

Prophecy Begins with Bible Study

Matthew 24, Pt. 1

Opening Text: **Matthew 24:1-51**

Matthew 24. Here we have a chapter that many have used in the past, and still use today, to predict the end of the present world. Some people are infatuated or obsessed with trying to figure out when the second coming of Christ will take place, down to the very day. For a while I thought it was okay to just ignore these people. I just want to be ready, with my faith firmly in Christ, for whenever he physically comes a second time as the Scriptures say he will.

I still believe that. I still believe that we shouldn't concern ourselves with trying to figure out when he is coming back. I believe the important thing is our faith in the Messiah, and to be doing what he has told us to do upon the earth while he is away. However, I have come to see that it is important that we understand prophetic texts like Matthew 24 properly, else we may very well fall prey to false understandings. Our lack of study in the area of prophecy can lead us to accept someone else's view, just because they make it sound good. When we do not know the truth, we are more apt to fall for the false. Studying and knowing the truth is a key to help us discern what is false.

I want to say here at the beginning that this will be an introductory lesson to the study. I won't get much into the Bible in this lesson, as I need to cover some preliminary points. I need to give you a background to why this subject fascinates me, and to why this subject is important for you to understand properly.

I began to look into what I'll be covering in these lessons back in 2008. I saw some things in the Bible then, but decided to put them on the shelf for a while and come back and pick them up later. Over the last couple of years, 2014 - 2015, I've felt the need to begin to share some of the things I've been studying, with you as a congregation. The so-called "Mystery of the Shemitah" and the whole "Blood Moons" teaching really lit a fire under me. I do not like to see the Bible handled haphazardly. I do not like to see Scripture ripped from its context. And probably most of all, I hate seeing men peddle some out-of-context teaching ripped from the Bible, making loads of money for their pockets, and leading sheep astray. It literally makes me sick some times. I love people. I don't like seeing them used for their money.

I'm 34 years old, and in my short lifetime alone there have been many, many prophetic predictions by people who claimed to be certain that something was going to happen in regards to "last day events," yet they were all wrong. Let me give you some examples.

"Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California believed that the rapture would occur before the end of 1981. In the early 1970's he wrote, 'The last days are upon us, and the Spirit of God is being poured out upon us... It's prophesied in the Bible that the Lord will pour the Spirit down upon all men, and I believe that it won't be long until we see the second coming of the Lord.' In 1978, Smith wrote more specifically saying,

'From my understanding of biblical prophecies, I'm convinced that the Lord is coming for His Church before the end of 1981.'

"When American President Ronald Reagan was shot, many End-time speculators suspected that he was the Antichrist because Revelation 13:3 speaks of a Beast recovering from a fatal wound. Also the names, Ronald Wilson Reagan, each have six letters in them, corresponding to the number of the beast, 666."

"Date setters saw many signs of the End in events which occurred in 1986. Some believed that the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Russia in that year was the fulfillment of the sounding of one of the trumpets in the Book of Revelation. Some thought that the move to a nine-digit zip code system in the United States in that year was preparation for the global system of the Antichrist. Some thought that the appearance of Haley's comet in 1986 was a sign of the End. And still others set the Rapture for 1986."

"In 1988, Ian Paisley, a minister from Northern Ireland, said that Pope John Paul II was the Antichrist."

"Buffalo Bill Hawkins, leader of the House of Yahweh sect, set 1991 for the beginning of the Great Tribulation. In his publication *The Prophetic Word*, of June 7, 1991, he claimed, 'The rain will soon be cut off again, as it was in the days of Elijah. This time, it will not rain for 1,260 days - but this soon-coming Time Period will begin the Last Seven Years of Satan's rule upon the earth. This seven year period is known as the Great Tribulation...' In 1994, Hawkins taught that the world was approaching the middle of the Great Tribulation. Hawkins also claimed to be one of the Two Witnesses."

"In 1991, some people believed that the AIDS epidemic was a sign of the End of the World. For example, David Jeremiah proclaimed, 'I believe AIDS could be the pestilence Jesus described in the Olivet discourse.' And Harold Camping wrote, 'The AIDS plague has come when many signs seem to indicate that the End of the world is close at hand. One cannot help but wonder if it is related to the final Tribulation period.'"

"Hal Lindsey, in his book *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon*, asserted that the 'decade of the 1980's could very well be the last decade of history as we know it.' ... In 1992, Hal Lindsey said that he still believes that this is the generation which will see the fulfillment of all the signs of the End. ... In 1994 Hal Lindsey wrote *Planet Earth - 2000 A.D. Will Mankind Survive?* in which he wrote: 'We are rapidly approaching the End... I believe that we are on the very brink of it... We don't know what day, just that it is near... This is the Generation. And Jesus tells us that the generation that sees these things will see the fulfillment of all the prophecies leading to the Second Coming... All the signs are there... In fact, looking at the state of the world today, I wouldn't make any long-term earthly plans.'"

"Harold Camping, in his book entitled *1994?*, calculated that 1994 was the most likely date for the End, saying 'We see that 1994 looks more and more like a candidate for the year of Christ's return,' and, 'Repeatedly the year 1994 A.D. appears to be a likely

candidate for the year of the End of history,' and, 'When is Judgment Day? We have already seen that 1994 is the probably year.'"

"Edgar Whisenant wrote a book entitled 88 reasons why the rapture is in 1988... Edgar Whisenant, famous for his 1988 rapture prediction, changed the date to 1993... Edgar Whisenant (later) predicted that Christ would come at 12:01 a.m. on September 25, 1995."

All of these references are taken from a book I have here titled "The Day and The Hour: Christianity's Perennial Fascination with Predicting the End of the World" by Francis X. Gumerlock. This man has chronicled all the failed predictions he could find since the early centuries A.D. - just after the ascension of the Messiah - up to the year 2000, when he wrote this book. It's a fascinating read. It's important that we not forget all of these failed predictions, yet people do forget them, and then, they grab hold to the next guy that comes along in our day and starts making bold predictions all over again.

All of the ones I quoted from in this book were before I was old enough to study the Bible for myself, but as an adult I have seen a few failed predictions take place that have been just as bold, if not even bolder than these I've mentioned.

My mind travels back to what I think was the most captivating one, so far in my lifetime, to early in the year 2011, when a man by the name of Harold Camping became famous in the news for a little while, when he predicted the end of the world would take place on May 21, 2011. Yes, this is the same Harold Camping that predicted 1994 would be the End of the World. One of the sections of the Bible he would quote, and his followers would quote, was Matthew chapter 24.

I remember driving around in the work truck, to various cities in the metro Atlanta area, and seeing these Billboards I have now on the screen. May 21, 2001. The Bible Guarantees It. Judgment Day. WeCanKnow.com. It still amazes me when I think about it.

I was actually driving to a church in South Carolina, with Frank and Denise, and the other members of August Rain at that time, to lead the song service that morning, the morning of May 21, 2011. I remember the teaching pastor of the church, Matt McGarrity, looking at me that morning and saying something like, "Well brother. We're still here." :)

There's no way I can do justice to describing how climactic this was. You had to follow it personally to have known. There was a documentary film director named Zeke Piestrup, who was hired by Family Radio (Harold Camping's radio ministry) to follow Harold Camping around during the last two weeks leading up to May 21, 2011. Zeke video chronicled Harold's ministry work in this area of predicting judgment day. I followed most of the daily video posts on YouTube. There were also other people who did video work themselves, interviewing Harold Camping's followers. Because of the day and age in which we live, we can watch the video footage and kind of "re-live the past."

I downloaded several YouTube videos back then, thinking that they might be later removed. I wanted to have them to be able to show others that something like this really happened. It's been happening for about 2,000 years - failed predictions that is, but they are easily forgotten when they aren't caught on tape. However, when you can actually show someone the sensationalism on tape, it is quite fascinating. So, I've taken some of the most climactic clips from the videos I downloaded, and put the clips together to show you some of what happened and was said.

This video is very emotional. Some parts make me laugh. Some parts make me shake my head in disbelief. I admit that some parts have brought tears to my eyes, because it hurts my heart to see people who have been deceived, and it weighs heavy upon my heart when I ponder upon deception in general. I don't want to be deceived, but the big part about deception is that no one realizes when they are deceived. They just are. We aren't immune to that. None of us are. I think you'll see that in the video. Watch some of what happened back in the early days of 2011.

For anyone reading these notes, please see the sermon titled "Prophecy Begins With Bible Study," dated 1.9.16, to listen to the audio of this video clip.

It's amazing isn't it? One of the last guys you saw on this collection of videos was a man by the name of Robert Fitzpatrick. He was the guy that talked about letting his garden go that year. This man spent over \$100,000 of his life savings on subway ads warning people that the world would end on May 21, 2011. This man REALLY believed it was going to happen. You don't spend a hundred grand of your own money if you don't really believe in what you are saying.

Harold Camping eventually did apologize. You can watch the documentary Zeke Piestrup filmed in its totality. I watched it on Hulu. It's titled "Apocalypse Later: Harold Camping vs. the End of the World." At the end of the documentary, Zeke is in Mr. Camping's home in May 2012 I believe it was. Harold said that he was wrong for trying to predict a date for Christ's return, and now he sees that verses like Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 really do teach that know one can know the day or hour of the return of Christ. Harold Camping died on December 15, 2013.

Even more recently we had the "Mystery of the Shemitah" thing from Jonathan Cahn and the "Blood Moon" thing from John Hagee. They were both careful not to set any dates particularly of the second coming, but they were still peddling their presentations as absolute truth, and preaching it as though they were "last day prophets" of the Lord. It was just more last days madness. I've dealt with both of their teachings in earlier sermons. Here we are in January 2016. All of that is quiet now. But, the further away we get from it, you watch, someone else will come up with some kind of snippet from the Bible and there will be people latch onto it.

What I think is that people don't take much time to study these matters out diligently from the Biblical text. They do not take the time to sit down and do the work of exegesis

in Scripture. Examining verses in their original culture, context, language, and then allowing the Bible to interpret the Bible.

Instead they take snippets from here and snippets from there, and start adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers, and they come up with all sorts of ideas.

A lot of people watch the news and believe it helps them interpret the Bible. They see that an earthquake hit somewhere upon the earth, and then read a verse in Matthew 24 that talks about earthquakes, and voila - we must be living in the last days because of the earthquake. The same goes with wars and famines.

But what people don't realize is that folks have been doing this for years and years. The same exact methodology. There's been wars and earthquakes going on in every generation since Yeshua left the earth. There's been lunar eclipses throughout the centuries. There's been comets, and tsunamis, and despotic rulers throughout the centuries, and in every single generation, someone has thought that they were the ones who would see the second coming of Christ.

So what do we do? Do we throw our hands up in the air and give up studying the Bible?

I suggest that we should not blame the manual for something that people do with the manual. There's a right way and a wrong way to do Bible study, just like there's a right way and a wrong way to work a computer. If you give 10 people the same computer, with the same manual, and all 10 of them end up not knowing how to work the computer, you don't automatically blame the manual. The odds are that the manual or the instructions will help solve the problems. You blame the people.

Don't blame the Bible for peoples mistakes. We can know the truth. We can understand prophecy, but we must be willing to slow down and do the sometimes difficult and tedious work of actually studying the Bible properly. Knowing the author and original audience. Knowing the culture of the time. Knowing the words and phrases of that time and how they were used and understood. And allowing the Bible to interpret the Bible.

I spent 9 weeks teaching through Matthew 23, and I spent much more time studying Matthew 23. But I did so because I love Yahweh's word, and I have a desire to understand it properly, and interpret it accurately. I also did so because properly understanding Matthew 23 helps us to properly understand Matthew 24.

In the next lesson, we'll begin studying Matthew 24 with the backdrop of Matthew 23 fresh in our minds. Let's stand and close in prayer.

Zion Will be Plowed Like a Field

Matthew 24, Pt. 2

Text to Read: **Matthew 23:36 - 24:2**

In the last lesson I basically gave an introduction to the prophetic chapter we are now going to begin to study. Today we get back to the Bible. I promise you, we will be using

the Bible in this study. I'm not going to be using the USA Today or the Huffington Post to interpret this prophetic text. We will just be letting the bible interpret the bible. As a matter of fact, these lessons will not only dissect Matthew 24, but they will also contain material on how to do proper bible study. I'll be explaining points and methods of bible study, and then showing you how to do them. I know people who want to study the bible more, but don't really know how. If you listen to these lessons carefully, you will learn some key points to use in your own bible study.

We'll begin with one of these right now, and that is this: I've often mentioned in sermons, how that chapter and verse divisions did not exist when the books of the bible were originally written. I've never really explained this in much detail, but I'll spend some time doing so in this lesson, because it is of importance to our study. It is key that you don't stop in Matthew 23:39, and then start Matthew 24, thinking that a totally new thought or account begins. It's vital that you see this as one continuous flow of thought.

In the manuscripts of Matthew available to us, the oldest of which are in the Greek language, there isn't any chapter and verse divisions. The same is true for the majority of the Old Testament Scriptures in Hebrew. They are each continuous books, for the most part.

This continued up for over 1000 years after the time of Christ. This means that congregations of believers in Christ for 1000 years never said something like, "Let's turn to Matthew 24, verse 2 today." They instead knew the book of Matthew, and likely knew the words or phrases where certain thought sections began.

An early Greek manuscript of the New Testament would have been written in all capital letters, with no punctuation (as we know it today), no spaces in between the words, and no verse divisions or chapter divisions.

If we carry this over into our modern English language, this means that Matthew 23:38 through Matthew 24:2 would look like this:

SEYOURHOUSEISLEFTTOYOUDESOLATEFORITELLYOUYOUWILLNEVERSE
 EMEAGAINUNTILYOUSAYHEWHOCOMESINTHE NAME OF YAHWEHISTHEBL
 ESSEDONEASYESHUALEFTANDWASGOINGOUTOFTHE TEMPLE COMPLEX HIS
 DISCIPLES CAME UP AND CALLED HIS ATTENTION TO THE TEMPLE BUILDING ST
 HEN HERE PLIED TO THEM DONT YOU SEE ALL THESE THINGS I ASSURE YOU NOT
 ONE STONE WILL BE LEFT THERE ON ANOTHER THAT WILL NOT BE THROWN DOWN
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Now, we aren't used to reading script like this, but this is how it was done early on in the Greek language. Later it became more nuanced. There were capital and lower case letters, spacing, some divisions in the text, but still no chapter and verse divisions like we know them today.

Those didn't come along until the 1500's. In 1551, a man by the name of Robert Estienne added verse divisions into what was his 4th edition of the Greek NT. These would become the pattern for what we now have in our English Bibles.

It is important that you realize this, because some people might think that we need to make a clean break after Matthew 23 and begin fresh in Matthew 24, because after all, we are starting a new chapter in the book. The problem with that thinking is that we aren't starting a new chapter. Those chapters didn't exist in the original or early copies of Matthew's manuscript.

Some times, sure, new thoughts begin in new chapters. Totally new ideas and concepts start when a new chapter starts. Bible scholars and translators have done a great job of placing chapter and verse divisions into the books of Scripture, but these are not inspired by the Holy Spirit.

When we realize this and then read through, as we should, we see an unbreakable connection from Matthew 23 to Matthew 24.

Yeshua is in the temple. He pronounces judgment on this generation. He tells them "your house is left desolate, waste, solitary." And he gives the only way that they will see him is to acknowledge that Yahweh sent him. Yeshua leaves the temple, and the disciples call his attention to the temple buildings. He then tells him that all the stones of the temple will be knocked down.

That's one cohesive thought, and it's vital that you put it together like that. What we are dealing with here is judgment upon unbelieving Israel, specifically the house of Judah. This is all about judgment coming upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their failure to accept Yeshua as the Messiah, sent by Yahweh.

Remember what we've learned from studying Matthew 21 and 23: the leaders in Judah are the builders who rejected the cornerstone. They are the tenant farmers who had the Son sent to them, but they rejected and murdered the Son. Therefore the Kingdom would be taken away from them, and given to a nation producing the fruit thereof.

Yeshua came unto his own, but his own received him not. And for that, there must be judgment.

Judgment would be visibly seen by calamity upon Jerusalem, and most specifically, the temple in Jerusalem. The temple that Yeshua now calls "your house" will be destroyed. He says, "your house is left to you desolate" and then he turns around and walks out of the temple. He is the prophet, pronouncing judgment upon unbelieving Israel, just like the prophets that came before him did.

Now you need to realize, this is major. This temple was the temple that had begun restoration in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. This was the House of Yahweh. This was the center piece for the worship given by the people of Israel, in the capital city of Jerusalem in Judah.

For this city and temple to be judged and destroyed would be a HUGE deal.

And the disciples recognize this. That is why they called Yeshua's attention to the temple buildings in Matthew 24:1. They are telling him, "You're talking about the temple? This place is left desolate? There is judgment coming upon this house?" They realized the implications of Yeshua's words, and it startled the disciples, so they began asking him questions.

Matthew 24:1 is the amazement of the disciples, concerning Yeshua's negative attitude towards the temple. Yeshua was negative about the temple, because of what the leaders in Judah had made it. Because of them, it had become a tomb of dead men.

In Matthew 24:2, Yeshua replies to their amazement. He says:

Matthew 24:2

Then He replied to them, Don't you see all these things? I assure you: Not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down!

See all what things? What's the context? The temple buildings. They are amazed that he has pronounced judgment upon this great house, and Yeshua basically tells them, "Yes, I'm being totally serious. You see these buildings? Not one stone will be left here that will not be torn down."

What temple is Yeshua talking about here? Isn't it obvious that he is referring to that temple that was still up at that time? He isn't talking about some future temple that still hasn't been built in our day and time, 2016. No, he's referring to THAT temple. That's not difficult to see.

Let's look at a parallel text. A text in Luke's gospel where Yeshua speaks about the same thing.

Luke 19:41-44

41 As He approached and saw the city, He wept over it,
 42 saying, If you knew this day what would bring peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes.
 43 For the days will come on you when your enemies will build an embankment against you, surround you, and hem you in on every side.
 44 They will crush you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave one stone on another in you, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.

If you study the surrounding context here in Luke, Yeshua just entered the city of Jerusalem in verses 28-40. In verses 45-46 he drives out the money-changers. Verses 41-44 is a judgment text just like Matthew 23:36 - Matthew 24:2.

Yeshua approaches Jerusalem, looks out over it, and weeps over it. Why? It's supposed to be a city dedicated to Yahweh, but it is not. The leaders have become corrupt, just like the leaders of old, in Israel, all through the Old Testament.

Yeshua tells them that the day is coming (here's the prophecy) when enemies of Jerusalem will build an embankment against them, surround them, and hem them in on every side.

In verse 44 he says that these enemies will crush you and your children to the ground. Who and who's children? The Israelites and their children. The ones Yeshua came to. They would be judged because as verse 44 says at the end, they didn't recognize the day of their visitation. The Son came to visit them. The parable of the vineyard happened in real life. But they didn't recognize the visitor for who he was, the promised Messiah, sent by Yahweh, so therefore judgment would come. And notice that Yeshua says that these enemies who come against the city of Jerusalem, would not leave one stone on another. Same judgment as Matthew 24:2.

But wasn't this Yahweh's city? Wasn't this Yahweh's temple? At one time, yes it was, but all of this was conditional to the people of Israel. They couldn't just do whatever they wanted, and worship whoever they wanted, and expect Yahweh to overlook it.

Look with me to 1 Kings 9. In 1 Kings 8 we have the prayer of King Solomon at the dedication of the temple of Yahweh. But in 1 Kings 9 we have Yahweh's response to the prayer recorded for us. Let's read verses 1-9.

1 Kings 9:1-9

1 When Solomon finished building the temple of Yahweh, the royal palace, and all that Solomon desired to do,
2 Yahweh appeared to Solomon a second time just as He had appeared to him at Gibeon.

Recognize that the temple has just been completed and dedicated by King Solomon.

3 Yahweh said to him: I have heard your prayer and petition you have made before Me. I have consecrated this temple you have built, to put My name there forever; My eyes and My heart will be there at all times.

Yahweh heard Solomon's prayer. The temple would be a special, sacred place. The way Yahweh speaks in verse 3 sounds as though Yahweh will be at the temple unconditionally, forever, but let's continue reading.

4 As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, with a heart of integrity and in what is right, doing everything I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and ordinances,

5 I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised your father David: You will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.

Now we are seeing some conditions. Notice the IF at the beginning of verse 4. IF you do what's right, if you walk with integrity, if you do everything I have commanded you, if you keep my statutes and ordinances.

Notice next, beginning with verse 6, we have more statements beginning with if. We just heard "IF you do what's right, this will happen." Now we will hear, "IF you do what's wrong, this will happen."

