

Sorry . . . Jesus Is Not Coming At Any Moment! : Part 1

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Matthew 24 Endtime Dissertation, Parable Of The Fig Tree, Questions Posed, Many Bible Versions = No Christian Unity, 1948 - Israel Becomes A Nation, Opinions Molded By Popular Preachers, Personal Biblical Research Aided By Holy Spirit, Bible Self-Interprets, Problem: How Long Is A Generation?, Jesus Didn't Say Fig Tree Is Israel, No One Knows The Day And Hour, Danger Of Forcing Bible Prophecy To Fit Into Our Personal Understanding, Preachers Disgraced By False Time Prophecies, Damage Control - Blind Sheep Keep On Following, The False Year 2000 Prediction Regarding Christ's Return, Y2K Date Problem, End Of A Millennium, Significance Of The Number Seven, Archbishop James Ussher & October 23, 4004 BC, Oslo Accords - Holy Covenant - Declaration Of Principles, The Seven-Year Treaty - Temple Mount - Beast - Antichrist, Is 1948 The Anchor Point Of Endtime Prophecy?, May 14, 1948, Reza Shah Pahlavi And The Iran/Persia Naming Controversy, Cyrus The Great, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi - The Shah Of Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini And The 1979 Iranian Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei And Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Arab Anti-Israel Attitude, Battle Of Armageddon, Y2K Glitch, I Rejected The Year 2,000 "Jesus Is Coming" False Doctrine, Believe Because God's Word Says So, God's Precise Timetable, Temple Mount Radicals And Destruction Of Solomon's Temple

Recently, someone wrote to me concerning some of Jesus' words found in Matthew chapter twenty-four, which, as some of you will already know, deals in large part with the Signs of the Endtime and the events which will lead up to Christ's Return, and the end of the current world governmental systems. To be more specific, this person's questions revolved around the following verses:

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."  
Matthew 24:32-36, KJV

Concerning the previous verses, this person stated:

----- Begin Quote -----

I have a 2 part question about the fulfillment of the fig tree parable:

1) Jesus mentioned the word "generation" in Matthew 24:36. He stated that a specific generation would live to see His return. He said that the 'generation' that lives to see Israel become a nation would not pass from the earth.

So, what is a biblical 'generation'?

One person said it was 52 years and gave the following reasons . . .

Luke 3:23-38, you have 77 generations from Adam to Jesus Christ. That's a period of 4,000 years. Divided by 77 it comes out to 51.9. 52 years.

Matthew 1:17, there were 42 generations between Abraham and Jesus Christ. This covers a period of 2,160 years. Divide the 2,160 by 42 and it comes to 51.4 years.

Is he right?

2) If so, then if we use the biblical definition of a generation as 52 years. Then should we be looking at the Lord's return as 52 years from 1948 (Israel becoming a nation) OR the more recent date of 1967 after the reunification of Jerusalem and the 6 Day War?

I ask simply because 1948 plus 52 years was the year 2000 which is obviously behind us . . .

And, 1967 plus 52 gives us 2019 . . .

I just wanted some clarification. Which date are we using as our fulfillment of the fig tree parable? And why?

----- End Quote -----

Before answering this person's questions, allow me to point out that in the King James Version of the Bible, which, as some of you will know, is my Bible of preference, the word "generation" is actually used in verse thirty-four, and not in verse thirty-six as stated above. It's possible that this person simply made a typographical error, or else they could be using a different version of the Bible. This is a clear example of why I have long believed that there should only be one standard Christian Bible. As I've said before, how in the world can we Christians ever hope to achieve any degree of Christian unity, while we are all reading from different Bibles, which have different words, or the same words but in different places, or where some verses are entirely omitted, or placed in footnotes? Given this lamentable situation, we will never be able to fulfill the desire that the Apostle Paul expressed when he stated:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."  
1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

That issue aside, as I pondered this person's message, it occurred to me that perhaps they need to approach this issue from a different perspective, because their current approach is obviously causing them some difficulty, and presenting challenges which they cannot seem to resolve. So to answer their questions, I will offer the following for their, and your, consideration:

While it is commonly assumed by some Bible scholars, popular radio and television preachers and lay Christians that the Parable of the Fig Tree is a reference to Israel becoming a nation in 1948, there's absolutely nothing in the Scriptures found in Matthew chapter twenty-four, which clearly states that this is so. Nowhere in those verses does Jesus outright say that the fig tree represents Israel becoming a nation in 1948. As far as I am concerned, this is simply one possible interpretation; it is nothing more than speculation; it is a

theory; it is an assumption which has long been promoted by certain pro-Israel Christians, and perhaps even by the Jews themselves, even though the latter for the most part reject Christ as being the Messiah. Perhaps the fig tree truly does represent Israel; I honestly don't know; but Jesus does not directly say this in His Endtime dissertation in Matthew 24.

Are you surprised by my pronouncement? You really shouldn't be; unless you have allowed your understanding of the Bible to be molded by some of these modern, popular, fast-talking preachers, instead of reading God's Word for yourself, as you are supposed to do, and allow God's Spirit to speak to your heart concerning its meaning. That is precisely what the Holy Spirit, and diligent, personal Scriptural research is for. As I explain in other articles, the Holy Spirit is our Guide, Teacher and Comforter. Jesus Himself stated on one occasion:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

Most of us have access to God's Word, either in print, or via the Internet, or through a computer program, or by some other way. So why have so many of you become so spiritually lethargic, that you allow yourselves to be spoon-fed by some fancy preacher who loves to bathe in his popularity, as he stands before his huge congregation, (where most people do not even know each other on a personal level), in a million dollar church building?

I have stated a number of times before that the Bible will in large part interpret itself, if we invest the time, and read enough of it. It is like a great Divine Jigsaw Puzzle. The more time we dedicate to reading the Holy Scriptures, the more the pieces slowly begin to fall into their proper place, and our understanding of God's Word begins to open. The problem is that many Christians just aren't willing to take the time to read it. As I point out in "Study, Work, And Don't Be Ashamed!", it is our Christian duty to study God's Word. The Apostle Paul wrote to his dear son in the Lord, Timothy, the following admonition:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

Another related article which emphasizes the importance of reading God's Word, as well as properly understanding it, is "Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth"; and there are others as well. I encourage you to search our site to find them. So my point is, because some Christians rely so heavily on some popular evangelist to tell them what God's Word means, they open themselves up to possibly accepting erroneous beliefs, which, in the end, may not be Scripturally sound at all.

To reiterate the point I made earlier, personally, I am not convinced that Jesus was saying that the budding fig tree represents Israel. Other Christians, such as the person who wrote to me, embrace a different view. In his message to me, he very specifically stated, and I quote, "He said that the 'generation' that lives to see Israel become a nation would not pass from the earth.". I'm sorry, but Jesus didn't say

that in Matthew, or in any of the other three Gospels. That is simply how this person has chosen to interpret the verse, or else he is accepting someone else's interpretation of the verse.

But the end result is that because they've become convinced that Jesus was cryptically suggesting in His Parable that the fig tree represents Israel becoming a nation in 1948, they are now faced with the challenge, and the dilemma, of figuring out exactly how long a Biblical generation is, as well as when this "last generation" began, and when it will end. The idea seems to be that if they can correctly figure out the math, they will know exactly what year the Lord will be returning. But is this really the case?

Now, before you are quick to answer in the affirmative, and tell me that Jesus was dropping us a hint by inferring that the fig tree represents Israel becoming a nation in 1948, so that we can do our number crunching, and thus know the exact year when He'll be returning, allow me to remind you of what else He said in the aforementioned verses. Verse thirty-six plainly states:

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Matthew 24:36, KJV

Please stop and think for a moment. Does it make any sense to you that the Lord would supposedly drop a hint regarding 1948, (via the Parable of the Fig Tree), so that, according to some Christians, we could begin counting the exact number of years until His Arrival, only to turn around and state in the same breath that nobody will know the day of His Advent? If we accept these Christians' interpretation of the Lord's words, then if we read those five verses together, (v32-36), it is as if Jesus is saying, "Here is a huge hint. This fig tree sprouting leaves represents Israel becoming a nation. When that event occurs, when Israel becomes a nation, start counting the years; because the generation that witnesses that historical event will not pass until I return. Oops, sorry, forget it. My Father says that you aren't supposed to know when I'll be returning to the Earth."

Are you beginning to see the light yet? There is something clearly wrong with that picture, isn't there? Jesus would not behave in that manner, would He? He wouldn't tantalize us with a clue supposedly concealed in the Parable of the Fig Tree, and then turn around and say that we really have no business knowing when He will return, would He?

So, in my opinion, here is the lowdown: There is absolutely nothing wrong with Jesus' words. I'm becoming convinced that the real source of the problem is that these Christians have been led to believe that Israel being declared a nation in 1948 is represented by the fig tree in the Lord's Parable; and because they have adopted that view, they are trying to force Jesus's words to fit their particular understanding. They are making the mistake of trying to assign a specific number of years to Jesus' words, when perhaps that isn't what the Lord meant at all; and I will attempt to prove my point in just a moment.

As I have mentioned before, trying to force Bible prophecy, particularly time-based prophecies, to fit into our personal understanding is dangerous business. Not only that, but it can be quite embarrassing when we are proven to be wrong. In

the case of some of these high-profile preachers, it can be disastrous; because making such a specific time prediction, such as the precise year when Jesus will return, can totally discredit them, and cause people to lose faith in them, and in their ministry, when their prediction fails to come to pass. In my own writings, I have always been very careful to never make this mistake. I have lived long enough to watch a number of these popular radio and TV evangelists fall from their pedestals in disgrace, because of this very thing.

But what truly amazes me, is that in spite of the fact that some of these men have been clearly proven to be frauds and false prophets, a lot of Christians are so blind and foolish, and so mesmerized by these fast-talking preachers, that they continue believing in them, attending their "mega-churches", and giving them their hard-earned money. Just like a lot of modern politicians, they implement damage control, and their blind followers just keep on following them. The attitude seems to be "to forgive and to forget".

False prophets are really nothing new. As I point out in the article "Office Of A Prophet", they have been around since the time of Moses, and probably earlier than that. If you want to know what the Bible instructs us to do once we have become aware of such a false prophet, then I encourage you to read that article. You may also want to read the related article, "Modern False Prophets And Worldly Ecumenism".

In his message to me, this person also briefly mentioned the year 2000 fiasco. As some of my readers may already know, I am referring to the fact that at that time, there was a lot of excitement within the Christian world; that is, at least within American Christendom. Many American Christians were apparently in a heightened state of euphoria, because some of their learned so-called spiritual leaders had convinced them that 2000 was it; it was THE year; and Jesus was about to appear in the clouds of Heaven to gather together His beloved children.

The Y2K date problem was fuel for the fire, and only served to further strengthen some Christians' belief that the world was about to fall apart, so Jesus must surely be returning at any moment. The fact that we would soon be leaving behind one millennium, and entering another one, also made the year 2000 seem to some Christians like the appropriate time for Jesus to make His Appearance. The common view amongst these Christians was that there was no better time for Christ to usher in the long-anticipated Golden Age of the Millennium, when He would initiate His Reign upon the Earth, as we find described in the Book of Revelation, than at the beginning of the Seventh Millennium, according to the Biblical record. For more information regarding these events, allow me to refer you to my article "From Armageddon To The New Earth".

