

**The Preliminary Passages – Matt. 10, Matt. 13, Matt. 23****Matt. 10:16–23**

In Matthew 10, Jesus is about to send the apostles out on a “preaching tour.” Though the instructions are the same as the sending of the 70 in Luke 10, this is clearly a separate incident. In verse 7, the specific instructions are to preach “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” ... “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons ...” Why were the miracles included in the message? Wimber has created an entire charismatic movement based on this passage. However, the miracles the Jesus and the apostles did were not arbitrary. They were used to demonstrate that the king of the coming kingdom was here. What is the association of the king with the miracles? Were the miracles merely a demonstration of God's power to the people so they would believe? Wimber thinks so. But it turns out that the particular miracles were used to demonstrate that Jesus WAS the king of the coming kingdom predicted by the OT prophets.

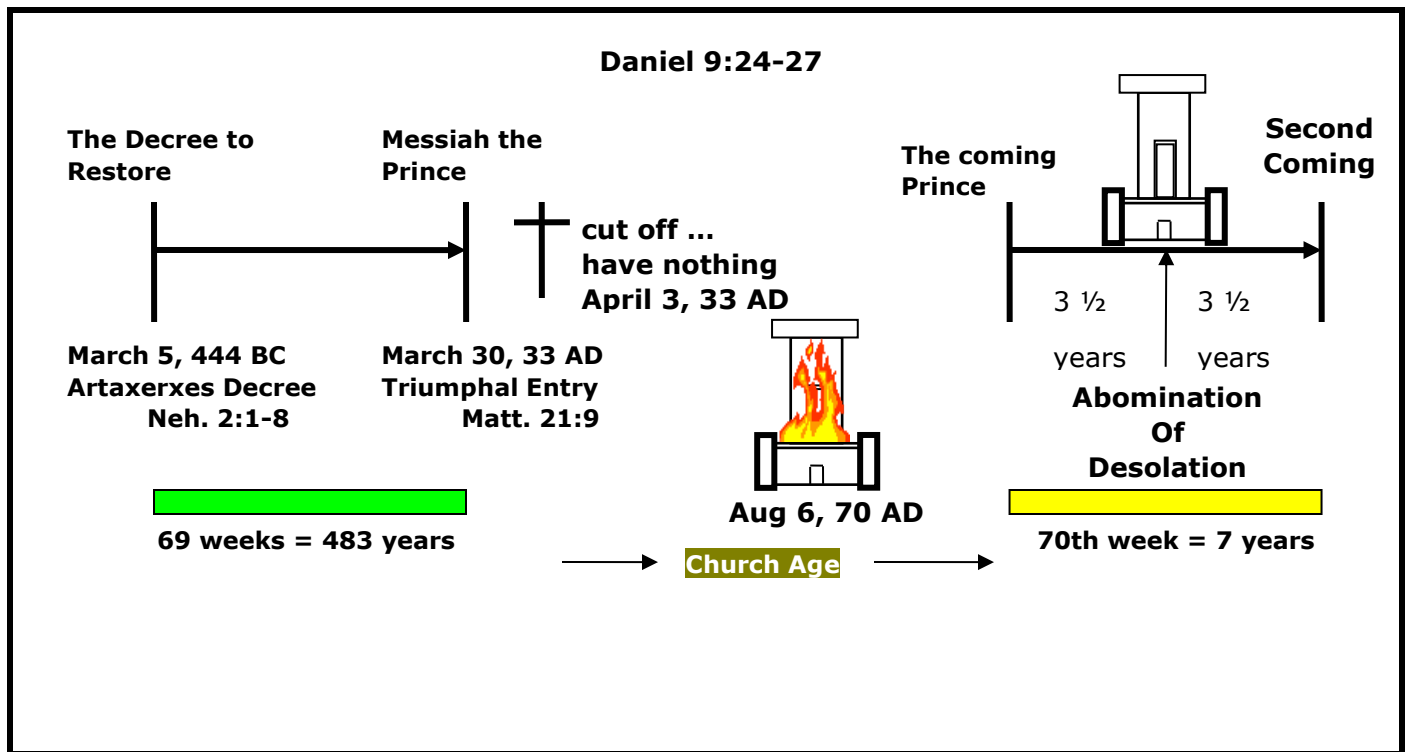
Did you know that all the OT prophecies about life in the coming kingdom were demonstrated by Jesus in the form of a miracle? For example, in Amos 9, it is predicted that wine will be so abundant in the Messianic age that “the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills shall flow with it.” In Joel 3, “the mountains shall drip with new wine ...” in the kingdom age. Can you think of a corresponding miracle that Jesus did that demonstrated He is the one to bring this particular kingdom age blessing to the world? Yes, the wedding at Cana where he turned water into wine.

