

"The Case of Where a Bible Commentary Is Embedded Into Another Bible Commentary"

Collated by Iclioncross, 2026.

Abstract: Emanuel Swedenborg wrote his magnum opus entitled in English "Secrets of Heaven", which is a verse by verse commentary on the Bible Books of Genesis and Exodus. The English version has been translated from the first published Latin version into 12 volumes and approximately 7,500 pages. Contained within the third volume in the preliminary chapter sections is a complete summary of the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Matthew. This is when the Lord's disciples came up to Him and asked Him what would be "...the signs of the end of the age". The Lord then gives a teaching and prophetic dissertation on that very subject. For the inhabitants dwelling in heaven, this might be the most important teaching in the entire New Testament. For the church dwelling on the earth, this should be the most thoroughly investigated and taken to heart as nearly anything the Lord spoke. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15)

Words spoken by the Lord Jesus are in red text. Blue Bible text is spoken by prophets, evangelists or others. Matthew Chapter 24 is an extended teaching by the Lord to His Apostles when He was on the earth. The running commentary on each verse is written by Emanuel Swedenborg in black text.

Emanuel Swedenborg Matthew Chapter 24 commentary on **Matthew Chapter 24:1-51** Found inside the book "Secrets of Heaven". The original Latin name was "Arcana Coelestia" (**AC**).

AC 3353-3356: Chapter 26 (Beginning) Matthew 24:3-13

AC 3353. The majority of people believe that when the Last Judgment comes everything visible in the world is going to perish — that is to say, the earth will go up in flames, the sun and moon will be reduced to nothing, and the stars will disappear; and after that a new heaven and a new earth will come into being. They have acquired this idea from the prophetic revelations, among which such occurrences are mentioned. But what will in fact happen at that time is quite different, as becomes clear from what has been shown already concerning the Last Judgment in 900, 931, 1850, 2117-2133. Those paragraphs show that the Last Judgment is nothing else than the end of the Church with one group of people and the beginning of it with another. This end with one and beginning with another occurs when the Lord is not acknowledged any longer, or what amounts to the same, when there is no faith any longer. No acknowledgment or faith exists any longer when there is no charity any longer, for faith is in no way possible except with those in whom charity is present. In those circumstances the Church comes to an end and is transferred to others, as is plainly evident from all the things that the Lord Himself taught and foretold in the Gospels concerning the last day or the close of the age — in Matthew 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21. But since

nobody without the key, which is the internal sense, is able to understand those things foretold by Him there, let them be explained one after another.

[2] Here first let the following words be explained which appear in Matthew,

"The disciples came to Jesus, saying, Tell us. when will those things take place, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the close of the age? And Jesus answering said to them, See that no one leads you astray, for many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ; and they will lead many astray. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that you are not alarmed; for all things must take place; but the end is not yet. For nation will be roused against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines, and plagues, and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of sorrows" Matthew 24:3-8.

Those who confine themselves to the sense of the letter cannot know whether these words and those that follow in this chapter refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, or whether they refer to the end of days which is called the Last Judgment. But those admitted into the internal sense see clearly that the end of the Church is being referred to, this end being that which here and in other places is called 'the coming of the Lord' and 'the close of the age'. And inasmuch as the end of the Church is meant one is able to see that all these statements made by the Lord mean such things as have to do with the Church. But their overall meaning may be seen from the individual meaning below which each of them has in the internal sense.

"Many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ; and they will lead many astray." 'Name' here does not mean name, nor 'the Christ' the Christ, but 'name' means that by which the Lord is worshiped, 2724, 3006, while 'the Christ' means truth itself, 3009, 3010. Thus the meaning is that people will come who say that this is the sum and substance of faith, that is, it is the truth, when in fact it is neither the sum and substance of faith, nor the truth, but falsity.

"They will hear of wars and rumors of wars" means that arguments and disagreements over truths will arise which are wars in the spiritual sense.

'Nation will be roused against nation and kingdom against kingdom' means that evil will conflict with evil, and falsity with falsity, 'nation' meaning good, but in the contrary sense evil, see 1259, 1260, 1416, 1849, and 'kingdom' meaning truth, but in the contrary sense falsity, 1672, 2547. "And there will be famines, and plagues, and earthquakes in various places" means that no cognitions of good and truth will exist any more, and thus that the state of the Church is altered, meant by 'an earthquake'.

AC 3354. CHAPTER 26 (Continued). These individual meanings show what the Lord's words are used to mean, namely the **1**) first state of the perversion of the Church, which occurs when people cease to know any longer what good is and what truth is, and instead argue with one another about them, which gives rise to falsities. But because this is only the first state it is said that "the end is not yet, and that these are the beginning of sorrows"; and that state is referred to as "earthquakes in various places", which in the internal sense means an alteration of the state of the Church — a partial or initial alteration. The fact that this was told to the disciples means that it was addressed to all who belonged to the Church, for the twelve disciples represented these,

2089, 2129, 2130. This explains why they are told, "See that no one leads you astray, and also, When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that you are not alarmed".

AC 3355. CHAPTER 26 (Continued). In the internal sense 'an earthquake' is an alteration of the state of the Church. This is clear from the meaning of 'the earth' as the Church, dealt with in 566, 662, 1066, 1068, 1262, 1733, 1850, 2117, 2118, 2928, and from the meaning of 'a quake' as an alteration of state, here an alteration as regards the things that constitute the Church, namely good and truth. This is also evident from other places in the Word, as in Isaiah,

"It will happen, that he who is fleeing from the sound of the terror will fall into the pit, and he who is climbing out of the middle of the pit will be caught in the snare, for the floodgates from on high have been opened and the foundations of the earth have been made to tremble, the earth has been utterly shattered. The earth has been made to quake thoroughly, the earth staggers like a drunken man, it sways to and fro like a hut, and heavy upon it is its transgression, and it will fall and not rise again. And it will be on that day, that Jehovah will visit the host of the height on high and the kings of the ground on the ground". Isaiah 24:18-21.

Here it is quite evident that 'the earth' is the Church, for the subject is a Church whose 'foundations' are said to 'have been made to tremble', while the Church itself, having been 'shattered' and 'made to quake', 'staggers' and 'sways to and fro' when good and truth are not known any longer. 'The kings of the ground' are truths, in this case falsities, upon which visitation will take place. As regards 'kings' meaning truths and in the contrary sense falsities, see 1672, 2015, and as regards 'the ground' being similar in meaning to 'the earth', namely the Church, though there is a difference, see 566, 1068.

[2] In the same prophet,

"I will make a man (homo) more rare than pure gold, and a man (homo) than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make heaven quake and the earth will quake out of its place, at the wrath of Jehovah Zebaoth and in the day of His fierce anger". Isaiah 13:12-13.

Here also, the subject being Judgment Day, 'the earth' plainly stands for the Church which is said to 'quake out of its place' when it undergoes a change of state - 'place' meaning state, see 1273-1275, 1377, 2625, 2837. In the same prophet,

"Is this the man who, making the earth quake, making the kingdoms quake, makes the world into a wilderness and destroys its cities?" Isaiah 14:16-17.

This refers to Lucifer. 'The earth' stands for the Church, which is said 'to quake' when it lays claim to all things as its own. For 'kingdoms' means the truths accepted by the Church, see 1672, 2547.

[3] In Ezekiel,

"It will be on that day, that Gog will come over the land of Israel. My wrath will come up in My anger and in My zeal. In the fire of My wrath I will say, Surely on that day there will be a great earthquake on Israel's ground". Ezekiel 38:18-20.

'Gog' stands for external worship that has been separated from internal and so made idolatrous, 1151. 'Israel's land' or 'ground' stands for the spiritual Church, 'an earthquake' for an alteration of its state. In Joel,

"The earth quaked before Him, the heavens trembled. The sun and the moon were darkened, and the stars withdrew their shining". Joel 2:10.

This also refers to Judgment Day. 'The earth quaked' stands for an altered state of the Church, 'the sun and moon' for the good of love and the truth of faith, 1529, 1530, 2441, 2495, which are said to be 'darkened' when goods and truths are not acknowledged any longer. 'The stars' stands for cognitions of good and truth, 2495, 2849. In David,

"The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook and trembled because He was angered". Psalms 18:6-7.

'The earth trembled and quaked' stands for the Church when its state has become perverted.

[4] In John,

"When he opened the sixth seal I looked again, and behold, a great earthquake took place, and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the full moon became like blood, and the stars in the sky fell to the earth". Revelation 6:12-13.

Here 'an earthquake', 'the sun', 'the moon', and 'the stars' have a similar meaning to that which they have above in Joel. In the same book,

"At that hour a great earthquake took place, and a tenth part of the city fell, and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand people".{1} Revelation 11:13.

From all these places it is evident that 'an earthquake' means nothing other than an alteration of the state of the Church, and that 'the earth' has no other meaning in the internal sense than the Church. And since 'the earth' is the Church it is clear that 'the new heaven and the new earth' which are to take the place of the previous heaven and earth, Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; Revelation 21:1, means nothing other than a new Church, internal and external, 1733, 1850, 2117, 2118 (end).

AC 3356. CHAPTER 26 (End).

AC 3356. The reason 'a quake' means an alteration of state is that a quake occurs within the space-time continuum, and in the next life there is no concept of space and time, but instead of these the concept of state. In the next life it does indeed appear as though all things exist within space and follow one another in a time-sequence, but in themselves they are alterations of state, for space and time there are the products of these. This is very well known to all spirits, even evil ones, who by means of alterations of state effected in others cause them to appear somewhere other than where they in fact are. Man too is able to know of this from the fact that insofar as his state is one of affection and therefore of joy, or insofar as it is one of thought and therefore of withdrawal from the body, he is outside time. For while such a state lasts, many hours seem to

him to be as scarcely one hour. The reason for this is that states belong to his internal man, which is his spirit, to which states intervals of space and periods of time in the external man correspond. 'A quake' therefore, being one of the consecutive events that occur within space and time, in the internal sense means an alteration of state.

AC 3486-3489: CHAPTER 27 (Beginning) Matthew 24:8-14

AC 3486. The preliminary section of the previous chapter, paragraphs 3353-3356, explained what the Lord has said and foretold in Matthew 24:3-7 about the close of the age or end of the days of the Church. Here, in the Lord's Divine mercy, let the next section be explained, that is to say, verses 8-14 of the same chapter in that gospel, where it is said,

"All these are the beginning of sorrows. At that time they will deliver you up to affliction, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And at that time many will stumble, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray. And because iniquity is multiplied the charity of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all nations; and at that point the end will come".

AC 3487. Chapter 27 (continued) The words which come before these and which were explained in 3353-3356 are a description of the 1) first state of the perversion of the Church — a state when people will cease to know any longer what goodness is and what truth is, and will start to argue with one another about these, with the result that falsities arise. The words in the present section however describe 2) the second state of the perversion of the Church — a state when people will treat goodness and truth with contempt and will also loathe them, so that faith in the Lord will breathe its last, doing so by degrees as charity comes to an end.

