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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW:**

### **THE DATE OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL:**

Conservative scholars have placed the writing of this book **somewhere around 50-58 AD**, while liberal scholars prefer a later date. Although it is difficult to put an exact date on origination, evidence appears to favor the conservative time frame. Let's consider a few reasons why:

1. **This book has a strong Jewish emphasis as does the earlier written book of James.** The Book of Acts gives us the account of the great number of Jews who were saved and placed into the early church. These Jewish Christians had a great number questions concerning Israel's future Kingdom and church issues. **Matthew confronted and answered these Jewish questions.**
2. There is reason to believe that Matthew was written before the other gospels and before the destruction of Jerusalem since **there is no mention of Jerusalem's destruction.** That would place the writing before 70 AD.
3. Stanley D. Toussaint made reference to **the emphasis on Peter in the book.** This fits with the prominence and authority that Peter had in the early days of the church.<sup>1</sup>
4. One of the strongest arguments for the early writing of the book is that **church tradition has so strongly advocated its early writing.** The early church fathers were in a much better position to keep, or make accurate accounts.

**Conclusion: A date placed somewhere around 50-58 AD satisfies all the above mentioned reasons.**

### **EVIDENCE OF MATTHEW'S AUTHORSHIP:**

1. There is external evidence that Matthew is the author of this book, and **tradition strongly supports Matthews's authorship** as well. This is substantiated in the fact that the **early church fathers gave it the heading of, "The Gospel According to Matthew"**. To this Pseudo Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen agreed. One may question Matthews's authorship due to the fact that Matthew was not a dominant character in the early church, such as Peter, James, or John, but **the early fathers were convinced that it was Matthew.**
2. The internal evidence is seen in the use of its words. There is **more mention of coins than in any of the other gospels.** This fits with Matthew, for he was a tax collector. **Matthew's humility** shows through in the references concerning himself, for **he consistently identifies himself as the "tax collector" (despised by the Jews).** The other gospels do not do this.

### **WHAT IS MATTHEW'S PURPOSE IN WRITING THE BOOK?**

1. Matthew purposed to prove the truths concerning Jesus Messiah, and he encouraged all the readers to consider Him. He proved that Jesus had met all the requirements of Israel's promised Messiah King. He also explained the plans of Messiah; what had been carried out, and what plans were yet to take place. In between these truths he demonstrated the unique life of Christ and His kingdom. Could all the Old Testament prophecies that referred to Messiah, and were so beautifully fulfilled by this Jesus simply be a coincidence? According to Matthew, absolutely not! **It could only be concluded that one of the main purposes of this book was to prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the one and only true Messiah of Israel.**

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold the King*, (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1928), 17.

2. The rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation was recorded in this book. **Jewish minds questioned, “What now since we rejected Messiah?” Matthew responded with truths concerning the program of the church that God is carrying out.** He also made it clear that the tribulation and the millennial kingdom are yet in Israel’s future, although the Father only knows when this will be fulfilled.

### **WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?**

**1. The audience was primarily Jewish. Whether lost or saved, this book covered the needs, questions, and programs concerning the Jewish mind at all levels.** The early recipients of the gospel were Jewish. The gospel was preached early on in the synagogues of the Jews. The numerous uses of Old Testament prophecies, and Rabbinical writings reflected Jewish understandings and beliefs.

2. The Jews were a mixed group; some believed, some rejected, and some were undecided concerning Messiah. Matthew encouraged the believers as he laid out the plan of God. Matthew challenged and condemned the unbelievers, because of their rejection of Messiah. Matthew appealed to the undecided with a convicting presentation of Messiah. No matter what their spiritual condition was, these truths about Messiah concerned them all. Jensen stated, “...it does not surprise us that one of the four gospels was directed especially to them [Jews] and answered questions uppermost in their minds about Jesus...”<sup>2</sup> **“Such subjects as law, ceremonial defilement, the Sabbath, the kingdom, Jerusalem, the temple, David, the Messiah, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, and Moses are all discussed from the Jewish viewpoint for Jewish readers.”**<sup>3</sup>

### **WHAT IS THE THEME OR THEMES OF THE BOOK?**

The book is very Jewish and deals with Jewish issues. There appears to be one main theme, with various underlying themes. **“In the first decades of the church the book of Matthew was the most highly revered and widely read of the four gospels.”**<sup>4</sup> Its themes would answer the early church questions.

**1. The overall theme of Matthew is the person of Jesus Christ Messiah. Two secondary themes are: He is rightfully both “King of the Jews, and a Light to the Gentiles.”**<sup>5</sup> Matthew traced Christ from his proper genealogy – physical birth – ministries – Calvary – and authority over the church in conclusion. All along, Matthew used Jewish prophecy to prove Jesus Christ as the true Jewish Messiah; the one who perfectly fit every biblical prerequisite, and the one who included gentiles in his program.

2. The book also follows the reaction of the Jewish people to this King; **from obscurity and curiosity, to recognition and popularity, and finally hostility and death.** The writer also noted the response of the gentiles to this Jewish Messiah. The Oriental astrologers came to worship Christ in chapter two. Christ’s final words were to preach to *all* nations.

**3. The book focused on Jewish concepts and disciplines of the Davidic King, his unique person and nature of his kingdom, his conflict with Jewish traditions, the results of Jewish rejection, the future church, and the great tribulation.** This is evidenced in the Sermon on the Mount,

<sup>2</sup> Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen’s Survey of the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), 115.

<sup>3</sup> Toussaint, “Behold the King,” 17.

<sup>4</sup> Jensen, “Jensen’s Survey of the New Testament,” 114.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 49:6, Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

the many parables, the many miracles and provisions of the kingly Christ, the kingdom authority of the disciples, and the warnings concerning the time of Jacob's trouble.

4. Another underlying theme is that this **Messiah not only took on Jewish identity**, but that He also **identified with Israel in the fulfillment passages**. Israel was a son who went to Egypt, so was Messiah. Israel was a nation raised up out of obscurity, so was Messiah. In chapter 8, He identified with the sick and lowly as mentioned in Isaiah 53. He also explained the plans of Messiah; what had been carried out, and what was yet to take place.

**Conclusion**, can all the Old Testament prophecies that refer to Messiah, and are so beautifully fulfilled by this Jesus simply be a coincidence? According to Matthew, absolutely not! It can only be concluded that Matthew's main theme was to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the one and only true Messiah of Israel.

### **MORE TO CONSIDER:**

1. **This book proves the absolute genuineness of the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah.** It held the unbelieving Jews who despised and rejected Jesus Christ accountable. It proved that there is no reason to doubt this Christ. Matthew encouraged the believing Jew, for God was not done with their nation. Matthew proved to all Jews, that this Jesus Christ was the very King whom they had been expecting. Compiling all the evidence of Matthew, there is no other conclusion.

2. "He was the one perfect Man, the ideal of humanity, His doctrine the one absolute teaching. The world has known none other, none equal. And the world has owned it, if not by the testimony of words, yet by the evidence of facts... If He be not the Messiah, there has at least been none other, before or after Him. If He be not the Messiah, the world has not, and never can have, a Messiah."<sup>6</sup>

*John 21:25, And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.*

Matthew Records Gems From Various Aspects Of Christ's Life That Fit His Arguments.  
He Does Not Focus On Chronological Order As Does Luke.  
Matthew Focuses On The Nation Of Israel And Her Prophesied King & Savior -  
The One Whose Ministry, Message, And Miracles Far Surpass All Others!

3. "But we have learned enough of the structure of the First Gospel to know, that its arrangement is determined by **the plan of the writer rather than by the chronological succession** of events."<sup>7</sup>

4. "...in the first century after the writing of the New Testament gospels it was Matthew which quickly established itself as *the gospel par excellence*..."<sup>8</sup>

5. "Another feature of Matthew that strikes all readers is **its sustained concern to present Jesus in the context of Judaism**... Such questions were inescapable for a church still close to its Jewish roots... Modern Christians... should realize that they live in a very different world from that of the early Christians, for whom **the 'Jewishness' of Jesus and his church was not just a matter of historical interest but an existential concern crying out for answers**, answers which Matthew's gospel offered to provide."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus Messiah*, (CD-Rom, Ellis Enterprises).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> R.T. France, *Matthew Evangelist and Teacher*; (Eugene, OR: Wipit & Stock Publishers, 1989), 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 19.

## **JEWISH IDENTITY:**

### ***Deliverance from Bondage; Passover***

1. “**The master narrative of Judaism begins with the story of the origins of Israel:** the descent of Israel into Egypt, four centuries of slavery there, then God’s sending Moses to the Egyptian Pharaoh to liberate Israelite slaves and lead them to the Promised Land.”<sup>10</sup>
2. “A single formula in words recited in the Passover narrative captures the moment: **For ever after, in every generation, every Israelite must think of himself or herself as having gone forth from Egypt.**”<sup>11</sup>
3. “The story the family tells about itself as Israel makes their play-acting at supper plausible as they turn their lives into metaphor, themselves as actors... it is how every day Jews transform themselves into the ‘Israel’ of which scripture speaks... Jews think of themselves as having gone forth from Egypt... thus the family states, recapitulating the entire narrative of Judaism’s Israel.”<sup>12</sup>

**Conclusion:** *All of Israel of all time is to see herself as having gone forth from Egypt, a redeemed people led to the Promised Land.*

### ***Receiving the Torah: Shavuot***

1. “...so now at **Shavuot every Israelite through all time is regarded as standing at Sinai and receiving Torah.**”<sup>13</sup>
2. “Shavuot **embodies the second component** of Judaism’s definition of Israel...”<sup>14</sup>
3. “The Torah is what distinguishes Israel from everybody else.”<sup>15</sup>
4. “If Israel inherits the world to come, that is because of its loyalty to the Torah, which includes suffering in this age in expiation for its sins of rebellion.”<sup>16</sup>

### ***Season of Rejoicing; Sukkot***

1. “Sukkot **forms the third and final component of Judaism’s definition of Israel:** as a pilgrim people, wandering in the wilderness, expiating the sin of a generation that rebelled against God.”<sup>17</sup>
2. “The element of the story that concerns us here is realized on Sukkot, beginning on the fifteenth day of the lunar month of Tishri and lasting for seven days thereafter. It concerns Israel’s forty years of wandering in the wilderness, until the generation of the Exodus and Sinai died out, when Israel dwelt in *sukkot* or huts, not in permanent houses... So the Israel of Judaism comes to realization in moments of active, participatory narrative, when people both repeat and act out a chapter of the master narrative...”<sup>18</sup>
3. “From the exile in Babylonia, the authorship of the Torah recast Israel’s history into the story of the continual existence of the people.”<sup>19</sup>

**Conclusion:** *Jesus fulfilled and brought to completion the failure of Israel. Jesus not only figuratively, but literally fulfilled all of these by His obedience and bringing it all to its final reality.*

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<sup>10</sup> Jacob Neusner, *Judaism, An Introduction*; (London, England: Penguin Books, 2002), 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Jacob Neusner, *Judaism, An Introduction*; (London, England: Penguin Books, 2002), 17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<b>A thematic view of Messiah's Identity with His people Israel</b>		
<i>Matt. Chapters:</i>	<i>Fulfillment and identity parallels</i>	<i>O.T. Scripture:</i>
1-3	Birth – from obscurity to recognition	Gen 12....
	The call out of Egypt into the Wilderness	
4	The call to follow God	Exo 1-13
5-7	The giving of the laws	Exo 19...
8-9	Miracles that followed	Exo...
10	Disciples sent out / Spies sent out	Num 13
11:28-30	Promise of rest	Gen-Deut
	Jonah parallel / Resurrection – mission to gentiles	
12	Rejection of Messiah's rest / Rejection of land of rest	Num 14
12	Unpardonable sin, left desolate / Kadesh Barnea, left to wander	Num 14...
14, 15	Feeding of 5,000 / Manna in the wilderness	Num 15...
16...	Focus on a new generation	Num 14

**SHADED AREA IS MATTHEW'S COVERAGE OF THE LIFE OF THE MESSIAH**

	<b><i>OBSCURITY VANISHING</i></b> <i>4:1</i>	<b><i>POPULARITY DECLINING</i></b> <i>4:12</i>	<b><i>OPPOSITION INCREASING</i></b> <i>15:1</i>	<b><i>SACRIFICE</i></b> <i>21:1</i>
Birth	<u>Early ministries</u> • John introduces Jesus • Jesus cleanses temple	<u>Extended ministries</u> • Jesus returns to Galilee – ministers • Jesus ordains the twelve	<u>Specialized &amp; Concluding ministries</u> • To Tyre & Sidon • To feast of tabernacles • Beyond Jordan	<u>Calvary ministries</u> • Triumphal entry • Death • Resurrection • Ascension
1:1	<b><i>FIRST YEAR</i></b> <u>Early Judean ministry</u>	<b><i>SECOND YEAR</i></b> <u>Early &amp; Middle Galilean ministry</u>	<b><i>THIRD YEAR</i></b> <u>Later Judean &amp; Perea ministries</u>	<b><i>REMAINING DAYS</i></b> <u>Jerusalem ministries</u>

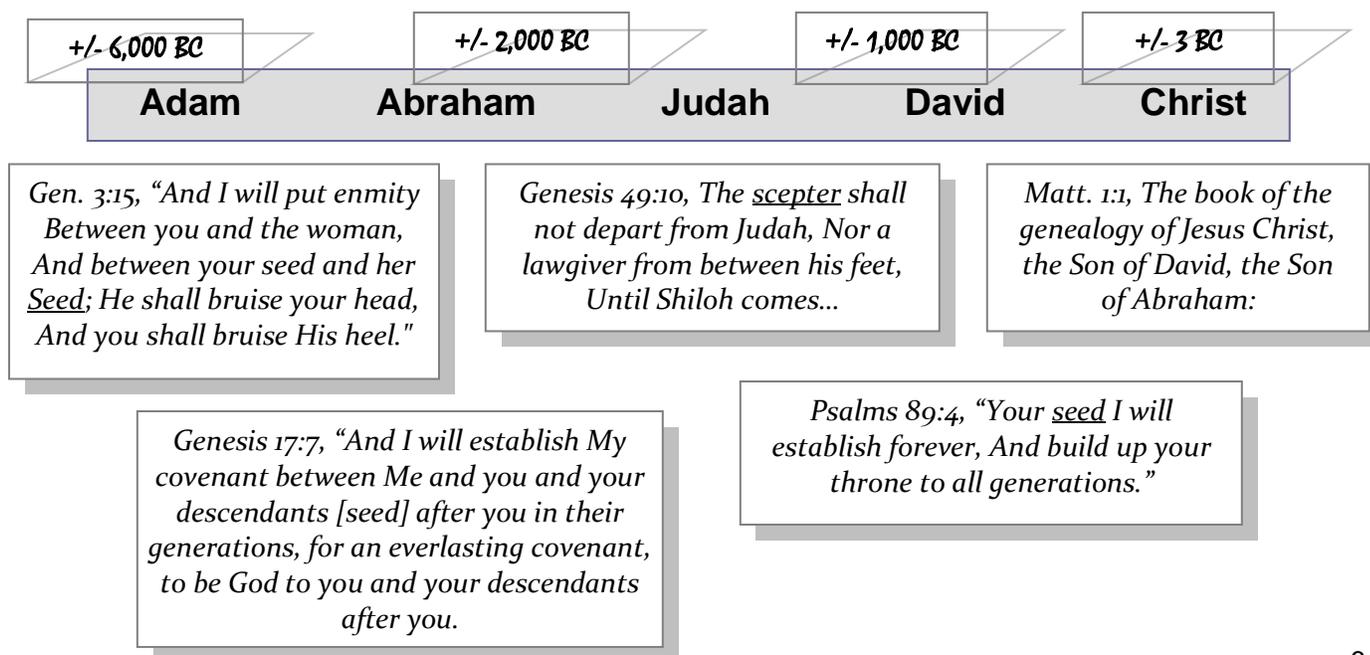
## CHIASTIC/CHIASMUS OUTLINE:

### **Chapters 1-12, Kingly / Ruling Aspect, Purpose: restore the preserved ones of Israel**

- A. Intro of the king to the nation of Israel
- I. B. The king will institute the New Covenant – Holy Spirit or Fire
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. The Messianic Kingdom is near – the King is present
  - D. *Messianic signs are for all Israel – for the masses*
- II. E. *Kingdom teaching is to all the people – Sermon on the Mount, etc.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. *The King openly demonstrates the character of His earthy kingdom*
- G. No policy of silence – the disciples are sent to preach with kingdom authority
- III. H. John the Baptist questions the King’s diminishing role
- \_\_\_\_\_ I. The King is offered – the king is clearly rejected
- X. *The unpardonable sin - the pivot point***
- IV. \_\_\_\_\_ I’. The Messiah begins to speak in parables - a mystery aspect is introduced
  - H’. *The terms – “The kingdom of Heaven/God is near” are not mentioned*
  - .G’. *Messianic signs are for the disciples*
- V. - VII. F’. *Messiah declares the policy of silence*
- E’. *The Messiah begins to declare His suffering servant role*
- \_\_\_\_\_ D’. *The church is introduced – Peter will be a part of instituting it*
- VIII. C’. The Messiah suffers, dies, and is raised from the dead
- B’. The Messiah gives authority to preach to the nations
- A’. The suffering servant is now “a Light to the Gentiles” through his body, the church

### **Chapters 13-28 Servant / Suffering Aspect, Purpose: a light to all peoples**

## GENEALOGY OF THE MESSIAH



# SECTION I - THE INTRODUCTION OF THE KING

## CHAPTERS 1-3

### I. THE GENEALOGY OF THE KING 1:1-17

*What was Matthew trying to prove by the genealogy account?*

#### **A. Jesus Fulfilled All the Biblical Requirements of the Messiah King**

1. Joseph, the adoptive father of Christ was in the lineage of David. Therefore Christ met this qualification of heirship. Although Joseph was in the line of the cursed Jeconiah, Matthew clearly explained that it did not affect Christ. Jesus was not a physical descendent of Joseph but an adopted son of Joseph (1:16). The conception was accomplished by the Holy Spirit upon Mary.

? *Vs. 16, Why was it important that Joseph did not beget Christ? Avoided the curse of Jeconiah (Jer 22:24).*

2. Matthew showed his readers that Jesus was a descendent of Abraham the father of the Jewish nation. Messiah, the descendent of Abraham, truly was one of His own people. He had the right and authority to carry out and fulfill the promises of the covenants. Christ beautifully met the legal criteria of Messiah's prophetic genealogy.

*Heb 2:17, Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

3. Matthew also noted that Christ was also in the lineage of Judah the law giver. Think this through: was not David of the tribe of Judah, and the descendent of Abraham? It seems that the writer wanted to remove all doubt in the Jewish minds and prove that Christ was a true Jew in Abraham and in the kingly line of Judah/David.

- ❖ *Abraham, the father of Israel – Judah, the law giver – David, the king*
- ❖ *There are 3 groups of 14 – Jewish custom for memorization*

#### **B. Included Rahab & Ruth, Both Gentiles, Both Women – Not a Jewish Custom**

1. Atypical to Jewish writers, Matthew included women in the Messiah's genealogy. Not only were they women, but they were gentile women of poor reputation and enemies of Israel. This indicated that God was not partial, and that he was willing to include gentiles and sinners into his program. Matthew began an underlying gentile theme that developed throughout his gospel. God has always sought to reach gentiles, and include them in his plan.

**C. Tamar & Bathsheba, both Jewish women who begot children through sinful ways – a blow to Jewish pride**

### II. THE BIRTH OF THE KING FROM JOSEPH'S PERSPECTIVE 1:18-25

#### **A. 18-19 Joseph Considered Divorcing Mary to Whom He Was Engaged**

#### **B. 21 Jesus – Joshua, Meaning Jehovah Is Salvation**

## ***C. 23 Virgin Birth, Deity - The First Fulfillment Verse, (used 12 Other Times)***

### **Importance Of The Virgin Birth**

The Lord, through Isaiah promised a sign to unbelieving King Ahaz, if Ahaz so desired. Because King Ahaz refused the sign, God gave a sign regarding the Messiah instead. The sign promised that a virgin would conceive and bear a son who would be Immanuel. There remains controversy over Isaiah 7:14, but Fruchtenbaum is confident that this text teaches that: “Messiah would be born of a girl who is still a virgin; the explanation of Genesis 3:15. Messiah will be a God-Man. Messiah will be a king. Messiah must be born prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.”<sup>20</sup> Matthew recorded that this prophecy in due course was fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

### **III. THE RECOGNITION OF THE KING 2:1-23**

#### **Importance Of Bethlehem:**

1. The prophet Micah (5:2) wrote that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah. King David, the recipient of the Davidic covenant, was also from Bethlehem. Some have considered King David a type of Christ. Bethlehem was the home of shepherds. A watch tower was constructed in this area, so the shepherds could view their sheep destined for sacrifice in the temple.<sup>21</sup> Bethlehem, who provided the temple sacrifices, ultimately provided another sacrifice, the last sacrifice, the one wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. The providers of the temple sacrifices, the shepherds, were the first to witness the Lamb of God. They were also the first to announce the glad tidings of Messiah.

2. Bethlehem was an insignificant town to the Jewish leaders, for it was the home of lowly shepherds. According to Edersheim “it was repugnant to Israel.”<sup>22</sup> Does not this Messiah fulfill the role of servant in every aspect, even a humble birth in a manger for animals, in a town of little interest to the Jewish Rabbis? Messiah at birth fulfilled his lowly servant role as foretold in the Scriptures, especially Isaiah 53:1-3.

#### **Characters:**

1. **Herod the King** was a descendent of the Idumeans who were descendents of the Edomites. This nation, though relatives of Israel, was continually a thorn and enemy of God’s people. During Herod’s time, the Idumeans considered themselves nominal Jews; therefore Herod was a bit sympathetic to the Jews, but mainly for the sake of popularity.

2. **Herod was a man given to jealousy, paranoia, and rage.** He lashed out at one and all, and even killed those of his own family. Matthew chapter two revealed the true jealousy and paranoia of this king. Herod was no different than his forefathers; it revealed itself in his response to the announcement of a new king by the Magi. When he could not identify the new born king, he carefully inquired to the age of the young child, and killed all the male children two years old and younger in Bethlehem. He thought this would keep his kingship intact.

3. Despite his being an extremely brutal leader, **Herod seemed to be a man that was courageous; a born leader.** He knew how to lead and flatter those who were around him, both the Romans as well as the Jews. For the Jews he spared no expense, and he built for them a beautiful temple in which to worship. Many considered this temple equal with several other “*wonders of the world.*” This appears to have pacified the Jewish people (It seems in Matthew chapter two that the

<sup>20</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Messianic Christology* (Ariel Ministries; Tustin, CA, 1998), 37.

<sup>21</sup> Edersheim, “Life and Times of Jesus Messiah.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Jewish leaders were on the side of Herod, when one considers that they were troubled by the Magi's words along with Herod).

**Conclusion:** In the end, Herod died a miserable, lonely, paranoid, gentile king; one who could never be the rightful king of the Jews. All ended in misery for this bloody king.

**1. The Magi commonly called the Wise Men were astrologers from the east.** They were likely from the area of Babylon. They were gentiles who had noticed a special star representing the birth of a special king.

**2. For hundreds of years there had been a special school in Babylon which taught astrology.** Balaam, the false, prophet may have been an astrologer. It was Balaam who prophesied of a special king who would arise out of Jacob (Num 24:17). A star would signify this unique occurrence. Daniel may have expanded upon this with the revelations that were made known to him, and thereby passed on to his students in Babylon.

**Conclusion:** God in his grace revealed to these gentile astrologers the sign of a star; the time of Messiah's presence. They responded properly to this King. They sought the King with effort, and worshipped Him. They also were sensitive to God's leading all along, even when God directed them away from Herod.

### ***A. 1-6 Notice Who Recognizes the Kingship of Messiah – Gentiles, Not the Jewish Leadership***

*\* Matthew immediately picks on the Jewish nation – he could, he was a Jew*

### ***B. 10-11 Reveal the Proper Response to This Special Person – Given Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh***

### ***C. 15 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Fulfillment Verse - Who First Went to Egypt? Why Did Messiah?***

1. Messiah fulfilled the prophecies concerning him, and he also identified with the nation itself. Israel went down into Egypt, so did the Messiah. Matthew proved to his readers that Jesus was a complete Jew.

