

What Is This World Coming To?

An In-depth Study Of Bible Prophecy

Instructor: Pastor Henry Wallace

Lesson 1

Introduction:

With all the fighting taking place in the Middle East today, it is only natural that people, especially saints of God are asking “What Is This World Coming To? Well, we are gonna come to the Word of God and finds some answers to this question, “*What Is This World Coming To?* Oh, the answer to the question is; “this world is headed to judgment”.

1. The Distinction Between Israel & The Church

One cannot come to a proper and correct understanding of what’s happening now in the Middle East and what will happen in the future, without first understanding the distinction between Israel and the Church.

You see, some Christians attempt to make Israel and the Church one and the same, suggesting that the Church is now heir of all promises given to Israel. But the Church is not Israel, nor is Israel the Church. Those who await the promises of Israel to be filled in the Church will wait in vain.

Consider these unique and distinctive differences between the two living organisms:

A. THEY HAVE DIFFERENT ORIGINATORS.

The Lord God brought Israel into being in a unique manner not only in the selection of Abraham and Sarah, but also in the choosing of their son Isaac’s wife to preserve their ethnic identity.

Christ Himself, however, founded His Church, as He promised in **Matthew 16:13-20**, and sent HIS SPIRIT to indwell HIS CHURCH.

B. THEY HAVE DIFFERENT FOUNDATIONS.

Jesus Christ is the living foundation of the Church (**1 Corinthians 3:11**). He had not yet been born on earth at the time of Israel’s foundation. Actually, the Church could not be established until after Christ died, was buried, and rise again, and ascend into heaven. As Paul explained in Ephesians 2:20, Christ Himself is the “chief cornerstone.”

Israel was not founded on the finished work of Christ on the cross but on God’s promises to her, which are still in force and have yet to be fulfilled.

C. THEY HAVE DIFFERENT PURPOSES.

Israel was never given the Great Commission. She was to be the torchbearer of God’s faithfulness to a nation that worshiped Him and would consequently enjoy His blessings. For most of her history,

however, Israel was a testimony to God’s judgment upon sinners, yet she was ever His special nation.

The Church, by contrast, is seen as the lampstand which, according to our Lord’s promise, “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against” (**Matthew 16:18**). The Church was given the promise and presence of the Holy Spirit with which to fulfill Christ’s great commission (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

D. THEIR PROPHETIC FUTURES ARE DIFFERENT.

The promises of God to Israel revolve around the restoration of the kingdom. After the Reformation, as people began to read the Bible again and take it literally, Christians started to look for the restoration of the Jews into the land of Israel according to **Ezekiel 36-37** and other passages.

By contrast, the Church does not look for an earthly kingdom. Whereas Israel seeks nationhood, and rightly so, the Church is awaiting the coming of her Lord to take her to the Father's house as He promised.

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As a general rule, whenever you hear someone preach about Bible prophecy, be sure he uses the two essential keys to understanding Scripture:

First, we must interpret the Bible literally (even the prophetic passages of Scripture) unless the context provides good reason to do otherwise.

Secondly, we must draw a distinction between Israel and the Church.

2. The Land Called Israel

(I'm deeply indebted to one of my Bible Teachers, Dr. Adrian Rodgers, who I met some 35 years ago in Memphis Tennessee. This material about the Land of Israel came from one of his Bible teaching sessions.

The land of Israel, I believe, is the most important spot on earth. The most important city is not Washington or Moscow, but Jerusalem. The most important land, believe it or not, is not America but tiny Israel, about the size of New Jersey.

Israel: the geographic center. *"See, I have set thee in the midst of the nations" (Ezekiel 5:5).* Israel, called "the navel of the earth," is strategically located at the hub of three continents.

Israel: the revelation center. From this land, the land of Moses, the prophets and the apostles, came the Word of God.

Israel: the spiritual center. In Bethlehem Jesus was born. In Nazareth He grew to maturity. In Galilee HE walked and taught on the mountainsides and beside the Sea. In Jerusalem our Lord was crucified, buried and rose from the dead. From the Mount of Olives, HE ascended. And to the Mount of Olives, HE will return; HIS feet will first touch down upon the Mount of Olives (**Zechariah 14:4**).

Israel: the prophecy center. Prophecy is "pre-written history." The land of Israel is the only land belonging to God's people. The details of their future are minutely recorded in the Bible. If you want to know what God is doing, study Israel and her people.

Israel: the storm center. The Middle East, specifically Israel, is the world's greatest trouble spot. The Bible says *"Jerusalem will be a burdensome stone for all people"* of the world. (**Zechariah 12:3**), and indeed we see in the daily news the gathering storm clouds of Armageddon.

Israel: also, the peace center. We're told to *"pray for the peace of Jerusalem"* (**Psalms 122:6**). There will never be peace on earth until there's peace in Jerusalem, until Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, rules and reigns from Jerusalem. When we're praying for the peace of Jerusalem, we're praying, *"Even so, come Lord Jesus."* We want our Lord to reign from Zion, to sit upon the throne of his father David.

Israel: one day will be the glory center. When our Lord returns, all nations of the world will come to Jerusalem to worship (**Micah 2:3**). Jerusalem will be the capital city not only of Israel but of the entire world, and the Word of the Lord shall go forth from Zion (**Isaiah 2:3**). Jesus will reign from Jerusalem (**Luke 1:32**). Israel is at the center of God's plan.

3. The Two Tracks



Israel

Church

4. Four Key Passages We Must Consider

The 1st is **Matthew 23:37-39**.

- Here our Lord is lamenting over the city of Jerusalem.
- HE is stating HIS desire for that nation.
- Jerusalem, as the capital, represented the entire nation.
- The people had killed the prophets and stoned those sent to them.

What a powerful image is pictured here.

- Our Lord longed to gather the nation together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.
- What a terrible testimony Israel was. While a little chick will naturally run to its mother in times of danger, Israel willfully refused to run to the Lord.

The 2nd is **John 13:33**. This term "little children" is a term of love expressed by Jesus for them. It is used some seven times in the 1st Epistle John. Jesus announces again that HE was leaving.

The 3rd is **John 1:11**. Maybe, in some ways, this verse is one of the saddest verses in the Bible. Jesus has come to HIS own people, the nation of Israel, and they, as a whole, rejected HIM.

The 4th is **Zechariah 12:10**. Here the nation will see HIM again and say what **Psalms 118:26** says.

5. So, What's Next

Israel has been set aside; The CHURCH has been founded (**Acts 2**); The CHURCH is being built up and now we come to the Rapture.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

Let's spend the rest of today's lesson on this next great event on the Christian Calendar.

- We will state what it is
- Who are in this event
- Who are not in this event.

Dial in Number for Bible Study: (602) 610-2076 - Code: 369563
Pastor Ray Access#: (302) 202-1115 - Code: 34668034

