ALSOM

BIB114 - CHRIST IN THE SYNOPTICS

Who was Jesus ?
Isn't that one of the biggest questions of history?

The HONEST attempt to answer that question … is part of mankind's search for significance. The better we understand Jesus the better we understand ourselves.

WHO WAS JESUS? What do you say?

Perhaps you have some doubts. Doubts are ok, they are only human, but never shut Jesus out, always allow Him thru His Word and Spirit, to speak to your doubts.

- *Jesus is the answer of TRUTH to humanity's questions.*
- *Jesus is the only WAY worth following.*
- *Only in JESUS will we find LIFE.*

Who is Jesus? HE puts the question to each of us: *"Who do YOU say that I am?"*

- **NOT the History Channel, NOT Christian TV**
- **NOT Kanye, NOT 21st cty American Culture!**
- **BUT YOU !! WHO DO YOU SAY HE IS !?**

This is THE question each Gospel writer, tries to answer in their own unique way. Now, NOT unique in that "Jesus is someone different to me than He is to you, we all bring our own meaning." NO! That's JUST REDUCING Jesus to a personal impression, my own subjective truth. *TRUTH DOESN'T reside in me, but in **Jesus.***

RORSHACH INK BLOT PIC. What do you see?

- Contrary to Postmodern Liberal Theology, Jesus isn't a Rorschach In Blot.
- Jesus isn't reducible to merely the impression of humans bound by THEIR OWN culture & time. The Gospels are not subjective opinions.
- NOR is Jesus reducible to the cold data of history.
- As if a bullet point list of things could ever sum up WHO HE IS.
- Jesus is not an object or subject we can master, put on a shelf, label & categorize.
- This is not what the Gospels are, nor what they do.
- **The Gospels are a LIVING TESTIMONIES OF LITERARY MASTERPIECES.**

Each Gospel writer is telling the same story of the same Jesus, but each with a specific agenda, with specific theological nuances, to communicate what they consider most vital, most revealing, most necessary.
BUT, it isn't open to different meaning for everyone, HUMANS do not bring meaning to the Gospel, it brings meaning to us.

The Gospel writers all counted themselves stewards of the true story.
Christians are called to be students of the story.
Who is Jesus? The answer is in His Word.

2 Timothy 2:15 ***Do*** *your best to present yourself to God as one* ***approved****, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who* ***correctly*** *handles the word of truth.*

"DO" – is an imperative in the Greek. An Imperative is a **COMMAND**

- It's the strongest possible way to say something in the Greek.
- The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to make this a command, not a request.
- "Correctly" is to use it how **God intended** according to **its design**.
- Those who correctly handle God's Word according to its design may be considered for a type of ministry "Approval" by God and God's Leaders.

THERE ARE COMON CHALLENGES WE FACE WITH SCRIPTURE:

1 – Distance:

- **Of Time –** at it's youngest, the Bible is around 2000yrs old.
- **Of Culture** – we live in the in 21st Century America, the Bible was written in the ANE by pre-scientific people. It's radically different.
- **Of Language** – Biblical Hebrew is a dead language. Biblical Greek is a dead language. We're from the South, we speak Redneckanese commonly known as Nascar American.
- ***There's a great distance between us & the Biblical World, Authors.***
- **They write from a different time, culture, & understanding of reality.**

2 – Modern Media such as Text Messaging:

- According to Google, text messaging began in 1989 with a NASA engineer using a beeper to turn #'s upside down & communicate.
- By 2006, TM was an $81 billion industry.
- TEXTING replaces the art of conversation, and telling a story.
- The relational power of speech and story is reduced to 144 letters.
- We lose the ability to READ WELL.
- We miss the beauty & strength of the biblical text.
- We have to resist the reduction of the Gospel to sound-bites, nuggets of advice, and we must insist on comprehending the BIG DEEP STORY.

- Short electronic messages & abbreviated words often lack DEPTH, HEART, & CONTEMPLATION. But the Bible calls us back to these.

3 – <u>The Spotlight:</u> Is the Bible about God or Man?

- **The Bible is about GOD** and the story He is telling of how He is going to set the world right. The spotight is on Him. I am never the lead actor, God is.
- **The Last 3 Generations (Boomers, GenX, Millenials) have many differences, but it is ONE BIG SIMILARITY, which presents a challenge.**
    - Each is consumed with "Finding One's Self" – IOW, life is all about SELF-fulfillment, self-discovery, self-expression.
    - Reading the Bible this way, makes it all about me, and not about GOD. The Bibles becomes self-help instead of salvation story.

→ CENTERED ON SELF - hasn't that happened before with God's Word
…in a Garden.

- **An apple offered to our 1st mother, a serpent's words that seduced HER to satisfy her needs & desires, instead of GODs.**
- **In the Desert, Jesus passes the temptation Adam & Eve failed.**

<u>The Bible sweeps us up into something MUCH bigger than ourselves.</u>
You don't have to SQUEEZE felt needs out of the Bible, they're everywhere… BUT GOD IS ALWAYS the main character, main hero of every story, even when He's in the background.

<u>WHAT IS THE OVERALL EFFECT?</u>

- **DISTANCE –** *We are too near-sighted and we read thru modern eyes and therefore misread.*
- **MEDIA INFLUENCE –** *We lose the ability to read well, pay attention, think deeply,* we miss THE DEEPER beauty.
- **THE SPOTLIGHT –** We cast ourselves as the lead actor with God just there for support. Our individual stories are the lenses thru which we see the world.
- **CULTURE HAS CONDITIONED YOU THIS WAY. ANY CHURCH, MINISTER, INSTITUTION, BOOK, READING OF THE BIBLE, ETC., WHICH FEEDS THESE TENDENCIES, SHOULD BE AVOIDED <u>AT ALL COSTS</u>.**
- **We have a tendency to take the easy paths, rather than the best paths.**

NOW, let's try to cover the distance and enter the Ancient Near East

1. **<u>THE LIFE & TIMES OF JESUS</u>**
    a. **Historical – Cultural analysis of Israel's Experience leading up to and during the time of Christ.**
    b. **God's People have lived Under 4-5 Empires.**
        - **Assyrian**

- **Babylonian**
- **Persian**

During the Persian period, the Jewish exiles in Babylon were *permitted to return to their homeland*.

- **Greek Hellenistic culture dominated.**

Several cultural factors enabled the Gospel to have great impact:

- *Greece provided the language in which the Gospel was expressed, Koine Greek was the most widely used common tongue throughout the Empire.*
- *Rome provided the political security that made its spread possible:*

- **Roman Law, Citizenship, and Culture.**

Paul's Roman citizenship enabled him great liberty of movement & freedom to speak.
The Roman System of Roads connecting major cities made it possible for Apostles & Christians to travel efficiently and spread the Gospel.
Rome's political protection of allowing the Jews to freely practice Judaism allowed Christianity to flourish as Rome initially saw Christianity as merely a sect of Judaism.

- **The Herods**

Jews never regarded the Herods as true Jews and made no attempt to hide their feelings of hatred towards these Edomites.
The Samaritans were best described as *a mixture of people whom the Assyrians resettled in Palestine and Israelites who were not deported*.

a. "Mixture" as in mixed marriages between these 2 people groups and their descendents.

c. 2ND Temple Judaism.

The Jewish nation helped Christ's message to be birthed and nurtured by providing a *religious vehicle through which Christ could be revealed.*

- **The Synagogue**

At the beginning, the synagogue was intended to *provide an alternative for Temple worship*.

According to the Law, presenting a male child to the Lord required parents to *take him to the Temple in Jerusalem and offer a sacrifice*.

The intertestamental period represents the time between *the end of Malachi's prophetic ministry and the dawn of New Testament events.*

Religious Sects

During the intertestamental period, the Hasidim were the *so-called pious ones who sought to protect the Jews from Hellenism and later became the Pharisees*.