6 If you or your sons turn away from following Me and do not keep My commands — My statutes that I have set before you — and if you go and serve other mighty ones and worship them,

7 I will cut off Israel from the land I gave them, and I will reject the temple I have sanctified for My name. Israel will become an object of scorn and ridicule among all the peoples.

8 Though this temple is now exalted, everyone who passes by will be appalled and will mock. They will say: Why did Yahweh do this to this land and this temple?

9 Then they will say: Because they abandoned Yahweh their Mighty One who brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt. They clung to other mighty ones and worshiped and served them. Because of this, Yahweh brought all this ruin on them.

So Yahweh promises to cut off Israel from the land and reject the temple, IF they do not walk in His commands and instead go after other mighty ones.

Well, what happened? Right around 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came into Jerusalem as a javelin in the hand of Yahweh and destroyed Jerusalem and burned down the temple. You can read about this in 2 Kings 25 and 2 Chronicles 36. What Yahweh told Solomon could happen, did happen, because of national, rebellious Israel.

Now the temple began to be rebuilt later on after the Babylonian captivity, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Yahweh blessed that temple, because there was repentance and restoration in Israel at that time. The beginnings of that temple would eventually be the temple that stood in Jerusalem during the days of the ministry of Yeshua. That was the temple complex that Yeshua entered in Matthew 21:12, and he saw them making what was supposed to be his Father's house of prayer into a den of thieves.

Wouldn't you think that the same destruction that happened to Solomon's original temple, because of national rebellious Israel, could happen to this temple in Yeshua's day? Well of course it could. Yahweh's promises in 1 Kings 9 were just as much for the temple in Yeshua's day as they were for the temple in Solomon's day.

What Yahweh told Solomon in 1 Kings 9 was just as true in Yeshua's day. And what Yahweh told the rebellious leaders in Israel, in Micah 3, was just as much against the rebellious leaders in Israel in Matthew 23. Look at Micah 3.

Micah 3

- 1 Then I said, Now listen, leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel. Aren't you supposed to know what is just?
- 2 You hate good and love evil. You tear off peoples skin and strip their flesh from their bones.
- 3 You eat the flesh of my people after you strip their skin from them and break their bones. You chop them up like flesh for the cooking pot, like meat in a cauldron.
- 4 Then they will cry out to Yahweh, but He will not answer them. He will hide His face from them at that time because of the crimes they have committed.
- 5 This is what Yahweh says concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who proclaim peace when they have food to sink their teeth into but declare war against the one who puts nothing in their mouths.
- 6 Therefore, it will be night for you — without visions; it will grow dark for you — without divination. The sun will set on these prophets, and the daylight will turn black over them.
- 7 Then the seers will be ashamed and the diviners disappointed. They will all cover their mouths because there will be no answer from the Mighty One.
- 8 As for me, however, I am filled with power by the Spirit of Yahweh, with justice and courage, to proclaim to Jacob his rebellion and to Israel his sin.
- 9 Listen to this, leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert everything that is right,
- 10 who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with injustice.
- 11 Her leaders issue rulings for a bribe, her priests teach for payment, and her prophets practice divination for money. Yet they lean on Yahweh, saying, Isn't Yahweh among us? No disaster will overtake us.
- 12 Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become ruins, and the hill of the Temple Mount will be a thicket.

Because of the leaders of the people of Israel; because of their rebellion; because of their sin - Zion will be plowed down like a field, Jerusalem will become ruins, and the hill of the Temple Mount will be a thicket. It will be weeds. Utter destruction will come.

That's sounds awfully familiar to what Yeshua said in Matthew 23-24. In 23, he rebukes the leaders in Israel, the scribes and the Pharisees. He tells them "Your house (the temple) is left desolate," he tells them "all these things will come upon this generation," and then he tells his disciples as he leaves the temple, "Do you see these things? Not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down."

Matthew 24 is all about judgment upon rebellious Israel in that generation. Yeshua showed up, and they rejected the day of their visitation. He came to his own, and his own received him not.

That's the beginning of Matthew 24. Meditate on what I've covered tonight. Go back and re-read the verses, comparing them with one another. If you paid careful attention to our

studies in Matthew 23, and you've listened intently to this first lesson on Matthew 24, you will be ready to interpret properly and understand correctly the rest of Matthew 24.

The Disciples Three-Fold Question

Matthew 24, Pt. 3

Text to Read: **Matthew 24:3 (Mark 13:3-4; Luke 21:7)**

We've opened up tonight by reading three parallel passages. I use that phrase a lot - parallel passages or parallel texts. What I mean by that is this: Bible verses where different authors write about the same thing, or sometimes Bible verses, where the same author, writes about the same thing, in different books or epistles.

In this case Matthew, Mark, and Luke are all recording the same account. Yeshua's Olivet Discourse. Remember, it's commonly called the Olivet discourse, because as we see from Matthew 24:3, he gave this prophetic discourse while sitting on the Mount of Olives, named such because of the many olive trees that grew upon it. Let me briefly mention that the Mount of Olives is not a mountain like some may think. It is more of a hill roughly 700 feet above the plain, composed of three peaks or summits.

In Matthew 24:1-2 Yeshua has exited the Temple, so we know he was in Jerusalem (at the Temple) at that time. However, in Matthew 24:3, Yeshua is sitting on the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives is still technically in Jerusalem, but it was outside the then *city walls* of Jerusalem. Mark 13:3 says that the Mount of Olives was across from the Temple complex. Acts 1:12 shows us that it was less than a mile from the city. You could sit on the Mount of Olives and see the city of Jerusalem. You could see the Temple. Only the Kidron valley separated the Mount of Olives from the city walls. So evidently, from reading Matthew 24:1-2 and then verse 3, after Yeshua made the pronouncement about the destruction of the Temple, he and his disciples left the city and went to sit somewhere on the Mount of Olives.

Matthew 24:3 says that while he was sitting there, his disciples asked him some questions privately. These questions were prompted by Yeshua's statements in Matthew 23:38 and Matthew 24:2. Yeshua had pronounced judgment upon the city of Jerusalem. He told the leaders of Judah "Your house is left to you desolate," and "not one stone will be left here upon another that will not be thrown down." Don't forget Luke 19:41-44 as well. It's a *very* important passage in all of this. Yeshua weeps as he looks out over the city, the city standing at *that time*, and he speaks of a day when the enemies of Jerusalem would build an embankment against them, surround them, and hem them in on every side of the city. These enemies would bring upon the city utter destruction, not leaving one stone upon another. That's the same thing he said in Matthew 24:2. Judgment would come upon Jerusalem because they did not recognize the time of their visitation.

Now, here's another important tip to use when studying the Bible. Remember last week, we talked about how it's often good to read through chapter divisions, because the thought continues on? Well this week I want to explain how it's good to read the Bible

not just vertically, up and down, from one verse to another (and so on), but also horizontally.

What I mean by horizontally is parallel passages, like I mentioned at the beginning. This is especially true when reading the gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are 4 authors that give us their account of the life ministry of Yeshua of Nazareth. The 4 authors often record the same accounts in their individual books, but because they are different men, with different personalities, and different interests, they record the same accounts in their own way, which often means that their accounts differ one from another.

I do not mean that their accounts can't be harmonized. That's not what I'm saying at all. Some people read the gospels, and are quick to criticize them, because (let's say) Matthew and Mark record the same account, but say different things about the account. A mind bent on discrediting the gospel accounts is quick to be negative. However, why in the world would we expect Matthew and Mark - two different people - to record an event in the exact same way, using the exact same words?

I would actually be skeptical if this were the case. If I read both Matthew and Mark, and they read identically to each other, it would make me skeptical of the truthfulness of the books.

This next quote I'm going to share will explain well what I'm speaking of. Listen carefully. This is from a work by James P. Lucier titled "Otto Scott Steers by the Compass," in 1999. James P. Lucier recounts something that Otto Scott said that fits well in our lesson today.

"Well, my wife was Christian and took our daughter to church all the time. I would attend out of courtesy. One night I was reading late and my little girl came out of the bedroom and wanted to know about this business of turning the other cheek. I had no idea where that idea came from but I thought it might be the Bible. I had a Bible in the house, of course, and I picked it up and read the Gospels—all four in one swoop.

It was the contradictions in the testimony of these four different men that convinced me. As a reporter I had interviewed a lot of men, and I was on the crime beat at one point. I knew that if you get four men who tell you the same story they probably are colluding because no four men see the same thing the same way. One sees one significant element; one sees another. Although there was a close resemblance in the reporting of certain incidents in the Gospels, they were not identical. I was instantly convinced. I don't think a person could have convinced me, but those varying contemporary histories did." ~ Otto Scott

I hope that you catch this. Mr. Scott became convinced of the credibility of the gospel authors - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - because their accounts or stories were NOT identical. And his point is a great one. A trained reporter knows that 4 men who tell the *exact* same story have already talked with one another and gotten their stories straight before being interviewed. Had the gospel authors all said the same thing, in the same

way, Mr. Scott would have remained skeptical. The fact that they differ, and sometimes seem contradictory, lends credence to their testimonies.

So, back to the Bible study tip. In reading Matthew, Mark, and Luke at the beginning of the sermon, we have 3 different accounts or perspectives of the same event. (John does not record the Olivet Discourse.) Here's a quick example of how they read differently, yet harmonize, and through reading all of these parallel texts, we glean more information than from just reading one author.

Matthew 24:3 tells us that the disciples approached Yeshua privately. Luke 21:5-7 just says that some of the men who were talking about the temple's beauty approached him. However, Mark fills in a detail for us. Mark 13:3 let's us know that the disciples who approached him privately on the Mount of Olives were Peter, James, John, and Andrew.

Were there other disciples there? Maybe, but we don't know for sure. What we do know for sure is that these 4 disciples were there, and they are the ones who approached Yeshua privately, asking him questions. And remember, the questions they asked him were prompted by Yeshua's statements about the destruction of the temple. So look again at Matthew 24:3.

Matthew 24:3

While He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Now, I see no reason at all to separate these questions into multiple events that take place at different times. In other words, (1) when will these things happen (?) (2) what is the sign of your coming (?) and (3) what is the sign of the end of the age (?) are all questions about one event. The disciples were marveling at Yeshua's statements about the *destruction of the temple*, and Yeshua told them to look at the stones of the temple. He then proclaimed: "I assure you - not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down!"

That statement made the disciples ask him when this would happen. The disciples then associated the destruction of the temple, with the coming of the Messiah, and the end of the age.

Now, reading horizontally will help us see that all three questions in Matthew 24:3 are associated. Notice how Mark records it.

Mark 13:1-4

1 As He was going out of the temple complex, one of His disciples said to Him "Teacher, look! What massive stones! What impressive buildings!
2 Yeshua said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down!"

3 While He was sitting on the Mount of Olives across from the temple complex, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately

4 Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign when all these things are about to take place?

Notice how Mark records the questions a little differently. When will *these things* happen? What's the sign when all *these things* are about to happen? Only two questions here, but both prompted by one statement from Yeshua about the temple's destruction.

Now notice Luke's account.

Luke 21:5-7

5 As some were talking about the temple complex, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to the Almighty, He said,

6 "These things that you see - the days will come when not one stone will be left on another that will not be thrown down!"

7 "Teacher," they asked Him, "so when will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"

Here again, Luke (like Mark) records the question as two-fold, and both questions are about the same thing - the destruction of the temple.

Reading the gospels horizontally shows us that when Matthew records the question as three-fold (in Matthew 24:3), all three questions pertain to the same event. The disciples associate the coming of the Messiah and the end of the age with the destruction of the temple. They did not have in their mind that any of these things would happen at different times, hundreds or thousands of years apart, but rather all at the same time.

It is important that you see that Yeshua is talking about the temple stones that stood then, and that the disciples are asking about the temple stones that stood then. Put yourself in their shoes. They were concerned with when this judgment that Yeshua spoke about - upon THAT Temple - would take place, and they associated the coming of the Messiah and the end of the age with that judgment.

Remember this as well, Yeshua had already said in Matthew 23:36 - "All these things will come upon *this generation*." What generation? The generation of Israel alive at that time. In Matthew 21-23, Yeshua had been rebuking the scribes and Pharisees of the *then living generation*. They were the tenant farmers that the Son of the Landowner was sent to. They were the builders that rejected the chief cornerstone. They were the sons of those who murdered the prophets. They were the ones who would fill up the measure of their father's sins. They were the ones that Yeshua said he would send prophets and wise men to, yet they would crucify some and flog others in their synagogues. It was rebellious Israel of THAT generation that Yeshua was speaking to, and therefore the judgment would come upon them, THEN. It was the temple that was standing THEN that would be destroyed. There wouldn't be left one stone upon another of THAT temple.

The disciples had heard all of this from the mouth of Yeshua, they just wanted to know more particulars. They wanted to know when all of this would take place, and what would be the sign of His coming, and the end of the age?

Let us not forget that Yeshua had already told his 12 disciples that He would come before they finished going through the towns of Israel. We read it at length in Matthew 10 in an earlier sermon, so I'll just re-cap here. Yeshua is giving his 12 personal disciples instructions in Matthew 10. Instructions about preaching throughout the towns of Israel. They were to announce that the kingdom of heaven has come NEAR, and they were to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, and drive out demons.

But, Yeshua warned his disciples that THEY would be persecuted. THEY would be handed over to councils and be flogged in synagogues. They were told that brother would betray brother to death and even a father his own child. Enemies would be people among the same household. Yeshua told them that THEY would be hated by everyone on account of his name, but the one that endured to the end would be delivered. He then says in Matthew 10:23:

Matthew 10:23

When they persecute YOU in one town, escape to another. For I assure YOU: YOU will not have covered the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Now, there is no way we are still waiting for THIS coming of the Son of Man. We know that Yeshua has not come back physically since he left the earth, yet here he tells the disciples that he will come before they finish covering all the towns of Israel in their own ministry. We can either conclude that (1) he was wrong, or (2) *he means* something different than a physical, second coming here in this passage. The physical, second coming is still future, but this coming he spoke of in Matthew 10:23 was future to when he said it, but it is now in the past because it happened just when he said it would - BEFORE his disciples covered all the towns of Israel.

I realize that is probably brand new in your thinking. It was brand new to me the first time I encountered it years ago, and then again in 2007. This may be something you've never heard before, but I challenge you to let go of any traditional thinking and think Biblically. Take Yeshua at his word. He told his disciples, "you will not have covered the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes" so I believe he came before they covered all the towns of Israel, because he said he would. That's obviously not a reference to his first physical coming, he had been born in Bethlehem about 30 years previous; and it's obviously not a reference to his second physical coming, that hasn't happened yet in over 2,000 years since he came the first time. Therefore, this coming of the Son of Man must mean something different than what we are accustomed to thinking traditionally.

Look at another passage that is similar.

Matthew 16:27-28

27 For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will reward each according to what he has done.

28 I assure you: There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

Once again, I think the implications are clear, I just think that our traditional mindset does not allow us to believe what Yeshua says. Yeshua had an audience in front of him that day. He was talking to *those* people. And he said that he assured *them* - some of *them* standing there would not die until they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

This implies that many of them would die, but some of them wouldn't. Therefore, this coming of the Son of Man must be far enough away from them that many of them would already be dead, yet close enough to them that some of them could still be alive.

Once again, this passage (like Matthew 10:23) cannot fit the traditional understanding of a coming that is still future to us living now. No, this coming of the Son of Man - spoken about by Yeshua himself - must have happened back in the first century A.D. when some of them standing there that day still had not tasted death.

The disciples had heard Yeshua speak like this, and this is why they included the question, "And what is the sign of Your coming?" in Matthew 24:3. They associated His coming with the destruction of the temple that he had just predicted in Matthew 23 and 24.

And what about this *end of the age* question? They also ask "What's the sign of the end of the age?" They weren't asking about the end of the present world (*cosmos*) that is yet future to us in our day, in 2016, they were asking about the end of the *age (aion)* as it related to Jerusalem and the Temple being destroyed. That would be the end of the Old Covenant age and the beginning of the age and reign of Messiah *from heaven*. The end of Old Covenant Israel, and the beginning of New Covenant Christian Israel.

If we let the Bible speak here it is not difficult. It is only a traditional mindset and traditional understanding that make it difficult for us to not believe what the Bible says.

However, if we let go of all that, and believe the Bible, we read that the New Testament authors considered *their day* to be the end of the age and the last days.

Hebrews 9:24-26

24 For the Messiah did not enter a sanctuary made with hands (only a model of the true one) but into heaven itself, that He might now appear in the presence of the Almighty for us.

25 He did not do this to offer Himself many times, as the high priest enters the sanctuary yearly with the blood of another.

26 Otherwise, He would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But now He has appeared one time, AT THE END OF THE AGES, for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (cp. 1 Corinthians 10:10-12)

The author of Hebrews here calls the time of the sacrifice of Yeshua on the cross - AT THE END OF THE AGES. The Messiah appeared, at the end of the ages, to be crucified to remove our sin by his sacrifice. And notice what the author of Hebrews states about the last days in Hebrews 1.

Hebrews 1:1-2a

Long ago the Almighty spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In THESE LAST DAYS, He has spoken to us by His Son...

Here, the author of Hebrews refers to the time period of the ministry of the Son - Yeshua of Nazareth - as THESE LAST DAYS. We hear preachers or people speak about the "last days" in our time, like we are in them now or they are still future to us in 2016. Yet that's not how the author of Hebrews understood the term. To him, the last days were the time of the Son's ministry.

And this is just a sampling of texts like this. I want to refer you here, and to anyone else listening, to my sermon titled "Are We Living in the Last Days?" from October 21, 2015. More information on the Biblical use of that term "last days" can be found in that sermon.

As I close today, I want to say that all of this makes the disciples 3-fold question in Matthew 24:3 make sense. Yeshua had just prophetically pronounced destruction upon the temple, and the disciples asked (1) when these things would happen, (2) what would be the sign of your coming, and (3) of the end of the age?

The disciples associated a coming of the Son of Man, and the end of the age, **with** the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. They were asking about one event, and Yeshua - beginning in Matthew 24:4 - answers their questions.

In the next lesson, we will look deeper into Matthew 24:1-3. We will examine how Yeshua here, and elsewhere, desires for his people not to focus on Jerusalem or the Temple, but on himself - who is greater than the Temple. The Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed, but Yeshua would not be. He would resurrect from death and reign from heaven.

Yeshua is Greater than Jerusalem

Matthew 24, Pt. 4

Text to Read: **Matthew 24:1-3**

In the last lesson we looked at the questions that the disciples asked Yeshua in private, while they sat together with him on the Mount of Olives. As we just read, he pronounced judgment upon Jerusalem saying that the temple that stood then, the temple he had just walked out of after rebuking the rebellious leaders in Israel (in Matthew 23), *that* temple

would be destroyed. "You see these stones?" Yeshua asked, "I assure you, there will not be one stone left here on another that will not be torn down!"

This was astonishing to the disciples. As Mark records them saying, "Look at what massive stones these are! Look at how impressive these buildings are!" They marveled at the structure there, the structure that was supposed to be Yahweh's House of Prayer. As we know from studying Matthew's gospel, the leaders in Israel had turned it into a den of iniquity; a den of thieves (Matthew 21:12-13). These Israelite leaders needed to repent and receive Yeshua for who He was, the promised Messiah and prophet sent from Yahweh. Yeshua was a prophet. He was the prophet like Moses that Yahweh raised up from among the brethren in Israel, according to Acts 3:22-26.

Acts 3:22-23

22 Moses said: Yahweh your Mighty One will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to Him in everything He will say to you.

23 And it will be that everyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from the people.

If you read all of Acts 3 you will see that Peter is preaching to the men of Israel. He tells the men of Israel that THEY killed the Messiah Yeshua (Acts 3:13-17), but Yahweh raised Him from death. He tells the men of Israel to repent of their wickedness that their sins may be blotted out (Acts 3:19), and here, he tells the men of Israel that they must listen to the Prophet like Moses that Yahweh raises up from among the brethren in Israel, and everyone in Israel that doesn't listen to this prophet will be destroyed. This prophet is Yeshua of Nazareth.

You must listen to everything Yeshua says. Why? Because He is sent by Yahweh. He has Yahweh's backing. He's not just a guy down the street that comes in his own name. Yeshua comes in Yahweh's name, and that means that everything Yeshua says to you, it is Yahweh saying it to you. When you hear Yeshua speak, you are listening to Yahweh speak, because Yahweh SENT Yeshua, just like He sent Prophet Moses. Anyone who rejected Prophet Moses rejected Yahweh, and anyone who rejected Prophet Yeshua rejected Yahweh as well. (*Peter continues...*)

Acts 3:24-26

24 In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also announced these days (the days Peter was in at that time).