As some of you may know, the number seven is regarded as a very holy number in the Bible. Not only is this number very prominent in the actual printed text of the Bible, such as in the mention of seven Angels, seven trumpets, seven vials of wrath, seven plagues, seven days of Creation, etc., but it's also been revealed in recent years that the Scriptures exhibit a very intelligent, intricate, mathematical design; and in the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek languages, the number seven is heavily interwoven throughout the text.

To add to this mystery surrounding the number seven, based upon the seventeenth century work of James Ussher, who was

the Anglican Archbishop of Armagh, (the smallest of the six counties which today form Northern Ireland), some Christians are of the opinion that the planet Earth, and the Universe, were created about six thousand years ago. After conducting considerable research, Ussher arrived at the date of October 23, 4004 BC as being the first day of Creation. Some of his contemporaries arrived at similar dates, give or take a few decades. Thus, leaving room for error, this would explain why some Christians believed that the year 2000 marked the end of the Sixth Millennium and the beginning of the Seventh Millennium, when Christ would return, and begin ruling upon the Earth.

In other words, if we add the 4,000 years which had passed prior to the birth of Christ, to the additional 2,000 years which had passed up until 2,000 AD, we arrive at a total of about 6,000 years . . . six full millennia.

Of course, in order to convince their followers that what they were saying was indeed true, that is, that the Lord's Return was imminent, these American false prophets had to provide Biblical proof to back up their claims. I remember that one of the arguments which was used by some of these men, was to tell their flocks that the Oslo Accords was the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding the seven-year Holy Covenant, which is discussed in various books of the Bible, including Daniel, Revelation, 2 Thessalonians 2, as well as the Gospels.

As some of my readers will recall, the Oslo Accords, which were also referred to as the Declaration Of Principles, were signed in Washington, D.C. on September 13, 1993 by Mahmoud Abbas, who represented the Palestinians, (and who is now the Palestinian president), and by Shimon Peres, who represented the Israelis. Also present were PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, Israeli P.M. Yitzhak Rabin, U.S. President Bill Clinton, and other dignitaries.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the seven-year Holy Covenant, some Christians, myself included, believe that the aforementioned books of the Bible predict that Jesus Christ will return to the Earth following a series of political and religious events which will span a period of seven years. The seven-year period may commence with the signing of this Holy Covenant, or peace treaty, which, among other stipulations, will allow the Orthodox Jews to rebuild their temple on the Temple Mount that's located in East Jerusalem. For centuries, this controversial site has hosted the Muslim al-Aksa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. This treaty will be abrogated at midpoint, (or after three and a half years), by a political leader who is commonly referred to in Christian circles as the Beast, or the Antichrist. For more information regarding these events, please consider reading such articles as "The Kings Of The North And The South".

At any rate, being as the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, these American shepherds did the simple math and concluded that Jesus would return seven years later in the year 2000, and that is what they told their flocks. What a terrible mistake it was!

This deception was compounded by the fact that, as we saw a moment ago, based upon their interpretation of Jesus' words, as found in Matthew chapter twenty-four, regarding the fig tree, these same spiritual leaders convinced themselves, and erroneously taught their flocks, that Endtime prophecy finds

its anchor point in the year 1948, when Israel was declared a nation on May 14th by the World Jewish Congress, under its then-president, Stephen S. Wise. It may interest you to know that literally within minutes, the government of the United States of America officially recognized the State of Israel. This is an obvious reflection of how much Zionist power had already influenced America's policy makers. Imagine how much worse it is today. It comes as no surprise then, that on one occasion, Ariel Sharon, the former Prime Minister of Israel, boasted on Israeli radio, that there was no need to worry about American policy makers, because the Jews have America in their pocket.

However, given today's political climate in the Middle East, what may surprise you, is the fact that the second nation to officially recognize the State of Israel was Iran. You see, sixty years ago, Iran was ruled by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was the second monarch of the Pahlavi dynasty, as well as the last Shah of the Iranian monarchy. The dynasty was begun by his father, Reza Shah Pahlavi, who, among other things, made the controversial declaration on March 21, 1935, that Persia, as it was then known, should be renamed Iran. In actuality, in the past, the country had been previously known as Iran, which means the "land of the Aryans"; however it was changed to Persia due to Western influences, such as the Greeks and the Romans.

The Iranian monarchy had ruled continuously for 2,500 years, since the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great. As I explain in other articles, Cyrus, or Koresh, as he was known in Persian, is clearly mentioned in the Bible, and was responsible for giving the Jews permission to return to the land of Israel, following their Seventy Years of Captivity under Babylonian rule. It is interesting then, that almost 2,500 years later, another Persian/Iranian leader would be the second world leader to recognize the State of Israel.

Pahlavi was well known for his pomp and ceremony. In fact, the title "Shah" is a shortened version of the Iranian word "shahanshah", which is interpreted as "king of kings". But what is important for our discussion is that Pahlavi was an American ally, and you might say, puppet; which explains in part why he may have been so quick to recognize the State of Israel in 1948.

It was precisely because of the fact that the Shah supported Israel, and allowed Western influences to penetrate Islamic society in Iran, in both a political and moral sense, as well as the fact that his government was known for its corruption, and the oppressive tactics it employed, via the secret police known as SAVAK, to control Iranian society, that the Iranian clergy turned against him. Pahlavi was overthrown during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which had been orchestrated by the exiled Shia, (or Shi'ite), cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who became Iran's so-called "Supreme Leader".

As I have noted before, the Supreme Leader is the true ruler of Iran, and has even more power than the Iranian president. This system has continued with Khomeini's successor, Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, an Islamic conservative who is adamantly opposed to the existence of the State of Israel, as is the rather vociferous Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the current president of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As a matter of historical record, the Soviet Union did not acknowledge Israel as a nation state until three days after

the May 14th declaration had been made. Other nations slowly followed suit; however, even to this day, due in large part to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Jerusalem is still not officially recognized as the capital of Israel by the international community; which is why most nations have their embassies in Tel Aviv. In fact, as you will probably already know, some Arab/Muslim nations, such as Iran, don't recognize Israel's legitimacy whatsoever. As I explain in other articles, it is this anti-Israel attitude amongst the Arab nations which may in fact lead to the pivotal war that many Christians know as the Battle of Armageddon. Consider these verses:

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Revelation 16:12-16, KJV

This place, Armageddon, or Har Megiddo/Har Megiddon, meaning "a place of crowds" according to the Hebrew lexicon, can be found on the southern rim of the famous Plain of Esdraelon, about six miles from Mount Carmel, and eleven miles from the town of Nazareth, in northern Israel. This plain has been the site of a number of historic battles, and it will be the site of another great battle sometime in the future; the long- prophesied Battle of Armageddon.

The main reason why I am sharing these historical facts with you, is so that you can better understand how these American shepherds arrived at their erroneous conclusions regarding the Second Coming of our Lord. As the person who wrote to me mentioned, these spiritual leaders arrived at the consensus that a Biblical generation must represent about fifty-two years. Because of their misinterpretation of the Scriptures in Matthew chapter twenty-four, they added 52 to 1948; thus arriving at the wonderful year of 2,000 as the time when the Lord would arrive. As we have already seen, based upon the work of Bishop Ussher, this event, (if it were true), would occur just as the world would enter its Seventh Millennium, which made this false doctrine seem all the more believable; at least to certain gullible Christians.

As I explained earlier, convinced of this year 2000 doctrine, it must not have been very difficult for them to then factor in the "Declaration of Principles" of 1993 as the prophesied seven-year Holy Covenant, in order to further strengthen the claim that 2,000 would be the year when Jesus would return. Tragically, these misguided shepherds shared this "evidence" with their congregations, who excitedly believed every word of it.

Well, they may have been excited by this news, but I most certainly wasn't. I was absolutely convinced that they were wrong, dead wrong. I had no anticipation whatsoever of Jesus arriving in 2,000. At the time, I was more concerned about the potential negative effects of the Y2K glitch; and I wrote



several articles in which I advised my readers how to prepare themselves spiritually, and physically, just in case Y2K did result in a serious disruption of government operations and local services. Thankfully, the fear which had been created proved to be greater than what actually occurred as millions of computer clocks around the world struck the new year. Of course, some technical flukes were reported here and there, but it was nothing like what the profiteering mass media had described. I don't doubt that the freeze-dried food industry and other businesses which cater to survivalist needs, must have made themselves quite a profit during the time leading up to the year 2,000.

As I partially pointed out earlier, the reason why I was not excited by the possibility that Jesus might return in 2,000 was because, in a word, based upon my personal understanding of the Scriptures, particularly those verses which deal with eschatology, or Endtime events, I was absolutely convinced that there was no such possibility. As I explain in a number of my articles, according to the Scriptures, there are some key Endtime events which must transpire, (such as the seven year Holy Covenant that we discussed earlier), before Jesus Christ will return. In 2,000, none of these events had yet occurred; and to this day, (January, 2008), to my knowledge, they still haven't happened. Thus, until these major events do begin to occur, I remain convinced that we have at least seven years to go before the Lord will return. In short, I am not, and have never been, one of these "at any moment" folks. In my view, Christians who have embraced this false doctrine simply do not know their Bible as they should.

Being as I amply discuss these events in other articles, I will not be rehashing them here. If you are hungry for the truth, and are a persevering student of God's Word, then I encourage you to delve into the many articles which can be found in the "Endtime Prophecies" section of our web site. Trust me; you will find a lot of interesting/challenging material to chew on and ponder. You may not agree with all of it, but it will get you thinking, and will motivate you to more closely examine your own beliefs, and perhaps even cause you to question why you believe some of the things that you do. But this is a good thing; because we shouldn't believe certain things just because, or because we've been spoon-fed by someone else. Our foundation of faith should be firmly based upon our understanding of God's Word, and not upon the opinions of other men, not even my opinion, if those opinions are not fully in agreement with God's Word.

One thing which I can tell you with full assurance, is that God has a very precise timetable for the world which He is following. He is very methodical in all of His doings. He is also very patient; and nothing that we say, or do, is going to alter His plans, or hasten the fulfillment of Biblical Endtime prophecies; not even our erroneous interpretations of His Word. I am reminded of the following verses found in the Book of Isaiah:

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"  
Isaiah 46:9-10, KJV

Contrary to the previous verse, it seems that there are some wayward individuals, (who even claim to be Christians), who

have deceived themselves into believing that they can hurry God along. Now and then I will read news reports regarding certain extremists who, according to the reports, have plans to destroy the Muslim "Dome of the Rock", which we discussed earlier. Some Jews, and Christians, believe that the Temple Mount was the site of the former temple, which was destroyed two times in the past; first by King Nebuchadnezzar's forces at the beginning of the Seventy Years of Captivity, around 587 B.C., and a second time, as prophesied by Jesus Himself, in 70 A.D., by Roman general, Titus, who was the oldest son of Emperor Vespasian. Titus later became emperor himself.