We may generally characterize the Pharisees as Jews who were *middle-class tradesmen or businessmen and were associated with the synagogues*.

A religious party like the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Essenes were known for *withdrawing from society to develop purity and practical service*.

b. Note: While accurate, it is not quite this simple.
c. **NOTE:** There was much debate about which sect or group was really "True Israel" (Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.). NO ONE believed that all ethnic Jews were really "Israel." (See discussion below)

Geography

Although the region is not mentioned by name in the New Testament, the "land beyond the Jordan" refers to *Perea*.

2. ONCE UPON A TIME … Jesus & Genre, The Gospels as works of Literature

a. The way you tell a story matters.

- *"Once Upon a time" –*
- *"A Long time ago in a galaxy far far away … "*

b. The Ancient World had many literary genres, literary devices & types just as we do today:

- ***Epic, Poetry, Biography, Fiction, Documentary***.
- Authors shape, craft their works, to accomplish very specific things. Whatever genre an author chooses, they choose what to communicate and how to communicate … so that the shape of their work, shapes the reader …

- Perhaps a political report shapes your opinion of about the Roman Emperor OR the American President.
- Perhaps reading Romeo & Juliet shapes your understanding of family, love.

- **<u>More to the point:</u>** The Bible is full of different genres commonly used across cultures in the Ancient Near East.
  - The Bible genres include Poetry, Prophecy, Law Code, Epistle, Biography. Apocalyptic, History (tho what qualified as history is often MUCH DIFFERENT than what we consider history, this can be especially true of major events in the O.T.). And some books blend genres together.
    - ***a.*** *<u>The Genre of Gospel does this a bit.</u>*
  - Make no mistake, every biblical writer is crafting their message for specific purposes, using events, people, places to convey primarily *<u>THEOLOGICAL MEANING</u>*.
  - IOW → How we are to understand this in light of GOD and what He has or has not revealed about Himself … both in through creation and through what Scripture we have.

Q: Why is all this important?

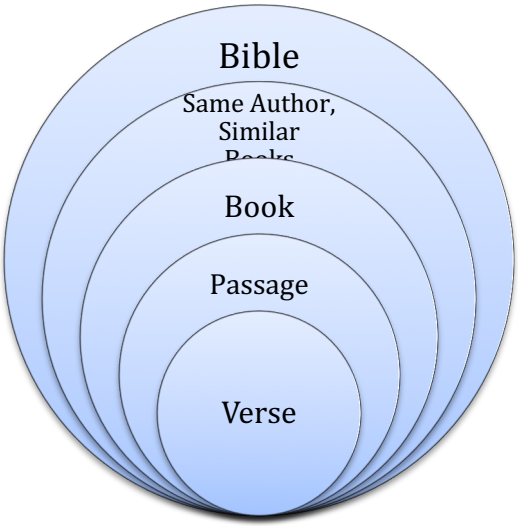
- ***Different Genres must be interpreted in different ways.***
- *There are basic interpretive rules for each genre.*
- *And when an author transitions from one genre to another, one literary style or device to another, we transition our rules. (and it is true with movies)*
  - ***<u>Ex</u>****: You would not watch "Star Wars" the same way you watch a documentary on the Civil War. <u>They are different genres</u>, one is epic fantasy, one is history. <u>You interpret them differently</u>.*
  - ***<u>Example</u>*** *of the same language meaning different things in different genres:*
    - *The phrase "red rose" means one thing in a botanical book, and something quite different in a poem "O, my love, is like a red red rose."*
    - *OR, the phrase "I'm going to kill you!" It means one thing when my wife says it because I've wreck her new car, it means something totally different if Goliath scream this at David.*
      - *That is a matter of context.*
  - ***<u>Ex</u>****: When Jesus says "I am the gate" … he doesn't literally mean he is a gate made of wood & metal.*

<u>THE INTERPRETIVE SPIRAL – Context is Key</u>

(INTSP) Interpretive Spiral

This is a simplified version for your benefit.

- It doesn't matter if you're reading Gospel, poetry, prophecy, historical narrative, Epic, etc.
- I've removed several circles that remain in your handout.
- **<u>The INTSP let's you see Scripture thru:</u>** microscope, binoculars, telescope.
- **<u>How many of you have read a verse, and something happens in your soul, you almost hear the harmony notes of something you've read before, and you rush to find the connection?</u>**



- You are tapping notes in the Interpretive Spiral.
- If you learn to play it, your reading will come alive and you will see art & beauty of the Bible.
- The Interpretive Spiral takes notes, and teaches you to hear symphonies.

<u>ill:</u> How many of you play w/ GOOGLEEARTH – scary but awesome!
I can zoom from space, to see my 4Runner in the driveway.

I live in a house in the rural town of McCalla. Zoom out…
…McCalla is in Alabama. Zoom out…
Alabama…is in the South. Zoom out…
The South…of the United States of America. Zoom out
The United States of America…is on Planet Earth. **<u>That's my context</u>**.

You can't FULLY understand McCalla unless you understand Alabama.
You can't FULLY understand Alabama unless you understand the South
You can't FULLY understand the South unless you understand the United States.
And so on…each give meaning, give a MORE FULL, picture.
<u>That's called Context.</u> That is what the INT. Spiral does for us.

<u>A Verse has a neighborhood, state, country, planet. It has citizenship.</u>
<u>Lift it out of context and you're violating its rights and its biblical citizenship.</u>
All this to say that Biblical Interpretation depends upon many things:

- *Genre of Book*

- *Literary Devices being used*
- *Context of the Passage*
- *And from the combination of these things we arrive at the author's intended meaning, and therefore God's intended meaning.*

GENRE → THE GOSPEL as GENRE

The gospels are the genre known as "APOLOGETIC BIOGRAPHY."

- **Apologetic Biography –** the biography of a person written to explain and defend his life, work, or teaching.
- The author ***selects*** facts, events, and words from the person's life, then writes and arranges them in a particular way *in order to highlight particular aspects and meaning of the person and his life*.
- **An intentionally creative telling of someone's life story.**
- ***Therefore, the gospels were never intended to be read as a strictly chronological or word-for-word telling of the story of Jesus.***
- ***Each author stresses similar aspects of Jesus, and different aspects.***

The Synoptics: the 411

THE SYNOPTICS – MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE
The Gospel is almost a Genre unto itself, something new on the world scene.
It is biography, but not exhaustive.

The term *Synoptic Gospels* refers to accounts of the good news presented by Matthew, Mark, and Luke and means they view the Gospel similarly.

While the Synoptic Gospels cover the final months of Jesus' ministry fairly well, we rely on John's Gospel for *important details of the Judean/Perean ministry*.

Many scholars assume the priority of Mark because Mark is *used almost entirely by Matthew and Luke.*

- ***Now, allow me to say that this wording is a weak position***.
  - *YES, many scholars do believe that Matthew relies upon Mark.*
  - *Scholars believe that Luke relies upon Mark, to a lesser degree.*
  - *The correct way to say this would be: "There is significant evidence that Matthew, in writing his Gospel, used Mark's Gospel as a source. Evidence suggests Luke also used Mark, though to a lesser extent."*
  - ***Do you see the difference?***

In the equation "Mark + Q + M = Matthew," Q stands for material that is common to *Matthew and Luke*.

A significant fact about the Synoptics: *Their goal was not to write an exhaustive biography, for this reason, they give few facts about Christ's first thirty years.*

Regarding harmonizing miracles in all 4 Gospels, the following is the best position: *The Gospel Accounts of miracles complement and verify each other, but may differ in terms of specific details*.

NOW, LET US RETURN TO THAT FIRST QUESTION FROM JESUS:

Who do you say that I am?