25 You are sons of the prophets and of the covenant that (the) Almighty made with your forefathers, saying to Abraham, And in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.

26 The Almighty raised up His Servant and sent Him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways.

Peter is still talking to the men of Israel, that's his only audience here in these verses. And he is telling the men of Israel that they are the sons of the prophets that spoke in days of

old, and they are sons of the covenant that the Almighty made with their forefathers. BUT, they must accept the terms of the covenant which means they need to repent of killing Yeshua. The terms are this from Yahweh: you must receive and listen to everything the prophet I send says to you. The prophet is Yeshua. They had crucified the prophet Yeshua. The prophet Yeshua was sent to them first (vs. 26; these were Judahite men of Israel - to the Judahite first). He was sent to them, to turn them, the men of Israel, from their evil ways.

See, Yeshua is the important one here. Receive Yeshua, have your sins forgiven. Reject Yeshua, die in your sins un-forgiven. That's everything in a nutshell. Yahweh sent Yeshua to them. Yahweh the Landowner, sent His Son to the tenant farmers, but the tenant farmers killed the Landowner's Son. The builders rejected the cornerstone that came in the name of Yahweh. The tenant farmers and the builders are the same people; rebellious leaders of Israel that rejected and murdered Yeshua.

So Yeshua, in Matthew 24, is trying to get his disciples to take their focus off of Jerusalem and the Temple. Those things have had importance, those things are well and good (and have their place), but that which is of *greater* importance, that which is of *utmost* importance, is Yeshua. Yeshua doesn't want them to focus on the Temple. The Temple will be torn down, destroyed, and judged because of the sins of the House of Judah. Yeshua wants them to focus on Him who is greater than the Temple. That's Himself.

In Matthew 12:6, in explaining a matter about the priests in the Temple on Sabbath, Yeshua says that there was one standing among them who was GREATER than the Temple. He's talking about Himself when He says that.

You've got to understand, in the minds of first-century Israelites, the Temple was the greatest place on earth. Jerusalem was the center of the earth to an Israelite, because it was the focal place of worship. It was the capital city of Judah, and it was the place to which all the men of Israel would go three times a year to celebrate the appointed feasts of Yahweh. The Temple in Jerusalem was holy. In it was a holy place and then a most holy place. In it were holy vessels. In it was Yahweh's presence.

But Yeshua presents Himself as one GREATER than all of that; and He was. Yeshua was what the Temple pointed to. Yeshua was what all the holy vessels pointed to. Yeshua was what all the sacrifices pointed to. And Yeshua is where Yahweh's presence, Yahweh's Spirit, dwelt fully.

If you asked a first century Israelite "Where does Yahweh dwell?" he would point you to the Temple in Jerusalem. Yeshua is trying to get the people of Israel to see though that the Temple in Jerusalem had become corrupt, just as Yahweh said it could become. Don't forget that this isn't anything new. Remember Yahweh's response to King Solomon in 1 Kings 9, and also Yahweh's rebuke to the leaders of Israel in Micah 3. The Temple had become a place of filth because of the sins of the leaders in Israel. They had rejected the

One that the Temple had been pointing to all along: Yeshua the Messiah, the Son of Yahweh. That's why Peter was preaching to them to repent in Acts 2 and Acts 3.

Now, we're going to spend some time in the Gospel of John today. Look with me to an account in John chapter 2.

John 2:13-22

13 The Judahite Passover was near, so Yeshua went up to Jerusalem.

14 In the temple complex He found people selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and He also found the money changers sitting there.

15 After making a whip out of cords, He drove everyone out of the temple complex with their sheep and oxen. He also poured out the money changers coins and overturned the tables.

16 He told those who were selling doves, 'Get these things out of here! Stop turning My Father's House into a marketplace!'

17 And His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for Your house will consume Me.' (quote from Psalm 69:9)

Take special note that what comes next takes place inside the temple complex. Yeshua has just released righteous indignation upon those who were making the temple a marketplace. Zeal for the House of Yahweh had overwhelmed Yeshua.

18 So the Judahites replied to Him, 'What sign of authority will You show us for doing these things?'

19 Yeshua answered, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.'

20 Therefore the Judahites said, 'This temple took 46 years to build, and will You raise it up in three days?'

21 But he was speaking about the temple of His body.

The Judahites there that day (and this is the leaders of Judah, just like we've been studying about in Matthew 21-23), they ask him for a sign of authority. In other words they are saying, "If you're going to have such zeal to drive us all out of here, overturn our money tables, and rebuke us with fervor, you must have some kind of authority. Give us a sign of this authority!"

What is the sign? Yeshua says, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days."

Now let me ask you. Who was speaking there? Well we know the words came out of Yeshua's mouth, but I believe that Yahweh was speaking through Yeshua here. This shouldn't surprise us at all because Yeshua is the prophet, the foremost prophet of Yahweh, and Yahweh had already spoke through His prophets in days gone past. As a matter of fact, look at what Yahweh says about the prophet like Moses in

Deuteronomy 18:18-19.

18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

19 I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to My words that he speaks in My name.

When Yeshua spoke here, He spoke the words of Yahweh. Yahweh put the words in his mouth. When Yeshua said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" that's Yahweh speaking through His prophet Yeshua. Remember, Yeshua is LIKE Moses in this regard.

When Moses told Pharaoh in Egypt, "Let my people go!" who do you think was speaking? Well when you read the narrative in Exodus 3-5 there can be no doubt that Yahweh was the one saying, "Let my people go!" but Yahweh used Moses as His mouthpiece.

Here when Yeshua says, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days," it is Yahweh speaking through Yeshua. But what temple is being spoken of? Not the temple made of stone and mortar. Not the temple made of beautiful gifts to Yahweh. No, not that temple. But the GREATER temple. The temple of Yeshua's body. The temple where the fullness of Yahweh's Spirit dwelt. Yahweh is telling them, "You will destroy Yeshua, but I will raise him up in three days."

The Judahite leaders were thinking of the stone temple there in Jerusalem. "It took 46 years to build this great edifice," they said, "how in the world will you build it in 3 days?" They were thinking about the wrong temple. They weren't acknowledging that Yeshua was the GREATER temple where Yahweh dwelt.

The disciples, however, later realized this. Look at verse 22 in John 2.

22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this. And they believed the Scripture and the statement Yeshua had made.

After Yahweh raised Yeshua from the dead, just like He said He would, the disciples remembered this account we just read. It clicked. They realized all the Scriptures that pointed to His resurrection from the dead, and they realized that Yeshua was speaking about the temple of His body.

See, Yeshua wanted the people to focus on Him, the greater temple. The temple at Jerusalem would be judged and destroyed because of sin, but the temple of Yeshua's body would continue on.

Let's look at another Scripture pertinent to our study tonight, John 4. As we look to John 4, let me give a brief background.

This is the account of the Samaritan woman at the well, it's around high noon and Yeshua is tired from journeying so he sits down at a well at a town in Samaria named Sychar. This well is Jacob's well, a famous well of the patriarch in the book of Genesis.

While he's sitting there, a Samaritan woman comes to draw water and he asks her for a drink. She's astonished because Judahites are generally at animosity with Samaritans; they have very little dealings with them. There's a lot I could get into here in regards to who the Samaritans were, and it is important to know, but it's not the point of my lesson today. It is sufficient to say here that Yeshua was witnessing to this Samaritan woman about who He was and what He had to offer to her, spiritually - living water. We pick up the account in verse 20 where she says to Yeshua...

John 4:20-23

20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, yet you [Judahites] say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem."

When the Samaritan woman says "our fathers worshiped on *this* mountain" she must be talking about somewhere local to where she was at that day. At the foot of a mountain named *Gerizim* stood the town of Sychar, the town where Yeshua and the Samaritan woman were at. When the Samaritan woman says "our fathers worshiped on *this* mountain" she was speaking of Mount Gerizim right there in northern Samaria - in contrast to southern Jerusalem, where the Judahites worshiped.

We see one of the differences between the two groups here. The Samaritans believed that the focal place of worship was not Jerusalem, but Mount Gerizim. Gerizim is mentioned positively in the Torah, but it was never designated by Yahweh to be the central location of worship. Notice what Yeshua says after this:

21 Yeshua told her, "Believe Me, woman, an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

What was Yeshua speaking of here?

I believe He is prophesying of the coming destruction upon Jerusalem and the rebellious House of Judah (the ones Yeshua came to, but they didn't receive Him). This is the destruction we've been studying about in Matthew 21, 23, and 24 where He tells the leaders of Judah "The kingdom will be taken from you," and "Your house is left to you desolate." He then tells the disciples, "I assure you, there will not be one stone left here upon another that will not be thrown down."

He tells the woman "an hour is coming" because it was near to them at that time. It was on the horizon. Whereas the Samaritans believed Mount Gerizim was the focal place of worship, the Judahites believed Jerusalem was the focal place of worship. But, an hour was coming when people would worship the Father, but not in either of these locations, because of the destruction that would take place in Jerusalem, and the devastation that it would cause throughout the entire land of Israel.

22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Judahites.

Yeshua tells the woman that the Samaritan worship has errors in it, and if you want to know how to worship properly, look at the Judahites, for salvation is from the Judahites.

What does this mean? Does it mean you can look to the Judahites and see perfect worship? I don't think so. Remember John 1:11 - "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." The whole point of Matthew 21-23 is a condemnation of leaders of Judahite-Israel. They were corrupt in their deeds. Yeshua is not telling this Samaritan woman that all Judahites are worshipping accurately.

He is pointing out HIMSELF, just like he did to the Judahite leaders in John 2. He's the focus, He's the chief cornerstone, He's the Son of the Landowner, He's the salvation that comes from Judah. Remember, Yahweh retained His marital relationship status with Judah so that His Son would come through a tribe that was still "wedded" to Him. Yeshua is telling the Samaritan woman to look to Judah because that is where SALVATION, that is where YESHUA would come through.

The focus is not on Mount Gerizim. The focus is not on Jerusalem or the temple in Jerusalem. The focus is to be on Yeshua, the salvation that comes from the tribe of Judah. The One GREATER than the temple.

23 But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship Him.

Here He mentions again about the hour that is coming, and He adds in this verse "and is now here." Remember I said that the phrase "the hour is coming" specifies a nearness, and the phrase "and is now here" proves that point. The true worshipers aren't the ones who just show up to Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem. The true worshipers worship the Father in spirit - from the heart, and thus in truth - a true desire to know Him and not just showing up at a location or a building.

Places and temples can become corrupt, and again, this isn't some new teaching Yeshua came up with, this is taught all through the Hebrew Scriptures. We covered 1 Kings 9 and Micah chapter 3 where Yahweh promises to remove His presence from the temple and destroy the temple because of the sins of Israel. Read Jeremiah 7 and you'll see the same thing. Yeshua's preaching in the Olivet discourse, and in the Gospel of John, is the same thing that His Father preached in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Father sent HIM. He's the chief cornerstone, not a building. He's the temple that will be raised up in three days. He's the salvation that comes from Judah. He's the focal point. Get your eyes off of Jerusalem. She will be destroyed. That temple is coming down. It is left desolate. But Yeshua, the greater temple of Yahweh, will continue on.

One more passage as we close this lesson.

Hebrews 12:18-24

18 For you have not come to what could be touched, to a blazing fire, to darkness, gloom, and storm,
 19 to the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of words. (Those who heard it begged that not another word be spoken to them,
 20 for they could not bear what was commanded: And if even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned!
 21 And the appearance was so terrifying that Moses said, I am terrified and trembling.)

What is this talking about? The author of Hebrews is writing to an audience that would immediately recognize what he is saying. "For you have not come to what could be touched" refers to the mountain of the Almighty back in the book of Exodus. This is a direct reference to Exodus 19-20 where the Israelites DID COME to a mountain that could be touched, but they were told not to touch. Yahweh did come down with fire and smoke and a loud trumpet blast accompanied with thunder, and He spoke to the Israelites. (Exodus 19:16-23; 20:18-21)

The author of Hebrews is recalling this *Old Covenant* event back in Exodus 19-20, but he is telling these *New Covenant* believers, "You have not come to what could be touched." Now look at what he continues to write. (cp. vss. 18 and 22)

22 Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living Almighty (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels in festive gathering,
 23 to the assembly of the firstborn whose names have been written in heaven, to the Almighty who is the judge of all, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect,
 24 to Yeshua (mediator of a new covenant), and to the sprinkled blood, which says better things than the [blood] of Abel.

The author says that they have come to Mount Zion, the city of Yahweh, but it wasn't a *touchable* Mountain. It wasn't an *earthly* location, it was the heavenly Jerusalem, and they had come to it RIGHT THEN.

This aligns perfectly with what Yeshua has been saying. Look to ME, not to a touchable location. Look to the heavenly Jerusalem, not the Jerusalem that is going to be destroyed because of corruption. Look to me, the mediator of a New Covenant. Look to my sprinkled blood upon the heavenly tabernacle that will be presented to the Father in heaven, it is better than the blood of Abel (which could be a reference to Abel's death, or Abel's sacrifice back in Genesis). Either way, the blood of Abel was good, but the blood of Yeshua is better.

The point here is that Yeshua (and the author of Hebrews) is telling the people that much of what you see visibly right now, central worship in Jerusalem, the temple complex, the Levitical priesthood, etc. will soon pass away. These things were all good, from Yahweh,

and served their purpose for a time, but they pointed to something that was better: Yeshua the Messiah, worship of the Father in spirit and truth, the heavenly Jerusalem.

When a contractor builds a building, he often erects a scaffold. A scaffold is a raised platform that helps you continue to lay brick or keep building taller and taller. The scaffold is necessary to get the building built in its totality, but once the building is built, the scaffold is taken down because it is no longer needed. Nothing is wrong with scaffold, nothing is bad about the scaffold, it's just that it's purpose is served and then it is removed because it was only being used for something greater, the actual building.

Many things in the Old Covenant, like the temple, the Levitical Priesthood, central/earthly Jerusalem, were good. Nothing was bad about any of those things. Yahweh used those things to accomplish His purposes during the Old Covenant, but they all pointed to something greater, something better ---> Yeshua, the heavenly Jerusalem, the assembly of the first-born, better things than Abel.

What Yeshua predicted, the destruction of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, worshipping the Father *neither* on Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem, that all happened beginning in AD 70, in that generation, when the destruction came. (rf. Luke 23:26-30)

Since then there has been no temple, there has been no Levitical Priesthood, and believers in the Messiah have worshiped the Father, but not in Jerusalem. The true worshipers of the Father, those who have received the YESHUA (*the salvation* that came from Judah), they've been worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth, not at one particular location, but in *many* locations. Not through the mediation of Moses or the Levitical Priesthood, but through the mediation of the Melchizedek Priest Yeshua of Nazareth, who still mediates for us today, sitting at the right hand of the Father.

What took place in the first century, with the destruction of Jerusalem, changed a lot of things, and the change came not from man, but from Almighty Yahweh. It was all ordained of Almighty Yahweh, and thus we are here today; not on Mount Gerizim, not at an earthly Jerusalem, but we have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the Living Elohim, to the heavenly Jerusalem, worshipping the Father, for His Son, in spirit and in truth.

Yeshua Answers His Disciples

Matthew 24, Pt. 4

Text: **Matthew 24:4-8**

In the last lesson on this chapter we dealt with the 3-fold question of the disciples (vs. 3). They asked Yeshua, while sitting there on the Mount of Olives, "When will these things be? And what is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Remember, what prompted their question was Yeshua's prophetic statements about the destruction of the temple that was then standing. Yeshua had told the rebellious Israelite leaders, "Your house is left to you desolate," (Matthew 23:38) and "Don't you see all these things? I assure you: Not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down."

Those were strong words. The temple in all its glory, what was supposed to be Yahweh's House of Prayer, had become a Den of Thieves. The sins of the house of Judah had corrupted the place that was once filled with the spirit of Yahweh. Yeshua pronounced judgment on Judah in *that generation*. He said in Matthew 23:36, "I assure you: All these things will come on this generation." He uses that term again in Matthew 24:34 where he says, "I assure you: This generation will not pass away until all these things take place."

And here we come to a key that I've mentioned briefly a few times in these lessons. When you read and study prophecy, it is pertinent that you pay attention to the *time* texts. In verses 4-8 that we read a moment ago, we have various *sign* texts, verses that speak of signs that would come; signs that the disciples could look for. But in Matthew 23:36 and Matthew 24:34, we have a time text. A time text is put there for a reason. We should not ignore it. In this case, the time text is the phrase "this generation."

As I've shown in previous lessons, every time Yeshua uses the phrase "this generation," it is always a reference to the generation that He is speaking to. It's not a phrase that refers to the generation before Yeshua was born, or to our current generation. It is a phrase that refers to that age or time period. That's what the word generation, or the Greek word *genea* means; "an age or time period of people."

Don't forget about the first use of the word *genea* in Matthew's gospel, Matthew 1:17. "So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations." 14 periods of time. You have the generation of Abraham, and then you count from generation to generation, and come to the generation of David. Also remember how the word is used in Luke 1:50. Luke records the virgin Mary as saying, "His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him." That means that mercy comes upon those who fear Yahweh from father to son, from father to son, in every generation.

When Yeshua uses the phrase "this generation," he is referring to the generation of Judah alive at that time, the time he is speaking. That's the generation he reprimanded in Matthew 23, and that's the generation he said would not pass away until "all these things" take place in Matthew 24:34.

So we have a time text here, and it governs the sign texts. What I mean is that after the disciples ask the 3-fold question in Matthew 24:3, we then are given various sign texts in verses 4-33, leading up to the time text in verse 34. The time text governs the sign texts. All the signs in verses 4-33 had to have happened before the generation living at that time passed away. I say this only because Yeshua said it.

He said, "I assure you: this generation will not pass away - UNTIL ALL THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE." He gave us a time reference there, yet many students of prophecy ignore it, or try very hard to get around it.

Not all do though. There have been students of Scripture in the past that have recognized the implication of Yeshua's words in verse 34. Let me quote from just a few of them.

John Lightfoot (1600's, Presbyterian, on Mt24:34) -- "Hence it appears plain enough, that the foregoing verses are not to be understood of the last judgment, but, as we said, of the destruction of Jerusalem."

John Wesley (1700's, Methodist, on Mt24:34) -- "This generation of men now living shall not pass till all these things be done - The expression implies, that great part of that generation would be passed away, but not the whole. Just so it was. For the city and temple were destroyed thirty-nine or forty years after."

AT Robertson (Late 1800's, Early 1900's, Southern Baptist, on Mt24:34) -- "The problem is whether Jesus is here referring to the destruction of Jerusalem or to the second coming and end of the world. If to the destruction of Jerusalem, there was a literal fulfillment. In the Old Testament a generation was reckoned as forty years. This is the natural way to take Mt 24:34 as of Mt 24:33 (Bruce), "all things" meaning the same in both verses."

I do not quote these men to prove what I am saying, I only quote them to show that there have been other students of the Bible, in the past, that have studied Matthew 24 and came to the conclusion that the phrase "this generation" regulates the sign texts to that particular generation of people, living at the time of the first century A.D. - between 30 and 70 A.D.

And you can prove this to yourself. All you need to do is use a concordance or a bible computer program, or an app on your phone, and look up the phrase "this generation" in the Gospels. Read and study each context. You will see that it always means, without exception, the generation alive at that time.

And with knowledge of the chapters before, specifically Matthew 21 and 23, this makes complete sense, because Yeshua has been scathing the rebellious leaders of Judah - ALIVE AT THAT TIME. Remember, they are the tenant farmers who the Son was sent to, yet they rejected the Son. They are the builders who rejected the chief cornerstone. They are the sons of their Israelite forefathers who murdered the prophets, and they are ones whom the kingdom was taken away from. It was all judgment upon the generation alive at that time.

The disciples asked when it would all happen (vs. 3), and Yeshua told them, "this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."

The disciples also asked "and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?" Yeshua begins answering them with sign texts, beginning in verse 4.

Now, as we venture into verses 4-8, I want you to try to place yourself "in the sandals" of the disciples. Remember that they are the ones who were sitting there with him. They are the ones who heard his righteous rant, in the temple, against rebellious Judah. They are the ones who heard him say that the temple would be destroyed, and they are the ones who asked him the questions of Matthew 24:3.

In **verse 4** we read, "Yeshua replied to them: Watch out that no one deceives you." When they heard Yeshua say that, who do you think *they thought* he was talking about?

If you were standing there asking Yeshua these questions and he looked at you and said, "Watch out that no one deceives you," wouldn't you think he was talking about someone trying to deceive you? The YOU in verse 4 is his immediate audience; the disciples.

