

**GOD’S AMAZING STORY: TRAVELING THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT**  
**Gospel of Matthew: The King Has Come (Part Three)**  
**Matthew 21:33-41**

**Matthew 21:33-41**~ <sup>33</sup>“Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. <sup>34</sup> When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. <sup>35</sup> And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup> Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. <sup>37</sup> Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ <sup>38</sup> But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ <sup>39</sup> And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. <sup>40</sup> When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” <sup>41</sup> They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

I. Introduction

Good morning, Forgiven Life. I hope and trust that all of us have been doing our daily devotion and daily reading as we are journeying through the New Testament in 6 months. All it takes, for the most part, is reading about 1 chapter a day, and sometimes 2 chapters, and we will have read through the entire New Testament! We will have accomplished something that most Christians have never done ... reading the entire New Testament.

This coming week, we will finish reading through the Gospel of Matthew. So, allow me to give a quick synopsis of the last part of Matthew.

Jesus comes to present himself as the King of the Jews, but His people reject Him as their King. So, in return, Jesus rejects them as His people. With the Remnant, that is, a small group of faithful Jewish people (His disciples), the King will establish a “new” nation that will be a part of His Kingdom. This “new” nation, if you will, consists of the Remnant (faithful Jewish believers) and the Gentiles. The Gentiles who were not the King’s people can now be His people. The Apostle Peter summarizes this prophetic fulfillment in his epistles to the Gentiles ... namely 1 Peter 2:9-10.

**1 Peter 2:9-10**~ <sup>9</sup> But you [the Church, Gentile Believers] are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

II. Overview of Matthew’s Gospel

Picking up where we left off the last time takes us to Matthew chapter 16.

In Chapters 16-20:

Jesus talks about the formation of His holy Kingdom and holy people, the Church. We can see this in chapter 16.

**Matthew 16:18~** <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Peter, as a representative of the Apostles (the 12 whom Jesus will “send out”), will be instrumental in formation of the Church, this new nation. Peter will have these “keys” or authority in the Kingdom of God. However, it is not only Peter who has these “keys” to bind and loose, but the Apostles. We see this in chapter 18. Jesus, speaking to his Apostles, says:

**Matthew 18:17-18~** <sup>17</sup> If he [the sinning brother] refuses to listen to them [the witnesses to the brother’s sin], tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you [the Apostles] as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you [the Apostles], whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

So, this authority to bind and loose is not only given to Peter, but to the Apostles in this new nation known as the Church. This is why Paul can boldly say in Ephesians 2:20

**Ephesians 2:19-20~** <sup>19</sup> So then you [Gentile Believers] are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints [Jewish Believers] and members of the household of God [the Church], <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ...

In chapter 20, Jesus will tell several parables that describe this phenomenon where God rejects the Jewish nation because of her rejection of the King, and God will give His Kingdom to another nation.

Take for example Matthew 21 starting in verse 33.

**Matthew 21:33a~** <sup>33</sup> “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower ...

The Master of the House is the Father. The Master is God. He plants a vineyard and puts a fence around it and builds a tower for safety. He also digs a winepress for this vineyard to be fruitful. Jesus is talking about the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel is supposed to produce fruits for the Master. To be a part of God’s Kingdom means that we are to produce fruits.

I am just surprised and baffled why people think that they can be a part of the Kingdom of God and not have to produce fruits. They think that they can be subjects of the Kingdom and not be in the Kingdom, that is in the Church. They do not want to go to Church. They do not want

to learn of Jesus. They do not want to be a part of His people. It baffles me. It makes no sense.

But let's move on. Jesus continues his parable by saying, "the Master of the House ...

**Matthew 21:33b~<sup>33</sup>** ... leased it [the vineyard] to tenants, and went into another country.

The Tenants are the Jewish people. God does everything in building His Kingdom.

- He builds it.
- He protects it.
- He makes it fertile so that it can be fruitful.
- And then, He gives His Kingdom to the Jewish people, expecting them to produce the fruit that he desires.

We see this in the next verse.

**Matthew 21:34~<sup>34</sup>** When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit.

The problem is that the tenants (the Jewish people) think they own the vineyard (the Kingdom). They think that they can do whatever they want and please. So, they have decided that they are not going to give to the Master what rightfully belongs to Him. They will harshly mistreat the servants whom the Master of the House sends to collect His fruits.