In the face of numerous false gods, Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" - Matthew 16:15-16.
Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah

- *Christos* is Greek for "The Messiah"
- *Messiah comes from the Hebrew M'shiach, which means, "to smear" as in "to smear with oil."*
- ***There were 3 O.T. figures who were anointed with oil*: Prophet, Priest, King.**
- *Israel expected Messiah to be anointed in a similar manner.*
- *BUT Israel's Expectations were far different than YAHWEH'S plan.*

Prophet, Priest, King – the 3 anointed offices of the O.T.

- *Add to this **LORD**.*
- ***LORD** → the promise that Yahweh Himself will come His People.*
- ***Israel DID NOT associate this as much with the Messiah.***
- *Yet, the People bear upon their shoulders the great weight of expectation.*

"WHY is all of this important?"

The Mission of God's Messiah involves 4 tasks :

1. *Gathering the Tribes of Israel*
2. *Cleansing the Temple of God*
3. *Dealing with the Enemies of Israel*
4. *Reigning as the Lord of the Nations.*

Israel expected Messiah to be SOMEWHAT involved in these, because each of these 4 tasks is described, in varying ways, in the TORAH, the PROPHETS, and the PSALMS. But Israel was full of flawed ideas. *Matthew, Mark, & Luke, relied heavily upon the Torah, the Prophets, the Psalms.*

BUT … Israel as a Nation … their expectations are … WAY off.

- **MIS - aligned with God's**

- Many expect a Messiah who will DEFEAT ROME MILITARILY and establish ethnic Israel as the pre-eminent people of the planet.
- "Our God will show YOU! He will send w KING and he is going gather God's People, get you OUT of our Temple, and we are going to kick your Roman rear and RULE OVER YOU!"
  - *Not much of a light to the nations are they?*
- When the crowds converge to make Jesus their KING … THIS is what they are after.
- Now some wanted a king like David … to UNITE the tribes once more and lead the people into right praise, but MORE wanted a king like David only for his prowess in battle to crush enemies. *(THEY DIDN'T WANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS, BUT TO ELIMINATE THE NATIONS.)*
- Centuries of resentment have been built up, and by the time Jesus arrives on the scene … the region is at a rolling boil.
- Jesus feels the historical tensions of his own people … on his own shoulders. BUT he feels more … he feels the weight of Paradise Lost, Humanity Broken, so *His Mission is bigger than Israel*.
- In fact, Jesus will be what Israel was supposed to be toward God, and toward the world. JESUS will be GOD'S TRUE ISRAEL because Jesus completely FULFILLS 100% of the People's Covenant Obligations. He didn't come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it.

PROPHET, PRIEST, KING, LORD.

A word about the MIRACLES of Jesus:

- *Some hearken back to O.T. Prophets, but they are always greater than the miracles of the prophets.*
- *Most of Jesus' miracles either MIRROR the miracles of Yahweh, or magnify them … as in Jesus does something greater.*
- *Israel was not expecting the Messiah to do these types of things.*
- *Israel was not expecting the Messiah to actually BE Yahweh in the flesh.*
- *The miracles of Jesus reveal the motives of the people, and the spiritual state of the nation.*

We may define "miracle" most accurately as *any event that would not normally occur without the intervention of an outside force*.

- **I would say "any event that demonstrates a supernatural intervention into or within our natural order, circumventing and/or superceding the natural order.**

One miracle of Christ common to all 4 Gospels is the *feeding of 5000*.

- *Of what does this remind us?*

- *God feeding His People with Manna in the Desert.*
- *Remember, Jesus said HE was the bread from Heaven, then He said "Eat my flesh, drink my blood." And the crowds dispersed.*

<u>As we move forward, carry several concepts with you:</u>

- **Jesus is the True Prophet, Priest, King, and LORD.**
- **Jesus is the Messiah and has 4 tasks.**
- **Further, look at what His Miracles reveal about WHO He is.**
- **Look at what His Hard Sayings and Parables reveal about WHO He is.**
- **Jesus is TRUE Israel, He recapitulates Israel's History in Himself.**

Look for these concepts in the Synoptics… in the coming sections below.

END OF SESSION 1 - BREAK

NEXT: SESSION 2 → MARK, MATTHEW

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: AMAZED AND AFRAID

The Uniqueness of Jesus is captured the Gospel writers in numerous passages. One such passage, is found in Mark 10:32

> *And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.*

Why the amazement? Why the fear? Mark describes several other reactions of amazement and fear, each the result of divine actions by Jesus:

- *Jesus calms the raging storm on the Sea of Galilee - Mark 4:40*
- *Jesus casts out demons – Mark 5*
- *Jesus is Transfigured on the mount – Mark 9*
- *Jesus speaks prophetically about his death & Resurrection – 9*
- *Jesus' Resurrection is announced by the angel at the tomb – Mark 16*

The fear was that of humans in the presence of God, as when Moses and the people were afraid at Mount Sinai amidst the blazing, thundering glory of the Lord (Exodus 3, 20). The amazement & fear were not due to Jesus being a mere teacher or human leader, but because he was GOD.

(MARK'S ANSWER TO JESUS' QUESTION: *"Who do YOU say that I am?")*
Mark's fear & amazement reveal his answer.

Based on Mark's style of writing, we may conclude that his purpose was to *stress Christ's deity as revealed in His works of power*.

Regarding the accounts of Christ's arrest in the Synoptic Gospels, we note that *only Mark mentions the young man, who only wore a linen garment, being seized by the crowd*.

MARK: THE DEATH OF GOD'S SON AS GOOD NEWS

PART 1: THE IDENTITY OF JESUS

The Importance of Jesus' Identity in Mark

Jesus' Messiahship and Divine Sonship in Historical Context

Mark's Understanding of Jesus' Messiahship & Divine Sonship

PART 1: SUMMARY

PART 2: THE MISSION OF JESUS
→ Mark has Jesus on the move like Lightning McQueen, Mission is the focus.

Jesus Proclaims and Establishes the Reign of God

Jesus Dies for Sinners
- **Jesus dies as the Son of Man**
- **Jesus Dies as Isaiah's Suffering Servant**

PART 2: SUMMARY

PART 3: THE RESPONSE TO JESUS

Jesus' Disciples

Jesus Enemies

The Messianic Secret
THE DEATH OF GOD'S SON AS GOOD NEWS → SUMMARY

Contributions of Mark:

1. **Mark must be appreciated for its Historical Importance.**
- *Significant evidence places it as the first Gospel*
- *Therefore the 1st to set forth an account of the life and ministry of Jesus … Mark lays a foundation for others to follow.*

2. **Mark is the creator of the Gospel in Literary form.**
- *He weaves this peculiar modification of the Greco-Roman Genre → Apologetic Biography.*
- *He weaves biographical events, facts, with Jesus' teaching, trying synthesize it as an authoritative whole.*

3. **Mark ties the Church to Jesus.**
   - *He anchors the Church in specific historical events in the 3rd decade of the 1st century.*
   - *If the Church is to be true, Mark is ensuring that it never abandons the REAL HISTORICAL HUMANITY of the Christ whom it worships.*
     - *Our Salvation depends on history: the physical death & the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

4. **Mark's straightforward, action-oriented account preserves the sequence of Jesus' ministry & teaching more clearly than do the other Gospels.** *Mark helps readers understand the basic salvation events and prepares them to recite these in personal evangelism.*
5. **The 1st half of Mark focuses on Jesus' Miracles, leading to Peter's confession, then the 2nd half of Mark focuses on Jesus' Suffering & Death.**
6. **The major Christological purpose of Mark: Jesus is the *suffering* Son of God and can truly be understood only in terms of this suffering.**
7. **Mark focuses on discipleship: He gives us the highs & lows of Jesus' Twelve Disciples … as an invitation. *Take up your cross, and follow me!***

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW: New Wine in Old Skins

PART ONE:IN MATTHEW → JESUS IS THE FULFILLMENT OF JEWISH BIBLICAL TRADITION

→ **CONSEQUENTLY, Jesus' true followers, are also fulfillment.**

Jesus is the Fulfillment of Israel's Scriptures

One of the most prominent theological themes in Matthew is that Jesus' life and teaching correspond to various statements in the Jewish Scriptures that Matthew took as predictions of the Messiah.