This doesn't mean there are no deceivers today. There have been deceivers in every generation, but Matthew 24:4 isn't about every generation. It's about that generation, and Yeshua was telling his disciples to watch out that no one deceived them, then. They were to be on guard. Why?

Matthew 24:5

For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Messiah," and they will deceive many.

Yeshua is talking about false Messiahs coming to THEM. That's why he said "Watch out that no one deceive YOU. Verses 4-5 are linked and talking about the same thing. He tells his disciples that there will be many come in his name saying "I am Messiah." They will deceive many, so be careful to watch out for them.

"Come in my name" here doesn't mean their name would be Yeshua or Yahweh. Name here is a reference to "Messiah." That's the name the deceivers would come in. They would claim to be the Messiah. Or better yet, they would claim to be anointed.

Again, this doesn't mean that there can't be deceivers who come claiming to be anointed in later generations. We had them in the 1900's, and they're a dime a dozen now in the 21st century, but that has nothing to do with Matthew 24. Yeshua is talking to his disciples about what would happen before their generation passed away.

Did false Messiah's come in that generation and deceive many? Absolutely, and this shouldn't surprise us because Yeshua said, "this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." (Matthew 24:34)

One of the easiest places to see these signs actually happening is - in the Bible. Remember, the Bible is its own best interpreter, and after Yeshua was crucified, resurrected, and ascended into heaven, we have a history book of the early church in the book of Acts - the Acts of the Apostles. It's the book that comes just after the Gospels.

When we research the book of Acts we will find evidence of the signs that Yeshua said would happen, happening right there in the first century.

For example, in Acts 8:9-11 we read of one of these deceivers name Simon.

Acts 8:9-11

9 A man named Simon had previously practiced sorcery in that city (of Samaria, vss. 4-8) and astounded the Samaritan people, while claiming to be somebody great.

10 They all paid attention to him, from the least of them to the greatest, and they said, "This man is called the Great Power of the Almighty!"

11 They were attentive to him because he had astounded them with his sorceries for a long time.

When the disciples ran into Simon, they would have remembered Yeshua's words, "Watch out that no one deceives you." This Simon was known as "The Great Power of the Almighty." He was deceiving many in Samaria.

In Acts, we read of another false prophet sorcerer known as Elymas Bar-Yeshua (son of Yeshua).

Acts 13:4-8

4 Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they came down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

5 Arriving in Salamis, they proclaimed (the) Almighty's message in the Judahite synagogues. They also had John as their assistant.

6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came across a sorcerer, a Judahite false prophet named Bar-Yeshua.

7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear (the) Almighty's message.

8 But Elymas, the sorcerer, which is how his name is translated, opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

Here is yet another false prophet, coming to deceive the people of that time, and notice that both of these men, Simon and Elymas, are able to perform signs and wonders. That not only aligns with Matthew 24:4-5, but also **Matthew 24:24**, "False anointed ones and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." This is one of the signs Yeshua told his disciples to watch for. The book of Acts is a historical record of some of these false anointed ones and false prophets.

This aligns with what John says in 1 John 2:18, writing to his first century audience.

1 John 2:18

18 Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard, "Antichrist is coming," even now many antichrists have come. We know from this that it is the last hour.

John told the recipients of his epistle that it was "the last hour." He also said "even NOW many antichrists have come, and that's how they can know it is the last hour. That aligns perfectly with what Yeshua said about deceivers, false anointed ones, and false prophets being a sign of the end of the age. John knew it was the last hour when he wrote.

The main point here is that Yeshua is addressing his disciples *then* in Matthew 24. He is giving *them* warning signs. Let's move on to...

Matthew 24:6

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end (of the age, vs. 3) is not yet.

Notice the "You." YOU will hear of wars and rumors of wars. The "you" is the disciples that he is talking to. Every generation since that first century generation has had wars and rumors of wars, but that's not what Yeshua is talking about here. He is instructing his disciples that lived in that generation.

Flavius Josephus, a first century Judahite historian, titled one of his works, "The Wars of the Jews (Judahites)." You can read his historical account and see that wars and rumors of wars existed back in the first century, just like Yeshua told his disciples they'd hear of.

But notice the end of verse 6. He says, "these things must take place, but the end is not yet." And then he goes on in **verse 7** to say that "Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places."

It's funny how people today hear of wars and rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, and think that these are all signs that "the end is upon us." Yeshua says plainly here in verse 6, to his disciples, that these are things that had to take place then, but THE END IS NOT YET. In other words, these were just preliminary signs. As Yeshua says in **verse 8**, "All these events are the BEGINNING of birth pains." The beginning of birth pains FOR THEM, not us.

I want you to notice too that nothing is said about the frequency of wars or potency of earthquakes. People today will say things like, "The earthquakes are getting more numerous and stronger. This must mean the end of the world is closer." Yet there's nothing in this text about more or stronger earthquakes. There's also nothing in this text about the end of the world. It's the end of the AGE that's being spoken of.

Number 1, Yeshua is talking about wars, famines, and earthquakes before THAT GENERATION passed away. Number 2, he says nothing about stronger earthquakes or more potent wars. He just says that wars and earthquakes would happen, and these things would be the beginning of the birth pains.

He likens the signs to a woman in labor. The signs of verses 4-8 are the very beginning of the birth pains. As the birth pains increase, it doesn't mean that the earthquakes will get stronger or the wars will get worse, it means that the signs will move on to something different. We will see the two main signs of the end of the age in a later lesson, in verses 14-16.

As I close out this lesson, let me just point out to you again, that the historical, scriptural book of Acts lists both famines and earthquakes in the first century.

Acts 11:27-29

27 In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 Then one them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. This took place during the time of Claudius.

29 So each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea.

Both the Judahite historian Josephus and the Christian historian Eusebius actually write about this famine, mentioned by Luke in the book of Acts. Josephus writes in his Antiquities of the Judahites (Book 20, Chapter 2) that the famine was so severe in Jerusalem that many people died because of a lack of food.

Along with famine often comes pestilence. Some manuscripts of Matthew 24:7 mention pestilence along with famine as one of the beginning birth pain signs. Albert Barnes writes this about the pestilence that occurred in the first century:

Albert Barnes (Commentary on Matthew 24:7)

Raging, epidemic diseases. The plague, sweeping off multitudes of people at once. It is commonly the attendant of famine, and often produced by it. A pestilence is recorded as raging in Babylonia, AD 40, (Josephus, Ant. 18, 9, 8) in Italy, AD 66, (Tacitus, 16, 13.) Both of these took place before the destruction of Jerusalem.

And what about the earthquakes? Were there earthquakes that happened in that generation? All we have to do is read the Bible, and we see that there were.

In **Matthew 27:51-54**, it is recorded that at the death of Yeshua, the earth quaked and the rocks were split, and tombs were even opened up, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised from death.

And later on in **Acts 16:25-26** we find that Paul and Silas were locked up in a jail in Philippi, praying and singing hymns to Yahweh. All of a sudden there was a violent earthquake that shook the foundations of the jail and all the cell doors opened up and everyone's chains came loose.

So... there *were* wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes that happened in the first century, just like Yeshua prophesied there would be. But as Yeshua said in verse 6, "these things must take place, but the end (of the age, vs. 3) is not yet." In the words of John L. Bray, in his book Matthew 24 Fulfilled (page 27), he writes:

These earthquakes did not prove the "end" was imminent; contrariwise, as Jesus said, all of those things proved that "the end is not yet" (24:6). Modern-day prophets ought to keep this in mind too, as they keep on talking about how many more earthquakes there are and how much more

destructive they are, etc., as though all this proves it cannot be long now until Jesus comes. What Jesus was trying to say is that these things "must" be, and do not prove a thing so far as indicating "the end" was at hand. But preaching and teaching about earthquakes being another sign of the soon-coming of Christ makes for "good" preaching, and tickles people's ears, even though it does not prove one thing so far as God's word is concerned in the matter of prophecy.

Yeshua told them that all these things would happen, and they would happen in their generation, but these were just the beginning of the birth pains. The stronger, more intense labor pains would come; not stronger famines or more intense earthquakes, but *different* signs that would be stronger and more intense.

One of the stronger signs would be the severe persecution of believers in Yeshua, and that's what we will talk about next time in verses 9-13 of Matthew 24. So you have some time to read over these next verses. I would ask that after you read over them, move to the historical account of the believers in the book of Acts, and look for the fulfillment of Yeshua's prophecy here about persecution, right there in the first century.

The Sign of Severe Persecution

Matthew 24, Pt. 6

Text: **Matthew 24:9-13**

Today's lesson is going to be a continuation in our series through Matthew 24, but I think it's going to be more than that. As I've went through Matthew 24:9-13, comparing it with the early Christian history in the book of Acts, it's been weighty. What I mean is that I have found that I don't know what being persecuted for my faith is, because I've never been persecuted for my faith.

Sure, I may have had someone say something sarcastic about what I believe. I may have had harsh words said towards me for a particular way I live, but I have never experienced bodily persecution for belief in Yeshua as the Messiah. I have never been imprisoned for believing in Yeshua. I have never had my shirt removed and whipped 39 times for my belief in Yeshua. I've never been stoned because I believed that Yeshua of Nazareth was the anointed one of Yahweh. And to be quite honest, I don't know what I would do if I was faced with any of these situations.

It would be easy for me to say that I'd stand firm. I'm standing here now in a heated building, with a full stomach, a nice car and home, with a group of people who love me. So it's easy for me to claim that if I was faced with being beaten for faith in Yeshua the Messiah, that I'd not cave in. So, I'm not going to say that. What I'm rather going to say is that *I hope* that if I am ever faced with such, I endure to the end of my life. *I hope* my faith in the Savior is genuine, like the first century disciples of Yeshua.

So, let's walk through verses 9 through 13, and then I'll show you where these things took place in the book of Acts. I want to also cover some in the parallel texts of Mark 13 and Luke 21, to be able to see things more clearly.

In Matthew 24:9 Yeshua tells His disciples that they would be handed over for persecution, and be killed. This doesn't mean that everyone who was persecuted was also killed. Some were persecuted, others were persecuted *and* killed. The parallel text in Luke 21:16 makes this clear. Luke records Yeshua as saying, "They will kill some of you."

Remember, Yeshua is still talking to His disciples in front of Him at that time. I realize that some of the believers in Christ have been persecuted in various places and at various times for the last 2,000 years, but that's not what Yeshua is talking about. He is referring to events leading up to the destruction of the temple that stood in those days. He is telling his immediate, personal followers what would happen to them.

In verse 9 He also says that they would be hated by all nations because of His name. Everywhere the disciples of Yeshua went, in all nations, people would hate them for nothing more than their belief in Yeshua. That He was the anointed one of Yahweh, the promised Savior. Realize that the phrase "all nations" is not speaking of every nation known to man today, but all nations, in that area of the world, at that time. All nations into which *they* would find themselves in as a witness for Yeshua.

In verse 10 Yeshua mentions that this persecution would trigger offenses (stumbings, fallings from the faith), hatred, and betrayal. When they were put to the test, when the pressure got severe, people would begin to break apart. Luke 21:16, a parallel passage to Matthew 24:10, has Yeshua saying that they would be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. Don't forget that Yeshua had already mentioned something like this in Matthew 10 (32-39) when he first sent out his disciples. He told them that their enemies would be those of their own household. Firm belief in Yeshua would cause such friction. Some would stand firm through the persecution, others would cave in and have hatred towards their family who stood firm.

In verse 11 Yeshua mentions many false prophets rising up and deceiving many. We covered that last week from verses 4-5 and verse 24. False prophets and false anointed ones were plentiful in that day and time. John wrote that many antichrists were on the scene in his day, and from that they could know that the last hour was upon them (1 John 2:18). John even told his brothers that the antichrists "went out from us, but they didn't belong to us." (1 John 2:19)

In verse 12 Yeshua speaks of lawlessness multiplying and love growing cold. This again is a reference to lawlessness in that day and time. In the first century, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that "the mystery of lawlessness is already at work" (2 Thess. 2:7). The severe persecution of believers would help greatly in separating the wheat from the chaff; who was serious and who was not. It's easy to profess Yeshua as Lord when there is no persecution, but when a man has a sword to your side or throat and asks, "Do you believe that Yeshua is Lord? Do you believe that Yeshua is the Son of Yahweh?" things get serious then. Some in that day endured to the end (as the next verse, Matthew 24:13 says). Others did not. They denied Yeshua, and saved their physical life, but they

went on to help multiply lawlessness, and love towards family members grew cold because of the separation of the genuine from the false.

I think it's best to understand Matthew 24:13 as speaking of the end of an individual believer's life. When Yeshua says "the one who endures to the end will be delivered," I think he is talking about a person enduring through the persecution that he's just been speaking of. Enduring means not giving up your faith in Yeshua. If you remain steadfast in your belief in him as the Messiah, Son of Yahweh, you will be saved eternally. I can get that just from the context here in Matthew 24, but a parallel text in Luke 21:16-19 helps greatly.

Luke 21:16-19

16 You will even be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. They will kill some of you.

17 You will be hated by everyone because of my name

18 But not a hair of your head will be lost

19 By your endurance gain your lives (see John Gill's commentary here)

Notice the persecution Yeshua mentions as recorded by Luke. Hatred, betrayal, and then it leads to death. He tells them, "they will kill some of you."

But then he tells them, "not a hair of your head will be lost." That only makes sense if he is speaking of eternal salvation. Think about it. He's talking to his disciples that would be persecuted, and some killed, so they would perish. The phrase "not a hair of your head will be lost" means that you will be saved eternally. Every single hair of your head will be remembered because you endured to the end. Verse 19 makes this even plainer when he says, "by your endurance gain your lives." That's the parallel to Matthew 24:13 "the one who endures to the end will be delivered." The way they would gain their lives - their eternal lives - is by enduring faithfully until the end of their physical, temporal lives. This brings out the meaning of Yeshua's earlier words to his disciples in Matthew 10:39: "Anyone finding his life will lose it, and anyone losing his life because of Me will find it." (see Matthew 10:32-39)

We learn from the parallel text in Mark 13 that something else would happen to Yeshua's disciples there in the first century. Look at this text:

Mark 13:9, 11

9 But you, be on your guard! They will hand you over to Sanhedrins, and you will be flogged in the synagogues (Luke 21:12 = synagogues and prisons). You will stand before governors and kings because of Me, as a witness to them.

11 So when they arrest you and hand you over, don't worry beforehand what you will say. On the contrary, whatever is given to you in that hour - say it. For it isn't you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. (see parallel in Matthew 10:16-22)

Here we learn that the followers of Yeshua would be brought in front of people in high authority. Sanhedrins refers to first century Judahite councils. Notice that Yeshua

references councils that existed at that time. We don't have Sanhedrins today, but they did at that time.

He also says that they would be brought before governors and kings (rulers and authorities), and they were, we will cover some of them shortly.

He tells them that there would be a supernatural happening when this took place. The Holy Spirit, in this time of severe persecution, would speak through them in the hour they stood before these people in high authority. They didn't have to worry about and rehearse a speech. Their words would be given to them from above.

Now, as I've alluded to, you can find fulfillment of all of these things Yeshua prophesied about by reading the book of Acts as well as some of the epistles of the New Testament. That's what I'd like to do now. We won't read through every single verse, but I'll give you some texts to read in your study time, and we will look at some verses in certain chapters in this lesson.

In Acts 3 we have recorded a salvation sermon, by the Apostle Peter, to the men of Israel who murdered Yeshua. It's clear that he's preaching to the men of Israel in Acts 3:12, and it's clear that he tells them in verse 14-15, "you denied the righteous one, and you killed the prince of life, whom the Almighty raised from the dead." He tells these rebellious Israelites in verse 19 to "repent, that your sins may be wiped out." In verse 26 he tells them that Yahweh sent Yeshua to them, "to turn each of you from your evil ways." I want to pick this up now in Acts 4.

Acts 4:1-5

1 Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests, the commander of the temple guard, and the Sadducees confronted them (Notice how they are brought before leaders in high positions here, just like Yeshua said in Mark 13:9 and 11.)

2 because they were provoked that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in the person of Yeshua the resurrection from the dead.

3 So they seized them and put them in custody until the next day, since it was already evening. (Here they are imprisoned for nothing more than preaching about Yeshua.)

4 But many of those who heard the message believed, and number of the men came to about 5,000. (Praise Yahweh, some of the Israelites listening to Peter preach repented and believed in Yeshua as the Messiah. The number 5,000 is to be read in connection with the 3,000 souls in Acts 2:41. 3,000 repented and believed in Acts 2, and another 2,000 repented and believed in Acts 3-4, totaling around 5,000. The numbers are likely approximations and not exact.)

5 The next day, their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest, Caiphas, John and Alexander, and all the members of the high-priestly family. (Here we see an assembly formed of men in high positions. Remember, Yeshua told his disciples they would be brought before Sanhedrins, governors, and kings.)

After this, Peter preaches in front of these high leaders. He does exactly what Yeshua told his disciples they would do when brought in front of leaders. They would witness about Yeshua, and the Holy Spirit would speak through them. In Acts 4:13-18, the Sanhedrin instructs them to stop preaching, but the apostles continue on.

Later on, in Acts 5, we see that the apostles are arrested and imprisoned again for nothing more than preaching about Yeshua. We see from Acts 5:17-21, that an angel of Yahweh opened up the doors of the jail during that night, brought them out of prison, and told the apostles, "Go and stand in the temple complex, and tell the people all about this life." So the apostles did just that.

Let's pick this up in Acts 5:21 and read a little bit.

Acts 5:21-31

21 In obedience to this (to the angel), they entered the temple complex at daybreak and began to teach. When the high priest and those who were with him arrived, they convened the Sanhedrin - the full senate of the sons of Israel - and sent orders to the jail to have them brought. (Notice that the apostles are about to be brought before unbelieving Israelites, the Sanhedrin, just like Yeshua said they would be. They would be able to give a witness about Yeshua to these unbelievers, in hopes that they would repent and believe in Yeshua.)

22 But when the temple police got there, they did not find them in the jail, so they returned and reported,

23 We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing in front of the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!

24 As the captain of the temple police and the chief priests heard these things, they were baffled about them, as to what could come of this.

25 Someone came and reported to them, 'Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple complex and teaching the people.'

26 Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them in without force, because they were afraid the people might stone them.

27 When they had brought them in, they had them stand before the Sanhedrin, and the high priest asked,

28 Didn't we strictly order you not to teach in this name? (This order was given back in Acts 4:13-18.) And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to bring this man's blood on us! ("This man's blood" here is Yeshua's blood.)

29 But Peter and the apostles replied, We must obey [the] Almighty rather than man. (The obedience here that they are speaking of is teaching about Yeshua. They must teach about Yeshua, because Yahweh has commissioned them to do so. They cannot obey man and cease to teach about Yeshua.)

30 The Mighty One of OUR fathers (they are talking to the Israelite Sanhedrin here) raised up Yeshua, whom YOU (these rebellious Israelites) had murdered by hanging him on a tree.

31 The Mighty One exalted this man (Yeshua) to His right hand as ruler and Savior, to grant repentance to Israel (the rebellious, evil Israelites needed to repent), and forgiveness of sins.

32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom the Almighty has given to those who obey Him.

33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

Remember that Yeshua told them in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 (the Olivet Discourse) that they would be persecuted, handed over to Sanhedrins, flogged, and some of them would be killed.

Acts 5:40-42

40 After they called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Yeshua and released them.

41 Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be dishonored on behalf of his name.

42 Every day in the temple complex, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that the Messiah is Yeshua.

This is all a fulfillment of what Yeshua prophesied about during the Olivet Discourse. What he told them would happen to them was happening to them. Persecution, brought before Sanhedrins, imprisonment, flogging, and as we read further, death.

Acts 6:8-15

8 Stephen, (one of the many disciples of Yeshua, Acts 6:1) full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

9 Then some from what is called the Freedman's Synagogue, composed of both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, came forward and disputed with Stephen. (Here we have men from the Synagogue disputing with Stephen. Think back to Yeshua's words in Mark 13:9 and Luke 21:12 about synagogues.)

10 But they were unable to stand up against the wisdom and the Spirit by whom he spoke. (This is because the Holy Spirit was speaking through him, just like Yeshua said was going to happen.)

11 Then they induced men to say, 'We heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and the Mighty One!' (Of course this is a false accusation. Stephen spoke no blasphemy.)

12 They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; so they came up, dragged him off, and took him to the Sanhedrin. (Here, a disciple of Yeshua was dragged in front of the Sanhedrin. Stephen would have a chance to witness about Yeshua in front of a Sanhedrin. Again, this is just like Yeshua prophesied in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.)

