

THE PROPHECY AND HISTORY OF ISRAEL CONT.

4/19/20

We ended our lesson last week talking about the end-time prophecies that pertain to Israel. We spoke of Gentile nations rising up against Israel. We will pick it up at the description of these nations.

KINGS ROW

- Scripture teaches us that in the end times there will be national alliances that will want to go against the King. These alliances will congregate under specific leaders:
- **The King of the North:** *At the time of the end, the king of the south will engage him in battle, but the king of the north will storm against him with chariots, horsemen, and many ships. He will invade countries and sweep through them like a flood. (Dan 11:40)*
- Daniel 11:40 describes the “King of the North” to be of the region now occupied by Russia. We’ve already seen that the nations joining Russia are from the north, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. (Ezek. 38-39) They will follow their leader into resounding defeat.
- **The king of the South:** Daniel 11:40 also speaks of the King of the South as being associated with the invasion of Israel. The King of the South made the mistake of allying himself with the King of the North, only to be betrayed and overrun in the end. Historically, this leader has been identified as the ruler of Egypt. The north African and Arab states will join the southern confederacy.
- **The King of the East:** *The sixth poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. (Rev. 16:12)*
- From beyond the Euphrates River will come a coalition of kings who will be involved in the final struggles. This power from the far east spoken of in *(Rev 9:16) The number of mounted troops was 200 million; I heard their number.*
- It has been said that the Peoples Republic of China, ruled by communism, could field an army that size. It is also reported that China is building a massive military arsenal capable of dominating the far east and becoming a major force in international affairs.
- **The Western Leader:** Note the term leader rather than king. The west will produce the most sinister of these end-times personalities and he will be the leader of the western nations.
- Major prophetic scholars believe he will lead a form of the revised Roman Empire; based on Daniel chapter 7 and other texts. Some believe this revised Roman Empire will be larger than the Old Roman Empire.

- The “he” here is referred to by several names; the Beast, the Man of Sin, and the willful king are three of his designations. But he will most commonly be known as the

Antichrist. *He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's Sanctuary, publishing that he himself is God. (2 Thes. 2:4)*

- He will enter the Temple of Jerusalem, place an image there, declare himself to be God and demand universal worship!
- the Gentile powers that will dominate the last days are seen in these alliances. The author notes that the allies listed are roughly aligned in the positions outlined in the Bible. Let's look at them again.
- From the North -Russia, Europe, Middle East and Africa.
- From the South – Egypt, North Africa, and the Arab States.
- From the East – China
- From the West – Antichrist
- Pretty sobering when you think of Israel so completely surrounded by enemies.

A GATHERING IN THE LAND

- Both the Old and New Testaments tell us the nations in the Middle East will come together for one last battle at Megiddo. Zechariah chapter 12 and Rev. 16:6 tell us. It will be more massive than mankind has ever witnessed. The prophet Joel said. *Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. (Joel 3:9-11)*
- Then Zechariah said...*Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. (Zec. 12:2-3)*
- *Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem, the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city (Zec. 14:1-2)*
- Then the apostle John said...*For they are spirits of demons. Performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14,16)*
- Forces will descend on Israel that run the length and breadth of the land. The intensity that Daniel and John described so vividly, will be unmatched in history. The entire world will be affected.
- Jesus said in Matthew 24:22 *Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

- I want to step off track just a bit and discuss this last statement. ...*but for the elect's sake...*
- Many people believe this verse is referring to those people who will get saved during the tribulation. Scripture teaches that many will be saved during that time but it also teaches that they will most probably give their lives for their decision. So, it doesn't seem likely that God is referring to His beloved church, or tribulation saints, when the word elect is used in this instance. You must remember we are dealing with Israel's history, not the history of the church. Israel, in the Old Testament was always referred to as "the elect", God's chosen people. Later, after the birth of the church, Christians began to be referred to as the elect. Clearly this is meant for the Jewish people. They are the ones who will be tormented the most during this great time of Jacob's Trouble and it is for their sake that God will shorten the number of days He will allow it to go on.
- Now, back to the subject at hand. We were talking about the intensity of the visions both Daniel and John were given; and the tribulation they witnessed will afflict the whole world and be unparalleled in history. It will be the result of satanically emboldened men on the one hand and Jehovah's judgement on the other.
- As these nations are busy trying to out maneuver each other to gain control of international affairs, God moves in with cataclysmic judgements on human kind. The entire earth will be buffeted by divine calamities sent from God; yet they will not repent. *And men were scorched with great heat. And they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. (Rev. 16:9)*
- Pestilence, famine, and persecution will torment the earth, marking these frightful days with suffering, warfare, and defiance of the Almighty. Half of the world's population will perish and once again, the world will blame Israel. Once again, the Jewish people will feel the heel of oppression bearing down on them.
- The Jews won't be alone in their rejection of Antichrist. For one thing they will refuse to bow down and worship him. Nor will Christians bow down and worship him. And yes, there will be Christians in those days but they will not be part of the Bride. That distinction belongs only to the Church. They will however, be saved if they come to a saving faith and ask Christ to save them. But what will happen when they are commanded to bow down and worship the image and they refuse? They will be killed.