Fifteen times Matthew says that some aspect of Jesus' life is fulfilled in the Scriptures:

- *His virgin birth → 1:22-23; cf. Isa. 7:14 LXX*
- *His birth in Bethlehem → 2:3-6; cf. Micah 5:2*
- *His move with family from Egypt to Israel → 2:14-15; cf. Hos. 11:1*
- *Herod's slaughter of children under two in Bethlehem in an effort to kill Jesus → 2:16-18; cf. Jer. 31:15*
- *His family's choice to live in Nazareth in Galilee → 2:23*
- *His own decision to live in Capernaum beside the Sea of Galilee (4:13-16; cf. Isa. 9:1-2)*
- *His teaching → 5:17*
- *His healing ministry → 8:16-17; cf. Isa. 53:4*
- *His silencing of those whom he healed → 12:17; cf. Isa. 42:1-4*
- *Use of parables to obscure his teaching for those who rejected him → 13:13-14; cf. Isa. 6:9-10*
- *Use of parables in his teaching generally → 13:34-35; cf. Ps. 78:2*
- *His decision to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey and her foal → 21:4-7; cf. 62:11; Zech. 9:9*
- *His refusal to call on the army of heaven to rescue him at his arrest → 26:53-54*
- *The arrest itself → 26:55-56*
- *The purchase of the "potter's field" with Judas's thirty pieces of silver → 27:6-10; cf. Jer. 18:2-;, 19:1-2, 4, 6, 11; 32:6-15; Zech. 11:13*

- **Ten of these references include their quotations in virtually the same way:**
  - **"In order that what was spoken thru the prophet might fulfilled, saying …"**
  - **Eight of Matthew's citations appear nowhere else in the N.T.**

<u>Jesus as the Embodiment of the Law and of Wisdom</u>

<u>Jesus is the New and Greater Moses</u>

<u>Jesus as the Messiah, Son of David, Son of God</u>

<u>Jesus is the Personification of Israel; He is True Israel</u>

And He Reconstitutes Israel's 12 Tribes, by choosing 12 Disciples.

- *Upon whom the Church will be built.*
- *The Church becomes what Israel could not be…a people within whom God's Spirit Dwells, a true Light to the Nations. (But only because Jesus WAS and IS this, and the Church is IN HIM.*
- *IN CHOOSING 12 DISCIPLES, Jesus is bringing Israel to it's intended fulfillment, and it's intended fulfillment is … THE CHURCH.*

- *A people God creates for Himself, both Jew & Gentile, and now neither Jew nor Gentile, because in Christ … we are ONE BODY.*

SUMMARY

PART 2: THE CLASH BETWEEN JESUS AND THE JEWISH LEADERSHIP

Jewish Leaders' Rejection of Jesus

God's Judgment on the Jewish Leaders' Rejection of Jesus

SUMMARY

A FINAL WORD: MATTHEW'S GOSPEL AND THE PROBLEM OF WINESKINS

- *Matthew wants any who read his Gospel to know that the Jewish majority who have rejected Jesus and his followers have failed to see Jesus as the fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures.*
- *With this fulfillment has come chage, and because the hearts of the those who have rejected Jesus and his followers are hard and evil, they have:*
    - Refused to accept change
    - Failed to perceive the fulfillment
    - Brought the judgment of God on themselves
    - Like the old wineskins in the parable, their temple has been ruined and God has begun to work among a new multiethnic people.
        - Matthew believes that within this new community, the old biblical traditions of Israel have been truly preserved.
        - IOW, the Church is True Israel.
- **For Matthew, God has placed the new wine of the Gospel into the new wineskin of the church, but now it is imperative that the church keep the new skins themselves undamaged.**
-

Matthew's main purpose in writing his Gospel was to *prove a Jewish audience that Jesus fulfilled the OT messianic promises and is truly their long-awaited Messiah.*

Matthew appeals to people's respect for teachers and teaching.

Matthew used the term "kingdom of heaven" more than "kingdom of God" PERHAPS because he *wanted to avoid using the term Yahweh, or God, out of respect for the feelings of devout Jews.*

The Contribution of Matthew:

1. **Matthew preserves larger blocks of Jesus teaching.**
   - *This is one of the reasons it was so popular in the early church.*
   - *Christ is portrayed as the true rabbi, the wisest teacher.*
2. **Matthew complements the other Gospels, Luke in particular, by giving an alternative account of Jesus' virginal conception, cast in Joseph's perspective.**
   - *Quite apart from other stories in the birth narrative of which there is no other record, (Magi, Egypt), the whole account is strongly tied to the antecedent revelation of the O.T.*

3. **Matthew's use of the OT is particularly rich and complex.**
   - **a.** *Most noticeably between 10-14 quotations found only in Matthew and introduced by a fulfillment formula.*
     - **i.** *His notion of prophecy and fulfillment cannot be reduced to mere verbal prediction and historical fulfillment in raw events.*
     - **ii.** *Matthew uses typologyand adopts a fundamentally christological reading of the Old Testament.*
     - **iii.** ***Ex:*** *Jesus' temptations (Matt4), for instance, are a re-enactment of the temptations confronted in the wilderness by the Israelites, God's "son (Exodus 4:22-23) – except Jesus the Son of God is entirely victorious in them because he is faithful to God's Word & Covenant.*
4. **In Matthew especially, Jesus is seen as one coming to "fulfill" the Law (M5:17).**
   - **a.** *And in perfectly, wholeheartedly doing so, is TRUE ISRAEL.*
     - **i.** *Jesus is the faithful son.*
     - **ii.** *Jesus is the faithful prophet, priest, king.*
     - **iii.** *Jesus is the true vine.*
     - **iv.** *Jesus is the Light of the World, the nations can now see Yahweh.*
     - **v.** *Jesus fills up, & overflows the vocation to which Israel had been called.*
5. **Matthew's Gospel is foundational not only as one looks backward to the scriptures of the old covenant but also as one looks forward to what the Church became…the one true and final Covenant People of God, TRUE ISRAEL … *IN Jesus Christ, who ALONE is the authentic Jew, True Israel!***
   - **a.** *Jesus fills up, & overflows the vocation to which Israel had been called.*
   - **b.** *The Old Covenant is obsolete, Jesus becomes the New Covenant.*
   - **c.** *Ethnic Israel has no special standing with God, their purpose was to bring forth the Messiah for the world. They come to Yahweh the same way as every other human. Rejecting Jesus results in the same fate for them as it would anyone else. Yet, even a national punishment as we see from the Olivet Discourse.*

d. *The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, demonstrate that Ethnic Israel is not true Israel, Jesus is true Israel, and His Church is now true Israel, the fulfillment of what God's People were supposed to be and do.*

SESSION BREAK 2

NEXT: SESSION 3 → LUKE, PARABLES, TRUE ISRAEL

<u>*LUKE*</u>: THE PLACE OF CHRISTIANS IN THE PROGRESS OF SALVATION HISTORY

<u>AN INTRO: SALVATION HISTORY AS LUKE'S ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE</u>

<u>PART 1: THE PROGRESS OF SALVATION HISTORY</u>

<u>The Unfolding of Salvation History in Luke (and Acts)</u>

<u>The Biblical Shape of Salvation History and its Fulfillment in Jesus and the Church</u>

Creation and Idolatry

Israel's Rebellion and God's Saving Power

Jesus as the Convergence Point of Two Stories
Israel's Royal Messiah
Jesus as Suffering Servant
Jesus as Eschatological Prophet
Jesus' Resurrection and Exaltation

PART 1: SUMMARY

<u>PART 2: THE CERTAIN TRIUMPH OF GOD'S SAVING PURPOSE</u>

<u>The Triumph of God's Purpose over Cosmic Evil Forces</u>

<u>The Triumph of God's Purpose over Opposition to Its Inclusive Character</u>

The Triumph of Inclusiveness in Luke's Gospel

The Triumph of Inclusiveness in Acts
From Within the Church

From Outside the Church

Does God's Purpose Include the Salvation of Israel?

