

74 YEARS - COMPANION I

JESUS – LAMB OF YAHWEH AND MESSIAH OF ISRAEL

A commentary

If we explore and discover what the four main players in our historical carve out said and wrote, it should become clear what economy they represented and what economy informed their perspectives. It is called context, and context is critical to understanding the Word of God. The scriptures are not haphazard, and they are not a tossed salad where everything is indiscriminately thrown together. Cherry picking cherished verses and passages is no way to understand what the Lord is trying to tell us. We must discern the big picture if we are to grasp the Author and His purposes. We can't be cavalier about His Word. Everything we read has its proper place and special purpose. We must be smart about sorting these things, because, if we're not, we'll live in a know-nothing world beyond the ability of the Lord to use us to move His purposes forward. It is a question of being a spectator or a participant. If we really care about joining the Lord in His eternal purpose, we will have to pass the test of knowing His Word. There are no shortcuts. We must pay the price to know how the Word is divided up, what the economies are, who are the main players, and what those players spoke and wrote.

JESUS

His birth in 4 BC began the 74-year period that ended with the Roman destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 AD. Some argue that because Herod died in 3 BC, it would make no sense for him to issue the baby-killing edict to cover two-year-olds, unless Jesus was born in 6 BC. But remember this was Herod and Herod was not concerned with anything but himself. All his information concerning the new king came from the magi who asked concerning "the King of Israel." If the magi came all that way to visit the child, then the child must be born. That terrified Herod. A new king? Already born? He didn't know when, nor did the magi. He recklessly throws out a blanket edict to kill all males two and under, just in case the magi are a little late to

the party. He did it because he could. He wanted nothing to interfere with his monarchy, soon to be passed down to his sons.

But Yahweh intervened and protected the child, as He had every right to do.

Christ the Son of God as the Word was in the beginning with His Father. Because He is the Word, He expresses the invisible thoughts of His Father, and He manifests, or demonstrates, the invisible Godhead to creation. We can see that the Father's thoughts are conveyed to us, His creatures, in the form of language. The Son is the Word, the manifestation of His Father's thoughts.

Let's take creation. God the Father's invisible thought is that His Son would have two things: a body and a bride mystically comprised of human beings. For that to happen, His thoughts must materialize. Thoughts materialize in words. Christ the Son is the Word that materializes the Father's thoughts. The Father needs a creation, so the Son creates. First the universe; then the angels; followed by humanity. We don't know the duration of time between these three events. Some say thousands of years, others billions. In any case there had to be a good bit of time for Lucifer, the archangel, to contemplate rebellion, to decide, and to urge his companion angels to insurrection against Yahweh. They did, and in their insurrection, they contaminated the Earth and ruined it. Why? Because Satan (means "adversary") is fueled by hatred and is ever intent upon destroying whatever Yahweh sets out to do. Yahweh creates; Satan ruins.

Nevertheless, Yahweh, through the Son, restored the Earth and created the man Adam. From his rib, He formed Eve. Satan watched and pounced. Through the serpent he tempted Eve and she fell for it. Adam followed and together, through disobedience, they ingested the evil nature of Satan, thereby contaminating their bodies, even their genomes. They passed that evil nature to their offspring, and so sin and corruption passed to every human following. That cut the fellowship between Yahweh and His creatures. To restore that fellowship and continue with His plan a perfect human sacrifice had to be slain to satisfy His holiness and righteousness. Christ the Son stepped forward and offered Himself to His Father for the great work. How did this bold plan work itself out? Let's just say it wasn't easy.

For this plan to succeed, the Son had to take a path through humanity and that path was littered with perils and pitfalls because the enemy was active at every turn. When Yahweh confronted the guilty couple in the garden, He made the first and, it could be argued, the most profound of all prophecies ever uttered:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman., and between your seed and her seed. He shall crush your head and you shall crush his heel (Genesis 3:15).

It was game on for Satan. From that point on, the gloves were off. Satan set about to use every means at his disposal to prevent the birth of the woman's seed, even if it meant the destruction of humanity. He had to prevent the coming of his destroyer.

His efforts so corrupted the Earth that he forced Yahweh to destroy it. The evil plan would have worked except for Noah and seven other souls. When that failed, idol worship arose to replace

Yahweh. But Yahweh pressed on. He called Abraham out of idolatry. He heard and obeyed the call and became the first of the race of Hebrews. Out of Abraham came Isaac and from Isaac Jacob, the father of twelve sons who became the nation of Israel. This chosen people had their own set of problems, mainly their propensity toward idol worship that led to their exile in Babylon. That exile rid them of idols and prepared them to receive their Messiah, the seed of the woman. He was born in 4 BC in Bethlehem near Jerusalem, narrowly escaping the Roman king's edict.

Jesus began His ministry at age 27. Here we will pick up the story as told by two of His four biographers.

MATTHEW'S BIOGRAPHY

1:1

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

Jesus' kingly pedigree goes back to Abraham, the first Hebrew, the first of the kingly people, the recipient of seven promises from Yahweh found in Genesis 17:2-8. Jesus was born a king to reign over the house of Israel like His father David did. Messiah's kingdom is the millennial (1000-year) kingdom.

What follows is His kingly pedigree, and it includes some, shall we say, questionable individuals. Tamar played a harlot to deceive Judah. Ruth came from the incest of Lot and his daughters. Rahab was a prostitute in Jericho. Solomon came from adultery and murder. And yet here they are in the line of Messiah! They knew the prize and gained it. Did Bathsheba know about the line of Messiah? Enough to bathe under the watchful eye of the king? Did Tamar know the line went through Judah? Did Ruth know to become an Israelite woman to further the line of Christ? Whatever the case Jesus did not come through sinless people. The Lord used what was available in those devoted saints and came to Earth through Mary.