My point here is that there will be more than just Jewish people who will reject Antichrist. Going on.

- Warfare will erupt in the Middle East and the Antichrist will no longer stand with Israel but will turn viciously on the Jewish people. He will be worse than the sinister, evil ancient Hellenistic ruler Antiochus Epiphanes who desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem in the second century B.C.

- The Bible calls the action of the Antichrist “abomination of desolation” spoken of in Daniel 12:11 *From the time the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.*
- It is viewed as the ultimate act of humanities rebellion on this earth. *He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God’s sanctuary, publicizing that he himself is God.*
- And so, all the arrows point to this gathering of the nations for Armageddon. Gentile nations will stand poised to do what they’ve always wanted to do: obliterate Israel and depose Jehovah forever.

REVELATION OF THE MESSIAH

- Earlier we spoke of a Jewish historian who said that in times of great national distress, Jewish people long for their homeland and for the coming of their Messiah. When scripture speaks of end-times and the final trauma it usually follows up with a picture of the coming triumph of the Messiah. Here are some examples:
- Joel 3:9-11 *Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for holy war; rouse the warriors; let all the men of war advance and attack! Hammer your plowshares into swords and your pruning knives into spears. Let even the weakling say” I am a warrior. Come quickly, all you surrounding nations; gather yourselves. Bring down your warriors there, LORD.*
- Joel 3:16 *the LORD will roar from Zion and raise His voice from Jerusalem; heaven and earth will shake. But the LORD will be a refuge for His people, a stronghold for the Israelites.*
- Zechariah 14:1-5 *A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided in your presence. I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for battle. The city will be captured, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half the city will go into exile. But the rest of the people will not be removed from the city. Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations as He fights on a day of battle. On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, forming a huge valley, so that half the mountain will move to the north and half to the south. You will flee by My mountain valley, for the valley of the mountains will extend to Azai You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah King of Judah. The LORD my God will come and all the holy ones with Him.*

JESUS CONFIRMATION

Jesus described the rigors of the Tribulation that will precede His return to earth, and then said, *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.* (Matt. 24:29-30)

- He then describes the establishment of the Messianic reign. *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. (Matt. 25:31)*
- Here again is evidence that the “elect” refers to the Children of Israel.

PAUL’S WITNESS

- Paul picked up the same reframe to the Thessalonian church. *Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. (2 Thes 2:3)*
- A question had been asked about “the Day of the LORD”. Paul told them of the Antichrist who would be revealed after the church is raptured and the Holy Spirit is refrained. We need to keep in mind the church will not be here for the Great Tribulation. This is the time of *Jacob’s* trouble.
- *How awful that day will be! There will be none like it! It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be delivered out of it. (Jer. 30:7)*
- Paul explained to the Thessalonians that the lawless one would be revealed and destroyed by God. So, in conjunction with this thought, Paul referred to Israel’s total restoration following the Lord’s return when he wrote his letter to the church in Rome. *So that you will not be conceited, brothers, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery: a partial hardening has come to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The liberator will come from Zion; He will turn away godlessness from Jacob. And this will be My covenant with them, when I take away their sins. (Romans 11:25-27)*

JOHN’S PERSPECTIVE

- When the apostle John described the days of the Tribulation he lit up the sky with pictures of thunderous judgment, manic tyrants, suffering saints and the coming of the Messiah to set things right: *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns, He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped*
- *in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev.19:11-16)*
- There are people, religious groups, who believe that as Christians, our job it to get the world ready for Christ’s return – we will change the way man thinks and when he is moral and good, then Christs will return.
- We need to understand that Messiah’s appearance will not be the result of anything people do to create conditions they think will be conducive to the divine King’s return.

No religious, political, or philosophical system will be able to prepare the way for the Messiah.

- The exact opposite will be true! Spiritual, moral and political conditions will be abysmal to use the authors own words. Conditions will continue to deteriorate until the world is brought to the brink of total destruction.

This the Bible has told us. For those who are students of God's Word there can be no doubt that the Messiah is the One who will make a spectacular personal appearance in the future. For Bible believing people, both Jews and Gentiles, it comes down to one question, "Who is the Messiah?"

Christians say He is Jesus. Jewish people say His is not. This is the taproot of division between Christians and Jews who both acknowledge the authority of scripture.

THE MESSIAH'S IDENTITY

- Two very important questions to ask are; Who is the King of Israel? And how can we recognize Him? The Old Testament scripture pertaining to Messiah offer two distinct views of the work of the deliverer to come: He will be both sufferer and sovereign. How can Messiah be both? Over the years, four main interpretations have emerged.
- Idea #1- there are two Messiah's: One who will suffer and one who will reign.
- Idea #2 – The sufferer will not be a personality but, rather, the nation Israel in its persecutions.
- Idea #3 – Choose the most desirable manifestation and reject the other.
- Idea #4 – There is one Messiah with two appearances on Earth.

Ok let's stop there for this week. We will pick it up next week with "A composite of the Messiah as Sufferer." We may actually finish this study next week; if not, then definitely the week after that. Have a great week and I love you all!