A knowledge of what Jesus said and prophesied in Matthew prior to chapter 24, and prior to Mark 13 and Luke 21, would help Christians to understand the strong and bewildering confusion the disciples were plunged into by the arrest, trial, scourging and crucifixion of their King. They had heard the Lord's many parables on how the enemies of Christ would wail and gnash their teeth and be "cast into a furnace of fire," and certainly they were familiar with the last two chapters in the only Scripture in existence at that time. They also "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

In view of this we can better understand Peter's denial. The chief priests and the captains of the temple, and the elders arrested Jesus and brought Him into the high priest's house. There Peter, when questioned about being a disciple of Jesus, said, "I know him not." In the concordance the word "know" is rendered: perceive and understand. Peter could not understand, perceive or comprehend why Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested and brought as a thief to the high priest's house. That was not the Jesus Christ that Peter knew. The Jesus Peter knew was "the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16)

The man Jesus, that Peter knew, fed 5,000 men beside women and children with five loaves and two small fishes. He walked on water, spoke to a raging storm and instantly it became calm. The Jesus Peter knew called Lazarus to come out of his grave after his body had begun to decompose. Peter might have been present when Jesus stopped a funeral procession and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak."

The man Jesus, that Peter knew, healed all manner of diseases – ten lepers at one time. The Jesus Peter knew and understood made the blind to see and the deaf and dumb to hear and speak. He made a whip and drove the thieves out of the temple and "overthrew the tables of the money-changers." Peter had heard and seen Jesus silence and overcome the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees every time they attacked Jesus.

When Peter saw the chief priests, and the captains of the temple, and the elders arrest Jesus and brought him unto the high priest's house, Peter followed afar off. What Peter saw did not make sense. He could not understand why Jesus did not speak a word and slay these cruel and wicked men. This was a different Jesus than the Jesus Peter had known.

Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him. See John 13:11. He also knew that Peter would deny Him, for a very different reason. Luke relates the following in chapter 22, verses 31 and 32: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Peter's faith was terribly shaken and strained to the breaking point when Jesus permitted Himself to be arrested by the Jews and brought to the high priest. And when Jesus stood meekly silent, like a guilty criminal, while the Jews hurled all sorts of false charges against Him, that was more than Peter could take. It did not make sense. Peter could not understand what had happened to the King Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. Peter's breakdown was due to a lack of understanding. The lack of understanding was due to a lack of knowledge of the Scriptures and the plan and purposes of God.

There seems to be thousands of Peters in our nation today. Because there is not an immediate divine judgment upon the antichrist, they deny and ignore many chapters in the Scriptures and take revenge into their own hands. They cannot see the hand, purpose and strategy of our sovereign God in what the antichrists are permitted to do. As in Peter's time, they are bringing wrath upon themselves to the bitter end. For some reason Peter could not take hold of prophecies and the teachings of Christ that He would arise from His grave after three days. So it is with Peters today, they seem to be unable to take hold of and appropriate the new covenant, kingdom atonement, redemption for Israel and the gospel of the kingdom as preached by Christ.

Both Christ and Satan desired to have Peter. Christ prayed for Peter "that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted (convinced), strengthen thy brethren." Peter was converted and strengthened the brethren by expounding the prophecies of the Old Scriptures. See Acts 2:14–17 and Acts 3:12–26. Everything Peter preached was based on the Old Scripture and the new covenant. May God help us to do likewise.

It was the baptism of the Holy Spirit that opened the Word to Peter, made the Word real, and enabled Peter to lay hold on God's Word. And so it is today. May God enable us to go beyond just teaching, debating and arguing about the Israel identity and preach the Gospel.

There are some strange things and some lessons and warnings in the character and life of Judas. It was strange that when Jesus at the last supper said, "One of you shall betray me," that none of the other disciples knew it was Judas. "And began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" Judas had been so effective in concealing his motive and purpose in being in the service and ministry of the Lord that none of the other disciples even suspicioned Judas. Judas talked and conducted himself as a true servant of the Lord.