3:1-2

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

John the baptizer, Jesus' cousin, cut the way for His ministry. His message carried through to the end of Acts – repentance, baptism, and the kingdom of heaven (Messiah's earthly kingdom). Jesus and His disciples echoed the same message. It was aimed exclusively at the children of Israel.

4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Jesus' message to His apostles and to Israel for the next few years. He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and by His preaching and teaching would try to bring them into the promises made to them in time past, particularly the promise of the kingdom.

5:3

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The famous discourse on the mount, so called. It really is a talk with His disciples. By extension the disciples would preach the same message to Israel after the ascension.

These are the first words of the long lecture to His disciples. He introduces the “kingdom of heaven,” the millennial kingdom over which He will rule.

5:10

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The second mention of the kingdom of heaven. It could be translated “kingdom from the heavens.” This is a major theme of Jesus’ teachings. He comes to Earth to offer the kingdom to Israel. He gives the discourse to set down the conditions of their obedience if they want to participate.

Because a kingdom requires a present king, Jesus, from heaven, is present so the kingdom is at hand. Only Matthew, the book of the king, mentions the kingdom from the heavens. The other gospels do not use this term. After several years of ministry, the Jews rejected and killed their king, and He went away after resurrecting from the dead into heavenly exile.

In the other gospels “kingdom of God” is used, indicating the eternal, overarching kingdom or sovereignty of God. It is the heavenly “umbrella” that includes the more specific “kingdom of the heavens” on Earth. The heavenly kingdom of the Father embraces, or incorporates, the localized kingdom promised to Israel.

5:13

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

Being the earthly people, the disciples are the salt of the Earth – to add flavor and to preserve.

5:14

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

The followers of Jesus are the light in a dark world. Through them the nation and the Gentiles will know Yahweh.

5:16

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

This is the purpose of the nation from the beginning. They were to light the way for the Gentiles to come unto their God, Yahweh.

5:17-18

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Mosaic law. For Israel to escape the burdensome law it must embrace the law’s fulfillment, Jesus the Messiah.

The law and prophets belong to Israel. Jesus came to fulfill every type and shadow found in them. For example, Jesus is the true Passover lamb.

5:19

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The necessity of keeping the law, even down to its details. Israel is a proud nation thinking that by keeping the law of letters they have arrived at their destination. Jesus comes teaching the “spirit” behind the law, and this He expects the disciples and the people to obey. This severely increases their already heavy load of trying to keep the law.

5:20

For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Those Jews who would aspire to the kingdom are under a heavy obligation.

5:21-22

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

The law says, “do not kill”; Jesus says, “do not get angry” – an impossible requirement.

Jesus is the spirit of the law. When the law says, “You shall not kill,” the spirit behind it says, “Don’t be angry with your brother.”

5:27-28

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

The law prohibits adultery; Jesus prohibits lust.

5:31-32

“Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Jesus raises the bar on divorce in Israel.

5:39-40

But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

Jesus puts behavior on a higher level, out of reach of human effort. He is showing the disciples the need for a higher life, one able to succeed.

5:43

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

The law says, “love your neighbor”: Jesus says, “love your enemies” – the impossible bar of the spirit of the law.

5:44

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

A very hard word for oppressed Jews living under the Romans, but He is speaking to the apostles and He expects them to do what He says. He needs them to fail so they learn to live according to a higher life and strength.

6:3,5

***But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.***

Jesus gets to the heart of the matter and cuts through every hypocrisy.

6:9-13

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

This famous prayer has been hijacked by Christians of the grace economy. Recitation of this prayer pops up everywhere in all kinds of circumstances. But it was never meant for us. It

belongs to Israel through the apostles of the Lamb. What Jesus is teaching here is to His people Israel through His twelve apostles under the economy of the law.

The prayer is for the Earth – that the Lord’s will be done in Earth. We in the body of Christ are heavenly, not earthly, people. The outward, tangible law economy requires a prayer for daily bread, for forgiveness of debts, for the coming great trial, for deliverance from the evil one.

6:14

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

The kingdom economy based on Jesus’ words is conditional and requires forgiving others to receive the Father’s forgiveness. Failure to forgive prevents the Father’s forgiveness. This economy is based upon obedience to the law, even the spirit of the law, which is much higher. Not so in the coming economy of the body of Christ (the economy of grace).

6:19-21

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The earthly people need a heavenly view concerning wealth to prevent their hearts from being compromised.

6:22

“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

The need for a single, undistracted eye fixed only on Yahweh.

6:24-25

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

The thrust of Jesus’ teaching to Israel. What is first in their hearts, riches or the kingdom? Would they be ruled by Earth or by heaven?

7:1-2

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Speaking directly to the apostles and indirectly to Israel, Jesus requires a seeking heart for the kingdom above everything else.

7:7-8

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Many sincere Christians have stumbled on these verses. Jesus spoke these words to His apostles, who would then pass them on to Israel. They require a good bit of human effort, a feature of the law economy. That’s the context. Christians today have no business here, and if they are, it’s no wonder they stumble.

7:12

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Jesus’ summation of the law and prophets can only apply to Israel.

7:13-14

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Jesus is the narrow (restricted) gate. Only those who want the life that is really life (zoe) will take the pains to find Him.