13 They also presented false witnesses (here's more false accusations, like in verse 11) who said, 'This man does not stop speaking blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. (While these were false witnesses, it is likely that what they were doing was *putting a slant* on the message Stephen brought. No doubt, Yeshua had prophesied about the destruction of the temple [Mt23:36; 24:1-2; Lk19:43-44], which

would thus bring an end to the Levitical Priesthood and laws intertwined to the Temple. This was no blasphemy though, seeing that the reason for the Temple's destruction was because of the lawlessness of the House of Judah! Yeshua was only echoing Yahweh in the prophets [Jer7; Mic3], and thus Stephen would have been echoing Yahweh through Yeshua.)

14 For we heard him say that Yeshua of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.'

15 And all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Now, the entire 7th chapter of Acts is mostly Stephen's witness in front of the Sanhedrin. He addresses them as "brothers and fathers" in verse 2, and says to them that the Mighty One of glory appeared to OUR father Abraham (also verse 2). Remember that Yeshua prophesied in the Olivet Discourse that his disciples would be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends.

Stephen speaks about the history of the Israelites, beginning with Abraham and going all the way down to Solomon. Then he ends his teaching with some hard words to the rebellious Israelite brothers and fathers he was speaking to.

Acts 7:51-60

51 You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts (Leviticus 26:41; Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:26) and ears! You are always resisting the Holy Spirit; as your forefathers did, (rebellious Israelites in the Old Covenant, like those who died in the wilderness wandering) so do you.

52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? (This aligns with Yeshua's teaching in Matthew 23. It was always rebellious Israelites that persecuted their own prophets and killed their own prophets. I give ample proof from the Holy Scriptures for this in my lessons through Matthew 23.) They even killed those who announced beforehand (the prophets) the coming of the Righteous One (this is Yeshua), whose betrayers and murderers you have now become. (Here again we see that it was rebellious children of Israel that betrayed and murdered Yeshua.)

53 You received the law (This is absolute proof that Stephen is preaching to Israelites because Israel was the only people who were specifically given the law) under the direction of angels and yet have not kept it. (These Israelites, like their forefathers, were rebellious. They were given the law but they did not keep the law. Their rejection of Yeshua was the paramount sin or transgression of the law. They did not receive the prophet like Moses that Yahweh raised up and sent to them.)

54 When they heard these things, they were enraged in their hearts and gnashed their teeth at him. (They were incredibly angry because they knew they were guilty but did not want to admit it.)

55 But Stephen, filled by the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven. He saw [Yahweh's] glory, with Yeshua standing at the right hand of [Yahweh], and he said,

56 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of [Yahweh]!' (This is a reference to Daniel 7 when in a vision Daniel sees the Son of Man come up to the Ancient of Days and be given authority, glory, and a kingdom.)

57 Then they screamed at the top of their voices, stopped their ears, and rushed together against him.

58 They threw him out of the city and began to stone him. And the witnesses laid their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. (This is the Saul who would later be converted to faith in Yeshua. He was also called by the Roman name Paul.)

59 They were stoning Stephen as he called out: 'Lord Yeshua, receive my spirit!'

60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin!' And saying this, he fell asleep.

In Luke 21:16 (Luke's account of Yeshua's Olivet Discourse), Yeshua says, "You will even be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. They will kill some of you." Rebellious sons of Israel killed Stephen, just like they had killed Yeshua.

Just after this we read in **Acts 8:1-3**

1 Saul agreed with putting him to death. On that day severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria.

2 But devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him.

3 Saul, however, was ravaging the church, and he would enter house after house, drag off men and women, and put them in prison.

All of this persecution is exactly what Yeshua prophesied about in Matthew 24:9-13. Stephen is a prime example of a brother in Messiah that endured to the end and was delivered. Not a hair of Stephen's head was lost. In his endurance he gained his life, Luke 21:19.

Now, I'm not going to read the rest of the passages I have here, but I want to give them to you to read on your own. One of the most fascinating things about the stoning of Stephen is that the man mentioned twice in this context, Saul, was one of the rebellious Israelites who was converted. He repented and believed in Yeshua of Nazareth, and after he became a disciple of Yeshua (beginning of Acts 9) he too was persecuted for his faith. In Acts 9 unbelieving Judahites tried to kill him. In Acts 14 the unbelievers attempted to stone him, but he got away, then later in Acts 14 he was stoned and dragged out of the city, but he got up and traveled to another place to preach the Gospel about Yeshua. In Acts 16, he and Silas were beaten with rods and put in prison. In 2 Corinthians 11, the apostle Paul writes of some of these occurrences. He says that 5 times he received 39 lashes upon his back from the unbelieving Judahite leaders. Three times he was beaten with rods. Once he was stoned. He said he faced dangers from his own people, and dangers from the heathens. He was brought before kings and governors as well, to give witness about Yeshua (Acts 23 [Sanhedrin; Felix]; Acts 24 [Festus]).

The apostle John also experienced tribulation. He wrote in Revelation 1:9 to his first century audience, "I, John, your brother and partner in tribulation, kingdom, and

perseverance in Yeshua, was on the island called Patmos because of [Yahweh's] word and the testimony about Yeshua." John was a fellow partner in tribulation.

Believers in Yeshua were also persecuted by heathen authorities, one of such was name Nero. Caesar Nero ruled Rome for about 14 years, and during the last 3 1/2 years of his reign - from 64 to 68 A.D. - he brought severe persecution upon the believers in Messiah. Philip Schaff (1800's) mentions some of this in his books titled "History of the Christian Church." He writes in Volume 1, Chapter 6 about Nero's persecution of the Christians.

A "vast multitude" of Christians [were] put to death in the most shocking manner. Some were crucified, probably in mockery of the punishment of Christ, some sewed up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the voracity of mad dogs in the arena. The satanic tragedy reached its climax at night in the imperial gardens on the slope of the Vatican: Christian men and women, covered with pitch or oil or resin, and nailed to posts of pine, were lighted and burned as torches for the amusement of the mob; while Nero, in fantastical dress, figured in a horse race, and displayed his art as charioteer. Burning alive was the ordinary punishment of incendiaries; but only the cruel ingenuity of this imperial monster, under the inspiration of the devil, could invent such a horrible system of illumination.

All that Yeshua prophesied to happen, happened, right there in that generation. As Yeshua said in Matthew 24:34, "This generation will not pass away until all these things took place." We've seen that what he spoke of in verses 9-13 did indeed take place in that generation.

As I close, let me say that studying for this lesson has been sobering. What I mean is this: I've never had to go through anything close to what these first disciples went through. Their only "crime" here; the only thing they did to cause such havoc upon them was to believe in Yeshua as the promised Messiah. That was it. They weren't zealots. They weren't trying to overthrow the government. They weren't even fighting back. They were just proclaiming their faith, and they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to be dishonored for their belief in Yeshua.

In Yahweh's providence, we live in an area and time in history where it is not a crime to believe in Yeshua as the Messiah. But what if we didn't? Or, what if one day we come to a place where we are faced with similar things that these first-century disciples were faced with? I can only hope that I will endure to the end. I can only hope that the life to come, the resurrection, will be so paramount in my mind, that I can lose my physical life as they did, and gain my eternal life in the kingdom. May Yahweh grant that we draw closer to His Son, Yeshua the Messiah.

Gospel Into all the World

Matthew 24, Pt. 6

Text: **Matthew 24:14**

Today we come to verse 14, a verse that some people believe to be a hurdle for those like me, who believe that Yeshua's words here were fulfilled in the first century. In other

words, I believe that everything Yeshua prophesied from Matthew 24:4-33 took place before the generation alive at that time passed away. I believe that, because Yeshua tells his disciples in Matthew 24:34, "I assure you: this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." Every time Yeshua uses the phrase "this generation" in the Gospels, it always - without exception - means the generation alive at that time.

In Matthew 24:14, Yeshua says: "This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world, as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come."

"Brother Matthew! There's no way the gospel was preached in all the world back in the first century! There's no way the end has already come!" Here again, people make statements like these because they read the text with 21st century glasses on, rather than 1st century glasses on.

A key in properly interpreting the Bible is to make certain that you are not reading a text with a modern, American filter (or any other filter for that matter). You must train yourself to read the text from the perspective of the people to whom it was first spoken and/or written. As I like to say, the only meaning of any text is its original meaning. After that, we may branch out to principles and secondary applications, but - what the original author intended to convey, to the original audience, in the original language he wrote - that's the meaning of the text.

And yes, most of the time this takes diligent and detailed study because we are now far removed from that time. You have to find out who the author was, and who the recipient was. What was going on in the culture at that time? What did certain words originally mean? How does this author use these same words elsewhere in his writings? Are there any parallel texts that will help shed light on this text?

All of these questions are good questions, and all of these questions should be asked by the student of Scripture. **It dishonors Yahweh to not ask these questions.** It dishonors Yahweh to think that we can just open up the Bible, read for a few minutes, close it up, and think we know everything about what we just read.

So, was Matthew 24:14 fulfilled in the first century? How could the gospel of the kingdom be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, back in the first century A.D.? How could the end have already come?

First, look at the phrase "gospel of the kingdom." This phrase is found 4 times in the New Testament, 3x in Matthew and 1x in Mark. Early on in the ministry of Yeshua, he proclaimed this according to Matthew 4:23 which says: "Yeshua was going all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people."

Before this, in Matthew 3:1-2 we read, "In those days John the Baptizer came preaching in the Wilderness of Judea and saying, Repent, because the kingdom

of heaven has come near!" The NASB renders this last part literally as, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Notice the words "near" and "at hand." John was preaching that the kingdom was not something far and out of reach, but near and at hand.

Yeshua basically says the same thing in Matthew 4:17 which reads, "From then on Yeshua began to preach, Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!" Again, the NASB renders this more literally as "the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Here we have two preachers, Yochanan and Yeshua, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and they preach that it is something near, something close to their grasp. If you look up the words "at hand" in the NASB, you will see that everywhere you read that something is "at hand," it is close. It's just like if I were to say, "This Bible is at hand." The words "this" and "at hand" indicate that I'm speaking of a Bible that is close to me; one that I can reach out to, and pick up.

Mark 1:15 adds to this by recording Yeshua as saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of (the) Almighty has come near (at hand). Repent and believe in the good news (gospel)!"

The gospel about the kingdom means the good news about the king and his dominion. The king is Yeshua, the one Yahweh sent to be king, and his dominion is the dominion, power, authority, and kingdom that would be *given* to Yeshua by Yahweh, at Yeshua's *first* coming, specifically after his resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:18). This kingdom was something *close* according to both Yochanan and Yeshua, and this is the gospel that Yeshua says will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, in Matthew 24:14.

So, was this good news about the kingdom proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations before the generation alive at that time passed away? I believe the answer is yes, and I will prove this by just allowing the Bible to interpret the Bible.

The apostle Paul, who we know was a Christian Israelite - a once rebellious Israelite that murdered Christians, but later came to faith in Christ - was a powerful messenger for Yeshua in the first century. He wrote a letter to the congregation in Colossae in the first century, commonly called Colossians. Paul wrote this letter while in prison, and during the early 60's in the first century A.D. This letter was written around 30 years after Yeshua went to heaven to be with the Father. In Colossians 1:6, Paul writes this:

The gospel that has come to you. It is bearing fruit and growing all over the world, just as it has among you since the day you heard it and recognized (the) Almighty's grace in the truth.

Later in the same chapter, Colossians 1:23, Paul continues by saying, "the gospel that you heard has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven."

So what we have here is Paul writing a letter to the congregation at Colossae, in the early 60's A.D. which we now know was very close to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and Paul says - at that time - that the gospel had been proclaimed all over the world, and in all creation under heaven. That sounds almost identical to Yeshua when he says in Matthew 24:14 that this gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Yeshua said it would be, Paul says that *it was*, in the early 60's. Do we believe them?

But what about the phrase, "as a testimony to all nations" used by Yeshua in Matthew 24:14? Well, for starters, I think "in all the world" and "in all creation under heaven" would cover "to all nations," but Paul does say something else similar to this phrase at the end of the book of Romans. He says in Romans 16:25-26 the following:

Now to Him who has power to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Yeshua (the) Messiah, according to the revelation of the sacred secret kept silent for long ages, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic scriptures, according to the command of the eternal Almighty, to advance the obedience of faith among all nations.

The NASB reads here at the end of verse 26, "has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith." According to Paul's letter to the Romans, this gospel he preached had been made known to all nations.

This sounds very similar to what Luke writes in Acts 2:4-5 about the day of Pentecost there in the first century.

Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability for speech. There were Judahites dwelling in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.

Men from "every nation under heaven" were there that day when they heard Peter preach his first salvation sermon, which was the good news about Yeshua, the King that Yahweh sent and gave dominion to.

Now, here's what we must understand about all of this. When Yeshua said that this gospel of the kingdom must be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, he is not talking about the known world in *our* time, 2016, but the known world in *that* time, the first century A.D.

A huge key here is to recognize that Yeshua was prophesying about the known, inhabited world at that particular time, and all the nations into which the people from the tribes of Israel had been scattered and sifted into. Just as Acts 2:5 says, the men there on the Day of Pentecost were *Judahites*; Israelites from the tribe or house of Judah. Yet, they were from *every nation under heaven*, and then Acts 2:9-11 lists the nations they were from.

They had traveled from their own home towns to Jerusalem in Judah for the Day of Pentecost.

They were Israelites scattered throughout the known world at that time. They were in every nation under heaven, meaning all the nations in that area of the earth. One of the criteria for *the end* to come (and remember - that's the end of the age, NOT the end of humanity), one of the criteria is that the gospel of the kingdom had to be proclaimed in all the world (the world of that time), as a witness or testimony to all nations.

Also realize that being proclaimed as a witness doesn't mean that everyone would accept this gospel. Yeshua is not saying in Matthew 24:14 that everywhere the gospel of the kingdom is preached, every single individual Israelite in the land of Israel or in the surrounding nations will receive this gospel. He is only saying that it must be *preached as a witness* in all the world, to all nations. As we see in the book of Acts, some accepted the gospel, but most rejected the gospel.

Here is something else that will help us in getting the proper interpretation of Matthew 24:14. The word for world here, used in the Greek text of Matthew, is the word *oikoumene*. It is not the more common Greek word for world used in the New Testament, *kosmos*. *Oikoumene* often carries with it a more restricted meaning, like "inhabited earth" or "Roman empire" in the New Testament. It's made up of two Greek words "*oikos*" (meaning "to inhabit, or house") and "*ghey*" (meaning "land" or "soil").

You will run into a problem if you only read and study the KJV at this point, because there are 3 different Greek words in the New Testament that often mean 3 different things, but the KJV translates them all as "world." The words are *kosmos* (which is best translated as "world"), *oikoumene* (which is best translated as "inhabited land or earth") and *aion* (which is best translated as "age" or "period of time").

We ran into this a little bit back in verse 3 where the disciples asked about the "end of the world" if you read the KJV, but that's not correct. It should be "end of the age (*aion*)."

Here in Matthew 24:14 Yeshua is speaking of the gospel of the kingdom going out into the inhabited earth, specifically meaning the places in the earth where the scattered Israelites lived. This would include the land of Israel at that time, as well as all the surrounding nations in the known, inhabited earth of that time.

The same word, *oikoumene*, is used in Luke 2:1 where we read (KJV): "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." All the world? Did Caesar Augustus tax Canada and Australia? Of course not. This is why the HCSB translates this as "that the whole empire should be registered." The NASB reads, "that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth." The NET reads, "to register all the empire." Caesar Augustus was registering or taxing the *inhabited earth of the Roman Empire* in his time.

See, now it makes sense why the disciples of Yeshua were accused of turning *the world* upside down with their teaching (Acts 17:5-7). The word world there in Acts 17 is *oikoumene*.

Again, this is the same Greek word used in Matthew 24:14 to convey the message that Yeshua gave during the Olivet Discourse. Yeshua said that the end would come after this proclamation of the gospel happened. The end of what? The end of the age (verse 3). After the disciples heard Yeshua prophesy of the temple's desolation, they asked "When will these things happen? And what is the sign of your coming and the end of the age?" Yeshua goes on to tell them. He begins by giving them general signs in verses 4-8, but he says "the end is not yet" (verse 6). He continues by telling them they will undergo severe persecution (verses 9-13), and then he says that the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the inhabited earth as a testimony to all nations, and then the end (of the age) would come.

I've shown tonight, by only using the Bible, that the generation alive at that time experienced the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14, just like Yeshua said they would in Matthew 24:34. "I assure you: this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" - that includes verse 14.

But, Matthew 24:14 is only the *approximate* sign of the end of the age. There is a more direct sign found in Matthew 24:15-21. Let's end this lesson by reading these verses.

- 15** "So when you see the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place" (let the reader understand),
16 "then those in Judea must flee to the mountains!
17 A man on the housetop must not come down to get things out of his house.
18 And a man in the field must not go back to get his clothes.
19 Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days!
20 Pray that your escape may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.
21 For at that time there will be great tribulation, the kind that hasn't taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again!

Yeshua tells his disciples, "When YOU see the abomination that causes desolation... those in Judea must flee to the mountains." That is the most direct sign of the end of the age, and that is the sign that we will begin to look at - in the next lesson.

What is the Abomination of Desolation?

Matthew 24, pt. 7

Text: **Matthew 24:15-21**

In the last lesson we covered what I call the *approximate* sign of the end of the age; the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, in all the inhabited land of the Roman Empire, as a witness to all nations. The end of the Old Covenant age would take place soon after this sign was fulfilled. According to the witness we have in the apostolic epistles, this sign was fulfilled in the first century 60's, A.D.

But, in Matthew 24:15-21 we get a more direct sign. When the followers of Yeshua saw this sign take place, they were instructed to flee, in order to escape the great tribulation. This is the great tribulation that many people today in the prophetic world are waiting on to take place in the future; in this lesson I will begin to explain why I believe it has already taken place in the past.

Never forget Yeshua's use of "this generation." He uses that phrase as a "bookend" both before and after his Olivet Discourse. In Matthew 23:36 he announces to the unbelieving Judahite leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, "I assure you, all these things will come upon this generation." Then, he echoes himself when he tells his disciples in Matthew 24:34, "I assure you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. The "these things" that he speaks of are the things at the end of Matthew 23 up to Matthew 24:34.

This includes the abomination of desolation and great tribulation he speaks of in Matthew 24:15-21. That's part of what would take place before the generation living at that time passed away.

This seems odd to many people when you first tell them, because in their minds they believe the "great tribulation" is a future, worldwide or global event. A catastrophic time that just precedes the end of the world and humanity as we know it.

But I ask you? Why do people believe this? If we are of this view, why do we believe this about the great tribulation? Is it because we've seriously studied this text in Matthew 24? Or is it because it's what everyone else for the most part thinks and we have just followed along with all the hype (without doing our own research)?

The Olivet Discourse is the only time Yeshua uses the phrase "great tribulation." So if we are interested in what *he* means by "great tribulation," we need to study the context of Matthew 24, as we've been doing.

Let's look at a few things here to begin with. The first thing I'd like you to notice is that Yeshua is telling those in JUDEA to flee to the mountains. Remember, he is talking to his disciples, his followers. In verse 15 he says, "when YOU see the abomination of desolation." Then in verse 16 he says that those in Judea need to flee to the mountains." Why? To escape the great tribulation he mentions in verse 21.

The conclusion is that the "great tribulation" is a local event, that can be escaped by fleeing to the mountains outside of Judea. Judea is used 43 times in the New Testament, and every time it is used it is speaking of a physical location of land in southern Israel.

Matthew 2:1 says that "Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea." Matthew 3:1 says, "In those days John the Baptizer came preaching in the wilderness of Judea." Matthew 19:1 says, "When Yeshua had finished his instruction, He departed from Galilee and went to the region of Judea across the Jordan."

Judea was a place where many Israelites lived, including many believing or Christian Israelites (followers of Yeshua as the Messiah). Yeshua is telling his core, personal

disciples here, when they see the abomination of desolation, those in Judea need to flee - *on foot* - to the mountains, immediately. Yeshua's closest disciples would have taken Yeshua's warning here and passed it around to all of his followers.

Again, the great tribulation was confined to the area of Judea, but could be escaped by heeding Yeshua's warning, to flee to the mountains outside of Judea.

Notice the urgency here. In verse 17 Yeshua says that a man on the housetop must not come down to get his clothes. That certainly speaks of a first-century Judean culture where the housetops were flat. In Luke 5:19 it's recorded that some people went up on a housetop to lower down a paralyzed man through the roof into the house. Imagine trying to carry a paralyzed man up on one of our housetops today! We don't spend time on our housetops, but the housetops in those days had steps or ladders up to them, and were flat on top. Easy access.