Here again, if the disciples had considered prophecies in the Old Scriptures and what Jesus had said, they would not have been deceived by Judas. A devil had gained control of Judas' mind and ambition prior to the last supper. Later Satan himself entered Judas. In Luke 22:3–6 we read: "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve."

To whom Judas went, after Satan had entered Judas, is a very revealing and significant fact. And so are the facts that they "covenanted to give him money," "and he promised . . . to betray him unto them" without the multitude being aware of it.

It is not possible to physically arrest, bind and deliver the Christ to the scribes and Pharisees today. But it continues to be done – for the same reason. John 1:1 states: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Verse 14 states: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Christ was and is the Word of God personified. Christ is the Word Incarnate.

Knowing this, Satan's strategy today is to arrest, wrest, bind and seal the Word of God to the scribes and Pharisees and those who accuse Jesus of having a devil. The whole Old Scripture has been delivered to the synagogue of Satan. And it is significant that those who do this have money. When Judas realized what he had done, he "went and hanged himself." Scripture indicates that it was Judas' avarice for money that enabled first a religious devil and later Satan to control and use Judas.

See John 12:6. Judas did not care for the poor. He was a thief and realized he could use the distress and misfortunes of people to get money to put into his bag. There is nothing that will open a ministry to "the wiles of the devil" as effectively as an avarice for money. Ministries that have betrayed Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and the prophets and have sold them to the antichrists will soon realize what they have done. Some will do as Peter did – weep bitterly. Others will be tempted to do as Judas did. Their denial and betrayal will also be considered a denial and a betrayal of this kingdom nation, if the Lord's kingdom parables mean anything.

Having considered some of "these things" recorded in the four Gospels, we shall now seek to rightly divide the word of truth spoken by the Christ at the mount of Olives. In Luke's report, beginning at verse 8 in chapter 21 and continuing through verse 19, Christ foretold the persecution that would come to Christians during the church age. Earthquakes, famines and pestilences and wars have occurred throughout the church age, although they will increase in the end time. In verse 9 Jesus said, "but the end is not by and by."

In verses 20 through 24 Jesus prophesied what would come upon Jerusalem "and wrath upon this people." This began in 70 A.D. when the Romans compassed Jerusalem and executed one of the most terrible slaughters in history. According to verse 24, this vengeance was to continue "until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Beginning at verses 25 through 36 Jesus spoke specifically of the present end time. It is well to distinguish between the persecution and tribulation which characterized the long church age and the present end time which is a time of "distress of nations, with perplexity." Daniel 12:1 states: "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." All nations must now be prepared for the reign of Christ and the kingdom age.

Mark's record of Christ's prophecy at the mount of Olives is the same as Luke's. From verses 5 through 18 Mark related mostly on what Jesus said about the deception, persecution and tribulation that would confront the Christians during the church age, saying, "the end shall not be yet."

Like Luke, Mark records that Jesus told His followers that when the Romans come against Jerusalem they should "flee to the mountains" in Judea. This command was for that time and place. Secular history relates that when the Romans besieged Jerusalem, they suddenly withdrew their troops for a short time. This gave the Christians an opportunity to flee out of Jerusalem. This was the fulfillment of Jeremiah 6:1. Most of the Christians were Benjamites and Galileans.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all state that the first thing Jesus said in answering their questions was, "Take heed lest any man deceive you." Deception and unscriptural doctrines seem to have been the Lord's greatest concern for the Christians during the church age. Christ repeatedly warned the disciples to beware of the teachings or doctrines of the Pharisees.

As stated before, there is an interweaving on what would come as vengeance on the city and inhabitants of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. and for years to come, and the vengeance and destruction destined to come on those who hate the Christ in this end time. This is especially so in Matthew's reports.

At verse 29 in chapter 24, Matthew clearly gives present end time prophecy and continues through verse 51. Verse 29 states: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her