From what I understand, these radicals seem to believe that if they destroy the Muslim mosque, they will precipitate an inevitable war between the Israelis and the Arab and Muslim nations, which will ultimately result in the foretold Battle of Armageddon, and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. I find the idea of trying to force God to move faster than He wants to absolutely ludicrous. Who do these people think they are? How dare they place themselves above God, or think that they know better than He does!

This series continues in part two. I trust that you will join me.

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End Of File

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Danger Of Perverting Meaning Of The Scriptures, Exposing The "At Any Moment" Folks, Danger Power And Strong Influence Of Cultish Belief Systems, Signs Of Cult-Like Organizations And Churches, Danger Of Leading God's Children Astray, Stumbling Blocks, The Troublesome 52 Years, 2019 Their New Prediction, I Don't Know When Jesus Will Return, Persevere In Patience, To Live Is Christ - To Die Is Gain, Fruit Of False Prophets, Modern Fast Living vs Ancient Simple Living, Backgrounds Of Apostles, Gospel Parables, Truth Reserved For Sincere Folks, Build The Temple In Three Days?, Christ's Resurrection And Jewish Elders' Grave Robbery Deception, Parable Of Fig Tree, Certainty Of God's Word - Sure Word Of Prophecy, Why Matthew Chapter 24 Came About, Related Series, Foul Weather Parable, Caiaphas' Words And Plot To Kill Jesus, Free Through Christ, Blindness Of The Jews, Rejected By His Own Jewish Brethren,

But let me ask you something: When these American Christian leaders and preachers pervert the meaning of the Scriptures in order to convince their flocks that the Day of Christ is at hand, aren't they doing the same thing as these radicals? Maybe they are not blowing up anything, but the results of their misguided words can be just as disastrous. Not only are they trying to force God's Hand, and dictate His plan, but their failed prophecies can have very negative effects in the lives of their followers. I can only wonder how many young, impressionable Christians may have lost their faith in God, and in the Bible as His inspired Word, when Jesus didn't make an appearance in 2,000. Their hopes must have been extremely high, but were probably dashed to the ground when nothing happened. Did God fail them? No; those leaders did by propagating a false doctrine and a deception.

To reiterate a point I made earlier, it is a serious matter to purposely distort the meaning of God's Word, in order to try to support one of our own pet doctrines. Even if it is done in ignorance, it can still have negative consequences. The New Testament informs us that the First Century Apostles encountered this same problem when certain individuals tried to understand the Apostle Paul's more profound writings. In his second Epistle, the Apostle Peter writes the following. I have added a word in brackets to clarify Peter's words:

"As also in all his [Paul's] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

2 Peter 3:16, KJV

In the original Greek, that word "wrest" means to twist, or to turn awry. Metaphorically, it means to pervert or torture language in a false sense. In short, "wrest" means to assign a meaning which is not true to the intent of the author.

It may surprise you to learn that the Apostle Paul also had a problem with the "At any moment" folks, who likewise held the belief that Jesus was going to return at any moment. As I explain in other articles which deal with Endtime events, in his second Epistle to the brethren at Thessalonika, Paul wrote the following. Again, I have added a few words for the

sake of clarification:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, [the Rapture] that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [Christ's Return] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, [the Apostasy] and that man of sin [the Antichrist] be revealed, the son of perdition;"

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, KJV

As I have done in this series, the Apostle Paul then goes on to explain exactly why those people were wrong to assume that Jesus would return at any moment. Please refer to some of my other articles, such as "Who Is Hindering The Antichrist?", for further details regarding this issue.

Well, some two thousand years have passed, and it seems that the "At any moment" people are still with us today. I know exactly how some of these Christians must have felt in 2,000 when Jesus failed to appear, as their leaders had told them that He most assuredly would; because many years ago, when I was a young, idealistic, teenage Christian who was eager to serve the Lord, I also became mesmerized by one group which emphasized the importance of Bible prophecy. They likewise had specific beliefs regarding Endtime events and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Sadly, they too were very wrong.

Thankfully, some years later, I realized how misguided their leadership had been in a number of areas, and how deceived I had become; and by God's Grace I was eventually able to pull myself out from under their influence. But it was not easy. Once one has been involved with a church or organization for any appreciable length of time, it can take literally years before one is able to completely rid himself of their ideas, and other influences. Cult-like organizations and churches use very powerful, persuasive, subtle techniques; and unless one is careful, he can become completely engulfed in their belief system before he realizes it.

A word to the wise . . .

Any time that a church or an organization elevates a man or a woman, or its group leadership, above God, beware! You are probably dealing with a cult. In addition, any time that a church or an organization gives precedence and preference to their own teachings, and esteems those doctrines above what is actually contained in the Bible, beware! You are probably dealing with a cult. Even if the church or organization does hold the Bible in high regard, if their doctrines in any way conflict with what is taught in the Bible, beware! You may be dealing with a cult! Whatever you do, please don't fall under the popular misconception that cults are only comprised of secretive leaders and members who hide away in communes or in basements. There are in fact some high-profile churches, and popular preachers and evangelists, who do seem to qualify as cults, and cult leaders, even if they have been shrouded in an aura or respectability.

If you still haven't understood what I just said, please take the time to read the last paragraph again, until you are sure that you do understand it.

Returning to the year 2,000 "Jesus is coming" fiasco, and how

it may have had a negative effect on some Christians, I have mentioned before that in the Scriptures, Jesus offers a very serious warning regarding those people who cause His children to fall from the faith. Please realize that in the following verse, the word "offend" is somewhat of a mistranslation. It is derived from the Greek word "skandalizo". According to my Greek lexicon, the primary meaning of this word is "to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall, metaph. to offend". Jesus specifically said:

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Matthew 18:6, KJV

So it is indeed serious business to cause one to fall away from the faith. Tragically, in spite of the fact that these American Christian leaders and preachers were so very wrong regarding their predictions that Jesus would return in the year 2,000, apparently, as is evidenced by the message that I received from this person, some of them are still at it, and are still trying to force their interpretation upon the Scriptures. Obviously, these false prophets cannot deny that adding fifty-two years to 1948 was a major blooper on their part. Not only did they lead many Christian people astray, but they gave free ammunition to the enemies of our faith; that is, to the atheists, and made us Christians look like half-witted idiots. These leaders have been a reproach to the name of Christ.

But apparently, some of them still can't seem to let go of the idea that there must have been some secret meaning in Jesus' words regarding the Parable of the Fig Tree, and the word "generation". They are still trying to squeeze a deeper meaning out of it, and still attempting to figure out how the number fifty-two fits into the equation. Having realized their error in adding 52 to 1948, some of these leaders are now suggesting to their followers that the triggering event for counting to the year of the Lord's Return, was not the birth of the nation of Israel in May of 1948, but rather the 1967 "Six Day War", in which, against all odds, Israel was victorious over her Arab enemies, and reclaimed the eastern half of Jerusalem, as well as the Golan Heights, (which were recaptured a second time during the 1973 Yom Kippur War).

In other words, if this person's email message to me is any indication of what is now happening in American prophetic circles, then these Christian leaders have now scrapped the 52 + 1948 equation, (and rightly so), and are now using the 52 + 1967 equation. In other words, as this person points out in his message, it seems that some of these preachers are now suggesting that Jesus will make His Appearance in the year 2019; that is, 52 + 1967.

So what are my thoughts on the above speculation? Well, quite frankly, at this point in time, I honestly don't know in what year Jesus will return, and I am not ashamed to say so. As I have already pointed out, I am waiting for certain Endtime events to occur, so that I can get my prophetic bearing, and hopefully, by God's Grace, properly gauge where we are at in the Endtime timeline. Until I am absolutely certain of this, and have a good idea of when Jesus will be returning, please don't expect me to publicly state any given year, as some of these American preachers have so foolishly done, to their

own shame.

Since the time that I first began this online ministry not quite fourteen years ago, I have never offered a date, and I have absolutely no intentions of offering one now; so please don't hold your breath. For the record, I have been reading the news, watching world developments, and patiently waiting for some of the Endtime prophetic events to be fulfilled for almost forty years; and I will keep on waiting. If, by God's Will, I should die anytime soon before the Lord appears, I suppose that my waiting will be over, as I'll go to see Him face-to-face anyway. As the Apostle Paul so famously wrote:

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

Philippians 1:21-24, KJV

But no matter what I do, one thing is absolutely certain: I most certainly won't place my faith in anything that these American false prophets are saying, no matter how convincing it may sound. I have told my readers many times before that Jesus very specifically stated in the Gospel of Matthew that we can know a tree by its fruits; and the prophetic fruit of some of these American spiritual leaders is obviously rotten and definitely not good for one's health. Jesus stated the following regarding the false prophets of His own time:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep, and in outward clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Matthew 7:15-20, KJV

Those of you who are Christians, and who are reading this, may have already been familiar with that final verse, but did you know that when read in its proper context, Jesus was actually warning us about false prophets? Well, there it is before your very eyes. The evil fruit of a false prophet is obviously a false prophecy . . . like the year 2,000 "Jesus is coming" prophecy.

In part one of this series, I mentioned that I would offer an explanation regarding why I don't believe that Jesus was using the Parable of the Fig Tree as a veiled message which, as we have already seen, some American preachers have chosen to interpret as being a cryptic reference to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. While I have already presented some of my arguments to explain why I've adopted my current position, there are other reasons as well, which I will now share with you.

In addressing this issue, I think that it is important that we first understand the huge difference which exists between many people of our current time, and those who lived almost two thousand years ago. Unlike ourselves, who live in a very loud, fast-paced, modern, gadget-oriented world filled with all kinds of electronic and technological distractions, the

people of two thousand years ago lived in a more leisurely, natural world. By leisurely, I do not mean that they all led easy lives; after all, the Jews of that period were in fact subservient to Roman domination and cruelty; but what I do mean, is that they led slower lives, compared with today.

Because the Jews led slower lives, without all of our modern trappings and distractions, obviously, they had more time to observe the natural world around them, and they were in fact in tune with it. From the calendar that they used, to when they chose to plant their crops, or to breed their animals, or to make long journeys, as well as the very holy days that they celebrated, everything that they did was in large part determined by their observation of the natural world.

It is to this environment that Jesus arrived preaching the Gospel of Salvation. While the proud people of the twenty-first century like to boast of their intelligence, I posit that the people of that era were equally as smart. This does not mean that they understood all of the advanced scientific concepts that have been discovered in our current time, but they weren't stupid either. In fact, as I have noted before, unlike some Bible-bashing evolutionists, I believe that God created the first man and woman with intelligence. I do not believe that the first couple communicated by grunting and groaning, as is so often depicted in a number of modern pro-evolutionary movies. Yet at the same time, I also believe that the people of 2,000 years ago were simpler as well.