2. “Matthew sees striking parallels in the patterns of God's activities in history in ways he cannot attribute to coincidence. Just as God brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt to inaugurate his original covenant with them, so again God is bringing the Messiah, who fulfills the hopes of Israel, out of Egypt as he is about to inaugurate his new covenant.”<sup>23</sup>

### ***D. 16 Notice Herod's Improper Response to This Special King***

1. Herod was similar to the Pharaoh of Egypt who ruled over Israel during the time of the birth of Israel's first deliverer, Moses. Herod was brutal, and killed the Israelite children, just as Pharaoh had done. More so, Herod played a role in the fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures concerning Messiah. It was Herod's brutality that caused Joseph, the father of Jesus, to bring his family to Egypt. This fulfilled the scripture concerning Christ's identification with Israel and their being called out of Egypt. When Herod killed the Israelite children, it caused a great time of weeping for the Jews and also fulfilled scripture concerning Israelite suffering.

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<sup>23</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, *The New American Commentary: Volume 22, Matthew*; (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 67.

### ***E. 17, 18 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Fulfillment Verse – What Is It All About?***

1. According to the Jewish people, Rachel was considered the symbol of Jewish motherhood (prototypical). Ramah was a plateau near Bethlehem that was the location of Rachel's death and burial. It was where Jacob had set up a pillar, and revered his beloved wife; it was where Israel wept for his wife.

2. Years later, Ramah was the meeting place for the captives of Judah who were led away by the ruthless gentile king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. A bitter bondage was the future for the healthy and chosen captives; others such as the women, the old, the young, and the weak, were ruthlessly slaughtered since they were only a hindrance to their bloody conquerors. Because of the cruel deaths, and the heartrending departure of family, and friends another bitter wailing had taken place at Ramah. Israel's disobedience to their God brought about persecution by the gentiles. Yet the wailing in Ramah was not complete-

3. There was one who was the true representative of Israel, the Son of God, and Messiah. It was He who was the fulfillment of Israel's history. Another cruel gentile king was in power many years later during the birth of Messiah; Herod the Great. It was he who slaughtered the innocents next. Did not the Jewish leaders stand by and ignore the claims of the gentile Wise Men? Again the Jewish leadership was dull to the prodding of God. For the third time there was wailing in Ramah. This was the re-echoing of the cry that had taken place over 500 years before. This time, as stated by Matthew, was the fulfillment, or the completion of that dreadful, bitter weeping that had taken place before. It all was done in hopes of extinguishing Israel's true king. The full prophetic scene of Jeremiah 31:15 was realized in the mothers of the male children two years old and younger in Bethlehem. Messiah had not only fulfilled, but identified with his people again in their suffering.

### ***F. 23, The 4<sup>th</sup> Fulfillment Verse - What Is It All About?***

1. The prophet Isaiah spoke of a servant coming from the seed of David who would be lowly, despised and rejected.

*Isaiah 11:1, There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.*

*Isaiah 53:2, 3, For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

2. Israel was raised from obscurity and lowliness; King David was raised from obscurity and lowliness; the Messiah was raised from obscurity and lowliness.

3. The prophet Isaiah spoke of a servant from the seed of David who would be lowly, despised and rejected. It's possible that Matthew was speaking of Isaiah as one of the prophets who foretold the humility of Messiah. According to both Arnold Fruchtenbaum and Alfred Edersheim, the Nazarene was looked down upon by the Galileans, and the Galileans were looked down upon by the Judeans. That may be why Nathanael asked Philip in John 1:46, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

## *Messiah's Identity With His People – So Far*

Nation of Israel	Israel's Messiah	Conclusion
Exo 4:23, So I say to you, let <u>My son</u> go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.	Matt 2:15, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, " <u>Out of Egypt I called My Son.</u> "	Israel was called God's son, but they failed as a son. Messiah was called God's son, but fulfilled as a son.
Hosea 11:1, When Israel was a child, I loved him, And <u>out of Egypt</u> I called My son.		Both went to Egypt, both were called out of Egypt.
Isa 41:8, But you, Israel, are <u>My servant</u> , Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.	Isa 42:1, Behold! <u>My Servant</u> whom I uphold, My <u>Elect One</u> in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.	Israel was called God's servant, but they failed as a servant. Messiah was called God's servant, but fulfilled as a servant.
1 Samuel 25:10a, Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, " <u>Who is David</u> , and who is the son of Jesse?"	Matt 2:1, Now after Jesus was born in <u>Bethlehem of Judea</u> in the days of Herod the king,	Messiah identified with the obscurity of King David.
Deut 7:7, The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the <u>least of all peoples</u>	Matt 2:23b ...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a <u>Nazarene.</u> "	Messiah identified with the lowliness of Israel.
Jeremiah 31:15a, Thus says the LORD: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, <u>Rachel weeping</u> for her children..."	Matthew 2:18a, "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, <u>Rachel weeping</u> for her children..."	Messiah identified with the sufferings of the nation of Israel.
Exo – Deut, Temptation in the wilderness	Matt 4:1-11, Temptation in the wilderness	Will be discussed
<i>Heb 2:17, Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.</i>		

1. Matt 1:23, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." These three words have a far greater implication than we could ever imagine. Messiah became a Jew, not only in body, but in life and purpose as well. He was the ultimate Jew.

2. "Archeological facts, accordingly, do not bear upon the issues of faith, because for Rabbinic Judaism the Torah – God's instruction – yields no one-time history, but the eternal truth in the form of story... For Judaism, the past is present, and the present is part of the past, so past, present, and future form a single plane of being."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Jacob Neusner, Judaism and the Interpretation of Scripture; Introduction to Rabbinic Midrash; (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub.' 2004) 2, 3.

## IV. INTRODUCTION OF THE KING 3:1-17

### ***A. 1 The Introduction Of The Herald, John The Baptizer – Who Is He?***

1. “In ancient times a herald, or forerunner, would be sent out to clear the road of obstacles or repair pot-holes in the road prior to a journey of a king.”<sup>25</sup> John the Baptizer was the forerunner, the herald, the ambassador of the Messiah, who was present among His people. John’s message therefore was, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near”. The coming of John was foretold by the prophet Isaiah (40:3-5). His purpose was also stated, namely preparing Israel for her coming king, and calling out of Israel a remnant to receive the Messiah. The fulfillment of the promised Messianic kingdom was near, and the Jewish hearts needed preparation.

2. John, the cousin of the Messiah, was in many ways similar to Elijah. He wore similar clothing, ate similar food, and preached forthright as Elijah had done. As Elijah had, he desired to bring the hearers to a decision concerning their king.

3. John’s message and style was foreign to the Jewish people. He was extremely bold and honest about whom they were. He spoke a clear message of repentance, and he called them out of the synagogues and temple into the desert. He made their responsibility clear. Number one, they were to repent. This was foreign to the Jew, for the Jewish teachers taught that through Abraham they were already fit for the kingdom. Secondly, they were to identify with John’s message, and his king through baptism. This was to be the commitment on their part, to be part of that remnant acknowledging Jesus Christ as Messiah.

4. In short, John the Baptist was announcing and introducing the Messiah, the Jewish King to His people Israel. John declared that this was the king who would rule over his people Israel forever; the kingdom that was foretold, the kingdom that was expected, and the kingdom that would come to pass through their faithful God.

Note: “The Judaic system... described in the documents at Qumran... [And Pharisees]; both groups lay stress on religious cleanness and uncleanness...”<sup>26</sup>

### ***B. 7-10 Reveal the First Stage of The Jewish Leadership – That of Observation; Controlled Worship***

### ***C. 11, 12 There Are Two Baptisms, Holy Spirit or Fire - H.S. Hints At What Covenant?***

1. It should not be missed that John introduced the New Covenant when he made reference to the fact that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This is the core of New Covenant truth. “I will put My Spirit within...” Ezekiel 36:27. John introduced the New Covenant, namely Jesus Christ (Isaiah 42:6).

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<sup>25</sup> Fruchtenbaum, “Messianic Christology” 44.

<sup>26</sup> Neusner, “Judaism, An Introduction” 60.

#### **D. 13-17 The Purpose of The Messiah's Baptism:**

1. Receive special anointing by the Holy Spirit
2. Fulfill all righteousness of the law; Israel identified with John, so must Messiah

*“To fulfill all righteousness’ means to complete everything that forms part of a relationship of obedience to God. In so doing, Jesus identifies with and endorses John’s ministry as divinely ordained and his message as one to be heeded.”<sup>27</sup>*

3. To be publicly made known to Israel
4. Identify with John’s message, believing remnant, and sinners
5. Public recognition and authentication by His heavenly Father

**Why the dove?** Rabbinic view is that the Holy Spirit is connected with a dove, or with Israel.

#### **1. Fruchtenbaum’s View:**

“There remains, therefore, only the one passage in the Talmud, [a Chag. 15 a.] which is generally thus quoted: ‘The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, like a dove.’”<sup>28</sup>

#### **2. Edersheim’s View:**

“But we go farther, and assert, that the dove was not the symbol of the Holy Spirit, but that of Israel. As such it is so universally adopted as to have become almost historical. [d Comp. the long illustrations in the Midr. on Song i. 15; Sanh. 95 a; Ber. R. 39; Yalkut on Ps. 1v. 7. and other passages.] If, therefore, Rabbinic illustration of the descent of the Holy Spirit with the visible appearance of a dove must be sought for, it would lie in the acknowledgment of Jesus as the ideal typical Israelite, the Representative of His People.”<sup>29</sup>

3. This teacher holds to the second view, due to its greater popularity and theme in the Jewish writings. It also fits Matthew’s theme of Messiah’s identification and personification of Jewishness. According to Neusner, the Midrish was written before the Talmud.

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<sup>27</sup> Blomberg, “The New American Commentary” 81.

<sup>28</sup> Edersheim, “Life and Times of Jesus Messiah.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

## SECTION II - THE CHARACTER OF THE KING

### Chapters 4-7

#### I. THE TEMPTATION OF THE KING 4:1-11, WAS IT NECESSARY?

##### ***A. Messiah Again Identified With His People in Intensified Temptation***

1. It appears that the temptation of Christ had a twofold aspect; 1) Messiah represented Israel; 2) Christ represented all of mankind as the second Adam.
2. Old Testament scriptures make it clear that Israel as a nation had failed in respect to their obedience to God. This was especially evident during their forty years of wilderness wanderings. As a people called out of Egypt, they failed in all aspects of their testing. Israel as a disobedient son failed; Messiah as an obedient son fulfilled. The Sukkot meal reminds the Israelite of the 40 years of wandering.

##### **Six Parallels of Testing:**

1. Both Israel and Christ were called sons.
2. It was the wilderness in which the trials took place.
3. The Spirit of God had led, and was present with them both.
4. A point of testing regarded food. Israel ate manna for forty years. Messiah's test was intensified; Messiah had no food for 40 days.
5. Israel wandered in the wilderness forty years. Messiah was intensely tested in the wilderness forty days.
6. Finally, they both had the same scriptures in which to trust – Deuteronomy

***Consider:*** *Messiah fulfilled for Israel what they never had; victory in temptation. This struck a chord in Jewish minds as they considered Christ. Messiah proved that He was the ultimate obedient son. He was the Ultimate Jew!*

*Hebrews 4:15, For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

##### ***B. Messiah Identified With Adam & Eve Who Represent Mankind***

1. The other major aspect of Christ's temptation dealt with Adam and Eve and their failure in temptation, which represented all of mankind's failure. Hebrews 4:15 states that Christ was tempted in all points as us; I John 2:16 specifically states, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Again parallelism is identified, not in the exact item of each temptation, but in respect to the category of each temptation.

##### **Three Parallel Areas of Testing:**

1. **Lust of the flesh:** Eve and Jesus were tempted by food - related to the desires of the body
2. **Lust of the eyes:** Eve - tempted with the forbidden fruit; Christ - tempted with the kingdoms of the world

3. **The pride of life:** Eve - tempted to gain knowledge to make her wise. Christ - to publicly display Himself.

**Conclusion:** *Christ had victory where Adam failed. Christ, the second Adam overcame where Adam and his descendents continually failed. He accomplished for Israel and the Adamic race what they could never do. He alone is Messiah he alone is God he alone is sinless he alone has power over Satan, and He alone is the one who causes us to be over-comers!*

*<sup>1</sup> John 2:16, For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

## **II. THE FULFILLMENT BY THE KING 4:12-25**

### ***A. Christ Began His Public Extended Ministry by Fulfilling the Scriptures – A Witness to the Coasts***

1. Messiah fulfilled what disobedient Israel failed to do; that was to be a witness to the nations. Messiah was the obedient servant spoken of in Isaiah 42:1-6. The gentile theme is sustained.

2. Jehovah had afflicted the lands of Zebulon and Naphtali due to their covenant disobedience. This resulted in their captivity and spiritual darkness. Jehovah foretold of another day when this region would see a great light. Matthew declared that Messiah at the beginning of his earthly ministry fulfilled this prophecy, and brought light to this region because he was that light. The Messiah inaugurated the restoration process as forecasted by Isaiah.

*"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law." Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.*

3. vs 17 The message was unique to its time – the kingdom of heaven was near

### **Kingdom of God & Kingdom of Heaven (Unique to Matthew's Gospel)**

**1. Overview:** The biblical terms *Kingdom of Heaven* and *Kingdom of God* appear to be general terms with specific expressions; this makes it difficult to put an exact or consistent definition on either of these terms. But if they are considered a theme with specific expressions, then one can clearly define the specific meanings without harm to Israel's future Davidic kingdom, or the mystery kingdom (church), or God's supreme rule and realm. The Gospels use these terms more than the Epistles. The *Kingdom of Heaven* is a phrase used only in the Gospel of Matthew, while the Kingdom of God is used throughout the New Testament. It is likely that both terms find a narrow meaning in the Gospels in light of the nearness of the Messiah and His coming earthly kingdom.

**2. Introduction of the Earthly Kingdom:** In the early use of these phrases in the Gospel of Matthew (3:1, 2; 4:17), it is apparent that the phrases are referring to the promised Messianic Kingdom which was prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures. There was a remnant of Israelites who were anticipating a millennial kingdom. John the Baptist announced the nearness of the kingdom because the Messiah was present (Matt 3:1-2)! He was the prophesied forerunner of Israel's king. Matthew chapter ten also describes the character of the *Gospel of the Kingdom*, which had different characteristics than *Paul's Gospel*. The Gospel of the Kingdom was only for the house of Israel. The message declared was that the kingdom of heaven was near, because the king was present. Kingdom authority was given to the disciples to heal, and work miracles, etc.; and there was severe judgment for unbelief because of the Messiah's nearness. (It must be considered that according to Revelation 20:7, 8, unbelievers will inhabit Messiah's earthly kingdom, even though they will not be part of Messiah's eternal kingdom).

**3. The Implications of the Rejection of Messiah:** After Matthew chapter twelve described the rejection of the Messiah; there was silence in regards to the nearness of the messianic kingdom in this Gospel. The kingdom program of Messiah had been set aside for the coming church, which appears to be a mystery kingdom revealed in the parables that followed in Matthew chapter 13. It would be a kingdom that would be at conflict with Satan, and a kingdom that anticipated her Lord's return in glory. It was a mystery kingdom unknown to the Old Testament saints. This mystery kingdom or church could only be entered in by a new birth by faith in Jesus (John 3:3).

**4. The Broadness and Expansion of the Kingdom:** As the Gospels declared a specific kingdom that was near, with its own character, the Book of Acts and the epistles revealed a wider or broader kingdom concept. The Kingdom of God was now preached to all peoples (Acts 20:20-25). It also was used in the broad sense as God's holy domain and kingdom which only those who are justified by God may enter in (1 Cor. 6:9, 10).

**Conclusion:** There is a physical sense of an earthly messianic kingdom in fulfillment of the covenant promises to Israel, and there is a spiritual sense in which one must be born again to enter in. All saints from all time will be brought together under the Messiah's Eternal Kingdom (Eph 2:11-22).

### ***B. Messiah Begins To Call His Disciples into His Public Ministry***

1. Calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John – Fishermen
2. Remember, the teacher picks his disciples – but who would pick fishermen from Galilee?

### ***C. Messiah Begins To Rid Himself of His Obscurity***

- ❖ *His following is from a very large region – view map*

## **III. THE EXPLANATION & INSTRUCTION OF THE KING CONCERNING THE LAW (SERMON ON THE MOUNT) 5:1-7:29**

**1. Background:** The timing could not have been any better; the teaching could not have been any more distinctive; the teacher could not have been any more commanding; and the people could not have been any more astonished! The Lord Jesus Christ far surpassed any of the Jewish Rabbis or Scribes when He correctly explained the Jewish Torah.<sup>30</sup> His teaching was so spiritual, so perfect, and so distinct from any other, that even the crowds themselves who had gathered

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<sup>30</sup> 'Torah' is commonly applied to the 'five books' of Moses'... [+/- 200 BC – BC 30] Torah became increasingly the sign and symbol of their [Jewish] faith. (D.S. Russel, *Between the Testaments*. Fortress Press; Philadelphia:1960, 42.)

around to hear Him were astounded. "...the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."<sup>31</sup> Edersheim accurately affirmed, "...scarcely any who lived in the time of Jesus said aught that can be compared with it."<sup>32</sup> Edersheim also affirmed that the Jewish teachings during this same time period had "wit and logic, quickness and readiness, earnestness and zeal, but by the side of it terrible profanity, uncleanness, superstition and folly. Taken as a whole, it is not only utterly unspiritual, but anti-spiritual."<sup>33</sup> He also claimed that the rabbinical teachings also reflected a narrow nationalism which became the bonding agent of the Jewish traditions. In reflection, it must be concluded that, Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" far surpassed all the teachings of the Law before Him. The Sermon was not carnal, but utterly spiritual, for the teacher was the author of the Torah, and the author of the Torah was the true interpreter of it!

b. What is the Sermon on the Mount all about? What was its purpose? Was it New Testament or Old Testament teaching, or both? Was it meant for the Jews, or for the gentiles, or both? Was it taught as a means of salvation, or a means to stay in right relationship to God? Was it meant as a social guide for that society, or governing rules for a future society, or both? Really, what was Jesus' objective in the Sermon on the Mount? What was Matthew's purpose in recording a more detailed manuscript of Jesus' teaching, more so than any of the other Gospel biographers? Let's examine these important questions concerning Jesus' Sermon on the Mount; a brief overview of the most popular interpretations of this text; and conclude with this teacher's interpretive view of the Sermon.

**2. Interpretive views:** In his well written commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, Blomberg delineates eight of the most common views pertaining to the purpose of the Sermon on the Mount. In general, concerning these various interpretations, each would agree with Walvoord, "That the Sermon on the Mount presents ethical content...."<sup>34</sup> But as to the purpose of the ethical content is where the differences occur. The following views are a summary from Blomberg's commentary:<sup>35</sup>

1. It is a higher ethical teaching for the clergy, which originated before or around medieval times.
2. Its function is that of the law (as in Pauline teaching), purported by Martin Luther.
3. It is to be taken literally and obeyed completely as instructed by Anabaptists.
4. The paradigm of the social gospel proposed by protestant liberals, which when obeyed would usher in the kingdom of God on earth.
5. The Sermon's ethics are not to be taken as absolute, but more of a guide to the consciousness of man's finitude alongside of divine encounter. This theory has been promoted by existentialists.
6. It was an interim ethic for those of Jesus' day who mistakenly believed that Christ would come back in their day. Albert Schweitzer devised this view.
7. It is future millennial kingdom teaching as taught by some dispensationalists.
8. It is Jesus' general teaching on the kingdom which has an already/net yet tension. The teaching is meant for all Christians in all ages, but not fully realized until Christ's return. Blomberg and other scholars hold to this view.

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew 7:28b, 29. All scripture taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

<sup>32</sup> Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus Messiah".

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Matthew Thy Kingdom Come* (Kregel Pub.: Grand Rapids, 1974) 44.

<sup>35</sup> Blomberg, "The New American Commentary" 94-95.

**3. This teacher's view:** This teacher's observation pertaining to the Sermon will first consist of a synopsis of the historical background leading up to the Sermon, and then conclude with his view of the Sermon itself.

b. According to Russell, somewhere between the fourth century and the Maccabean Revolt (167 B.C.) the transfer of emphasis from the temple to the Torah took place. He clarifies that, "The triumph of the Maccabean Revolt and the development of the Synagogue and the schools both in Jerusalem and in the Dispersion would further enhance the reputation of the Torah."<sup>36</sup> During this time, the temple priesthood fell into political trappings surrounding Jerusalem, and there also was political fighting within and without the Jewish community; which may have led to a growing disrespect for the priesthood and temple. This did not mean that the temple had no place within Judaism, for Antiochus Epiphanies IV's desecration of the temple proved otherwise. The point being, that the Torah became the greater identity of the Jewish people. It was the promises in the Torah which set them apart as God's special people. Russell claims that "The ritual of the Temple had been replaced by reverence for the Torah; the priest had given way to the Rabbi; the Temple was supplemented by the Synagogue. Judaism thereafter was to be essentially a religion of the book."<sup>37</sup> Recall, it was disobedience to the Torah that caused Israel to lose her sovereignty and temple centuries before. One can then understand why strict adherence to the Law and the traditions were engraved in the minds of the Pharisaical leadership. Which in turn were pressed upon the people.

c. Between the testaments there also grew a mass of interpretations of the Torah (Midrish, and Mishnah), which supposedly surrounded and protected the sacred text. These writings and oral teachings of these Jewish Fathers became known as "The tradition of the Elders." These traditions had the highest place of honor alongside the Torah. Both oral and written were considered more authoritative than the Prophets, and the writings. It was into this world that the Lord Jesus came; it was into this rabbinical teaching the Lord Jesus came into conflict with.

d. Jesus shocked Judaism! His teaching did not underscore the rabbinical oral traditions, He rather denounced it. He did not quote the Jewish Fathers to add authority to His teaching. "So we are not surprised to read at the end of the Sermon that it was the *authority* of Jesus which impressed the bystanders (7:28-29)."<sup>38</sup> Jesus' teaching far surpassed that of the Rabbis. His teaching was entirely spiritual. It lifted the humble and condemned the proud. It was unbiased, unhypocritical; full of grace and truth. Simply stated, Jesus was an anomaly, He shocked Judaism to its core! "Christ came to found a Kingdom, not a School; to institute a fellowship, not to propound a system."<sup>39</sup> With this in mind, it is this author's contention that Jesus Christ came to establish His kingdom, and not to set aside the Law and the Prophets in any manner, but to fulfill them, and bring about their intentioned purposes; and the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount being an integral part of His first coming, and filling up the meaning of all the Law!

e. With a rough historical background set, this student will explain his view of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Recall that by the time Messiah had come onto the scene, the Jewish teachers had thoroughly corrupted the Law. Their interpretations and additions had become the tradition and standard of their conduct. It was an extremely external code of conduct, and was totally unrelated to conditions of the heart (Pharisaical Judaism). When Christ confronted these false traditions and interpretations, the teachers claimed that He was against the Mosaic Law and the covenant established by their God. Christ, in His Sermon on the Mount, did not destroy the Law but appeared to properly interpret the intent of the Law and fulfill it. Consider the following points:

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<sup>36</sup> D.S. Russell, *Between the Testaments* (Fortress Press; Philadelphia:1960) 44.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 44.

<sup>38</sup> France "Matthew Evangelist and Teacher" 165.

<sup>39</sup> Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus Messiah."