The same thing can be said for Peter's vision in Acts 10. Peter has his vision of the sheet filled with common and unclean animals, while on a housetop. He had went up on the housetop to pray, Acts 10:9 says. We don't go up on our housetops to pray. In that day and culture, it was a common thing.

Yeshua is giving an urgent warning in Matthew 24:16-17. When they saw the abomination of desolation, those in Judea were to flee to the mountains, and if any of them were on their housetop when they saw the abomination, they were to flee with such urgency that they shouldn't even bother to come down to get things out of their house. This was possible because the houses were so close to one another that you could actually walk along the tops of the houses to the edge or border of the city, and then leave the city.

In verse 18 Yeshua says that a man in the field must not go back to get his clothes. Here again we have urgency. Don't worry about your clothes, just flee to the mountains. This lets us know that the tribulation that approached would be horrible. When you see the abomination of desolation, get out of town, even if you are working out in a field. Take what you have on you and don't worry about anything else.

In verse 19 Yeshua says woe be unto the pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days. Why does he pronounce a woe upon them? Well, it's not because there's anything wrong with being pregnant or nursing your baby, it's because it will be tougher for a pregnant woman to quickly leave Judea. It will be more laborious for a nursing mother to carry her baby with her as she flees to the mountains.

It's similar to verse 20 where he tells them to pray that their escape (their fleeing to the mountains) does not happen in the winter or on a Sabbath. Obviously, the winter weather is more difficult to survive in. Spring through Fall is more comfortable weather, and there is more in nature to survive off of.

On the Sabbath it would be more difficult to escape, because the gates of the city of Jerusalem would often be shut on the Sabbath. Remember, this city was walled with

front, main entry gates. You can see this even in Nehemiah's day about 400 years previous to this, where Nehemiah commanded that the gates of Jerusalem be shut before the Sabbath day arrived, in order to prohibit people from coming in to buy and sell on the Sabbath (Nehemiah 13:19-22). Plus, on the Sabbath, everyone would be relaxing and resting; not in an active mood. A *Sabbath day escape* would be all around more difficult for the Christians, than a *working day escape*.

Then in verse 21 Yeshua says, "For at that time (a time future to Yeshua, but I believe past to us) there will be great tribulation, the kind that hasn't taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again!"

People have asked me, "Do you really believe that the tribulation there in the first century was greater than any other tribulation?" My answer is, yes, because that's what Yeshua says.

And notice where he places the great tribulation in history. He doesn't place it at the end of history, but in the midst or middle of history. He says that there will be great tribulation, the kind that hasn't happened *before* now, nor *ever will again*. That means there hasn't been this kind of tribulation *before* this, nor will there be *after* this. This again proves that the great tribulation has nothing to do with the end of the world as we know it (the end of humanity), because if the world ended right after the great tribulation, then of course we wouldn't have ANY tribulation again. It makes more sense to realize that historical, real time existed *before* the great tribulation, and will continue to exist *after* the great tribulation, and neither before or after it will there be anything quite like it.

In the near future, I will devote one entire lesson to looking at what great horrors took place upon unbelieving Israel of that generation. The historian Flavius Josephus gives us a first-hand account of the atrocities that fell upon the unbelieving Israelites who lived in the land of Judea, doing violence to them (over 1 million were slaughtered), and to their city, Jerusalem, where the temple was completely obliterated.

For now, let it be realized that there is nothing in these verses that cause us to HAVE to believe all of this is yet in the future. But, there are many points of evidence that do lead us in the direction of believing that these events have taken place in the PAST.

Now, I want to *begin* showing you what the abomination of desolation was. I saw what I'm about to show you years ago, but I turned my mind away from it. For whatever reason, I wasn't ready to accept it back then, even though the words of Yeshua make it crystal clear as to what it was.

All we have to do is remember to let the Bible interpret the Bible, and make sure that we don't only read Matthew's account of the Olivet Discourse, but also Mark and Luke. I encourage you to do this tonight when you get home. Read these texts we are about to look at, and see if they are parallel. Look at Matthew's account again, **Matthew 24:15-16**.

15 "So when you see the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place" (let the reader understand),
16 "then those in Judea must flee to the mountains!"

Now let's read Mark's account. Remember, Mark 13:14 is giving an account of the same discourse, the Olivet Discourse by Yeshua.

14 "When you see the abomination that causes desolation standing where it should not" (let the reader understand), "then those in Judea must flee to the mountains!"

Mark records Yeshua as saying the same thing, but yet his record is a little different. Matthew mentions the prophet Daniel, but Mark does not. This is okay, because different authors relate things in different ways, but they both mention the abomination of desolation, and that those in Judea must flee to the mountains.

Now look at Luke's rendition (21:20-21), which is parallel to Matthew 24 and Mark 13.

20 "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that its desolation has come near.
21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains!"

Luke mentions desolation, and that those in Judea must flee to the mountains. BUT, instead of using the phrase "the abomination of desolation," Luke records for us more detail as to what this means. Matthew and Mark record this as "when you see the abomination of desolation," but Luke records this as, "when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies." Same thing, said in different ways.

This means that according to the gospel authors witness, the abomination of desolation is when the followers of Yeshua - in that first century generation - saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies. When a person was on their housetop and saw this, in the field and saw this, or somewhere in Judea and saw this, they were to flee to the mountains as soon as possible, because desolation of the city of Jerusalem had *come near*. The great tribulation was close.

I will go into more detail on this in tomorrow's lesson, but let me answer one question that you may have about this understanding. If Jerusalem surrounded by armies is the abomination of desolation, how could the Christians flee to the mountains if they were already surrounded? That's a good question. It's one that I had at one time. For our answer, I turn to John Gill's commentary, a Baptist theologian from the 1700's, on Matthew 24:16.

Then let them which be in Judea, When this signal is given, let it be taken notice of and observed; let them that are in the city of Jerusalem, depart out of it; or who are in any other parts of Judea, in any of the towns, or cities thereof; let them not betake themselves to Jerusalem, imagining they may be safe there, in so strong and fortified a place, but let them flee elsewhere; see **Lu 21:21** and accordingly it is observed, that many did flee

about this time; and it is remarked by several interpreters, and which Josephus takes notice of with surprise, that Cestius Gallus having advanced with his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it, on a sudden, without any cause, raised the siege, and withdrew his army, when the city might have been easily taken; by which means a signal was made; and an opportunity given to the Christians, to make their escape: which they accordingly did, and went over Jordan, as Eusebius says, to a place called Pella; so that when Titus came a few months after, there was not a Christian in the city, but they had fled as they are here bidden to...

John Gill remarks that both the Israelite historian Josephus (writing in the late first century A.D.) and the Christian historian Eusebius (writing in the late 3rd century to early 4th century A.D.) record that there was a surrounding of Jerusalem by the army of Cestius Gallus (a Roman officer), but then Cestius Gallus (*for no apparent reason*) withdrew his army, (**PROVIDENTIALLY**) giving the Christians an opportunity for escape, just as Yeshua had told them to do in Matthew 24:15-21. They escaped to a place beyond the Jordan river, East of Judea, to a place named Pella, in the mountains and caves.

Listen carefully to these words from Eusebius, Book 3, Chapter 5, titled "*The Last Siege of the Jews after Christ.*" (Points 1-7 are all intertwined, but I will only read point 3 here):

3. But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, [This revelation was from Yeshua in Matthew 24:16] vouchsafed to approved men [the personal disciples of the Messiah] there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come there from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men.

As it says in Luke 19:41-44:

41 As He [Yeshua] approached and saw the city [Jerusalem], He wept over it,
42 saying, "If you knew this day what [would bring] peace-but now it is hidden from your eyes.

43 For the days will come on you when your enemies will build an embankment against you, surround you, and hem you in on every side.

44 They will crush you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave one stone on another in you, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

And as Yeshua also said to the unbelieving Judahites in Matthew 23:36-38:

36 I assure you: All these things will come on this generation!

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! The city who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, yet you were not willing!

38 See, your house is left to you desolate.

Yeshua knew that judgment was going to come upon first century rebellious Judah, and it all had to do with their rejection of him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him (John 1:11). Mark 12:6 (Mark's account of the parable of the vineyard) says that the Landowner, "...still had one to send, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'" But those wicked tenant farmers, rebellious Judahites of the first century A.D. said among themselves, "This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and his inheritance will be ours." They were the builders. Yahweh sent His Son to them, the chief stone of the corner. But the builders rejected the stone that came in the name of Yahweh.

Judgment therefore had to come upon them. Yahweh, in the past B.C. era, had used Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians as a rod in His angry hand, against His rebellious, covenant people. After Yeshua was raised from the dead, exalted to the right hand of Yahweh, and given all power and authority in heaven and earth, Yeshua would do something similar. Yeshua would use the *Roman* armies, as a rod in his angry hand, against the rebellious Judahites in the first century.

As we keep studying Matthew 24, we will continue to see how it is all about judgment upon first century Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment for their denying Yeshua as the Messiah, the Son of Almighty Yahweh. Will pick this back up tomorrow.

When You See the Abomination

Matthew 24, pt. 9

Text: **Matthew 24:15-21**

Yesterday we began going through these verses, looking at their context, here in this chapter, and looking at their cultural context. It really is amazing what we will glean from scripture when we stop trying to *make* it say something, and let it speak for itself. That's easier said than done, but it should always be our goal.

Today, I'd like to continue doing this, and build on a few points from the last lesson. I think we will answer a few questions or objections along the way.

The first thing I want to point out is that many people think that the abomination of desolation is some kind of a pagan statue that is set up inside a future temple. The text doesn't specifically say that, but they may get it from the statement about the "holy place" in Matthew 24:15. Yeshua says that the abomination that causes desolation will be "standing in the holy place." People read this and think of the "holy place" and "most holy place" inside the temple. Let me mention something here that I've mentioned in previous lessons. There is a temple in view in the context of Matthew 24, but it's the temple Yeshua walked out of in Matthew 24:1 and pronounced judgment on in Matthew 24:2. Matthew 24 doesn't say anything about a future, rebuilt temple. Yeshua is dealing strictly with the temple that stood in his day.

But, to further answer this question about what the abomination that causes desolation is (or consists of), and if it has anything to do with the temple, let's put Matthew 24:15-16

side-by-side with Luke 21:20-21. Remember, these are parallel texts of Yeshua's Olivet Discourse.

<p>Matthew 24:15-16 So when you see the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.</p>	<p>Luke 21:20-21 When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains! Those inside the city must leave it, and those who are in the country must not enter it.</p>
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I'll be color coding what I believe to be the parallel's in the two accounts. Some of them are obvious, but some of them I feel are overlooked, because Luke records them using different wording than Matthew. Or we could even say that Matthew records them using different wording than Luke.

Let's first look at the words "**when you see**" (in red) used in both passages. This teaches us that whatever Yeshua was speaking about was able to be seen by the people he was speaking to. He told his disciples, "when YOU SEE the abomination that causes desolation." It was something they would be able to see.

Not only does neither text explicitly mention a statue being set up in the temple, but it wouldn't make much sense for that to be the abomination of desolation, because if it only took place inside the temple, very few people would be able to SEE it happen.

Notice also the end of Luke 21:21: "Those inside the city must leave it, and those who are in the country must not enter it." Yeshua says that people inside the city must leave. Why? Because of seeing the abomination that will cause desolation. But, Yeshua also says that the people in the country (*outside* of the city) must not enter into the city. Why? Why is he giving his disciples instructions for people outside the city? Well, it's because when the abomination that causes desolation happens, it is likely that some of his followers may indeed BE OUTSIDE the city, but they could still SEE the abomination that causes desolation, or as Luke says, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies." People in the country of Judea would still be able to see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, and this would be the abomination that would cause desolation - the sign that they should flee to the mountains to escape the great tribulation.

That makes sense, because people in the city could see that happening, *and* people in the country (outside of the city) could see that happening. And anyone inside the region or land of Judea (southern Israel), that took heed to Yeshua's warning, would flee to the mountains.

This is why I've color coded in green both "**the abomination that causes**" (in Matthew) and "**surrounded by armies**" (in Luke). Matthew and Luke are saying the same thing in two different ways. The armies surrounding the city would be the abomination that causes. And notice also that I've color coded in blue, both uses of the word "**desolation**." It's not only the same word in English, but it is also the same word in Greek (*eremosis*)

meaning "to lay waste or bring to naught." The surrounding armies would lay waste to the city. *Or we could say* the abominable armies would cause desolation to the city.

And this brings me to my next point in the parallel; the proper understanding of the "holy place" in Matthew 24:15. If we notice all of these parallels by comparing Matthew and Luke, we should be able to notice the remaining parallel that we haven't yet covered.

Matthew says that the "abomination that causes desolation" is "standing in the holy place." We've already seen that Luke records this as the "armies that are surrounding." Surrounding what? Yes, surrounding JERUSALEM. **Jerusalem** (color coded in purple) is Luke's parallel to the **holy place** in Matthew. "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies" is the same thing as "when you see the abomination that causes desolation standing in the holy place." The holy place is not a reference to just the temple, by itself, but to the entire location of Jerusalem. The Roman armies would stand in and around Jerusalem, which was the holy place.

It should not be difficult for us to recognize that Jerusalem can be called "the holy place." It was Yahweh's chosen city for a long time. It was the capital city for the southern house of Judah, and it was the place where everyone went 3 times a year to keep the appointed feasts. Luke 2:41 says that "Every year, Yeshua's parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival." Matthew 4:5 and 27:53 call Jerusalem "the holy city." That does not mean that every time you see the words "holy place" in your Bible that it means Jerusalem, but what Matthew compared with Luke shows us is that "holy place" *in this context*, does mean Jerusalem.

In the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees, a couple hundred years before Yeshua's Olivet Discourse, we see Jerusalem called the *holy land* in 2 Macc. 1:7, *holy place* in 2 Macc. 2:18, and *holy city* in 2 Macc. 3:1. The point is clear when comparing Matthew and Luke. The abomination that causes desolation stands in the holy place; Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies thus desolation would be near. This is something Yeshua's disciples could SEE. Matthew and Luke are speaking of the same thing in different ways.

The next point is to attempt to understand why the armies surrounding Jerusalem are called an *abomination* that causes desolation. The desolation part is not difficult to understand because these armies did cause desolation to the holy place of Jerusalem. Remember that desolation means "to lay waste or bring to naught." The Roman armies that surrounded Jerusalem in the years 67-70 A.D. certainly did bring Jerusalem to naught. They laid waste to the city. It makes me cringe when I read Josephus' account of the things that happened during these years, but Yahweh was bringing judgment upon His people that rebelled against Him by not receiving the Messiah He had sent them. The parable of the vineyard took place. The Son of the Landowner was rejected and murdered.

It is as Yeshua said to the women watching him walk off to be crucified (Luke 23:28-31), "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children. Look, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the

barren, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" Yeshua knew extreme judgment was coming upon first century Judah and Jerusalem, because as a whole, they had rejected him as their Messiah.

He came unto his own (Judah), and his own people did not receive him (John 1:11). The judgment that came upon the city of Jerusalem in Judah between 67 to 70 A.D. was Divine judgment. It was Yahweh ordained judgment, and it was all because the Son had come to visit for 33 1/2 years, and for the most part, the house of Judah did not receive his visitation.

So, the Roman armies certainly did cause desolation on the holy place of Jerusalem, but why are they called "the ABOMINATION that causes desolation"? Let me begin by quoting some of what Albert Barnes (a Presbyterian theologian from the 1800's) says about Matthew 24:15.

The abomination of desolation. This is a Hebrew expression, meaning an abominable or hateful destroyer... The abomination of desolation means the Roman army; and is so explained by Lu 21:20. The Roman army is farther called the *abomination*, on account of the images of the emperor and the eagles, carried in front of the legions, and regarded by the Romans with divine honors... *Stand in the holy place.* Mark says, "standing where it ought not," meaning the same thing. All Jerusalem was esteemed *holy*, Mt 4:5. The meaning of this is, when you see the Roman armies standing in the holy city, or encamped around the temple, or the Roman ensigns or standards in the temple. Josephus farther relates, that when the city was taken, the Romans brought their idols into the temple, and placed them over the eastern gate, and sacrificed to them there. [Jewish Wars, book vi., chap. 6, 1.]

Most of the older bible commentators mention something similar to Albert Barnes. The Roman armies carried ensigns or standards with them in battle. These symbols and flags represented their nation, on which were an image of an eagle, and an image of the Caesar. The emblems were honored by the Romans in such a way that they would *worship* them. They would bow down and pay homage to the such images.

I've pulled a short video clip which was made by the Roman Catholic church explaining the importance of the ensign or standard in the ancient Roman army. Play Video.

There was actually a movie made recently, in 2011, called *The Eagle*. The film tells the story of a young Roman officer searching to recover *the lost Roman eagle standard* of his father's legion in the northern part of Great Britain.

In his commentary on Matthew 24:15, Albert Barnes mentions that Josephus records that the Roman armies eventually DID bring their standards inside the temple in Jerusalem. They began by surrounding the holy city with their idolatrous ensigns, and before the destruction was over, the ensigns ended up in the temple at Jerusalem. Here's the quote from Josephus, Wars of the Judahites, Book 6, Chapter 6, section 1.

And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus imperator with the greatest acclamations of joy.

Notice that the Romans offered sacrifices (probably of unclean animals) TO THEIR ENSIGNS; to the image of Caesar and the eagle. Adam Clarke (Methodist theologian, 17-1800's) comments (on Matthew 24:15):

The Roman army is called an abomination, for its ensigns and images, which were so to the Jews. Josephus says, (War, b. vi. chap. 6), the Romans brought their ensigns into the temple, and placed them over against the eastern gate, and sacrificed to them there. The Roman army is therefore fitly called the abomination, and the abomination which maketh desolate, as it was to desolate and lay waste Jerusalem; and this army besieging Jerusalem is called by St. Mark, Mr 13:14, standing where it ought not, that is, as in the text here, the holy place; as not only the city, but a considerable compass of ground about it, was deemed holy, and consequently no profane persons should stand on it.

So the reason the Roman armies in the holy place of Jerusalem are called an "ABOMINATION that causes desolation" is because of the idol worship of their ensigns. They worshiped the eagle and the Caesar upon their banner.

This makes even more sense when we look up the Greek word behind abomination in Matthew 24:15. The word is *bdeleogmah*, defined by Strong's as "a detestation, i.e. (specially) idolatry." Vines dictionary defines it in part as "denotes an object of disgust." Thayer's defines it as "a foul or detestable thing" and then adds later that, "in the OT often used of idols and things pertaining to idolatry, to be held in abomination by the Israelites," and then he lists several OT verses where the word is used in this way. I'd like to just look at the first verse Thayers mentions, 1 Kings 11:5-6 (I'll read it in the KJV).

1 Kings 11:5-6 KJV - "For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and went not fully after Yahweh, as *did* David his father."

See that word "abomination" there in 1 Kings 11:5? In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT, that word is *bdeleogmah*, the same exact word used in Matthew 24:15 in the phrase "the abomination that causes desolation." The word is often used to denote other *elohim*, idols, and idolatry. This is why the Roman armies are the *abomination* that causes desolation. They are idolatrous armies, worshiping Caesar and his image, and worshiping the image of the unclean eagle. John Gill writes on Matthew 24:15 (in part):

...the Roman armies were desolating ones to the Jews, and to whom they were an abomination; not only because they consisted of Heathen men, and uncircumcised persons, but chiefly because of the images of their gods, which were upon their ensigns: for images and idols were always an abomination to them...

It's really amazing how all of this comes together when you let the Bible interpret the Bible. In this case, we have seen how Matthew and Luke parallel in harmony. It's also

neat to see how men who have studied the Bible before our time have come to the same conclusions.

Now, to close this lesson I want to just briefly comment on the one part I haven't yet dealt with, yet. In Matthew 24:15 Yeshua says, "When you see the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel." This lets us know that what Yeshua is telling his disciples will happen, will be the fulfillment of a prophecy spoken by Daniel.

This takes us back to the prophecy about the 70 weeks in the book of Daniel, in Daniel 9; a chapter I have preached through before, but parts of which I believe I interpreted wrongly. I placed some of Daniel 9 yet in our future. I now believe that it was indeed future to Daniel, and even future to Yeshua when he spoke Matthew 24:15, but it is in the past to us who live now.

In the next message we will break off from Matthew 24, and go back to Daniel 9, and see if we can understand how Daniel's prophecy was indeed fulfilled in total, at the time period of the first coming of Yeshua the Messiah, just like Yeshua taught in Matthew 24. If Yeshua taught that Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled in that generation, we need to follow his lead and gain his understanding.