In the case of the Twelve Apostles, to whom the message of Matthew chapter twenty-four was directed, we also need to remember that they weren't exactly what we would call the cream of Jewish society. They weren't highly educated men. The majority were fishermen from Galilee, along with a few revolutionaries, (the Zealots), a tax collector, etc. Jesus undoubtedly kept this fact in mind when He spoke with them. Yet, at the same time, I also suspect that it was probably because of their lower social status, that Jesus chose them in the first place. For more on this topic, I encourage you to read my article "The Only Credentials You Need", as well as "The Wisdom Of God vs The Philosophy Of Men".

My point in all of this, is that Jesus fully understood into what kind of world He was coming, and He adapted His message so that it would reach, and be understood, by as many people as possible. What better way was there to reach out to those people then, if not by speaking to them of things with which they were already familiar in their daily lives?

Thus, as the Gospels will clearly attest, Jesus often shared simple moral-containing stories, into which He would inject familiar elements from their surroundings. Today, we refer to these stories as Parables. Exactly what kind of Parable Jesus shared, depended a lot upon whom He was speaking with. In the case of His followers, He would often share stories where the meaning was rather clear. After all, what would be the purpose of sharing a story with them, if they were left scratching their heads, and wondering what He had said? They would learn nothing from such an experience. But in spite of the Lord's best efforts to be clear, sometimes His Disciples weren't able to immediately grasp the meaning of His words. In such cases, the Lord would often later more fully explain to them what it was that He meant.

At the same time, there were other occasions where the Lord was purposely ambiguous, such as when He was challenged or

provoked by His unbelieving Jewish enemies. Jesus even told His close followers that He purposely did this, so that, in His words, "seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand". Consider the full context of what the Lord said to His Disciples in Luke chapter eight, after sharing the Parable of the Sower with them:

"And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God . . ."

Luke 8:9-11, KJV

In Matthew chapter eight, we find another account concerning the very same event. Consider again what happened, as well as how Jesus responded:

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people, Æs heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

Matthew 13:10-16, KJV

As you can see, Jesus was eager to share the spiritual riches of His Father's Kingdom with His sincere followers; yet, as I noted before, when it came to His obvious enemies such as the Jewish spiritual hierarchy, or other people who rejected Him, it was an entirely different matter. Consider the following Scriptural example:

"Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."

John 2:18-22, KJV

You see, Jesus obviously realized that the Jewish Elders did not understand Him, but it didn't matter to Him, because He knew that they would never believe Him, or accept Him, even if He did reveal to them the truth behind His words. In fact, as you may recall, in the final chapter of Matthew's Gospel, the Jewish religious leaders were so desperate to discredit Jesus' Resurrection from the dead, that they even bribed the soldiers into spreading the lie that Jesus' body had merely been stolen by His followers, as we see here:



"Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor,Ïs ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."  
Matthew 28:11-15, KJV

Having now shared these different points and examples with you, let's take a closer look at what Jesus said in Matthew chapter twenty-four. In verses thirty-two and thirty-three the Lord says:

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."  
Matthew 24:32-33, KJV

As far as I can tell, there is no mystery or secret meaning encrypted in those verses. Jesus is doing exactly as He was accustomed to doing. He is taking something with which He knew His Disciples would be quite familiar, and using it to emphasize a point. Year after year, when the weather would begin to warm, and the fig trees would begin to sprout their leaves, the Jews would know that summer was approaching. It was something which they knew by heart; it was an absolute certainty that they'd learned by watching the natural world around them. Summer was something which they could expect, and anticipate, occurring every single year, without fail; and they knew that it was drawing close when the fig trees began to sprout their leaves.

So the Lord is using this normal occurrence in their lives to help them to better understand the astounding things that He has just told them; and not only to understand them, but to emphasize the fact that they will most certainly occur as He has prophesied. Jesus is telling them that just as they know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Summer is just around the corner when they see the fig tree begin to sprout its leaves, the generation that observes the events that He has just described to them, should "know that it is near, even at the doors". It is evident to me, that the primary reason why Jesus uses the Parable of the Fig Tree in this chapter, is to emphasize the certainty and surety of God's Word. You may recall that in part one, I shared the following verse with you:

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"  
Isaiah 46:9-10, KJV

The Apostle Peter shares a very similar thought in his second Epistle when he writes the following concerning Divine Prophecy:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in

your hearts:"

2 Peter 1:19, KJV

The word "sure" is translated from the Greek word "bebaios". The Greek lexicon states that it means steadfast, sure, firm, stable, fast, firm and trusty. In other words, God's Word is steadfast, firm and trustworthy. We can place our full faith in it, and we won't be disappointed. Jesus is conveying the very same thought by using the Parable of the Fig Tree as He describes Endtime events to His followers.

The next question that we need to ask ourselves is this: Exactly what is this "it" that Jesus is referring to? Again, He stated "know that it is near, even at the doors". All we have to do is go back to the beginning of this same chapter in order to find the answer. In the opening verses we read:

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:1-3, KJV

So the bulk of this chapter is about answering three main questions posed to Jesus by His Disciples:

1. When will the temple be destroyed?
2. How will we know when you are returning?
3. How will we know when the end of the world is coming?

Jesus then very directly proceeds to answer their questions, thus resulting in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. If you have an interest in learning more about the specifics regarding the above questions, I encourage you to read such articles and series as "The Triumphant Touchdown Of Jesus Christ", "The Great Tribulation And The Rapture", "Who Is Hindering The Antichrist?", "From Armageddon To The New Earth", and related articles; all of which can be found on our Endtime Prophecy Net website.

Matthew 24:32-33 is by no means the only place in the Gospels where Jesus uses this approach (using something familiar from nature) to emphasize a point. Just as He uses the example of the sprouting fig tree to impress upon us how important it is to watch for the signs which will precede His Second Coming, and to know without a doubt that He is coming, eight chapters earlier, Jesus also uses the weather to expose the spiritual blindness of His Jewish enemies. In the following verses, the style is exactly the same as what He uses in Matthew 24:

"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed."

Matthew 16:1-4, KJV

Once again, we see Jesus using something that was obviously very familiar to everyone who lived in Israel: the weather. Jesus is basically saying to them, "Look; everyday you can look at the sky and decide by its appearance if the weather will be fair or rainy; yet are you so spiritually blind that you cannot even interpret the dangerous signs that are all around, which are signaling your own demise?". Exactly what signs was Jesus referring to? Well, as we saw in part one, Israel was a nation subjugated by the powerful Roman Empire, and the Romans were slowly growing weary of the Zealots and their rebellion. While most were blind to the danger, a few were not, such as the Jewish High Priest, Caiaphas. This is why we find the following scene in the Gospel of John:

"And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death."

John 11:49-53, KJV

While the Roman occupation was a clear omen of things yet to come, Jesus' own presence in Israel at that time was an even greater sign that the harsh, unforgiving, self-righteous rule of the Scribes and Pharisees would soon be brought to an end. Why? Because Jesus would free the Jews, and in fact, all men everywhere, through His own Blood which He would freely shed upon the Cross. As I explain elsewhere, in order for the New Covenant, (or New Testament), to become effective, Jesus had to die; and the Old Covenant, which revolved around the Jews' temple worship and vain traditions, had to be destroyed. As Jesus stated in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Luke:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Luke 4:18-21, KJV

Even though the Scripture was fulfilled that very day before their very eyes; even though they had the truth standing in front of them, many of the old-school Jewish Elders were not able to see it. The above event occurred in Nazareth, Jesus' own boyhood town, where He grew up, and where everyone knew Him; and yet, they rejected Him, and in fact, tried to throw Him over a cliff, as we see here:

"And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."

Luke 4:28-29, KJV

It is for this very reason that Jesus also stated in the

Gospel of Matthew:

". . . A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house."

Matthew 13:57b, KJV

The Apostle John was likewise inspired to write in the first chapter of his Gospel:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

John 1:11, KJV

And in the Old Testament, the Prophet Isaiah, foreseeing the rejection and sufferings of Christ, wrote the following:

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Isaiah 53:3, KJV

This series continues in part three. I trust that you will join me.

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End Of File

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70 A.D. - Titus Destroys Solomon's Temple, A Third Temple?, Kingdom Of Heaven Taken From The Jews, Rejected Cornerstone, Violent Spiritual Warfare, "Harpazo" Force And The Rapture, Dark Times Of The Great Tribulation, A "Lovey-Dovey" Jesus?, God's Displeasure Was Revealed Through The Torn Temple Veil, Theories Regarding Lost Ark Of The Covenant, Mercy Seat And A Dead Hollow Religion, Blind Leaders Of The Blind, Purpose Of Parables, More On Parable Of Fig Tree And 1948 Doctrine, Defining A Biblical Generation, Blindly Trusting Preachers, Seminary Doctrines, Pro-Israel Religious Right In America, Isaiah 66:8 The Diaspora Jacob's Trouble And 1948 Doctrine,

Of course, as we now know, and as we discussed earlier in this series, the Israelites would not feel the full weight of Jesus' words, and the wrath of Rome, until almost forty years later, when General Titus would march into Jerusalem, and utterly destroy it, along with Solomon's Temple. You may recall that in part two, I shared the following verse with you from Matthew chapter twenty-four, where Jesus clearly told His Disciples:

". . . See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Matthew 24:2b

As I have pointed out before, according to my research, the Romans were not content with just burning down the temple. Precisely as Jesus prophesied in Matthew chapter twenty-four, they also tore the temple remains apart, block by block, in order to recover all of the gold which had melted down into the cracks; and there was apparently plenty of it, based on the descriptions found in the Old Testament. To our current time, the temple has never been rebuilt, and it is also my understanding that those blocks remain untouched by the Jews, due to their fear of offending God.

Imagine how shocked the Apostles must have been to find out that the beautiful building which they so admired, would be destroyed. So their first inquiry was answered by Titus in 70 A.D.; but please note that this event may not necessarily have been the complete fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy. As I mentioned earlier in this series, and explain more fully in other articles, there is Scriptural evidence which suggests that a third temple may be built on the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem, sometime in the near future, after the Israelis and the Palestinians have resolved the various issues which exist between them. Will this third temple also be destroyed by the enemies of Israel? Please refer to the aforementioned articles for more details.

Another point of interest is that at the time of our Lord's Crucifixion, God gave the Jewish religious leadership a very clear sign that He was displeased with them. You may recall that on one occasion, while Jesus was teaching in the temple in Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priests and Elders came and challenged Him. In response, the Lord shared a Parable with them, and then He concluded by saying:

". . . Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord, Æ doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Matthew 21:42b-44, KJV

In the previous verses, the word "taken" is derived from the Greek word "airo". One meaning of this word is to take by force or violence. You may recall that after John the Baptist had been imprisoned, he sent two of his disciples to inquire of Jesus whether or not He was the Messiah. In His response to them, one of the things that the Lord said was this:

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

Matthew 11:12, KJV

So, as I've shared before in a number of my spiritual warfare articles, there is in fact a very real, violent spiritual war that is being fought for the Kingdom of Heaven, between the forces of Light and the forces of Darkness; and our souls are in fact a part of the prize. In that last verse, let me point out that in the original Greek, the word translated as "the violent" also means "the strong"; so we could translate that phrase as "the strong take it by force". It's interesting to note that the phrase "take it by force" is derived from the Greek word "harpazo". Some of you who are sharp students of God's Word may realize that this is precisely the same word that is used in some other beloved verses that are familiar to many Christians. I am referring to the following found in Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonian brethren:

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, KJV

That verb "caught up" is likewise translated from "harpazo". Thayer's Greek lexicon defines it as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

- 1) to seize, carry off by force
- 2) to seize on, claim for one's self eagerly
- 3) to snatch out or away

----- End Quote -----

As I share in other articles, such as "The Great Tribulation And The Rapture", for we Believers, the situation is going to be very bad, and will look very dark, just prior to Jesus' Return. In fact, it will be very bad for the entire world. It is for this reason, that while sharing the Endtime signs with His Disciples in Matthew chapter twenty-four, Jesus pointedly tells them:

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall

be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect, those days shall be shortened."

