

Tapestry

(This, Your Day – Part 2)

Jesus was in His own town, in the synagogue. Having recently spent 40 days in the wilderness overcoming Satan's temptations, He now began to present some very good news. Standing, He took the scroll of Isaiah the prophet and opened it to what we call Chapter 61. Reading from verses one and two, He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel (good news) to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18,19)

At this point, He closed the scroll, sat down and with every eye fixed on Him, He began, "Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Of course, those around were astounded at such a proclamation but something important happened in what He didn't read. You see, the passage runs from verse one to verse three and Jesus stopped in the middle of verse two. The clear implication was unspoken – this part of the passage remained as yet unfulfilled. What immediately follows in verse two is a "day of vengeance" and then a comforting and consoling of those in Zion (implicitly, the Jews) who mourn.

Thus, a period of vengeance and mourning yet to come, but when?

Turn to Daniel 9. In our last lesson we looked at a period of time described in verses 24, 25 and the first part of verse 26 as a total of 69 consecutive seven years "weeks" which culminated with Christ's first coming and specifically His entrance into Jerusalem while being hailed as King. (see Luke 19:38).

Therefore, one seven year period remained. But what is the cause of the disconnect? Why is this last 'week' separated from the first 69?

Let's look again at the passage. In verse 26, the Messiah is "cut off" or killed and then the "people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." This part was clearly fulfilled exactly as Christ Himself prophesied in Mat 24:1,2 say that the stones of the temple buildings would be thrown down. In 70 AD, four Roman legions destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

"The prince who is to come" may, as many scholars assert, point to the coming Antichrist who we are shown in other prophecies arises to power in the 'revived' Roman Empire (more on that in another study, Lord willing) and so the "people of the prince..." would speak of the Romans just as was fulfilled.

Now, the next part of the 70 week prophecy says, "The end of it shall be with a flood and till

the end of the war, desolations are determined (or decreed)." So, during the period of time between Messiah being cut off and the last week we have a war and some decreed desolations all culminating with a flood.

What is this war? What is this flood? And what are these desolations?

I believe this war is that which has been going on since the time Messiah was cut off. It is a war between Israel and the Lord. A conflict in which Israel has stubbornly continued to reject the gracious covenant of God through Christ's atoning blood. But the war will end. Isaiah writes, "'Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" says your God. "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.'" (Isa 40:1,2)

And what's this "flood" spoken of in Daniel's prophecy? Well, this isn't the ordinary word used in the Bible for a flood. This word literally means a "cleansing overflow" and I believe refers to that which is spoken of in the following three passages (as well as others):

"In that day, a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech 13:1)

"Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant, and Israel whom I have

chosen. Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb, Who will help you: "Fear not, O Jacob My servant...for I will pour water on him who is thirsty and floods on the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring;" (Isa 44:1-3)

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." (Zech 12:10)

The desolations were to the land and to the temple. Concerning the land, Josephus who observed the Roman conquest wrote, "The Romans, though it was a terrible struggle to collect the timber, raised their platforms in twenty-one days, stripped the whole area in a circle around the town to a distance of ten miles. The countryside, like the city, was a pitiful sight; for where there once had been a lovely vista of woods and parks, there was nothing but desert and stumps of trees. No one – not even a foreigner – who had seen the old Judea and the glorious suburbs of the city, and now set eyes on her present desolation, could have helped sighing and groaning at so terrible a change; for every trace of beauty had been blotted out by war, and nobody who had known it in the past and come upon it suddenly would have recognized the place; when he was

already there he would still have been looking for the city.”

Even Mark Twain who toured the area in the late 1800's described it as an unbelievable desolation.

Concerning the temple or sanctuary, the Romans dismantled the temple Herod built stone by stone. In addition, we know from prophecy that the antichrist will desolate the coming tribulation temple (see Mat 24:15 and Dan 12:11) so then it's clear that two temples (plural) will be desolated during this period.