Yes, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the same as for all the gentiles!

Following Jesus as The Way

PART 2: SUMMARY

The Contribution of Luke:

The prefaces of Luke and Acts indicate that *the same person wrote the Gospel of Luke first and then Acts*.

Luke gives us more *historical details* than any other Gospel writer.

Concerning the annunciation and birth of Jesus, Luke records *Joseph and Mary's trip to Bethlehem in response to a decree from Caesar Augustus.*

Luke's Gospel includes *Adam in the genealogy of Jesus Christ*.

According to Luke's Gospel and our study, the first 2 of his 12 disciples to see Jesus after His resurrection were the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus.

KEY POINTS OF THE SYNOPTICS:

PARABLES, THE OLIVET DISCOURSE, TRUE ISRAEL,

PARABLES

NOTE:

- **Parables of Judgment on Israel,** giving God's Kingdom to another people: These are parables of *fulfillment*, NOT *replacement*. The "new people" are those who have BECOME Israel by be grafted INTO the True Vine, Jesus Christ (I AM the Vine, you are the branches."). Jews and Gentiles all come by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

- **Parables of Second Advent …** always teach *delay*, and *never* give any certain sign or signs of imminence .

Defined correctly, a "parable" is a method in which the teacher *uses familiar concepts to illustrate unfamiliar concepts in terms the learners understand.*

The Gospel of Luke records the most *parables of Jesus*.

The parables which deal with kingdom living teach us that *discipleship requires obedient service, sacrifice, and sharing kingdom knowledge with others*.

***NOTE*: IN THE TEXTBOOK, PAGES 161-163, THERE IS TEACHING THAT SUPPORTS JESUS AS TRUE ISRAEL and THE CHURCH AS RENEWED ISRAEL. MANY times the writers of these textbooks would love to say MORE, to be more OPEN about some of the ramifications of such truths, but they CANNOT because certain groups in our Fellowship with poor biblical / theological education would race such a stink.**

The largest number of Christ's parables by far dealt with the theme of the Jews rejecting Jesus, and the Kingdom (their special relationship to God) being taken from them forever and given to others (Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus).

> "Christ's early parables implied that the old religious order was passing away, that there was a 'changing of the guard.' The former system was being ***replaced*** by a new one; it needed more than a patch to meet the requirements of the new order. The new system would be like the dawning of a new day, and the old laws would not be compatible with its requirements." *(Your textbook, page 163.)*
>
> "The underlying theme of many parables in this final period was that the gift of the Kingdom **would be taken from the Jews** and given to others. God had offered the Kingdom to His people; they had rejected it because they failed to perceive its value; and, therefore they would suffer great loss." *(Your textbook, page 163.)*

TRUE ISRAEL – Jesus is True Israel

***NOTE*: FULFILLMENT THEOLOGY - that Christ and God's People in Christ from every nation (the Ecclesia / the Church) - are the fulfillment toward which the entire OT was pointing and moving, is fundamental and essential to correctly understanding Christ, the Gospel, and the entire Bible. …**

1. Ethnic or National Israel *as a whole* was never considered "Israel" / "True Israel."

Everyone knew that it was a Remnant within visible Israel that was True Israel, truly faithful to Yahweh … *and every group/sect thought they were IT*! ☺

- The Essenes
- The Sadducees
- The Pharisees
- Particular Rabbis and their Followers (e.g., Shammai, Hillel, etc.)
- … many other groups …

2. SO, the question of "who is truly Israel? / which group is really God's People?" had been a huge argument within Judaism for decades!

3. *Yahweh's answer was always "You will all – ALL ISRAEL – sin and fail." "Even the Remnant will ultimately be down to ONE – ONLY ONE will be Faithful to Me, will keep covenant with Me."*

BUT, "God so loved the world, that He gave his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whoever believes in HIM would not perish, but have eternal life."
GOD came as the SON to be the PERFECT … SON / ONE TRUE Israelite / Seed of Abraham / Son of David / Lamb / Sacrifice / High Priest.
ONLY Jesus Christ perfectly kept Covenant with the Father, perfectly fulfilled the Law.
GOD WOULD RENEW / RESTORE ISRAEL **IN JESUS** WHO ALONE WAS TRUE.

Jesus clearly, explicitly, and repeatedly claimed by His words and deeds to be the One Israelite who was perfectly true to the Father, God's True Son who alone perfectly pleased the Father, who has come to redeem, renew, and restore God's Remnant and all gentiles who will come. True Israel will be those who follow Jesus the Son.

Jesus does not "replace" Israel with Himself and His followers … He redeems, renews, reconstitutes, restores Israel by grafting all who repent and believe into Himself, both Jew and Gentile. *All of God's promises are kept IN JESUS!*

The gospel authors and the entire NT continually portray Jesus and those who follow Him in this way. 100%. Without exception.

JESUS RECAPITULATES ISRAEL'S HISTORY …

- **Journey into Egypt and back (out of Egypt I have called my son)**
- **Red Sea / Baptism**
- **Israel Failed its Wilderness Testing … Jesus triumphed in his.**

- **Israel is the wayward son who breaks the Law, Jesus is the faithful son who keeps the Law**

- **Israel is called a wild and untamed vine, Jesus calls himself the True Vine**

- **Jesus is TRUE Israel, ethnic Israel is unfaithful and obsolete.**
  - Jesus says "I am the true Vine." Now "vine" was what God called Israel in the OT, *but GOD said they were a wild vine to be cut off & burned*. Jesus now says "I am the true Vine. Remain IN ME."
  - IOW – I am the fulfillment of what Israel was to be, IF YOU ARE NOT IN ME, you are not TRUE ISRAEL, but a wild vine, a fruitless branch to be cut off & thrown in the fire." This was His Word TO ETHNIC ISRAEL!

- **David can't hold his Kingdom together, Jesus builds a better one.**

- **Israel's 12 tribes were scattered & lost, Jesus reconstitutes the tribes.**

  - **The Twelve Apostles …**

JESUS RECONSTITUTES THE NATION OF ISRAEL

IN CHOOSING 12 DISCIPLES, Jesus is bringing Israel to its intended fulfillment, and its intended fulfillment is … THE CHURCH.

- *A people God creates for Himself, both Jew & Gentile, and now neither Jew nor Gentile, because in Christ … we are ONE BODY.*
- ***Compare Paul in Ephesians …***
  - *The mystery of the Church was God's plan from eternity past.*
  - *Christ broke down all division between Jew and Gentile.*
  - *IN CHRIST we are One New Man, One New People.*
- ***Compare Hebrews …***
  - *Written to warn Jewish Christians against going back into Judaism.*
  - *Christ is God's final Word.*
  - *The new covenant is the fulfillment of the old, BETTER in every way.*
  - *The old covenant is obsolete and passing away, forever.*
- ***Compare Revelation …***
  - *Israel's patriarchs names are on the gates to the Heavenly City,* ***but***
  - ***The Apostles' names are on the foundation stones.***
  - *The Apostles / the Church was always God's plan, always the final goal.*

SESSION 4 → ESCHATOLOGY / FINAL SYNTHESIS OF CHRIST IN THE SYNOPTICS

ESCHATOLOGY

OLIVET DISCOURSE – Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

Aside from the book of Revelation, there is hardly a more important section of Scripture on the subject of biblical eschatology than Matthew 24, the famous Olivet Discourse delivered by Jesus to his disciples shortly before his betrayal by Judas. Many Christians simply assume that Jesus is describing the end of human history and his second coming.