AC 3488. Chapter 27 (continued) The fact that these words spoken by the Lord and recorded in the gospel describe the second state of the perversion of the Church is evident from their internal sense, which is as follows,

"All these are the beginning of sorrows" means the things that have already happened, that is to say, the things that belong to the first state of the perversion of the Church, which, as has been stated, takes place when people cease to know any longer what goodness is and what truth is and start to argue with one another about them, with the result that falsities, and consequently heresies arise. The fact that such things perverted the Church before very many centuries had gone by is evident from the consideration that the Church in the Christian world became divided, and that its divisions were the result of opinions concerning goodness and truth; so that the Church began to be perverted a long way back in the past.

[2] "At that time they will deliver you up to affliction, and will kill you" means that goodness and truth will perish, at first through 'affliction'— that is, through perversion — and then through men 'killing' them, that is, through denial. For 'killing', when used in reference to goodness and truth, means that these are not being accepted, and thus that people deny them, see 3387, 3395. 'You' - the apostles — means all things of faith in their entirety, and so means the good of faith as well as the truth of faith; for the twelve apostles meant those things, see 577, 2089, 2129, 2130 (end), 3272, 3354. Here it is quite evident that they have that meaning, for the subject is not the

preaching of the apostles but the close of the age.

[3] "And you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake" means contempt for and loathing of everything to do with goodness and truth. 'Hating' is holding in contempt and loathing, for these are manifestations of hatred. 'By all nations' means by persons under the influence of evil, for 'nations' refers to these, see 1259, 1260, 1849, 1868, 2588 (end). 'For My name's sake' is for the Lord's sake, and so for the sake of everything that comes from Him - 'the Lord's name' being everything in its entirety by which He is worshiped, and so everything belonging to His Church, see 2724, 3006.

[4] "At that time many will stumble, and betray one another, and hate one another" means hostility on account of those things. 'Many will stumble' means the hostility in itself — the Lord's Human being that against which the hostility is directed. That this will be a cause of offense or a stumbling-block is foretold in various places in the Word. 'Betray one another' is hostility towards one another arising out of falsity conflicting with truth. 'And hate one another' is hostility towards one another arising out of evil conflicting with good.[5] "And many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray" means declarations of falsity - 'false prophets' meaning teachers of falsities, thus false doctrine, see 2534. 'And will lead many astray' means that there will be things that are the issue of that doctrine.

[6] "And because iniquity is multiplied the charity of many will grow cold" means charity together with faith breathing its last. 'Because iniquity is multiplied' means in keeping with falsities of faith. 'The charity of many will grow cold' means charity breathing its last; for the two — charity and faith — go together side by side. Where there is no faith there is no charity; and where there is no charity there is no faith. Charity however is that which receives faith, and the absence of charity is that which rejects faith. This is the origin of all falsity and of all evil.[7] "But he who endures to the end will be saved" means the salvation of those who have charity. 'He who endures to the end' is the person who does not allow himself to be led astray, and so does not yield in times of temptation.

[8] "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all nations" means that the Christian world will be the first to come to know it. 'Will be preached' means that it will come to be known. 'This gospel of the kingdom' is this truth, that it really is so - 'gospel' being pronouncement, 'the kingdom' truth, for 'the kingdom' means truth, see 1672, 2547. 'In the whole inhabited earth' is the Christian world, 'the earth' being that region where the Church, and so the Christian world, is, see 662, 1066, 1068, 1262, 1733, 1850, 2117, 2118, 2928, 3355. Here the Church is called 'the inhabited earth' from the life of faith, that is, from the good that dwells in truth, for 'inhabiting' in the internal sense is living, and 'inhabitants' are the goods that dwell in truth, 1293, 2268, 2451, 2712, 3384. 'As a testimony' means to ensure that they know, and to prevent them pretending that they do not know. 'To all nations' means to the evil, 1259, 1260, 1849, 1868, 2588. For when people are under the influence of falsity and evil they no longer know what truth is or what good is; indeed they believe that falsity is truth, that evil is good, and vice versa. When the Church reaches this state, at that point the end will come. The words that follow next, to be explained in the Lord's Divine mercy in the preliminary section of the next chapter of Genesis, deal with that state of the Church which is called 'the abomination of desolation', which is 3) the third state.

AC 3489. Chapter 27 (End Matthew 24:8-14) To those within the Church it is not apparent that this is the condition of the Church, that is to say, that they treat with contempt and loathe everything to do with goodness and truth, and also show hostility towards those things, especially towards the Lord Himself. They do indeed attend places of worship, listen to sermons with some kind of reverence while they are there, go to the Holy Supper, and sometimes discuss those things with one another in a seemingly way. The evil accordingly do the same things as the good, even exercising common charity or friendship to one another, and as a consequence others do not see in them any contempt for the goods and truths of faith, or therefore any contempt for the Lord, still less any loathing of these, and least of all any hostility towards them. But those very actions are outward forms, by which one person leads another astray, whereas the inward forms existing with members of the Church are completely different and the complete reverse of those outward forms. It is the inward forms which are described here and which are of that nature. The essential nature of these inward forms is presented visually in heaven; for the angels pay no attention to anything else than the things that are internal — to ends in view, that is, to people's intentions and wills, and to their thoughts stemming from these. How different these are from external things becomes clear from members of the Christian world entering the next life, regarding whom see [2121-2126](#).

[2] Indeed in the next life it is solely in accordance with internal things that people think and speak, for external things have been left behind with the body. There it is evident that however peaceable such people seemed to be in the world they nevertheless hated one another, and hated everything belonging to faith, hating the Lord above all else; for at the mere mention of the Lord's name in their presence in the next life a sphere not only of contempt but also of loathing and hostility towards Him clearly emanates from them and envelops them, including those who to outward appearances spoke about Him with reverence and also preached about Him. It is similar when charity and faith are mentioned. As to their inward form which is disclosed there, these people are such as they would have been while living in the world if external restraints had been released and taken away from them. That is, if they had not in the world feared for their lives and feared the law, and in particular if they had not feared for their reputation on account of the positions they strove and worked for, and of the wealth they desired and avidly sought after, they would on account of their deadly hatred have laid into one another, as their intentions and thought directed them. And without any conscience they would have seized other people's goods and also without any conscience would have butchered them, no matter how utterly innocent their victims may have been. Such is the nature of Christians interiorly at the present day, apart from a few who remain unknown. From all this it is evident what the nature of the Church is essentially.

AC 3650-3655: Chapter 28 (Beginning) Matthew 24:15-18

AC 3650. Chapter 28. (Beginning) The preliminary section of the previous chapter (27), paragraphs [3486-3489](#), explained what the Lord has taught and foretold about the Last Judgment or last days of the Church in Matthew 24:8-14. In the preliminary section of the present chapter there now follows, in the section-by-section method of presentation that has been adopted, the explanation of verses [15-18](#) of that chapter in Matthew,

["When therefore you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place — let him who is reading this take note — then let those who are in Judea flee](#)

into the mountains. Let him who is on the roof of the house not go down to take anything out of his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his clothing”

AC 3651. Chapter 28 (Continued) Anyone may see that these statements contain arcana and that until those arcana are disclosed no one can possibly know what is meant by those who are in Judea being told to flee into the mountains, what is meant by him who is on the roof of the house being forbidden to go down to take anything out of the house, and by him who is in the field being forbidden to turn back to get his clothing. Without the internal sense to teach what these things mean and imply, those who study the Word and those who explain it might be drawn towards and slide into opinions that are totally alien to the truth. More than this, people who at heart deny the sacredness of the Word may therefore conclude that no more is described by such words than flight and escape from an approaching enemy and that consequently nothing more sacred than this lies within them. But in fact these words spoken by the Lord give a full description of that state when the Church has been devastated as regards goods of love and as regards truths of faith, as may become clear from the explanation of these words that follows below.

AC 3652. Chapter 28 (Continued) The internal sense of these words is as follows:

“When therefore you see the abomination of desolation” means when the Church has undergone devastation, which is the situation when the Lord is acknowledged no longer, and therefore when there is no love of Him nor any belief in Him; also when there is no longer any charity towards the neighbor nor consequently any belief in what is good and true. When these conditions exist in the Church, or rather in the area where the Word is, that is to say, in the thoughts of the heart though not in the doctrine on the lips, it is a case of desolation, and the circumstances that have just been mentioned constitute 'the abomination of that desolation'. Consequently 'when you see the abomination of desolation' means when anyone witnesses such conditions. And what he is to do when he does witness them follows in verses 16-18.

[2] “Spoken of by the prophet Daniel” means, in the internal sense, spoken of by the Prophets, for when any prophet is mentioned by name in the Word it is not simply that prophet who is meant but the whole prophetic part of the Word, the reason being that names do not ever come through into heaven, 1876, 1888. Even so, one prophet does not have the same meaning as another. For what Moses, Elijah and Elisha mean, see the Preface to Chapter 18, and 2762. By 'Daniel' however is meant every prophetic statement concerning the Lord's coming and the state of the Church, in this case its final state. Much reference is made in the Prophets to devastation, and by the reference to it here in Daniel is meant in the sense of the letter the devastation of the Jewish and Israelitish Church, but in the internal sense the devastation of the Church in general, and thus also the devastation of it which is now at hand.

[3] “Standing in the holy place” means a devastation involving everything that forms part of what is good and true. 'The holy place' is a state of love and faith, for by 'a place' in the internal sense is meant a state, see 2625, 2837, 3356, 3387. The 'holy' element of that state consists in the good of love and in the truth of faith grounded in this. Nothing else is meant in the Word by the expression 'holy', for goodness and truth originate in the Lord, who is Holiness itself or the Sanctuary.

“Let him who is reading this take note” means that these matters are to be thoroughly understood

by those within the Church, especially by those who have love and faith, to whom the present words refer.

[4] “Then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains” means that members of the Church are to fix their attention solely on the Lord and so on love to Him and on charity towards the neighbor. For 'Judea' means the Church, as will be shown below, while 'a mountain' means the Lord Himself but 'the mountains' love to Him and charity towards the neighbor, see 795, 796, 1430, 2722. According to the sense of the letter when Jerusalem was besieged, as was done by the Romans, they were not to resort to that city but to go onto the mountains, according to the following in Luke,

“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its devastation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee onto the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of it^{1} depart, but those who are out in the country let them not enter it”. Luke 21:20-21.

[5] The same applies to this reference to **Jerusalem**; that is to say, in the sense of the letter it is the city of Jerusalem that is meant, but in the internal sense the Lord's Church, see 402, 2117. For every single thing mentioned in the Word concerning the Jewish and Israelitish people is representative of the Lord's kingdom in heaven and of the Lord's kingdom on earth, which is the Church, as has been shown often. Consequently nowhere in the internal sense is '**Jerusalem**' used to mean Jerusalem, or '**Judea**' to mean Judea. But every single thing so mentioned was such that by means of it the celestial and spiritual things of the Lord's kingdom were able to be represented. It was for the sake of what they represented that the events which have been recorded took place. Thus the Word was able to be written in such a way that it lay both within the mental grasp of people reading it, and within the understanding of angels who were present with them. This was also the reason why the Lord spoke in a similar way. Indeed if He had spoken in any other way it would not have come within the mental grasp of those reading it, especially at that time, nor simultaneously within the angels' power of understanding. Thus it would not have been accepted by man, nor understood by angels.