Daniel's Seventy Sevens

Matthew 24, pt. 10

Text: Daniel 9:20-27

Today we begin getting into the prophetic portion of Daniel 9. I've enjoyed going back over verses 1-19, and refreshing my memory about what is going on here with the 70 years of captivity, why the Judahites were in captivity, and how serious Daniel got with the Almighty in prayer, fasting, repentance, and humility.

I've decided to just keep the original lessons on Daniel 9:1-19 available on my website. The two I preached over the past two weeks won't be replacing the originals, so if anyone would like to go back over those verses in more detail, you can listen to lessons #178 "Seventy Sabbaths," and #179 "Men are Not Righteous."

Beginning with this lesson today, I will be making some replacements on my website, because I am now understanding Daniel 9:20-27 differently than I used to. That doesn't mean I now have perfect understanding. It just means that as I've grown in the faith and in my bible study, I have come to see these verses, in what I would call, a more clear and consistent way.

I have come to see that the 70 weeks of Daniel were fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, and await no future fulfillment. I believe the last of the 70 weeks, the 70th week of Daniel, was fulfilled back in the 1st century A.D. whereas most prophecy teachers today would insist that we are yet awaiting a future fulfillment of the 70th week of Daniel.

My main reason for believing this is the teaching of Yeshua at the end of Matthew 23 and throughout Matthew 24. I don't believe you can have a better interpreter of holy Scripture than Yeshua the Messiah. He is the greatest bible teacher that has ever been. As we saw in studying Matthew 24:15-21, Yeshua speaks of the abomination of desolation, and then he references the prophet Daniel. We opened up reading about that abomination in Daniel 9:27, and that's what Yeshua was referring to in Matthew 24.

I've come to see that Yeshua's Olivet Discourse (at least up to Matthew 24:34) has nothing to do with the end of the world - the end of humanity - but rather the end of the Old Covenant age. Yeshua is not dealing with judgment upon the world as we think of it, but rather judgment upon first-century apostate Judah, the large portion of the southern nation of Israel that rejected their promised Messiah. As I've quoted over and over, and will continue to quote in hopes that it sticks with you - John 1:11 says, "He (Yeshua) came to his own, but his own people did not receive him."

In the last lessons on Matthew 24, I dealt with properly understanding the abomination of desolation in the context and time that Yeshua places it in. Because so many preachers have dismissed the context and life-setting of Matthew 24, they have come up with all types of fanciful interpretations and speculations about what the abomination that causes desolation might be. When we let go of trying to make up what we want it to be, and just believe Yeshua, we see that it was the first century Roman armies surrounding the holy city of Jerusalem, before and during the siege of the city.

The armies came into Jerusalem, with their standards bearing images of Caesar and the Eagle, caused desolation to the city and the people, and eventually made it into the temple, where they did sacrifice to their idolatrous images. When the Christian Israelites, those who believed in and followed Yeshua as their Master, first saw the Roman armies surround Jerusalem, it was their cue to flee to the mountains outside of Judea, just as Yeshua had instructed them to. And remember, Yahweh providentially caused the first set of Roman armies, under Cestius Gallus, to come against Jerusalem, and then retreat back, giving the Christian Israelites time to flee.

If the abomination of desolation took place in the first century, then Daniel's prophecy about the 70th week in Daniel 9 took place in the first century. If you've studied prophecy at any length, I realize that is not what most TV preachers and radio "prophets" will tell you, but you need to ask yourself if they are letting the bible determine what they believe, or are they determining what they want to believe first, and then running to bible to find any ammunition they can to back up what they think.

I personally became sick of hearing all of these speculations last year. The whole "blood moons" thing and "mystery of the shemitah" thing. It's like we just keep seeing all these self-proclaimed prophets make predictions that never happen, and then after they don't happen, it's like it's no big deal. John Hagee and Jonathan Cahn still have big followings, and that's a shame, because after their failed predictions (and lack of repentance for such failings), people should have shut them off as fast as possible. I can only speak for

myself, but I have zero interest in the words they speak. I take Yahweh's word seriously, and bible study seriously. I have no time for charlatan's of their brand.

So all of this led me to study Matthew 23 and 24 in context, and to do so diligently, and that's why I've been preaching on it, hoping to spark an interest in others who are fed up with all this haphazard prognostication. Matthew 24 has in turn led me back to Daniel, and that's where we are today. Let's go back to Daniel 9:20-21 where we started earlier.

20 While I was speaking, praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my petition before Yahweh my Mighty One concerning the holy mountain of my Mighty One,
21 while I was praying, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the first vision, came to me in my extreme weariness, about the time of the evening offering.

Sometime during that beautiful prayer of Daniel's, that we went over last week, while he was confessing his sin and the sin of his people (the Israelites), Gabriel showed up. Daniel had seen Gabriel back in Daniel 8:16 where Gabriel helped Daniel understand a previous vision he had.

Gabriel is here called a man (*iysh*, in Hebrew), because his form or appearance was as a human being, but Gabriel is an angelic being. This is the same angel that later appears to both Zechariah and Miriam in Luke 1. It appears that Gabriel is a chief-messenger angel of Yahweh. Whenever he shows up it is always to bring an important message from Yahweh.

Don't let Gabriel's appearance as a man throw you for a loop. Remember that in Genesis 1:27 when the Almighty created man in his own image and likeness, that before in Genesis 1:26 the Almighty announced this creative act to his heavenly host that were there (Job 38:7) by saying, "Let US make man in OUR image, and according to OUR likeness." While verse 27 shows that Yahweh made man by Himself (using the singular pronouns), verse 26 shows that Yahweh, the angels, and Adam share the same image and likeness. Mankind resembles both the angels and Yahweh. I'd like to get more into that, but that isn't the main point of my message today, so I will move on from that for now.

So Gabriel shows up while Daniel is weary. Remember, he has been fasting, with sackcloth and ashes on, and in repentant prayer to Yahweh. He is weak, but Gabriel has come to comfort Daniel.

22 He gave me this explanation: "Daniel, I've come now to give you understanding.

23 At the beginning of your petitions an answer went out, and I have come to give it, for you are treasured [by (the) Almighty]. So consider the message and understand the vision:

Can you imagine this? You're in the middle of praying, and Gabriel shows up in your room to tell you that at the beginning of your prayer an answer came forth from heaven,

and Gabriel is there to give you the message, because you are treasured by Yahweh. The feeling that Daniel had at that moment is hard to imagine. To hear the words "you are treasured by the Almighty" directly from an angel would probably produce so much emotion in me; emotion that would be hard to explain. This is what Daniel experienced. He was a chosen vessel of Yahweh. A very special man.

This does show us how ready and willing Yahweh is to hear prayers from his people when they are humble and repentant. Yahweh resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. If walking through Daniel's prayer in verses 4-19 didn't make you want to pray like Daniel, then verses 22-23 should. Seeing how ready Yahweh was to answer Daniel's humble heart makes me want to study Daniel's prayer all the more, and learn better how to pray like Daniel.

So then we have the vision or the message that Gabriel brought to Daniel. Yahweh chose to give this directly to Daniel, and we are blessed to be able to have this at hand to study now. We are just going to begin to get into verse 24 today.

24 Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city- to bring the rebellion to an end, to put a stop to sin, to wipe away injustice, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place

Seventy weeks are decreed, and they are about Daniel's people (Israel), and Daniel's holy city (that's Jerusalem).

What we need to understand at this point is the time frame or time period of these 70 weeks. We might immediately think of 70 weeks of days, weeks as we normally define them, beginning with a first day and ending with a Sabbath. I'm going to tell you that this is NOT what is meant here by 70 weeks.

The weeks spoken of by Gabriel here are 70 sevens of years. In other words, a week of years would equal 7 years. 70 weeks of years (70x7) would equal 490 years.

While that might sound odd to some people today, realize that it wouldn't be odd to a Hebrew like Daniel. Daniel knew Yahweh's law, and was familiar with a week of years that ended in a Sabbatical year. 6 years of sowing and reaping, followed by 1 year of rest for the land. That's 7 years or 1 week of years.

And that is the context of the passage from Daniel 9:1-3. Remember that Daniel had been reading the prophet Jeremiah, and he found that the reason for the 70 year captivity was because of the neglect of the land Sabbath, 70 times. The land Sabbath is what is on Daniel's mind from reading the scroll of Jeremiah, and the land Sabbath laws contain weeks of years not weeks of days.

So what Gabriel is telling Daniel here is that there are 70 weeks or 490 years that have been decreed about the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

I want to point out here that we've seen no reason in our text to not view these 490 years as consecutive years. There is no reason to believe that there exists any type of gap in these years, just like there was no reason to believe that there existed a gap in the 70 years of captivity. The 70 year captivity of the Israelites in Babylon were 70 consecutive years. They didn't stay in Babylon for 69 years, and then experience a gap of, let's say 5 years, and then have the 70th year. That doesn't make any sense, because that would be 75 years not 70 years. The same holds true for the weeks of years here. 70 weeks of years equals 490 consecutive years with no gaps.

You might be wondering, "Why would anyone think that there is a gap somewhere in the 490 years to begin with?" If you are wondering that, that is a good wondering, because you are asking that question from looking at the text itself. There are people who insert a gap into these 490 years, but it stems from a theological presupposition in prophecy, not from the text itself. I used to believe in this gap theory myself, but I've now come to see the error of my ways on this issue.

People who believe that the "great tribulation" (mentioned in Matthew 24:15-21) is yet future to our time, link this 70 weeks prophecy up with Matthew 24. I believe the two are linked because Yeshua said they are linked in Matthew 24:15, but I believe they are linked in a way that found their fulfillment in the first century. The 70th week of Daniel took place in the first century A.D.

People who do not see it this way believe that the first 69 weeks (483 years) took place in the past, but then there was a postponement or gap that was initiated; an indeterminable time period. They believe that the last 7 years of Daniel's vision are yet to be fulfilled, still in our future. These 7 years are termed by them as the tribulation period, and some call the last 3 1/2 years of this 7 year period, the "great tribulation" of Matthew 24:21. The *only* way to make that belief system work is to separate the 70th week from the first consecutive 69 weeks, and that's what proponents of this system do. They believe that the first 69 weeks of Daniel's vision were all consecutive; no gaps. But after the 69th week a gap is inserted, that's been going on for over 2,000 years now, and we are still waiting for the last 7 years of Daniel's vision to take place.

I'm saying that the 70th week should come directly after week 69. There is no pause or hold in the count, just like there was no pause or hold on the count in the 70 year captivity. It was 70 consecutive years of captivity, and thus the vision is 70 consecutive weeks of years - 490 years in a row.

And what is decreed to take place in this time frame of 490 years?

24 Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city - to bring the rebellion to an end, to put a stop to sin, to wipe away injustice, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.

There are 6 things mentioned in verse 24, and I now believe that all 6 of these things were accomplished at the first coming of Christ. In my previous thinking, I do not believe I gave Yeshua's *first coming* the credence or allegiance that it deserved. Instead of letting the bible interpret the bible, letting the NT authors show me how all these 6 things were accomplished at Yeshua's first coming, I reasoned in my brain how they could *not* have been accomplished at Yeshua's first coming, and thus I figured that the final 7 years of the prophecy must be yet in the future. Thus the insertion of the GAP in the 70 weeks.

But I am here to say to you today that if we allow the bible to interpret the bible, as we've been doing through Matthew 23 and 24, we will see how that Yeshua, *at his first coming*, brought rebellion to an end, put a stop to sin, and wiped away injustice. We will see how everlasting righteousness was brought in, the visions and prophecies were sealed up, and the most holy place was anointed.

The way we are going to see this is by looking more intently at what took place at the first coming of Christ. I believe we still await his second advent, or second physical coming. I do believe in a future, physical coming of Christ to this earth, and it will be glorious, but we should not allow our anticipation for that second advent to overshadow what he has accomplished at his first advent. There was so much that took place in the first century A.D. *in that 70th week of Daniel*. There was so much that Yeshua did to secure these things mentioned in Daniel 9:24. In the next lesson, we will begin to look at them one-by-one.

It is Finished

Matthew 24, pt. 11

Text: **Daniel 9:20-25**

Last week we began getting into the prophetic portion of Daniel 9 regarding the 70 weeks that Gabriel told Daniel about. 70 weeks of *years*, 490 years had been decreed, from heaven, concerning Daniel's people (Israel) and Daniel's holy city (Jerusalem). The last thing we looked at was verse 24 where there is listed 6 accomplishments that will take place within the time frame of the 490 years. Again, these things are (1) to bring the rebellion to an end, (2) to put a stop to sin, (3) to wipe away injustice, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal up vision and prophecy, and (6) to anoint the most holy.

Today we are going to look at just the first one: "to bring the rebellion to an end." Or as the KJV translates it, "to finish the transgression." What does this mean, and how was it accomplished in the allotted time frame of 490 years?

To understand this I want to begin by pointing out something important in verse 25. Look at Daniel 9:25 again.

25 Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince will be 7 weeks and 62 weeks. It will be rebuilt with a plaza and a moat, but in difficult times.

Verse 25 contains the starting point of the 70 weeks. The 490 year time period *begins* from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. I'll pin-point that down in a later sermon, but for now just know that this has to do with the time frame of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, when Jerusalem began to be rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity. That's right around the beginning of the 490 years of this prophecy.

We learn in verse 25 that from the issuing of this decree until the Messiah the Prince (the focal point of this prophecy is Yeshua) will be 7 weeks AND 62 weeks. Knowing that 1 week equals 7 years in this vision helps us here. 7 weeks = 49 years. 62 weeks = 434 years. That's a total of 69 weeks or 483 years. So Gabriel is telling Daniel that from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince will be 483 years. Think about that. Daniel was shown an exact time frame for the coming of the promised Messiah to Israel.

This is interesting, because this means that anyone who studied and understood this vision of Daniel's (back then) should have known when the Messiah would be on the scene so to speak. Just as Daniel was reading the scroll of the prophet Jeremiah back in Daniel 9:1-3, Israelites after Daniel could have read the scroll of the prophet Daniel and understood the time of the coming of the Messiah the Prince. Or they may have had it past down to them by word of mouth. Yet, the nation of Judah for the most part did not recognize Yeshua as the Messiah.

This shines a whole new light on Yeshua's words during his ministry in Luke 19:41-43.

- 41** As He approached and saw the city, He wept over it, [the city is Jerusalem, the same city that Gabriel says the 70 week prophecy is about, Daniel's holy city]
42 saying, "If you knew this day what [would bring] peace [Accepting Yeshua as the promised Messiah would bring peace to the city as a whole] - but now it is hidden from your eyes. [They weren't able to see this]
43 For the days will come on you [The "you" is the people alive at the time Yeshua is making this prophetic prediction.] when your enemies will build an embankment against you, surround you, and hem you in on every side. [I believe this refers to the Roman armies that we've been discussing, the Roman armies that are called the abomination that causes desolation.]
44 They will crush you and your children [The adult Israelites and their children] within you to the ground, and they will not leave one stone on another in you, [same as Matthew 24:1-3; destruction of the temple.] because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

In verse 44, Yeshua says that all of this calamity will happen because the generation then didn't recognize *the time of their visitation*. Here's the point: Yahweh revealed the time to Daniel when he sent Gabriel to give Daniel the vision in Daniel 9. Gabriel point blank told Daniel, "From the time that the decree goes forth the rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince will be 483 years."

This ties in with the parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21 where the landowner has been sending his servants, one after another, and the tenant farmers keep rejecting the servants. Remember, the landowner is Yahweh, the servants are the prophets, and the tenant farmers are the leaders in the nation of Israel. But last of all the landowner sends his well-beloved son to the tenant farmers, but they kill the son and throw him out of the vineyard. The landowner's son came to *visit them* to gather the fruit of the harvest, but the tenant farmers did not recognize *the time of their visitation* (Luke 19:44; Daniel 9:25). *They did not understand or properly interpret the vision given to Daniel.

Now, the reason I bring this up is because it all ties in with the first thing that Gabriel tells Daniel will be accomplished in this 490 year period. He says in Daniel 9:24 that 70 weeks are decreed to "bring the rebellion to an end," or as I believe the KJV, ASV, NASB, and NIV translates this more literally and better rendering, "to finish the transgression."

In Daniel's prayer (prior to this vision), Daniel had been confessing his sins and the sins of his people Israel (Daniel 9:20). In Daniel 9:11 he says in his prayer, "All Israel has broken your law and turned away, refusing to obey You. Thus the promised curse written in the law of Moses has been poured out on us because we've sinned against You Yahweh." Daniel mentions how that the prophets had been sent to the sinful people of Israel, but they wouldn't listen. Daniel even calls the prophets "servants" just like Yeshua does in the parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21. Look at Daniel 9:5-6.

5 we have sinned, done wrong, acted wickedly, rebelled, and turned away from Your commandments and ordinances.

6 We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, leaders, fathers, and all the people of the land.

Daniel says "we." Who is he talking about? He and his people. He is praying to Yahweh and saying, "We *Israelites* have not listened to Your servants the prophets. We've sinned by turning away from your commandments." That's why they were in captivity.

Each time Yahweh would send Israel a prophet, and they would reject and murder that prophet, it was metaphorically filling up a measure of sin. Think of a cup, and then think of each drop of the blood of a prophet filling up that cup. That cup was a testimony against the sins of the nation of Israel. As Yeshua said, the landowner sent his servants to the tenant farmers, but the farmers would beat and kill the servants. Each beating and murder was more blood being poured into this cup of sin.

This harkens back to what we covered in Matthew 23:29-32 about how the shedding of the prophets blood was pouring into a measure. The scribes and Pharisees of Yeshua's day would fill up the measure of their forefather's sins.

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous,

30 and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we wouldn't have taken part with them in shedding the prophets' blood.'

31 You therefore testify against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' sins!

The Pharisees claimed that had *they* lived back in the days of Israel of old, they would not have shed the blood of the prophets sent to them. They claimed that they wouldn't have turned their ear from hearing the prophets, like Daniel spoke of in Daniel 9:6. But of course the Pharisees were lying. They were just as rebellious as their Israelite forefathers who killed the prophets back in the days of Israel of old.

This is why Yeshua tells the first-century Pharisees in verse 32: "Fill up then the measure of your fathers' sins!" Notice the metaphor Yeshua uses of "filling up" and "measure." He tells them that as their rebellious fathers poured into this cup with the blood of the prophets in times past, they, the first century leaders in Israel, will fill up the measure of this cup.

Or we might say, in the words of Gabriel (Daniel 9:24), "70 weeks are decreed... to finish the transgression." To finish the transgressions equals filling up the measure of their fathers' sins.

And how would the Israelites in that first-century generation fill up the measure? The answer to that is found in realizing what was being poured into this "sin cup" all along: the blood of the prophets. So the generation of Israelites alive during Yeshua's day - his own that he came to but they did not receive him - they would fill up the measure by pouring into that cup the blood of the prophet of all prophets: Prophet Yeshua of Nazareth.

After the landowner sent servant after servant to collect the grape harvest, the landowner finally sent his son to the tenant farmers. The landowner said, "Surely they will respect and reverence my son." But the tenant farmers killed the son and threw him out of the vineyard. The son is Prophet Yeshua. Shedding this prophet's blood is what filled up the measure of the sin cup.

I've studied and studied the parable of the vineyard, and it is such an important parable that explains what happened there in the first century, and why Yeshua said in Matthew 23:36, "I assure you, all these things will come upon this generation!" But I haven't noticed until recently, the parable that comes right after the parable of the vineyard, the parable of the wedding banquet. It fits in nicely here in this lesson, so let's read from Matthew 21:45 through Matthew 22:7. Remember, Matthew 21:45 is just after Yeshua speaks the parable of the vineyard to the chief priests and Pharisee elders of his day.

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they knew He was speaking about them.

46 Although they were looking for a way to arrest Him, they feared the crowds, because they regarded Him as a prophet.

1 Once more Yeshua spoke to them in parables:

2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.

3 He sent out his slaves to summon those invited to the banquet, but they didn't want to come.

4 Again, he sent out other slaves, and said, 'Tell those who are invited: Look, I've prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet. '

5 "But they paid no attention and went away, one to his own farm, another to his business.

6 And the others seized his slaves, treated them outrageously and killed them.

7 The king was enraged, so he sent out his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned down their city.

Here again, we see another parable come to light when we view it in its first-century context. The King (Yahweh) announces a wedding banquet for his son (Yeshua), and he sends out his slaves or servants (the prophets) to invite people (chief priests and Pharisee elders) to the banquet, but they don't want to come. Some of them even seize the servants and kill the servants. So what did the King do? He sent out his troops, destroyed those murderers and burned down their city. That latter part here took place in A.D. 70 when the Romans were used as a rod of judgment against the rebellious nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem.