The best scholars across conservative denominations believe Jesus was actually and primarily describing, the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 a.d., and this was in response to his disciples' question.

I maintain an openness to the possibility that Jesus envisioned the events of 70 a.d. as a microcosmic foreshadowing of the macrocosmic events associated with his second advent. But with some of the greatest N.T. scholars, I agree that the primary focus and fulfillment has to do with the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D.

Scholars who take this view:

- **Gordon Fee,** the world's greatest living NT Exegete, and a retired A/G minister.
- **R.T. France**, possibly the greatest living theologian on Matthew & Mark.
- **N.T. Wright**, Spirit-Filled Anglican, former Bishop of Durham, perhaps the greatest Pauline theologian, one of the greatest NT Theologians.

The Olivet Discourse is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21.

- We will use Matthew because he records more than the others.

An Overview of Mt. 24:1-31

Matt. 24:1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 2 "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

Matt. 24:3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

1. **We must first observe the context.** Jesus has repeatedly predicted that a time is coming when God will COME AS JUDGE and punish national Israel for her sin and rebellious rejection of the Messiah - Mt. 21:33-36 (esp. v. 43); Mt. 22:1-14 (esp. v. 7); Mt. 23:29-36 (esp. vv. 35-36); Mt. 23:37-39 (esp. v. 38). (All this would be visibly and gruesomely consummated in the destruction

of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 a.d.) Now he

2. **The disciples are dumbfounded as well as curious, asking him:** "When will all this happen and what will be the sign of your coming at the end of the age?" - Mt. 24:3; Mark 13:3.

3. **Jesus responds with <u>two</u> crucial answers: <u>First</u>,** he tells them when the Temple will be destroyed, *but*, **<u>second</u>**, he also tells them that, contrary to their expectations, his second coming and the end of the age are *not* to occur at that time (i.e., not at the same time as the destruction of the Temple). In other words, the destruction of the Temple *can* be dated by signs, but the second coming of Christ *cannot*.

4. **Matthew 24:4-28 thus contains a description of events prior to and inclusive of the destruction of the Temple.**
   a. ***vv. 4-14*** = refer to events that are to characterize the entire period from 33-70 a.d., none of which, in themselves, are signs that the end of the city and its Temple are immediately at hand.
   b. ***vv. 15-28 =*** refer to the one sign that indicates the prophesied destruction is about to occur, the "*abomination of desolation*" unmistakably confirms the consummation of God's judgment against Israel has come.
      i. The most popular identification is **Titus and the armies of Rome**. While the city of Jerusalem was still burning the soldiers brought their legionary standards into the temple precincts and offered sacrifices there, declaring Titus to be victor. The idolatrous representations of Caesar and the Roman eagle on the standards would have constituted the worst imaginable blasphemy to the Jewish people.

   c. **The debate surfaces with the interpretation of vv. 29-31**. T**hree views contend for our allegiance:**
      i. (1) Vv. 29-31 describe the second coming at the end of history.
      ii. (2) V. 29 describes the present inter-advent age, while vv. 30-31 portray the second coming.
      iii. (3) Vv. 29-31 have nothing to say about the second coming of Christ. Rather, they are a symbolic description of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 a.d. and the inauguration of the church age in which the gospel is proclaimed and the elect of God are saved.

5. **This period of unprecedented tribulation (66-70 a.d.)** inaugurates or introduces a time of undetermined length, during which tribulation will be prominent, during which also we are alertly to look for the second coming

of Christ. This is the present age in which we live, called by Luke "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24; cf. Rom. 11:25).

a. It should be noted that some argue that "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) was the **very short span of time between the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem and the city's final destruction**. In other words, "the times of the Gentiles" does not refer to the present age but to that period 66-70 a.d. during which the Gentiles (in particular, the Romans) "trampled under foot" Jerusalem and destroyed her temple. If so, "the 'trampling' then refers to the physical acts involved in laying waste the city" (Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City*, 101, n. 167).

6. " **Sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky…they will see the Son of Man coming on clouds of glory"**
   a. **"See the Son of Man coming…"**
      i. **"See" –** they will "see" him in the sense that they will "understand", i.e., spiritually *perceive* that he is the vindicated and enthroned King. For "seeing" = "understanding", see John 12:40 (Isa. 6:10); Acts 26:18; cf. 1 Kings 8:29,52; 2 Kings 2:16; 6:20; 19:16; Isa. 35:5; 42:7,16; see also Luke 24:31; also note Mark 1:44; Luke 17:22; John 3:3,36; Rom. 15:21. "This actually refers to Jesus' ascension [not his second coming]. In the destruction of the temple, the rejected Christ is vindicated as the ascended Lord and shown to possess great power and glory" (Gentry, 61).
      ii. **"Son of Man" -** *Jesus uses this phrase to identify himself with the figure from Daniel.*
      iii. **"Coming" -** *BUT in Daniel, this figure is not COMING from Heaven to Earth, but from Earth to Heaven, being accepted into God's Presence.*
         1. This "coming" refers to an event "whereby the authority of Jesus is vindicated over the Jewish establishment which has rejected him", Jesus is not . . . suggesting that Caiaphas will witness the end of the space-time order…In and through it all, Caiaphas will witness events which show that Jesus was not, after all, mistaken in his claim: he is the Messiah, the anointed one, the true representative of the people of Israel, the one in and through whom the covenant God is acting to set up his kingdom." The Father HAS accepted Jesus, the old system is forever obsolete.

7. **Thus, "*the tribulation of those days*" (v. 29) refers to all that occurred from 33 to 70 a.d., with special reference to the events relating to the siege and sack of Jerusalem in 66-70 a.d. (called the "*great tribulation*" in v. 21).**

8. **The generation to whom Jesus was speaking would live to see "all these things" occur,** "these things" being a reference to the events leading up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple - Mt. 24:34-35.

9. **Although there will be signs and events indicating when the Temple will fall, the second coming of Jesus at the end of the age will be unannounced:**
   a. so be prepared (vv. 36-51).
   b. "That day and hour" (v. 36) refers to the day of Christ's coming described in vv. 37-51.

Summary:
Although this entire present age intervening between the first and second comings of Christ is one of trial and distress (generic tribulation)…

- *the so-called Great Tribulation mentioned in v. 21 (and described in vv. 15-28; and perhaps also in vv. 29-31) has already come and gone.*
- *It is to be identified with the siege on Jerusalem during the years 66-70 a.d., which culminated in the destruction of the city and its Temple by the armies of Rome (the latter being the "abomination of desolation" referred to in v. 15).*
- *Thus "The Great Tribulation" of Mt. 24:21 (called "days of vengeance" in Lk. 21:22 and "days of affliction" in Mk. 13:19) is not a future event but an established fact of past history.*

There are several initial reasons why I understand the passage in this way:

1. **GENRE & LANGUAGE.**
   a. Jesus was speaking to a people saturated by Old Testament language, concepts, and imagery. From the earliest days of their lives they memorized and were taught the OT. Thus, when Jesus spoke to them of things to come he used the prophetic vocabulary of the OT which they would instantly recognize. "*the sun will be darkened, the moon lose its light, and the stars will fall from the sky.*"
      i. Are these literal, physical, astronomical events that one might see with the naked eye? I don't think so.

