

## The Messianic Prophet

“The prophet said, ‘A spirit of prophecy before the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has exalted me to announce good news to the poor.’” *Targum of Isaiah* 61:1

Deuteronomy 18 identified that following Moses there will be a prophet lineage. Instead of the illegitimate ways of divining the future, God promised to raise up a Jewish prophet like Moses as the mediator between God and Israel (Deut. 18:15–22).<sup>1</sup> The prophetic pattern shows that this prophet will: 1) speak the divine message, 2) have a consistency with Moses teaching, 3) teach in Yahweh’s name, and 4) have full accuracy with predictive comments and corroboration in real events that come to pass. Prophecy then must include prediction of future events along with Mosaic consistency, corroborative evidence, and exhortation. The fact, that there is discussion about presumptuous prophets shows that the expectation of this passage was a series of prophets in Moses’ lineage, rather than only a climactic Messianic prophet. Joshua was the first in this lineage, completing the exodus by bringing Israel into the Promised Land. By 1 Samuel 9:9, prophet (נָבִי/*nabi*) was viewed as one called out for special duty to declare God’s word, perhaps from Akkadian *nabu* “to call to duty.” Early prophets were also called seer (רֹאֵה/*r’h*) or one who sees but later these descriptions are used interchangeably (1 Chr. 9:22; 26:28; 29:29). Many prophets followed, calling out their authoritative message prefaced by “Thus says Yahweh.”

The prophetic lineage develops a consistency among the prophets. For example, Asher Finkel develops the parallels Jesus has with the foremost prophets: Moses and Elijah.<sup>2</sup> We briefly recounted the Moses parallels in the chapter on Jesus birth. Finkel draws parallels with Elijah with regard to the 40 day desert examination and a ministry that constituted a call for repentance, discipleship (leaving all), healing lepers, miraculously feeding others, and raising the dead (1 Kgs. 17:6, 16–24; 18:20–40; 19:8, 19–21; 2 Kgs. 4:9, 32–44; 5). These roles can all be seen as an expression of Elijah’s and subsequently Jesus’ prophetic ministry.

The category of “messiah” broadens out to include this role of prophet, since anointing is associated with prophets (1 Kgs. 19:16; Isa. 61:1–2; Joel 3:1; Ps. 105:15).<sup>3</sup> The hope for an eschatological messianic prophet from Deuteronomy 18:15–18 might have been expected to generate considerable pre-Christian influence in Judaism but the evidence remaining is only from Qumran and Josephus, for Theudas and the Egyptian saw themselves as this “messianic prophet.”<sup>4</sup>

Isaiah spoke of a prophetic “servant of Yahweh” who would be Spirit empowered to bring justice through Law and the proclamation of release from bondage through Jubilee (Isa. 42:1–4; 61:1–3). Jewish tradition includes a ministry of miracle working and healing as within this role of prophet (Isa. 53:4; 61:1–3; Mt. 8:17; Lk. 4:18).<sup>5</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> Echoed in *4Q175* 1.5–8.

<sup>2</sup> Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth: A Study of their Background, their Halachic and Midrashic Teachings, the Similarities and Differences* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), pp. 97–102.

<sup>3</sup> *CD* 2.12; 6.1; *1QH* 18.14–15; *11QM* Melch.

<sup>4</sup> *4QTestim* 5–8; *1QS* 9.11; Josephus, *Ant.* 20.97, 169–70.

<sup>5</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.167–72; *b. Yeb.* 121b.

servant prophet would not be overly boisterous but will gently accomplish this goal. He will be called by God from the womb as a chosen and effective weapon from God's quiver, trusting that God would provide justice (Isa. 49:1–4). One of the chosen roles of this prophet is to gather Israel back into the land with a new exodus and national redemption (Isa. 40:1–11; 49:5–13; similar to Yahweh's use of Cyrus, Isa. 44:24–45:6). Part of the Servant's tools would be effective listening to God and speaking that which brings real comfort (Isa. 50:4–5). Isaiah also describes the unfortunate rejection and abuse that this prophet would undergo (Isa. 50:6–11; 53:1–12). Yet God guarantees His effectiveness and honor.

With the closure of Malachi and Daniel, there was no continuing writing prophet lineage. The Maccabeans considered that prophecy had ceased and that they were in a different era of God's work.<sup>6</sup> This lack of prophecy was evident. In *1 Maccabees* 4.46, Judas and his companions stored the stones of the defiled altar “until a prophet should come to tell them what to do with them.” Likewise, Simon was appointed leader and high priest “until a trustworthy prophet should arise.”<sup>7</sup>

Some second Temple Jewish groups believed that there would be the arrival of a prophet like Moses who would lead a new exodus out of bondage and re-establish the Mosaic Covenant with a more accurate interpretation of the Law.<sup>8</sup> The Qumran community saw Moses as the premiere historical figure and showed this by obeying the Torah so stringently, which they perceived that the rest of Israel had failed to do.<sup>9</sup> The Qumran community expected an eschatological prophet like Moses, as the *Rule of the Community* 9:9–11 makes clear, and so the primary role of the Qumran covenanters was to maintain this teaching until he should arise.

They should not depart from any counsel of the law [of Moses] in order to walk in complete stubbornness of their heart but instead shall be ruled by the first directives which the men of the community began to be taught until the prophet comes [the prophet like Moses], and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.

Here the prophet is not included in the Messiahs to be expected, but he is still anticipated to come to bring clear teaching.

