

Lighthouse Bible Church

November 30th, 2014

Matthew 23: 37 – 24: 3

‘The Temple and the Coming of Jesus’ Pt.#1

Stand – Read – Pray

If you watch the news at all, you can't help but see all of the unrest and violence, destruction, death taking place all over the world and much of it is done for and in the name of religion.

None of that is more evident than what has taken place and continues to take place in the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding area of Israel. Jerusalem has been in the news again as of late because of more violence taking place. As a matter of fact I received an email from Kurt Schafli, when he was there recently, that they had to leave a day early because of the fighting going on.

Fighting and wars and unrest are nothing new to the city of Jerusalem especially when you have the different religious groups and religious sites they hold sacred, being threatened and contested. The city of Jerusalem has been around in biblical history for thousands of years and is first mentioned as far back as the book of **Genesis 14: 18** known then as **Salem** when **Melchizedek, king of Salem, came out to meet Abraham and blessed him** and it has had much turmoil over the years since then.

With all of the violence in Jerusalem it is a fitting reminder once again of what the Psalmist said in **Psalm 122: 6** when he said **pray for the peace of Jerusalem**. But true peace will not come to Jerusalem until our Lord returns to rule and reign there.

As a matter of fact, the last final peace treaty that will ever be signed between Jerusalem and the surrounding area and the enemies of Israel will only last 3 ½ years **Daniel 9: 27** says and then be broken and then ultimate peace will be restored 3 ½ years later for 1000 years.

What makes Jerusalem such a place of violence and unrest, among other things, is one very special piece of land known as the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem that is the holiest site in Judaism.

According to Jewish tradition the Temple Mount is the site, recorded in **Genesis 22: 1 – 12** known as Mt. Moriah, where Abraham nearly offered his son Isaac. It is also the place where Solomon constructed the first Jewish Temple 480 years after the exodus from Egypt according to **1st Kings 6: 1**.

That would have been around 967 BC and that first temple was later destroyed by the king Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians around 586 BC. A second Temple, known as Zerubbabel's temple, was constructed in the same area starting around 536 BC according to **Ezra 3: 8** and it was completed around 516 BC according to **Ezra 6: 15**.

This temple remained and is the temple we read about in the New Testament known as Herod's Temple. From 615 BC until the time of King Herod, this temple was besieged, according to historian Josephus, many times until Herod was made and declared king of the Jews and stationed in Jerusalem. *That is why later when the Magi came and said 'where is he born king of..'*

King Herod, as a gesture to the Jews but more importantly to make a name for himself, began a rebuilding, expansion and renovation of the temple around 20 BC. This was a massive undertaking that, according to **John 2: 20**, took **46 years** to finish.

This is the same temple mentioned many times in the New Testament where we see Jesus go into and cleanse, where He often taught, where the disciples comment on the beauty of it in Matthew 24, where Paul taught and where the veil was torn at the death of Jesus and much more.

This Temple, Herod's Temple, would also be destroyed as we shall see in our passage in Matthew 24. In AD 70 Titus Vespasian and the Roman soldiers came and completely destroyed the city and the Temple.

Today, there is no Jewish Temple in or around the area of the Temple Mount where the first two temples were built and the place the Jews hold so sacred. If another Jewish Temple were to be built, it would have to be on or near the Temple Mount. The problem with that is; the Temple Mount is currently the home of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock and the Dome of the Chain, which are all Islamic structures *built on this site the late 7th century*, thus a cause for much of the increased tension in that area between the different factions and religious groups.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque is considered to be the 3rd holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina. The Dome of the Rock is the place where many Muslims believe Mohammed ascended into heaven and the Dome of the Chain is a small structure they use for prayer.

You can see how this tension and violence is aggravated between the factions over this holy site. One writer said 'more Jews have been visiting the Temple Mount for the Jewish Holidays. This has angered many Palestinians, who see this as a sign that Jews are trying to take back the holy site. Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas has added fuel to the fire by saying that Jews should be barred from the Temple Mount 'by any means'.