Matthew 24:21-22, KJV

Putting all of the previous verses together, it appears that from a worldly perspective, it will look as if the forces of Darkness have won. But then, when the world least expects it, when our cause appears to be lost, Jesus will appear in the clouds of heaven, and He will send His Angels to rip us right out of this violence-prone world. He'll forcefully snatch us up in order to save us out of the grips of our enemies. You may wonder exactly how the Lord is going to accomplish this. I offer one intriguing perspective in the series "Chariots Of Fire: A Voluntary Voyage To Heaven?".

Some of the previous verses paint a side of God which some people don't like to see; particularly those Christians who like to promote an image of a "lovey-dovey" Jesus, and a God who would never resort to force or violence, or even punish us. The truth is, as I have pointed out before, God can, and has, presented Himself as a gentle lamb, but He can also be a roaring lion as well. It depends on the situation and with whom He is dealing. I mentioned earlier that at the time of Jesus' Crucifixion, God gave the Jewish Elders a very clear sign that He was very displeased with them. In fact, it was an omen that their power would soon be ripped right out of their hands, precisely as Jesus had prophesied. That sign can be found in the following verses:

"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,"

Matthew 27:51-52, KJV

Imagine that. When Jesus was resurrected, God split the veil of the temple, which divided the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple, right in half from top to bottom. What a clear indication of His anger. I honestly don't know if there's any truth to this theory, but some Bible researchers have stated that the reason why God did this, wasn't just to demonstrate His anger with the Jewish religious hierarchy; it was also to expose the fact that the Ark of the Covenant, (which was a gold-plated chest which contained the holy items, such as the tablets on which were written the Commandments, Aaron's rod which budded, and a sample of the manna), was long gone.

In fact, the general belief is that the Ark of the Covenant had either been spirited away for its own protection by the Jews sometime prior to the Babylonian invasions, or carried off by the Babylonians, (highly unlikely since anyone who touched the Ark died, or was at least plagued), or simply disappeared from history in some other way. Some people are convinced that it remains hidden in a secret chamber within the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem; and that at the right time, once the final temple has been built, as many people believe it will be, the Orthodox Jews will present the Ark to the world once again. If I recall correctly, there have also been claims that the Ark of the Covenant is currently hidden somewhere in Jordan, around Mount Nebo, or possibly in Ethiopia.

Whatever happened to the Ark, if it truly no longer resided in the temple at the time of Jesus' Crucifixion, the temple veil being torn from top to bottom certainly exposed what a

dead, hollow religion the Jewish hierarchy was forcing upon their people. You see, in addition to the fact that the Ark contained the holy items, it was upon the Mercy Seat, which was located on the hood of the Ark between the wings, where the Lord would appear in order to speak with Moses, or to instruct the High Priest, (such as Aaron), each year. Here are two verses for your consideration. Once again, I have added a few words in brackets for the sake of clarification:

"And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him [meaning the Lord], then he [Moses] heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him."  
Numbers 7:89, KJV

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."  
Leviticus 16:2, KJV

So if the Ark of the Covenant was truly gone, then this was indeed a clear indication that God had abandoned their false religion centuries before; but the common people just didn't know it yet, because the Scribes and the Pharisees purposely kept them in the dark concerning it. Is it any wonder then, that in Luke chapter four, Jesus stated that He had come to give sight to the blind; that is, to the spiritually blind? Let's also not forget that in speaking of the Jewish Elders, (the Pharisees in this case), on one occasion the Lord said:

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."  
Matthew 15:14, KJV

But let us backtrack a moment now, lest we lose sight of why I am sharing these things with you. Earlier in this series, I shared two clear examples with you where Jesus used things from nature in order to emphasize a point. In one case, the Lord used a budding fig tree; and in another, the weather. I pointed out that in both cases, in my view, there wasn't any secret meaning hidden in His words. Jesus was more than clear regarding what He meant. The Lord was merely using something which was quite familiar to every single listener, to ensure that they would make the proper connection to the lesson He was trying to share. He was making simple comparisons, as He often did. This, in fact, is exactly what Parables were for. According to Thayer's Greek lexicon, the word "parable" finds its origin in the Greek word "parabole". In a Biblical sense, its principle definition is "A comparing, comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude; an example by which a doctrine or precept is illustrated".

So, in my view, the practice of making a statement such as "Jesus said that the generation that is alive at the time that Israel becomes a nation will live to see His Return", is not only misleading, it is in fact false; it is putting words in Jesus' mouth; and it is twisting the meaning of the Scriptures. Lest someone misinterpret my words, allow me to clarify that I am not saying that our generation, (I'm what they call a "Baby Boomer"), won't still be alive when Jesus returns. Perhaps some of us will be. The situation in the Middle East is certainly becoming more aggravated; and as I explain in some of my other articles, there are indicators which seem to suggest that the time of Christ's Return is



drawing near. So all that I am saying, is that Jesus never said that the budding fig tree represents Israel becoming a nation in 1948, and it is wrong for anyone to say that He did.

To reiterate what I said earlier, the 1948 theory is merely one interpretation of what the fig tree may have symbolized; but, as I have made more than clear, I don't believe that it was meant to symbolize anything. It was simply a comparison that Jesus used so that His followers, (including us), would know that what He prophesied is indeed going to happen, and that we are supposed to watch for the signs of the Endtime, just as the Jews knew that summer was approaching, when they saw the fig tree sprout its leaves. Period.

As we discussed in parts one and two, part of the confusion concerning this 1948 doctrine, and the year 2,000 fiasco, is a result of trying to apply a specific length of time to the Biblical word "generation". To refresh your memory, the man who wrote to me stated "if we use the biblical definition of a generation as 52 years". That is his mistake right there. He obviously picked up this idea from one of those preachers. To my knowledge, nowhere does the Bible specifically say that a generation is equal to fifty-two years. Fifty-two is simply an average that these American preachers dreamed up, because it helped to prove their year 2,000 theory.

In fact, it would really be impossible to assign a specific number of years to a generation, because throughout Biblical history, human beings have lived different lengths of time. Adam lived to the ripe old age of nine hundred and thirty. Abraham died rather young, comparatively speaking, at the age of one hundred and seventy-five years. Moses fulfilled his days at the age of one hundred and twenty. King David died even earlier at the age of seventy. On the other end of the spectrum, some people die at birth, or at a young age. In short, it is foolhardy to try to assign a specific number of years to a Biblical generation.

So exactly what is a generation in the Bible? The best way to answer this question is by examining the original Greek word. According to my Thayer's Greek lexicon, the word "generation" is translated from the Greek "genea", which it defines as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

- 1) fathered, birth, nativity
- 2) that which has been begotten, men of the same stock, a family
  - 2a) the several ranks of natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy
  - 2b) metaph. a group of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character
    - 2b1) esp. in a bad sense, a perverse nation
- 3) the whole multitude of men living at the same time
- 4) an age (i.e. the time ordinarily occupied by each successive generation), a space of 30 - 33 years

----- End Quote -----

Please note that aside from the transliteration of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words into English, the definitions provided in Bible dictionaries and lexicons are subject to the opinions, beliefs and prejudices of the author of the work. Thus, the creator of the above entry states that a Biblical generation was about thirty to thirty-three years in length; which obviously conflicts with what these modern Bible preachers are saying.

If we set aside these doctrinal prejudices, and take all of the previous definitions at face value, then we can arrive at the conclusion that a Biblical generation was variable in length, and consisted of the time that passed from the birth of one man, to the birth of his son, and anyone else who was born in that man's family while that man was alive. In other words, anyone who is born in that family while that man is alive, is a part of his generation. In similar fashion, we can say that anyone who is born in that family while the son is alive, is a part of the son's generation. A generation is simply all of the people who are living in that family at any given moment of time. On a larger scale, anyone living in the world during any specific time period, is likewise a part of that historical, global generation.

Based upon the previous definitions and explanations, it's my belief that when Jesus used the word "generation" in Matthew chapter twenty-four, He was not offering us a subtle hint of a specific number of years. He was simply saying that some of the people who would be alive on the Earth at the time that all of those Endtime events begin to occur, in other words, earthquakes, wars, famine, pestilence, invasion of Jerusalem, Great Tribulation, etc., would still be alive, and would see His Return in the clouds of Heaven. Again, it has nothing to do with 1948, or adding a magical number to 1948. That is all manmade doctrinal baloney. Are you convinced of this yet?

But you really have to wonder, why it is, and how it is, that this 1948 idea has become so deeply rooted with some American Christians. Well, as I've already stated, I believe that part of the problem is that too many of them allow themselves to be spoon-fed by their popular radio and television preachers, instead of studying and researching the Bible for themselves. They adopt this attitude that the preacher must know what he is talking about; after all, he went to seminary school, and he is supposed to be the authority on these subjects. Sadly, as I have said before, that isn't always true. These men are not any more infallible than the Pope is. Let me also remind you that when these fellows graduate from seminary school, they have already been indoctrinated with some very specific theological ideas from that school, and that is what they begin to preach to their flocks, whether those doctrines are Scripturally-sound or not.

As in other parts of the world, American Christendom consists of a lot of different branches, flavors and colors insofar as doctrines are concerned. Some churches and denominations are very pro-Israel while others are not. The 1948 interpretation of the Parable of the Fig Tree is clearly from the pro-Israel camp, which just so happens to hold a lot of political power and sway within the United States. It is precisely for this reason that president after president has been such a strong advocate and supporter of Israel. The American Conservative Right is to a large degree comprised of older, conservative Christians, and high-profile evangelical preachers in large part control them, influence how they vote, and instruct

them doctrinally as well.

So the question is, where did this 1948 doctrine originate? As I first mentioned ten years ago in my lengthy series "The Kings Of The North And The South", there is in fact a verse in the Bible which has been used by pro-Israel preachers to support their 1948 view. That verse is the following, found in the Book of Isaiah:

"Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

Isaiah 66:8, KJV

According to these preachers, the previous verse describes, or prophesies, the birth of the nation of Israel in 1948, following the "Diaspora". The Diaspora, or Dispersion, as it is also known, refers to the historical fact that the tribes of Israel were scattered around the world as a result of the various invasions of ancient Israel by foreign armies, such as the Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans. Of course, as I explain in such series as "The Fruits Of Disobedience", the invasions were in fact a part of God's chastisements against them, due to their continuous disobedience to His Will.