7:15-20

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

What a person is cannot be hidden. Every person is a metaphorical tree who is exposed by the fruit he/she bears. Here Jesus shares a universal principle applicable to every economy. No one escapes this truth. Failure to bring forth good fruit in the law and kingdom economies, results in fire. In the body Christ economy, it results in loss.

7:21

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

This word of warning to Israel will play out during Jesus’ ministry now and in the tribulation later.

The will of the Father for Israel is that the nation would receive and embrace the Messiah. Jesus’ words and actions are intended to show them who He is and what they are to do with Him.

7:24

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

The Lord’s expectation of Israel – hear and obey or be swept away. Jesus’ words are not easy to hear, much less to follow; and yet, He expects this from Israel. They must come to the realization that to obey Him requires another life they don’t have. He is that life and the children of Israel need it desperately. Those who see Him for who He is builds on the rock.

8:4

And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

Jesus’ ministry is only for the Jews. Healing requires a priest under the law.

8:11-12

And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

A glimpse of the kingdom to come for the faithful and a stern warning to the faithless in Israel. Jesus makes a distinction in Israel between those who believe in the Messiah and enjoy fellowship in the kingdom, and those of the nation who do not believe though living under the Father’s promise of it. As “sons of the kingdom” - to whom the promises were given – they are cast out.

8:31-34

So the demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.” And He said to them, “Go.” So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.

The reaction of the city is curious. Two possessed men had terrified the city for some time before Jesus came. They taunted Him with His divine title – Son of God – never admitting that they were being displaced by a man. They convinced Jesus to send them into swine which they plunged into the Sea of Galilee. The town came and saw what happened. Rather than rejoicing in their sudden emancipation from evil, they begged the Deliverer to go away. Strange, until we realize these people were not Jews. Jesus, being an orthodox Jew, came to deliver them from demonic activity. They should have been grateful.

9:6-8

But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

The multitudes marveled and glorified Yahweh. Jesus has no problem reaching the lost sheep of the house of Israel. His problem is with the shepherds of those sheep.

9:10-13

Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Jesus and the leaders of Israel, the Pharisees, fought incessantly for the entire time of His ministry. The common people had no problem with “Repent and be baptized,” but the leaders would have none of it.

Jesus is not beyond gentle, if not biting, sarcasm. Detracting Jewish elite question Him for eating with publicans and sinners, including Matthew the tax collector whom He just called to join His team. The elite hated Matthew – a Jew collecting taxes for the Romans. Jesus answered their criticism by identifying with a physician called to the sick. He tells them He did not come to the whole but to the sick. He did not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners. The leaders were neither whole nor righteous, and, surely, they got the point.

9:14-17

Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into

old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

For those Christians who try to rob Israel of her status as Bride, Jesus makes it clear that He is the Bridegroom.

He makes Himself metaphorically new cloth and new wine. The nation is the old garment and old wineskin. Unrepentant Israel is not able to contain Christ. He will only fit in new wineskins and upon new cloth; and only Jews who believe in Jesus qualify to be both.

9:30-31

And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See that no one knows it.” But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

They could not help themselves. They only added to His fame, and limitation. How could Israel ever deny that Jesus was Messiah? Every healing, every exorcism, every miracle testified of it.

9:32-34

As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!”

But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

Here, in glaring depravity, is the religious elites’ assessment of their Messiah. The only attitude lower than this is murder. That would come later.

9:35-36

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Teaching – preaching – healing. Small wonder the people loved Him. “Having no shepherd.” Jesus’ indictment of the privileged class.

The gist of Jesus’ ministry – teaching, preaching, and healing. All to Israel and all for Israel.

10:1, 5-6

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. . .

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Jesus sends His disciples only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They are not to go to the Gentiles.

10:7-8

And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

The disciples are to preach the kingdom and perform affirming miracles to convince the people. Israel requires a sign, a sign they will have.

10:16

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Prophetically, the wolves are the religious leaders who populated the status quo in Jewish society.

10:17

But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

Jesus' opposition is Jewish leaders, heads of synagogues.

10:32-33

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

The economy of the law has some very stringent conditions, none greater than this.

10:34-39

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Where Jesus is, there is conflict. Evil hates good. Death hates life.

10:40-42

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

The law economy has its rewards and its punishments. Human responsibility plays a big part.

11:3-6

and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

With all that Jesus does for the people, why would any not believe, especially John? A low moment for the baptizer.

11:18-19

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children.”

Nevertheless, Jesus defends His cousin. John is justified by what he has produced – the pathway for Messiah into Israel.

11:27-30

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

A wonderful, reassuring word and the only path for a victorious follower. “Take my yoke,” not Moses’ yoke. Take His yoke repeatedly and learn of Him.

12:1-8

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!” But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Apparently, the hypocritical Pharisees stalked Jesus even on the Sabbath day. Though He is greater than the temple, the Pharisees reject Him as a priest.

12:9-14

Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—that they might accuse Him.

Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Jesus exposes the Sabbath day as a Jewish idol that prohibited the Lord Himself from healing a man. He defied the celebration and provoked the Pharisees into taking the next steps toward murder – *on the Sabbath day!*

The Son of Man is Lord, not the sabbath day, nor any other Hebrew celebration.

12:15-21

But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. Yet He warned them not to make Him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“Behold! My servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory; and in His name Gentiles will trust.”

Gentiles. First, they are shown the coming judgment, but then they trust in His name. Jesus may have realized the coming rejection by Israel and was looking beyond into the future.