Prophecy News Watch Article Archive

Early in October of this year during Sukkot or the Feast of Booths some Palestinians started a riot against some Jews by throwing rocks, firebombs and metal objects and were later chased into the Al-Aqsa mosque by the police and later arrested.

Just 2 weeks ago you might remember Jewish activist Rabbi Yehuda Glick, who advocates for Jewish prayer nights at the Temple Mount, was shot 3 times by a gunman on a motorcycle. The gunman was linked to a Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror group who was later shot by police.

As a result of that, the Israeli police closed off the Temple Mount to all visitors and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called the action 'a declaration of war'. Then just within the last week or so 5 Rabbi's were killed in a Jerusalem synagogue by radical Islamic terrorists and Abbas condemned the killings and then turn around and blamed Israel for starting it. *Huckabee 11-21-14*. So you get just an idea of what is happening there and in particular at the most holy site of the Jews and Muslims alike.

You may have heard from any number of sources but especially from what the scriptures have to say, that there will be a third temple built in Jerusalem for the Jews to worship in. In our passage here in **Matthew 24: 15**, which is talking about a future event yet future to us today, it says **when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing (where) in the holy place**. There must be a temple to have a holy place.

In **2nd Thessalonians 2: 3 – 4** talking about this same event as Matthew 24: 14 and is a reference to an idol or statue or image of the anti-Christ, it says **who opposes and exalts himself above all this is called God or this is worshipped so that he sits as God in the TEMPLE of God showing himself that he is God**.

In order for that to happen, there must be a temple built similarly to the first and second temples and it must be built in the approximate location of the first two. There is currently no Jewish temple where their needs to be one because the land is currently occupied by the Muslim holy sites. So what happens now? That is what we want to find out as we begin to open this chapter up and see ‘the temple and the coming of Jesus’ so lets look at it starting in Verse one of Matthew Chapter 24.

Just to set the context of what is happening here, Jesus entered Jerusalem in what is known as His ‘triumphal entry’ in the final week before His death **Matthew 21: 1 – 11** say. Then Jesus goes into **the temple** **Matthew 21: 11 – 13** says and cleanses it, much like He did at the beginning of His ministry.

And while He cleanses the temple by turning over the table of the money changers and driving out all of those who bought and sold, He says to them **MY house shall be called a house of prayer but you have made it a den of thieves.**

Then Jesus shares a series of parables dealing with the kingdom of heaven in the rest of Matthew 21 and the start of Matthew 22. During this time the Pharisees and the Sadducees approached Jesus and asked Him a series of questions trying to trap Him so they could eventually destroy Him. But **Matthew 22: 46** says **and no one was able to answer Him a word nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.**

Then in **Matthew 23: 1 – 36** Jesus begins a blistering indictment and judgment against the scribes and Pharisee’s, the religious leaders, for their rejection of the Messiah, for their misleading the people and for their murder of the prophets of God and for their hypocritical, false teaching and lifestyle.

That is why He calls them hypocrites at least 7 times in those verses and pronounces a woe or a curse on them at least 8 times in those same verses. And then we see something interesting happen in **Matthew 23: 37 – 39**.
Read.

Notice **Verse 38**: **Your house is left to you desolate**. He is talking about the temple. Just 2 chapters earlier He called it ‘My Father’s house’ when He went into the temple and now He says ‘Your house’. God is no longer a part of that temple; the glory of the Lord has departed. That word **desolate**, *eremosis*, means abandoned to ruin or devoted to ruination.

And then He says in **Verse 39**: **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’**. And you want to know something, they had already said that. In **Matthew 21: 9** as Jesus was coming into the city they shouted **hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest**.

But their idea of the Messiah was one who would overthrow the Roman government and usher in the kingdom right then and there. That is why, when that was not done, they turned around and shouted crucify Him. Jesus says to them **you will not see Me again** because I am spending the remainder of My times with the disciples only and then I will be crucified and die and ascend to My Father in heaven.