This is predicted in Lev 26 where the Lord, in answering a stubbornly rebellious Israel says, “I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation (note the plural), and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas (that is, the sacrifices offered will not be acceptable to Him). I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it.” (Lev 26:31,32)

However, as desolations came upon God's people, land and the first temple, in Christ, He was building another matching, complimentary set – He made a new people who were not a people, bringing new birth to individuals all around the world – the mostly gentile church. (see 1 Peter 2:9,10). Also, He has prepared a new place or land for them – heaven (see John 14:1-3). And, He is forming a new glorious temple or tabernacle by joining together all genuine believers (see Eph 2:19-22).

But the gentile church is not a replacement for the Jewish people.

The church is not Israel of prophecy. Israel is the Israel of prophecy. When all the gentiles who are saved in Christ have come in to His family, the age will be ended – a wrap, done, finito (see Romans 11:25). But that's not the end of God's plan! The scripture says that Jesus will come for His bride (that's us who believe!) and will take her home. In this, there is a wonderful alignment symbolically even with the old Jewish wedding practice.

You see, it used to be that when a man would desire a woman for his own, he would come to the house of her parents and pay the price for her. He would then return to the home of his father and would prepare an addition to his house for himself and his new bride. Meanwhile, as the bride to be did not know when her bridegroom would come back, she would wait eagerly for him, prepared for his imminent return. Even the bridegroom did not know the day of his return for it was his father who would finally say that the new dwelling place was finished. When he did, the bridegroom would come for the bride accompanied by all his friends. He would take her then to himself and bring her back to his home where a grand wedding feast would be held. Then she would be intimately cared for in her new home away from the public eye for one week. After this, they would

both emerge and she would be publicly displayed as his new bride.

This parallels perfectly the great anticipation of the church as the bride of Christ. Christ did come and paid the fantastic price for us with His own blood. He then returned to the Father where He is preparing our new home in heaven. The time in which He has been gone has been the Church Age in which He said He would be with us in the Spirit always (see Mat 28:20). When He returns to take us home, there will indeed be a glorious wedding feast and we will spend the next seven years (or 'week') on a rapturous honeymoon! After this, we will return with Him to earth to save the remnant of His people and conquer planet earth.

But while we who believe are gone to heaven, that is, during this week of heaven, there's a week of hell back on earth. This is the 70th week of the Daniel 9 prophecy – just as with each of the first 69 weeks, a seven year period. You see, the church was not present during the first 69 and will not be present on earth for the 70th – specifically, it's called the time of “Jacob's trouble” (see Jeremiah 30:7).

And the church age is about to close. From Abraham to Christ was approximately 2000 years and so also with this present age – a perfect balance if you would. It's no accident that the entire church, Jew and gentile

believers in Christ is called the dwelling place of God. In fact, the wall of the original tabernacle was a beautiful type and symbol of this. In Exodus 26:1-8, we see that the tabernacle's walls were made of ten curtains – grouped specifically in two sets of five each (five is the number of grace in the Bible!). The two groups of five were then joined together by 50 gold clasps. Now, 50 is the number of jubilee in scripture (refer to Lev 25:10) and when you read about it you recognize that of course, Jesus Christ is our Jubilee. And so, pictured here in the design of the curtain walls of God's dwelling we are saved by grace and joined together in Christ – Jew and gentile believers.

But the 70th week is designed to prepare the Jewish bride for her Husband. She has not yet accepted His Spirit (typified frequently in scripture by oil). She is not ready for his appearing. Jesus may have spoke of this when in Mat 25 after describing the Great Tribulation and the unexpectedness of the rapture, He speaks of five (remember the tabernacle walls above?) wise (or saved) virgins and five foolish (or as yet unsaved). The latter couldn't get in to the wedding feast.

However, the 70th week will prepare them. It will complete the tapestry of the spiritual tabernacle if you would. And it's right around the corner. Are you ready? If so, you can say, “Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!”