



The Last Days Series - Part 4

Pastor Christopher Miller - August 23, 2020

-greet / -welcome online audience / -share the service / -giving update

Relaunch Wednesday Nights on September 2

Please Stand for the reading of God's Word

The Lesson of the Fig Tree - The Rebirth of the Nation of Israel

Matthew 24:32-35 - 32 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branches become tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 34 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

- “Lesson” in verse 32 - 3850 *parabolé* (from 3844 /*pará*, "close beside, with" and 906 /*bállō*, "to cast") - a parable; a teaching aid cast alongside the truth being taught. This casts additional light by using an arresting or familiar analogy, (which is often fictitious or metaphorical, but not necessarily). (par-ab-ol-ay') - pronunciation
- “He is” in verse 33 - 1510 *eimí* (the basic Greek verb which expresses *being*, i.e. "to be") - *am, is.* and its counterparts, (properly convey "straight-forward" *being (existence, i.e. without explicit limits).* (i-mee') - pronunciation (eimi directly interprets to mean “I Am”).
- “Pass Away” in verse 34 - In the Greek, the word used here is a compound word and the word is *Parercomai* (par-er'-khom-ahē) and directly interprets to mean “to pass by or to come to”. This compound word is made up of two words, “Para” and “Erchomai”. Para means “close beside or from closely alongside”. Erchomai means “to come, to go”

So what does the Greek have to do with what I am teaching today?

Because the Greek gives us deeper insight into what Jesus was saying in these four verses. First of all, why in the middle of Jesus’ prophetic declaration of Matthew 24 does He seem to take a detour and utilize a lesson or parable to communicate prophetic insight? What did He mean by referencing the Fig Tree and was there a deeper meaning to this parable that what meets the eye?

The Fig Tree has a deeper meaning than surface level, the deeper meaning of the Fig Tree is a sign leading up to Jesus being at the door, but what is the deeper meaning? And, on top of that, there is going to be a generation that sees these things begin to manifest in the earth and this generation that Jesus is referring to will not pass away until all these things take place. Verse 32 is so interesting in this chapter because Jesus doesn't use a "parable" or "lesson" anywhere else in the chapter but in the middle of the chapter, he shifts gears and uses a parable that his Jewish audience would be able to understand and interpret. He hid a nugget of insight known only to His audience.

Why did Jesus use the Fig Tree as the reference? What was the significance? Two texts that you can research about the Lord referring to His people as a Fig Tree or being a choice Fig can be found in Jeremiah 24:5 and Joel 1:6-7. But there is one unique text found in **Hosea 9:10; listen to these words, "When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree."** When I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree... In the Hebrew, the word used here for "early fruit" is the Hebrew Word, "Bikkurah" which literally interprets to mean "the first ripe fig, early fig".

So with this word defined, let's look at this text once again, "When I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the first ripe fig or early fig on the fig tree." The first ripe refers to the fig tree's first fruits and signifies the fig tree coming out of dormancy and producing its first fruits as it enters into a new season after a season of dormancy. Winter to Spring.

And what did Jesus say, "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branches become tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near." It was a Code within a Code! Double Speak. At surface level it seems general and unambiguous, but at its depth, Jesus was giving a deeper prophetic insight regarding the Nation of Israel being reborn. And it was this sign of the Nation being reborn that would be a warning and a signal; the generation that sees the Nation of Israel rise again as its own Nation would not cease to exist until these things begin to manifest in the earth. I firmly believe that Matthew 24:33-35 is a prophetic utterance of Jesus addressing the rebirth of the Nation of Israel!

Listen to the words penned by the Prophet Isaiah! Isaiah 66:7-8 - "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. 8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a Nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children."

In the Hebrew verse 8 reads as follows: “Who has seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a Nation be delivered in an instant? Yet as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children.” Now why is this Prophecy by Isaiah so important? Because that’s exactly what happened on May 14th 1948!