AC 3653. Chapter 28 (continued). From these considerations it may now be seen that these verses give a thorough description of the state of the Church when devastated as regards the goods of love and as regards the truths of faith. At the same time they urge what is to be done in those circumstances by those with whom such goods and truths are present. There are three kinds of people within the Church, namely, those who are moved by **1)** love to the Lord, those who are moved by **2)** charity towards the neighbor, and those who are moved by **3)** the affection for truth. Members of the first group — those moved by love to the Lord — are meant specifically in the injunction, Let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains. Members of the second group are those who are moved by charity towards the neighbor; and these are meant specifically in, Let him who is on the roof of the house not go down to take anything out of his house. Members of the third group are those who are moved by the affection for truth; and these are meant specifically in, Let him who is in the field not turn back to get his clothing. See what has been stated and explained already about these matters in Volume Two, in 2454, and also in the same paragraph what is meant by '**turning back**' and '**looking back behind oneself**'.

AC 3654. Chapter 28 (continued). In the internal sense of the Word '**Judea**' does not mean Judea, any more than '**Jerusalem**' means Jerusalem. This becomes clear from many places in the

Word. In the Word Judea is mentioned less frequently than the land of Judah, which, like the land of Canaan, means the Lord's kingdom, and therefore the Church also since the Church is the Lord's kingdom on earth. And Judea has this meaning because Judah or the Jewish nation represented the Lord's celestial kingdom, and Israel or the Israelitish people His spiritual kingdom. And because His kingdom was represented by them, therefore when that nation or people is mentioned in the Word, nothing else is meant in its internal sense.

[2] The truth of this will be evident from those things which in the Lord's Divine mercy will be stated later on regarding Judah and the land of Judah. For the present it will be evident from the following few examples in the Prophets: In Isaiah,

"My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. 1 He surrounded it [with an enclosure] and gathered out the stones, and planted it with the choicest vine and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress in it. And he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, O inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah, judge, I pray you, between Me and My vineyard. I will make it a desolation, for the vineyard of Jehovah Zebaoth is the house of Israel, and the man of Judah His pleasant plant. 2 And He looked for judgment, but behold, festering; for righteousness, but behold, a cry". [Isaiah 5:1-3, 6-7](#).

Here the subject in the sense of the letter is the perverted state of the Israelites and Jews, but in the internal sense it is the perverted state of the Church represented by Israel and Judah.

'Inhabitant of Jerusalem' is the Church's good - 'inhabitant' meaning [good](#), or what amounts to the same, those with whom good is present, see [2268](#), [2451](#), [2712](#), [3613](#), and 'Jerusalem' the Church, [402](#), [2117](#). 'The house of Israel' has a similar meaning - 'house' meaning [good](#), [710](#), [1708](#), [2233](#), [2331](#), [3142](#), [3538](#), and 'Israel' the Church, [3305](#). 'The man of Judah' also is very similar, for 'a man' means truth, [265](#), [749](#), [1007](#), [3134](#), [3310](#), [3459](#), and Judah [good](#). The difference however is that 'the man of Judah' means truth grounded in the good of love to the Lord, which is called celestial truth, that is, those governed by that kind of truth are meant.

[3] In the same prophet,

"He will raise an ensign for the nations, and will gather the outcasts of Israel, and will assemble the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Then the rivalry of Ephraim will depart, and the enemies of Judah be cut off. Ephraim will not vie with Judah, and Judah will not harass Ephraim. Jehovah will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt, and will shake His hand over the River with the might of His spirit. Then there will be a highway for the remnant of His people which will remain from Asshur". [Isaiah 11:12-13, 15-16](#).

Here the subject in the sense of the letter is the bringing back of the Israelites and Jews from captivity, but in the internal sense it is a new Church in general and with each person in particular who is being regenerated or becoming the Church. 'The outcasts of Israel' stands for their truths, 'the dispersed of Judah' for their goods. 'Ephraim' stands for the understanding part of their minds, which will no longer offer any resistance. 'Egypt' stands for facts, and 'Asshur' for reasoning based on these, which they have perverted. 'The outcasts', 'the dispersed', 'the remnant', and 'those who remain' stand for truths and goods which survive. For 'Ephraim' means the understanding part of the mind, as will be shown elsewhere, while 'Egypt' means factual knowledge, see [1164](#), [1165](#), [1186](#), [1462](#), [2588](#), [3325](#), 'Asshur' reasoning, [119](#), [1186](#), and 'remnant' the goods and truths that the Lord has stored away in the interior man, [468](#), [530](#), [560](#), [561](#), [660](#), [661](#), [798](#), [1050](#), [1738](#), [1906](#), [2284](#).

[4] In the same prophet,

"Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel and who came out of the waters of Judah. For they are called after the city of holiness, and upon the God of Israel they place their reliance". [Isaiah 48:1-2](#).

'The waters of Judah' stands for truths which spring from the good of love to the Lord. The truths from that source are actually the goods of charity, which are called spiritual goods and constitute the spiritual Church, the internal of this Church being meant by 'Israel' and the external by 'the house of Jacob'. This shows what is meant by 'the house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel and who came out of the waters of Judah'.

[5] In the same prophet,

"I will bring forth seed from Jacob, and from Judah the heir of My mountains, and My chosen ones will possess it, and My servants will dwell there". [Isaiah 65:9](#).

'From Judah the heir of mountains' stands in the highest sense for the Lord, and in the representative sense for those in whom love to Him is present and so the good of love to Him and the good of love towards the neighbor. As regards 'mountains' meaning these forms of good, this has been shown above in [3652](#).

[6] In Moses,

"A lion's whelp is Judah; from the prey you have gone up, my son. He crouched, he lay down like a lion, and like an old lion; who will rouse him up?" [Genesis 49:9](#).

Here it is quite evident that in the highest sense 'Judah' is used to mean the Lord, and in the representative sense those with whom the good of love to Him is present. In David,

"When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a foreign people, Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominions" [Psalms 114:1-2](#).

Here also 'Judah' stands for celestial good, which is the good of love to the Lord, while 'Israel' stands for [celestial truth](#), which is [spiritual good](#).

[7] In Jeremiah,

"Behold, the days are coming, says Jehovah, and I will raise up for David a righteous branch, who will reign as king, and will prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is His name which they will call Him, Jehovah our Righteousness". [Jeremiah 23:5-6](#); [33:15-16](#).

This refers to the Coming of the Lord. 'Judah' stands for those with whom the good of love to the Lord is present, 'Israel' for those with whom the truth that goes with that good is present. For 'Judah' is not used to mean Judah, nor 'Israel' to mean Israel, as may be seen from the fact that neither Judah nor Israel was actually preserved any longer. Similarly in the same prophet,

"I will bring back the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel, and build them as they were previously. [Jeremiah 33:7](#).

The like may be seen here also. In the same prophet,

"In those days and at that time, says Jehovah, the children of Israel will come, they and the children of Judah together, weeping as they come; and they will seek Jehovah their God; and they will seek Zion on the way, their faces towards it". [Jeremiah 50:4-5](#).

In the same prophet,

"At that time they will call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah, and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, because of the name of Jehovah; and they will go no more after the stubbornness of their own evil heart. In those days the house of Judah will go to the house of Israel, and together they will come over the land out of the land of the north". [Jeremiah 3:17-18](#).

[8] In the same prophet,

"Behold, the days are coming, said Jehovah, in which I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast; and I will make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant. This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days: I will put My law in the midst of them, and will write it on their heart". [Jeremiah 31:27, 31, 33](#).

This shows plainly that Israel or the house of Israel was not meant, for once dispersed among the gentiles they were never brought back from captivity. Nor consequently was Judah or the house of Judah meant. Instead Israel and Judah meant in the internal sense members of the Lord's spiritual and celestial kingdoms. It is with these people that the new covenant is made, and in whose hearts the law is written. 'The new covenant' stands for being joined to the Lord by means of good, [665](#), [666](#), [1023](#), [1038](#), [1864](#), [1996](#), [2003](#), [2021](#), [2037](#). 'The law written in their heart' stands for a perception of good and of truth springing from that good, and also for conscience.

[9] In Joel,

It will happen on that day that the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and all the streams of Judah will flow with water; and a spring will come forth from the house of Jehovah and will water the river of Shittim. Egypt will become a waste, and Edom a desolate wilderness, 3 on account of the violence done to the children of Judah whose innocent blood they have shed in their land. And Judah will abide for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. [Joel 3:18-20](#).

From every detail here also it is evident that 'Judah' is not used to mean Judah, nor 'Jerusalem' to mean Jerusalem, but those in whom the holiness of love and charity dwells, for they are 'to abide for ever' and 'from generation to generation'.

[10] In Malachi,

"Behold, I am sending My angel, who will prepare the way before Me; and suddenly there will come to His temple the Lord whom you are seeking, and the angel of the covenant in whom you delight. Then the minchah 4 of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to Jehovah, as in the days of eternity, and as in former years" [Malachi 3:1, 4](#).

This refers to the Coming of the Lord, at which time, it is clear, the minchah of Judah and Jerusalem was not acceptable to Jehovah. From this it is evident that Judah and Jerusalem mean such things as constitute the Lord's Church. The same applies wherever else Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem are mentioned in the Word. From this one may now see what is meant in Matthew by 'Judea', namely the Lord's Church, in that case when vastated.

Footnotes: 1. literally, on a horn of a son of oil. 2. literally, the young plant of His delights. 3. literally, the wilderness of a waste. 4. Generally rendered 'offering' in English versions of the Scriptures. It is a Hebrew word. The 'ch' in it has a hard or guttural pronunciation, as in German buch or Scottish loch.

AC 3655. Chapter 28 (End). The subject in the previous sections of [Matthew 24](#) has been the first and second states of the perversion of the Church. 1) The first state exists when people cease to know any longer what good is or what truth is, and instead argue with one another about these, as a result of which falsities arise, see [3354](#). And 2) the second state exists when they treat good and truth with contempt and also reject them, and so when belief in the Lord breathes its last, which things take place step by step as charity ceases to exist, see [3487](#), [3488](#). Here the 3) third state is now dealt with, which exists when good and truth in the Church are made desolate.

AC 3751-3757: Chapter 29 [Matthew 24:19-22](#)

AC 3751. Chapter 29 (Beginning). The preliminary section of the previous chapter explained what the Lord has foretold about the final period of the Church in [Matthew 24:15-18](#). In the preliminary section of the present chapter, in which the same section-by-section method of presentation is adopted, the explanation is given of the words that follow in verses [19-22](#) of that chapter in Matthew, which are these,

"But woe to those who are with child or giving suck in those days! Pray that your flight may not take place in winter or on a sabbath. For then there will be great affliction, unlike any from the beginning of the world until now, or any in the future. And unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short".

