells us that the Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants, the prophets.

Daniel seven, we've read a bit of he's going to come. These are, these are all scriptures that prophesy about what it's going to be like when he comes back. He's coming in great power and glory.

I would submit to you that the power and glory in which he is going to come is far beyond anything that we can deal with, with our normal imaginations. It's like things that the world has never seen. Joel two verses 30 to 32 again describes astronomical phenomena when he comes.

Zachariah 14 verses one to five victory in battle against his enemies whilst preserving his elect. So this is power and great glory.

He has military power. Revelation one verse seven and six verses 12 to 17. Spectacular astronomical signs with men in fear and trembling, knowing that this is King Jesus come to judge them from whom they cannot hide.

[29 : 32] Two Peter three verse 10 astronomical phenomena again with the elements being burned. up Matthew 16 verse 27, not only coming to do all this, but bringing with him myriad angels and us.

In Colossians three verse four, and also you'll find it in revelation 17 verses 14 and 19 verse 14 and 20 verse six. We will be coming with him when he comes in glory.

All right. 10,000 times 10,000 of his holy ones. His holy ones are us. So rather than being on earth, cowering under God's judgment, we will be coming back with him.

And I don't know whether we'll just be spectators or helping him administer that judgment. I haven't got that in my head yet, but we'll be coming with him in his victory.

He brings us with him. Very important. Just imagine being alive during this period. Amazing, isn't it?

[30 : 45] We then read, go back to Matthew. Should read it, not just take my word for it. Verse 31, he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

There are lots of people. You may remember the Left Behind series of books and films, where Hal Lindsay authored a very, very helpful book.

But unfortunately, there were a few things he got wrong. Now, he wasn't wrong about the rapture, and he wasn't wrong about the fact that when the rapture happens, some will be left behind.

But he was wrong about the fact that this is not the scripture that describes that. This scripture describes something else entirely.

And one of the reasons that people get foggy about this is that he uses this word elect. He's going to go and gather his elect. And people think, well, that must be the church.

[31 : 58] But the word elect simply means chosen or chosen ones. So you have to ask yourself, again, we come to the argument of context. Who are the chosen ones referred to here?

We read in the scriptures that at some point, all Israel will be saved. This is a gospel written to Jews by a Jew, and everything in the context of this passage is Jewish.

Pray that it be not on the Sabbath. I won't bother to go through it, mainly because my brain's gone foggy, but it's addressed to Jews.

And we haven't changed horses here. We haven't changed context. So he's going to gather his elect, which is his chosen nation. He's chosen people, the Jews from all parts of the earth.

So I would say that he's command. And again, glory and power. You have a whole army of angels and you say, right, go and get my elect.

[33 : 05] That's a pretty powerful military commander, is it not? And I'm assuming that the elect that he draws is firstly, believing Jews, because during this end time period, two thirds of Jewry Jews are killed, but there is a remnant left of a third.

So Israel in this day will be that group. And we read in scripture that all Israel will be saved. So there is this group of Jews that will certainly be saved, but you've also got going on during the run up to this, you've got 144,000 evangelists going around spreading the gospel.

Then you've got the two witnesses. So there's going to be a massive number of people, Jews or otherwise, that get saved during this time. They are also God's chosen.

He's choosing to gather them. Now, let's just deal with this difference between this and the rapture. These believers are gathered on the earth. According to one Thessalonians four, the church is snatched up to be with the Lord.

God deals with them, not on the earth. He deals with them up there somewhere. These folk are being dealt with on earth, which leads us, I hope to undo another confusion in a moment.

[34:35] He then says, watch the fig tree, right? Verse 32, learn the parable from the fig tree. When its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leave, you know that summer is near.

So you too, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near right at the door. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. So the fig tree, the Jewish person knows that when the fig tree goes tender and starts to produce leaves, summer is around the corner.

And what he's saying is, when you see all these things I've told you about begin to take place, you know that I'm just around the corner. But this isn't a matter. And how many of us here know we, we are scratching our heads sometimes saying, Lord, surely you've got to come soon.

The place is going to pot. It's, you have got to come soon. I think it was Billy Graham that said, if the Lord doesn't come soon, he'll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.

[35:48] Because what's going on these days is even worse than Sodom and Gomorrah, in the estimation of some. So he deals with the church in the air, but he deals with these folks on the ground.

And he says, this generation will not pass away. Aha! That generation is now dead, isn't it? So that's not true, is it? Hmm. The word generation in this, it's the word genea, which is commonly used to mean this nation or this race.

So this nation will not pass away before these things come to pass. And if you go to Jeremiah, do it in your own time, Jeremiah 31 verse 37, you will find that what God says there through the prophet Jeremiah, is that while there are stars still in the sky, there'll always be in Israel.

Israel. So this isn't, this wasn't saying, you know, your grandsons are not going to see this. It's not generation in that sense.

It's, these things will all happen to this nation. Well, this nation is still here. And miraculously so. You only need to watch what's going on on the news to know that little tiny Israel, people, it's about the size of Wales, Israel.