At any rate, the Diaspora is believed by some people, (such as certain Jews, as well as the aforementioned preachers and their followers), to have come to an end when the Jews from around the world began migrating back to the land of Israel during the twentieth century. Furthermore, this migration is believed to mark the end of "Jacob's Trouble". Jacob was the original name of Israel, before God changed his name in the Book of Genesis. Jacob was the father of the twelve sons who became the first leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. I discuss the return to Israel, and Israel becoming a nation, in much more detail in the second part of "The Seven Heads" series.

Regarding this modern-day return of thousands of Jews to the land of Israel, following is a set of Scriptures which these same people insist is a description and prophecy regarding the Diaspora, or scattering, and the Jews' return to Israel:

"For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment."

Ezekiel 34:11-16, KJV

So the question we need to ask ourselves is whether or not the previous verses are really describing the modern return

of the Jews to Israel. Personally, I have some very serious doubts. To understand why I have these reservations, and don't just hop on the 1948 bandwagon, one must understand the history and context of these verses. Similar to Daniel, Ezekiel was a Jewish Prophet, and captive, in Babylon. His mission wasn't just to help his brethren to understand why they found themselves in such a predicament, and why God had allowed their enemies to invade and capture Jerusalem; it was also to give them comfort and hope; by letting them know that their captivity would not last forever; and that someday, they would be allowed to return to Israel as free people again.

In my mind, it makes absolutely no sense that Ezekiel would then proceed to tell them things which would not occur for about another 2,500 years, until the twentieth century. What kind of comfort would that give to them? They would be long gone and dead. On the other hand, if Ezekiel was speaking of a more immediate return, that is, within decades, and not in centuries, that would certainly offer a lot more hope to the captives in Babylon. Perhaps they might not live long enough to see it, but some of their children would. As I explain in other articles, it turns out that the Jews of Jerusalem were held captive by the Babylonians in Babylon and the surrounding provinces, for a period of seventy years, precisely as the Prophet Jeremiah had told them would occur, as we see by these verses:

"And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations . . . For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place . . . For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."

Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10, 30:3, KJV

Thus, within Christian circles, we refer to this historical Jewish period as the "Seventy Years Of Captivity". We know from history, that following the invasions by the forces of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, and the fulfillment of the "Seventy Years of Captivity", the Jews were indeed allowed to return to Israel by Cyrus the Great, considered by many to be the greatest king of the Medo-Persian Empire. Again, this topic is discussed in more detail in "The Seven Heads" series. In Jeremiah chapter thirty, a few verses later, we find these additional verses which speak of the "time of Jacob's trouble" and the eventual return to Israel. As with the previous verses, while we can try to apply them to our current time, and the modern return of the Jews to Israel, in my view, it is clear that they're really referring to the exodus from Babylon, which was initiated by Cyrus the Great. The reference to David may be a look into the future, when Jesus fulfilled His Ministry in Israel. You may recall that in the Gospels, the people repeatedly referred to Jesus as the son of David:

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out

of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."  
Jeremiah 30:7-11, KJV

There is another clear hint in the previous sets of verses which further supports my belief that these Scriptures are prophesying of the Jew's return to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, and not of a modern 20th century return to Israel, as these wayward American preachers, as well as some Jews, are trying to convince us. Please notice that in the prophecy, the Lord says through Ezekiel:

". . . but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment."

In similar fashion, Jeremiah, who began preaching decades before Ezekiel, also clearly stated in his prophecies:

". . . And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations."

This same warning of impending judgement is issued to the Babylonians in other places, and in other prophetic books as well. It is a proven historical fact that this is precisely what happened. As I explain in other articles, such as "The Fruits Of Disobedience", time and time again, God would use the heathen nations to punish the Israelites. He would use these nations as His "vessels of wrath" against the Jews; but then He would turn around and judge those nations for their own wickedness. The reason why the "Seventy Years Of Captivity" came to an end, is because the Babylonians were defeated by the Medes and the Persians, who initially formed the dual empire of Medo-Persia. The Persians are still with us today. As I noted earlier, they are the Iranians. It is also believed by some people that the Kurds are descended from the Medes.

But what I hope you can see here, is that these prophecies, which, according to some people, are supposedly talking about the Jews returning to Israel in our modern day, in order to found the modern nation of Israel in 1948, are in fact about historical events which actually occurred over two thousand years ago. Please notice that they very specifically mention the fate of Babylon. They were very time-specific prophecies, which cannot possibly be applied to our modern times. We are very specifically told that when the Seven Years Of Captivity ended, and the Jews returned to Israel, God would punish the Babylonians; and that is exactly what happened. These events are intrinsically tied together, and they occurred thousands of years ago.

You see, the perpetrators of this deception, have to convince you that the return of the Jews to Israel today is supported by the Scriptures; because if they don't, then obviously, the rest of their deception simply falls apart. In other words, if they have purposely, or perhaps ignorantly, misinterpreted the previous verses, what else have they been teaching that is wrong? If the modern return of the Jews to Israel does not fulfill prophecy, then what about Israel becoming a nation in 1948? What about all of the other things the Israelis have done in order to claim modern Israel as their own, such as the decades-old fight with the Palestinians?

This series continues in part four. I trust that you will join me.

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End Of File

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Isaiah 66:8, Israel Has Existed For 4,000 Years, Political Maneuverings To Create Modern State Of Israel, Jews Lost The Kingdom Due To Their Rejection Of Christ, A Link Between The Prophecy Of Isaiah And Christ's "Another Nation" Prophecy?, Hollow Temple Worship During Isaiah's Time, Prophesied Birth Of Jesus, Jesus' Birth And Ascension In Revelation, Birth Of Christian Nation, Jesus Is Firstfruits Of The Resurrection, Nicodemus And Necessity Of Spiritual Birth, Spiritual Temple And A Holy Nation, Kingdom Passes From Unbelieving Jews To Peter And First Century Christian Church, RCC Pope Doctrine, Jesus Is The Rock And Not Peter, Birth Of The New Nation, Christ's Resurrection, An Earthquake And Centurion's Remark, Surprise And Astonishment - Isaiah's Prophecy Is Fulfilled, Spiritual Christian Nation Born "In One Day" And "At Once", God Will Complete The Full Number Of Resurrected Souls

In part three, I shared the following verse with you from the Book of Isaiah. This verse has been widely used by pro-Israel American preachers and the Jews themselves, to try to justify and add legitimacy to, the political "creation" of the nation of Israel on May 14, 1948:

"Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?  
Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall  
a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she  
brought forth her children."  
Isaiah 66:8, KJV

We have already seen that the prophecies which have been used to explain the return of the Jews to the land of Israel since the twentieth century, have, in my view, been grossly misinterpreted. Is it possible that the meaning of the above verse has also been distorted in order to support a wayward doctrine? Again, I suspect that it has.

To begin, I do not believe that the nation of Israel can be born in our modern times, "in one day", or "at once", due to the fact that, according to the Biblical record, Israel has in fact existed for over four thousand years. As I explained before, it began with the birth of Jacob and his twelve sons. While it's true that Israel has been repeatedly attacked and dominated many times during this lengthy period of time, and even temporarily lost its national identity at times, such as when the Roman Empire renamed it Palestine, nevertheless, the Jewish nation, whether scattered, or bound together into one cohesive form, has existed; and I am sure that many Jews will know exactly what I mean by this. Nationhood isn't just a matter of being at one physical place at the same time. It is also a matter of personal identity, tradition and belief.

Furthermore, in the real sense of the word, the nation state that we know as Israel today did NOT become a nation "in one day", or even "at once", as the prophecy states. It may have been declared a nation to the world on a particular day, just as the foreign colonial powers created and carved out quite a few nations in decades past; particularly in the Middle East and Asia, with just the stroke of their pen; but in reality, the 1948 announcement by the World Jewish Congress was the result of political maneuverings which had been going on for

literally decades. In short, this event did not occur "in one day", or "at once"; therefore, I am not fully convinced that it really meets the requirements of the prophecy. Isaiah's prophecy is describing something truly unique which creates astonishment for the observer of the event.

Concerning the events of 1948, I again suggest that you read the "The Seven Heads" series, and/or conduct online research of your own regarding the British Mandate, Europe's attitude toward the Jews during that time period, as well as the 1917 Balfour Declaration. You'll learn that the Europeans wanted the Jews to leave Europe; and thus, they had to politically create a place for them to go. The atrocities committed by Hitler only strengthened the resolve of the European powers to achieve their goal, and they may have acted partially out of guilt. But the point I wish to emphasize here is that the process to carve out a home for the Jews did not occur "in one day", or "at once"; it took decades to complete; and to my knowledge, such a slow development would not result in surprise or astonishment, as the prophecy seems to indicate. European politicians were fully aware of what was happening, as were the other major world powers of the day.

Another reason why I have difficulty accepting the argument that the verse in Isaiah is a prophecy regarding the "birth" of Israel in May of 1948, is because, as I explained in part three, Jesus very clearly stated that the Jews had forfeited their rights to the Kingdom, due to their unbelief. In fact, you may recall that the Lord very specifically said that it would be given to ANOTHER nation; and that is the key which will help us to unlock this mystery. The Lord said:

". . . Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord, who is doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Matthew 21:42b-44, KJV

So here we have Jesus clearly stating that another nation is going to be given the Kingdom; and we also have Isaiah saying that a nation will be born "in a day", and "at once". He also conveys the idea that the birth of this nation will come as a surprise. Thus he writes "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?". This attitude cannot possibly refer to the 1948 declaration; because as we have already seen, it was no mystery that the Europeans had been working on plans to create a homeland for the Jews for decades. Is it possible that what Isaiah is saying, and what Jesus is saying, are in some way related. I suspect as much. So who is this nation?

To better understand what Isaiah is talking about, and to put the verse in its proper context, all we have to do is to read some of the previous verses in that chapter. Once we do that, we discover that just as God was sick and tired of the Jews, and their hypocritical, dead temple worship during the First Century, (as we discussed earlier), He was equally tired of the Jews and their hollow temple worship during Isaiah's time as well. This was some one hundred and fifty years before the Babylonian invasions, and even before the Assyrian invasions. Isaiah was in fact sent to warn the Israelites of the coming chastisement by the hand of the Assyrians. At any rate, the beginning of the chapter clearly reveals God's attitude:



"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog, Æ's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine, Æ's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not." Isaiah 66:1-4, KJV

So, as you can plainly see, the Lord was utterly fed up with their false spirituality, and even with their temple, which King Solomon had built centuries earlier. The Jews had become totally absorbed in their traditions. They were going through the motion of being holy and righteous, but they had lost the Spirit. How much this sounds like so many modern churches in America. As a result, God decided to do something new. After expressing His anger with the Jews, in the seventh and eighth verses He tells us exactly what He is going to do about it:

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Isaiah 66:7-8, KJV

In these verses, "Zion" refers to Jerusalem, or in a larger sense, to Israel as a whole. If we just read verse eight by itself, we can be tricked into believing that it is talking about Israel becoming a nation on May 14, 1948; which is what some of these preachers, (and certain Jews), want us to see. However, if we take the time to read verses seven and eight together, as we really should, suddenly, the verses takes on an entirely new, and wonderful, meaning.