AC 3752. Chapter 29 (continued). No one can possibly grasp what these words mean unless he has been enlightened by means of the internal sense. The fact that they are not utterances concerning the destruction of Jerusalem is apparent from many things said in that chapter, for example from the statement 'unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short'; and the statement further on, 'after the affliction of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then will appear the sign of the Son of Man; and they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory'; and from other statements. Nor are they utterances concerning the destruction of the world, as is also evident from many things said in this same chapter. In what has gone before, for example, it is said, 'Let him who is at that time on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house, and let him who is in the field not turn back to fetch his clothes', then in what is up for consideration in this section - 'Pray that your flight may not take place in winter or on a sabbath', and in what occurs further on, 'At that time two will be in the field; one will be taken, the other left; two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, the other left'. But such utterances, it is evident, concern the final period of the Church, that is, its devastation. It is said to have undergone devastation when charity does not exist any longer.

AC 3753. Chapter 29 (continued). Anyone who thinks with reverence about the Lord and who believes that the Divine was within Him and that He spoke from the Divine may know and believe that, as with everything else the Lord taught and said, those utterances do not refer to one

particular nation but to the entire human race. Anyone may also know and believe that they do not refer to the worldly but to the spiritual condition of the human race, as well as that the Lord's words embraced the things that constitute His kingdom and those that constitute the Church, for those things are Divine and are eternal. One who believes these things concludes that the words 'Woe to those who are with child or giving suck in those days' do not mean those who are with child or giving suck, and that the words 'Pray that your flight may not take place in winter or on a sabbath' do not mean any flight on account of a worldly foe, and so on.

AC 3754. Chapter 29 (continued). In the verses prior to these the subject was three states of the perversion within the Church of what is good and true, and the subject now is a fourth state, which is also the last. **1)** The first state exists when people cease to know any longer what good is or what truth is, but begin to argue with one another about these, as a result of which, falsities arise, see 3354. The **2)** second state exists when they treat good and truth with contempt and also reject them, and so when belief in the Lord breathes its last, which things take place step by step as charity ceases to exist, see 3487, 3488. The **3)** third state exists when good and truth in the Church are made desolate, see 3651, 3652. Now in this present section the **4)** fourth state is dealt with, which exists when good and truth are made profane. The fact that the present section describes that state may be seen from each detail in the internal sense, which is as follows.

AC 3755. Chapter 29 (continued). "But woe to those who are with child or giving suck in those days!" means those who have been endowed with the good that flows from love to the Lord and with the good that goes with innocence. 'Woe!' is an expression meaning the danger of eternal condemnation. 'Being with child' means conceiving good that stems from heavenly love. 'Giving suck' is also a state of innocence, 'those days' the state which the Church is passing through at that time.

[2] "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath" means removal from those things to prevent it happening rapidly during a state of excessive cold or a state of excessive heat. 'Flight' is removal from a state of good stemming from love and from innocence, dealt with just above. 'Flight in winter' is a removal from these during a state of excessive cold — cold being a time when there is an aversion to those things, which is caused by all kinds of self-love. 'Flight on a sabbath' is removal from them during a state of excessive heat — heat being external holiness when self-love and love of the world exist inwardly.

[3] "For then there will be great affliction, unlike any from the beginning of the world until now, or any in the future" means the furthest degree of the perversion and devastation of the good and truth of the Church, which is profanation. For the profanation of that which is holy leads to eternal death, a death far more serious than that to which any other states of evil lead, and which is all the more serious insofar as they are interior goods and truths which are made profane. And since they are interior goods and truths that have been disclosed and made known in the Christian Church and have then been made profane it is said that 'then there will be great affliction, unlike any from the beginning of the world until now, or any in the future'.

[4] "And unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short" means the removal of those who belong to the Church from interior goods and truths to exterior in order that those who lead lives that are good and true may nevertheless be saved. 'Cutting days short' means a state of such removal; 'no flesh being saved' means that otherwise nobody could be saved; 'the elect' means those who lead lives that are good and true.

AC 3756. Chapter 29 (continued). One could show quite fully here that this is the internal sense of these words. It could be shown fully that '[those who are with child](#)' means those who first are endowed with good, and '[those who give suck](#)' those who are endowed with a state of innocence. It could also be shown fully that '[flight](#)' means a removal from these, '[winter](#)' an aversion to those forms of good because self-love is in possession of the interiors, while '[flight on a sabbath](#)' means profanation, which comes about when holiness exists externally but self-love and love of the world reign inwardly. But since the same words, and expressions like them, occur in various places further on, the meaning of them will in the Lord's Divine mercy be shown in those places.

AC 3757. Chapter 29 (End of section) Few however know what is meant by profaning that which is holy. But this may be seen by looking at what has been stated and shown already.

Those who know, acknowledge, and are endowed with good and truth are able to profane these, but not those who have not acknowledged them, still less those who do not know them, [593](#), [1008](#), [1010](#), [1059](#), [3398](#).

So it is possible for those inside the Church to profane holy things but not those outside it, [2051](#).

It is possible for members of the celestial Church to profane any holy good, and for members of the spiritual Church to profane any holy truth, [3399](#).

To the Jews therefore interior truths were not disclosed, lest they profaned them, [3398](#).

Least of all are gentiles able to profane them, [2051](#).

Profanation is mixing and linking good and evil together, and also truth and falsity together, [1001](#), [1003](#), [2426](#).

It was meant by eating blood, something strictly forbidden in the Jewish Church, [1003](#).

People are therefore withheld as far as possible from an acknowledgment of and a faith in what is good and true if they are unable to remain steadfast in the same, [3398](#), [3402](#), and are therefore kept in ignorance, [301-303](#); and their worship also becomes external, [1327](#), [1328](#).

Internal truths are not revealed until the Church has undergone devastation, for at that point it is no longer possible for good and truth to be rendered profane, [3398](#), [3399](#).

As soon as this was the case therefore the Lord came into the world, [3398](#).

How much danger lies in profaning the Word and that which is holy, [571](#), [582](#).

AC 3897-3901: Chapter 30 Matthew 24:[23-28](#)

AC 3897. Chapter 30 (Beginning) In the preliminary section of this chapter — in accordance with the method of presentation adopted previously — those things which the Lord has taught in [Matthew 24](#) about the Last Judgment or final stages of the Church come up for explanation. The preliminary section of the previous chapter explained the contents of [Matthew 24:19-22](#), and now an explanation appears below of verses [23-28](#), which are,

["Then if anyone says to you, Behold, here is the Christ! or There! do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and they will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they say to](#)

you, Behold, He is in the wilderness! do not go out; Behold, He is in the inner rooms! do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and is seen as far as the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there also the eagles will be gathered together”.

AC 3898. Chapter 30 (continued) What these words embody no one can know except from the teaching of the internal sense — such as the prediction that false Christs will arise who will show great signs and wonders; the command that they should not go out if they were told that Christ was in the wilderness, and that they should not believe it if they were told that He was in the inner rooms; the declaration that the coming of the Son of Man will be like lightning which comes from the east and is seen as far as the west; and also the comment that where the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. These various statements — like those that come before and those that follow them in this chapter — do not seem, in the sense of the letter, to have any connection with one another. But in the internal sense there is a most wonderful flow of ideas, and this starts to be seen when one understands what is meant by 'false Christs', by 'great signs and wonders', by 'the wilderness' and 'the inner rooms', also by 'the coming of the Son of Man', and lastly by 'the carcass' and 'the eagles'.

[2] The Lord's reason for speaking in this manner was that people should not understand the Word in case they profaned it; for once the Church had been destroyed, as it had been at that time among the Jews, people would have profaned the Word if they had understood it. This was also why the Lord spoke in parables, as He himself teaches in [Matthew 13:13-15](#); [Mark 4:11-12](#); [Luke 8:10](#). For the Word cannot be profaned by those who have no knowledge of its mysteries, only by those who do, see [301-303](#), [593](#), [1008](#), [1010](#), [1059](#), [1327](#), [1328](#), [2051](#), [3398](#), [3402](#); and more so by those who consider themselves learned than by those who consider themselves unlearned.

[3] But the reason why the interior contents of the Word are being disclosed at the present time is that the Church today has been so much devastated, that is, is so devoid of faith and love, that although people know and understand they still do not acknowledge, let alone believe, see [3398](#), [3399](#) - with the exception of a few who lead a good life and are called the elect. Among these few who are now able to be taught the new Church is to be established. But where those few are the Lord alone knows. Few of these will be inside the Church. In the past it has been the gentiles among whom new Churches have been established, see [2986](#).

AC 3899. Chapter 30 (continued) The subject in the verses prior to these in this chapter of Matthew was the progressive ruination of the Church. That is to say, **1**) first of all people ceased to know any longer what good or truth was, and instead began to argue with one another about these; after that **2**) they treated them with contempt; then in **3**) a third phase they did not acknowledge them; and in **4**) a fourth they profaned them, see [3754](#). But now the subject is the kind of doctrine that is taught generally in the Church, and especially by those whose worship is outwardly holy but inwardly profane; that is, those who with their lips praise the Lord in holy and reverent ways, but in their hearts they worship self and the world, so that for them worshipping the Lord is a means by which they gain position and wealth. When this is what their worship becomes, then to the extent they have come to acknowledge the Lord, the heavenly life and faith, they profane the same. This state of the Church is the subject now, as may be seen more clearly from the internal sense of the Lord's words quoted above, which is as follows:

AC 3900. Chapter 30 (continued) “**Then if anyone says to you, Behold, here is the Christ! or There! do not believe it**” means a warning to beware of what they teach. ‘**The Christ**’ refers to the Lord as regards Divine Truth, and therefore to the Word and to doctrine from the Word. But here the contrary is clearly meant — Divine Truth falsified, or doctrine that teaches what is false. For ‘**Jesus**’ means Divine Good and ‘**Christ**’ Divine Truth, see [3004](#), [3005](#), [3008](#), [3009](#).

[2] **For false Christs and false prophets** will arise means the falsities (errors) taught by that doctrine. ‘**False Christs**’ means matters of doctrine from the Word that have been falsified, that is, truths that are not Divine, as is evident from what has been stated immediately above; see also [3010](#), [3732](#) (end). And ‘**false prophets**’ means those who teach those falsities, [2534](#). In the Christian world those who teach falsities are in particular those who have self-aggrandizement and also worldly wealth as their end in view. Indeed they twist the truths of the Word to suit themselves. For when self-love and love of the world is the end in view, nothing else is contemplated. These are the ‘**false Christs and false prophets**’.

[3] “**And they will show great signs and wonders**” means proofs and convincing reasons that are based on outward appearances and on illusions by which the simple allow themselves to be led astray. The meaning of ‘**signs and wonders**’ will in the Lord’s Divine mercy be shown elsewhere.

[4] “**So as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect**” means those who lead lives that are good and true and who therefore abide in the Lord. These are the ones who in the Word are called ‘**the elect**’. They are rarely present in a group of those who cloak worship that is profane with outward reverence; or if they are present there they go unrecognized because the Lord hides them and so protects them. Until they have been made strong by Him, they easily allow themselves to be led astray by external practices expressing reverence; but once they have been made strong they are not deceived. For though they are not aware of it, they are kept by the Lord in the company of angels, when it is impossible for them to be led astray by that unspeakable crew.