**Mathew 21:35-36~<sup>35</sup>** And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup> Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them.

So, God sends to the Jewish people prophets to tell them that they need to bear fruits. In the Old Covenant, the fruits are righteousness and justice.<sup>1</sup> But instead of giving God these fruits of righteousness and justices, the Jewish people beat, kill, and stone the prophets. Look at the next verse ...

**Matthew 21:37~<sup>37</sup>** Finally ...

Now this Greek word, ὕστερος (*husteron*), can mean "lastly" or "last of all" as we see in the NKJV.

**Matthew 21:37~<sup>37</sup>** Then last of all ... (NKJV)

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<sup>1</sup> **Isaiah 5:4,7~<sup>4</sup>** What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? ... <sup>7</sup> For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

In other words, God is going to give the Jewish people one more chance ... and He will do this through His Son, that is, through Jesus.

**Matthew 21:37-38**~<sup>37</sup> Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’  
<sup>38</sup> But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’

What? Delusional!

**Matthew 21:39**~<sup>39</sup> And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

The Jesus asks a very pertinent question in verse 40.

**Matthew 21:40**~<sup>40</sup> When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

Now, the Jews will answer this question themselves.

**Matthew 21:41a**~<sup>41</sup> They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death ...

I just like the way the NASB translates this verse.

**Matthew 21:41a**~<sup>41</sup> They said to Him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end ... [NASB]

I do not like that this happened to the Jewish people. I just like the syntax of the sentence. God “will bring those wretches to a wretched end”. And please notice the second part of the sentence.

**Matthew 21:41b**~<sup>41</sup> and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

Because of the Jewish nation rejects the King, two things will happen:

1. First, God will wipe out the Jewish nation.

**Matthew 21:41a**~<sup>41</sup> They said to Him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end ... [NASB]

Because the Jewish people reject the King and kill the Son, God will destroy the Jewish nation. He will “bring those wretches to a wretched end.” And this happened in 70 A.D.

In 70 A.D., God brought the Roman army under General Titus upon Jerusalem and burned down city and the temple. God scattered the Jewish people to the winds ... to

the four corners of the earth. And when the temple was destroyed, so ended the age of the Jewish nation. It ended the Old Testament.

You see, biblical Judaism and the Old Testament lean heavily on the temple. They require the Jewish Temple to perform animal sacrifices so that they could receive righteousness. But if they do not have the temple, they cannot sacrifice for their atonement (for the Mosaic Law is clear that they could not sacrifice animals just anywhere they please; it has to be done in the temple and in the place God has chosen). The modern Judaism is NOT biblical Judaism. It cannot be because they do not have the temple. Modern Judaism is really Talmudism ... they follow the teachings in the Talmud than the Mosaic law.

So, the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 is a big thing. It ended the Jewish age. Now, we are in the age of the Church or what the New Testament calls ... “The Times of the Gentiles.”

Luke mentions this in his gospel. Talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, he writes:

**Luke 21:24~<sup>24</sup>** They [the Jews] will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

2. Second, God will give His Kingdom (the vineyard) to another nation (the Church) that will bear Him the fruits that He desires.

**Matthew 21:41b~<sup>41</sup>** and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

The “other tenants” is the Church that consists of both the remnant Jews and believing Gentiles. It is now the Church’s responsibility to do what the Jewish nation failed to do. We are to cultivate the vineyard, bear fruit, and bring to God His fruit.

Now the telling of this parable (and others like it in this section) outlines the remaining part of the Gospel of Matthew.

In Chapters 21-28:

In these chapters, we have the rejection of the King by Israel, the rejection of Israel by the King, and the formation of a New Kingdom, the Church.

In chapter 21, Jesus officially enters the city of David to present Himself as their King. This is known as the “Triumphal Entry” of the King. But the Jews reject Jesus. So, at the end of chapter 23, Jesus sadly and painfully pronounces a judgment on the nation of Israel and the temple.

**Matthew 23:36-39**~<sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.  
<sup>37</sup>“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>38</sup> See, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup> For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

And then in the next chapter (Chapter 24), Jesus describes what will happen to the Jewish age. Chapter 24 is NOT talking about the End of the World (at least not verses 1-34).<sup>2</sup> It is referring to the end of the Jewish age ... the end of the Old Covenant.