A Country was born in a day! A Nation was delivered in an instant! Israel was reborn out of the Ashes of the Holocaust at the Hands of Hitler And God promised it! God Prophesied It! And it happened during the lifetime of many who are sitting in this room today! The Lord prophesied through the Prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah 43:5-7**, “Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. **6** I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, **7** everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

And again the Lord spoke through the Prophet Jeremiah in **Jeremiah 30:2-3**, “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: **2** “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. **3** For behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it.”

Moreover the Lord spoke through the Prophet Ezekiel in **Ezekiel 34:11-16**, “For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. ¹²As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy.^[a] I will feed them in justice.”

So to all the nay-sayers and grumblers and arguers who want to argue about Bible Prophecy especially concerning the Lord’s Return, if 3,000 years of Bible Prophecy came to pass just as He said concerning the ingathering, rebirth, and establishment of the Nation of Israel on the world stage then how could we ever justifiably argue with Bible Prophecy concerning Christ Jesus’ return?

If the Father prophesied concerning the Nation being reborn then how would His prophecies be any different regarding Jesus' second advent?

Now with all of that said, if the Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Hosea were right in their prophetic insight concerning the Rebirth of the Nation of Israel then it would seem to reason that any other prophetic declarations made concerning the Nation of Israel will happen just as they are recorded as well. But we can only move forward if we are willing to go backwards for a moment! Is the Holocaust of World War 2 recorded in your Bible?

Many Bible Scholars and Theologians believe that Ezekiel 37 was a prophetic utterance concerning that horrible time during the darkest days of World War 2. The Prophet Ezekiel gave us some amazing insight into this matter in Ezekiel chapters 34-39 addresses Prophetic Writings of Israel's Restoration. But Ezekiel chapter 37, there is a very unique Prophecy made concerning the Nation of Israel.

There are several points of with the texts for our study between today and next Sunday and they are as follows:

- 1) Ezekiel 37 - Holocaust
- 2) Psalm 83 - Israel to war against neighboring enemies who have made a confederacy amongst themselves to destroy Israel.
- 3) Isaiah 17:1-3 - Jeremiah 49:23-27 - Damascus, Syria destroyed
- 4) Ezekiel 38 & 39- The Battle of Gog and Magog

These texts may seem that they have nothing in common with one another because they are written by four different writers in four different times of history but I assure you that they have more in common than any of us could imagine. Notice with me Ezekiel chapter 37 beginning in verse 1-14, “The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley;^[a] it was full of bones. ²And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath^[b] to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.” ⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling,^[c] and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.”

¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ ¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”

Notice the emphasis on restoration of life and land: I will open you grave and bring you into the land of Israel. The Lord echoes this point concerning the Land twice in two verses; in verse 12 and in verse 14. Verse 12 states, “I will bring you into the land of Israel.” And verse 14 says, “I will place you in your own land.” The Lord says that He will not only bring them into the land but He will personally place them there in their own land! Here we live today! The Land of Israel belongs to the Nation of Israel because God promised it to them and I thank God that the seated President of the United States of America chose to stand with Israel, protect Israel, support Israel, and uphold Israel’s right to their Holy City; the city of Jerusalem!

I thank God that President Donald Trump moved the US Embassy to Jerusalem thus declaring that Jerusalem is the Capital of Israel therefore reinforcing Israel's right to exist and solemnly declare, "Never Again" as a Nation to never be exposed to the atrocities that the Jewish people endured during Hitler's reign of Europe. My only concern is this; if the "two-state solution" is enforced on Israel then Israel will go to war and we will see the Prophecy of Psalm 83 come to pass. Now let's discuss Psalm 83 and some of the literary history of this text. "Who is Asaph that is mentioned in the Book of Psalms; specifically in Psalm 83?"

There were a number of Levites that King David assigned as worship leaders in the tabernacle choir, according to 1 Chronicles 6:31–32. Asaph was one of these men (1 Chronicles 6:39). Asaph's duties are described in detail in 1 Chronicles 16. According to 2 Chronicles 29:30, both Asaph and David were skilled singers and poets. Asaph is also mentioned as a "seer" or prophet. The "sons of Asaph" are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 25:1, 2 Chronicles 20:14, and Ezra 2:41. The sons of Asaph were likely a guild of skilled poets and singers, modeling themselves musically after Asaph, their master.