[5] “**Behold, I have told you beforehand**” means an exhortation to be shrewd, that is, to be on their guard, since they are among false prophets who appear in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves, [Matthew 7:15](#). Those false prophets are the sons of the age who are more shrewd, that is, more cunning, in their own generation than the sons of light, referred to in [Luke 16:8](#). For this reason the Lord warns them as follows,

“**Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves**”. [Matthew 10:16](#).

[6] “**If therefore they say to you, Behold, He is in the wilderness! do not go out; Behold, He is in the inner rooms! do not believe it**” means that what they say about the truth, what they say about good, and many other things, are not to be believed. Nobody can see that this is the meaning of these words except one who is acquainted with the internal sense. They contain an arcanum within them, as one may see from the fact that the Lord spoke them and that without some other sense concealed within them interiorly they would not amount to anything. That is to say, the injunctions not to go out if they said that Christ was in the wilderness and not to believe it if they said that He was in the inner rooms would not amount to anything. But truth that has undergone devastation is what ‘**the wilderness**’ means, and good that has undergone devastation, what ‘**the inner rooms**’ or inward parts means. The reason why truth that has undergone devastation is meant by a wilderness is that when the Church has undergone devastation, that is, when there is no Divine truth there any longer because no good exists there any longer, that is, no love to the

Lord or charity towards the neighbor, it is called a **wilderness** or said to be **in the wilderness**. For the word wilderness is used to mean everything that is uncultivated or uninhabited, [2708](#), and also to mean that which has little life to it, [1927](#), as is the case at that time with truth in the Church. From this it is evident that '**the wilderness**' here means a Church in which truth does not exist.

[7] '**The inner rooms**' or inward parts however in the internal sense means the Church as regards good, and also simply that which is good. A Church in which good is present is called '**the House of God**', '**the inner rooms**' in this case being forms of good, as also are the contents of that house. For '**the House of God**' means **Divine good**, and '**a house**' in general means good that flows from love and charity, see [2233](#), [2234](#), [2559](#), [3142](#), [3652](#), [3720](#). The reason why what they say about truth and what they say about good is not to be believed is that they call falsity the truth and evil good. Indeed people whose end in view is self and the world do not understand anything else by truth and good than that they themselves should be adored and they themselves should receive benefits. And if they give the impression that they are devout it is so that they may be seen dressed in sheep's clothing.

[8] What is more, the Word which the Lord has spoken contains more in it than anyone can calculate, and '**the wilderness**' is an expression that has a wide range of spiritual meanings. As everything uncultivated or uninhabited is called '**the wilderness**' and all things that are interior are called '**the inner rooms**', therefore '**the wilderness**' also means the Old Testament Word since this is considered to be superseded, while '**the inner rooms**' means the New Testament Word since this teaches about interior things, that is, it is concerned with the internal man. The Word as a whole is likewise referred to as '**the wilderness**' when it no longer serves to supply matters of doctrine, and '**inner rooms**' is the name given to human practices which, being departures from the commands and ordinances of the Word, turn the Word into a wilderness. This is also well known in the Christian world, for people whose worship is outwardly holy but inwardly profane owing to the introduction of novelties which have as their end in view pre-eminence over all others and becoming wealthier than all others set aside the Word. Indeed they go so far as not to allow others to read it. And even in the case of those whose worship is not profane as just described and who do regard the Word to be holy and do allow it a place among ordinary people, they nevertheless bend and explain everything in accordance with their own teachings. And this turns the rest of the Word which does not accord with their own teachings into a wilderness, as becomes quite clear from those who focus salvation on faith alone and show contempt for the works of charity. They turn so to speak into a wilderness everything which the Lord Himself has stated in the New Testament, and so many times in the Old, about love and charity. And everything to do with faith without works is turned so to speak into inner rooms. From this it is evident what is meant by, "**If they say to you, Behold, He is in the wilderness! do not go out; Behold, He is in the inner rooms! do not believe it**".

[9] "**For as the lightning comes from the east and is seen as far as the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be**" means that internal worship of the Lord will be like lightning which is instantly dispersed. For '**lightning**' means that which is a manifestation of heavenly light and thus that which has reference to love and faith since these are the components of heavenly light. '**East**' in the highest sense means the Lord, in the internal sense good that flows from love, charity, and faith received from the Lord, see [101](#), [1250](#), [3249](#). '**West**' in the internal sense however means that which has gone down or ceased to be, and so means the non-acknowledgment of the Lord or of good that flows from love, charity, and faith. Accordingly '**the**

lightning which comes from the east and is seen as far as the west' means dispersal. The Lord's coming does not consist, as the letter has it, in His appearing once again in the world, but in His presence within everyone. He is present there as often as the gospel is preached and that which is holy is contemplated.

[10] "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together" means that confirmations of falsity by means of reasonings will be multiplied in the Church that has undergone devastation. When the Church is devoid of good and as a consequence devoid of the truth of faith, that is, when it has undergone devastation, it is called dead, since good and truth are the source of its life. And so when it is dead it is compared to 'the carcass'. Reasonings to the effect that goods and truths are nothing except insofar as they can be grasped mentally, and confirmations of evil and falsity by means of those reasonings, are meant by 'the eagles', as may be seen from what follows immediately below. The fact that 'the carcass' here means the Church when devoid of the life of charity and faith is evident from the Lord's words where the close of the age is the subject, in Luke,

"The disciples said (referring to the close of the age or the Last Judgment), Where, Lord? Jesus said to them, Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together". Luke 17:37.

'The body' is used here instead of the carcass, it being a dead body that is understood in this case, which means the Church. For it is clear from many references in the Word that the House of God — that is, the Church — is where the Judgment begins. These then are the details meant in the internal sense by the Lord's words which have been introduced and explained above. The most wonderful flow of ideas, though barely visible at all in the sense of the letter, may be seen by anyone who thinks about them in the connected sequence explained above.

AC 3901. Chapter 30 (End) The reason why the final state of the Church is compared to eagles gathered together where there is a carcass or body is that 'eagles' means man's rational ideas. When used in reference to forms of good 'eagles' means true rational ideas, but when used in reference to forms of evil 'eagles' means false rational ideas, or reasonings. 'Birds' in general means a person's thoughts, and in both the genuine and the contrary senses, 40, 745, 776, 866, 991, 3219; and each species has some individual meaning, 'eagles' meaning rational ideas because they are high-flyers and sharp-sighted. This meaning may be seen from many places in the Word, from which let the following be brought forward to confirm it. First, places where true rational ideas are meant: in Moses,

"Jehovah found His people [Jacob] in a wilderness land and in the emptiness, the howling, the lonely place He encompassed him, instructed him, and kept him as the pupil of His eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreads out its wings, takes one, carries it on its wings". Deuteronomy 32:10-11.

That which is described here and compared to the eagle is instruction in the truths and goods of faith. The actual process up to the point when a person becomes rational and spiritual is what this description and comparison contains. All comparisons in the Word are made by means of meaningful signs, in this case by 'the eagle', which means the rational.

[2] In the same author,

"Jehovah said to Moses, You have seen the things which I did to the Egyptians, and I bore you on eagles' wings so that I might bring you to Myself". Exodus 19:3-4.

Here the meaning is similar. In Isaiah,

"Those who await Jehovah will be renewed with strength; they will mount up with strong wings like eagles; they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint". [Isaiah 40:31](#).

'Being renewed with strength' stands for growth in the willing of good, 'mounting up with strong wings like eagles' for growth in the understanding of truth, and so growth of the rational. Here, as elsewhere, dual expressions are used to present the subject, the first of a pair involving good which belongs to the will, the second truth which belongs to the understanding. 'Running and not being weary' and 'walking and not fainting' are similar dual expressions.

[3] In Ezekiel,

"Speak a parable about the house of Israel, and say, Thus said the Lord Jehovah, A great eagle with long pinions, full of feathers, in its embroidery, came on Lebanon and took a twig of the cedar. He carried it into a land of trade, he placed it in a city of perfumers. It sprouted and became a spreading vine. There was another great eagle with great wings and full of feathers, towards which, behold, this vine directed its roots, and sent out its branches towards it to water it from the beds of its young plants in a good field, by many waters. But it will be laid waste. He sent his ambassadors to Egypt that they might give him horses and many people". [Ezekiel 17:2-9, 15](#).

The eagle mentioned first stands for the rational enlightened by the Divine, the eagle mentioned second for the rational originating in the proprium (*human understanding*), subsequently perverted by means of reasonings based on sensory evidence and factual knowledge - 'Egypt' standing for factual knowledge, [1164](#), [1165](#), [1186](#), [1462](#), and 'horses' for understanding resulting from all this, [2761](#), [2762](#), [3217](#).

[4] In Daniel,

"A vision of Daniel. Four beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion, but had eagle's wings. I watched it until its wings were torn away and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on its feet like a human being; and the heart of a human being was given to it". [Daniel 7:3-4](#).

That which is described by 'a lion which had eagle's wings' is the first state of the Church, 'eagle's wings' in this case meaning rational ideas originating in the proprium. And when these had been removed, rational ideas and desires in the will which had a Divine origin were given to it. These are meant by the lifting up of the eagle from the ground and the standing of it on its feet like a human being, and the gift to it of the heart of a human being.

[5] In Ezekiel,

"As for the likeness of the faces of the four living creatures or cherubs, each of the four had the face of a human being, and the face of a lion on the right side; and each of the four the face of an ox on the left side; and each of the four had the face of an eagle". [Ezekiel 1:10](#).

"Their wheels were called Galgal; and each one had four faces — the first face was the face of a cherub, the second face the face of a human being, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle". [Ezekiel 10:13-14](#).

In John,

"Around the throne were four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a human being, the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle". [Revelation 4:7](#).

Clearly, those living creatures that were seen mean Divine arcana, as consequently does the likeness of their faces. But exactly which arcana are meant cannot be known unless one knows what 'lion', 'calf', 'human being', and 'eagle' mean in the internal sense. It is evident that 'the face of an eagle' means vigilance and therefore providence, for the cherubs who were represented by the living creatures in Ezekiel mean the Lord's providence which guards against anyone entering the mysteries of faith from himself and his own rationality as the starting point, see [308](#). This also shows that when 'an eagle' is used in reference to a human being the rational is meant in the internal sense. It has this meaning because an eagle is a high-flyer and from its more exalted position has a wide view of things below.

[6] In Job,

"Is it through your intelligence that the hawk flies up and spreads its wings towards the south? Is it at your command 1 that the eagle lifts itself up and makes its nest up high?" [Job 39:26-27](#).

In this verse it is evident that 'the eagle' means reason which is an attribute of intelligence. This was what 'eagle' meant in the Ancient Church, for the Book of Job is a book of the Ancient Church, [3540](#) (end). In fact the writing of almost all the books of that period involved the use of meaningful signs, but with the passage of time meaningful signs have been so eclipsed that it is not even known that 'birds' in general means thoughts, even though these are referred to many times in the Word and in those places quite clearly is meant something different from birds.

[7] As regards 'the eagle' in the contrary sense meaning rational ideas that are not true, and so are false, this is evident from the following places: In Moses,

"Jehovah will raise up above you a nation from far away, from the end of the earth, as an eagle flies, a nation whose language you do not understand, a hard-faced nation". [Deuteronomy 28:49-50](#).