12:22-28

Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

This is the second time the Pharisees have alleged this. Jesus thoroughly refutes it. It reveals again how closely they follow His every move. They are so close to crossing the line of unbelief from which there is no retreat.

Jesus' ministry is all about the coming kingdom promised to Israel. For Pharisees to attribute Jesus' casting out of demons to Beelzebub is to forfeit any participation in that coming kingdom. This passage shows that Satan indeed has his own kingdom and is about to include the religious detractors.

12:31-32

***“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*”**

It is no mistake that this word follows the Jews' allegation that Jesus was acting under Beelzebub's direction. They cross the line of no retreat and are forever unforgiven; that is, condemned to perdition.

12:33,37

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. . . For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

The importance of language, the Father's chosen vehicle to accomplish His eternal purpose. The tree and fruit are nice metaphors, but Jesus brings it down to words. Words reveal everything about a person; they are the “fruit” of his “tree.”

12:38 - 42

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

They want a sign? Really? It's a little late for another sign. They've already seen dozens and yet disparage the Lord. The Pharisees reject Him as a prophet (greater than Jonah) and as a king (greater than Solomon). They totally miss His reference to resurrection, the ultimate sign. Jonah was three days in the belly of the fish; Jesus would be three days in the belly of the Earth.

12:43-45

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

Given the context of this chapter, this could very well be a reference to Israel. Jesus comes and drives out the unclean spirit from Israel, but by rejecting Him they open themselves to a reinfestation. History supports this interpretation.

13:1-2

On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

Is the house a metaphor for the nation? The leaders have driven Him out. The common people accept and embrace Him.

13:8

But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Jesus’ parables are always directed at Israel. If they involve the kingdom, they involve Israel because the kingdom belongs to the nation by promise. Occasionally, there are references or allusions to Gentiles, but never are those references overtly or covertly about the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the Father’s secret hidden in Him and not yet revealed at the time of Jesus’ ministry.

From the end of the first century, Christians of the body have been guilty of stealing from Israel. From around 100 AD the accusation that Jews were “Christ killers” began to surface. Christian leaders were the originators of this vile slander, and it has persisted to this day, even leading to the pernicious doctrine that Jewish duplicity regarding their Messiah caused Yahweh to abandon them, to terminate His covenant with them, and to replace them with the body of Christ. This purely diabolical. The Holocaust came out of such thinking.

13:13-16

Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, let them should see with their eyes and hear with their ears; lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.’

But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;

The parables are for those whose eyes see and ears hear. Only a small remnant of Israel fits this description. And it should be so. Yahweh has always sought for such a remnant in Israel.

Midway through His ministry, Jesus told Israel the truth about their future. They are in grave danger of losing favor with Yahweh, as the prophets warned. However, there is another group, another people who have blessed eyes and ears. Who are they but the remnant of Israel who believe in Jesus and are known as the “little flock.”

13:18

“Therefore hear the parable of the sower:

This and the following parables have *nothing* to do with the body of Christ. We are not part of that economy, which belongs exclusively to Israel, and they involve Messiah’s millennial kingdom.

13:41

The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

The mechanics of the Son of Man’s kingdom. Those who practice lawlessness are those who forsake the law. Obedience to the law brings in the kingdom.

13:44

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The believers in the Messiah are the hidden treasure.

13:45-46

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Is the bride of Christ the great pearl? The Lord Jesus gave all He had to buy her.

13:47

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,

This might be the gathering of the Gentiles during the Great Tribulation. The good will participate in the kingdom.

13:52

Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.”

These scribes, are they Jews of the kingdom teaching the Gentiles during the kingdom age? I believe so.

13:57

So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

Jesus is rejected by those most familiar with Him.

13:58

Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

“There” is His hometown Nazareth. Even the Messiah of Israel is stymied because of unbelief.

15:1-3

Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?"

The real problem in Israel. The leaders have corrupted the law of God by their traditions. It is no wonder they reject the living Word.

15:6-8

then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me'.

The danger of tradition – it drives the true teachings of Messiah far from them.

15:21-28

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus

answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Jesus iterates that He came only for Israel but extends grace to the Canaanite woman. This proves the Gentiles can be included under the economy of the law because the Lord makes provision for them (Exodus 12:48-49; Deuteronomy 10:18; Ezekiel 47:22; Esther 8:17).

15:24

But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

An iteration of Jesus’ purpose in incarnation.

16:4

A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” And He left them and departed.

“Adulterous” is Jesus’ condemnation of a nation that runs after other “men.” Throughout her history she has been prone to idolatry, and now she prefers the law and traditions above her husband.

The sign of the prophet Jonah – death, burial, and resurrection. Jonah was swallowed – death; three days in the whale’s belly – burial; regurgitated – resurrection. Would even this sign be enough to convince the leadership of the nation?

16:6

Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”

Laying down the gauntlet. Jesus puts Himself at odds with the Pharisees and Sadducees. They are but leaven in the national lump, foreign to the bread and full of hot air, diluting truth.

16:13

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

This region is the headwaters of the Jordan River flowing out of Mt. Hermon’s mountain range. The pagans considered it the entrance to the underworld and called it the “Gates of Hades.”

“Son of Man.” Jesus stands upon His manhood.

16:16

Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Peter’s famous proclamation. He speaks the truth of what he sees.

16:17

Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Only the Father can reveal the Son, and whoever sees the Son is blessed. Peter is blessed indeed!