***First, parallel and fulfillment:*** Messiah's life beautifully parallels that of His chosen people. Matthew clearly portrayed Jesus as the ultimate Israelite. He identified with Israel in birth (1:18-25), bondage and release from Egypt (2:13-15), sorrow and suffering in massacre (2:16-18), called in obscurity and lowliness (Nazarene, 2:23), baptism, as Israel with Moses (3:13-17), wilderness temptation (4:1-11), possibly the giving of the Law as did Moses (chapters 5-7), miracles in wilderness wanderings and throughout Israel's history (chapters 4, 8, 9, 14ff), sending of the 12 spies into promised land (chapter 10), offer of rest to his people as with the promised land (11:28, 29), rejection at Kadesh Barnea (Chapter 12), rejection of the present generation entering land of rest (12:39-42), the feeding of multitudes with as in the wilderness (14:13-21; 15:32-39), passing of blessing on to another generation (21:43), and experience of rejection as Israel experienced God's rejection (but Jesus suffered wrath not for His sin as Israel did, but for the sins of mankind, 27:27-56).

b. Messiah's life beautifully parallels that of His chosen people. But where Israel completely failed as God's chosen servant, the Messiah completely fulfilled as God's chosen servant. Guthrie astutely points out; "OT history vividly demonstrates the failure on the part of the Israelites to fulfil their part of the bargain. Jesus alone perfectly fulfilled man's side of the covenantal agreement and this supplies at once the justification for regarding the moral teaching of Jesus as the perfect interpretation of the real intention of the law."<sup>40</sup> Jesus taught the sermon and fulfilled its many aspects, and it strongly appears that He brought it to its real and final climax. Consider Fruchtenbaum, "Fulfillment here means to 'fill up the meaning of,' or to bring to its highest meaning. It is exemplified by Yeshua's teaching on the Law in Matthew 5-7, and the pattern of his life."<sup>41</sup> Blomberg states, "...Jesus views his role as that of fulfilling all of the Old Testament."<sup>42</sup> What is the point of stressing this parallelism and fulfillment? Is it possible that the Sermon was the parallel of Moses giving the Law to his people? Blomberg notes this parallel, "Jesus goes up to the mountainside just as Moses did at Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. Many have seen Matthew's portrait of Jesus, therefore, as the new Moses or new lawgiver."<sup>43</sup> Jesus was on a mountain as was Moses, the teaching and terms of both leaders were alike in nature (conditional). Could it be possible that the Messiah, the author of the Law, needed to clarify the true teaching of the Law? And as He perfectly taught the Law, He perfectly fulfilled the Law in every way. That is why He did not need to destroy the Law, but He brought it to its intended goal; in prophecy and obedience.

***Second, standard and agreement:*** Almost all biblical scholars agree that the Sermon sets a standard that is very high with practical ramifications. Walvoord correctly notes, "In the progress of this narrative [sermon], Jesus not only proclaimed lofty general principles, but also made particular application to current situations."<sup>44</sup> Jesus in His sermon immediately gets to the core issues; those are issues of the heart. "Jesus taught ...that the demands of the law were not only external conformity, but also internal conformity. While one does not violate the letter of the law until he commits an act of adultery, he does violate the righteousness of the law by lusting."<sup>45</sup> Walvoord quotes Pink as saying, "Its larger part was a most searching exposition of the spirituality of the Law and the refutation of the false teaching of the elders."<sup>46</sup> Jesus skillfully went beyond mere behavioral acts and raises a spiritual standard unattainable by flesh. "It is indeed true, that the Words of Jesus, properly understood, marks the utmost limit of all possible moral conception."<sup>47</sup> The NBD powerfully points out, "...the Sermon still demands a quality of

<sup>40</sup> Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Ill, 1981) 894.

<sup>41</sup> Arnold G Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Ariel Ministries: Tustin, CA, 1989) 898.

<sup>42</sup> Blomberg, "The New American Commentary," 103.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 96-97.

<sup>44</sup> Walvoord, "Matthew Thy Kingdom Come," 45-46.

<sup>45</sup> Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic," 705.

<sup>46</sup> Walvoord, "Matthew Thy Kingdom Come," 44.

<sup>47</sup> Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus Messiah."

ethical conduct which is breath-taking in its dimensions... It is neither an impractical ideal [?] nor a fully attainable possibility.”<sup>48</sup> Jesus’ teaching was certainly idealistic, and yet it did not conflict with the OT teaching of the Law, but personified it and amplified it.

b. Were the issues of the heart that Jesus emphasized foreign to Old Testament Law? McClain answers this question by quoting Naegelsbach; “...it is true that men knew even under the Old Covenant that the law, in order to be fulfilled...must be in the heart (Deut. 30:6; Ps. 40:8; Prov. 3:1).”<sup>49</sup> Were the conditional statements of the Old Covenant similar to the Sermon? “Accordingly, it certainly seems to correspond to the Divine Revelation in the ‘Ten Words’ from Mount Sinai.”<sup>50</sup> Edersheim saw a direct correlation between the teaching of both Moses and the Messiah. Blomberg quotes Lapidé on this point; “Jesus is not proclaiming a new law but announcing what he believes is the legitimate interpretation of God’s will as contained in the already-existing Torah.”<sup>51</sup>

c. Reflecting upon the standard of Messiah’s teaching and His agreement with the Old Testament, it would appear that the Messiah has recognizably interpreted the Law in its truest sense, resulting in a standard of righteousness that not even the Pharisees themselves could keep (5:20). And if that were not enough to make His point, Jesus declared an even higher standard; a standard of perfection; likeness to God (5:48).

***Lastly, recipients and conditions:*** Another interpretive issue would be; who are the recipients of the Sermon? France is convinced that it is very Jewish in nature due to the anti-Gentile remarks found within the sermon. “...the anti-Gentile stance of the sermon is concluded from the disparaging references to Gentiles in 5:47; 6:7; 6:32...”<sup>52</sup> France continues his argument by declaring the obvious. “To treat it as a universal code of ethics, however, not only fails to recognize the clear sense of separation between ‘you’ and ‘them’ which runs through its text, and the ‘family’ relationship with God which it presupposes in its audience...”<sup>53</sup> This author agrees with France’s observation pertaining to the Sermon’s audience. Jesus is teaching His Jewish disciples and His Jewish nation. This would correspond with the fact that the Old Covenant was given to Israel alone. This author’s impression is that the Sermon was meant for the Jewish people in light the presence of years of misguided rabbinical teaching.

b. The conditional aspects placed within the Sermon significantly reflect the conditional aspects of the Old Covenant; both the blessings and cursing. Blomberg articulates that the hermeneutical pattern of the Sermon reflects that of Sinai.<sup>54</sup> These conditional aspects of Jesus’ teaching would have brought about a real awareness of Israel’s national and personal failures, and a need for some thing far greater; perhaps a New Covenant?

***Conclusion:*** Considering these points, the question must be asked, “Who among the Jewish nation would have even come close to fulfilling the demands of the Sermon?” The most revered among the nation, the Pharisees themselves could not attain to this righteousness. If the Pharisees could not, where did that leave the rest of the Jewish nation? And why did Jesus mention the failure of Pharisaical righteousness (5:20)? “He mentions the scribes and the Pharisees precisely because they were a paradigm of the greatest righteousness imaginable within Judaism.”<sup>55</sup> And they all fell far short of God’s glory!

<sup>48</sup> New Bible Dictionary (Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Ill., 1962) Logos Electronic Library.

<sup>49</sup> Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (BMH Books: Winona Lake, IN, 1959), 159.

<sup>50</sup> Edersheim, “Life and Times of Jesus Messiah.”

<sup>51</sup> Blomberg, “The New American Commentary,” 97.

<sup>52</sup> France, “Matthew Evangelist and Teacher,” 163.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 164.

<sup>54</sup> Blomberg, “The New American Commentary,” 98.

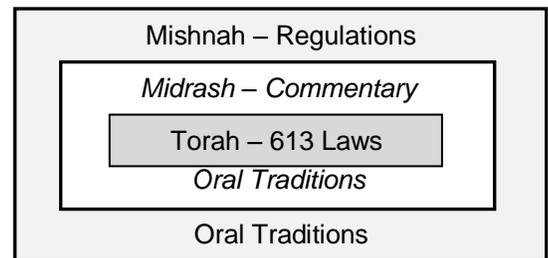
<sup>55</sup> Blomberg, “The New American Commentary,” 105.

b. Now to define this author’s interpretive view in a simple statement; Jesus Sermon on the Mount is Messiah’s interpretation of the Law in contrast to years of distorted rabbinical teaching. Jesus personified and personalized the Law. God really did desire a heart response from His chosen people. Yet there had been hundreds of years of failure under the conditional Mosaic Covenant. A covenant far surpassing the Old Covenant was needed. Calvary became the conversion from the Old to the New. A working covenant now exists for all born again believers, due to the promises found within the unconditional New Covenant. This teacher titles the Sermon as: **“Old/Mosaic Covenant Kingdom Teaching.”**

c. One final thought, “If the Sermon is completely relevant for today, why are there so many concepts that conflict with Pauline theology, which is New Covenant Theology?” A few examples: Forgiveness based on forgiving others vs. forgiveness by the blood of Christ (Matt. 6:14, 15 vs. Eph. 1:7; 4:32); do and be blessed vs. blessed therefore do (Matt. 5 vs. Eph 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:3); possibility of harsh judgment vs. no condemnation (Matt. 7:2 vs. Rom. 8:1; Col. 2:14). If one recognizes Calvary as the beginning of a New Covenant, one can understand how both the Sermon on the Mount and Pauline teaching correspond to one another. Their theologies by no means are at odds, their theology just happens to be on different sides of the Cross!

**Chapter 5. Old/Mosaic Covenant Kingdom Teaching**

***A. 1-12 The Beatitudes– Issues of the Heart***



1. The first section of the Sermon on the Mount is named the beatitudes. This is found in Matthew 5:3-12. The first section, verses 3-6, of the beatitudes deals with man’s relationship to God, since the heart has always been the issue with God. Christ clearly made it evident, the happy ones are those who recognize their spiritual need, seek God’s comfort, are not self promoting, and hunger for God’s true righteousness. This interpretation of the Law was completely contrary to that of the self righteous. To those who outwardly kept the Law, this was a sharp rebuke for their great lack of understanding concerning the issues of the heart.

2. The second section of beatitudes deals with man’s proper relationship to his fellow man. This again was a sharp rebuke to the letter of the Law followers. The happy ones are those who were pitiful to others, and those with pure motivation. They are peacemakers, not dividers.

3. Comfort and warning are given in the last part, verses 10-12. Carrying forth the proper intent of the Law and its connection with Messiah would bring persecution. Did it not happen to Messiah himself?

4. God throughout the ages has consistently desired for man to respond by faith in his promises, resulting in a love for him. The command to love the Lord and to love your neighbor can be found in the Mosaic Law. The Israelites clung to the cold letter and failed, therefore God promised a New Covenant that would change the heart, and bring true obedience. The beatitude truths will be fulfilled one day through a New Covenant, and God will do it, for the fruit of the Spirit surpasses the requirements of the Law.

## **B. 13-16 The Similitude's – Issues of World View**

1. Did God want Israel to be salt and light? It seems obvious that he did.
2. Did Israel fulfill her obligation to the nations? Consider Jonah's attitude toward gentiles.

## **C. 17-20 The Establishing of the Law**

Contrasting Jesus respect for the Old Testament: "The amillennial hermeneutic includes two chief principles: the primacy of the New Testament over the Old and the primacy of clear texts over symbolic."<sup>56</sup>

1. God's Righteousness does not equal, but exceeds the Pharisees – condemns the Pharisee  
*"He mentions the Pharisees and scribes because they were a paradigm of the greatest righteousness imaginable within Judaism."*<sup>57</sup>

### **Who Were the Pharisees?**

1. The Pharisees were very zealous, religious Jews who belonged to a closely connected religious society. They were extremely influential among their own people. They may not be respected by all Jews, but they did wield power among them, not only religiously, but politically. For the most part the Pharisees were fearless in their pursuit of personal self righteousness and fraternal duty.
2. The Pharisees began to rise up after the Babylonian captivity. It may have been in response to the Hellenizing that was taking place among their people. Their name defines who they became, separatists. They were proud with elitist attitudes, considering themselves true to God and the Law. They were the sticklers, holding to the letter of the Law, and their oral traditions. Yet, they saved much of Israel from becoming Greek.
3. Pharisees avoided all contact with those of a lesser station in life. They despised those they considered sinners such as harlots, tax collectors, fishermen, and such the like. They strictly avoided all who could possibly defile them by a simple touch.
4. Despite their arrogance, the Pharisees were popular among their people. Even though the average Jew was not as zealous as the Pharisee, they respected the Pharisee. The Pharisee had a tremendous influence among his people, similar to the Roman Catholic priest who wields a power over the laity, despite the laity's indifference to the written Word. The Pharisees helped shape the thinking of Jewish society. Scriptures clearly indicate the Pharisaical influence concerning Christ's rejection by the masses. "In his romanticized account, however, Josephus merely says the Pharisees live simply, avoid any pretense of luxury, and, because of the recognition of their strict observance of the religion, are 'extremely influential among the townfolk; and all prayers and sacred rites of divine worship are performed according to their exposition' (Jewish Antiquities 18:15)."<sup>58</sup>
5. Rabbinic Judaism, the standard form of the religion from antiquity to our own day – represented by Scripture as mediated by the Mishnah, Talmuds and midrish – drew upon the heritage of two distinct groups in Second temple times: Pharisees, a religious community, and scribes, a profession. The message of the one joined with the method of the other formed the

<sup>56</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *The Millennial Maze*; (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press, 1992), 153.

<sup>57</sup> Blomberg, "The New American Commentary" 105.

<sup>58</sup> Calvin J. Roetzel, *The World That Shaped the New Testament*, (John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1985) 27.

Judaic religious system represented by the rabbinic writings of the period after the destruction of Jerusalem...”<sup>59</sup>

### **Quotations from Alfred Edersheim Concerning Pharisees:<sup>60</sup>**

1. Courted or feared, shunned or flattered, reverently looked up to or laughed at, he was equally a power everywhere..., belonging to the most influential, the most zealous, and the most closely-connected religious fraternity, which in the pursuit of its objects... feared no danger, and shrunk from no consequences.
2. Avoidance of every touch of persons or things he considered unclean...
3. Whether sternly severe, blandly meek, or zealously earnest, he would carefully avoid all contact with one who was not of the fraternity, or even occupied an inferior degree in it...
4. [Their appearance] ...would gain for them the distinction of uppermost rooms at feasts, and chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi (my great one, my great one) in which their hearts so much delighted.

### **Israel’s View of Themselves:**

1. “Israel attains merit through Torah study, and thereby Israel is able to endure while the nations come to naught.”<sup>61</sup>
2. “Through doing religious duties Israel was redeemed, and preparation of the rite well in advance was the religious duty to which redemption for Israel would serve as reward.”<sup>62</sup>
3. “Israel gained great merit because it alone was willing to accept the Ten Commandments. The Israelites deserve praise for accepting the Torah.”<sup>63</sup>
4. “Israel will be saved through the merit of the ancestors, atonement, study of Torah, practice of religious duties...Among these [ancestors], Moses stands out; he has no equal. The special position of the humble Moses is complimented by the patriarchs and by David, all of whom knew how to please God and left an inheritance to Israel the merit they had thereby attained.”<sup>64</sup>
5. “Why does God so love Israel? It is because Israel accepted the Torah and carry out God’s will.”<sup>65</sup>

#### ***D. 21-26 The Procedure for Reconciliation***

#### ***E. 27-32 The Proper Understanding of Adultery and Divorce***

#### ***F. 33-48 The Proper Response to a Brother***

### **Chapter 6**

#### ***A. 1-18 Proper Worship - A Rebuke to the Showy, Loveless Pharisee***

#### ***B. 19-24 The Proper Focus of the Follower of God***

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<sup>59</sup> Neusner, “Judaism, *An Introduction*,” 63.

<sup>60</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish social Life*, (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Pub., 1994).

<sup>61</sup> Neusner, “Judaism and the Interpretation of Scripture; Introduction to Rabbinic Midrash,” 44.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 49.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 50.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 85, 86.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 99.

### **C. 25-34 The Trust of a Believer in the Faithful Heavenly Father**

1. There is a trap of falling into pagan thought, and gratifying the flesh, seeking things of the world, and being occupied with the temporal. The Jews had fallen into this trap continually throughout their history.
2. We are told to seek not only God's kingdom, but God's righteousness also. It is by His righteousness that we are saved. It is by His righteousness that we are sanctified. It is because of His imputed righteousness that we may dwell with him forever. This is God's mind, and God's way, this is that which is eternal. These Jews, needed to be persuaded of the eternal, and not merely the physical or temporal.

## **Chapter 7**

### **A. 1-14 Personal Judgment, Prayer, The Golden Rule, And The Two Ways**

“Among the Rabbinic sages, Aqiba is joined by Hillel, who framed matters in negative terms and in Aramaic, ‘What is hateful to yourself, do not do to your fellow. This is the entire Torah. All the rest is commentary. Now go, study! (b. Sabbat 30b).<sup>66</sup>

### **B. 15-21 The True & False Compared**

### **C. 24-29 The Two Foundations, And the Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount**

**Conclusion:** *By the time Messiah had come, the Jewish leaders had corrupted the Law by their oral traditions. Their customs had become the standard of conduct, but it was only an external code and unrelated to their hearts. This is called Pharisaical Judaism. When Christ confronted these false interpretations, the teachers claimed that He was against the Mosaic Law. Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, properly interpreted the intent of the Law. This proved He did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. It also revealed the evilness of the Pharisaical mindset concerning this external system of worship. The Law did not bring about humility in the Pharisee as it could have; it caused pride. Messiah corrected this false teaching with the Sermon on the Mount.*

**The primary purpose of this sermon was to show an individual of his inadequacy and failures to meet the standard set forth by God, and then drive him to this Messiah of whom Matthew wrote.**

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 62.

## SECTION III - THE AUTHORITY & QUALITY OF THE KING

### Chapters 8-10

#### **I. MIRACLES OF THE KING 8:1-9:38**

*“In Midr. on Eccl. i. 9 it is shown at great length that the Messiah would re-enact all the miracles of the past.” The Messiah would then be recognized by his great power and authority.*

#### **Chapter 8 – Beginning of Miracles**

##### ***A. 1-4 Authority over Defilement***

Laws concerning leprosy by Fruchtenbaum:<sup>67</sup> *No record in Jewish history of a Jewish healing*

1. It was a defiling and contagious disease – defiled anyone that came in contact
2. The mosaic priest could only pronounce leprosy on the person
3. When a leper approached, he announced “Unclean, unclean”
4. The leper was forbidden in the temple compound and its spiritual benefits
5. A leper would have to live in a different section of town
6. A Jew with leprosy was considered under divine discipline
7. After cleansing there was a seven day observation – then investigation of circumstances
8. On the 8<sup>th</sup> day, four offerings were made: trespass, sin, burnt, and meal

#### **Quotes from Alfred Edersheim on Leprosy:**<sup>68</sup>

A. It has already been stated, that Rabbinism confessed itself powerless in presence of this living death. Although, as Michaelis rightly suggests, [b Das Mos. Recht, vol. iv. p. 195.] the sacrificial ritual for the cleansed leper implies, at least, the possibility of a cure, it is in every instance traced to the direct agency of God... In truth, the possibility of any cure through human agency was never contemplated by the Jews... We may go further, and say that not only did Rabbinism never suggest the cure of a leper, but that its treatment of those sufferers presents the most marked contrast to that of the Saviour.

B. Once declared leprous, the sufferer was soon made to feel the utter heartlessness of Rabbinism. To banish him outside walled towns [c Kel. i. 7.] may have been a necessity, which, perhaps, required to be enforced by the threatened penalty of forty stripes save one.

C. We can now in some measure appreciate the contrast between Jesus and His contemporaries in His bearing towards the leper. Or, conversely, we can judge by the healing of this leper of the impression which the Saviour had made upon the people. He would have fled from a Rabbi; he came in lowliest attitude of entreaty to Jesus.

**Note:** *The Rabbis believed that only the God could heal leprosy, for God had given Israel the procedures for cleansing – When Christ sent the cleansed leper back to the priest it forced the leadership to take notice of this miracle, which had never been performed in Israel’s history.*

##### ***B. 5-17 Authority to Heal – Gentiles Would Also Benefit from This King***

1. vs. 10&11 Christ strongly rebukes the nation of Israel

<sup>67</sup> Compiled from lectures on Matthew by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Tyndale Theological Seminary.

<sup>68</sup> Edersheim, “Life and Times of Jesus Messiah.”

2. vs. 17 Notice again the fulfillment, Messiah identifies with the people

**Note:** The Lord Jesus identified with his people in their sickness, disease, and spiritual depravity. He restored what sin had taken away. He replaced darkness and fear with light and hope. Isaiah had prophesied of this servant who would accomplish this great task. Jesus was the fulfillment of these great promises. Edersheim eloquently stated, "By His Incarnation and Coming, by His taking our infirmities, and bearing our sicknesses, for this in the truest and widest sense is the meaning of the Incarnation of the Christ, He become the Healer, the Consoler of humanity, its Savior in all ills of time, and from all ills of eternity."<sup>69</sup> And Matthew identified him for us in his gospel.

***C. 18-21 Authority over Discipleship – No Guarantee of Comfort***

***D. 23-27 Authority over Nature – Wondering Who He Is***

***E. 28-34 Authority over the Spirit World – Fear In the Hearts of Man***

1. vs. 29 The demons recognize Christ as God, but not the people (27)

**Chapter 9 – Pharisees are beginning to come to some conclusions**

***F. 9:1-8 Authority to Forgive Sins – Only God Can Do This – Questioning Begins***

**Son of Man**

1. This term was the name which Jesus most often called Himself. The expression carries more than one meaning; the first relating to His identity as man and secondly the messianic concept relating to deity.

2. The term identifies Christ as a man, born of a woman. Hebrews chapter two makes it very clear that Jesus Christ, a son of man, fully identified with His people Israel. Yet it is much more than that. He is *the* son of man, there being only one son of man.

3. The O.T. books of Ezekiel and Daniel related this term to the Messiah. In Daniel chapter seven, it describes the son of man as having an everlasting dominion, kingdom and glory. It is clear that this term, son of man, is no doubt related to Christ's messianic claims, therefore it relates to His deity, as much as His humanity. Only those with ears to hear would truly understand this term when Christ used it to describe Himself.

*Daniel 7:13 & 14, "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.*

*Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

## **A Messianic Requirement**

“Thus the inward reasoning of the Scribes, [1 The expression, 'reasoning in their hearts,' corresponds exactly to the Rabbinic,' Ber. 22 a. The word is frequently used in contradistinction to speaking.] which was open and known to Him Who readeth all thoughts, [2 In Sanh. 93 b this reading of the thoughts is regarded as the fulfillment of Is. xi. 3, and as one of the marks of the Messiah, which Bar Kokhabh not possessing was killed.] issued in quite the opposite of what they could have expected. Most unwarranted, indeed, was the feeling of contempt which we trace in their unspoken words, whether we read them: 'Why doth this one thus speak blasphemies?' or, according to a more correct transcript of them: 'Why doth this one speak thus? He blasphemeth! Yet from their point of view they were right, for God alone can forgive sins; nor has that power ever been given or delegated to man. But was He a mere man, like even the most honoured of God's servants?’<sup>70</sup>

### ***G. 9 Authority to Call Whom He Desires – Even a Publican***

#### **Who Were The Publicans?**

1. The publican worked for Rome. The publican's job was to examine goods, and to collect a tax in relation to its value. The problem was that taxation rates were unclear. The average publican took what he could from the person, and the people no doubt hated giving up what was theirs. The publican paid a set amount to Rome, and kept the rest. This caused great hatred toward the publican. The people considered them thieves protected by the Roman government.
2. Some publicans were Jewish. They were bitterly hated among their people, for they were not only taking money from among their own, but they worked greedily for the hated Roman Government. The Rabbis made it clear that it went against the religious worship of the nation. The Jewish publican was excommunicated from Jewish society, and could only associate with those of lower-class society, namely, sinners and harlots. The Lord Jesus made publicans a focus of his ministry, for He knew that they needed salvation. Matthew, the writer of this book, was one of those despised publicans whom the Lord came to seek and to save.

