

The Love of Many Has Grown Cold



By Dr. Mike Spaulding

April 7, 2024

Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. –Matthew 24:12 NASB

The context of Matthew 24:12 is Jesus speaking to His disciples after leaving Jerusalem during His Passion Week. He had sparred with the religious leaders several times in the preceding days. As He and his disciples left Jerusalem that day, Jesus responded to some of the disciples' comments about the beauty of the Temple complex. He said that what they thought beautiful would be destroyed one day. This led to some of His disciples asking when that time would come. Jesus then described the things that would be prominent during the time right before His Second Coming.

The timing of this verse in Matthew's Gospel is generally accepted as being during the time of the Tribulation.[\[1\]](#) This is thought to be the case because Matthew 24:9 mentions "Then they will deliver you to tribulation..." Following that, verses 9-11 describe a falling away from the faith, betrayal, and hatred arising among the brethren to the extent that many will be misled by false prophets apparently suggesting that their betrayal, hatred, and callousness toward the brethren is warranted. Verse 12 describes the fading love of many. Some scholars see this entire passage as part of the period Jesus called "birth pangs" prior to the Tribulation (Matthew 24:8).

Regardless of the timing of this worldwide event, I see this very behavior spreading across the world today and especially in American Christianity.

Lawlessness is from the Greek *anomia* from *anomos*, which means illegality, violation of the law, iniquity, and/or sin.[\[2\]](#) We get the word antinomian (without or against the law) from these roots. In this context, it means to violate God's law specifically, which of course, includes God's moral law.[\[3\]](#)

Notice in verse 12 that Jesus connects the rise of antinomianism (lawlessness) with love (agape) growing cold. The Greek for "will grow cold" is *psygesetai*, and means to cool, chill, or pass. Paul was writing of the same thing when he wrote in his second letter to Timothy, Chapter 3:

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...

Here we see clearly that the agape love for one another will be replaced by a love for self only. A self-absorbed, narcissistic love will characterize many and will result in a mass exodus from the ecclesias. No wonder, for these will love themselves and will become swallowed up in their own pursuit of pleasures, abandoning any pretense for loving God (2 Timothy 3:4 cited above).

Believers are instructed to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength (Mark 12:29), as well as our neighbors in like manner (Mark 12:31). Jesus then stated that there are no other commandments greater than these two. Are Christians obeying these two commandments today? Some are and unfortunately some are not.

Most alarming for me in the context of love growing cold, is the meteoric rise of Antisemitism among those who profess Christ that evinces vitriolic outbursts and denigrations. It is one thing to criticize some of Israel's political decisions over the years. It is quite another to demonize Israel and the Jewish people as a whole *carte blanche*.

What do we see happening today that reflects the love of God and His heart for all people and especially His people Israel? In many evangelical ecclesias we see Christians supporting Israel by word and deed. Millions of dollars of humanitarian assistance have been delivered to the Israeli people. Sermons have been preached advocating for the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign nation, her right to her ancestral land, and her right to defend herself against aggression. This is the love of God for His people manifested by and through the grafted in vine, the Christian ecclesias.

However, not all Christians are exemplifying the love of God for Israel. Instead, they are demonstrating hatred, rage, tirades of ungodly speech, and advocating for other Christians to follow their lead. Many churches are involved in the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Movement (BDS), a known hotbed of aggressive Antisemitic rhetoric and behavior. The stated goal of one of the founders of the BDS movement is: "The ending of Israeli control in the territories is but the first stage on the road to fulfilling the vision of the dismantling of Israel."[\[4\]](#) Some are appealing to non-sequiturs such as the evil of Zionism, Rockefeller and Rothschild seed money provided for Israel's creation, and the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion. Lies and Antisemitic thinking is a hallmark of the devil and must not be entertained or given credibility by Christians.

The question that must be answered by all Christians is this – "Who is your neighbor?" Is it only those people who meet your criteria such as holding the same doctrine, the same eschatology, being of the same ethnicity, or meeting your

requirements whatever they might be, to be loved and concerned about? Do we love only the loveable or do we love with a godly love that seeks the best for all people?

Will we obey God's command to pray for the peace of Jerusalem? Do we seek to share the Gospel of Jesus with Jewish people, knowing that only through faith in Jesus for eternal life will peace come to Jerusalem. Without appealing to eschatology, do we see God's love for His people Israel as a motivating factor in how we view and interpret the news and reports concerning Israel and her need to be ever vigilant against overwhelming odds?

God is not done with His people Israel. God has promised through the prophet Zechariah that His people will one day return to their land and turn to Him through faith in their promised Messiah (Ezekiel 36:24; Zechariah 12:10; 13:1). We read in Ezekiel 36:25-28 that God will one day yet future:

For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

What some in the church today seem incapable of overcoming is their antagonistic beliefs concerning Israel that simply are not supported in the Bible. An entirely new narrative has arisen among some Christians that is antithetical to the Scriptures concerning Israel. If your doctrine, theology, and/or eschatology results in you hating, vilifying, denouncing, and working to destroy Israel as a people and nation, you are creating for yourself a future where you will

answer to God for your treatment of His people.

When the Bible is permitted to speak for itself, and people seek the leading of the Holy Spirit, they will be able to clear away all of the mis and disinformation that clouds their judgment.

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E-Mail Mike Spaulding: drmichaelspaulding@gmail.com

Footnotes:

[\[1\]](#) Generally accepted by those who are Premillennial in their eschatology. Amillennial and Postmillennial interpreters are confronted with several problems by this text.

[\[2\]](#) Interlinear Bible –
<https://biblehub.com/interlinear/matthew/24-12.htm>

[\[3\]](#) Micah 6:8 and Luke 10:30-37 (The Parable of the Good Samaritan) are two of hundreds of examples of the moral law being an outworking of God's Law, often referred to simply as the Torah.

[\[4\]](#) Quote Attributed to Omar Barghouti, Co-Founder and Leader of the BDS Movement. See <https://www.ajc.org/issues/bds>