16:18

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Peter’s name means a “rolling stone,” here today, there tomorrow. Of all the apostles he was the most vacillating, unpredictable, and unstable. Yet a giant fraud grew out of the failure to understand his name – the Roman Catholic Church.

The rock is the revelation of Christ the Son, and upon this rock He builds the *ekklesia*. He is the builder but can only build when His followers see who He is? Really? Yes! He needs us, and He needs us to see who He is.

Forever cast the word “church” out of your Christian vocabulary. It means a structure that houses idols. How can the Lord’s people be said to have anything to do with idols?

16:19

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Peter’s keys for the building of the *ekklesia*. He will use them wisely as we will see.

16:21-23

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Jesus’ future will fulfill His Father’s plan. The ancient priests sacrificed lambs for the people; the current priests will slay the Lamb of God for Israel and all humanity.

Imagine being Peter here! After the wonderful revelation of Christ, he tries to prevent Him from accomplishing His purpose for coming.

16:28

Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Could this be a reference to the transfiguration to follow? Or to John when he wrote Revelation?

17:1-2

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

The transfiguration bypassed time and put Jesus where, in time, He would someday be. In the Father's eyes Jesus was His Son though He had not yet been slain and resurrected. This event shows Him in His glorified state outside the parameters of time.

17:4

Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Peter, true to form, reveals how little he sees of the One he proclaimed in 16:16.

17:5

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

Peter suggests three equal tabernacles be built to which the Father interrupts him midsentence. "This is my beloved Son . . . hear Him!" He is *not* to be compared with Moses (the law) or Elijah (the prophets).

18:1-5

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

Humility applies to all economies. It is a transcendent virtue.

18:6,8

"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.

A strong word to the Pharisees and anyone stumbling a young believer.

Some Christians, failing to discern to whom Jesus is speaking, have maimed themselves for a kingdom not their own.

18:34-35

And his master was angry and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Forgiveness is a huge requisite for Israel under their economy. Failure to forgive another meant forfeiture of the Father's forgiveness. Without His forgiveness there was no salvation for Israel.

19:16

Now behold, one came and said to Him, "GoodTeacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

This encounter with the rich young man shows that keeping the letter of the law is not sufficient for eternity.

19:21-22

Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

The young man, confident in his adherence to the law, met the "spirit of the law" and failed miserably. The Lord wants followers, not religionists.

19:28

So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The future for the disciples. Not only will they sit on twelve thrones, but they will also make up the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb (Revelation 21:2).

20:17-19

Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."

Jesus is completely transparent. There should be no doubts, no questions, among the twelve. There were.

The time has come for Jesus to be examined and slain as the Father's sacrifice. It was for this He was born a man.

20:20-28

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

And He said to her, "What do you wish?"

She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

They said to Him, "We are able."

So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, [f]and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Here is a bold request that enables Jesus to deliver a universal principle: Whoever wants to be great must serve others, just as He has done and will do in giving "His life a ransom for many."

20:30

And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

Two men of faith. They could not see Jesus physically but had faith in Him, even calling Him "son of David." Their faith healed them.

21:12-13

Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

Jesus cleanses the temple of the corruption allowed by Jewish leaders.

21:19

And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

Israel is the nonproductive fig tree, and in a few years will wither away.

21:23-27

Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?”

But Jesus answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?”

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus and said, “We do not know.”

And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Jesus corners the arrogant religionists who blatantly lie.

21:33

“Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.

This parable tells the history of Israel. The Father is the homebuilder; the Jews are the vinedressers who tend to His vineyard. His servants (the prophets) come to receive the fruit but are abused and killed. Finally, the Son (Messiah) comes and is murdered.

21:38-43

But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’“

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

Jesus speaks in parables so the blind and deaf can neither see nor hear. The Jews were so corrupted that it was only a matter of time before His words would come true. General Israel represented by the leaders was fast losing out on Yahweh’s favor. Soon the little flock of believing Israel would fulfill verse 43.

21:41

They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”

The Lord gives His vineyard to the little flock, the believers in Messiah. In 70 AD He “miserably destroys those wicked men.”

21:43

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

This can be none other than the little flock, the remnant believers in Israel.

22:2-7

“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.”’ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

This parable explains Israel in the first century. They are the bidden people who reject at every turn the offer of the kingdom marriage of the Son and His bride. Finally, the king’s anger results in the judgment of Israel and the destruction of their city and temple.

This devastating prophecy fell upon deaf ears. National Israel heard nothing of the coming peril awaiting them because they were too intent upon catching Jesus in His words so they could condemn Him to death. They wanted nothing to do with Him, and the time was near when they would make their move to put Him away. Did they not know that He came to die? No, they would rather murder Him in the Roman style. And murder they would, but, alas, at what a colossal cost to them as a people! They would lose Jerusalem for almost 1900 years – until 1967.

22:8

Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

This is the wedding feast of the Bridegroom and His bride. This follows the destruction of “those murderers” in verse 7. Between this destruction and the wedding feast there is a lengthy interval unseen by the old prophets and never mentioned by the Lord. In this interval, now over 1950 years long, the body of Christ is incubated, matured, and waiting to be called up to the Lord.

22:9-10

Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’

So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

The two witnesses go forth preaching (Revelation 11:3) the eternal gospel, gathering saints for the marriage supper (Revelation 19:7-9), and to fill up the banquet hall. Apparently even then, after the Great Tribulation, after the Lord returns, and after the feast is prepared, there is still some sorting out to do as the following verses (:11-14) prove.

22:32

‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.’