### ***H. 10-17 Authority over Men & Tradition***

1. vs. 13 “Go and learn” – a rebuke to the know-it-all rabbinical teachers
2. vss. 16, 17 A new program replacing the old – may refer to the New Cov./dispensation

### ***J. 18-26 Authority over Death – Christ's Fame Spread – Leadership dismayed***

### ***K. 27-35 Authority over Blindness and Demonic Oppression***

1. vs. 33 A miracle of such magnitude was never accomplished in Israel by its leadership
2. vs. 34 The Jewish leadership begins to make false conclusions

### ***L. 36-38 Concludes revealing the true desire of this special king – His quality***

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

## II. THE SENDING FORTH & DISCIPLINE OF THE DISCIPLES 10:1-42

### **Question: Is the message of Chapter 10 for today?**

1. At first glance some would say yes. But a yes answer introduces a host of questions: when Jesus taught, who was the focus of His ministry? What was the time frame? Was the Old covenant still in effect? Why is there no mention of the cross of Calvary, of blood, of resurrection? And, would Calvary affect the message of this kingdom gospel?
2. A common mistake among Bible scholars is to overlook apparent biblical distinctions. An attempt is made to blend two different themes, concepts, or messages. An example of this is the message of John the Baptist. Was his message the same as today? Absolutely not! His purpose was to prepare Israel for their Messiah and administer the baptism of repentance. The Messiah was physically present on the earth so John declared "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matt 3:2). In other words, your Messiah is here Israel; awaken to your Messianic Kingdom! Is the Messiah physically present on earth today? No! That is why after the cross John the Baptists message is absent from the scriptures. To prove this point Acts 19:1-6 reveals a distinction between John's baptism and the believer's baptism. John's disciples were still living in the past not in the present administration. Why all the worry over distinctions? The answer is apparent.
3. John MacArthur (JM) claims in his book, "The Gospel According to Jesus," that Lewis Sperry Chafer was wrong in making the distinction between the Gospel of the Kingdom, and the Gospel of Grace. Referring back to prophecy, a literal interpreter realizes that Messiah has two tasks. "Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth'" (Isa 49:6). What were Messiah's two tasks? Restoring the nation of Israel, and being a light to the gentile nations.
4. JM does not recognize the differences between the messages for their times or he simply chooses to ignore them. He is suspiciously silent when it comes to Matt 10:1-8. These verses are also a contradiction to Matt 28:19, if there is no consideration of the time frames of these commands. The Gospel of Matthew, which is a very Jewish book, discloses that the kingdom message in chapter 10 was to be preached *only* to the Jewish nation at that time with the nearness of the Messianic King and Kingdom. The recipients were only Jewish. The message was only Jewish. The gifts of miracles given to the disciples were clearly Messianic.
5. A lack of distinction of the time frames stems from Covenant Theology. Shower's accurately makes this statement about Covenant Theology's lack of distinctions.

Covenant Theology denies the distinction between the gospel of the Kingdom and the gospel defined in I Corinthians 15:1-4... it teaches there is only one gospel throughout history... the gospel of the Kingdom ("Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Mt. 4:17, 23) said nothing about Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Christ commissioned the gospel of the kingdom to be preached exclusively to Israel."<sup>71</sup>
6. Matt 28:19 gives the saints of today the authority from the risen Christ to preach the resurrection to the entire world. The view that mixes these distinctive gospel messages lacks the emphasis placed on the cross of Calvary, as compared to the heavy emphasis placed upon man's list of responsibilities. Those who mix the messages have a very noticeable lack of emphasis on the theme of the New Covenant Gospel (1 Cor 11:23-28) which is very evident in the book of

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<sup>71</sup> Renald E. Showers, *Covenant Theology: What's in it for Israel?*, (Israel My Glory, January/February 2005) 12.

Acts. The theme being the resurrected victorious Christ! “Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom 4:25).

**This teacher’s view of Matt 10:** Messiah was still focused on the presentation of the “Kingdom at Hand.” He had established His teachings, His miracles, and His authority, now it was time to spread the news of the Messianic Davidic Kingdom, yet still under the Old Covenant. After His rejection, the time of silence would begin.

**Warning:** If you remain uninformed of the scriptural distinctions you may be preaching the wrong message for the wrong time. Those who would pervert the Gospel of Grace are to be Anathema! That is why we preach a bloody cross, and a resurrected Messiah!

**A. 1-23 The Witness To The Present King & Kingdom Under The Old Covenant**

**The Old Covenant Kingdom Gospel – a cross-less, blood-less message for Israel**

1. vss. 1-4 Who was commissioned?
2. vss. 5, 6 Who were to be the only recipients of the message?
3. vs. 7 Message was that the kingdom of heaven is near – Why this message?
4. vs. 8 Kingdom power was given to the disciples – Why were they given this power?
4. vs. 15 Why such severe judgment to the people of that day?
5. vs. 22 Whoever endures will be brought into what?

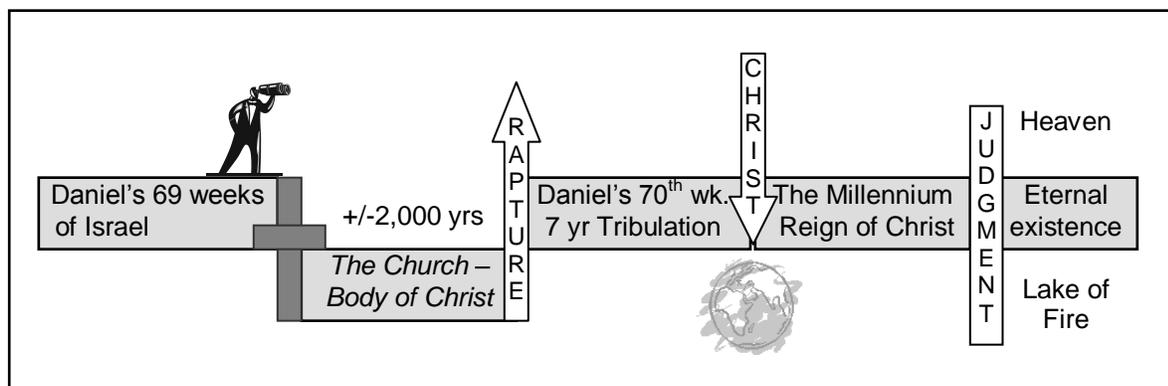
**Notice:** *There are some similarities of the gospel messages: E.g., The Gospel of the Kingdom, Paul’s Gospel, and the future Gospel, presented during the Tribulation. What are some of these similarities?*

**B. 24-42 The Compensation & Costs of Discipleship**

- Notice:
1. vs. 25 is the first mention of Beelzebub – Jesus knows the leadership’s hearts
  2. vss. 32-42 The heavy emphasis placed upon the disciples that is very Old Covenant
  3. vs. 38 is the first mention of the cross, but not Christ’s Cross, the individuals cross

Is Jesus setting a standard with the cross concept that only He can fulfill? By the end of this narrative, Matthew will convince us that all have failed to bear their cross other than the One and Only Jesus Christ. By the way, New Covenant teachings never tell us to take up our cross, but to reckon that we are completely identified with the Messiah’s cross! Think on that!  
Gal 2:20.

**A Simple Prophetic Timeline**



## SECTION IV - THE REJECTION OF THE KING & ITS RESULTS

### Chapters 11-13

#### **I. THE UNCERTAINTY OF JOHN 11:1-19**

***A. 1-6 John Begins To Doubt That Jesus Christ Is the Messiah***

***B. 7-15 Jesus Describes the Character of John the Baptizer***

#### **II. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN OF THAT GENERATION 11:20-12-45**

##### **Chapter 11**

***A. Vss. 16-30 Messiah's Declaration of Judgment and Appeal to All***

##### **1. Judgment Pronounced Upon Chorazin And Bethsaida**

1. Chorazin, according to Eusebius, was located two miles north of Capernaum, while Bethsaida of Galilee was located two and one half miles east of Capernaum. This associated them with the Capernaum area and the many miracles accomplished by Messiah there. They had obviously been exposed to a tremendous amount of Christ's miracles, but did not respond by faith. To whom much is given, much is required. The Messiah mentions these two cities because of their unbelief.

2. When the Lord Jesus departed from Nazareth, he made his abode at Capernaum. This town, according to Josephus, was an insignificant town of his day, yet the Lord Jesus made it His chief center of activity during a large part of His public ministry. It was here that a number of disciples were called, the centurion's son was healed, the nobleman's son was healed, Peter's mother-in-law was healed, and unclean spirits were cast out. The fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4 was fulfilled one evening as the crowds gathered around and all manner of sicknesses were healed. Not only were many miracles accomplished, Christ did much teaching, such as His discord on the bread of life.

3. News of these wonderful happenings must have traveled quickly to nearby towns. The inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida could not have resisted the idea of witnessing this unique man, and may have traveled the one hour to visit Capernaum. Messiah may have visited these neighboring cities on occasion as well, because of their proximity.

4. There can be no doubt left in one's mind that this entire geographical region was offered the Messiah, by signs, wonders, miracles, and by the words of Messiah Himself. The Messianic scriptures were fulfilled right before their very own eyes! The principle of, *to whom much is given much is required* is clearly delineated by Christ as he spoke of the woes concerning these cities surrounding Capernaum. The woes that the Messiah pronounced upon these cities came true. Ruins are all that is left of these cities where the Messiah had once offered Himself. Sadly, the people did not respond in faith.

2. vss. 28-30 Christ appeals to his people – exchange the yoke of bondage for Christ

*John 1:17, For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

*Acts 15:10, "Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"*

*Galatians 5:1, Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

## ***B. 12:1-13 The Lord of the Sabbath – His Teachings Concerning the Sabbath***

### **Jewish Oral Law – don't walk on the grass on the Sabbath day:<sup>72</sup>**

1. You may step on wheat unknowingly, cause it to separate. That would be reaping.
2. Your foot might grind the wheat, which would be the threshing of wheat.
3. Wind from your garment may cause a wind, therefore winnowing the wheat.
4. A bird could then eat the exposed seed, which is considered storing the wheat.

### **Pharisees claim Christ broke 4 of the 1500 laws concerning the Sabbath:<sup>73</sup>**

1. Guilty of reaping on the Sabbath day.
2. Guilty of threshing by rubbing it in their hands.
3. Guilty of winnowing by blowing the chaff away.
4. Guilty of storing it when they swallowed it.

## ***C. 14-23 Jesus Continues His Work - Matthew Begins To Emphasize Gentile***

### ***Ministry - Pharisees Make Decision***

#### **The Final Straw**

"The Synagogues of Galilee are no longer the quite scenes of His teaching and miracles; His Word and deeds no longer pass unchallenged. It had never occurred to these Galileans, as they implicitly surrendered themselves to the power of His words, to question their orthodoxy. But now, immediately after this occurrence, we find Him accused of blasphemy...They had not thought it breach of God's Law when, on that Sabbath, He had healed in the Synagogue of Capernaum and in the home of Peter; but after this it became sinful to extend like mercy on the Sabbath to him whose hand was withered... All these new incidents are due to one and the same cause; the presence and hostile watchfulness of the Scribes and Pharisees, who now for the first time appear on the scene of His ministry. It is too much then to infer, that, immediately after that Feast at Jerusalem, the Jewish authorities sent their familiars into Galilee after Jesus, and that it was to the presence and influence of this informal deputation that the opposition to Christ, which now increasingly appeared, was due?"<sup>74</sup>

1. Once the Jewish leadership made the decision to kill Messiah, the focus of Messiah turned towards gentiles
2. Son of David implies rule and kingship – the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant

<sup>72</sup> Compiled from lectures on Matthew by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Tyndale Theological Seminary.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus Messiah."

### ***D. 24-32 Jewish Leadership Commits the Unpardonable Sin***

1. The ultimate national sin is committed – like at Kadesh Barnea; there is no turning back
2. The leadership didn't deny Christ's miracles, they attributed them to demonic forces

### ***E. 33-45 The Judgments Pronounced by the King on This Wicked Generation***

**Conclusion:** Matthew chapter 12 revealed the hearts of Israel's leadership. The ultimate rejection materialized. The Jewish leadership had blasphemed the Holy Spirit. In this context Matthew emphasized the Gentile aspect of Messiah's ministries. Since Messiah was not able to restore Israel at that time due to her unbelief, it appeared that the focus of Jesus' ministry began to focus on the nations. McClain stated that, "Although the announcement of the coming Kingdom was initially restricted to the nation of Israel (Matt. 10:5-6), the preaching of the kingdom made clear that the gentiles would share in its benefits."<sup>75</sup> That may be why Matthew in his gospel introduced these prophetic terms regarding Messiah's ministry to the Gentiles at this point.

### **The Two-Fold Purpose Of Messiah Isaiah 49:6**

"Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

## **III. THE UNVEILING OF THE MYSTERY 12:46- 13:58 – THE PARABLES** ***SPOKEN THE SAME DAY***

❖ ***REFER BACK TO CHIASTIC OUTLINE – PAGE 6***

### **What's Going On In Chapter 13?**

1. The parabolic teaching which Messiah began to use in Mathew 13, which had been predicted in Old Testament Scripture, had a twofold purpose. Number one, it kept the truth hidden from the deaf ears of the ones who were rejecting him. Secondly, it was a way in which he could reveal truth to the disciples, and those who had ears to hear. The Matthew 13 parables are related to the future in relation to Israel's rejection of their Messiah.
2. Isaiah revealed that Messiah would bring justice to the nations and be a light to the gentiles. This truth had only been in seed form in the Scriptures, and was not realized in full by the Jews at the time of Christ. The parables in chapter 13 seem to set forth principles of the expansion of the truth of the time period of the establishment of the church period, and into the tribulation as well.
3. The preaching of the nearness of the kingdom was no longer being preached. The kingdom program had been set aside for the coming parenthetical period of the church. Chapter 13 shows the shift towards this proclamation of truth, and the false system that would parallel it until the second coming of Christ.

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<sup>75</sup> McClain, "The Greatness of the Kingdom," 295.

### **A. 13:1-23 The Sower & Seed – The Dullness of the Jewish Leadership**

1. The same day - Parable stated
2. Purpose and fulfillment of the parables
3. Private explanation of the parables

### **B. 24-30 The Wheat and Tares**

1. The wheat and tares appear to reveal a false religious system being planted alongside that of a true system. The good seed (the wheat) had been planted by the farmer, and while he slept, another came and planted a false seed (the tares). This allowed for two very different, but similar looking plants to grow side by side, until the reapers would come and harvest the fruit, separating the wheat from the tares.
2. The good seed speaks of the truth, or the gospel of grace being planted among the world. Satan and his workers have come alongside and have planted similar looking, but very different false messages. The good seed produces good fruit, the second produces fruit as well, but a false fruit, deceptive, because it is hard to distinguish the difference. Only the reapers will be the final judge.
3. This planting process characterized the new coming mystery kingdom of the church. This would be a continual process or development until the time that the reapers come and separate the true saint from the mere professor, or denier of truth.

### **C. 31, 32 The Mustard Seed**

1. This parable may be a bit harder to understand. Toussaint described this parable scene as preceding the earthly kingdom of Messiah, or a pre kingdom revival of truth. Fruchtenbaum described this parable as truth concerning the mystery kingdom age, or the Church age. In either case, the growth of this small seed of truth will flourish, and will become of a phenomenal size. It will expand and become a haven for many. It is also unclear what the birds represent. Toussaint stated that they are heirs of the kingdom; Fruchtenbaum stated that they are the false deceivers that have engrafted themselves into Christianity.
2. In either case, both principles are true. This teacher leans towards Fruchtenbaum's interpretation, because Christianity has grown to a phenomenal size through the years. Secondly, Christianity has become a haven for many cults.

### **D. 33-35 The Leaven**

The parable of the leaven is similar in nature to the previous and reflects the growth that will take place in the yet future church.

### **E. 36-43 The Wheat & Tares Explained**

1. vs. 39 Since Satan is roaming loose this cannot be referring to the Messianic Kingdom

### **F. 44-52 The Hidden Treasure, Pearl of Great Price, Dragnet and Householder**

## **The Hidden Treasure**

1. The hidden treasure may be a reference to the nation of Israel, for Israel had been referred to in the Old Testament many times as a special treasure to Jehovah.
2. The buyer then of this field must be Jesus Christ who purchased this field with His own blood. The hidden treasure must be the remnant of Israel who would be saved during this new program that Messiah was introducing. This interpretation of the parable would fit well with what the Apostle Paul declared in Romans chapter 11.
3. Some have interpreted this parable as Christ as the treasure, and man being the purchaser of the field. This does not fit scripturally, for all seek their own, and it is Christ who seeks Israel, and who purchased their salvation.
4. Toussaint's interpretation of this parable is valid; for Israel has been set aside as a nation for this new mystery period. It was also necessary for them to be purchased through the blood of Christ.<sup>76</sup>

***Or simply:*** The treasure is God's kingdom, and the parable reflects its value and worth!

## **The Pearl of Great Price**

1. If the treasure referred to Israel, possibly the pearl refers to the gentiles. The word pearl is not an Old Testament term used for Israel; therefore it may be an introduction to the gentile aspect of the new kingdom. The pearl, a product of the sea, would be a fitting description of the gentile saints taken from among the coastlands.
2. Toussaint's interpretation of this parable is also consistent with the previous parable. According to Toussaint, Israel is hidden for a time; therefore the pearl represents the whole of Christendom.
3. In either one of these interpretations, Christ must be the One who gave up all for us. Philippians chapter two clearly demonstrates this truth. As stated previously, man is completely helpless, and unable to move forward one inch towards God. Christ is the initiator and finisher of our salvation. It is man who is precious in His sight, because the natural man cannot comprehend this awesome God.

### ***G. 53-58 Messiah's Last Visit to Nazareth***

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<sup>76</sup> Toussaint, "Behold the King," 183, 184.

## SECTION V - THE NEW COURSE OF THE KING

### Chapters 14-16

#### **I. PERSONAL INSTRUCTION & WARNINGS OF THE KING 14:1-15:39**

##### ***Chapter 14 – Other Miracles***

###### ***A. 1-13 The Rejection of Messiah’s Forerunner – Prelude to Messiah’s Death***

1. Jesus had sorrow for John; His fate was set, yet He stayed focused

###### ***B. 14-21 The Feeding of the 5,000 – Disciples Learning the Nature of Ministry***

1. Responsible to feed the people
2. Responsible to rely on the Father to provide the needs
3. Responsible to learn to distribute what the Lord provides for them

###### ***C. 22-36 The Messiah Walking on the Water – Learning Faith***

##### ***Chapter 15-16:12***

###### ***A. 1-9 The Messiah Challenges the Commandments and Tradition of Men***

**Consider:** In a confrontational dialogue with the Pharisees, Jesus cited Isaiah to convince them of this point; Jehovah had previously confirmed the hypocrisy of the Jewish teachers’ hearts and message prevalent in Isaiah’s day. Just like the old generation, the new generation gave lip service to God, and derived their teaching from man’s wisdom and authority. Both generations worshipped God in vain, for their belief system was based upon the commandments of men. Fruchtenbaum and Edersheim compiled these quotes from the Rabbinical writings concerning the authority of the teaching of the Rabbis.

##### **Jewish Oral Law (Mishnah) – Its Authority Over The Nation**<sup>77</sup>

1. It is more punishable to act against the scribes than the scriptures.
2. He who does not hear his rabbi the shekinah could depart from Israel.
3. My son give heed to the rabbis more than the Mosaic law.
4. He who speaks against the rabbis speaks against shekinah and God.
5. The study of scripture is neither good nor bad; the study of the Mishnah is a good habit and brings reward.

##### **Edersheim:**<sup>78</sup>

6. 'He who blows his nose in the presence of his Rabbi is worthy of death' (Erub, 99 a, line 11 from bottom).
7. 'The sayings of the elders have more weight than those of the prophets' (Jer. Ber. i. 7); 'an offence against the sayings of the Scribes is worse than one against those of Scripture' (Sanh. xi. 3).

<sup>77</sup> Compiled from lectures on Matthew by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Tyndale Theological Seminary.

<sup>78</sup> Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus Messiah."

8. He who says, No phylacteries, so as to transgress the words of Scripture, is not guilty (free); five compartments, to add to the words of the Scribes, he is guilty.' [b Sanh. xi. 3.]

9. In the same connection it is added, that the study of the Mishnah is more important than that of the Bible, that of the Talmud being considered the most meritorious of all, as enabling one to understand all questions of right and wrong.

### ***B. 10-20 The Foolishness and Hypocrisy of Religious Works***

#### **History Of Hand Washing:<sup>79</sup>**

**Quote.** “But the earliest trace of this custom occurs in a portion of the Sibylline Books, which dates from about 160 B.C., [d Or. Sib. iii. 591-593.] where we find an allusion to the practice of continually washing the hands, in connection with prayer and thanksgiving.... [It was reserved for Hillel and Shammai, the two great rival teachers and heroes of Jewish traditionalism, immediately before Christ, to fix the Rabbinic ordinance about the washing of hands (Netilath Yadayim), as previously described. This was one of the few points on which they were agreed, [e Shabb. 14 b, about the middle.] and hence emphatically 'a tradition of the Elders,' since these two teachers bear, in Rabbinic writings, each the designation of 'the Elder.' Then followed a period of developing traditionalism, and hatred of all that was Gentile.”

#### **Jewish Oral Law (Mishnah) - Laws Concerning Washing of Hands<sup>80</sup>**

1. It is better to walk four miles for water than to incur guilt by eating without washed hands.
2. He who neglects hand washing is the same as a murderer.
3. He who neglects hand washing is as the one who goes to a prostitute.
4. Three sins bring poverty after them, one being neglecting of hand washing.
5. Similarly, the putting on of phylacteries, and the washing of hands, are also described as taking upon oneself the yoke of the Kingdom of God.<sup>81</sup>

**Quote.** “The attitude of antagonism to traditionalism was never more pronounced than in what He said in reply to the charge of neglect of the ordinance about 'the washing of hands.' Here it must be remembered, that it was an admitted Rabbinic principle that, while the ordinances of Scripture required no confirmation, those of the Scribes needed such, [a Jer. Taan. 66 a, about the middle.] and that no Halakhah (traditional law) might contradict Scripture. [1 It was, however, admitted that the Halakhah sometimes went beyond the Pentateuch (Sot. 16 a).] When Christ, therefore, next proceeded to show, that in a very important point, nay, in 'many such like things', the Halakhah was utterly incompatible with Scripture, that, indeed, they made 'void the Word of God' by their traditions which they had received, [b St. Matt. xv. 3, 6; St. Mark vii. 9. 13.] He dealt the heaviest blow to traditionalism. Rabbinism stood self-condemned; on its own showing, it was to be rejected as incompatible with the Word of God.”<sup>82</sup>

### ***C. 21-28 The Mercy & Illustration of Faith and Messiah's Policies***

1. vs. 21 Messiah moves into gentile territory – should it surprise the reader?
2. vs. 22 A gentile woman truly recognizes Christ – another rebuke to the Jewish people

<sup>79</sup> Edersheim, “Life and Times of Jesus Messiah.”

<sup>80</sup> Compiled from lectures on Matthew by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Tyndale Theological Seminary.

<sup>81</sup> Edersheim, “Life and Times of Jesus Messiah.”

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

3. Story also teaches that Israel retains their portion – gentiles get the unwanted crumbs

**Quote.** “She who now sought His help was, as St. Matthew calls her, from the Jewish standpoint, 'a Canaanitish [c Ezra ix. 1.] woman,' by which term a Jew would designate a native of Phoenicia, or, as St. Mark calls her, a Syro-Phoenician (to distinguish her country from Lybo-Phoenicia), and 'a Greek', that is, a heathen. But, we can understand how she who, as Bengel says, made the misery of her little child her own, would, on hearing of the Christ and His mighty deed, seek His help with the most intense earnestness, and that, in so doing, she would approach Him with lowliest reverence, falling at His Feet. [a St. Mark vii. 25.] But what in the circumstances seems so peculiar, and, in our view, furnishes the explanation of the Lord's bearing towards this woman, is her mode of addressing Him: 'O Lord, Thou Son of David!' This was the most distinctively Jewish appellation [designation] of the Messiah; and yet it is emphatically stated of her, that she was a heathen.”<sup>83</sup>

### ***D. 29-39 The Continued Ministry of Messiah's Provision for Physical Need***

### ***E. 16:1-12 The Messiah's Rebuke of & Warning Concerning the Leaders***

#### **Who Were The Sadducees?**

1. The Sadducees may have arisen in reaction to the Pharisees. They were not as popular among the people as the Pharisees. The Sadducees and Pharisees differed in a number of aspects. While the Pharisees added to the Law with their writings, interpretations, and traditions of the fathers, the Sadducees held to the bare letter of the Law. They rejected all the extras attached to the Law. This kept them to a more literal interpretation and judgment, resulting in a stricter application than the others who added the Rabbinical writings into their decisions.
2. The Sadducees also differed in the area of the resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe that a resurrection could be proved from the Torah, or the Law.
3. The Pharisees had a greater influence over the Sadducees, than the Sadducees had over the Pharisees.