Psalms 50 and 73–83 are called the "Psalms of Asaph" because his name appears in the superscription at the head of those Psalms. Regarding Asaph's role as a prophet, of particular interest is Psalm 83, which deals with God's judgment of Israel's enemies.

Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagarites, Gebal, Ammon, the Amalekites, Philistia, Tyre, and Assyria. If we examine the Psalms written by Asaph, we can see that all of them have to do with the judgment of God, and many involve the prayers of the people at the prospect or moment of a particular event.

Psalms 83:1-18, “O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God! 2 For behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads. 3 They lay crafty plans against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones. 4 They say, “Come, let us wipe them out as a Nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!” 5 For they conspire with one accord; against you they make a covenant— (KJV - For they have consulted together with one consent; they form a confederacy against You.) 6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagriles, 7 Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; 8 Asshur also has joined them: they are the strong arm of the children of Lot. *Selah* 9 Do to them as you did to Midian, as to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, 10 who were destroyed at En-dor, who became dung for the ground. 11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, 12 who said, “Let us take possession for ourselves of the pastures of God.” 13 O my God, make them like whirling dust, like chaff before the wind. 14 As fire consumes the forest, as the flame sets the mountains ablaze, 15 so may you pursue them

with your tempest and terrify them with your hurricane! 16 Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek your name, O Lord. 17 Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever; let them perish in disgrace, 18 that they may know that you alone, whose name is the Lord, are the Most High over all the earth.”

Notice again in verse 5. They have made a covenant with one another; they have formed a confederacy and *they say*, “*Come, let us wipe them out as a Nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!*” There may be some to say; “well this Prophecy has already come to pass!” But it has not per Jewish history. Remember, it was David, after he took the throne from Saul, which unified all the tribes and brought them under one banner as the Nation of “Israel”.

Solomon, David’s Son, continued that process but the Nation began to split during his reign due to his marrying of strange women and unions with pagan Nations and fell apart after his death; generating the northern and southern kingdoms due to the rebellion of Idolatry within the Nation. King Rehoboam, who was Solomon’s successor and son, completely lost the kingdom. Now why is all of that important?

Because this Prophecy is speaking to a unified Nation who has wealth and provision and the ability to protect itself. You have to understand that everyone was afraid of David’s reign and Solomon had made alliances with all of his enemies causing him to be at peace with his enemies.

Which is the factor that brought him great wealth. Not to say there wasn't some head-butting here and there but not a full-scale military invasion from multiple Nations at once. We must bear in mind that the "Nation of Israel" did not exist again as a unified independent Nation from the fall of King Rehoboam, who was Solomon's successor and son, until May 14, 1948, which was 72 years ago. Are You Awake Yet?

Psalm 83 was written sometime after the end of King Solomon's reign (about 900 BC) and the Bible, nor history, does not contain an account of a coordinated effort such as is described by Asaph by all of Israel's neighbors to destroy them, either during that time or since; but all of the Nations listed by Asaph in 900 BC are all in existence today and have a deep hatred for Israel.

Now who are these groups that conspired against Israel per this Prophecy by Asaph in Psalm 83 and who are they in modern names?

Name in Psalm 83	Modern Equivalent
Tents of Edom	Palestinians & South Jordan
Ishmaelites	Saudi Arabia
Moab	Palestinians & Central Jordan
Hagarenes	Egyptians
Gebal	Hezbollah & North Lebanon
Ammon	Palestinians & North Jordan
Amalek	Sinai
Philistia	Hamas of Gaza
Tyre	Hezbollah & South Lebanon
Assyria	Syria & Northern Iraq

Interesting nugget: Who was in Syria and Northern Iraq trying to drive a caliphate amongst the Muslim extremists? ISIS - Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Notice, from what I just shared with you, that Assyria in Psalm 83 is modern day Syria and North Iraq.

