

Part 1

Last time, we finished Daniel's wonderful prophecy of the '70 Weeks of Daniel.' The angel, Gabriel, told Daniel that it would be a total of 173,880 days until Messiah rode into Jerusalem, riding on the colt of a donkey, as prophesied by Zechariah: His Triumphant Entry: '*...and (they) brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set (Jesus) thereon. ⁸ And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and (spread) them in the way. ⁹ And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. ¹⁰ And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? ¹¹ And the multitude said this is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. ¹² And (immediately) Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, ¹³ And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. ¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. ¹⁵ And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; **they were sore displeased...***' Mt 21:7 What a thing! Right before their eyes: a very important prophecy from Zechariah is fulfilled as they watch. Then, the blind and the lame are instantly healed... none of this phony 'I sense that God is healing a sore neck... or a sore toe... or whatever completely unverifiable malarkey they spout today... Jesus was the real deal doing the real thing and what was the response from those evil hearted Pharisees... **they were sore displeased!!** Imagine how sore displeased God was toward them...

We see the exact thing today here and around the World. Under the previous administration, gasoline was \$1.67/gal. We were energy independent; the economy was growing at 3-4%... conservative judges were being appointed who would honor the Constitution in their decisions... small businesses were being created by the 10's of thousands... unemployment was at historical lows... peoples' outlooks were at historic highs... everything in this country was moving in the right direction... and the *Left* were sore displeased!!! They fomented evil from every corner. They've brought every kind of evil out into the open to be no longer hidden in the shadows... they are proud of their evil ... every kind of sexual deviancy, grooming children for sexual purposes, killing babies till the hour of delivery and even after when they can get away with it... surely, Sodom and Gomorrah were tame in comparison to today's Left.

What we see in this country and around the World is simply a reflection of the evil that has always infected humanity. We live in the kingdom of darkness and it will only get worse until the Antichrist comes on the scene and Hell reigns upon the Earth.

Then, just a few verses later in that chapter we read: '*Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?' ⁴³ Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. ⁴⁴ And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. ⁴⁵ And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet'.* Mt 21:42

Here we see Jesus presenting Himself as King; then, as the Mighty King, He throws out all of the crooked moneychangers and sacrificial animal merchants from the Temple area. Then we see Him fearlessly confronting and judging the Pharisees, condemning them according to the Law and Prophets.

Regarding a stone, Jesus is referring to the Psalms and Isaiah: '*Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. ¹⁴ And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for **a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel.***' Isaiah 8:13

Not only would they reject Him but they would be offended and stumble over Him.

'The stone which the builders refused is become the (chief cornerstone.) ²³ This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.' Psa 118:22

'Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. ⁸ I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. ⁹ For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.' Psa 69:7

Back in Daniel chapter 2, we see this 'Stone' in Nebuchadnezzar's dream which Daniel interpreted for him; he had seen, in his dream, a great statue representing five world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the later revived Roman Empire of the Last Days. At the end of his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a stone, cut without hands, which struck the statue at its feet, at the end of the Age, destroying the statue, grinding it to powder which the wind carried away, while the stone grew into a great Kingdom which filled all the Earth.

'This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, ³³ His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. ³⁴ Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. ³⁵ Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.' Dan 2:32

Jesus is that Stone; all who fall upon Him, in repentance, are broken and saved, as He is the only door to Salvation, the only Way to God. But all those who reject Him are shattered, ground to powder and destroyed. This statue, Nebuchadnezzar saw, represented all the World's great empires, each built upon the conquest of the previous, until the final world empire of the Antichrist. At that time, at the end of the Tribulation, the end of the final 70th Week of Daniel, Jesus would return to destroy completely that final kingdom, replacing it with His own Millennial Kingdom which would last for 1000 years and then forever.

The Pharisees knew exactly who Jesus was, and is, and they willingly crucified Him. Jesus told them:

'Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.' Mt 21:43 Jesus was telling them what we've been studying all along: the Kingdom would be taken from Israel, for a time, as they would be '*shelved*' for 2000 years while the Gospel of Grace, as taught to, and by, Paul, would be taken to every Gentile nation as God would draw to Himself all those whom He had chosen and elected, from the foundation of the World, to be the Body and Bride of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ: ***the True Church***.

I refer to the 'True Church' because from the very beginning of the Church, there has grown beside it, and even from within it, a false church, an apostate church, led by false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing. That false church grows larger and stronger by the day, swallowing up weak and wandering congregations from nearly every denomination and also so many weak and wandering '*christians*' sitting at home watching their blasphemous '*circuses*' every Sunday morning on phony '*christian*' television stations across the U.S. and the World. After the True Church is removed, in the Rapture, that false, apostate church will willingly and wholeheartedly join the Worldwide Whore of Babylon *church*, led by the False Prophet who will direct all worship to the Antichrist who will, himself, claim to be god.

Jesus fulfilled Daniel's prophecy, perfectly, presenting Himself as King on the very day that was prophesied, some 500 years earlier. Then He fearlessly confronted the false religious system of the Pharisees, told His Disciples that He will be killed, also in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, and now, in Mt. 24, He will give them an important picture of the future. Seeing that He had fulfilled Daniel's prophecy would later give the Disciples, and us, the assurance that everything Jesus said would also be fulfilled perfectly and completely.