Let's think about this in relation to Acts 3:12-26.

12 When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel [Peter is preaching specifically and only to the men of Israel], why are you [follow the pronouns throughout the text] amazed at this? Or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him walk?

13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Yeshua, whom you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, [here is the filling up of the measure of their fathers' sins] when he had decided to release Him.

14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, [they did not receive the son of the landowner sent to them] and asked to have a murderer given to you.

15 And you killed the prince of life, [they killed Messiah the prince, the son of the King, and threw him out of the vineyard] whom God raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this.

16 By faith in His name, His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that comes through Him has given him this perfect health in front of all of you. [this refers to the miracle earlier in Acts 3 upon the lame man]

17 "And now, brothers, [notice how he addresses the murderers of Yeshua as brothers, meaning physical brothers. They weren't brothers in the faith of Yeshua, but brothers,

meaning kinsmen.] I know that **you** did it in ignorance, just as your leaders also did.

18 But what God predicted through the mouth of all the prophets-that His Messiah would suffer - He has fulfilled in this way. [Yahweh predicted the suffering of the Messiah through the mouth of his prophets in times past. Texts like Isaiah 52 and 53 come to mind here.]

19 Therefore repent and turn back, [Peter is telling the men of Israel to repent of murdering Yahweh's servant Yeshua] that your sins may be wiped [if they repent their sins will be wiped away] out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, [this Lord is Yahweh the Father]

20 and He may send Yeshua, who has been appointed Messiah for you.

21 Heaven must welcome Him until the times of the restoration of all things, which God spoke about by the mouth of His holy prophets from the beginning.

22 Moses said: Yahweh your God will raise up for you a Prophet [here we see that Yeshua is a prophet like Moses. Thus his blood was the last blood to be poured into the cup of sin spoken about by Yeshua himself in Matthew 23:32.] like me from among your brothers. You must listen to Him in everything He will say to you.

23 And it will be that everyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from the people. [Those who don't listen to prophet Yeshua will be cut off from the people. In order to be cut off, you have to be attached somehow. This is speaking of Israelites who don't listen to prophet Yeshua. They will be detached or cut off from the people.]

24 "In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also announced these days.

25 You [the men of Israel Peter has been preaching to] are the sons of the prophets [they are descendants of the prophets of old] and of the covenant that God made with your forefathers, [they are also sons of the covenant that Yahweh made with their forefathers] saying to Abraham, And in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.

26 God raised up His Servant [Yeshua] and sent Him first to you [the Judahite men of Israel] to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways." [They needed to turn from their evil ways of sin, specifically the sin of wanting Yeshua murdered, and then murdering Yeshua, the prophet like Moses from among the brethren.]

I believe this is what the angel Gabriel was referring to in Daniel 9:24 when he said that in the time frame of the 70 weeks or the 490 years that 1 thing that would be accomplished was "to finish the transgression." All of the transgressions of the nation of Israel, in rejecting the prophets sent to them, and killing those prophets, would come to a fullness with their rejection of the greatest prophet to ever live, Yeshua the Prince, the Son of Yahweh the King. I also think that this sheds light on what John 19:28-30 actually means.

28 After this, when Yeshua knew that everything was now accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, "I'm thirsty!"

29 A jar full of sour wine was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on hyssop and held it up to His mouth.

30 When Yeshua had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" Then bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Gabriel said "to finish the transgression" would take place in that 490 year period, and that there would be 483 years from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the Messiah the Prince. During that time frame Yeshua was crucified, and as we just read, Yeshua knew that everything was now accomplished that the Scripture would be fulfilled, so he said, "It is finished." What is finished? The transgression or sin cup had been filled up with his rejection and death.

Many people have asked me over the years what I believe Yeshua meant when he said "It is finished." I've always given people answers that have to do with justification, forgiveness of sin, atonement, etc. While I believe in all of those things, and that those things were accomplished through the death of Yeshua, I now see and believe (through this study) that Yeshua was specifically echoing the angel Gabriel in Daniel 9:24. Yeshua was saying that the finishing of the transgressions, the transgressions of rejecting and killing Yahweh's prophets up to himself (the ultimate prophet), was finished.

The next time I teach, I will try to cover Daniel 9:24's mentioning of "to make an end of sins," and "to make reconciliation for iniquity" (KJV). In the HCSB these are termed as "to put a stop to sin," and "to wipe away injustice." I believe we will continue to see how these things were all fulfilled at the first coming of the Messiah.

To Make an End of Sins

Matthew 24, pt. 12

Opening Text: **Daniel 9:20-25**

I am very excited to get into this lesson today, because I get to teach on my favorite subject in the Bible, and that is this: What Yahweh has done for us, in and through His Son Yeshua. I am specifically speaking of the death of His Son, but of course the death without the life first, and resurrection after, is meaningless.

The life, death, and resurrection of Yeshua are inseparable in the working of salvation. If Yeshua had not lived a perfect life, according to Yahweh's law, he would not have qualified himself to be the unblemished offering for sin. If after his death, there would not have been a resurrection, we would have no hope or promise to be delivered from the penalty of sin, which is death. These three elements - life, death, and resurrection - are intertwined like a three-fold cord, and as the author of Ecclesiastes says, "a three-fold cord is not easily broken." In the case at hand, no one can break this three-fold cord.

Last week I spoke on how that through Messiah the Prince (which is the focal point of this prophecy according to Daniel 9:25), through him the transgression was finished. He was the ultimate prophet. He was the culmination of all the prophets that came before him. Just as the blood of all the prophets before him was shed when they came preaching Yahweh's message, so also was his blood shed when he came preaching Yahweh's

message. His death filled up the measure in the sin cup, and thus his death finished the transgressions.

Today, I will cover one more thing that was accomplished in the 70 weeks through Messiah the Prince. In Daniel 9:24, it is termed as (KJV), "to make an end of sins," In the HCSB it is termed as "to put a stop to sin." I'm not going to rush through any of this, so if I can only cover one point (out of the 6) each week, then that is fine. Each point is important enough to deal with by itself.

According to the Bible, the first coming of Messiah the Prince made an end of sins or put a stop to sins. Yeshua the Messiah, through his one time sacrificial death, which was able to be made because of his perfect life, made an end of sins. There are many verses I could go to in showing this, but I would rather spend some time dissecting one text in context, so look with me to Hebrews 10:1-2.

1 Since the law has a shadow of the good things to come, and not the actual form of those realities, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices they continually offer year after year.

2 Otherwise, wouldn't they have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, once purified, would no longer have any consciousness of sins?

The first thing to grasp here is that the author of Hebrews is speaking of the sacrifices within the law that were a shadow of the good things to come. We can see that by verse 1 where we read that the law HAS a shadow, not that the law is a shadow.

There are many things within the law that are not a shadow. Thou shalt not murder is not a shadow. Thou shalt not commit adultery is not a shadow. It is not the whole law that is a shadow, but the law does CONTAIN shadows, and the biggest shadow within the law is probably the sacrificial system, worked out through the Levitical priesthood.

These sacrifices, offered year after year, can never perfect the worshipers that come bringing them, because they are only a shadow of the reality. The shadow is what is cast by the reality, but the shadow cannot do what the reality does.

During the day, my hands cast a shadow when the sun is out. I can see the shadow of my hands on the ground, but that shadow of my hands cannot pick up a shovel and dig a hole. Only my hands, the real hands (which are the reality) are able to do the work.

Anytime there is a shadow cast, there is a reality behind it. The sin sacrifices that were offered by the Levitical priesthood, to provide atonement for the sins of the Israelites, were shadows within the law. They were shadows that were cast by a greater reality. Seeing that they were just shadows, they couldn't do what the reality could do, just like the shadow of my hands couldn't do what my hands could do.

The writer goes on in verse 2 to say that if the sacrifices did perfect the worshipers, wouldn't they have stopped being offered? His point is that if a sacrifice under the Old

Covenant, offered for the worshiper by the Levite priest, made those who brought them perfect, then once the worshiper brought one sacrifice, his or her conscience would have been cleared of sin permanently. But, the point is that this is not what happened. These sacrifices were made over and over and over again, proving that they didn't do anything eternal, only temporal. They didn't do anything for the worshiper in the heavenly, everlasting realm. They only applied atonement in the earthly, physical, temporal realm.

3 But in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Every time a sin sacrifice was offered up, there was a reminder that your sins had *not* been taken away. If they were taken away - permanently - in the last sacrifice you brought for atonement, why in the world are you having to come and offer the same sin sacrifice again?

The writer points out an important truth here in verse 4. It's not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to TAKE AWAY sins. The blood of bulls and goats under the Old Covenant fixed the sin problem temporally, for a while, upon the earth, allowing one entrance to the Jerusalem Temple, but that blood did not *make and end of* or *put a stop to* sin. That blood did not take away sin.

5 Therefore, as He was coming into the world, He said: You did not want sacrifice and offering, but You prepared a body for Me.

6 You did not delight in whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.

7 Then I said, "See, I have come- it is written about Me in the volume of the scroll - to do Your will, O Mighty One!"

In Hebrews 10:5-7, what we just read, the writer to the Hebrews quotes a passage from the Psalms and makes an application to what he is speaking of. Anytime a NT author quotes from the OT, I think we should go back and see what that OT text is teaching, and then see what application the NT author is making.

In this case, Hebrews 10:5-7 is a quote from Psalm 40:6-8. Psalm 40 is a Psalm of David, and a cry of thanksgiving, and a plea for help from Yahweh.

Bible students recognize that Yahweh used the prophet David at times to speak as the coming Messiah to Israel. This is a point that both Peter and Paul make in their salvation sermons in the book of Acts. They point out Psalms of David where it sounds like David is talking about himself, but in reality he is speaking *as* or *for* the coming Messiah, his descendant that would come from his loins or progeny. David was the father or ancestor of the Messiah, thus David sometimes was used prophetically by Yahweh to speak and write as though it was Yeshua of Nazareth who was speaking and writing.

This is most readily seen where David spoke these words to Yahweh, "You [Yahweh] will not let your Holy One [me, David] see decay." David actually said that back in Psalm 16, but the fact is that David, after serving in his own generation in Yahweh's plan,

fell asleep (died), was buried with his fathers, and saw decay. His body or skin rotted in the ground. But... the Messiah - the descendant from David's loins - did not see decay when he was buried (Acts 2:25-30; 13:34-37). Yahweh raised Yeshua the descendant of David from the dead before his body saw decay. This let's us know that Yahweh was using David in the Psalms to prophetically speak for the coming Davidic Messiah! As Yahweh's prophet, David was able to visualize the resurrection of the Messiah before it ever occurred (Acts 2:31).

This is what is going on in Psalm 40. Back when David initially wrote Psalm 40, other Israelites would hear it and/or read it, and they would see an immediate application to David; but the Psalm is actually about Yeshua. We can know this because of later revelation in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews 10:5-7. The author quotes Psalm 40:6-8 and applies it to the Yeshua of Nazareth. So let's begin in Psalm 40:1-5, and then we will center in on verses 6-8 in the chapter.

- 1** I waited patiently for Yahweh, and He turned to me and heard my cry for help.
- 2** He brought me up from a desolate pit, out of the muddy clay, and set my feet on a rock, making my steps secure.
- 3** He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our Mighty One. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in Yahweh.
- 4** How happy is the man who has put his trust in Yahweh and has not turned to the proud or to those who run after lies!
- 5** Yahweh my Mighty One, You have done many things - Your wonderful works and Your plans for us; none can compare with You. If I were to report and speak [of them], they are more than can be told.

Remember, this is Yeshua talking in this Psalm. Not that he was literally back there when the Psalm was written, but Yahweh is using David as a mouthpiece for Yeshua. Yeshua is the one who says in verse 1, "I waited patiently for Yahweh, and He turned to me and heard my cry for help." That's Yeshua crying out and praying to Yahweh. In verse 5 he says, "Yahweh my Mighty One, You have done many wonderful works." That's Yeshua speaking about Yahweh's wonderful works. Next comes the pertinent verses, quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7, Psalm 40:6-8.

- 6** You do not delight in sacrifice and offering; You open my ears to listen. You do not ask for a whole burnt offering or a sin offering.
- 7** Then I said, "See, I have come; it is written about me in the volume of the scroll.
- 8** I delight to do Your will, my Mighty One; Your instruction resides within me."

David, speaking for or as Yeshua, begins by saying, "You, Yahweh, do not delight in sacrifice and offering." What does that even mean, because all through the OT we see where Yahweh *does* delight in sacrifice and offering. In the early chapters of Leviticus we read over and over where the sacrifices are a sweet-smelling savor to Yahweh. That's a metaphor saying that Yahweh is delighting in the sacrifice. He is taking pleasure in the offering being given.

I think David's point here is this: "Sacrifice is good, but obedience is better." While Yahweh does accept and love the man who is repentant for his sins, and brings a sin offering for atonement, it would be better if that man did not sin, and thus obeyed the law of Yahweh, and never had to bring a sin sacrifice.

It reminds me of the scribe who came to Yeshua in Mark 12 and asked him, "Which commandment is the most important in the law?" Yeshua responded by quoting the *Shema* and saying that man is to love Yahweh with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love his neighbor as himself. When the scribe heard Yeshua's answer he said, "You are right Teacher! To do this is WORTH MORE than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices!"

That scribe knew the law. That scribe knew that Yahweh commanded burnt offerings and sacrifices. That scribe knew all of the Scriptures that said the sacrifices, when brought properly, were sweet-smelling savors to Yahweh, but the scribe knew that it would be *better* or *worth more* if a man obeyed Yahweh fully, completely, perfectly.

So that is David's point in Psalm 40:6, or we should say, that is Yeshua's point, because remember, Psalm 40:6-8 is Yeshua speaking. Yahweh is using David as a prophetic mouthpiece for Yeshua back in the OT.

Then, in Psalm 40:7 we read again, "Then I said," and once again that is Yeshua speaking, not literally but through his ancestor David. He says, "See I have come, it is written about ME in the volume of the scroll." That's Yeshua's first coming. He is the one it is written about in the scroll of the OT.

Now, if you are paying careful attention to Hebrews and Psalms, you will notice that something is said by the author to the Hebrews that we don't read in Psalms. In Hebrews 10:5 we read, "Therefore, as He was coming into the world, He said: You did not want sacrifice and offering, but You [Yahweh] prepared a body for Me [Yeshua]." When we flip the pages of our Bible over to Psalm 40:6-7 we don't read anything about this body being prepared, UNLESS we realize that the author of Hebrews is quoting from the Septuagint text of Psalm 40 and not the Hebrew Masoretic Text.

This is done quite often in the NT. The NT authors would quote from the OT, but they would quote from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT.

I bring this up because the writer to the Hebrews brings it up. He quotes David as saying, "You [Yahweh] did not want sacrifice and offering, but You [Yahweh] prepared Me [Yeshua] a body." Why a body? Well, for starters, Yeshua did not exist back in the OT, except in the foreordination, plan, wisdom, mind, and word of Yahweh.

Did you know that the Bible says that Yeshua was slain from the foundation of the world? It does, in Revelation 13:8 it actually says that. It speaks of the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. I have to believe that verse, so I have to believe that Yeshua was slain from the foundation of the world. But, at that time, there had been no body prepared for Yeshua. He wasn't physically slain from the foundation of

the world, but in the mind, plan, foreordination, and predestination of Yahweh he was slain. It was already as good as done because Yahweh already thought it, spoke it, and thus ordained for it to take place.

Yahweh predestined it from the foundation of the world, but the body of Yeshua, the man, the descendant of David was prepared for a later time, the fullness of time. *As Galatians 4:4-5a says KJV, "But **when the fullness of the time was come**, [Yahweh] sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law." Peter puts it like this in 1 Peter 1:18-20 ESV, "For you know that you were ransomed from your futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you." This is the body that Hebrews 10 and Psalm 40 is talking about. Body here does not mean suitcase. Yeshua was not just a body or piece of flesh, he was a living soul, just like Adam, Abraham, David, and all his Israelite ancestors. Body here means Yeshua was a flesh and blood man, which consists of the dust of the earth plus the breath of life, and equals a living soul (Genesis 2:7).

So David, speaking prophetically for Yeshua, says, "You did not want sacrifice and offering, but You prepared me a body." Then we come to the climax in Psalm 40:8 which is quoted in Hebrews 10:7. Again, David is speaking as or for Yeshua, so...

8 I [Yeshua] delight to do Your [Yahweh's] will, my Mighty One; Your [Yahweh's] instruction resides within me [Yeshua]."

This is Yeshua saying that he comes with delight to do his Mighty One's will. Yahweh's instruction (Torah) resides inside his heart. And that's the point of the author of Hebrews. Sacrifice is good, but obedience is better. Yeshua delighted to do the will of Yahweh. Yahweh's Torah resided within Yeshua's heart to the fullest. Yeshua never sinned. He never transgressed Yahweh's law, and therefore he qualified as that perfect substitute for our sins! This is why the Hebrews' author goes on to say after this (10:8-10):

8 After He says above, You did not desire or delight in sacrifices and offerings, whole burnt offerings and sin offerings, (which are offered according to the law),

9 He then says, See, I have come to do Your will. He takes away the first to establish the second.

10 By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Yeshua Messiah once and for all.

The taking away of the first is speaking of the first covenant or old covenant. It's called the *first* covenant in Hebrews 8:7, 8:13, 9:1, 9:15, and now in Hebrews 10:9. The descendant of David, ordained from the foundation of the world, was born (that's when he came into the world), and then he grew up increasing in wisdom, stature, and favor in the sight of Yahweh and man, to perfectly carry out Yahweh's law, therefore needing no sin sacrifice to atone for his sin because he didn't have any! He came to do Yahweh's

will. Sacrifice was good, but obedience is better, and Yeshua brought Yahweh perfect obedience rather than an animal sacrifice for sin.

Through Yeshua, the first covenant or Old Covenant is taken away, and the second or New Covenant is established.

And as the author goes on to say in Hebrews 10:10, "by this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Yeshua the Messiah ONCE FOR ALL." We've been made holy through the offering of the body of Yeshua, that body Yahweh prepared for him. That holy man that did not see corruption or decay. And the offering of that body happened ONCE FOR ALL in contrast to the shadows that had to happen over and over again, mentioned back in Hebrews 10:1-2. Look at what the author goes on to say in Hebrews 10:11-14.

11 Now every priest stands day after day ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away (vs. 4) sins.

12 But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of (the) Almighty.

13 He is now waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.

The Levite priests in the temple at the time the author of Hebrews wrote this, those priests still stood day after day in the service of the earthly temple, and they offered the same shadowy sacrifices, time after time, but those sacrifices could never TAKE AWAY sins. Or we might say, echoing Daniel 9:24, those sacrifices could never MAKE AN END OF sins.

But this man (speaking of Yeshua) after offering ONE SACRIFICE FOR SINS FOREVER, sat down at the right hand of the Almighty. He didn't have to keep offering himself over and over, because he was the reality of the shadow! He did what those sacrifices could not do! He obeyed the law perfectly! He came to do Yahweh's will! The instruction of Yahweh was in his heart! The first covenant was taken away, and we are now ministers of a NEW covenant!

And verse 13 says, he is now waiting until his enemies are made his footstool. That's a quote from Psalm 110:1, which is Yahweh's favorite Bible verse because it is quoted to or alluded to in the NT more than any other OT verse, about 23x. That's the passage where Yahweh speaks to David's Master (Yeshua) and says, "Sit here at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." That's what Hebrews 10:13 is speaking about. After Yeshua made that ONE offering for sin - forever - he was resurrected and soon after took his seat at the right hand of Almighty Yahweh, and he still sits there today waiting for Yahweh to put all enemies under his feet.

And Hebrews 10:14, it says, "For by ONE offering, he has perfected FOREVER, those who are sanctified." Doesn't that make you want to leap for joy?! It makes me want to!

Yeshua's offering up of himself, one time, perfected us forever. So long as we have faith in him, are sins are taken away, permanently.

This is what Daniel 9:24 is talking about. Messiah the Prince would "make an end of sins" during that 490 year time frame of Daniel 9:20-27. We aren't waiting for this to happen at the second coming of the Messiah. He made this offering at his FIRST coming.

I will close with Hebrews 9:24-26:

24 For the Messiah did not enter a sanctuary made with hands (only a model of the true one) but into heaven itself, that He might now appear in the presence of (the) Almighty for us.

25 He did not do this to offer Himself many times, as the high priest enters the sanctuary yearly with the blood of another.

26 Otherwise, He would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But now He has appeared one time, at the end of the ages, for **the removal of sin** by the sacrifice of Himself.