The Pharisees come at Jesus with a question on the resurrection trying to stumble Him. He proves the resurrection by quoting their own scriptures. Isaac and Jacob live, making the Father the God of the living.

22:41-46

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about Christ? Whose Son is He?”

They said to Him, “The Son of David.”

He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’?”

If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Here is the end of all questions from the detractors. Jesus backed them into a corner, and they had no retreat. Jesus is what all the ancient prophets said He would be.

23:13

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

After over three years of sparring with the Jewish religionists, Jesus has had enough and releases His passion. They are exposed, condemned, and humiliated.

23:37-39

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ ”

Lest any should doubt why Jesus came to Earth, these verses should set all at ease. He came for Israel and Israel would not respond. He could do nothing but weep over the city and the temple. He predicts its demise in v. 38, and His second coming in v. 39.

23:4

Then Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” He answered him and said, “It is as you say.”

Jesus before the Pilate, who represents the Gentile world. He also finds no fault in Him.

23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”

Jesus is Israel’s Messiah and He is among them, but they “receive Him not.” He looks over Jerusalem, home of the temple where His Father used to dwell, and laments deeply and bitterly over their unwillingness to receive Him. That He beckons twice reveals the depth of His anguish. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!”

24:1-2

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

The temple fell in 70 AD. Not one stone was left on another because the Roman Titus’ soldiers searched every crevice of the scorched structure, tearing apart the building stone by stone to retrieve melted gold.

All the predictions and parables in this chapter and the next have everything to do with Israel and nothing to do with the Gentiles. The destruction of the temple, the wars and rumors of war, the Great Tribulation, the second coming of the Son of Man, the signs of His coming, the necessary individual preparation for His coming, and the future judgment all center on Israel and none other. Israel is the epicenter of all Yahweh’s earthly activities. Unbelieving Gentiles will be judged, but the Lord’s primary focus is upon His people. For us Christians who think and act as if we are the central players in this end time drama is terminal delusion. We kick Israel to the curb and march on as if the universe revolves around us. Christians rob Israel at every turn. We think Jesus’ ministry is directed toward us, when really, He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. If we persist in this kind of narcissism, we’ll never understand the Bible. If we don’t understand the Bible, we’ll not understand the person and work of the Triune God. Our individual and corporate lives will be in a constant state of turmoil, stumbling along in a system designed through tradition to deceive, to demoralize, and eventually destroy.

24:3-14

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

John and Matthew, the two scribes of the twelve, both heard Jesus and recorded what they heard. The Spirit, of course, oversaw what they were to write, and as it turns out Matthew gave us the general sketch and John's Revelation filled in the details. Matthew's account of the Lord's death consumed two chapters and John's the bulk of Revelation. In fact, the entire book of Revelation takes up the subject of the seven-year span of the tribulation and its aftermath. It describes Daniel's prophecy of the final "week" of seven years that Yahweh allotted to Israel (Daniel 9:24-27).

Jesus' answer describes the prelude and the first 3.5 years of the tribulation which corresponds to Revelation 6:1-14. The two witnesses preach the gospel to the Gentiles and to Israel. The four horsemen ride forth into the Earth spreading famine and disease and death.

24:15-28

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.

"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the

west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

This describes the second half of the tribulation called the Great Tribulation when antichrist makes his move. He assassinates the two witnesses and sets up his image in the temple to be worshiped. This image is the “abomination of desolation” described in Daniel 9:27, and is probably a smaller version of Nebuchadnezzar’s desert idol.

24:29-31

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

This describes the sixth seal of Revelation 6:12-17 and the calling up of the 144,000 in Revelation 7.

24:32-34

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

This fig tree is Israel, and it matches the shaken fig tree in Revelation 6:13. The branch of Israel put forth its leaves in 1948 when it became a nation, proving that the end of our economy (grace and the body of Christ) is near and the economy of the kingdom (Israel) is about to begin a second time.

24:36-42

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

We shouldn’t forget the context of chapters 24 and 25. This is the tribulation of Israel, Daniel’s 70th week, the consummation of Israel’s history. The description here of people being gathered could either be the 144,000 or the great multitude standing before the throne in Revelation 7 who have been saved out of the great tribulation (Revelation 7:14).

24:45

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?”

These are Jews during the tribulation. Especially here the Lord is looking for faithfulness.

25:1

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.”

As before, the Lord is looking for the faithful in Israel to marry.

25:14

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.”

In this parable the Lord is seeking the faithful to rule with Him in His kingdom.

25:31-32

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.”

The Lord sits in judgment on Earth and separates the Gentiles (“nations” are always Gentiles) into two groups. These Gentiles have survived the seven-year tribulation and are to give account. Those who pass the test will populate the millennial kingdom. The test is simple: how did you treat My people during the last seven years?

26:1-4

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, “You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him.

The end game for the Lord Jesus. The reason for His incarnation is upon Him. The Jews examine the lamb of God for any flaw or blemish. They don't know what they are doing, but they inadvertently fulfill their priestly duties.

Jesus' death was always an inevitable event, but the scheming by the leaders of Israel had grave consequences for the nation. Jesus died at the hands of His people and of the Gentiles, the Roman government. They colluded to murder the Prince of Life, and that brought down upon them the wrath of Yahweh. So intense was the Father's grief that a dear brother once described it as a father in ancient Israel, upon hearing of the death of his son, tearing his garments. Yahweh

tore from top to bottom the thick veil hanging in the temple separating the Holy Place from His former sanctuary.

Never has the nation been more degraded by its leaders.

26:8

But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"

What is poured out on Jesus is never a waste, including our lives!