I can see why people think this section is talking about the end of world or what is known as “the Apocalypse”. There are:

- Wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6-8)
- The Great Apostasy where many will “fall away” (Matthew 24:9-11)
- Increase in wickedness and lawlessness (Matthew 24:12)
- Gospel must be preached in the whole world which has not been done (Matthew 24:14)
- The Great Tribulation “such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be” (Matthew 24:21)
- Sun darkened and the moon will not give its light and the star will fall from the sky (Matthew 24:29)
- Son of Man appearing in the sky (Matthew 24:30)

Surely all these things indicate that Jesus is talking about the end of the world or the Apocalypse, right? Besides, that is what all these great teachers and preachers (whom I personally respect) teach behind the pulpits and in lecture halls, so this passage must be talking about the End Times, right. No. It is not. This is talking about the Destruction of the Temple or the End of the Jewish Age in A.D. 70.

Since this series is a summary of the books of the New Testament, time does not permit me to get into details of this passage. But let me give you just a few reasons why this passage is talking about A.D. 70 and not some future cataclysmic events.

1. First, the context is about the Temple.

Jesus and the disciples are talking about the temple.

**Matthew 24:1-2**~<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.<sup>2</sup> But he answered them, “You see all

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<sup>2</sup> It is this author’s understanding that chapter 24 starting in verse 36 and following is talking about a future time when Jesus returns in his “Second Coming”. The reasons for such understanding is beyond the scope of this summary. For reasons and explanation of why Matthew 24:36 and following is about the future coming of Jesus, please refer to this author’s commentary on Matthew.

these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

Jesus tells the disciples that the temple will be destroyed. The “these” or “these things” refer to the “buildings of the temple.” Upon hearing the prophecy of the destruction of the temple, the disciples come and ask Jesus when will these buildings of the temple be destroyed.

**Matthew 24:3~**<sup>3</sup> As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

Now, it sounds like the disciples are asking three questions:

- When will these things be?
- What will be the sign of your coming?
- What will be the sign of the end of the age?

But really, they are only asking two questions ... when and what:

- When will this happen?
- What will be the sign?

The sign of what? The sign of the destruction of the temple. Because Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience, they understand that the “end of the age” refers to the end of the Jewish dispensation since the Jewish nation is tied closely to the temple.

The sign “of your coming” and the sign “of the end of the age” refers to the same thing ... the destruction of the temple and the end of the Jewish economy. The sign of your coming does not refer to Jesus’ Second Coming. The sign of your coming refers to Jesus coming to the nation of Israel in judgment. (Remember the parable in Matthew 20? “When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes?” The coming here is the coming in judgment on the nation of Israel for rejecting the Son).

The parallel passages of Mark and Luke, in their Gospel, make it clear that the disciples are asking two questions about the destruction of the temple.

**Mark 13:1-4~** And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”<sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”<sup>3</sup> And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,<sup>4</sup> “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?”

When will these things and what will be the sign of these things? What are the “these things”? The stones and buildings of the temple.

**Luke 21:5-7**~<sup>5</sup> And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, <sup>6</sup>“As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” <sup>7</sup> And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”

The discussing is about the destruction of the temple, which is the end of the Jewish age. This is not about the end of the world.

2. Second, the audiences are the Apostles.

The audiences to whom Jesus is speaking to are the disciples. They are the twelve apostles who live in the first century. Throughout the discourse and prophesy, Jesus uses the second plural personal pronoun “you”.

- See to it that no one misleads you (24:4).
- You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened (24:6).
- Then they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name (24:9).
- So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel (24:15).
- Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath (24:20).
- Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it (24:23).
- See, I have told you beforehand (24:25).
- Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place (24:34).

And on and on ... you, you, you. Jesus is saying that these things ... these signs are going to come upon “you”, the apostles. The apostles are eye witnesses of these things and not some distant future generation. If Jesus had intended that these things would come upon a future people, he would surely use the third personal pronoun, “they”.

- They will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars.
- They will be delivered to tribulation.
- They will see the abomination of desolation.

But Jesus does not say that. He says “you”. These things are going to happen during the lifetime of the twelve apostles. It will be in the first century ... more specifically in 70 A.D.