In closing, (Pastor Brad if you will come) what is going to happen during the psalm 83 war? I believe two things will happen specifically and a possible third scenario:

- 1) Israel will take back all Palestinian lands within the Nation of Israel under their jurisdiction; this includes the temple mount, the Gaza strip, all of the west bank, and Bethlehem: all of which are currently under the Palestinian authority. If you are not understanding of some of the items I just listed then it would be worth a Google regarding the Palestinian Authority and the different terrorist groups that operate within these annexed zones.
- 2) Israel will increase her borders to give her a larger buffer zone between the heartland of Israel and her neighbors. Why? To eliminate the threat of missile attacks and rocket attacks.
- 3) The third part of this scenario I mentioned could possibly involve the Prophecy of Damascus, Syria being destroyed.

a. Isaiah 17:1-3 declares, “Behold, Damascus will cease to be a city and will become a heap of ruins. 2 The cities of Aroer are deserted; they will be for flocks, which will lie down, and none

will make them afraid. ³ The fortress will disappear from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus; and the remnant of Syria will be like the glory of the children of Israel, declares the Lord of hosts.

b. Jeremiah 49:23-27, “²³ Concerning Damascus: “Hamath and Arpad are confounded, for they have heard bad news; they melt in fear, they are troubled like the sea that cannot be quiet. ²⁴ Damascus has become feeble, she turned to flee, and panic seized her; anguish and sorrows have taken hold of her, as of a woman in labor. ²⁵ How is the famous city not forsaken, the city of my joy? ²⁶ Therefore her young men shall fall in her squares, and all her soldiers shall be destroyed in that day, declares the Lord of hosts. ²⁷ And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall devour the strongholds of Ben-hadad.”

c. There is a possibility of a nuclear option for Israel against Syria. Why? Because Saddam Hussein was hiding WMDs in Syria before the US invasion in 2005. Some may scream “Conspiracy!” But slow your roll and listen to me.

In an article published on January 26, 2006 by The New York Sun written by Ira Stoll, Staff Report of the Sun, the following title was shared as the Article’s Title, “Iraq’s WMD Secreted in Syria, Sada Says”. This is an excerpt from the beginning of the article, “*The man who served as the no. 2*

official in Saddam Hussein's air force says Iraq moved weapons of mass destruction into Syria before the war by loading the weapons into civilian aircraft in which the passenger seats were removed. The Iraqi general, Georges Sada, makes the charges in a new book, "Saddam's Secrets," released this week. He detailed the transfers in an interview yesterday with The New York Sun. "There are weapons of mass destruction gone out from Iraq to Syria, and they must be found and returned to safe hands," Mr. Sada said. "I am confident they were taken over." Mr. Sada's comments come just more than a month after Israel's top general during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Moshe Yaalon, told the Sun that Saddam "transferred the chemical agents from Iraq to Syria."

If Syria begins to stockpile WMDs in Damascus, after accessing the caches set in place throughout the country by Saddam Hussein before Operation Iraqi Freedom, for the use against Israel then Isaiah 17 and Jeremiah 49 will play right into the story of Psalm 83 and I'm sure several targets will receive the nuclear option due to the necessity of neutralizing the WMDs. Damascus, Syria is a city that has been inhabited for 5000 years with a large population density of people that will one day "cease to exist!"

Now concerning Ezekiel 38 and 39, this is an entirely different conflict that holds its genesis to an entirely different purpose. Let's begin in Ezekiel 37. Ezekiel 37 is prophetically dealing with the holocaust, the resurrection of the Nation of Israel, and it's rise back to power and provision.

Ezekiel 38 and 39 annotate a serious conflict between Israel and Gog / Magog. And we are going to dive into Ezekiel 38 and 39 next Sunday as we continue laying the foundation for our study of the Book of the Revelation during the month of September. Your homework this week is to read Ezekiel chapters 37, 38 and 39 this week at least 3 times before next Sunday.