## **II. THE RECOGNITION & LEADERSHIP OF PETER 16:13-20**

### ***A. 13-16 Peter's Correct Understanding of Messiah***

### ***B. 17-19 Peter's Coming Responsibility & Introduction of the Coming Church***

1. After the Lord Jesus had been shunned by the Israelite leadership, he began to withdraw from them. When he went to the predominately gentile area of Caesarea Philippi, he asked the disciples a question concerning the thoughts of men towards the Son of Man; “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” It was obvious from the disciples' answers that the people were confused as to his person. Christ's power made him different, yet they did not comprehend his person. They did not recognize him as the Messiah, the Son of David.
2. Christ continued asking the same question of the disciples. The ever eager Peter quickly answered the question beautifully. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah whom the Scriptures had foretold as the hope of Israel's redemption. Messiah yearned for the whole nation of Israel to recognize this, only a few realized

<sup>83</sup> Edersheim, “Life and Times of Jesus Messiah.”

this glorious truth. Peter far surpassed the crowds who simply declared Jesus to be the son of Joseph, by declaring Christ as the Son of the Living God. Peter's words declared Christ equal with the Father, for the Jew considered the son equal with the father. Peter believed that Christ would reign on the earth as the Scriptures had promised.

3. The Lord Jesus commended Peter for His proper response with the words, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The Lord's commendation is not due to Peter's own ingenuity, but due to the grace of God on Peter's behalf. God blessed Peter by revealing this most glorious truth concerning His only begotten Son. This is always the case concerning the truth, for flesh and blood, (that which is natural) is not inclined to understanding the supernatural truths of the spiritual realm.

4. Christ explained to Peter the new concept or mystery program which He had been speaking of in the previous chapters. "That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The Greek states that the word for Peter (pebble, stone), and the word for rock (large rock, ledge) are two different words, describing two different persons. In other words Christ said, "You are a stone, and upon this large stone, meaning myself, I will build my church". In 1Peter, Peter made it clear that Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone, upon which the spiritual house is built. Peter never alluded to the idea that he himself was the foundation of the church as the Roman Catholic Church would claim.

5. Messiah continued by emphatically stating that he would build his church. This is the first mention of an assembly of called out ones. By Christ's words, He made it obvious that it was yet future; something new that had not been instituted at this time.

6. Messiah promised that the gates of hell or death would not prevail against the church. Satan and his angels would do all they could do to destroy the person and work of Christ. Peter did not know it yet, but the resurrection would be where Christ would claim and pronounce victory over death, and the powers of darkness. Messiah loosed the chains of death by His resurrection. Peter would come to understand this more fully in the months ahead. In Christ's explanation of the future building program, it was clear that Peter would have a tremendous part. Christ was planting the seed of victorious truth which Peter would eventually preach to the people.

7. The promise concerning the keys may fit with Peter's leading role in the early church. It was Peter who led and taught the group; it was Peter who preached the resurrection to the thousands; it was Peter who first preached to the gentiles, it was Peter who first taught the truth of whosoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. It was Peter who the early church looked to for guidance. The door to this mystery kingdom was opened by Peter, and later more fully revealed to Paul. Fruchtenbaum questioned, "Is it merely coincidence that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was first opened by Peter?"<sup>84</sup> The Jews in Acts 2, the Samaritans in Acts 8, and the gentiles in Acts 10, all seemed to have received the Holy Spirit by the authority of Peter.

### ***C. 20 Messiah Establishes the Policy of Silence***

Christ told the "disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." The Messiah had been rejected. His course for the cross was set.

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<sup>84</sup> Compiled from lectures on Matthew by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Tyndale Theological Seminary.

### **III. THE KING INTRODUCES HIS COMING DEATH 16:21-28**

#### ***A. Vs. 21 Christ Introduces Calvary and His Suffering***

1. He must go to Jerusalem
2. He must suffer physically (Psa. 22, Isa. 53)
3. He will be killed
4. He will arise from the dead

#### ***B. 22 Peter Strongly Rebukes the Savior***

#### ***C. 23 Christ Strongly Rebukes Peter – Calvary Is Victory***

#### ***D. 24-27 The Cost & Reward of Discipleship Explained***

#### ***E. 28 The Promise of An Upcoming Glimpse Into The Future***

***Conclusion:*** Messiah is now in His last year of ministry. The leadership of Israel had made its choice. There was no turning back. Messiah began to further teach about a new period of time coming and Peter's role in it. The church was not to replace Israel's kingdom, but would postpone it. For there to be a restitution of all things, Messiah would have to go to the cross and secure the victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Messiah's face was now set to carry out that task.

## SECTION VI - THE REAFFIRMATION OF THE KING

### Chapters 17-20

#### **Question: Is The Millennial Kingdom Yet Coming?**

**1. Warning: Amillennialism.** A system of biblical interpretation that according to Archibald Hughes (quote taken from Stanley Grenz)<sup>85</sup> holds that, “the New Testament is the foremost and final authority in any enquiry, and it is also the interpreter of the Old Testament.” Grenz goes on to say, “The chief implication of this principle is the ‘spiritualizing’ [allegory] of many Old Testament prophecies, for such an appeal is in keeping with the New Testament usage of the Old.”

**2. What does this lead to?** “The priority of the New Testament is crucial in the amillennial system. The employment of this principle results in the elimination of the necessity of a millennium.”<sup>86</sup> Based on this principle, Grenz also states, “Amillennialists conclude that promises originally given to Israel are fulfilled in the church. As a result of their attempt to apply this principle consistently, amillennialists, in contrast to premillennialists, traditionally are unsympathetic to expectations of a widespread eschatological conversion of Israel.”<sup>87</sup> Grenz concludes, “Amillennialism is an eschatological orientation that awaits no future earthly millennium.”<sup>88</sup> The church age fulfills the concept of the kingdom.

**3. Where did Amillennialism come from?** “After Augustine, Amillennialism came to predominate, so much so that it is the only eschatology that is either expressed or implied in the historic creeds of the Christian tradition.”<sup>89</sup> From that day forward, the Reformed Church has followed the supposed “safer” amillennial view, which has always embraced an allegorical interpretive view rather than a historical literal view of Scripture.

**4a. Beginnings of the Allegorical Method:** Before Augustine there was a literal interpretive view concerning the Scriptures. The allegorical view is at least as old as Plato who semi-introduced, and clearly defined a western dualism that became closely associated with allegory. Allegory became a common philosophical method among the Greek thinking culture, even to the point that some Jewish scholars embraced it. Philo the Jew is commonly recognized as one who developed an elaborate commentary of the Torah, based on allegory; for he loved both Plato and Moses.

**4b. E.g., Pseudo epistles:** *The Epistle of Barnabas*, written somewhere around the turn of the first century AD is a perfect example of a pseudo epistle filled with *allegorical interpretation* and *replacement theology*. This epistle was rejected as Scripture, even though both Clement of Alexandria and Origen considered it important and inspired. It appears that a literal view of Scripture, and a literal prophetic fulfillment of it, had lost its importance through allegorical views.

**5a. The defense of the faith during the so-called Patristic Period:** The foremost arguments of the early Patristic period apologists were identical to those of the apostles; the verification of scriptural truth based on the miracles of Christ and the literal fulfillment of prophecy in relation to Jesus Christ; this form of argument is clearly identified in the writings of Justin Martyr (c. 100-165). It was during this time that Christianity had to defend itself against Gnosticism, which is clearly identified and challenged in the writings of Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130-200). In time, the mid to latter Patristic period defenders of the faith shifted the focus from

<sup>85</sup> Grenz, “The Millennial Maze,” 153.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 155.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 149.

the empirical more towards the ontological, which is clearly identified in the writings of Augustine (c. 354-430).

**5b.** But as theology progressed, so did the influence of Greek thought in its relationship to the scripture. Both Clement of Alexandria and Origen sought to develop this relationship. But, it was Augustine, a converted Neo-Platonist who highly respected Plato, which would shift the focus from empirical evidence to rational evidence; that which can be understood through the rationale of the mind. The physical literal became less important.

**6a. Augustine:** From what is known of Augustine of Hippo, he was a Neo-Platonic Christian. His writings reveal somewhat of an understanding of the grace of God relating to the lost sinner, but it also appears quite obvious that he was still under influence of Neo-Platonic ideas. His great respect for Plato also bears witness to this; for he believed that Platonism was the nearest ideology to that of Biblical Christianity. Augustine even believed that Plato in some sense was a Christian.

**6b.** Not only did Augustine have a love Plato, but the day in which he lived Neo-Platonism had taken on a very popular role in the philosophical realm. So as a Christian, Augustine focused on the rational role as did the Neo-Platonist of his day. It was in this frame of mind that he set out to prove the existence of the one true God through rational apologetics.

**6c.** From his Christian perspective, Augustine argued as did Plato, that conclusions about God and the unseen realm could be derived from the human intellect. He borrowed Plato's concept of imagination and idealism; e.g., that the mind can imagine perfection or God, therefore the perfect, or God, must exist outside of the realm of the empirical. It was from Plato's theory of Forms or ideas from which Augustine developed his own theories and in a sense was Neo-Platonic ideas placed within a Christian framework.

**6d.** The very strength of his apologies was also the weakness of his apologies; it was the Platonic and Neo-Platonic slant that is noticeably apparent throughout his writings. Because he had taken such an idealistic/Platonic form of argument he left himself open to the same weaknesses that Platonism had; for Platonism had been scrutinized for years and found lacking. Without getting into details, Augustine's main problem stemmed from his love of Platonism, and the doubt that Plato had concerning the physical. It was Plato's main concepts which caused Augustine to be skewed or one-sided in his approach to a literal view. His teachings were ontologically strong (in a philosophical sense) and empirically weak. The church to follow established his views, and philosophical, intellectual methods, which have affected the church to this day.

**6e.** In the years that have followed Augustine, he has been a matter of much debate. Some in the church have raised him up as a standard, some have outright refused to believe that he could even be a born again Christian. For some the debate is still open.

## **I. THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE KING 17:1-13**

"...amillennialists conclude that promises originally given to Israel are fulfilled in the church. As a result of their attempt to apply this principle consistently, amillennialists in contrast to premillennialists, traditionally are unsympathetic to expectations of a widespread eschatological conversion of Israel."<sup>90</sup>

### ***A. Peter Has a Right Heart, but He Does Not Understand the Kingdom Has Been Delayed***

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<sup>90</sup> Grentz, "The Millennial Maze," 155.

**B. There Are Two Comings Now In View; Lamb & Lion – Peter is Mistaken**

**C. This Is Not the Time for the Feast of Tabernacles – It Is the Passover**

*Lev 23:40-42, 'And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 'You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 'You shall dwell in booths for seven days.*

*Zech 14:16, And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.*

**The Significance Of The Transfiguration Of Christ:**

1. God the Father authenticated the rejected Christ as Messiah before the three
2. Anticipates the future earthly kingdom of Christ – seeing the future glory of Messiah
3. It guarantees the fulfillment of all Scripture – II Peter 1:19-21
4. Reinforces His love for us by having to veil His glory a second time
5. Authenticates the agreement of Christ with the Law & Prophets
6. We have heard Moses and Elijah, now we must listen to His Son.
7. It is the second time the Father's voice speaks from heaven concerning his Son

*II Pet 1:16-19, For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...*

**II. THE PERSONAL INSTRUCTION & PREPARATION CONTINUED 17:14-19:30**

**A. 14-27 Explanation of Faith & Warning of Calvary & Temple Tax**

**Chapter 18**

**A. 1-14 The Father's Love for His Little Ones**

**B. 15-17 Instruction Concerning a Sinning Brother**

1. First go to the one who has hurt you – don't gossip
2. If #1 doesn't work, take one or two others as witnesses
3. If the first two don't work, take them before the whole church
4. The last resort is to dismiss the person from the congregation

## ***C. 18-35 The Unlimited Forgiveness Explained & Illustrated By A Parable***

### **Note On The Parables:**

1. Matthew matches the parables of Christ with the topic or theme at hand. Example: the Matthew 13 parables fit with the rejection of Messiah, and his new course of ministry. The Matthew 18 parable fits with the issue of forgiveness at hand. This will be recognized throughout the remainder of this gospel.

### **Chapter 19**

#### ***A. 1-12 The Messiah's Teaching Concerning Divorce***

##### **Issue of Divorce:**

1. The Pharisees wanted to condemn Christ and sought for ways to do so. We know that the gentile leadership condemned John over divorce. They may have sought a way for Christ's words to condemn Himself. That may be the reason Christ was asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"
2. The Lord Jesus explained the original creation and the intent of marriage. Christ challenged their thinking with words from their Torah.
3. Scripture taught that the original marriage was: a) for a male and female to be joined together, b) the man was to leave his parents, and was to be joined to his wife, c) the two become one whole, or one flesh, d) what was joined by God was to not be separated by man.
4. The Lord corrected their interpretation by stating that Moses allowed divorce, but did not command it. Christ referred back to their history. Divorce was not allowed until Moses. The Lord referred to the time when it was changed, Deuteronomy 24:1ff, because of the hardness of their hearts.
5. Messiah taught that adultery was the only cause for divorce.

#### ***B. 13-26 The Importance of the Little Children to the Loving Lord Jesus***

#### ***C. 16-26 The Hopelessness of Riches As Seen In the Rich Young Ruler***

#### ***D. 27-30 The Promise of Future Reward – Not Temporal***

### **III. ANOTHER PARABLE, PREDICTION & PREPARATION 20:1-34**

#### ***A. 1-16 The Parable of the Laborer***

#### ***B. 17-19 Jesus Again Warns of His Coming Separation***

#### ***C. 20-28 Jesus Explains the Work Which He Must Partake Alone***

#### ***D. 29-34 Another Gracious Miracle by the Son of David***

***Now what? The Lord Jesus was in Jericho for the last time. He was making his way to Jerusalem. We all know what awaited him there. Even though rejection by the leadership had taken place, Jesus did not live in a state of pity. All along the way he continually taught and trained His disciples, and showed pity to those who were needy and suffering. What a great God, he was always thinking of others!***

## SECTION VII - THE WARNINGS OF THE KING

### Chapters 21-25

#### **I. THE PUBLIC OFFER OF HIMSELF 21:1-17**

##### ***A. 1-11 The Fulfillment of Prophecy, the Final Offer – Zech. 9:9***

? Why doesn't Matthew quote verse 10?

*Zech 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.*

*10, I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.'*

##### ***B. 12-17 The Passion Of Messiah & The Displeasure Of The Leadership***

1. Following his Triumphal Entry, the Lord Jesus swiftly fulfilled another prophetic scripture. He as God, had authority over his temple. He displayed this by cleansing the temple of the ungodly practices that were taking place in it. Due to this desecration,<sup>91</sup> Jesus referred back to Isaiah and declared the true purpose of his father's house, and showed his obedience to this truth by his extreme action. This event is also recorded in Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46, and John 2:14-16.

#### **II. THE CONTINUATION OF INSTRUCTIONS THROUGH PARABLES 21:18-22:14**

##### ***A. 18-22 The Barren Fig Tree – What Does It Mean?***

1. The Lord Jesus was hungry the morning after His presentation. Having seen a fig tree shining forth, desired for it to have fruit. It had leaves but no fruit. It appears that this was a picture of Israel; leaves covering her fruitlessness. The Lord cursed the fig tree because of its barrenness. This cursing pictures that wicked generation of Jews who rejected their Messiah. That Jewish generation would not bear fruit and would quickly wither away.

2. The disciples marveled how quickly the fig tree withered. Jesus once again took the occasion to train his disciples about faith. Jesus taught that through faith, they would be able to do more than what was done to a fig tree, even remove a mountain. Edersheim reminds us, "That the expression 'rooting up mountains' is in common rabbinic use as a hyperbole (over statement) for doing the impossible or the incredible."<sup>92</sup> The disciples would come to realize the great power God made available to them by faith.

##### ***B. 23-46 The Messiah Challenged By Question And Parable***

1. vs. 23-27 Christ's authority is challenged
2. vs. 28-32 Parable exposing condemnation of Jewish leadership
3. vs. 33-41 Parable of "The Vineyard," exposing national judgment

<sup>91</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Pub., 1990), 116.

<sup>92</sup> Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus Messiah."

## **Introduction to the Parable**

1. The Messianic scriptures were fulfilled right before their very eyes! Nearly the entire geographical region surrounding Jerusalem had witnessed the Messianic signs, wonders, miracles, and teachings. Yet as quickly as it all began, the end was in sight. The Leadership of Israel had made her choice. The Parable of the Wicked Vineyard illustrates the deteriorating and near severed relationship between God and His chosen people Israel.
2. In light of the controversial issues of this parable, there will be a brief discussion of two major theological views concerning present day and future Israel.

### **I. The Historic Vineyard**

#### ***A. Old Testament Israel***

1. The community of Old Testament saints treasured numerous possessions. They were treasured for their beauty, for their symbolism, and sometimes necessary of life. One such possession of great worth was the vine or vineyard. The grapevine was a treasure from God that can be traced throughout the scriptures; from Noah to Christ, and in historical progression the symbol of the grapevine took on significant meaning.
2. One of the most striking or noteworthy facts about the vineyard is, the symbolism that it represented. “It was used as a symbol of the religious life of Israel itself, and a carving of a bunch of grapes often adorned the front exterior of the synagogue.” Josephus describes a wall of the temple; “it had also golden vines above it, from which clusters of grapes hung as tall as a man’s height... Edersheim describes the gigantic golden vine as the symbol of Israel. This symbolism had personal meaning to the Israelite. As a symbol for Israel it represented peace and prosperity. The fact is God had referred to the Israelites as His vine in which he took out of Egypt and planted and established.
3. God considered Israel His choice vine; He spoke to them in a very personal way in Isaiah 5:1&2a, where He described what He did for their nation. God placed Israel on a fruitful hill, fenced it, cultivated it, planted the choicest vine, built a watchtower, and made a winepress. God saved His people out of Egypt, and gave them a good land and the covenants where they could live in true fruitfulness, which truly would have been a pleasure to Him. In reality, the construction of a vineyard in Old Testament times was very costly and difficult compared to the other forms of husbandry in and near the land of Israel. In metaphoric reality God could do nothing more than which He had already accomplished for His people Israel to make them a fruitful vineyard for Himself.

#### ***B. New Testament Messiah***

1. Despite all His work and patience with Israel, she brought forth wild grapes as affirmed by Isaiah. Jeremiah further declared that the noble vine became a degenerate and strange vine. Hosea confirmed that Israel is an empty selfish vine. The reality, the householder is God, the vineyard is Israel. Israel had failed as God’s vineyard or vine.
2. Yet, the concept of the vine does not end with Israel’s failure. In the fullness of time, God sent forth His son to be the obedient fruitful Son that Israel failed to be. All that the disobedient son Israel failed to do, Jesus Christ Messiah the obedient son fulfilled. Jesus accomplished all that His Father desired of Him. “Therefore Jesus as ‘the true vine,’ fulfills what God had intended for Israel.” Christ rightfully and authoritatively declared, “I am the true vine.” And just as His Father was Israel’s vinedresser, so was the case for Him.

## II. The Parable of the Vineyard

### A. Israel's Rejection

1. Messiah was now in His last year of ministry. The leadership of Israel had made its choice; they had committed the unpardonable sin. That is why the parable of "The Wicked Vineyard Tenants" is spoken by the Messiah at this time; His crucifixion was very near, as the parable foretold His death. The need for this parable was prompted due to the argument surrounding Jesus' temple cleansing authority. Israel's leadership, "As the custodians of the spiritual life of the nation, they had the right to ask this question." The parable authoritatively taught who the authority was, and Israel's position in relation to that authority.
2. The parable describes a landowner (God) who established a beautiful Vineyard and leased it out (to Israel) and left on a journey. When the owner expected fruit at harvest time he sent servants one after another (the prophets of Israel) to the vineyard; they were ill-treated or killed. The owner thought it best to send his son (Christ), but to no avail they threw him out and killed him and desired to take what did not belong to them; they usurped authority and brought judgment on themselves.
3. After explaining the parable, Jesus asked the chief priests and Pharisees how the land owner would respond upon returning to his vineyard. Their own answers condemned themselves; "get rid of the tenants, and lease the vineyard to those who would responsibly tend it." Jesus then quotes Psalms 118:22, 23 in regards to His rejection. It is at this point a sad yet very controversial statement is made in regards to Israel. "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it."

### B. Messiah's Acceptance

1. Matthew describes the messianic implications of this parable when quoting Psalm 118:22–23; Jewish leadership rejected the greatest stone of a building, they easily recognized they were the ones being condemned by this teacher. They were aware of their forefather's failure and of the Old Testament truths regarding their identity as Jehovah's vineyard; they were quite aware of the parabolic reality spoken by the Messiah. The pride and power of the Jewish leadership was quite evident in this parable. Consider Keener; "Landowners always had power, socially and legally, to enforce their will on the tenants; a few reportedly even had squads of hired assassins to deal with troublesome tenants. Here the tenants act as if they are the ones with power, and they exploit it mercilessly (as opposed to the ideal of a benevolent landowner). This attitude fits the Jewish tradition that Israel martyred many of the prophets God sent.
2. God's judgment of Israel was justified. The reality of the parable did come to pass for both Israel and the Messiah. Israel rejected their Messiah and His kingdom, their Messiah accepted His Cross, and all who would come to trust in Him, whether Jew or Gentile. The Father also accepted the work of His Son, and therefore accepts all who come through Him.

## III. The New Testament Church

### A. The True Vine

1. Two important questions arise from this parable: First, who is the new people or nation? Second, is God finished with Israel as a nation, with all of the promises made in regards to a Davidic kingdom? The answer to number one has already been answered in Matthew 16:18; a church was to be born including both Jew and gentile. It was this church that would be a new entity, a new people. And in regard to the word "people" consider Carson. A 'people' suggests not just a change of leadership but that the very composition of the people of God was to change (along the lines suggested in 8:11–12). It was not, however, a simple matter of Jews being

replaced by Gentiles (that would have needed a reference to 'peoples' in the plural, the normal Greek term for Gentiles); rather a new community of God's people was being created (cf. on 16:18), in which both Jews and Gentiles would find their place. What would characterize them was not their nationality, but that they would produce fruit (cf. 3:8, 10; 7:15-20; 12:33-37; 13:8, 26; and especially 21:18-20).

2. Messiah became the One in whom the fruit will be produced through the New Covenant which He was yet going to establish at Calvary. Whoever trusts the Messiah becomes one with Him and part of His body, the church. As the believer abides in the True Vine fruitfulness is accomplished by the Messiah in them. It is Jesus Christ carrying out His work through His body the church. Messiah accepted the position of the True Vine; whoever accepts the Messiah, is positioned in the True Vine.

4. The blessed truth for both Jew and Gentile under the new covenant is that they are in Christ, the True Vine, the obedient son, the moment they trust in Him alone for salvation. Christ declared, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." In order to bear fruit, the believer only needs to abide, remain or continue in Him, for the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide on the vine. What Israel never accomplished, Christ did, and continues to accomplish in those that abide in Him.

4. vs. 42-46 The result of Jewish rejection of Messiah; is it Replacement Theology?

1. a. Matthew has revealed how Messiah reached out to the gentiles. Jesus will continue to in the mystery kingdom, the church. It has never been God's intent to completely set aside Israel, but their rejection of him forced Messiah to set aside the restoration of Israel for a time so he may carry out the second aspect of his plan; a light to the nations. The focus of Messiah's ministry would be the nations, and the nations would respond.

b. Matthew did not teach Replacement theology, he taught the two-fold aspect of Messiah's ministry as prophesied in Isaiah 49:6. "Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Later in his gospel, Matthew will focus on end times pertaining to the time of Jacob's Trouble, which reveals Messiah's future anticipated work among his people the Jews.