How about the prediction of the super abundance of food in the kingdom age? Consider Joel 2:22, 24, 26. Can you think of a miracle that Jesus did that demonstrated His is the one to bring this particular kingdom age blessing to the world? Yes, the feeding of the five thousand. All the miracles that Jesus performed demonstrated the conditions that will exist during the millennium. It would be a very constructive exercise to list those Messianic age conditions from OT prophecies during your next OT readthrough.

Back to Matthew 10 ... He instructs them ... “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Then starting in verse 16, Matthew records some additional instructions that do not seem to apply to the task at hand ... but rather, will apply later in their lives. Three clues lead us to believe these additional words pertain to their ministries later on. First, Jesus says their testimony then will be to the Gentiles (verse 18) but He told them not to go to the Gentiles in verse 5. Second, He mentions “endurance to the end” in verse 22, which seems out of place for just a preaching tour in which all of them returned safely. Finally, in verse 23 Jesus says that “you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.” We understand that the coming of the Son of Man pertains to His Second Coming, which we know from Daniel does not occur until the end of the tribulation. This final saying could not mean that the Second Coming would occur before they finished their preaching tour in the Jewish cities; the Second Coming could not occur before His ascension into heaven after His first coming! This IS a difficult saying but taken at face value ... it likely means that the evangelistic efforts of the disciples in the future to the nation of Israel as a whole would not be completely successful until the Second Coming of Christ, no matter how vigorous the efforts.

The last question concerning these additional instructions is the “when” part. When would these instructions be useful to the apostles? History tells us that many of the apostles died martyrs’ deaths. They were dragged into the courts of the day and sentenced to death as a result of their faith in Christ. Since Jesus spoke these instructions TO the apostles, the main application of His words would apply to them later in their ministry.

Now where on our Daniel timeline would we put these “events?”



### Matt. 13 – Parables of the Kingdom

The parable of the wheat and the tares is an important introduction to the eschatology of Matthew and it gives some important details that integrate with the framework we have obtained during our time in the book of Daniel. The key element marker in Matt 13 is in verses 39–40; namely, the term “end of the age.” What does the end of the age refer to? Where does the term come from? From the end of Daniel 12, Gabriel (perhaps) tells Daniel that he will rise again ... “at the end of the age.” When is the end of the age? Recall the judgment of the nations is at the end of the age from Daniels visions. The last Gentile kingdom will be done away with, along with the “little horn,” the last Gentile ruler. Since judgment is the theme of the Second Coming, how does this judgment relate to the end of the age?

The parable of the wheat and the tares explains it. Turn to the text in Matt. 13:24–30. Many Christians have taken this to be a prediction of false converts within the church and how we should deal with them. The assumption is that we should not seek to root out false converts as the process of doing that will surely cause destruction within the church. The theory is to “let God sort them out ... at the end of the age.” But the context here, as will be seen from the explanation, is the harvest after the Second Coming. The passage does not deal with the church, relationships within the church, or the church age at all. It is the separation of the righteous and the wicked left on the earth following the Second Coming.

Skip ahead now to the explanation of the wheat and tares, starting in verse 36. Notice the identity of some of the symbols beginning in verse 39 ... “the harvest is the end of the age.” Again, when is the end of the age? After the Second Coming. Verse 39 again ... “the reapers are angels.” Verse 40 ... “the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.” Now the punch line in full force ...

Vs. 41, “the Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire ... then “THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their father.” Notice the capitalized words in this passage. What does that signify? It signifies a quotation from the OT text. What text is being quoted here? It is from Daniel 12:3 ... lets go back to Daniel 12 again momentarily ...

Recall Daniel 12 talks about the final period of distress for the nation of Israel. From our Daniel timeline we know that distress happens during the last 3 1/2 years prior to the Second Coming. Those who are written in “the book” will be

rescued. Verse 3 describes these Jews who are rescued as possessing a general characteristic of insight into these events. As a result, they will shine like the brightness of the expanse of heaven. Notice that Matthew quotes Daniel 12 in the context of that final separation of unbelievers and believers at the end of the age. Now, where would we put this event on our Daniel timeline? Just after the Second Coming. We will also see that these events are highlighted in Matt. 25 (sheep and goats judgment).

## Matthew 23

Perhaps the most important context for the eschatology of Matthew 24 is the events starting in Matthew 21, beginning with the Triumphal Entry. Jesus cleanses the temple again, is challenged by the chief priests and elders, and presents a few final parables to the people. The rulers begin to plot how to kill Him and bait Jesus with a few questions (tribute to Caesar, the seven husbands and the resurrection, etc.) In chapter 23 Jesus begins to expose the Pharisees hypocrisy and pronounces eight woes upon them. It is this last woe, beginning in verse 29, that we wish to concentrate.

