

S.O.H.L.

WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

Pronounced "Soul"
December 15, 2014

Falling Temperatures

MATTHEW 24:11-12 NKJV – (11) Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. (12) And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

In the previous years most of us heard about the senseless massacre of twenty kindergarten children at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. Six adults were also victims that day.. We still have not been informed of the shooter's motives, although we have been told that he was "troubled" ...some even said he may have been "autistic", while others claimed he was just plain "weird." His grade school classmates and neighbors expressed that they were not surprised at the turn his life took. From all reports, it appears that he was a time-bomb just waiting to go off. Obviously, his actions showed no love or compassion. One would have to be cold (*without feeling*), to do such a thing. In **II Timothy 3:2-3**, the apostle Paul prophesies that the last days would be dangerous because "men will be lovers of themselves," and, "without self-control, brutal." It seems we are seeing this prophecy fulfilled in ever-greater frequency, as people seem to have less and less regret about terrorizing and taking the lives of their fellow human beings. Under the grip of a merciless narcissism, many are losing their humanity. Even so, **Matthew 24:12** is not speaking about such people; it is not addressed to the people in the world at large but directly to Jesus' disciples and their spiritual descendants. How do we know this? Jesus uses the word *agape* for the love that grows cold. Such spiritual love, godly love, is unattainable by those driven by the spirit of this world. This *agape* love—the love of God—is the kind that is "poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit [which] was given to us" (**Romans 5:5**).

Jesus, then, is warning His church that the wickedness of the world will increase to such an extent that it will sap the spiritual heat out of His own people, causing their love to grow cold. This will have two major ramifications: **1)** People in God's church will love Him less; and **2)** they will love each other less. The effects of this drop in temperature of love - this coldness - will result in reduced time and respect for God, as well as deteriorating relationships between brethren. Christians will reduce their time in prayer and study, relax in their formality before God, and behave carelessly ("*sin in haste* and *repent at leisure*"), assuming that He will forgive every trespass. Yet, gossip about church friends will continue, taking advantage of their kindness and forgiveness, betraying them when convenient, and judging them mercilessly even for their most minor faults. None of these things express godly love; they are the manifestation of love growing cold.

SCRIPTURE READING: EPHESIANS 6:12

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "For children are innocent and love justice, while most of us are wicked and naturally prefer mercy."