3. Third, the nation is the Jewish nation.



Jesus is NOT referring to something that is going to happen to the entire world ... some great cataclysmic events on the whole world. No. Jesus is talking about something that is going to happen to the Jewish nation. How do we know? Look at verse 20 of chapter 24.

**Matthew 24:20~<sup>20</sup>** Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

The Gentile world does not keep the Sabbath. Only the Jewish nation does. If Jesus had intended that these events will be on the whole world, then why should the Gentile pray that their flight would not be on the Sabbath? It is only the Jewish nation that needs to pray that her flight is not on the Sabbath because they entire city and country are shut down on the Sabbath.

This passage is about 70 A.D. It is about the War of the Jews when the Roman army came in and destroyed the city and the temple.

4. Fourth, the time frame is this Generation.

And finally, the proof of all proof that Jesus is talking about the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. in this passage is that all these things will happen to “this generation”. Look at verse 34.

**Matthew 24:34~<sup>34</sup>** Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

If Jesus had meant some future generation who would see all these things, he would have used a distant demonstrative and said, “that” generation. Instead, he uses the near demonstrative, “this” generation.

And besides, all the time in the Gospels when the biblical text says, “this generation”, it is referring to the first century generation ... the generation during the time of Jesus’ ministry in Judea. It does not refer to some future generation. Take for example:

- But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates (11:16).
- The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it (12:41).
- The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it (12:42).
- Then it [unclean spirit] goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation (12:43-45).
- So that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered

between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation (23:35-36).

So, Matthew 24 is about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. When the Jewish nation rejects Jesus as her King, Jesus rejects the Jewish nation as His people. And because the Jewish nation kills the Son, the Father brings these wretches to a wretched end (Matthew 21:41).

### III. Conclusion

The remain chapters of the Gospel of Matthew is the fulfilment of the Jews' rejection of the King, the King's rejection of the Jews, and invitation of the Jews and Gentiles into Jesus' Kingdom, the Church.

**Matthew 28:19-20**~ <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The end of the Jewish age has come. We are in the "Times of the Gentiles". We are in the Church Age. Now the Church is responsible to bear fruit for the King.

### IV. The Blessing

**Presider:** May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be unto you.

**Congregation:** And also to you.

### V. Forgiven Life Living

1. Read Matthew 11:16-19. Have you encountered situations where God is trying to speak to you but you were too busy or distracted to notice or accept what He has to say? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. In Matthew 12:25-30, verse 30 states "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." It is not only by active opposition that you follow the kingdom of God, but also through complacency. How does this solidify which side you want to be on, the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan? \_\_\_\_\_

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Gathering or scattering? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Read Matthew 13:51-52. How well do you understand the parables in Matthew 13? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you consider yourself trained for the kingdom of a heaven, ready to be a "master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old?" \_\_\_\_\_

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4. In Matthew 14, twice in this chapter, Jesus withdrew away from the crowds to a quiet and secluded place after hearing the news of John the Baptist's death. How often are you able to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life with family and your obligations to take some quiet time to be with God? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Read Matthew 15:3, 8-9. What are some of the things that the Pharisees and scribes do to reject God even if they honor God with their lips? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Read Matthew 16:21-23. What are the things you may be doing that is a hindrance to God, where you are setting your mind not on the things of God but the things of man? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. In Matthew 17, what do you think the disciples are thinking as they learn what Jesus has to say starting from chapters 16:13-23, to the transfiguration in chapter 17:1-13, to where Jesus continues to share about his upcoming death to his disciples in v. 22-23, and finally to Jesus' comment about being our King in v. 25-26? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you think they truly have a good understanding of who Jesus is? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Read Matthew 18:23-35. Do you recognize the areas that God has been merciful towards you? Is God leading you to extend the same mercy that He has given you to someone in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Read Matthew 19:16-26. Are there things that you are storing for yourself similar to the man who has great possessions? \_\_\_\_\_

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In v. 24, why do you think Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Read Matthew 19:27-30 as well as Matthew 20:1-16. As we serve God and "give up" things for Him, do you have a certain expectation of what God should give you in return? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you wholeheartedly serve God without expecting anything in return? \_\_\_\_\_

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