The last woe pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees concerns the killing of the prophets that God has sent to the nation of Israel. The leaders have honored the slain prophets of old by building and adorning monuments to them. But they also make the claim that if **they** had been there when the prophets were killed, they would not have participated in the murders of the prophets like their fathers did. Jesus then challenges them on that claim. “You are sons of those who murdered the prophets.” Jesus then goes on to proclaim that by rejecting Him (and later the apostles), they are continuing the stacking of judgment upon themselves that continues from their relationship with their sons who killed the prophets. He is calling out their hypocrisy in claiming “they wouldn’t have killed the prophets” yet they are going to kill Jesus Himself in a few days. Because of this audacious claim, Jesus commands them ... “fill it up.” What does He mean by that? He is saying that their guilt is ongoing from their ancestors and it has not quite reached the peak of full judgment. They still have more blasphemy to participate in before the full measure of God’s judgment will be pronounced upon them.

Jesus then makes an interesting point ... He is going to continue sending them prophets to kill so that their judgment will be more severe. What judgment on them could be more severe than that which will come from killing their own Messiah? Fill it up ... He then says something profoundly significant. He will send more prophets ... vs. 35 ... “so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

At this point, one of the Jewish leaders could have said “wait a minute ... we weren’t even there when these murders took place!” Yet Jesus says “you murdered.” You see, Jesus is illustrating a very profound truth, that the Jews all throughout history have murdered righteous people that God has sent them ... and since they would also murder Jesus in a few days, and the apostles after that ... judgment would be metered out on all of them, but in particular, the ones who are about to kill Him. Jesus is using a “collective” “you” in verse 35 ... “whom you murdered.” His collective you include the entire nation; past, present, and, likely, future ... the entire historical existence of the Jews.

He finally says the important conclusion in verse 36 ... “all these things will come upon this generation.” What does Jesus mean by “this generation?” This is a very important point here. The lexical range on the word γενεά is not exactly small. The word can mean

- a. Literally, those descended from a common ancestor *race, clan, descendants, as an ethnic group kind*
- b. Generally, all those living at the same time *generation, contemporaries*
- c. the time span of one generation *age, generation, period*
- d. quotation from Isaiah 53:8 Septuagint, possibly *origin*; more probably *posterity, descendants*

The particular meaning of this word, turns out, is the heart of a heretical view called preterism. Preterism is the view that everything in Matthew 24, Luke 21, Mark 13, and the book of Revelation was fulfilled in the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem. While it is possible that here in Matthew 23:36 the word does mean that generation of Jew alive at the time of Christ, whom rejected Him ... it is not possible that this word has the same meaning in verse 34 or Luke 21:32. When we get to these passages, we will fully dissect them.

Jesus then pronounces judgment by saying “your house is being left to you desolate.” Most expositors see this as a prophetic reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Before we move on, where would we put these events on our Daniel diagram? Yes, just before the Aug 6, 70 AD point.

The final verse in Matthew 23 is verse 39 ...

"For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

This is the familiar Messianic proclamation from Psalm 118. What does this mean ... “you will not see me until ...?” Since the Triumphal Entry has already occurred, it cannot be a reference to that event. Therefore, it must be a future (wrt the Matthew 23:39 statement) time when this proclamation will be made by the Jews. Exactly when is a topic of considerable disagreement among believers.

There are those propagate the meaning of “this generation” in verse 36 onto this verse and who would say the leaders of the Jews will see His Second Coming from Sheol. But this is not a possible interpretation as those Jews are not going to proclaim Him as their Messiah ... they have already rejected Him.

Others see the destruction of Jerusalem in this verse in the so-called “cloud coming” of the Roman armies. Those who hold this view must, of necessity, believe the Second Coming has already happened ... in 70 AD; though some would see a second Second Coming in the future. The problem with this view is that the Jews of 70 AD did not proclaim Him as their Messiah either. So this view is impossible.

The view that makes the most sense is the view that “this generation” in verse 36 is a “collective you” and refers either to the Jewish race ... “this race (the Jews) will not pass away ...” or the generation alive at the time of the Second Coming. In either case here, the future leaders of the nation of Israel will call upon the Lord Jesus as their Messiah ... and then “they will look on Me whom they have pierced ...” It simply cannot refer only to the generation alive during Jesus’ day due to verse 39.

From the standpoint of our Daniel diagram ... the events of Matthew 23 up to verse 38 seem to go in the slot near the Aug 6, 70 AD point. Verse 39 stands alone and should be put at the Second Coming.

### **Final thoughts going into Matthew 24**

As we go into Matthew 24, it is clear from their questions that the disciples have some pre-understanding of the events that Jesus would talk about. Where did they get this understanding? Naturally, from the OT scriptures. Since their questions relate to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the age ... where would they have gone in the OT to get that understanding?

Next week we will look at Zechariah 14 momentarily, for it really provides the background understanding for the disciple’s questions.