Rom 11:8-12, Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day." And David says: "Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always." I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

2. Notice also the fear of the Pharisees and the misunderstanding of the people regarding Messiah. The Jewish leadership had long ago made their decision about Jesus after much observation and questioning. They hated Jesus and wanted to condemn Him, but the people still showed some favor towards Him. They must persuade the people differently. The people could be persuaded, for they did not believe that Jesus was their Messiah. According to vs. 11 & 46, Jesus was simply a prophet.

## 5. vs. 22:1-14 The Parable of the Wedding Feast – Messiah Confirms New Outreach

1. The Lord Jesus spoke another parable to the disciples concerning the present Jewish nation. The characters of this parable were the king, representing God; His son representing the Messiah, the servants, representing it seems John the Baptist and the disciples/apostles, the original invitees representing unbelieving Israel, and the new invitees representing the gentile nations. This parable so accurately follows the history of the invitation and rejection of Messiah; it seems to leave room for no other interpretation.
2. The king had repeatedly sent out his servants to call a certain group to the special feast for his son. This was the work of John the Baptist, and the disciples, and even later on after the cross, the apostles calling Israel to partake of the kingdom of Messiah. The first invitation before the cross, was rejected by the nation, so was the invitation after the resurrection. Matthew makes it clear that all was ready, the feast was fully set, and they only needed to come to it.
3. Verses five and six revealed the hearts of the original invitees. They were very careless and unconcerned, and all went about to do their own thing. They also mistreated the ones bidding them to the feast, even killing some of the messengers. Were not the Jewish people careless concerning John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul and Peter and others who were killed by their own people?
4. The only thing left for the king was to judge that generation. This did happen to that generation of Israel, when their city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 AD.
5. The rest of the parable beautifully illustrates the calling of the gentiles. The Jewish people had found themselves unworthy, and the gentiles rejoiced in the fact that they had been invited to partake of this Messiah. The invitation was to all the people and nations as prophesied by Isaiah. The light of Messiah was to now shine to all the coasts. Many did come to the feast, for it was full.
6. In this parable, Messiah made it clear that a proper preparation must take place for one to be fit for this kingdom. One of the invitees would not dress in a wedding garment which had been provided. This garment represented the righteousness of Christ. Without it, one could not partake of God's kingdom. The New Testament Scriptures make it very clear that one must be made righteous by God's grace to be a partaker of eternal life. This man was severely judged, even though he was invited, because he was dressed in his own natural attire. As is the case today, many are invited to partake of Christ, but few are chosen.

### **III. THE KINGS ANSWERS & REBUKES THE LEADERSHIP 22:15-23:39**

#### ***A. 15-22 Jesus Answers the Herodians Who Try To Stumble Him***

#### **Who were the Herodians?**

1. The Herodians were a party, or political group derived from Herod. They were not necessarily a religious party, but a political group or council watching out for the interests of Herod's empire.
2. Because this group is only mentioned twice in the scriptures, it is difficult to know many details concerning them. Both times mentioned they were teamed up with the Pharisees to oppose the Lord Jesus. What we do know of the Herodians is that they were Edomites, so there was a natural affinity of some sort with the Jewish people, more so than with the Romans.
3. Like many of the Jews, the Herodians liked the status quo of their day. That would give them the motivation to persecute Messiah, for He had disrupted their smooth culture. Christ's moral

teaching and testimony were no doubt a conviction to their lifestyle. Jesus warned His disciples to "beware of the leaven of Herod". This could have meant a reference to the dangerous spirit of this sect.

4. It is possible that since Messiah had openly rejected Pharisaical traditions and laws, the Jewish leadership may have thought that he also may reject governmental law. By rejecting this law also, it would put Messiah under the condemnation of both the Herodians and them. There can be no doubt that team building was taking place.

***B. 23-33 Jesus Answers the Sadducees Who Try To Stumble Him***

***C. 34-40 Jesus Answers the Pharisees Who Try To Stumble Him***

***D. 41-46 Jesus Turns the Table, Asks the Question and Stumbles the Leadership***

***D. 23:1-36 Jesus Openly Rebukes the Character and Teachings of the Pharisees***

1. In light of the whole book of Matthew, there is no doubt that the Jewish leadership, namely the Pharisees and the Sadducees were the first to consider Christ and to reject His person and claims. It was only a matter of time before they exercised their control and authority over the nation and caused them to follow their deceitful and wicked conclusions. They were the cause of national rejection; they were to be held more accountable. It was to them that the woes were placed upon.

2. The rejection of the whole nation behind Him, and the cross before Him, Jesus described to the congregation before Him the false teachings and actions of their leadership in Matthew 23. These 'woes' were the opposite of the 'blesseds' as described earlier on in the book. The first half of the 'woes' describes the doctrine of the Pharisaical leadership; the second half describes their hypocritical practices. With this warning having been spoken not only to the disciples but to the multitudes around Him, there can be no doubt that Christ desired for the blind Jewish followers to reconsider their false impressions of their hypocritical dishonest leadership. The multitudes were also held accountable for not considering the 'woes'.

***E. 37-39 Clearly Shows the Love And Passion Jesus Has For His People***

1. Messiah promises a desolate household for Israel
2. Messiah promises to return when invited by his people

**IV. THE FUTURE AS FORETOLD BY THE KING 24:1-25:46**

1. Matthew described the person, the presentation, the rejection, the mystery age ( the church), and the cross of the king. He now describes details following the church – the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. These chapters describe the birth pangs that the O.T. scriptures spoke of.

2. The Old Testament Scriptures reveal a day that will be like no other, namely the time of Jacob's trouble, or the Great Tribulation. As the Messiah was ready to leave this earth, he explained in detail to the disciples that period of troublesome times which will precede His second coming, namely the beginning of birth pangs (Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week), the hard labor (Jacob's trouble, or the Great Tribulation), and then the birth of the millennial kingdom. Taking a close look at chapters 24 and 25 reveals that these scriptural events also align themselves with the seals and events of the book of Revelation. These events are clearly different than that of the

rapture of the church, which was yet in mystery form, and not understood by the disciples. They are yet future, are Messianic in nature, and deal with Israel. This judgment will cause Israel to repent. Israel one day will say, “Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.”

*Zechariah 12:10, "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

*Rom 11:26, 27, And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*

## **The Lord's Olivet Discourse**

**Introduction:** Approaching the end of his first advent, the Lord Jesus spoke of a future day, an unparalleled time of great tribulation which the world had never experienced before. He also explained that at the conclusion of this great tribulation the Son of Man would appear in great glory, and establish his kingly throne. All nations would then be brought into his presence for judgment. The Lord Jesus described in detail this prophetic time period to his disciples. It was in answer to the questions which they had requested of him: “And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?”<sup>93</sup>

2. This prophetic narrative of scripture has been entitled, “The Lord’s Olivet Discourse.”<sup>94</sup> Presently, this Discourse has been a central point of interpretive division in the body of Christ. In the church today it may be one of the most controversial teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. For it has been interpreted from two opposing theological views.

3. Let’s consider three Olivet Discourse topics: a comparison of the three gospel narratives; a comparison of the opposing preterist and futurist views; and lastly, a brief explanation of Matthew’s account.

**Gospel comparisons:** Three Gospel authors Matthew, Mark, and Luke documented what is called the Lord’s Olivet discourse.<sup>95</sup> Each gospel writer, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit recorded what he desired his readers to know and understand. Each narrative shares many common themes, but each discourse also differs in details. This section will be a concise comparison of the three synoptic accounts.

2. The first noticeable difference in the accounts is the length and detail of Matthews’s account compared with the other two. Many Bible scholars agree that Matthew’s Gospel is very Jewish and deals with Jewish issues. Matthew covered the needs, questions, and programs concerning the Jewish mind at all levels. The early recipients of the gospel were Jewish. The gospel was preached early on in the Jewish synagogues. The numerous uses of Old Testament prophecies and rabbinical writings reflected Jewish understandings and beliefs. Jensen stated, “...it does not surprise us that one of the four gospels was directed especially to them [Jews] and answered questions uppermost in their minds about Jesus...”<sup>96</sup> And of course, one of the Jewish issues was Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, the time of Jacob’s trouble, or the abomination of desolation. Matthew used

<sup>93</sup> Matthew 24:3b. All scripture references are the NKJV, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>94</sup> “Sometimes known as the Synoptic Apocalypse, this is the last major discourse of Jesus recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke (Mt. 24:3–25:46; Mk. 13:3–37; Lk. 21:5–36), and is the longest and most important section of teaching about the future in the Synoptics.” D. R. W. Wood & I. H. Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, 1996).

<sup>95</sup> The harmony of the gospels used was from Logos Bible Software Series X, The Scholar’s Library.

<sup>96</sup> Jensen, “Jensen’s Survey of the New Testament,” 115.

lengthy parabolic teaching absent from the other accounts. Yet the other accounts documented this same discourse, because this future time would have far reaching effects into the gentile world also.

3. One major theme shared by each narrative was the discourse's gaze into the prophetic future. Also common to all three narratives was its description of a desperate unparalleled time, or an epoch that would involve all the nations of the earth that would end with the Son of Man coming in power and glory. Within in these themes, there were similarities and differences concerning the details.

4. All three gospel portrayals began by describing the locality of the discourse when it was spoken. All reported that the discourse was given at Herod's temple. Each began with the disciples' apparent admiration of this great structure. All three recorded the Lord's response to the disciples' appreciation of their temple. Christ's reaction opened the opportunity to develop his discourse in regard to future events. Matthew and Mark moved the setting of the discourse to the Mount of Olives. Only Mark mentioned whom the disciples were who came to seek answers concerning the second coming, while each author mentioned the disciple's question which inaugurated the dialogue.

5. Evaluating the beginning portion of the discourse, each narrative is very similar in its description of the beginning events, other than Luke did not note what Matthew and Mark recorded: "the beginning of sorrows,"<sup>97</sup> which appears to be the starting point of the future events. As Christ described the persecution that would arise, and warned of strong opposition to the saints, he gave one promise of hope and one declaration of truth that Luke did not record, which are: "But he who endures to the end shall be saved."<sup>98</sup> And, "the gospel must first be preached to all nations."<sup>99</sup>

6. Each gospel writer also described a time of desolation. Matthew and Mark noted that this desolation was spoken of by Daniel the prophet.<sup>100</sup> Between the mention of Daniel and the coming of the Son of Man, Matthew documented the most detail. Matthew and Mark documented this as a time of great tribulation which the world has never seen<sup>101</sup> and also described the warnings of Christ in that time frame.<sup>102</sup> Luke left out these two points. But Luke added another dimension. Unique to his story is the term, "the times of the gentiles."<sup>103</sup> Luke added a time frame by describing an era which would come to an end when the times of the gentiles are complete.

7. The parable of the fig tree was confirmed by all three authors. From this point on, the gospels differ greatly. Luke comes to an abrupt end with the warnings of Christ. Mark continues with one simple parable of a man and his steward, and then ends his account. Matthew continues on at length with parabolic teaching and warnings of the Lord Jesus Christ. This portion will be reviewed later.

**Preterist vs. Futurist views:** Preterism, defined by Michael A. Fenemore, "is the belief that all Bible prophecies, including those concerned with the Second Coming of Jesus, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Rapture and the Judgment came to complete fulfillment in AD 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem just as Jesus predicted they would."<sup>104</sup> Contrary to the preterist, a futurist believes that there are many Bible prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled regarding

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<sup>97</sup> Matthew 24:8 & Mark 13:8.

<sup>98</sup> Matthew 24:13 & Mark 13:13.

<sup>99</sup> Matthew 24:14 & Mark 13:10.

<sup>100</sup> Matthew 24:15 & Mark 13:14.

<sup>101</sup> Matthew 24:21 & Mark 13:19.

<sup>102</sup> Matthew 24:23-26 & Mark 13:21-23.

<sup>103</sup> Luke 21:24.

<sup>104</sup> Michael A. Fenemore. [www.preterism.info](http://www.preterism.info). Accessed 10/18/2005.

eschatological issues such as: the Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Rapture of the church, the restoration of Israel, and the Judgment.

Now contrasting two theological views of the Lord's Olivet Discourse:

2. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD is absolutely essential to preterist eschatology. R.C. Sproul claims that Preterism has "An eschatological viewpoint that places many or all eschatological events in the past, especially during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70"<sup>105</sup> (Emphasis added). The majority of preterist theologians would agree that 70 AD is essential to understanding the Olivet discourse. The futurist Randall Price claims that, "Preterism, however, which forces the fulfillment of most prophetic texts, particularly the fall of Jerusalem and the temple, into the events of the first Jewish revolt, views the destruction of the Jewish people as the central focus of prophecy."<sup>106</sup>

3. When Jesus delivered this discourse, he spoke of many future circumstances and events that would come to pass. He spoke of the destruction of the favored Jewish temple, and a scattering of God's people. He also used the term, "this generation" intertwined with the culmination of these prophetic events. Preterists claim that "this generation," was the generation living when Christ delivered the Olivet Discourse. They argue the fact that this prophecy of Messiah was to shortly come to pass. It appears to be a probability. Therefore, the preterist views the Lord's Olivet discourse as having come to complete fulfillment by 70 AD. Included in this fulfillment would be the many truths the Apostle Paul had spoken of, and looked forward to as well.

4. The preterist also differs with the futurist concerning the physical aspect of prophetic fulfillment. While the futurist claims a physical, literal, fulfillment of prophecy, the preterist may insist on a spiritual (allegorical) fulfillment. The preterist claim is that portions of prophetic scripture do not have to be fulfilled physically or literally, but spiritually. (The prophetic word may be symbolic in nature; symbolic of spiritual truths.) Consequently, the Olivet Discourse guarantees no future for Israel. The New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant; the spiritual church replaced the physical nation of Israel.<sup>107</sup> This transaction took place in 70 AD. The preterist views the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem as God's final dealing with the unbelieving nation of Israel. The preterist therefore does not look forward to a future physical Messianic Jewish kingdom; for he is living in the spiritual kingdom at this very moment, which is the preterist reality of the physical kingdom promises.

5. Since preterism has built such a tremendous eschatological system on the events of AD 70, it has left itself very vulnerable to futuristic eschatological ideas. The preterist, Todd D. Dennis claims that preterism "**delivers the answer to centuries-old questions**, unlike the tired filibustering rhetoric of Futurism!" Futurists would wholeheartedly disagree with this bold statement. A reading of the Matthew 24 text, along with numerous Old Testament passages does not seem to thoroughly fit with Israel's destruction in 70 AD.

Years ago, J.C.Ryle, who was certainly not a dispensationalist, made the following observation (*Expository Thoughts in the Gospels*, in his comments under Matthew 24): "But we must not suppose that this part of our Lord's prophecy is exhausted by the first taking of Jerusalem. It is more than probable that our Lord's words have a further and deeper application still."<sup>108</sup>

<sup>105</sup> R.C. Sproul. *The Last Days According to Jesus*. p. 228, [Todd D. Dennis, www.preterism-eschatology.com/What%20Is%20The%20Preterist%20View.htm](http://www.preterism-eschatology.com/What%20Is%20The%20Preterist%20View.htm). Accessed 10/18/2005.

<sup>106</sup> Randall Price. 2005. A.D. 70: Preterism's Prophetic Dead End. *Israel My Glory*, January/February, 22.

<sup>107</sup> Todd D. Dennis, *An Introduction to Preterism* [www.preterism-eschatology.com/What%20Is%20The%20Preterist%20View.htm](http://www.preterism-eschatology.com/What%20Is%20The%20Preterist%20View.htm). Accessed 10/18/2005.

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/proph/luke21.htm>. Accessed 10/18/2005.

6. The futurist does not deny the destruction of Jerusalem, nor does he deny 70 AD prophetic fulfillment of portions of the Olivet Discourse. But the futurist does reject the complete fulfillment of the discourse by 70 AD. There are too many unfulfilled details.<sup>109</sup> The futurist seeks logical answers to these questions from Preterists: If the Lord returned in AD 70, where were all the eye witnesses (Matt 24:30-31)? There was judgment in 70 AD, but where was the deliverance and regathering of his people (Matt 24:31)? Was the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD really as broad and as catastrophic as the Lord predicted (Matt 24:21)? If the Lord's second coming was to destroy Jerusalem in AD 70, why was his second coming placed after the tribulation, or judgment (Matt 24:29-31)? Where is the judgment of the gentiles along with Israel if the Olivet Discourse was completely fulfilled in 70 AD (Matt 24:21-22; 25:31-46)? Reflect on this one last point:

In Matthew 23:39 the Lord Jesus made it clear that the Jewish nation would not see the Lord Jesus again until they would say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." This means that He will not come until the nation is repentant. Since the nation was not repentant in 70 A.D. this must mean that Christ did not come at that time.

It is evident that the futurist does not believe that the full realization of the Olivet Discourse came to pass in 70 AD.

**A brief explanation of Matthews account:** The O.T. Scriptures declared a day that would be like no other, namely the time of Jacob's trouble, or the Great Tribulation. As the Messiah was ready to leave this earth, he explained in detail to the disciples a period of troublesome times which would precede his second coming, namely the beginning of birth pangs (Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week), the hard labor pangs (Jacob's trouble, or the Great Tribulation), and then the birth of the millennial kingdom. By taking a futuristic theological glimpse at chapters 24 and 25, it appears possible that these scriptural events may also align themselves with the seals and events of the book of Revelation. They were yet future, were Messianic in nature, and again focused on Israel. These events are clearly different than that of the rapture of the church.<sup>110</sup> This coming judgment will cause Israel to repent. Israel will say, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord."

2. "In the first decades of the church the book of Matthew was the most highly revered and widely read of the four gospels."<sup>111</sup> Its themes were Jewish in nature. Toussaint claims that, "Such subjects as law, ceremonial defilement, the Sabbath, the kingdom, Jerusalem, the temple, David, the Messiah, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophesies, and Moses are all discussed from the Jewish viewpoint for Jewish readers."<sup>112</sup> These early Jewish Christians undoubtedly had numerous questions concerning their future Kingdom, and current church issues. Matthew attempted to answer these tough Jewish questions.

3. By the time that the reader approached Matthew's account of the Olivet Discourse, Matthew had already introduced the King (Chapters 1-3); revealed the character of the King (Chapters 4-7); described the authority & quality of the King (Chapters 8-10); exposed the rejection of the King & its results (Chapters 11-13); illustrated the new course of the King (Chapters 14-16); and declared the reaffirmation of the King (Chapters 17-20). There yet remained one unanswered question concerning Israel's future; what about the future Messianic kingdom which had been set aside, due to Israel's national rejection of their Messiah? Matthew described these details yet to come.

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<sup>109</sup> For more details read: Randall Price. 2005. A.D. 70: Preterism's Prophetic Dead End. *Israel My Glory*, January/February, 22. And, Luke 21 article; [www.middletonbiblechurch.org/proph/luke21.htm](http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/proph/luke21.htm)

<sup>110</sup> Renald Showers in his book, *Maranatha Our Lord, Come*, points out the stark differences.

<sup>111</sup> Jensen, "Jensen's Survey of the New Testament," 114.

<sup>112</sup> Toussaint, "Behold the King," 17.

4. The following is a simple futuristic outline of Matthew chapter twenty-four. It was largely compiled from Renald Showers,<sup>113</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum,<sup>114</sup> and Walvoord and Zuck's<sup>115</sup> interpretive views.

**A. 1-3 Jesus Forewarns the Disciples of the Coming Destruction of Their Temple**

**B. 24:4-24:51 Large Scale Judgment and Catastrophic Events Yet To Come**

1. Vss. 4-14 The first half of the 7 year tribulation – Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week
2. Vss. 15-20 The mid point of the tribulation – the abomination of desolation

**\* SEE APPENDIX C IN REFERENCE TO DANIEL'S "SEVENTY SEVENS"**

3. Vss. 21-28 The last half of the tribulation, called the great tribulation or the time of Jacob's trouble - spawned by the abomination of desolation
4. Vss. 29-31 The coming of Messiah at the end of the 7 year tribulation
5. 32-35 The signs for that tribulation generation
6. 36-51 The explanation of the details of Messiah's return

1. Futurist scholars may vary on where they draw the line between the fulfilled and unfulfilled portions of Matthew 24, but they do embrace a greater future fulfillment of certain portions of this text. Preterists point out that this futurist approach seems to disregard the seeming nearness of Jesus' proclamations. It seems that the Lord is speaking directly to the disciples and not to a future generation. Preterists also dislike the idea of separating the fulfillment of the text. Todd D. Dennis claims that holding to any kind of a futurist view, "is a lack of recognition regarding the *inseparability* of the prophecies concerning Israel's overthrow and those of the Judgment, Resurrection (redemption), and Coming of Christ..."<sup>116</sup> Yet, it is apparent that portions of Old Testament prophecy find complete fulfillment with two physical advents of the Messiah.

2. In Matthew chapter twenty-five the author further recorded the teachings of Christ which explained the responsibility of his people through practical parables. Matthew, throughout his gospel, used the parables of Christ to further explain the topic or theme at hand. For example: the Matthew 13 parables fit with the rejection of Messiah and his new course of ministry; the Matthew 18 parable fits with the issue of forgiveness that was at hand. Now the Lord interjected two more parables which explained the second coming of Messiah at the end of the age.

3. The first of these is the 'Parable of the Ten Virgins,' and the theme is that of watchfulness. This parable appears to represent the Israelites at the time of Messiah's second coming at the end of the Great Tribulation. The context of Matthew 24 and 25 is the tribulation, and it appears to make sense that this parable demonstrates the condition of Israel at that time.

4. The virgins illustrated the Eastern wedding custom of that day. They were part of a wedding ceremony that was to go out and meet the bridegroom who at that time was not present. Some of the virgins were prepared and ready for the groom's appearance. Some were not ready and revealed this by their nonchalant attitudes concerning the groom's appearing. So will be the case

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<sup>113</sup> Showers, "Maranatha Our Lord, Come," Part 1.

<sup>114</sup> Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology," Chapter X.

<sup>115</sup> John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Pub., 1983), pages 76-81.

<sup>116</sup> Dennis, "An Introduction to Preterism"

at the end of the tribulation. Some of the Jewish people will be eagerly anticipating the Lord's return; some will not.

5. This parable shows the importance for each Israelite to be spiritually prepared and ready for the return of their bridegroom, Jesus Christ. The end result is very different for each group. The prepared will enter into their millennial kingdom with their groom and king. The unprepared ones will enter judgment not the millennial kingdom.

6. The second of these parables is the 'Parable of the talents,' and the theme is laboring for the master. The parable of the talents represents the personal responsibility of each individual's gifts, attitude, and labor while awaiting the return of their master. There is little uncertainty that this parable was misunderstood by the audience. The culture at this time was very familiar with the master and servant relationship. "This parable of the Talents stressed the need to serve the King while He was away."<sup>117</sup>

**Conclusion:** In the interpretation of the Olivet Discourse there is tremendous practical application; even though this author prefers a futuristic view of the majority of the discourse, he does not rule out its relevance for our day.

1. Throughout the discourse, judgment and salvation are undoubtedly expressed as major themes. Along with that, the individual's future outcome is determined by their personal response to the Lord. There is also tremendous warning and preparation for future tribulation. During this time the saint is challenged to remain watchful and alert to the circumstances surrounding him. The saint is also challenged to remain faithful to the Lord during his absence. The saint is promised reward upon the King's return. And one of the greatest events is eagerly anticipated by the saint, the Lord's second coming to this earth to gather his people and rule over them for eternity. And what a day it will be; no longer will faulty human government rule!

#### ***A. 1-3 Jesus Forewarns the Disciple of Coming Judgment & Destruction***

#### ***B. 24:4-25:46 The Coming Judgment Upon Israel – Parables Explain***

1. 4-14 The first half of the tribulation
2. 15-20 The mid point of the tribulation
3. 21-28 The last half of the tribulation called the great tribulation
4. 29-31 The coming of Messiah at the end of the 7 year tribulation
5. 32-35 The signs for that tribulation generation
6. 36-51 The explanation of the details of Messiah's return
7. 25:1-30 Typical - Interjection of the parables explaining the second coming of Messiah

#### **Parable of the Ten Virgins: Watchfulness**

1. The parable of the ten virgins represents the Israelites at the time of Messiah's second coming at the end of the Great Tribulation. The context of Matthew 24 and 25 is the tribulation, and it appears to make sense that this parable demonstrates the condition of Israel at that time.