In Jeremiah,

"Behold, he comes up [like] clouds, and his chariots like a whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe to us, for we have been laid waste!" [Jeremiah 4:13](#).

In the same prophet,

"Your bragging has deceived you, and the pride of your heart, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, who hold the height of the hill; because, like the eagle, you have made your nest up high, I will cast you down from there. Behold, he mounts up and flies like an eagle, and spreads his wings over Bozrah; and the heart of the powerful men of Edom has become on that day like the heart of a woman in distress". [Jeremiah 49:16, 22](#).

In the same prophet,

"Our pursuers were swifter than eagles; they pursued us over the mountains, they laid in wait for us in the wilderness". [Lamentations 4:19](#).

In Micah,

"Make yourself bald, and shave your head for the children of your delight; extend your baldness like an eagle, for they have departed from you". Micah 1:16.

In Obadiah,

"If you raise yourself up like the eagle, and if you place your nest among the stars, I will bring you down from there". Obadiah, verse 4.

In Habakkuk,

"I am rousing the Chaldeans, a bitter and headlong nation, marching into the breadths of the earth, to inherit habitations that are not its own. Its horses are swifter than leopards. 2 Its horsemen will come from afar. They will fly in like an eagle hastening to devour". Habakkuk 1:6, 8.

[8] In all these places 'eagles' means falsity that has been introduced through reasonings — the delusions of the senses and external appearances being the source of that falsity. 'The Chaldeans' referred to in the last of the Prophets quoted means people who outwardly are holy but inwardly are under the influence of falsity (*errors*), see 1368, and these like Babel are those who lay waste the Church, 1367. 'The breadths of the earth' means truths (the devastation of which is meant by 'marching into the breadths of the earth') see 3433, 3434, and 'horses' their intellectual concepts, which are similar, 2761, 2762, 3217. What is meant by 'an eagle hastening to devour' is clear from all this, namely a hastening to make man desolate of truths, for the desolation of the Church is the subject in these verses. Comparisons are made with eagles, but as has been stated, comparisons in the Word are made by means of meaningful signs. From all this one may now see what is meant by the comparison with the eagles which will be gathered together where the carcass is.

Footnotes: 1. literally, mouth 2. The Latin means eagles, but the Hebrew means leopards, which Swedenborg has in other places where he quotes this verse. End 901

AC 4056-4060 Chapter 31 (Beginning) **Matthew 24:29-31**

AC 4056 Chapter 31 (Beginning) The preliminary sections of Genesis 26-30 in Volume Three explained what the Lord has said and foretold in Matthew 24 about the Close of the Age, or the Last Judgment. Those sections covered verse 3 through to verse 28, and now the statements next in line come up for explanation. The preliminary section of this chapter deals with what is stated in verses 29-31 in the following words,

"But immediately after the affliction of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and He will send out His angels with a trumpet and a loud voice, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other end of them".

AC 4057. Chapter 31 (continued) What the Close of the Age or the Last Judgment is has been explained already, namely the final period of the Church. It is called the final period of it when no charity or faith exists there any longer. It has also been shown already that such closes or final periods have been reached on several occasions. 1) The close of the first Church has been

described by the Flood; **2)** the close of the second Church by the uprooting of the nations in the land of Canaan, and also by the many uprooting and exterminations referred to in the Prophets. **3)** The close of the third is not described in the Word, but is foretold; it was the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering throughout the whole world of the Jewish nation, with whom the Church existed. **4)** The fourth close of an age is that of the present-day Christian Church, which is foretold by the Lord in the Gospels and also in John, in the Book of Revelation, and which is now at hand.

AC 4058. Chapter 31 (continued) The subject in previous verses of this chapter in Matthew has been the progressive ruination of the Church, which took place as follows: **1)** First of all people ceased to know what good or truth was, and instead began to argue with one another about these. In a **2)** second phase they treated them with contempt; in a **3)** third they did not in their hearts acknowledge them; and in a **4)** fourth they profaned them. These phases were the subject in verses 3-22 of this chapter. And because the truth of faith and the good of love would continue to exist at the center, that is, with some called '**the elect**', the state of the truth of faith as this will be at that time is dealt with in verses 23-28, and the state of the good of charity and love as that will be then, and also the beginning of a new Church, are dealt with in the verses which have just been quoted [in 4056].

AC 4059. Chapter 31 (continued) Each individual phrase in these verses is clear evidence of the existence of an internal sense, and of the fact that unless that sense is understood no one can possibly know what is implied in any of the following descriptions: "**The sun will be darkened**", and the moon also; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; the Lord will appear in the clouds of heaven; and the angels will sound a trumpet and in so doing will gather together the elect. Anyone who is not acquainted with the internal sense of these words will believe in a literal fulfillment of such events — that the world really is going to perish, together with everything visible in the universe. It is not the destruction of the world that is meant however by a last judgment but the coming to an end or the ruination of the Church as regards charity and faith; see 3353. The same is also quite evident from the words which come later on in this same chapter in Matthew,

"**At that time two will be in the field; one will be taken, the other left. Two women grinding; one will be taken, the other left**" Matthew 24:40-41.

AC 4060. Chapter 31 (End) Therefore the words quoted above [in 4056] mean the state of the Church at that time as regards good, that is, as regards charity towards the neighbor and love to the Lord. This is clear from the internal sense of these words, which is as follows:

"**But immediately after the affliction of those days**" means the state of the Church as regards the truth of faith, which is dealt with in the verses immediately before this. In the Word desolation of truth is called '**affliction**' in various places - '**days**' being states, see 23, 487, 488, 493, 893, 2788, 3462, 3785. From this it is evident that these words mean that once faith no longer exists neither will any charity exist. For faith leads to charity because it teaches what charity is, and charity acquires its particular character from the truths of faith. The truths of faith however receive their essence and life from charity, as has been shown many times in previous volumes.

[2] "**The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light**" means love to the Lord, which is '**the sun**', and charity towards the neighbor, which is '**the moon**'. '**Being darkened**' and '**not**

giving light' mean that that love and charity will not be in evidence and so will disappear. For 'the sun' means the celestial kind of love and 'the moon' the spiritual kind; that is, 'the sun' means love to the Lord, and 'the moon' charity towards the neighbor which comes through faith, see [1053](#), [1529](#), [1530](#), [2120](#), [2441](#), [2495](#). The reason why the sun and the moon have these meanings is that the Lord is seen in the next life as a sun by those in heaven who are governed by love to Him and are called celestial, and as a moon by those who are governed by charity towards the neighbor and are referred to as spiritual, see [1053](#), [1521](#), [1529-1531](#), [3636](#), [3643](#).

[3] The sun and the moon in heaven, or the Lord, are never darkened, nor do they lose their light but are shining unceasingly. Thus in heaven there is no darkening or loss of light in the love which celestial angels have for the Lord or in the charity which spiritual angels show towards the neighbor. Nor on earth is there any in people with whom angels are present, that is, in people who are governed by love and charity. But those who are not governed by any love or charity, only by self-love and love of the world, and consequently by feelings of hatred and revenge, bring that kind of obscurity to themselves. It is like the sun of this world which is shining constantly; yet when clouds intervene the sun is not visible, see [2441](#).

[4] "And the stars will fall from heaven" means that cognitions of good and truth will perish. When mentioned in the Word 'stars' have no other meaning than those cognitions, [1808](#), [2849](#).

And the powers of the heavens will be shaken means the foundations of the Church which are said to be shaken and jolted when those cognitions perish. This is because the Church on earth is heaven's foundation; for the influx of good and truth from the Lord through the heavens culminates ultimately in the goods and truths present with the member of the Church.

Consequently when the state of the member of the Church is so perverse that he no longer allows good or truth to flow into him 'the powers of the heavens' are in that case said 'to be shaken'.

That being so, the Lord always provides for some vestige of the Church to be left. And when the old Church perishes a new one is established.

[5] "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven" means the manifestation of Divine truth - 'sign' meaning a manifestation, 'the Son of Man' the Lord as regards Divine truth, see [2803](#), [2813](#), [3704](#). This manifestation, or this 'sign', is what the disciples asked for when they said to the Lord,

"Tell us, when will those things take place; what especially will be the sign of Your coming and of the close of the age?" [Matthew 24:3](#).

For they knew from the Word that when the age drew to a close the Lord would come, and they knew from the Lord that He would be coming again, by which they understood the Lord's coming a second time into the world since they were not yet aware of the fact that the Lord had come as often as the Church had been brought to ruin. Not that any of these comings had been a coming in person, as was the case when, through birth in the world, He took on the Human and made this Divine. Rather, those comings had been made through appearances or manifestations of Himself, such as when He appeared in Mamre to Abraham, in the bush to Moses, on Mount Sinai to the Israelites, and to Joshua when he entered the land of Canaan. There were other comings of a less visible nature, such as those at times when inspiration was received and the Word was given by means of it, and later on through the Word itself. For the Word has the Lord present within it; every detail there comes from Him and has reference to Him, as may be recognized from what

has been shown many times up to now. This is the kind of appearance that is meant here by '[the sign of the Son of Man](#)' and is the subject in the present verse under consideration.

[6] "[And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn](#)" means that all in whom the good of love and the truth of faith dwell will experience grief. This is what is meant by '[mourning](#)', see [Zechariah 12:10-14](#); and '[the tribes](#)' means all aspects of good and truth, that is, of love and faith, [3858](#), [3926](#), and so consequently those in whom these things dwell. The phrase '[the tribes of the earth](#)' is used because those inside the Church are meant - '[the earth](#)' being the Church, see [662](#), [1066](#), [1067](#), [1262](#), [1733](#), [1850](#), [2117](#), [2928](#),

[7] "[And they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory](#)" means that at that time a revelation of the internal sense of the Word — the sense in which the Lord is present — will take place. '[The Son of Man](#)' means Divine truth within the Word, [2803](#), [2813](#), [3704](#), '[the clouds](#)' the literal sense. '[Power](#)' has reference to the good and '[glory](#)' to the truth present there. For this meaning of '[seeing the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven](#)', see Preface to [Genesis 18](#). This is the kind of coming of the Lord that is meant here, not a literal manifestation of Him in clouds. Next follows a reference to the establishment of a new Church, which takes place once the old has been brought to ruin and cast aside.

[8] "[He will send out His angels with a trumpet and a loud voice](#)" means election — not by visible angels, still less by trumpets and by loud voices, but by an influx of holy good and of holy truth from the Lord through angels, so that the expression '[angels](#)' in the Word means something essentially the Lord's, [1925](#), [2821](#), [3039](#). In this instance it means things which come from the Lord and have reference to the Lord. '[A trumpet and a loud voice](#)' means the proclamation of the Gospel, as in other places in the Word.

[9] "[And they will gather the elect from the four winds](#)", [from one end of the heavens to the other end of them](#)" means the establishment of a new Church, '[the elect](#)' being people in whom the good of love and faith dwell, [3755](#) (end), [3900](#), '[the four winds](#)' from which they will be gathered being all states of good and truth, [3708](#), and '[one end of the heavens to the other](#)' the internal and the external features of the Church. These are the considerations that are meant by these words spoken by the Lord.