And when you do see Me again, He is talking about His 2nd coming, **you will say ‘blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’**. It will really be a fulfillment of **Zechariah 12: 10** where when Jesus does come back at His second coming the nation of Israel **will look on Him whom they pierced and mourn for Him** and then they will say **blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord**.

All of this teaching of Jesus was being done in the temple, the house of God, but now that God's house has been defiled and the nation of Israel has turned their back on Jesus the Messiah, Jesus leaves the temple with His disciples and look at the conversation that ensues in Verse 1 of Chapter 24.

Verse 1: Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

Jesus and His disciples were leaving the temple to head to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus would later be arrested. As they are walking out of the temple the **disciples show Him the buildings of the temple**. In the parallel account in **Mark 13: 1** and **Luke 21: 5** the disciples draw Jesus' attention to the **stones** of the buildings and how they were decorated.

These were massive stones; from the retaining wall around the temple mount to the temple building itself. The Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia, Roman Historian Tacitus and the Jewish Historian Josephus describe the temple and in particular these stones as massive and beautiful.

They were marble stones quarried in a single piece from miles away and brought to the temple mount. Some of the stones, they say, measured as large as 40 feet long by 12 feet high by 12 feet wide; and many of them were overlaid in pure gold. Other stones were more than 85 feet in length and had to be raised several hundred feet. *MacArthur GTY Matthew*.

You can imagine, can't you, the disciples coming out of such a massive building with these massively beautifully decorated stones and pointing them out to Jesus. But look at His response to them in Verse 2.

**Verse 2: 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 question in the disciples minds is ‘how can this temple with these massive stones be abandoned to ruin or devoted to ruination’? But before they can even ask the question, Jesus already answers it.

He tells them **that not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down.** He says the entire temple will be destroyed and left desolate and this did happen some 40 years later when Rome came in under Titus Vespasian, around 70 AD and completely destroyed the temple. They put wood around the outside of the temple walls and burned it and it eventually got the stone so hot that they burst.

One historian, Josephus, records how the Roman soldiers came in a burned the entire temple and pushed all those stones down so that none were on top of another in an attempt to get all the melted gold they could.

And so the disciples hear this and what Jesus had already said earlier about the ruin of the temple and more questions are being formed in their minds. So they begin walking down the side of the temple mount to the Kidron river valley and then up the other side to the Mount of Olives somewhat excited to ask Jesus when all this will happen. Look at Verse 3.

Verse 3: 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 the end of the age’?

Jesus goes to the place He went to many times with His disciples. The M.O.

And when they get there, four of the disciples, **Peter, James, John and Andrew** **Mark 13: 3** says **asked Him privately when will these things be and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?**

What are the **these things** that they are referring to? It is what Jesus had said to them when He left the temple just a little while ago. He told them that the temple would be left desolate, abandoned to ruin, that one stone would not be left upon another and that they would say about Him ‘blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’.

The thing is; for these disciples they see all of this happening as one event in the very near future; the destruction of the temple and the kingdom of God being ushered in at Jesus’ coming. As a matter of fact, in **Luke 19: 11** it says **now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.**

They are looking for all of this to happen immediately so the disciples ask Him ‘when shall these things be (and the implication is soon?) and what will be the sign of Your coming, Your coming kingdom in which you will rule as Messiah, and the end of the age, the end of the Roman rule and oppression.

They had that same expectation of His soon coming kingdom after His resurrection as well. Do you remember in **Acts 1: 6** just before Jesus ascends into heaven; they ask Him **when they had come together, they asked Him saying ‘Lord will You at THIS TIME restore the kingdom to Israel?**

So Jesus will spend the next two chapters telling them that ‘no, it is not time yet. There is a lot that has to happen before I come back and set up My kingdom’.