2. The virgins illustrated the Eastern wedding custom of that day. They were part of a wedding ceremony that was to go out and meet the bridegroom who at that time was not yet present. Some of the virgins were prepared and ready for the groom's appearance. Some were not ready

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<sup>117</sup> Walvoord, and Zuck, "The Bible Knowledge Commentary," 80.

and revealed this by their nonchalant attitudes concerning the groom's appearing. So will be the case at the end of the tribulation. Some of the Jewish people will be eagerly anticipating the Lord's return; some will not.

3. This parable shows the importance of each one of the Israelites' responsibly to be spiritually prepared and ready for the return of their bridegroom, Jesus Christ. The end results for each group is very different. The prepared will enter into their millennial kingdom with their groom and king. The unprepared ones will not enter the millennial kingdom.

### **Parable of the Talents: Laboring**

1. The parable of the talents represents the personal responsibility of each individual's gifts, attitude, and labor while awaiting the return of the Messiah.

8. 31-46 Messiah's dealing with the tribulation gentiles

## SECTION VIII - THE SUPREMACY OF THE KING

### Chapters 26-28

***Important Consideration:*** *Jesus' life was a clear recapitulation or reliving of Israel except the rest Israel enjoyed in the Promised Land. Why? Because He had to provide the ultimate rest through His death, burial, and resurrection!*

#### **I. THE PREPARATION FOR THE DEATH OF THE KING 26:1-46**

##### ***A. 1-16 The Betrayal of Christ & and His Anointing Before Death***

***(Jewish Leadership Fails)***

##### ***B. 17-29 The Last Passover Meal & the First Lord's Supper***

***(Judas Fails)***

##### ***C. 30-46 Prediction about Peter & the Passion of Messiah in the Garden***

#### **II. THE BETRAYAL & TRIAL OF THE KING 26:47-27:26**

##### ***A. 47-56 The Betrayal of Christ Fulfilled – They Hated Him without a Cause***

##### ***B. 57-68 The Lord of Heaven and Earth Brought Before Men***

***(The Counsel Of Men Fails)***

#### **The Sanhedrin:**

1. The Sanhedrin was the supreme Jewish Court of Justice located in Jerusalem. It was the uppermost ranking Jewish court. It had about 71 members, plus 23 lower court members. The court members were most likely Pharisees, Sadducees, high priests, priests, and heads of families.

2. Rome wanted no part with Jewish religious matters. They allowed the Jewish court to freely judge their own religious matters under Roman authority. That is why the Sanhedrin was the court in which Christ was brought before on the eve of His death.

3. This high court of the Jews had the authority to pronounce Christ guilty in regards to their religion; they felt they had the right to pressure Pontius Pilot to crucify Christ.

##### ***C. 69-75 Peter's Denial and Discouragement – Can't Trust In Yourself***

***(Peter Fails)***

## ***D. 17:1-26 Judas's Death, Fulfillment Of Scripture & Pontus Pilate's Dismay***

### ***(Pilate, and the Multitudes Fail)***

#### **Who was Pilate?**

1. Pilate was a Roman official at the time of Christ. He held this position for about 10 years, and ruled over Samaria, Judea, and Idumaea.
2. It was no easy task to be an official among and over the fastidious Jewish people. This was evident in Pilate's desire to let Christ go after a beating in place of crucifixion. He hoped this would calm the angry Jewish mob, but they desired death. Pilate had the authority to let Christ go free; he even seemed to have a desire to do so. Due to threats though, Pilate gave in to the demands of his subjects and ordered the Messiah to be crucified. Pilate is one of many who are accountable for the physical sufferings of Christ.

#### **The People's Choice:**

The Lord had given Israel one more chance to reconsider her decision concerning her Christ. Pilate, as the custom was, offered to let one of the prisoners go free, either Christ or Barabbas. The choice was final. The Jews desired the release of Barabbas, and they desired the death of their Messiah. Who was Barabbas? He was the murderer and thief chosen by the Jerusalem mob, under the direction of their leadership to be set free in place of their Savior, Redeemer, Messiah, and Jehovah.

### **III. THE JUDGMENT OF THE KING 27:27-66**

#### ***A. 27-32 The Humility of the King as Predicted In Isaiah 53 – The Beating***

#### ***B. 33-44 The Crucifixion of the King***

#### ***C. 45-56 The Death of the King***

#### ***D. 57-66 The Burial of the King***

#### **❖ The Crown Exchanged For The Cross**

Jesus fulfilled both the blessing and the cursing of the Mosaic Law.

The rent veil was divine proof that something new was happening; and it did: THE NEW COVENANT in HIS BLOOD!

### **IV. THE ASCENSION & AUTHORITY OF THE KING 28:1-20**

#### ***A. 1-10 The Proof of the Resurrection – Witnessed By The Disciples***

#### ***(The Victory Of Messiah – He Does Not Fail)***

#### ***B. 11-15 The Bribe – The Vain Attempt of Man to Quench the Truth***

#### ***C. 16-20 The Beginning of a New Era – The Establishing of the Church***

Matthew has told us a true story about the person of Jesus Christ Messiah; from His birth & obscurity to His popularity & final rejection. Matthew also proved to us that Jesus fit every single truth about God's promised Messiah. With that, Matthew added many wonderful teachings of the servant king. He also showed us the beautiful character of the King and His kingdom. This was displayed by His many works and many miracles. Matthew also showed us the two-fold purpose of Messiah's coming, and how it was applied. This book leaves no doubt in our minds to whom Jesus is...

### **The God of the Church & coming King of Israel.**

We mustn't forget that one day Israel will accept Jesus as their king as foretold in the Bible. That day will be when Israel shall say...

**“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!”**

#### **A FEW TRUTHS CONCERNING THE CHURCH AND HER RELATIONSHIP TO ISRAEL:**

##### **We Are To Bless Israel:**

*Genesis 12:3, “I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

##### **We Are To Present Messiah To Them:**

*Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”*

##### **We Are To Minister To Them In Material Things:**

*Romans 15:27b, “For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.”*

##### **We Are To Pray For Their Salvation And Restoration:**

*Romans 10:1 & 11:23, “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.” “And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.”*

##### **We Are To Be Looking Forward To Their Future Restoration And Our Rejoicing With Them:**

*Romans 11:26, “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob...”*

“I love the Bible; and I love the Jew.

I love the Bible because it is the inspired revelation of God's boundless love to a lost and dying world; because it tells of sins forgiven, of a Savior who loved us and died for us, and who rose again from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. I love the Bible because it tells of joy and peace and forgiveness in this world, and of endless bliss in the world to come.

I love the Jews, because my savior was a Jew. I love the children of Israel because they gave us the Bible. I love them because the first Christians were Jews - because Peter and Paul, those flaming Jewish evangelists of the first century, gave the gospel message to the Gentile world. I love the Jews because they are God's chosen people who will yet be the greatest and most highly honored race and nation in the world”<sup>118</sup>

<sup>118</sup> George T.B. Davis, *Jewels for Messiah's Crown*, (Philadelphia: The Million Testaments Campaigns, 1939), 7.

## APPENDIX A

### Important Dates: Captivity of Israel - Birth of Christ<sup>119</sup>

- 586** --- The 70-year Babylonian Captivity began when, on July 9th, the Chaldeans destroyed Jerusalem
- 538** --- CYRUS invaded Babylon. BELSHAZZAR was slain and NABONIDUS was captured by Persian General GOBRYAS on June 16th
- 536** --- CYRUS issued a decree allowing 42,360 Jews to return to Judea under SHESHBAZZAR (ZERUBBABEL).
- 520** --- HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH prophesied and wrote "Haggai" and "Zechariah". ZERUBBABEL led a group of Jewish returnees to Jerusalem. Carthage conquered Sardinia
- 519** --- Work on the Jerusalem Temple began. The Persians recaptured Babylon in June
- 516** --- The Second Jerusalem Temple was dedicated and the 70-year captivity of the Jews ended. DARIUS I reorganized the Persian Empire
- 486** --- DARIUS I died and XERXES I (AHASUERUS) ruled Persia. He was the king who married ESTHER
- 485** --- XERXES crushed the Egyptian and Babylonians revolts and deposed his Queen VASHTI
- 479** --- ESTHER became Queen of Persia. Persia lost Sestos and the Hellespont
- 473** --- ESTHER established the Purim Feasts. Tribune GNAEUS GENUCIUS was murdered in Rome for impeaching two consulars
- 471** --- SOCRATES was born
- 465** --- XERXES was assassinated and ARTAXERXES I LONGIMANUS ruled Persia. He was the king who issued the decree of March 5th, 445 B.C. granting the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem.
- 445** --- NEHEMIAH returned to Jerusalem under the decree of ARTAXERXES
- 444** --- The Jews began to rebuild Jerusalem under the decree of ARTAXERXES
- 437** --- NEHEMIAH completed the walls of the city of Jerusalem
- 436** --- NEHEMIAH organized the "Great Synagogue" in Jerusalem
- 427** --- PLATO was born
- 425** --- The Prophet MALACHI, the last of the Old Testament prophets, wrote "Malachi"
- 384** --- ARISTOTLE was born
- 332** --- ALEXANDER was welcomed in Egypt and the city of Alexandria was established
- 331** --- The Persian Empire fell to the Greeks at the Battle of Gaugamel in October
- 330** --- ONIAS I was High Priest in Jerusalem
- These were years of great peril for the Jewish faith... "Long before the reign of Antiochus IV there had been a strong Hellenizing party among the Jews in Palestine whose ring leaders were to be found chiefly among the ranks of the wealthy and priestly aristocracy who, by reason of their social position, enjoyed the privileges of the royal court and carried the favour of the king... Moreover, this whole period was marked by bitter rivalry between two great houses, the House of Tobias and the House of Onias..."<sup>120</sup> Tobias' house – pro-Syrian, Onias' – pro-Egyptian.*
- 320** --- PTOLEMY took Jerusalem for Egypt
- 291** --- High Priest SIMON the Just died, succeeded by ELEAZAR
- 285** --- The translation of the Septuagint from Hebrew to Greek was authorized
- 276** --- High Priest ELEAZAR died, succeeded by MANASSEH
- 251** --- High Priest MANASSEH died, succeeded by ONIAS II
- 195** --- High Priest SIMON died, succeeded by ONIAS III
- 175** --- SELEUCUS IV PHILOPATER was murdered and ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES ruled the Seleucid Empire
- 173** --- High Priest ONIAS III was deposed by ANTIOCHUS IV and replaced by JASON
- 171** --- High Priest JASON was replaced by MENELAUS for robbing the Temple treasury. MITHRIDATES I ascended the Parthian throne. ANTIOCHUS IV invaded Egypt. War between Rome and PERSEUS of Macedonia "Antiochus Epiphanes saw in Hellenism a force of integration as well as a religious and humane symbol of stability that would counter the strain toward fragmentation."<sup>121</sup>

<sup>119</sup> CHRONOLOGY OF BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY: Wetzel R. C, Public Domain, 1995. (C) Copyright 1988. Electronic Work Product. Ellis Enterprises, Inc.

<sup>120</sup> Russell, "Between the Testaments," 25, 26.

<sup>121</sup> Roetzel, "The World That Shaped the New Testament," 11.

“Even in Jerusalem, the symbolic center of Israel’s religion, the Jewish aristocracy embraced Hellenistic ways...”<sup>122</sup>

“...Antiochus installed high priests sympathetic to and supportive of his policies... Antiochus’ complete contempt for Judaism is in fact evident in the way he manipulated the high priestly office.”<sup>123</sup>

“The orthodox Jews, in particular the Hasidim or Pious Ones (predecessors of the Pharisees), were deeply incensed at these happenings (civil strife)... and the spread of Hellenistic influence generally.”<sup>124</sup>

*With Hellenization struggling to take affect in Jerusalem... “Accordingly Antiochus determined to wipe out the Jewish religion altogether (168 B.C.)”*<sup>125</sup>

**170** --- The Septuagint translation was completed in Egypt. JASON led an attack against Jerusalem. ANTIOCHUS IV plundered the Temple at Jerusalem and killed 40,000 Jews

**168** --- The Jerusalem Temple was desecrated by ANTIOCHUS IV on December 25th

**167** --- Priest MATTATHIAS led a Jewish revolt against ANTIOCHUS IV

**166** --- Priest JUDAS BEN MATTATHIAS died, succeeded by his son, JUDAS MACCABEUS. JUDAS defeated APOLLONIUS, Governor of Judea

**165** --- The Jerusalem Temple was purified and rededicated by JUDAS MACCABEUS on December 25th

**164** --- ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES died, succeeded by ANTIOCHUS V. EUPATOR, age 9, in Syria

**163** --- High Priest MENELAUS was slain, succeeded by ALCIMUS

**162** --- LYSIAS took Jerusalem

**160** --- JUDAS MACCABEUS was killed in battle. His brother, JONATHAN, became the Jewish leader. High Priest ALCIMUS died

**158** --- JONATHAN MACCABEUS of Israel and BACCHIDES of Syria made peace

**157** --- Judea became an independent state

**155** --- Priest ONIAS was given permission to build a Jewish Temple at Heliopolis in Egypt

**153** --- JONATHAN MACCABEUS was made High Priest in Jerusalem

**145** --- The Pharisees and the Sadducees appeared as separate parties in Judea

**142** --- High Priest JONATHAN MACCABEUS was killed by Syrian General TRYPHO, and was succeeded by his brother SIMON MACCABEUS in Judea, who founded the Hasmonean dynasty

*In 142 B.C. the Jews claimed their independence. Enjoyed 70 years of it with Hasmonean rule.*

**134** --- High Priest SIMON MACCABEUS and two of his sons were slain by his son-in-law. JOHN HYRCANUS I, son of SIMON, became High Priest

*“...but during this period there was a growing discontent, chiefly on the part of the Hasidim and the orthodox Jews generally, with the Maccabees and the Hasmonean House. Not only had they taken over the priesthood, they had become increasingly worldly and irreligious. By the time of John Hyrcanus [134 B.C.] ...two parties now for the first time emerge as the Pharisees and Sadducees.”*<sup>126</sup>

*One of the chief reasons was that the Hasmoneans spoke of themselves as kings though not of the house of David.*

**133** --- ANTIOCHUS of Syria occupied Jerusalem

*Hyrcanus was implicated in the murder of his mother and brother also.*

**107** --- High Priest JOHN HYRCANUS died, succeeded by ARISTOBULUS I

**106** --- High Priest ARISTOBULUS I died, succeeded by ALEXANDER JANNAEUS

**103** --- High Priest ALEXANDER JANNAEUS assumed the title of King of Judea

*Alexander Jannaeus ruled next (102-76 B.C.). There was six years of civil war, which when peace was restored it was reported that 800 Jews were crucified that opposed him.*

*“But so powerful was the Pharisaic Party becoming that Jannaeus, near the end of his life, saw in it a grave danger to the royal house.”*<sup>127</sup>

**76** --- High Priest ALEXANDER JANNAEUS died and JOHN HYRCANUS was appointed to the office. But ALEXANDER'S wife, SALOME ALEXANDRA, took it

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Russell, “Between the Testaments,” 27.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. 28.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 32.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. 34.

**67** --- High Priestess SALOME ALEXANDRA died and a struggle between JOHN HYRCANUS II and ARISTOBULUS II erupted over the High Priest's office. ARISTOBULUS won

**64** --- POMPEY took Antioch, ending the Seleucid monarchy. He regulated the affairs of the Bedouins, Jews and Nabataeans in Syria. JULIUS CAESAR made himself head of the state

*Jannaeus wife ruled after him and reached out to the Pharisees by appointing her other son (Hyrcanus II) as high priest who was sympathetic to them. The Pharisees greatly increased in power, and were able to impose their views. His younger brother (Aristobulus) was intent on taking the throne, and after their mother's death he defeated his older brother and governed from 66-63 B.C. Hyrcanus II with help of Idumaea besieged his brother in Jerusalem. It was at this point Rome stepped in; Pompey brought them under the yoke of the heathen. Jewish nationalism became as strong as ever under the Roman yoke.*

**63** --- POMPEY took Jerusalem and the Hasmonean power ended

**62** --- JOHN HYRCANUS II was made High Priest and ruler in Judea, Galilee, Samaria and Perea by POMPEY  
*In 48 B.C. Pompey was overthrown by Caesar who granted considerable privileges to the Jews. In 37 B.C. after Jewish civil strife Herod the Great began to reign. He loved Hellenism, but tried to be all things to all people. Since he could not be a high priest, he appointed them. Following the death of Herod in 4 B.C. tumults broke out in Galilee from which time forward became the hot-bed of Jewish nationalism. The Jewish people wanted another freedom fighter to bring about national independence. Zealots were not uncommon, and some believe that Judas Iscariot (from Latin sicarius, an assassin) was possibly one of them.*

**44** --- ANTIPATER and HYRCANUS were authorized to repair the Jerusalem walls

**43** --- Procurator HEROD ANTIPATER the Idumean was poisoned by the Sadducees

**42** --- ANTIGONUS rebelled and was defeated by HEROD. HEROD and PHASAELUS were appointed Tetrarchs of Judea by MARC ANTONY

**40** --- King PARTHIA of Babylon invaded Judea. HEROD fled to Rome where he was made King of Judea by the Roman Senate. ANTIGONUS MATTATHIAS was made High Priest

**38** --- HEROD married MARIAMNE the Maccabean granddaughter of former High Priest HYRCANUS II

**37** --- HEROD conquered Jerusalem. All the Jewish Sanhedrin were slain except two. ANTIGONUS MATTATHIAS was executed and ARISTOBULUS III was made High Priest. Work was begun to restore the Temple

**35** --- HEROD executed ARISTOBULUS III and made JESUS, son of PHIABI, the High Priest

**29** --- HEROD was called before OCTAVIAN for murdering his uncle JOSEPH. HEROD killed his wife MARIAMNE

**28** --- HEROD killed ALEXANDRA, the last of the Hasmoneans

**27** --- OCTAVIAN assumed the title of Emperor AUGUSTUS CAESAR, and the Roman Republic was replaced by the Roman Empire

**26** --- PONTIUS PILATE was appointed Procurator of Judea. GALLUS committed suicide

**22** --- SIMON, son of BOETHUS, became High Priest

**20** --- HEROD began reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple. HILLEL led the Pharisees

**7** --- HEROD slew his and MARIAMNE'S sons ALEXANDER and ARISTOBULUS ZACHARIAS was High Priest

*"Indignation festered against rich landlords, tax collectors, and Roman administrators. The times were ripe for prophetic figures promising divine deliverance from heavy burdens, or even for revolutionary leaders who dreamed of liberating Judah from Roman rule."<sup>128</sup>*

**6** --- The Annunciation to MARY in Nazareth. JOHN THE BAPTIST was born in September to ZACHARIAS and ELISABETH. Judea became a sub-province of Syria

**5** --- JESUS CHRIST was born in Bethlehem in April

*"The Judaisms that emerged from Scripture centered on three points of emphasis: first, the one that stressed doctrine, law and way of life, which emerged from the priestly viewpoint, with its interest in sanctification; second, the one that took a special interest in the wise conduct of every-day-affairs, which emerged from the wisdom writings, with their emphasis on the here-and-now of ordinary life; and third, the one that emphasized the meaning of purpose of history, which emerged from the prophetic viewpoint, with its focus on salvation. The principle strands of ancient Israelite life come to realization in the three distinct types of holy men we identify as priests, scribes, and messiahs..."<sup>129</sup>*

<sup>128</sup> Roetzel, "The World That Shaped the New Testament," 17.

<sup>129</sup> Neusner, "Judaism, An Introduction," 59, 60.

## APPENDIX B

### THEOLOGICAL COMPARISON OF THE GOSPELS AND EPISTLES

#### GENERAL SIMILARITIES

“It is a common teaching of all the New Testament writers that God did something unique in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, and that that unique something is the most important thing that ever happened.”<sup>130</sup> That is why the theme or focal point of the N.T. is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:39; 1 Cor 3:11). His person and work is central in all of scripture (Luke 24:7). “It requires little effort to demonstrate that he is the binding force throughout the NT.”<sup>131</sup> Narrowing it down further, the cross became the core of the overall theme of Christ in both the gospels and the epistles. The N.T. texts are interpreted in light of Calvary. “The death of Christ not only redeemed and propitiated a holy God, but provided the basis by which the world was reconciled unto God.”<sup>132</sup> This is the very core of redemption; it is the heart of the N.T. Canon.

Another common thread between the gospels and the epistles is that they were written to fulfill essential needs of the people. The New Testament authors’ purposed to prove the truths concerning Jesus Messiah, and they encouraged all the readers to consider him foremost. The Gospel writers proved that Jesus had met all the requirements of Israel’s Messiah, and that he also desired to reach the gentiles. They also explained the plans of Messiah; what had been carried out, and what plans were yet to take place. In between these truths they demonstrated the unique life of Christ and his kingdom. They proved that Jesus was the Messiah who redeemed all mankind. The authors of the epistles as well proved that Jesus was superior both to Judaism and the all the religions of the Greco-Roman world. They answered the questions and needs of the Jews, Gentiles, and the church. And it must not be forgotten that all the N.T. writers were also confronting and correcting the heresies about their Messiah.

Jesus Christ was the focal point; the texts were written from a pastor’s heart to instruct, challenge, and to encourage Christian ethical living in an ungodly world. The writings revealed Messiah’s plans and purposes for all.

#### HISTORICAL ORIGIN

The historical origins of the texts appear to be similar. The writers were directed by the Holy Spirit, but were also driven by the church’s need of correct doctrine and practice. Most of the authors were eye witnesses of Christ, or at least had access to them. The gospel writers did not get into all of the detailed doctrines as the Apostle Paul did (Eph 3:1ff; 2 Peter 3:16), but they sought to record the necessary events of Jesus’ life to prove their arguments. They focused more on the pre-cross days of Christ.

#### CANONICAL FUNCTION

Considering the big picture, both the gospels and epistles bring to conclusion God’s completed canon of scripture. It was the last days of God’s progressive revelation, revealed in his son, and confirmed by the Apostles (Hebrews 1:2; 2:1ff). Both together disclose Christ’s first advent, the history that followed, the promise of a second advent, and eternal future. Together they reveal the person of God in Christ, his redemptive plan, and his impact in early church history. The focus of the gospels and epistles do differ somewhat though. The gospels focus more on the days before the cross and Jewish nation. The epistles focus on the effects of the cross in a Jew and Gentile world setting.

#### GENERAL DIFFERENCES

The major difference in relation to the gospels versus the epistles lies in the person and program of Christ. The Messiah came into this world as Israel’s prophesied king. He was born of Jewish lineage into a Jewish household, and he lived his life in a Jewish culture. He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6; Matthew 15:24). The Gospel of John recorded how he came to Jerusalem for a number of Jewish activities. But in spite of his Jewishness, he was rejected by his own. The Gospel of Matthew recorded the outcome of this rejection. That will be covered under *Substance*.

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<sup>130</sup> Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology*, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1986) 91.

<sup>131</sup> Guthrie, “New Testament Theology,” 54.

<sup>132</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1974) 62.

The epistles were very different in this respect; they dealt more with life outside of Jerusalem. It is not that these issues are absent in the epistles by any means, but that the epistles were written to churches that were mainly in Gentile areas with a mixture of Gentile and Jewish issues.