26:14

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests

Judas knew Jesus could overthrow Rome with a single word. Being a zealot (a nationalist), he was thinking he was forcing Jesus into action. But Jesus' time to rule was not yet.

26:34-35

Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"

Though well meaning, the apostle had no idea what he was saying. He would soon learn.

26:42-44

Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Jesus knew the sacrifice had to be perfect and human. Never once in His human life did He leave His Father's presence as a man. He was perfect in all His ways. He was sinless. The satanic life in His flesh, contributed by His mother, had never been activated, and thus was entrapped in Him. But Jesus also knew that His Father could not look on sin and would have to turn away from Him during the process of His death. Was there no other way? Jesus prayed that it could be so.

26:57

And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

Jesus the Lamb goes first to Caiaphas the high priest to be examined by His brethren.

26:59-60

Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.

Jesus passes the test of the Jews, and, by extension, the law.

26:64

But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The Jewish religionists hated the fact that Jesus was the Son of God. Still Jesus maintained His human status by identifying as the Son of Man.

He is referring to His second coming after the tribulation.

27:1-2

When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

The Jews found nothing, so they delivered Him to the Gentile. If He is the Savior of the Gentiles, He must be proven worthy as their sacrifice as well.

27:22-23

Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

Pilate finds nothing.

27:37

*And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:
THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

Pilate is a weasel. He writes this sign to mock the Jews at Jesus' expense. What he doesn't know is that everything on the sign is the absolute truth to be fulfilled in the future.

27:46

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

This is one of seven statements Jesus uttered on the tree. Seven is a number of divine completion, an apt number for Jesus' all-inclusive death.

Jesus' death put an end to the economy of law. He fulfilled all its requirements so there was no more need for it. Hereafter the Father changed His way of dealing with people. Now that Jesus fulfilled the law, what remained for Israel was the economy of the kingdom? By repenting, by being baptized, and by accepting Jesus as her Messiah sent from God, Israel could have entered into the seven-year tribulation, had her sins and practices purged, and received her King in His kingdom. They would not and He remains her exiled King and husband.

28:1

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

To any chauvinistic Christian male, take note who came first to the tomb seeking Jesus.

28:6

He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

The Father was so pleased with Jesus' life and work and sacrifice He brought Him up from the dead. The resurrection is the one true hope of every believing Jew and Christian.

28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Christians have stolen these instructions from Israel and made them marching orders for evangelizing the world. However, Jesus was instructing and motivating His apostles, all Jews, to fulfill what national Israel had failed to do – reach the Gentiles with salvation. Matthew 24:14 speaks to this:

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

“Nations” always refers to Gentiles. “The end” is the end of the age. The age, or economy, of the kingdom was in place when Jesus spoke these words and would be to the end of the book of Acts.

LUKE'S BIOGRAPHY

1:26-27

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Jesus' mother was a virgin who contributed her humanity to her son. Her fallen and corrupted DNA passed on to Him in her genes. The Holy Spirit contributed the other half of His genetic package, and that half was divine and sinless. Jesus lived His life with satanic contamination in His flesh.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed Yahweh and ate the forbidden fruit, they took into themselves the satanic element that corrupted them. This corruption was thorough extending into the information package (DNA) in each of their cells. From that point, every child born to them contained the evil stain, and they in turn passed on their fallen nature to their progeny. Mary, of course, was in that line. Some argue that she was not tainted, but how could she not be? She was human like we all are, and she contributed her half of the genetic package to her son. How could He then be free of contamination? How could He qualify to be the spotless lamb to take away sin?

Though Satan had intended to destroy the Lord's plan from the beginning by insinuating himself into the flesh of the first couple, Jesus, though carrying in Him the evil nature, never let that nature become activated. He essentially had Satan in the cage of His flesh. Had He ever once sinned, the cage would have opened, and Satan would have contaminated His being, His soul, and the sacrifice would have been ruined.

Yahweh told the serpent in Genesis 3:15:

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel.

There would come a showdown when Satan would bruise His heel in His death, but He would bruise (crush) Satan's head. Jesus' heel was crushed, no doubt, but so was Satan's head. The reason why reveals divine brilliance.

Satan thinks he is so clever. By his intrusion into the flesh of humans, he thought he had destroyed Yahweh's plan of redemption. He was successful to a point, reducing humanity to eight souls at the time of Noah. These eight souls had escaped the taint of rebellious and fallen angelic contamination responsible for the flood. Noah found grace and the eight survived to continue the race.

Failing there, Satan nearly eliminated the line of Messiah, reducing it to one little boy who had to be hidden away from a murderer. At every turn he used human nature to attack the line and then the man himself.

But when Jesus refused to activate the evil nature in His flesh, rendering it dormant, Satan found himself trapped in Jesus. Jesus' death crushed Satan's head and destroyed him. This is the fact! Satan no longer has any power over a believer if that believer exercises his victory over a mortally wounded snake. What needs to happen now is for the Lord's people to enter into the reality of what Jesus has done. He gave us the victory; can we keep it?

1:31-33

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

This is the Father's will for His Son. He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever. This is the earthly purpose of the Son of Man. At the end of verse 31 we have the Lord's first coming. These verses summarize the Lord's work on Earth with Israel. The body of Christ is not mentioned because it has not come into being. After verse 31 and before verse 32 (He will be great) we can insert in parentheses the body of Christ. Once the body is removed from the Earth, then verse 32 will resume and the Messiah will ascend to His rightful throne to reign in His kingdom.