In short, the Lord seems to be saying that because the Jews have become so sidetracked in a spiritual sense, and are only interested in their temple worship and their vain traditions, (just as Jesus would tell them centuries later), He is going to do something new. We are informed that a man child will be born; in other words, a son. Isaiah appears to be describing a very unique, miraculous birth. Notice that he says that the child will be born before the woman travails, and before her pain comes. In other words, it sounds as if this woman will give birth without experiencing labor pains. Are you starting to grasp what is actually being said here? Do you understand what this prophecy is really all about? It is much more than the concocted "birth" of Israel in 1948.

In verse eight, it is translated as "for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Actually, in my view, this is an important mistranslation; because the word "children" is translated from the Hebrew word "ben". As the Hebrew lexicon clearly proves, "ben" shouldn't be translated as "children"; it should be translated as "son":

----- Begin Quote -----

ben bane

- 1) son, grandson, child, member of a group
  - 1a) son, male child
  - 1b) grandson
  - 1c) children (pl. - male and female)
  - 1d) youth, young men (pl.)
  - 1e) young (of animals)
  - 1f) sons (as characterisation, i.e. sons of injustice [for un- righteous men] or sons of God [for angels])
  - 1g) people (of a nation) (pl.)
  - 1h) of lifeless things, i.e. sparks, stars, arrows (fig.)
  - 1i) a member of a guild, order, class

----- End Quote -----

As you can plainly see, "son", or "male child", is clearly the primary meaning of the Hebrew word "ben"; thus, those two verses together should be read as:

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her [son]."

Isaiah 66:7-8, KJV

As soon as I read those two verses together, my eyes nearly popped out of my head, because I was immediately reminded of very similar phraseology in the Book of Revelation. Consider the following verses:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

Revelation 12:1-5, KJV

As I have explained before, the above Scriptures are widely believed to be discussing Jesus' birth in Israel, as well as His subsequent Ascension to Heaven following His Crucifixion and Resurrection from the dead. Notice how the woman wears a crown of twelve stars. This may represent the Twelve Tribes of Israel, or perhaps the Twelve Apostles, who represent the leadership of the New Nation that was founded upon Christ's blood. Please notice the similarities between the verses in Isaiah, and these verses in the Book of Revelation. In both instances, we have Jerusalem or Israel being described as a woman in travail; that is, in labor, who then brings forth a son. The verses in Isaiah, when read together, make it clear in my mind, that this son is directly linked to the birth of the prophesied nation. In fact, he seems to be responsible for its very birth.

It should be clear to you by now that I'm not referring to a physically-recognized, political nation with earthly borders like Israel, but rather to a global, spiritual, eternal one, that is comprised of all Christian believers everywhere, and for all time.

Based upon these verses, and others I will be sharing with you momentarily, I am convinced that this is what Jesus was talking about when He told the Jewish spiritual leaders that the Kingdom would be taken from them, and given to another nation. As we saw earlier, He very clearly told them that the cornerstone which they had rejected, (meaning Himself), would become the foundation stone for His new nation; which as we now know, would be born once He died and rose from the dead.

I am convinced that this is the man child, or son, as well as the nation which would be born "at once", or "in a day", just as Isaiah had prophesied. This nation perfectly meets all of the requirements set by Isaiah's prophecy, because it had in fact never existed before, unlike the nation of Israel which had already existed for several thousand years.

The reason why I'm so convinced that this nation didn't exist prior to Christ's Sacrifice and Resurrection, is because the Bible very plainly tells us, as I have explained before, that Jesus Christ is the very first member of this new spiritual nation, and it couldn't possibly have existed until Jesus did what He did for us. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus is the first begotten of the dead, the firstborn and the firstfruits of the Resurrection, as we see here:

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body . . . For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Romans 8:22-23, 29, KJV

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Corinthians 15:19-23, KJV

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: . . . And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:12-15, 18, KJV

"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"

Hebrews 12:23, KJV

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

James 1:18, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Revelation 1:5, KJV

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Revelation 14:4, KJV

Jesus also made it very plain in His conversation with the Pharisee Nicodemus, that in order to become members of this new spiritual nation, we must be born of water, (meaning a physical birth in the womb, as Nicodemus understood), and of the Spirit, through our faith in Christ. Consider the Lord's words to Nicodemus:

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother, Äôs womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

John 3:3-8, KJV

There is further proof that the nation of which both Isaiah and Jesus spoke is really the spiritual nation of worldwide believers in Jesus Christ. Please consider what the Apostle Peter wrote to the First Century Christian brethren. Peter makes it very plain that Jesus Christ, (the Cornerstone who was rejected by the Jewish Elders, as per the Old Testament prophecies), is the founder of our spiritual temple. He also explains that not only are we symbolic living stones in the Lord's Temple, but we are also a Holy Nation. Peter wrote:

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had

not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

1 Peter 2:4-10, KJV

As we've already seen, Jesus clearly stated that the Kingdom would be taken from the unbelieving Jews who rejected Him, and would be given to another more worthy nation; i.e., to a nation of believers in Christ Jesus, who truly demonstrate the fruits of repentance. Is there any additional Scriptural evidence which mentions this transfer of power and spiritual anointing and authority? There most certainly is; and it is directly tied to the previous verses written by Peter. The reason why Peter could write with such authority, is because Jesus Himself gave Peter this authority, as becomes evident by the following verses found in the Gospel of Matthew:

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Matthew 16:16-19, KJV

In spite of his own shortcomings, (his cowardice, and his own betrayal of Christ, for example), Peter firmly believed that Jesus was the long-prophesied Messiah, the Christ, and Jesus obviously recognized this quality in Peter. Thus, the Lord chose Peter to lead the followers of the fledgling First Century Church, once He had returned to His Father in Heaven. However, please realize that while the Lord gave Peter this special blessing, this is a far cry from the Roman Catholic doctrine which promotes the false belief that Peter was the first Bishop of Rome, and thus, the first Pope. As you may know, the Roman Catholic Church uses this false doctrine to try to validate their supposed spiritual superiority, and authority, over other Christian churches.

As I have pointed out before, while Jesus gave Peter certain authority, the Gospels, as well as the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, seem to indicate that Peter may not have fully embraced it. These books suggest that leadership within the First Century Church was shared by Peter, James and John, and later by Paul as well. It's also important to realize that in the previous verses, the Lord is referring to Himself when He states "upon this rock I will build my church". I don't share the opinion that Jesus is calling Peter the rock, even though Jesus did name him Cephas, meaning "a rock". Peter seems to confirm that Jesus was referring to Himself as the Rock, in the verses I shared earlier, where Peter refers to Jesus as the Cornerstone. The Apostle Paul likewise states:

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

1 Corinthians 10:4, KJV

So while Peter may have been nicknamed Cephas by Jesus, the Lord is the only true Rock, as well as the only High Priest, of our Christian faith.

But the main point that I wish for you to grasp, is that the Jews did in fact lose the Kingdom, precisely as Jesus stated

that they would, as a result of their unbelief. Furthermore, this Kingdom was given to a new spiritual nation, comprised of believers in Jesus Christ. The birth of our new nation is directly linked to the birth of the man child, Jesus Christ, precisely as Isaiah had prophesied in the two Scriptures we examined earlier. You may recall that Isaiah seems to convey the idea that the birth of this nation would be accompanied by a certain degree of surprise and astonishment. It would be something unique and out of the ordinary.

Exactly when this new nation was born is a matter of personal conjecture. Whether we establish it as the moment that Jesus died on the Cross, or three days later when He rose from the dead, one thing is absolutely certain: If we stop to examine the events which transpired during that entire period, and the things that were said by some of the participants, it is obvious that there was plenty of surprise, astonishment, and fear going around. Consider the following verses that we find in Matthew chapter twenty-seven:

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."  
Matthew 27:50-54, KJV

One problem with reading the Bible, is that sometimes it can be difficult to recognize when time gaps exist between some of the events. At first glance, one might erroneously assume that the events described in the previous verses all occurred shortly after Jesus died on the Cross; however, it seems to me that a careful reading of the above verses indicates that Matthew is describing things which occurred, not right after Jesus died on the Cross, but rather three days later when He miraculously rose from the dead.

In other words, contrary to what we see in certain Hollywood movies, the centurion did not say "Truly this was the Son of God" as he gazed upon Jesus dying on the Cross. The soldiers were undoubtedly desensitized, having already witnessed many such crucifixions of criminals. Jesus' Crucifixion was just another one and a part of their job. Jesus did nothing while hanging on the Cross, which would give the centurion reason to make such a remark. However, the remark makes more sense if we realize that it was said three days later when a great earthquake occurred, and Jesus rose from the dead. When it states that they were "watching Jesus", it doesn't mean that they were watching Him die on the Cross; it means that they were watching His grave, as they had been instructed to do by the unbelieving Jewish Elders, who feared that the Lord might actually rise from the dead, as we see here:

"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto

them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."

Matthew 27:62-66, KJV

So consider the facts which surrounded the birth of this new nation. We have a great earthquake which must have surprised and unsettled a lot of people, and caused them to fear. We can also easily imagine the shock and horror that the Jewish religious leaders must have felt after having gone through a great earthquake, and then discovering that the temple veil had been fully ripped from top to bottom, possibly revealing the Holy of Holies, which was the holiest part of the temple, where the Ark of the Covenant had been formerly placed. Maybe they realized that it was a sign from God, that their days as the spiritual leaders of Israel were numbered. As we saw in part two, Caiaphas certainly seemed aware of the danger. Then we have these hardened soldiers witnessing the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Matthew tells us that "they feared greatly" having been observers of these events. As if the Lord's own Resurrection wasn't enough, it isn't difficult to imagine the astonishment, shock and fear which must have permeated all of Jerusalem, as her inhabitants found themselves being visited by many of the Old Testament saints.

In light of these events, and the people's reactions to them, it makes perfect sense that God would inspire Isaiah to write "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?". By comparison, in my opinion, the political events of 1948 don't even come close in magnitude, and certainly do not warrant this kind of a statement from the Prophet Isaiah.

Clearly then, the prophesied birth of this new nation was fulfilled to the letter. It was fulfilled "in one day", and "at once", precisely at the moment that Jesus rose from the dead, followed by all of the other Old Testament saints. It resulted in such shock and awe as this world has never seen before, and won't see again, until Jesus returns. As we saw earlier, Jesus became the first begotten of the dead, and the founder of our New Nation, as described by Peter. Jesus is the firstborn, and the firstfruits of the Resurrection, and all of the Old Testament Saints who followed Him out of the grave are the very first inhabitants of this New Nation; and some day, we will follow them into Glory; for as we are told at the end of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Hebrews 11:40, KJV

That word "perfect" does not mean what you think it means. According to the original Greek word used there, "teleioo", it really means that their numbers won't be complete, until we have all likewise been resurrected as well. God's eternal Plan of Redemption extends from the first page of Genesis, to the final page of the Book of Revelation. Everyone who is predestinated to be saved and resurrected, will be, in God's perfect time, and absolutely nothing will hinder His plans.