#### *FORMS/STYLES*

The gospels were written a bit differently in form or style than the epistles. They had a tendency to be general, rather than pointed pertaining to the audience. The audience is not defined in the gospel writings. The gospels historically follow the life of Christ, sometimes loosely and sometimes closely. “In the gospels the teaching is found in various aspects – the sayings of Jesus, the doings of Jesus, the theological comments of the evangelists.”<sup>133</sup> In totality “These accounts present the ‘good news’ concerning the Son of God, telling His life on Earth and His death on the cross for the sin of mankind.”<sup>134</sup> The focus of the gospels is the physically present Messiah and his kingdom teachings and works. The gospels also closely focus in on the physical suffering of Christ, his death, burial, and resurrection. Morris claims, “And when we come to the public ministry [of Jesus], we have only a small proportion of Jesus’ teaching and his life and a disproportionate amount of information about his death and resurrection.”<sup>135</sup>

Generally, the epistles were written as personal letters to specific people, groups, or churches. They reflect and answer certain problems, concerns, and questions of the recipients. It is apparent that the epistles reflect one side of a conversation; certain facts are assumed by the authors and recipients. The focus of the epistles relates to the happenings of the church in relation to her risen Messiah. The epistles do not historically describe and prove the suffering of Christ, but assume it, and use it as the basis for doctrine and practice.

#### *SUBSTANCE*

The substance of the gospels and epistles differ in respect to Messiah’s programs. While Christ was on earth it was a Jewish focused ministry, which is reflected in the substance of the gospel writings. McClain states this concerning Christ’s introduction of himself in Luke 4:18-21, “. . .it is clear that we have here the Messianic Kingdom promised to the nation of Israel, which will be established over all nations, in its splendor and greatness.”<sup>136</sup> McClain continues by stating, “The Gospel records always connect the Kingdom proclaimed by our Lord with the Kingdom of Old Testament prophecy.”<sup>137</sup> Even though this promised kingdom had a gentile aspect, it was mainly Jewish in content. The majority of Jesus’ time was spent with his people. Yet this Messianic Kingdom never came to pass due to Israel’s national rejection of her Messiah. After Jesus Christ’s rejection and crucifixion it became both a Jew and Gentile focused ministry. The book of Acts clearly traces this course of history. So while the content of the gospels reflect the nearness of the Messianic Kingdom, the content of the epistles reflect the gentile program in Christ’s absence and anticipated Second Advent. A thematic glimpse at Matthew’s Gospel reveals this twofold aspect of both a Jewish centered ministry and a Gentile focused ministry that was to come about with Messiah’s rejection.

Prophecy in the book of Isaiah reveals a dual role of Jesus Christ Messiah (Isa 42:6). The first New Covenant aspect is that Messiah would restore Israel and bring justice to the nations; the second aspect of the New Covenant is that Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles. It appears that with Israel’s rejection of her king and refusal of restoration, the gospel was then to be proclaimed to all nations. That is why the substance between the gospels and epistles does vary. One has a Jewish emphasis, the other a Gentile emphasis. Matthew clearly demonstrated this in his Gospel narrative.

The overall theme of the Gospel of Matthew reveals this dual role of Messiah. Notice the difference in direction and instruction after the unpardonable sin in Matthew chapter 13 due to the rejection of Christ by the Jewish leadership. Matthew demonstrated this change of ministry focus for the Messiah, but he also demonstrated in Matthew chapters 24 and 25 that he would at some point in time turn his attention back to restoring Israel.

#### *INTERPRETIVE RELATIONSHIP*

The above arguments do affect the interpretive relationship between the gospels and the epistles. The rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah appears to have changed his program. Even though these two bodies of texts under discussion are closely intertwined, the interpreter must be careful how the text is to be understood. Guthrie states, “Unquestionably the major problem within the variety of NT theology is the relationship between the theology of

<sup>133</sup> Guthrie, “New Testament Theology,” 49.

<sup>134</sup> Walvoord, and Zuck, “The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament,” 13.

<sup>135</sup> Morris, “New Testament Theology,” 93, 94.

<sup>136</sup> McClain, “The Greatness of the Kingdom,” 280.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* 281.

Paul and the teaching of Jesus.”<sup>138</sup> One example is: Matthew 10 demands that the Gospel of the Kingdom was for the Israelites alone, and Paul claims it is for both Jew and Gentile (Romans 1:16). When the Bible student constructs a N.T. theology he must intricately link these texts, but he must also keep in mind the time period and historical context in relation to what God was doing in the world. Is Messiah restoring Israel? Or is he building his church? Both Jesus and John the Baptist spoke of the nearness of a kingdom (Matthew 3:2; 4:17), yet the epistles do not focus on the Messianic Kingdom’s nearness, but the church, or body of Christ. “The frequent occurrence of the term *ekklesia* [Greek word for church] in the epistles suggests that they are concerned chiefly with this particular body of the saved. The term appears only three times in the gospels, doubtless in a prophetic sense (Matt. 16:18; 18:17); nineteen times in the book of Acts; and sixty seven times in the epistles.”<sup>139</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Some interpreters suggest that this two-fold division appears to fit the pattern of the Old Testament pattern of the Law and Prophets. The Law was the foundation set forth; and the Prophets were the working out of that Law within the framework of an ever changing cosmos. Similarly, the gospels set the foundation of the unique person of Jesus Christ; the ultimate fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures, and the epistles work out or continue to build on that foundation which was laid in the gospels. Guthrie says this of Paul, “. . . Paul introduces many concepts which do not occur in the teaching of Jesus. Some of his most characteristic ideas concern the person and work of Christ and their application to man.”<sup>140</sup> Paul declared Calvary centered truth that was obviously built upon Christ’s cross. It was truth that was not contrary to Christ but was an extension of Jesus’ own work and words (Gal. 1:11, 12).

Whether the reader fully agrees with this analysis of the gospels and epistles (interpreting them in light of Messiah’s twofold program), in this may all agree: That Jesus Christ alone is the central figure and theme of the scripture; he being the living word of God written of, and revealed to the world; the one who as no other seized history with his first advent. And as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ may we allow the anticipation of his Second Advent to seize our lives.

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<sup>138</sup> Guthrie, “New Testament Theology,” 51.

<sup>139</sup> McClain, “The Greatness of the Kingdom,” 431.

<sup>140</sup> Guthrie, “New Testament Theology,” 53.

## APPENDIX C

### Daniel's "Seventy Sevens"

#### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The year was 538 BC, the location was Babylon, the ruler was Darius the Mede, the recipient was the faithful old prophet Daniel, the messenger of God was Gabriel, and the interpretation was, "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city..."<sup>141</sup> Why are there seventy weeks determined for the children of Israel? "1) To finish the transgression, 2) To make an end of sins, 3) To make reconciliation for iniquity, 4) To bring in everlasting righteousness, 5) To seal up vision and prophecy, 6) And to anoint the Most Holy."<sup>142</sup> This futuristic message to Daniel was astounding. But Gabriel did not end with this previously quoted scripture; he went on to give further detail concerning what the seventy weeks (or seventy sevens) would entail.

This portion of scripture (Daniel 9:24-27) "are four of the most controversial verses in the Bible..."<sup>143</sup> It is considered by some scholars as the most difficult text in the entire book of Daniel. Walvoord claims that liberal scholars doubt the reality of a future fulfillment for Israel, "The prophecy, because of its precision, has aroused great opposition from liberal expositors who attempt to explain it away as somehow a garbled restatement of the seventy years of Israel's captivity."<sup>144</sup> Perhaps it may be one of the most complex and troublesome texts in the book of Daniel, but without controversy it is one of the most fascinating texts relating to the future, even associated with the detailed eschatological events described in the Book of Revelation. "In all of prophetic scripture, this is surely one of the most significant. The very background of the prophecy – Daniel's search through previous prophetic writings, his fervent and effectual prayer, the arrival of Gabriel at God's urgent command – all serve to prepare the reader for truly a spectacular statement of divine purpose for Israel."<sup>145</sup>

Since controversy and mystery surround this exceptional revelation given to the aged Daniel, this writer will endeavor to recapitulate various espoused interpretations of this text. A survey of this author's interpretive view will be established, with the supporting facts in regards to his analysis. Lastly, a brief conclusion will be noted as to the practicality of this exciting scriptural revelation.

#### A GLIMPSE OF INTERPRETIVE VIEWS OF THE SEVENTY SEVENS

The first difficulty requiring a solid explanation is, "what are the seventy weeks referring to?" Some biblical scholars consider the seventy weeks indefinite or figurative periods of time. This would appear to leave more room for various interpretations; e.g. fitting seventy weeks into history without having to deal with definite historical dates or events. But other biblical scholars argue that the sevens reflect a definite time period in which each week is equivalent to a seven year period. This view would result in there being a definite 490 year period in which this prophecy would take place. Therefore, the prophesied events (of the 490 years) would have to fit into world history as we know it. But the differences among these scholars that hold to the latter view commences as to when the 490 years fit into history as we know it.

Those who hold to the first view (an indefinite or figurative amount of time) believe, "The emphasis is on the events and the certainty of the progression of redemption rather than on the length of time."<sup>146</sup> (This group of scholars also differs concerning the timing of these prophetic events). But with this explanation of the seventy weeks there are a number of problems. The sevens (periods of time) are not interpreted consistently and the duration of the time periods widely vary. Miller makes an excellent point. "...those who contend that the sevens are symbolic must account for the fact that specific numbers are used and for division of the seventy sevens into units of seven, sixty-two, and one. Why would such definite numbers be employed to represent periods of indefinite length?" Walvoord warns, "Conservative scholars, particularly those who are amillennial, resist the idea that this is a literal 490 years because they have difficulty in finding fulfillment that is satisfactory to their other views."<sup>147</sup> This figurative or allegorical model of interpretation is simply too subjective, and allows uncontrolled freedom of

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<sup>141</sup> Daniel 9:24a. All scripture references are NKJV unless otherwise noted.

<sup>142</sup> Daniel 9:24b.

<sup>143</sup> Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel: The New American Commentary* (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 252.

<sup>144</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1990), 250.

<sup>145</sup> John C. Whitcomb, *Daniel: Everyman's Bible Commentary* (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1985), 129.

<sup>146</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 349.

<sup>147</sup> Walvoord, "Every Prophecy of the Bible," 250.

interpretation weighed against the preciseness of God's revelation to Daniel. For this reason this view will not be considered any further, except in its relationship to preterism in the conclusion of this thesis.

The latter view of Daniel's 70 weeks (literal seven year periods), not only works out contextually, but this view also collaborates with other known scriptures in Daniel's day. In accordance with Leviticus 25:3-9, the Lord had divided Israel's calendar into seven year periods; with every seventh year being a sabbatical year. What did this mean for Israel? The nation had gone 490 years disobeying the law concerning the sabbatical year (resting the land), therefore for 70 ( $490/7 = 70$ ) years she was to be in captivity in Babylon (Lev. 26:34-35; 2 Chron. 36:21).<sup>148</sup> The Hebrews were not only familiar with the divisions of seven, Daniel himself was aware of it also (Daniel 9:2). Bear in mind that the 70 years of discipline and the "seventy weeks of years" all relate to Israel, her kingdom, and her occupation of the Promised Land and the Holy City. That is why the reader can be confident that the 70 weeks of years can be equated to an actual 490 year period, not just symbolic periods of time. Those who do hold to this view also differ concerning the timing of the events within this prophecy.

Since it is not absolutely certain when the decree went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25) which is the inauguration of the seventy weeks, it allows room for varied opinions as to the start of the seventy weeks. As to the conclusion of the seventy weeks, views vary from Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.), Christ's first advent, His death, somewhere in-between His death and the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem, and Christ's second coming.<sup>149</sup>

#### DETAILS REGARDING THE FULFILLMENT OF THE SEVENTY SEVENS

Now regarding the issuing of the decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, there are three popular beginning points in view that can be biblically referenced: The first date is 538 B.C., when Cyrus permitted Jewish exiles to return to their land. Yet no decree commanded the rebuilding of Jerusalem during this time. More importantly, the date of Messiah's being "cut off" is not even remotely close to being 483 years later.

The second date was 458 B.C., when Artaxerxes I allowed the Jews under Ezra to reestablish their proper temple worship. Yet no decree commanded the rebuilding of Jerusalem during this time. Although the date of Messiah's being "cut off" could possibly correlate with this view if the 483 years were 365 day years.

The third date is 445 B.C. (or early 444 B.C.), when Artaxerxes I gave the decree to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem (Neh. 2:5-8). The nature of this decree of Artaxerxes I given to Nehemiah in 445 B.C. best correlates with the decree referenced in Daniel 9:25. Although Miller notes, "Those who begin the sevens in 445-444 B.C. are faced with a dilemma; 483 years after 445 B.C. comes to A.D. 39, a date well after the time of Christ."<sup>150</sup> Miller further comments by stating that Anderson argued that the years were 360 day prophetic years, dating the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week at April 6<sup>th</sup>, A.D. 32, the time of Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He further adds that Archer demonstrated that Israel used a 365 day year, thus throwing doubt on this 360 day prophetic year theory of Andersons.<sup>151</sup> Miller also claims there is another problem with this time frame; "...most consider that Christ was not crucified in A.D. 32 but in A.D. 30."<sup>152</sup> Yet in contrast to this statement Walvoord asserts, "If 444 B.C. is accepted as the beginning date of the 490 years, the 483 years would culminate in the year A.D. 33 where recent scholarship has placed the probable time of the death of Christ."<sup>153</sup> One can clearly assess that the timing of Christ death is a debatable issue. But a question must be asked, "Is a 360 day prophetic year possible?"

Would God use a 360 day prophetic year even if the Israel did not? It appears that He would. Consider Walvoord on this issue, "The concept that the prophetic year is 360 days is confirmed by the 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6), with the forty-two months (11:2; 13:5), and with a time, times and half a time, or 3 ½ years (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14)."<sup>154</sup> Simply put, 1260 divided by 360 equals exactly 3 ½ years, or 42 months, or Daniel's time, times and half a times. A 360 day prophetic year is quite possible.

<sup>148</sup> For more information on this subject see, Renald Showers, *Maranatha Our Lord, Come!* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995).

<sup>149</sup> For more information on this subject see: Miller, *Daniel: The New American Commentary*, 252-257.

<sup>150</sup> Miller, "Daniel: The New American Commentary," 265.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.* 265.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* 265.

<sup>153</sup> Walvoord, "Every Prophecy of the Bible," 254.

<sup>154</sup> Walvoord, "Every Prophecy of the Bible," 254.

In conclusion regarding the commencing of the seventy weeks (the decree to rebuild Jerusalem), it seems most plausible, that the 445-444 B.C. decree of Artaxerxes I given to Nehemiah best synchronizes with the decree in Daniel. But in either case, since the seventy sevens appear to be actual years, not just irregular time periods, and the dating of the Messiah's death is anywhere from A.D. 30-33 (depending on which view you hold), there is one week that has yet to be fulfilled, since Messiah was cut off ("The word 'cut off' was used for the death penalty [Lev. 7:20-21, 25, 27] and often referred to a violent death..."<sup>155</sup>) after 69 weeks. It is this author's position that Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week has not been fulfilled, but is yet future.

Many scholars believe that Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week has been fulfilled; as already mentioned, anywhere from Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.) to the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. The majority who believe in the complete fulfillment place the completion of the 70<sup>th</sup> week anywhere from Messiah's death to A.D. 70. Bright apparently identifies Antiochus IV Epiphanes as the fulfillment of the 70<sup>th</sup> week.<sup>156</sup> Baldwin effectively points out, "Commentators who argue that Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled this prophecy are at a loss to account for the fact that he destroyed neither the temple nor the city of Jerusalem..."<sup>157</sup> Glasser identifies the 70<sup>th</sup> week with Messiah's death.<sup>158</sup> VanGemeran believes, "The last 'seven' will witness the death of the Messiah (v. 26a) and the desecration of the temple (vv. 26b-27)."<sup>159</sup> (Recall, VanGemeran emphasizes the progress of redemption as more important than length of time regarding the seventy weeks). Pentecost asserts that in general, "The posttribulationist denies any future fulfillment to the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, claiming for it an historical fulfillment."<sup>160</sup>

Now as to this writer's futuristic view of the completion of the seventy weeks of years, a number of reasons will be reflected upon as to why the future second coming of Christ will bring the seventy weeks to an end. First, the text of Daniel 9:24-27 indicates that the achievement of God's intended plans will all come to pass. The first three goals (see introduction for the six goals) of v. 24 have been achieved in part through Calvary (not a reality with the nation of Israel yet), but not the last three in the least. "...according to verse 26, He [Messiah] will be 'cut off and have nothing'... that is, the Messianic King will have none of the blessings named in verse 24, for these attach specifically to Daniel's historic 'people' and 'city' when the kingdom shall have been established on earth in accordance with other Old Testament predictions."<sup>161</sup>

Second, the text indicates that there would be a break between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week. "For example, Christ's crucifixion... and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (v. 26) would occur *after* the sixty-ninth seven, but *not during* the seventieth seven (v. 27), revealing a gap between these sevens."<sup>162</sup> Miller goes on to argue that prophetic gaps were not uncommon among Old Testament prophecies, "in which gaps such as that between the first and second advents were not perceived."<sup>163</sup> That is why this present period of the church, which does not pertain to Daniel's people is not surprisingly absent from his prophecies. It is clear that the Isaiah prophecies revealed that the servant Messiah would have a dual role; that of restoring Israel and that of being a light to the gentiles (Isa. 49:6). The Apostle Paul clearly and powerfully delineated this truth in his letter to the Romans (Romans chapters 9-11). That is why Israel can count upon her God to restore her just as her Messiah promised. But the time is not yet; the times of the gentiles have not come to a completion. The text does validate a break between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week.

Third is the case for historical accuracy. "A careful study of the text will show that the first 483 of the 490 years are now history, having been fulfilled at the time of the first coming of the Messiah."<sup>164</sup> McClain contends, that the sixty-nine weeks of years were accurately fulfilled by an omniscient God. So be the case, why should one expect anything less for the seventieth week?<sup>165</sup> The prophecy and the fulfillment of the prophecy are so astoundingly accurate, that liberal scholars have refused to believe that the Book of Daniel was written in the sixth century B.C.; these thinkers claim it was written by a pseudo author many years later reflecting upon the history that had taken place from the sixth to second centuries concerning the nation of Israel.

<sup>155</sup> Showers, "Marantha Our Lord, Come!" 240.

<sup>156</sup> John Bright, *The History of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 425.

<sup>157</sup> Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-varsity Press, 1978), 171.

<sup>158</sup> Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 179.

<sup>159</sup> VanGemeran, "Interpreting the Prophetic Word," 349.

<sup>160</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 165.

<sup>161</sup> McClain, "The Greatness Of the Kingdom," 173-174.

<sup>162</sup> Miller, "Daniel: The New American Commentary," 269.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: The Missing Link In Systematic Theology," 769.

<sup>165</sup> Alva J. McClain, *Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 5.

Fourth is the signing of the covenant (v. 27). From the text it is evident that the “one week” would refer to the seventieth week. And that week would begin by the signing of a covenant. Young<sup>166</sup> claims the person making the covenant will be the Messiah. But Young’s concept lacks biblical evidence since Messiah’s New Covenant is an everlasting covenant, therefore it will never be broken (Heb. 13:20). The covenant maker according to the events of the text refers to one who is against God and against His people Israel. Whitcomb also affirms, “There is no place in history where such an event [Dan. 9:27] can be placed, certainly not at the crucifixion as some have supposed.”<sup>167</sup> Many would affirm that the covenant maker is the antichrist. He will make a covenant with Israel for seven years, which half way through (3 ½ years) he will break the covenant. This event collaborates well with Revelation 12:6-17. That is why it is most hermeneutically consistent to place the people and events of Dan. 9:27 as yet future.

In reflection, by endeavoring to remain true to a grammatical, literal, and historical interpretive view of Daniel 9:24-27, it appears that Daniel’s seventieth week has not arrived; it is waiting for divine fulfillment by a sovereign God who can not only divulge future details, but execute them with supernatural precision. Does it matter if God accomplishes His prophetic promises? Isn’t it His name that is at stake?

According to this student of the Word, Daniel’s seventy sevens can be counted upon as being real numbers with real meaning and with real significance, otherwise why did God give us such prophetic detail? The seventy sevens are seven weeks of years totaling 490 years, all dealing with God’s chosen nation Israel. After the first sixty-nine weeks the Messiah was cut off with no earthly kingdom as of yet. When the Messiah was cut off Daniel’s prophetic clock stopped, and is on hold until the signing of the covenant established by the antichrist. At that time the last week (seven years) will come to pass, ushering in the King at the end of the seven years. At that time Daniel 9:24-27 will come to a perfect completion, just as the Lord foretold it would.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, does it really matter what one believes in relation to Daniel’s seventy sevens? This author is convinced it makes a tremendous difference. One example and probably the most obvious is that of Preterism, even replacement theology.

Michael A. Fenemore, a preterist defines preterism as, “the belief that all Bible prophecies, including those concerned with the Second Coming of Jesus, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Rapture and the Judgment came to complete fulfillment in AD 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem just as Jesus predicted they would”<sup>168</sup> (Emphasis added). The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is absolutely essential to preterist eschatology. R.C. Sproul claims that Preterism has “An eschatological viewpoint that places many or all eschatological events in the past, especially during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70”<sup>169</sup> (Emphasis added). The futurist Randall Price claims that, “Preterism, however, which forces the fulfillment of most prophetic texts, particularly the fall of Jerusalem and the temple, into the events of the first Jewish revolt, views the destruction of the Jewish people as the central focus of prophecy.”<sup>170</sup>

When Jesus delivered the Olivet Discourse, he mentioned Dan. 9:27 as an event yet unfulfilled, he also spoke of many future circumstances and events that would come to pass. He spoke of the destruction of the favored Jewish temple, and a scattering of God’s people. He also used the term, “this generation” intertwined with the culmination of these prophetic events. Preterists claim that “this generation,” was the generation living when Christ delivered the Olivet Discourse. They argue the fact that this prophecy of Messiah was to shortly come to pass. It appears to be a probability. Therefore, the preterist views the Lord’s Olivet discourse including Daniel’s seventy weeks as having come to complete fulfillment by A.D. 70.

The preterist also differs with the futurist concerning the physical aspect of prophetic fulfillment. While futurism places itself under the control of a physical, literal, fulfillment of prophecy, the preterist may insist on a loose spiritual (allegorical) fulfillment. The preterist claim would be that the seventy weeks do not have to be exactly fulfilled physically or literally, but spiritually. (The prophetic word may be symbolic in nature as already discussed;

<sup>166</sup> Miller, “Daniel: The New American Commentary,” 270.

<sup>167</sup> Whitcomb, “Daniel: Everyman’s Bible Commentary,” 133.

<sup>168</sup> Michael A. Fenemore. [www.preterism.info](http://www.preterism.info). Accessed 9/20/2007.

<sup>169</sup> R.C. Sproul. *The Last Days According to Jesus*. p. 228, [Todd D. Dennis, www.preterism-eschatology.com/What%20Is%20The%20Preterist%20View.htm](http://Todd D. Dennis, www.preterism-eschatology.com/What%20Is%20The%20Preterist%20View.htm). Accessed 9/20/2007.

<sup>170</sup> Price. “Preterism’s Prophetic Dead End,” 22.

symbolic of spiritual truths.) Consequently, Daniel's seventy weeks guarantees no future for Israel. The New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant; the spiritual church replaced the physical nation of Israel.<sup>171</sup> The preterist views the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem as God's final dealing with the unbelieving nation of Israel. The preterist therefore does not look forward to a future physical Messianic Jewish kingdom as promised in Daniel, for he is living in the spiritual kingdom at this very moment, which is the preterist reality of the physical kingdom promises. The foremost difficulty is, sorrowfully to say, that Israel has been replaced and forgotten. Could a faithful God turn his back on hundreds of promises to her? Did not he say his love for her was an everlasting love (Jer. 31:3)?

This author, as a futurist does not believe that the full realization of Daniel's seventy weeks of years came to pass by A.D. 70. Since this is the case, there has to be a future for the nation of Israel. God will make good on every promise, and every detail of his promises, including those to Daniel, his people, and to the church (Isa. 49:6). Does it matter how one views the seventy weeks? It would appear so.

Praise God for his unfathomable mercy and wisdom!

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.” Rom. 11:33-36

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<sup>171</sup> Todd D. Dennis, *An Introduction to Preterism* [www.preterism-eschatology.com/What%20Is%20The%20Preterist%20View.htm](http://www.preterism-eschatology.com/What%20Is%20The%20Preterist%20View.htm). Accessed 9/20/2007.

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