1:35

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

To the angel of the heavenly realm, He is the Son of God; to His people in the earthly realm, He is the Son of Man.

2:22-23

Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"),

Jesus is by every definition an orthodox Jew under the law whose life and ministry is to and for Israel.

3:23

Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli,

Jesus the man must have a genealogy to be legitimate, and it must begin with the first man Adam. Jesus is not an other-worldly being come to Earth. Rather He is fully man and fully God. However, He lives His life as the Son of Man, only occasionally resorting to divine signs and miracles to convince Israel of who He is.

4:2

being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

When Jesus is tempted of the devil, He does not resort to His divinity. He came as man to bear the sins of humanity, so He must be tempted as man to show His worthiness. The battle is on Earth for the salvation of Israel.

4:3

And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

Satan’s tactic is to attack the physical body with bread, to get Jesus to take the easy path and act from His divinity. Jesus answers, “*Man shall . . . live by the word of God.*”

4:7-8

Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” And Jesus answered and said to him, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ “

Satan tempts the spirit of Jesus to worship the devil. It falls flat. The spirit is the worshiping agent in us.

4:9

Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.

This is Satan’s temptation of Jesus’ soul. He refuses to acknowledge Jesus’ humanity, so he tempts the Lord to consider with the mind (leading part of the soul) the idea of casting Himself from the temple wall, and to decide with the will (a second part of the soul) whether to do it. But Jesus uses His tempted soul to rebuke Satan with quoted scripture.

4:17-20

And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Then He closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

Everything Jesus quoted here from Isaiah 61 He would accomplish in His first advent. Everything He didn’t quote He would finish at His second advent.

4:44

And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

This is Jesus’ method of fulfilling His commission to Israel.

10:21-24

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to

Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.”

Seeing the truth of the Triune God comes only by divine revelation. We should aspire to being babes. They are simple, uncluttered, eager. They have the blessed eyes.

10:38-42

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Mary “heard His word” and this was “that good part.” If this is true in the economy of law when the Lord spoke on Earth, how much more critical is it to hear Him who speaks from heaven through Paul? This manner of speaking is the essential difference between the economies of the law and kingdom, and the economy of grace.

12:31-32

But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

This is an important word to the disciples who would eventually raise up congregations of Jewish believers throughout the empire. These assemblies would become a remnant in Israel for whom the kingdom was promised and would come. This “little flock” of believers would be the recipients of the promises shared by the ancient prophets, by Jesus, and by the apostles.

“Little flock” is *not* synonymous with the body of Christ. They are comprised of Jewish believers in the Messiah (including Gentile proselytes who believe). Paul also ministered to the little flock assemblies in his early ministry, but as time went on, he brought in new light regarding the body of Christ. It seems that the Lord wanted these congregations to receive and practice the new revelation (the mystery). This transition is most apparent in the book of 1 Corinthians where, for example, we see the matter of keeping the feast (Jewish) and the *ekklesia* in chapter 12 (the body of Christ).

12:42-44

And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?”

Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

This is a clear promise for faithfulness, and it altogether involves ruling with Jesus in His kingdom. A lack of faithfulness is dire for Israel.

12:46-47

the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Failure to meet the Lord's conditions will result in the catastrophe of judgment.

21:29-33

Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Jesus here predicts an event far in the future. In 1948 Israel attained statehood. The fig tree puts forth shoots indicating summer at hand. Though it has been 70+ years since statehood, Israel took jurisdiction of Jerusalem in 1967. All that remains is the 7-year period of tribulation for Israel's history to be complete. Messiah will build His temple at His second advent when the millennial kingdom begins.

21:34-36

"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

This warning to Israel underscores the conditional aspect of the economy of the law. There is no grace here.

22:2-7

"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding." But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

This parable explains Israel in the first century. They are the bidden people who reject at every turn the offer of the kingdom marriage of the Son and His bride. Finally, the king's anger results in the judgment of Israel and the destruction of their city and temple.

This devastating prophecy fell upon deaf ears. National Israel heard nothing of the coming peril awaiting them because they were too intent upon catching Jesus in His words. So they could eventually condemn Him to death. They wanted nothing to do with Him, and the time was near when they would make their move to put Him away. Did they not know that He came to die? No, they would rather murder Him with a cruel death. And murder they would, but, alas, at what a colossal cost to them as a people!

23:4

Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered him and said, "It is as you say."

Jesus before the Pilate, who represents the Gentile world. He also finds no fault in Him.

24:44-49

Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Jesus did everything required of Him by the Father. All that the prophets, the law, and the psalmists wrote of Him He accomplished as a man. He came to Israel as the lamb of God. They heard Him; they questioned Him; they examined Him; they murdered Him. All He did pleased the Father.

Jesus' prayer for His peoples' forgiveness (23:34) resulted in their salvation starting at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-42). Israel remained in the primary position and the Gentiles secondary. The question remained: would the nation repent for slaying their Messiah, be baptized for the remission of that horrible sin?

The Hebrew scriptures are all about Christ and declares how He fulfills them all. The Lord explains His resurrection to the apostles and unveils their subsequent commission. Once the Spirit descends at Jerusalem and they are endued with power, they go forth proclaiming the truth. Will the nation respond and receive and embrace Messiah? The immediate kingdom awaits their obedience. Seven years of tribulation, seven years of preparation, and the Lord returns. What will Israel do?

24:51

Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

Israel's Messiah is sent away in exile to await the repentance of His people. Would His exile be lengthy or brief? Over 1900 years and counting.