[37:10] Is surrounded by enemies, outnumbered millions to one. And remains. Why? Because God said it would.

So. He's saying, just as you use the fig tree as a bit of a barometer about the seasons, use all these things as a bit of a barometer to let you know when I'm just around the corner, I'm almost touchable.

Right. You look at the fig tree and you think, any day now we'd see summer. We can look at all that's going on on the earth and say, any day now we're going to see the Lord. If any of you have conversations with Lisa, she shuts her eyes and says, now, Lord, now, Lord.

Oh, you didn't. OK, now, Lord. Because there is that feeling is that it's so close you can almost touch it. The fig tree in the Bible is always a type of Israel.

So once again, this scripture contextually is aligned with Israel and with no one else. And he says he expresses that heaven and earth will pass away, but his words will not pass away.

[38:27] So what he's saying is there is absolutely categorically no doubt that these things will happen. To that nation.

There is absolutely categorically no doubt. So much so. So he says the heaven and earth is more likely to pass away than these things not come to pass.

And then we come to the latter verses. These last verses. The coming of the Son of Man will be like the days of Noah.

In the days of Noah. It was the righteous or the ones that God had saved that stayed on earth. It was all the rest that were obliterated.

So in the rapture, the righteous are taken. But in this series of events, it's the righteous that stay on earth. And this is where Hal Lindsey got it wrong.

[39 : 27] Because he said, you know, one being taken and one being left. That was the rapture because he described the unrighteous as being taken. Sorry, he described the righteous as being taken and the unrighteous staying behind.

It's the other way around. The Jews, the chosen people of God, he has called them from all corners of the earth. And he's called them to himself to populate the new heaven and the new earth.

And the 1,000 year reign with Christ on the earth. And it's all the unrighteous, rebellious, Christ-rejecting people that are taken away. And it's a contextual thing.

It works no other way. And it's why a lot of people get confused over rapture doctrine. And then he says, of this day and hour, no one knows, nor the angels, nor even the sun.

You would think that that would be plain enough that we wouldn't even bother to try and work out these dates. But what do we do? I use the broad we.

[40 : 33] We're not supposed to know that. I need to find it out. And we go chasing after something that God has told us not even to bother with. We cannot know the day and the hour.

And there's another little ingredient. Even if you manage to work out roughly when it is, it says in another part of scripture that those days will be cut short for the sake of the elect.

So we don't know how much it's going to be cut short by. So even if you're there and you're only 24 hours away from it, you still don't know when it's going to happen. So these date setters, they become famous for five minutes for being date setters.

And then they become famous again a little while later for being wrong. Don't try to set dates. It is a waste of brain. So we finish with Daniel 7 verses 9 to 14.

Just before we read it, the application of all of this for us is that we be careful to rightly divide the word of truth.

[41 : 44] It's so easy to get off into confusion. And sometimes, and I don't care who you are, how many degrees you've got, how many letters you've got after the name. Sometimes you can't do it on your own.

You need to get together and have that really precious thing called fellowship. And you need to get around the word and dig into it together. And admit what you don't know.

To where people like Malcolm, who bless him, can't be here this morning, is so useful because he spent a lifetime digging in the scriptures.

And he's a goldmine of information. And when you get confused, you can often go to Malcolm and say, I'm confused about this, Malcolm. And he says, oh, well, I think I can help you with that. But bless him, if he doesn't know, he'll say, oh, sorry, I don't know.

Daniel 7. And we've already touched on a bit of Daniel 7, but we'll finish with this. It's so important to get the context of scriptures right.

[42 : 47] So much confusion takes place because people embark on the wrong context. So I'm going to read verse 9 to 14. And we've already read some of it, but we're going to read a bit more.

So this is Daniel prophetically describing the days we've just read about. I kept looking until thrones were set up and the ancient days took his seat.

His vesture was like white snow and the hair of his head was like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames and its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming from before him.

Thousands upon thousands were attending him and myriad upon myriads were standing before him. The court sat and the books were opened. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking.

I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away. But an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

[43 : 58] I kept looking in the night visions and behold with the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man was coming. And he came up to the ancient of days and he was presented before him.

And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom that all peoples and nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away.

And his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. I'm not even going to comment on that. I think that is self-explanatory. Father, I thank you for this wonderful word in which we can have so much and such a great confidence.

Lord, you have mapped out the future for us. And we read from the book of Isaiah that you are the one who can tell us the end from the beginning. And indeed, you do that. But I do pray, Lord, that you'll keep our minds sharp and you'll keep us from falling into deception.

That you will protect us and keep us on the right path with you. Lord, and let no man deceive us. Lord, equip us to rightly divide your word so that we are spared the fear and the confusion that comes from getting it wrong.

[45 : 20] And Lord, give us a healthy perception of you and your nature and your character that we don't walk about constantly in fear that somehow you're out to get us. When in fact, you have only ever been out to save us.

Lord, thank you in Jesus name. Amen.