AC 4229-4231 Chapter 32 (Beginning) Matthew Chapter 24:32-35

AC 4229 Chapter 32 (Beginning) In Volume Three [1](#) an explanation was begun of what the Lord has foretold in [Matthew 24](#) about the Last Judgment. The explanation stands in the preliminary sections to the final chapters of that volume and has been taken as far as [Matthew 24:31](#), see [3353-3356](#), [3486-3489](#), [3650-3655](#), [3897-3901](#), [4056-4060](#). The internal sense in brief of all that He foretold is evident from the explanations contained in those paragraphs; that is to say, He foretold the progressive ruination of the Church and the establishment at length of a new Church, in the following order:

1. People ceased to know what good or truth was, and instead began to argue with one another about these.
2. They treated them with contempt.
3. They did not in their hearts acknowledge them.

4. They profaned them.

5. And because the truth of faith and the good of love would continue to exist with some who are called the elect, the state of faith as this will be at that time is described.

6. Then the state of charity as this will be.

7. And finally the beginning of a new Church is dealt with, which is meant by the words which were explained last of all, namely,

"And He will send out His angels with a trumpet and a loud voice, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other end of them" Verse 31.

These words are used to mean the beginning of a new Church, see the end of 4060.

Footnotes: 1. i.e. of the Latin, which begins with paragraph number 2760. The treatment of Matthew begins with paragraph number 3353.

AC 4230 Chapter 32 (continued) When the end of the old Church and the start of the new is at hand, that is the time of the Last Judgment. For such a time is meant in the Word by the Last Judgment, see 2117-2133, 3353, 4057. That time is also meant by the coming of the Son of Man. It is that very coming which is being referred to now, and the coming which the disciples asked the Lord about when they said,

"Tell us, when will those things take place; what especially will be the sign of Your coming and of the close of the age?" Matthew 24:3.

There now remains to be explained therefore that which the Lord has foretold about the actual time of His coming and of the close of the age, which is the Last Judgment.

[2] But in this present foregoing section to a chapter the contents of only verses 32-35 are covered, which verses are these,

"But from the fig tree learn a parable. When its branch now becomes tender and leaves sprout forth, you know that summer is near. So also yourselves — when you see all these things, know that He is near at the doors. 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"

The internal sense of these words is as follows.

AC 4231 Chapter 32 (End) "But from the fig tree learn a parable. When its branch now becomes tender and leaves sprout forth, you know that summer is near" means the first period of a new Church. 'The fig tree' means the good of the natural, 'branch' the affection belonging to that good, while 'leaves' means truths. 'A parable' which they were to learn from means that those things are what is really meant. Anyone unacquainted with the internal sense of the Word cannot possibly know what is included within the description in which the Lord's coming is compared to a fig tree and its branch and leaves. But since all comparisons in the Word are also meaningful signs, 3579, one can know from these what is really meant by such a comparison. Whenever 'a fig tree' is mentioned in the Word it means in the internal sense the good of the natural, see 217. The reason why 'a branch' means the affection for that good is that affection stems from good as a branch from its trunk. And as for 'leaves' meaning truths, see 885. From these considerations one may now see what is really meant by that parable, namely this: When a new Church is being created by the Lord, the good of the natural shows itself first of all, that is, good in external form together

with the affection belonging to it and with truths. The expression '[the good of the natural](#)' is not used to mean the good into which a person is born or derives from parents, but good which is spiritual in origin. Nobody is born into this kind of good but is brought into it by the Lord by means of cognitions of good and truth. Consequently until this good — that is to say, spiritual good — exists with a person, he is not a member of the Church, no matter how much he may seem to be by virtue of that good which he is born with.

[2] "[So also yourselves; when you see all these things, know that He is near at the doors](#)" means that when those things are apparent that are meant in the internal sense by the words spoken immediately before this in verses [29-31](#) as well as by these words concerning the fig tree, the end of the Church has arrived, which is the Last Judgment and the Coming of the Lord — a time therefore when the old Church is cast aside and a new one established. The phrase '[at the doors](#)' is used because the good of the natural and its truths are the first things to be introduced into a person when he is being regenerated and becoming the Church.

"[Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place](#)" means that the Jewish nation will not be eradicated like other nations. For the reason why, see [3479](#).

[3] "[Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away](#)" means that the internal and the external features of the former Church will perish, but the Word of the Lord will remain. For '[heaven](#)' means the internal aspect of the Church and '[earth](#)' the external aspect of it, see [82](#), [1411](#), [1733](#), [1850](#), [2117](#), [2118](#), [3355](#) (end). The fact that the Lord's '[words](#)' include not only those stated here concerning His coming and the close of the age but also all contained in the Word is self-evident. The words under consideration here were spoken immediately after those concerning the Jewish nation because the Jewish nation has been preserved for the sake of the Word, as may be seen from [3479](#), mentioned already. From all this it is now evident that these verses foretell the beginnings of [a new Church](#).

AC 4332-4335 Chapter 33 (Beginning) **Matthew 24:36-41**

AC 4332 Chapter 33 (Beginning) The preliminary section of the previous chapter explained what the Lord foretold in [Matthew 24:32-35](#) about His coming, by which was meant, as was shown there and in previous preliminary sections to chapters, the final period or end of the former Church and the first period or beginning of the new Church — see the preliminary section to Chapter [31](#), in [4056-4060](#), and the preliminary section to Chapter [32](#), in [4229-4231](#). To be explained next are the words which follow in Verses [36-41](#) of the same chapter in that gospel, which are these,

"[But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as they were in the days before the Flood — eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage — up to the day on which Noah entered the ark \(and they were unaware of anything until the flood came and took them all away\) so also will be the coming of the Son of Man. At that time two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left behind. Two women grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left behind](#)".

AC 4333 Chapter 33 (continued) What those words mean in the internal sense will be clear from the following explanation, namely that they describe what the state will be at the time when the

old Church is set aside and the new is established. It has been shown many times already that the setting aside of the old Church and the establishment of the new is that which is meant by the close of the age and the coming of the Son of Man and in general by the last judgment. It has also been shown that a like judgment has occurred several times on this planet, the **1)** first taking place when the Lord's celestial Church, which was the Most Ancient, perished among those living before the flood through the deluge of evils and falsities meant in the internal sense by the flood.

[**2**] The **2)** second judgment occurred when the spiritual Church, which existed after the Flood and is called the Ancient, and which was spread through much of the Asiatic world, reached a point when it had destroyed itself.

[**3**] The **3)** third occurred when the representative of the Church among the descendants of Jacob was destroyed, a destruction which took place when the ten tribes were carried off into everlasting captivity and were scattered among the gentiles, and finally when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews too were dispersed. Because the close of that age was reached after the Lord's Coming, many of the Lord's statements in the Gospels about the close of that age are therefore applicable to that nation also; many at the present day do apply statements to it. But though these can be understood in that way, they refer specifically and primarily to the close of the age which is now imminent; that is to say, they refer to the end of the Christian Church, which is the subject also in John, in the Book of Revelation. This will be the **4)** fourth last judgment on this planet. Exactly what is implied by the words contained in verses **36-42** quoted above will be clear from the internal sense of them, which is this.

AC 4334 Chapter 33 (continued) "**But of that day and hour no one knows**" means that the state of the Church at that time so far as forms of good and truth are concerned is not going to be visible to anyone either on earth or in heaven, for '**day**' and '**hour**' in this case are not used to mean day and hour, that is, a period of time, but a state so far as good and truth are concerned. Periods of time in the Word mean states, see **2625, 2788, 2837, 3254, 3356**, and '**day**' also has the same meaning, **23, 487, 488, 493, 893, 2788, 3462, 3785**. '**Hour**,' too therefore is descriptive of state, but some specific aspect. The reason why state so far as good and truth are concerned is meant is that the subject is the Church, for good and truth constitute the Church.

[**2**] "**Not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only**" means that heaven does not know the specific nature of the state of the Church so far as good and truth are concerned; the Lord alone knows. Nor does it know when that state of the Church is going to be reached. The Lord Himself is meant by '**the Father**', see **15, 1729, 2004, 2005, 3690**; also the Divine Good within the Lord is called '**the Father**' and the Divine Truth originating in Divine Good is called '**the Son**', see **2803, 3703, 3704, 3736**. People therefore who believe that the Father is one and the Son another, and who keep the two apart, do not understand the Scriptures.

[**3**] "**But as they were in the days before the Flood**" means the state of devastation undergone by those who belonged to the Church. This state is compared to the state of devastation which the first or Most Ancient Church underwent, the close of their age, that is, their last judgment, being described in the Word by means of the Flood. For '**the Flood**' means a deluge of evils and falsities and the close of that age which followed as a result, see **310, 660, 662, 705, 739, 790, 805, 1120**; and '**days**' means states, see above.

[**4**] "**Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage**" means their state insofar as they made evil and falsity their own, and by doing this became joined to these. For '**eating**' means making

good one's own, and '[drinking](#)' making truth one's own, see [3168](#), [3513](#) (end), [3596](#); and so in the contrary sense they mean making evil and falsity (*errors*) one's own. '[Marrying](#)' means becoming joined to evil and '[giving in marriage](#)' becoming joined to falsity, as may be seen from what has been stated and shown about marriage and conjugal love in [686](#), [2173](#), [2618](#), [2728](#), [2729](#), [2737-2739](#), [2803](#), [3132](#), [3155](#), to the effect that in the internal sense the joining together of good and truth is meant by them, though here in the contrary sense the joining together of evil and falsity is meant. Everything the Lord has said, since it is Divine, is of a different nature in the internal sense from what it is in the letter. So eating and drinking in the Holy Supper do not in the spiritual sense mean eating and drinking but making the good of the Lord's Divine love one's own, [2165](#), [2177](#), [2187](#), [2343](#), [2359](#), [3464](#), [3478](#), [3735](#), [4211](#), [4217](#). And as the joining of good which is the good of love to truth which is the truth of faith is meant when the idea of a marriage is used in reference to the Church or to the Lord's kingdom, so therefore is the Lord's kingdom in the Word called the heavenly marriage.

[5] "[Up to the day on which Noah entered the ark](#)" means the end of the former Church and the beginning of the new one, for '[Noah](#)' means the Ancient Church in general which replaced the Most Ancient after the Flood, [773](#) and elsewhere, while '[the ark](#)' means the Church itself, [639](#). The word '[day](#)' which is used several times in these verses means state, as shown just above.

[6] "[And they were unaware of anything until the flood came and took them all away](#)" means that members of the Church at that time will not know that they have been swamped by evils and falsities (*errors*) because, on account of the evils and falsities in which they are immersed, they will have no knowledge of what the good of love to the Lord is and what the good of charity towards the neighbor is, nor also what the truth of faith is. Nor will they know that such truth originates in those forms of good and that it cannot exist except with people who lead lives filled with such love and charity, in addition to which they will have no knowledge of the fact that what is internal saves or condemns, not what is external separated from internal.