In the next chapter, Mt 22, Jesus said, *'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son (sounds familiar), and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ... Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, **but they which were bidden were not worthy**. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found,*

both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. (These are not the Bride; they are the guests at the Wedding.) ¹¹ *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:* ¹² *And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. (These are the same to whom Jesus will say, 'I never knew you.' They are like those filling pews today having never come to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith; they believe they are saved, that they have every right to be either in or at the Wedding of the Messiah but they will be cast into outer darkness.)* Then said the king to the servants, *Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **For many are called, but few are chosen.***
Mt 22:2,8,13

We understand that Jesus is describing something far more than just some regular wedding in Israel when the king tells His servants: *'Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **For many are called, but few are chosen.***' This is serious and it is eternal reality; there is no second chance when one finally stands alone before the King.

Remember, as we rightly divide His Word of Truth, Jesus is living in Old Testament times and He is preaching directly to Old Testament Jews and also speaking for the benefit of Tribulation Saints who would be those very guests at the wedding of the Bride to the Son. The one cast out, without proper wedding garments, would be one who had not truly come to faith in Jesus Christ. It appears, from Scripture, that during the Tribulation, those who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will not be part of the Church; the Church will have been removed; they will be like the Old Testament Saints.

As Jesus speaks, He is speaking in Old Testament times and those same times will resume after the Rapture. This, again, goes hand in hand with Daniel's 70 weeks. It will be as though the 69th week flowed directly into the 70th week as if the 2000 year gap of the Church had not even occurred. If we can see and understand that concept... we will see and understand so much more of God's Word and Prophecy.

Something that will never change is God's faithfulness to those whom He did elect and choose from the foundation of the World. Remember... our salvation is all God's work from beginning to end; He elected us in eternity past, He revealed Himself to us at the proper time, He gave to us the gift of faith to believe and He is the one who is responsible to carry us safely through until the Rapture or death. The same will be true during the Tribulation; it will be God's responsibility to carry them safely through until death or the return to Earth of the Lord Jesus Christ to inaugurate His Kingdom on Earth for 1000 years and then forever.

Salvation has always been according to God's Grace through our faith in the Savior, the Messiah, whether He was coming in the future or came in the past. If we say that Tribulation Saints are responsible to 'stay saved,' during the Tribulation, then we are saying that they are capable of being 'good enough' to be or stay saved. No one, except the Lord Jesus Christ, has ever been able to be good enough, ever! Every saint, from every time in history, has always been dependent only upon God for his salvation... always!

Every aspect of Salvation is all and only God's work... period!! No matter who, where or when!

Many are called, both in Israel and throughout the Gentile nations. All are being called and yet, few there be who were chosen and elected before the foundation of the World. Remember what Jesus said: *'Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:* ¹⁴ *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* ¹⁵ *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.'* Mt 7:13 ***For many are called, but few are chosen!***

Also remember: Daniel's prophecy led to the Crucifixion (483 years) but there remained one final seven year period which, once the Church is removed, will be as if it had been tacked onto the end of the 483 years at the Crucifixion. At that time, God will resume dealing with Israel as if there had been no time lapse, as if the Crucifixion had occurred the day before; that's what the Tribulation period is: that continued, final, 7 years.

Countless false teachers leading countless congregations, as they tailor their message and format to attract the world by trying to be just like the world, believe that they are working hard to 'build the kingdom, enlarge

the kingdom, further the kingdom...' when, in fact, all they are doing is filling their buildings with goats... those who sit, believing that they are *'in the kingdom'* when, in fact, they are being led, by their false teachers and pastors straight to eternity in Hell. They do not live in the kingdom and they are not enlarging the kingdom; Jesus said, *'My Kingdom is not of this world... and... I will build My Church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.'* He said that His Kingdom is not of this World... yet... when He returns, He will set up His Kingdom on Earth over which He will rule and reign for 1000 years and then forever as we rule and reign with Him.

The Church is not the Kingdom of Heaven... no matter how forcefully some 'TV-types' and 'megachurch types' try to say it is. The kingdom which many of them are, in fact, enlarging and furthering is the kingdom of darkness... let that sink in...

The next Chapter, 23 of Matthew, can best be described as Jesus saying, over and over: *'Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees... But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Woe unto you, ye blind guides Ye fools and blind... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.... Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar... ³⁶ Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. ³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, ³⁸ Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.'*

Jesus foresaw all that would happen to Israel, just a few years thence. He is the Word of God... He saw that Israel would reject and crucify Him; He knew that it was only by God's grace that Israel would not be wiped from the map forever; He knew that the time would finally come, two millennia into the future when God would restore Israel back into her land, followed by His return to Earth to personally rule and reign over Israel, and the World, for 1000 years and then forever.

And after Jesus cleansed the Temple of the money changers and after His prophecy against Israel's leaders... in Matt 24: *'And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. ³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?'*

The Disciples asked Him not one but, actually, three separate questions and the first thing He answered to them was: ***'See to it that you are not deceived!'***

This has been background for what Jesus will tell His Disciples, and us, in Matthew 24 which is a most important chapter in God's Word; never forget: all of God's Word, from Genesis through the Revelation, flows seamlessly from beginning to end as one message and revelation of God to man:

God is Holy and He is Love. Man is sinful and he is lost; all deserve and are destined for eternity in Hell.

God offers forgiveness and eternal salvation.

In these Last Days leading to the 70th Week of Daniel, all pretense of morality is being thrown aside; all evil is on full display: every reiteration of deep, dark immorality is being glorified and magnified while every expression of righteousness is being openly shamed, vilified and maligned.

Evil is called good and good is called evil.

'And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.' Matt 24:22

Next time we'll dive right into Matthew 24: a very important and far reaching prophecy.