   In the OT, such language was used to portray *not what is going on in the heavens but what is happening on the earth*. Natural disasters, political upheaval, turmoil among the nations, etc., are often described figuratively through the terminology of cosmic disturbances. Some examples of how *cosmic events* are used as symbolic portrayals of earthly realities (whether blessing or cursing) include Isa. 60:20; Amos 8:2-9; Zeph. 1:4,15; Isa. 5:30; Jer. 4:23,28; 13:16; Joel 2:10.

2. **The context pertains to the predictions of God's wrath against the *current* generation of Israel**, especially Mt. 23:35,36,38. This leads to the expectation of fulfillment at that historical moment.

3. **The *question* posed by the disciples pertained to the temple then standing in Jerusalem, out of which they had just departed, at which they were then looking, and about whose prophesied destruction they were wondering.**

4. **SO, Jesus' *answer* pertains to the then-standing temple, not some future temple (cf. v. 2).**

5. **The circumstances described in vv. 15-22 are geographically, historically, and culturally limited to conditions relevant in the first century.**

6. **The entire section is couched in terms of what his actual (original) hearers are to see, hear, and experience**. One cannot easily dismiss the repeated use of the second person in Jesus' warnings and instructions (e.g., "**you** will be hearing" [24:6], "see that **you** are not frightened" [24:6], "they will deliver **you** to tribulation, and will kill **you**, and **you** will be hated" [24:9], "therefore when **you** see the abomination of desolation" [24:15], "if anyone says to **you**" [24:23], "I have told **you** in advance" [24:25], "even so **you** too, when **you** see all these things" [24:33]).

SIGNS OF THE IMPENDING DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM and THE TEMPLE (AD 70) …

a. ***Religious impostors and Messianic pretenders* (v. 5)**
   i. See Acts 5:36-37; 8:9-10; 13:6; 21:38. Josephus reports that during the reign of Nero deceivers and false prophets were arrested on a daily basis. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius refers to the prevalence of false messiahs in this period.

b. ***Increased military conflict* (v. 6)**
   i. The period 33-70 a.d. witnessed countless military disturbances. An uprising in Caesarea took 20,000 Jewish lives; at Scythopolis 13,000 Jews were killed; in Alexandria 50,000 were slain; 10,000 were killed in Damascus.
   ii. Josephus reports that when the Emperor Caligula ordered his statue to be erected in the temple at Jerusalem (40 a.d.), the Jews refused. As a result, they lived in a state of fearful anxiety over imminent war with Rome and were in such distress that they even neglected to till the land.
   iii. The *Annals of Tacitus*, which describes events from a.d. 14 to a.d. 68 describes the turmoil of this period with phrases such as "disturbances in Germany," "commotions in Africa,"

"commotions in Thrace," "insurrections in Gaul," "intrigues among the Parthians," "the war in Britain," and "the war in Armenia" (cf. DeMar, 62).

iv. The "end" (v. 6) refers to the end or termination of Jewish national existence; the end of the city; the end of the temple.

c. ***Political upheaval and turmoil*** **(v. 7a)**

i. The incredible extent to which political and military revolution were in the air in Palestine alone during the first half of the first century has been documented at length by N. T. Wright in chp. 6 of his book, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

d. ***Natural disasters*** **(v. 7b)**

i. The famine described in Acts 11:28 occurred in 44 a.d. It resulted in the disciples at Antioch mounting a huge relief effort to ease the burden of the Christians in Judea (Acts 11:29).

ii. Three other famines occurred during the reign of Claudius. The Roman historians Tacitus and Seutonius both mention the prevalence of famines in this period of history (in particular the widespread famine in Rome in a.d. 51).

iii. Earthquakes were also common. See Acts 16:26. There were recorded earthquakes in Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Apamea, Campania, and Rome. The cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae were devastated by a quake in 60 a.d.

i. In 58 a.d. Seneca wrote:

1. *"How often have the cities of Asia and Achaea fallen with one fatal shock! How many cities have been swallowed up in Syria! How many in Macedonia! How often has Paphos become a ruin. News has often been brought to us of the demolition of whole cities at once."*

ii. (In Luke 21:11 we read about "terrors and great signs from heaven," which when taken in the immediate context of famines and earthquakes probably refers to natural phenomena.

1. In particular, we know that a comet appeared around 60 a.d. during Nero's reign, leading to public speculation that some change in the political scene was imminent.

2. Then *Halley's Comet* appeared in 66 a.d. Not long after this, Nero committed suicide.

3. Josephus wrote in *The War of the Jews* that "there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the

city, and a comet, that continued a whole year" [6:5:3,742].)

4. (As v. 8 makes clear, none of these "sorrows" were meant at any time to mislead Christians into thinking that either his second coming was imminent or that God's judgments against Jerusalem were about to begin.)

e. ***Persecution and Martyrdom* (vv. 9-10)**

i. Mark's version reads as follows: *"But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them" (13:9)*.

i. The reference to "courts/councils/synagogues" indicates that Jesus has in mind first-century fulfillment.

1. After 70 a.d., when the Jewish religious and political systems ceased to exist, there were no councils or synagogues. We see fulfillment of this word in Acts 4:1-18; 5:17-40 (synagogues); 12:1; 23:24; 24:27 (governors and kings). See also Acts 8:1.

2. The reality of v. 10 is caused by the pressures and pains of v. 9 (cf. 1 Jn. 2:19; 2 Tim. 1:15 ["all those in Asia have turned away from me"]; 4:10 ["Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world"], 16 ["at my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me").

f. ***False prophets* (v. 11)**

i. One need only remember that much of what we read in Galatians, Colossians, 2 Corinthians, 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude was written to counter the activity and influence of false prophets in the early church. See especially Paul's warning in Acts 20:29-30; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 11:13; Gal. 2:4; and Peter's in 2 Pt. 4:1; and John's in 1 John 4:1.

g. ***Religious insurrection and indifference* (v. 12)**

i. (Perseverance, according to v. 13, is the proof of eternal life. The "end" may mean, "right through, all the way, perhaps to the *end* of one's life".)

h. ***Worldwide preaching of the gospel* (v. 14) – "Inhabited world"**

i. The words "whole world" (NASB) are a translation of the term ***oikoumene***, which literally means an inhabited area, a standard term at that time for the Greek world, then for the Roman empire, and subsequently for the *then known world*. The same Greek word is used in Luke 2:1 – "Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a

census be taken of all *the inhabited earth*" (***oikoumene***).

ii. b. Writing before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 a.d., Paul says to the Colossians:

i. " . . . the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you, *just as in all the world* also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth" (1:5b-6).

iii. Again, Paul refers to the gospel

i. " . . . that you have heard, *which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven*, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister" (1:23).

ii. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed *throughout the whole world*" (Romans 1:8; cf. 10:18).

iv. Thus, prior to 70 a.d. the inhabited earth had indeed heard the gospel, precisely in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24.

7. **And most important of all, Jesus says that this prophetic scenario applies to "*this generation*" (v. 34).** Some try to evade this point by arguing that the word translated "generation" actually means "race" and that Jesus, therefore, was simply saying that the "Jewish race" would not die out until all these things took place. But:

a. this would require the Greek word *genos*, whereas the word here is *genea*;

b. the word *genea* occurs 27x in the gospels and *never once* means "race" (Mt. 1:17; 11:16; 12:39,41,42,45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:36; 24:34; Mk. 8:12,38; 9:19; 13:30; Lk. 1:48,50; 7:31; 9:41; 11:29,30,31,32,50,51; 16:8; 17:25; 21:32);

c. the word "generation" is used elsewhere in Matthew (and the other gospels) of those living in Christ's day (see Mt. 12:38-39; 16:4; 17:17).

d. every time the words "this generation" occur in the gospels they mean ***Jesus' contemporaries***, i.e., the sum total of those living at the same time he did. Read Mt. 11:16; 12:41,42,45; and esp. 23:36;

e. the adjective "this" points to the contemporary nature of the generation Jesus had in mind; if he had in mind a future generation he would more likely have chosen the adjective "that".