You see the Old Testament prophets and the disciples did not see any time gap between the destruction of the temple and the first and second coming of Christ in setting up His kingdom. They thought they were the same event and that Christ's kingdom and His presence would be immediate and in conjunction with the temple being destroyed.

But we have the full revealed Word of God and we know from many passages of scripture, plus what Jesus teaches us here, that there is a distinct time difference between Jesus' first coming and His second coming and it is known as the church age; An age and time frame not known to the Old Testament prophets or disciples. It was a hidden mystery revealed in the New Testament, as Paul says several times.

The disciples are asking Jesus 'what is the sign of your **coming**'. That word coming is *parousia* and it means to be around or be present. What is the sign that you will be present in all your Messianic glory? Jesus uses the same word, *parousia*, later in Matthew 24 to talk about His 2nd coming. And then they ask Him what will be the sign of **the end of the age**.

That phrase 'end of the age' is used 5 times in Matthew. In **Matthew 13: 39 – 40** it is used of the parable of the wheat and tares. **They enemy who sowed them, the tares, is the devil, the harvest is the END OF THE AGE and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the END OF THE AGE.**

In **Matthew 13: 49** talking about the parable of the dragnet where the kingdom of heaven is likened to fish that are caught in a net and the good are kept and the bad are thrown away. Then it says **so it will be at the END OF THE AGE, the angels will come forth and separate the wicked from among the just.**

That word **end** (of the age) is *sunteleia*. Teleios means end, when you add a sun to it, it means a full and complete end. Full and complete end of what? End of the **age**. That word age is *aeions* and in Matthews usage of it, it always means the end of everything when Christ comes back and seperates the unbelievers to judgment and the believers into His presence.

He actually uses the word **world** in **Matthew 13: 22** talking about the parable of the soils He says **now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word and the cares of this world** *aeions* and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the word...

So what they are asking Jesus is ‘when will the temple be made desolate and destroyed and what will be the sign of Your full presence with us and what will be the sign of the end of all things as we know it, with our people and with the end of the world.

Jesus will not answer their question about when the temple will be left desolate and destroyed, partly because many of them will be alive when it actually happens about 40 years from then.

But what He does answer, is the signs leading to His 2nd coming and the end of all things as we know it. And that is the rest of Matthew 24 and 25. We will begin to look at just a portion of that starting next week.

Gospel and closing prayer

Lighthouse Bible Church

November 30th, 2014

Matthew 23: 37 – 24: 3

‘The Temple and the Coming of Jesus’ Pt.#1

Introduction:

Genesis 14: 18, Psalm 122: 6, Daniel 9: 27

Genesis 22: 1 – 12, Ezra 3: 8, 6: 15

John 2: 20, Matthew 24: 15

2nd Thessalonians 2: 3 – 4

Matthew 21: 11 – 13, 22: 46, 23: 1 – 16

Chapter 23: 37 – 39:

Matthew 21: 9, Zechariah 12: 10

Chapter 24: 1

Mark 13: 1, Luke 21: 5

Verses 2 – 3:

Mark 13: 3, Luke 19: 11, Acts 1: 6

Matthew 13: 22, 39 – 40, 49

Lighthouse Bible Church

November 30th, 2014

Matthew 23: 37 – 24: 3

‘The Temple and the Coming of Jesus’ Pt.#1

Introduction:

Genesis 14: 18, Psalm 122: 6, Daniel 9: 27

Genesis 22: 1 – 12, Ezra 3: 8, 6: 15

John 2: 20, Matthew 24: 15

2nd Thessalonians 2: 3 – 4

Matthew 21: 11 – 13, 22: 46, 23: 1 – 16

Chapter 23: 37 – 39:

Matthew 21: 9, Zechariah 12: 10

Chapter 24: 1

Mark 13: 1, Luke 21: 5

Verses 2 – 3:

Mark 13: 3, Luke 19: 11, Acts 1: 6

Matthew 13: 22, 39 – 40, 49