[7] "[So also will be the coming of the Son of Man](#)" means Divine Truth which they will not entertain. The meaning of '[the coming of the Son of Man](#)' as Divine Truth which will be revealed at that time has been discussed already at verses [27-30](#), and in [2803](#), [2813](#), [3704](#), as well as [3004-3006](#), [3008](#), [3009](#).

[8] "[At that time two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left behind](#)" means those within the Church who are governed by good and those within the Church who are governed by evil; the former will be saved and the latter condemned. For '[the field](#)' means the Church as regards good, see [2971](#), [3196](#), [3310](#), [3317](#), [3766](#).

[9] "[Two women grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left behind](#)" means the future salvation of those within the Church who know the truth, that is, who are led by good to have an affection for it, and the future condemnation of those within the Church who know the truth, but who are led by evil to have an affection for it. These meanings which '[grinding](#)' and '[mill](#)' have in the Word will be clear from what appears immediately below.

From all this it is now evident that the words under consideration describe what the state of good and truth will be like within the Church when that Church is set aside and the new one is adopted.

AC 4335 Chapter 33 (End) In the Word '[those who are grinding](#)' means those within the Church who are led to know the truth by an affection for good, and in the contrary sense those within the Church who are led to know it by an affection for evil, as may be seen from the following places: In Isaiah,

"Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babel; sit on the ground, without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans. Take a mill and grind flour; uncover your hair, bare your feet, uncover your thigh, pass through the rivers" [Isaiah 47:1-2](#).

'[The daughter of Babel](#)' stands for those among whom externally things give the appearance of being holy and good but interiorly they are unholy and evil, [1182](#), [1326](#). '[The daughter of the Chaldeans](#)' stands for those among whom externally things give the appearance of being holy and true, but interiorly they are unholy and false, [1368](#), [1816](#). '[Taking a mill and grinding flour](#)' stands for producing teachings out of the truths which they pervert; for '[flour](#)', being the product of wheat or of barley, means truths which are products of good, but in the contrary sense truths which they pervert so as to lead people astray. In Jeremiah,

"I will banish from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of mills, and the light of the lamp. And this whole land will be a waste and desolation". [Jeremiah 25:10-11](#).

[2] In John,

"No craftsman of any craft will be found in Babylon any more; no sound of a mill will be heard in it any more; and the light of a lamp will not shine in it any more, and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride will not be heard in it any more" [Revelation 18:21-23](#).

'[No sound of a mill will be heard in Babylon any more](#)' means that there will not be any truth. '[The light of the lamp will not shine any more](#)' means that neither will there be any understanding of truth. In Lamentations,

"They have ravished women in Zion, virgins in the cities of Judah. Princes have been hung up by their hands, the faces of the old men have not been honored. The young men have been led away to grind at the mill, and the boys collapse under the wood" [Lamentations 5:11-14](#).

'[The young men have been led away to grind at the mill](#)' stands for being led away to produce falsities by the use of truths, and so by the power of persuasion.

[3] In Moses,

"Ah the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from Pharaoh's firstborn seated upon his throne, even to the servant-girl's firstborn who is behind the mill" [Exodus 11:5](#).

'[The firstborn of Egypt](#)' stands for truths of faith which have been separated from the good of charity and therefore become falsities, [3325](#).

'[The servant-girl's firstborn who is behind the mill](#)' stands for the affection for such truth from which falsities are obtained. These were the things represented by such historical events.

[4] In the same author,

"He shall not take as a pledge the mill or the milling stone, for they are the livelihood 1 of him who pledges them" [Deuteronomy 24:6](#).

This law was laid down because 'the mill' meant matters of doctrine and 'the milling stone' the truths that were an integral part of them and are called 'the livelihood of him who pledges them'. But for the spiritual meaning which 'mill' and 'milling stone' possess that law would obviously not have been given; nor would it have been said that they were 'his livelihood'.

[5] I have been shown that 'grinding' derives its spiritual meaning from the representatives which manifest themselves in the world of spirits. For I have seen people there who seemed to be grinding; these spirits, I have been told, mean those who gather large numbers of truths together not with any use in view, other than for the sake of their own pleasure. Because truths in that case are devoid of their own affection which originates in good, they do indeed look like truths to external appearance; but because there is no inner substance to them they are sheer fancies. But if evil is present within them truths are used to support that evil, and so are made falsities through that use of them. **Footnotes:** 1. literally, the soul.

AC 4422-4424 Chapter 33. (Further on Chapter 33) **Matthew 24:42-51**

AC 4422. Chapter 33. (Beginning). In the preliminary section of this chapter the Lord's words in Matthew 24:42-51 end come up for explanation. These last verses in that chapter concerning the close of the age or the coming of the Lord read in the letter as follows,

"Watch therefore, for you do not know at what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, if the master of the house knew at which period of the night the thief is coming, he would watch, and would not let his house be broken into. Therefore you also, be ready, for the Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect. Who then is the faithful and careful servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find doing so. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his goods. But what if that wicked servant shall say in his heart, My master is delaying his coming, and he shall begin to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with drunkards? The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and in an hour he does not know. And he will cut him off and assign him his part with the hypocrites, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth".

What these words hold within them may be seen from the train of thought, for the subject throughout this chapter in the gospel has been the last days of the Church, by which in the internal sense are meant the close of the age and the coming of the Lord. This can be seen plainly in the explanation of every statement in that chapter, in the preliminary sections of the chapters of Genesis immediately previous to this. That is to say, see 3353-3356, 3486-3489, 3650-3655, 3751-3757, 3897-3901, 4056-4060, 4229-4231, and 4332-4335, the preliminary sections of Chapters- 33.

[2] The sequence of thought contained in this chapter of the gospel has also been stated in those paragraphs, that sequence being as follows: When the Christian Church established after the Lord's Coming began to ruin itself, that is, to depart from good,

1. People ceased to know what good or truth was and began to argue with one another about them.

2. They treated them with contempt.

3. Then they did not in their hearts acknowledge them.

4. After that they profaned them.

5. And because the truth of faith and the good of charity were still to remain in existence with some who are called the elect, the state of faith as this will be at that time is described.

6. Then the state of charity as this will be.

7. Finally the beginning of a new Church is dealt with, and

8. The state of good and truth within the Church, so called, when that Church is set aside and the new one adopted.

From this sequence of thought one may come to see what is included within the final verses of Matthew 24, which are set out above. That is to say, they contain an exhortation to those within the Church to keep to the good of faith or else they will perish.

AC 4422–4424 Chapter 33 (Continued) Verses **Matthew 24:42–24:51**

AC 4423. Chapter 33 (Continued) Scarcely anyone is aware of what actually happens when the old Church is set aside and the new adopted. One who has no knowledge of the interior aspects of man, or of the states in which these exist, and who therefore does not know about man's states after death, cannot do otherwise than take it to mean that those who belong to the old Church — among whom good and truth have been brought to ruin, that is, are no longer acknowledged in the heart — are going to perish either as those before the Flood did in the floodwaters, or as the Jews did by being expelled from their own land, or in some other way. But when the Church is

brought to ruin, that is, when it ceases to keep at all to the good of faith, the interior aspects of the Church, and so the states in which it exists in the next life, perish. Heaven, and as a consequence the Lord, in that case departs from them and transfers itself to others who are adopted in place of them. For without the Church somewhere on earth no communication of heaven with mankind exists, the Church being like the heart and lungs of the Grand Man on earth, 468, 637, 931, 2054, 2853.

[2] The interior aspects of those who belong at such a time to the old Church and so have been removed from heaven are subjected to a kind of deluge, a deluge in fact that rises above the head. Of this deluge no one has any awareness during his lifetime, but comes to know it after death. The deluge is clearly visible in the next life; indeed it is like a dark cloud which envelops people and separates them from heaven. The state of those within that dark cloud is such that they cannot possibly see what the truth of faith is, let alone what the good of faith is. For the light of heaven which holds intelligence and wisdom within it cannot penetrate that cloud. This is the state of the Church once it has been ruined.

AC 4422–4424 CHAPTER 33 (End) Matthew 24:42–24:51

AC 4424. Chapter 33 (End) What the Lord's words quoted above embody in the internal sense becomes clear without explanation, for at this point **the Lord** uses comparisons rather than representatives and meaningful signs. Only the meaning of the words of the final verse has to be stated - '**He will cut him off and assign him his part with the hypocrites, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth**'.

"**He will cut him off**" means separation and removal from goods and truths, for people who have a knowledge of what is good and true, as those within the Church do, but who lead a life of evil are said to be cut off when that knowledge is removed from them; for in the next life their knowledge of good and truth is separated from them and they are restricted to evils and derivative falsities also. The reason why this takes place is so that they do not communicate with heaven through their knowledge of good and truth and with hell through their evil and consequent falsity, and thereby are left hanging between the two. A further reason is so that they do not profane goods and truths, as happens when these are mixed together with falsities and evils. The same is also meant by the Lord's words addressed to the one who hid his talent in the earth,

"**Take the talent from him and give it to him who has ten talents, for to everyone who has, it will be given, so that he may have in abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away**" Matthew 25:28-29.

And what the Lord says elsewhere has the same meaning – Matthew 13:12; also Mark 4:25, and Luke 8:18.

[2] “**And assign him his part with the hypocrites**” means that his lot, meant by '**part**', lies with those who outwardly give the appearance of knowing the truth so far as doctrine is concerned, and of cherishing good so far as life is concerned, but who inwardly have no belief at all in truth nor any desire at all for good, who are '**the hypocrites**'. People like this have become '**cut off**' in the sense described here. Consequently when external things are taken away from these people, as happens to all in the next life, they are seen to be what they are like internally — people devoid of faith and charity. Yet they have pretended to have these, so that, capturing the attention of others, they could earn themselves positions of importance, monetary gain, and reputation. Within the Church that has become ruined virtually everyone is like this, for they have things that are external but none that are internal. Hence the interior aspects of those people are engulfed in the deluge described immediately above in 4423.

[3] “**Where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth**” means their state in the next life, '**wailing**' that state as regards evils, and '**gnashing of teeth**' that state as regards falsities, for '**teeth**' in the Word means lowest natural things — in the genuine sense truths going with these, and in the contrary sense falsities going with them. Teeth also correspond to those things. For these reasons '**the gnashing of teeth**' means the clash of falsities and truths. People immersed in wholly natural things and governed by ideas resulting from sensory illusions, believing nothing which they do not see by means of these, are said to be where there is '**the gnashing of teeth**', and in the next life seem to themselves to be there when they draw conclusions about the truths of faith on the basis of their own illusions. A Church in which good and truth have been brought to ruin teems with people such as these. The same is meant again in other places by the gnashing of teeth, as in Matthew,

“**The sons of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth**”. Matthew 8:12.

'**The sons of the kingdom**' means those within the ruined Church.

'**Darkness**' means falsities, 4418, for they are in darkness when surrounded by the dark cloud mentioned above. '**The gnashing of teeth**' means the clash of falsities with truths there. The same matter occurs in other places, such as Matthew 13:42, 50; 22:13; 25:30; and Luke 13:28.

(End of Emanuel Swedenborg Matthew Chapter 24 commentary on Matthew Chapter 24:1-51)