<u>In sum:</u> "Surely Jesus does not denounce the first-century temple in which He is standing (24:1) by declaring it 'desolate' (23:38), prophesying its total destruction (24:2), then answering the question 'when shall these things be?' (v. 3), and warning about the temple's 'abomination of desolation' (v. 15) only to speak about the destruction of a totally different temple some two thousand years (or more) later!" (Gentry, *The Great Tribulation*, p. 24).

A FINAL SYNTHESIS OF JESUS'S MESSIANIC ROLES IN THE SYNOPTICS

Who is Jesus?

In the face of numerous false gods, Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" - Matthew 16:15-16.

Jesus is the Messiah

- *Christos* is Greek for "The Messiah"
- *Messiah comes from the Hebrew M'shiach, which means "to smear" as in "to smear with oil."*
- *"It became the name proper to Jesus because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that "Christ" signifies."*

The Mission of God's Messiah involves 4 tasks :

- *Gathering the Tribes of Israel*
- *Cleansing the Temple of God*
- *Dealing with the Enemies of Israel*
- *Reigning as the Lord of the Nations.*

Israel expected these, (to a greater or lesser extent), because each of these 4 tasks is described, in varying ways, in the TORAH, the PROPHETS, and the PSALMS.

Matthew, Mark, & Luke, relied heavily upon the Torah, the Prophets, the Psalms.

While most 1st century Jews would be quite familiar with those tasks, they were surprised, even scandalized, by how Jesus went about fulfilling them.

I. *The Work of Jesus the Messiah*
- **A. Described in the Torah (Law), Prophets, Psalms.**
- **B. The Messiah, the Anointed One, is called to 4 tasks.**
- **C. Jesus accomplished the 4 tasks in the strangest way.**

II. *THE 1ST TASK: Gathering the Tribes of Israel*
- **A. This gathering is not just for Israel, it is for the sake of the world.**
- **B. The Kingdom of God is the call to be gathered and reunited**
  1. **Humans are scattered due to sin.**
  2. **God desires that humans be gathered together into a people.**

C. Jesus Shepherded the people of Israel, forming the New and Final Israel, His Church.

III. THE 2ND TASK: Cleansing the Temple of God

A. Adam was the first priest: The Garden was the first temple.

1. *Adoration is perfect proper alignment to God.*
2. *Original sin is the adoration of the wrong thing(s).*

B. Israel was a temple, created to teach the nations right praise and how to offer sacrifices

1. *Sacrifice is the act of giving something of creation back to the Creator.*
2. *The prophets spoke of God's presence leaving the Temple and looked forward to a new and perfect Temple.*

C. The cleansing of the Temple by Jesus.

1. *Not an act of rebellion, but of rebuilding.*
2. *The Temple to be rebuilt, however, was the temple of his body.*
3. *Jesus is the dwelling place of God, and the perfect sacrifice.*

IV. THE 3RD TASK: Dealing with the Enemies of Israel (and all humanity)

A. The Davidic Warrior

1. Israel was constantly oppressed by other peoples: the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and finally the Romans.
   - *i. This oppression was the result of Israel's sin.*
   - *ii. Liberation from this oppression could only come from God.*
2. Jesus is a "Davidic Warrior"
   - *i. The power of God is revealed in a baby in a manger*
   - *ii. The baby Jesus was born "behind enemy lines." (CSL)*
3. Godly humility vs. Worldly Power
   - *i. Worldly Power:*
     - a. Herod, King of Judea
     - b. Quirinius, Governor of Syria
     - c. Caesar Augustus, Emperor of Rome
   - *ii. Heavenly Power:*
     - a. The True Emperor, Jesus Christ
     - b. The True emperor is not fed, but feeds (Communion)

B. Dealing with the Enemies of Israel: Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

1. Jesus took on "all forms of human dysfunction;" the sins of the world.
2. He embodied the Sermon on the Mount while on the Cross.
   - ***i.*** *He fulfilled all of the Law, perfectly, from a pure heart.*

C. The Resurrection

1. Complete the first 3 tasks of the Messiah.

2. The only good explanation for the early Christian movement, which logically should have died with Christ Jesus.
3. Not a symbol, not a metaphor, it is real.
4. "Shalom, peace." – Jesus shows his wounds to the disciples in the Upper Room.
    i. *And declares to them "Shalom"*
        a. This is more than mere peace.
        b. This is complete and utter WELLNESS towards God, wellness with God.
        c. Jesus establishes HE has complete Shalom with God, and HE can share that with His followers.
            i. *Jesus demonstrates that HE is True Israel.*
            ii. *He has kept covenant.*
            iii. *God has vindicated Him.*
            iv. *God has received Him as the perfect prophet and priest … and now the Father will establish Jesus as King and Lord.*

V. ***THE 4TH TASK: Reigning as Lord of the Nations***

A. Iesous Kurios – "JESUS is LORD"

1. Pilate, by putting a sign over the crucified Christ, was, ironically and unwittingly, the 1st evangelist.
    i. *Do you see that the mightiest human rulers are pawns on the chessboard of time? They think their MOVES are of their own volition & will, but GOD superintends History.*
        a. In Luke, An Emperor calls a census, he thinks to demonstrate the vastness of his domain and to build his wealth, but it is only so a baby can be born in Bethlehem.
        b. In Matthew, A King orders boys in Bethlehem under 2 to be killed, and he only proves he is a corrupt ruler of Psalm 2, gnashing his teeth at the Lord's Anointed One, the SON He has installed on Zion.
        c. Pilate speaks "he is innocent, he has done nothing to deserve death"
        d. In Mark, The hands of Roman Soldiers hang a sign above Jesus, this banner is true: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS."
        e. Luke gives voice to a criminal hurling insults at Jesus, doing what we all tend to do:
            i. Ask for a sign → "Save yourself and us!"
        f. Luke also gives voice to a criminal who calls on the name of the LORD:

i. "Jesus, when you come into your Kingdom, Remember me!"
ii. And what does Jesus do:
1. Tells him: "Today you will be with me in Paradise." Which is like saying "today, you will walk with me in a Garden."

g. From the cradle to the cross, the LORDSHIP of Jesus jumps off the page. This is no ordinary man.

2. The very words "Jesus is LORD" were fighting words in the 1st cty, leading to direct confrontation with Rome and Caesar.

B. However, it was through Rome that Christ and His Church would go out to all the world.

C. "Glad tidings" was an imperial greeting: the Good News (Gospel) was not about Roman Rulers, but about the King of Kings

D. The Cross taunts Rome and its successors.

1. "*Is this the worst you can do?*" Oh? Well, our God conquered that. *He rose*, *we've seen the scars*, *we've touched them*.
2. Rome, with its vaunted system of justice, blew out against Jesus with the full weight of all its might … the cruel death given to the worst of criminals … and we need to say several things
   i. THIS was supposed to be OUR sentence, and each of us has EARNED it.
   ii. Jesus was sacrificed on the pagan altar.
   iii. God took the greatest evil the enemy could muster and manipulate humanity into hurling at His Son, God took this … and completely turned it on it's head.
   iv. Even for the criminal hanging guilty … who confesses at the last minute … Jesus says "Sin, Satan, Death, Hell … you have no claim on him. He is mine. I have gathered him. He will walk with me in a Garden."
3. "Christus Victor" – Christ is Victor.
4. The Cross has become a taunt to all earthly and demonic powers, and with the empty tomb, ascension, and coming of the Holy Spirit proves their defeat has already come!! …

E. Ultimately, no earthly system will stand. Jesus is LORD, and He will rule the nations.