This series is concluded in part five. I trust that you will join me.

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End Of File



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Isaiah 66:8 - A Prophecy About A Nation Of Gentile Believers, Goyim And Infidels, "In His Name Shall The Gentiles Trust", Apostle To The Gentiles, Light Of The Gentiles, Peter Writes To Gentile Believers, God Instructs Peter To Accept Gentiles, Paul Writes To Gentiles - Works Circumcision Uncircumcision, There Is Neither Jew Nor Gentile In Jesus Christ - We're All One, Summary Of This Series' Primary Points, Closing Remarks

Now, if you are not yet fully convinced of everything I have been sharing with you in this series, allow me to share one final profound truth with you. While some American preachers, and some Jews, have tried to convince the world that Isaiah was talking about the birth of the Jewish nation of Israel in 1948, there is strong evidence which suggests that Isaiah was not only talking about the birth of a spiritual nation, but also that this new spiritual nation would in large part be comprised of Gentile believers. Are you surprised?

In the Scriptures from Isaiah that we examined earlier, the word "nation" is translated from the Hebrew word "goy". This word, and its plural form, "goyim", almost always refers to people of non-Hebrew, (or non-Jewish), stock. In other words, it means Gentiles, or heathen. Just as many Muslims view all non-Muslims as "infidels", Jewish people, at least Orthodox Jews, likewise view non-Jews as heathen; and the term "goy" is often used in a rather disrespectful, derogatory sense, although many Gentiles may not be aware of this fact.

So is there more Biblical evidence to support my contention that Isaiah was prophesying about the birth of a spiritual nation of Gentile believers in Christ, and not really about the birth of the modern Jewish nation of Israel in 1948? Yes, there most certainly is, I am happy to say. In the twelfth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, after watching Jesus heal a man with a crippled hand on the sabbath day, the Jewish spiritual elders, that is, the Pharisees, took counsel in order to determine how to destroy Jesus. In spite of their wicked intentions, Jesus kept on healing people anyway; and a few verses later, Matthew quotes from the Prophet Isaiah when he writes the following. Please notice carefully that Isaiah is very clearly stating that Jesus would minister to the Gentiles, and not just to the Jews. Furthermore, Isaiah concludes with "And in his name shall the Gentiles trust":

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

Matthew 12:17-21, KJV

This is such an important point, that is, that the Jews would lose the Kingdom, and that Jesus would primarily populate His new spiritual nation with Gentile believers, that the Apostle Paul also mentions this same prophecy in his Epistle to the

brethren at Rome; where Paul informs them that he has become the Apostle to the Gentiles, as we see here:

"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

Romans 15:9-16, KJV

In the previous sets of verses from the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle to the Romans, the word "Gentiles" is translated from the Greek word "ethnos". This word is basically used in the same way that "goy" is used in the Old Testament to refer to people of non-Hebrew stock. In fact, in the Greek lexicon, it plainly says "Paul uses the term for Gentile Christians". In other words, as opposed to Jewish Christians, such as the original Twelve Apostles, and other early Jewish Christians who helped to jump start the First Century Church.

The Prophet Isaiah was obviously in tune to the fact that God had plans to raise up a new spiritual nation. Isaiah realized that Jesus would be the founder of this New Nation, and that this New Nation would in large part be comprised of Gentiles who had embraced Christ. Further evidence that this is so can be clearly seen in the following verses, where God the Father is laying out His plans for Jesus, His Son:

"Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

Isaiah 42:5-7, KJV

If you're a sharp student of God's Word, you may realize that this is precisely the prophecy that Jesus Himself read in the synagogue at Nazareth, right before the Jews tried to throw Him over a cliff, as we discussed in part two of this series. Here again are those verses:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the

synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."  
Luke 4:18-21, KJV

Let me emphasize again that the reason why God has taken this particular course of action, is because the majority of Jews have stubbornly refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ as God's chosen manner of Salvation, and their attitude hasn't changed in the last two thousand years. Being a well-versed Pharisee, taught by Gamaliel, Paul was obviously quite familiar with all of Isaiah's prophecies regarding the coming Messiah, and how the Gentiles would be won to the Kingdom of God. Thus, it is no surprise that when Paul and Barnabas are again rejected by the antichrist Jews in Antioch, Paul simply turns his back on them, embraces the Gentiles, and again appears to make an indirect reference to the prophecies of Isaiah, as we see in these verses:

"And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium."  
Acts 13:44-51, KJV

As I explain in other articles, the above scene is typical of the reaction that Paul and his companions received when they tried to share the Christian Gospel with their fellow Jews; and so again, precisely as Jesus prophesied, this is why God chose to take the Kingdom from them, and give it to another nation; a nation of Gentile believers founded upon the Blood of Jesus Christ.

Earlier, we discussed how the Apostle Peter told the brethren that in God's eyes, they were "an holy nation". Some people may be tempted to erroneously argue that being as Peter was a Jew himself, his words were addressed to his Jewish brethren, and that this "holy nation" of which he spoke was the Jewish nation. However, this is most definitely not the case. As we saw with the previous sets of verses, the Greek word that is used in Peter's Epistle is again "ethnos". Clearly then, this "holy nation" is comprised of Gentile believers. Perhaps you may recall how God very pointedly showed Peter that he must extend the Gift of Salvation to the Gentile world. In the Book of Acts, we find these particular incidents:

"On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and

let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven." Acts 10:9-16, KJV

"And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:2-18, KJV

Let's return to my earlier comments regarding Peter's letter. If it were true that these people to whom Peter was writing were Jews, I don't think that it would make any sense that in verse ten, he'd write to them, "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy"; because the Jews have always considered themselves to be the people of God, even to this very day. In fact, they've also craftily convinced a large part of modern Christendom, that they are still the Chosen People, in spite of the fact that most of them have rejected Christ for the past two thousand years. On the other hand, if Peter was in fact writing to Gentile brethren, as I believe he was, it makes perfect sense that he would write in this manner.

To further validate this point, consider that the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, made the exact same point regarding how the Gentiles had become the people of God through their faith in Jesus Christ. Please carefully note how Paul too was addressing the Gentile Christians in Ephesus, and not his own Jewish brethren:

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles . . ."

Ephesians 2:11-3:1, KJV

To add some clarity to the previous verses, when Paul writes "the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands", he's referring to the Jews who have been circumcised as a matter of obeying the Mosaic Law. In fact, the Book of Acts informs us that at first, some of the Jewish Christians also believed that the Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to really be saved; but Paul strongly resisted this requirement. That's why only two verses earlier he wrote:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

As you may already know, it is those same two verses that got Martin Luther in trouble with the Roman Catholic hierarchy of his day. It seems clear that the "works" that Paul is talking about, is the act of being circumcised. That explains why he immediately begins discussing circumcision in the verses that immediately follow those two. He wants to assure the Gentile Christians that it isn't necessary to be circumcised in order to be saved. All that matters is faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Works of the flesh, such as circumcision, do not win us points with God, and we have no room to boast of our own supposed righteousness. As Paul also later wrote:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Titus 3:5, KJV

With that last point, we have now covered a lot of territory. I have strived to present solid Scriptural evidence to prove to you, that certain things you may have learned from some of the popular pastors and preachers, or perhaps even from the Jews themselves, are not necessarily true, and in fact, may be a deliberate deception, in order to convince you that it is your unflinching duty and responsibility as a Christian to

support the nation of Israel.

Let's recap some of the key points that we have discussed in this series. First, if you accept my arguments, there is no scriptural evidence to suggest that Jesus wanted us to think that the Parable of the Fig Tree was a cryptic message that, rightfully interpreted, was a reference to Israel becoming a nation in 1948. As far as I can tell, this is a fabrication of certain misguided American preachers and Bible teachers, who believe that it is our duty to support Israel.

Second, there is likewise no Scriptural evidence that we are supposed to interpret a Biblical generation as being a period of exactly fifty-two years. This again was a number dreamed up by American Christians who apparently thought that finding an average number of years would solve their problem for them and convince their followers that Jesus would be returning in the year 2,000.

Third, nowhere does the Bible exhort us to add 1948 and 52, so that we can determine that Jesus would return in the year 2,000. Obviously, this was a major error on the part of those same misguided American preachers, because Jesus certainly did not return in the year 2,000. Have you seen Him?

Fourth, there is convincing evidence in both the Old and New Testaments, which strongly suggests that Isaiah's prophecy was not about the birth of the nation of Israel in 1948, but rather, about Jesus' birth, and the new spiritual nation of believers which resulted from His Crucifixion on the Cross, and His subsequent Resurrection from the dead, almost two thousand years ago. This nation appears to have been born at the moment of Christ's Resurrection, and Jesus was in fact the Firstfruits, or firstborn, of this nation.

Allow me to add some clarification to that last point. While in my view the Old Testament Scriptures seem to be prophesying the birth of a new spiritual nation founded upon Jesus' Blood, and comprised mainly of Gentile believers, it is also important to realize, as we saw just a moment ago, that once a person does come to Christ, be they Jew or Gentile, their ethnicity is no longer any of importance. As Paul candidly wrote:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."  
Galatians 3:28, KJV

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."  
Colossians 3:11, KJV

Fifth, contrary to the claims of the "at any moment" people, who expect Jesus to appear any day now without warning, the Bible seems to indicate that certain key Endtime political and religious events must occur, before the Lord will return. Until all of these events do occur, as prophesied, it is my personal belief, based upon my current understanding of the Scriptures, that we still have at least seven years before Jesus will return. The day may indeed arrive when we will be able to anticipate Jesus' Arrival "at any moment", but in my view, that day has not arrived yet. As such, it is harmful to our faith to promote the "at any moment" doctrine, as a number of preachers have done. Not only does it give people

false hope, but it makes us look like idiots, and may even drive people away from our Christian faith when these false predictions fail to materialize.

Furthermore, contrary to the misguided views of a few, there is absolutely nothing that any of us can do, not even destroy the Dome of the Rock, in order to force God to speed up His plan. As we saw earlier, everything will occur in God's time, in His way, as He sees fit.

Before concluding this series, let me add one final thought. In presenting my arguments regarding why I believe that it's wrong to offer a precise date for when Jesus will return, I shared a verse from Matthew chapter twenty-four where Jesus states "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only". While I believe that this verse certainly held true for the Disciples of Jesus' time, being as they didn't need to know when the Lord would be returning, I also believe that the day may possibly come when we Christians of the Endtime may in fact know the exact day when Jesus will return. As the Lord said to His closest followers:

"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."  
Luke 8:10, KJV

Please also consider the truth of the following two verses:

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."  
1 Thessalonians 5:4, KJV

"Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."  
Amos 3:7, KJV

For more details regarding why I embrace this belief, please refer to my two-part article "As A Thief In The Night?: Not For Me". With these thoughts, and this challenge, I'll bring this series to a close. I pray that it has been a blessing to many.

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