Malachi 4:5–6 identified that in the eschaton, there would be a return of Elijah to “turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the hearts of the children back to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a curse.” The Elijah role was not identified with the Messiah but there was an eschatological expectation in *Sirah* 48:9–10, “you who are ready at the appointed time, it is written, to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury,<sup>10</sup> to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of

<sup>6</sup> *1 Macc.* 9.27; cf. *mAb.* 1.1; *b. Yom.* 9b.

<sup>7</sup> *1 Macc.* 14.41.

<sup>8</sup> *1 Macc.* 14.41; 44.4–46; *Rule of the Community* 8:13–16; 9:11; *4Qtestimonia* 5–8; *CD* 1:4–11; 6:2–11; *4QMMT* 92–93; Philo, *De spec. leg.* 1.65; Josephus, *Ant.* 20.5.1; cf. Julius Scott, *Customs and Controversies: Intertestamental Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), pp. 318, nn. 35, 36; Paul Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter, nach den Quellen des rabbinischen, apokalyptischen und apokryphen Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1934).

<sup>9</sup> *IQS* 1:1–11; 6:6–8; *4QMMT* 93–118; *CD* 15:7–15.

<sup>10</sup> James Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 655 identified that while the Hebrew is missing here, the Syriac reads, “before the day of the Lord.” Cf. *1 En.* 90.31.

Jacob.” While this hope left little effect on the pseudepigrapha,<sup>11</sup> and Qumran,<sup>12</sup> there is an issue in the gospels about Elijah coming, but Jesus refuses the identification with himself (Mt. 11:14; 17:10–11; Mk. 9:11–12; Lk. 1:17; Jn. 1:21). Instead, John the Baptist might be seen as this Elijah figure if the nation was responsive to him but Israel wasn’t.

Perhaps the role of Jesus as prophet is to be seen in the fact that he taught with authority and demonstrated His teaching authority by corroboratory miracles, much like Moses, Elijah and Elisha had done (Mt. 7:29; Mk. 1:22, 27; Lk. 4:36). Jesus’ own authority was evident in His teaching which did not come with scribal support or the comment that many prophets said “thus says Yahweh.” Instead, Jesus declared “I say to you” (e.g., Mt. 5:22, 28, 34, 39, 44). His authoritative manner of teaching and miracles was noticed by the religious authorities, for they were irked by it (Mt. 21:23; Mk. 11:28; Lk. 20:2). Whereas, the populous was amazed and attracted to him for his authoritative teaching and miracles (e.g., Mk. 1:27). When Jesus raised a young man carried on a burial plank during a funeral procession, the people cried out, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” (Lk. 7:16). One specific prophetic example was that the Samaritan woman at the well was confronted by Jesus concerning her illicit sexuality and her failed five marriages (Jn. 4:17–19). She cried out perceiving Jesus to be a prophet. In announcing His ministry in Nazareth, Jesus fused His healing with that of being a prophet, unappreciated by His hometown (Lk. 4:24). The people of Nazareth reject Him and tried to stone Him (Lk. 4:21–30). They chided Him, “Physician heal Yourself,”<sup>13</sup> for they wished to see healing signs as Jesus had done in Capernaum (Lk. 4:23). In the synoptics, Jesus does not heal to convince unbelievers, so he slipped through the crowd and returning to Capernaum, He met real needs by healing the sick there (Lk. 4:29–33).

Whether it was from unusual information, authority, or miracles, the people broadly identified Jesus as a revived prophet such as John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah (Mt. 16:14; 21:46; Mk. 6:14–16; Lk. 9:7–9). The fact of Jesus’ transfiguration with Moses and Elijah draws these figures together in a continuing prophetic ministry (Mt. 17:3–4; Mk. 9:4–5; Lk. 9:30–33). The gospel writers acknowledge Jesus’ life and ministry has continuity with the prophet’s program. Jesus acknowledged that he was a prophet, so he owned the role Himself (Mt. 13:57; Mk. 6:4; Lk. 4:24).

As prophet, Jesus declared that He would be killed by the Jews in Jerusalem and then He would resurrect three days later (Mt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:9, 12, 22–23; 20:18–19; 27:63; Mk. 8:31; 9:12, 31; Lk. 9:22; 17:25; 18:32; 24:7; Jn. 2:19). Such clearly prophesied statements provided the basis for calling His disciples to follow Him in His costly way even to martyrdom, if necessary.

However, the role of prophet meant that at times (as in his home town) that the people would reject Him (Mt. 13:57; Mk. 6:4; Lk. 4:24).<sup>14</sup> Jesus’ role of prophet even became part of what was mocked by the Sanhedrin, when individuals struck the blindfolded Christ and others called out “prophecy who hit you” (Mt. 26:68; Mk. 14:65; Lk. 22:64).

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<sup>11</sup> *Sib. Or.* 2.187–190.

<sup>12</sup> 4Q521 fragment 2 3.2: “the fathers will return to the sins;” 4Q558: “to you I will send Elijah, before”

<sup>13</sup> Similar denigrating statement to this in *Gen. Rab.* 23.4; and Euripides fragment 1086; cf. Geza Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 31.1; *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* 1.

Much of Jesus teaching should then be seen as prophecy, in the spirit of the prophets. This point was made in previous chapters, such as in Jesus' ministry through miracles, the continuing Jewish Messianic ministry in the Sermon on the Mount, and in His Kingdom parables. However, the Olivet Discourse is a concentrated example of Jesus' fulfilling the prophetic role. Throughout the synoptic gospels, Jesus predicts last things (e.g., Mt. 5:3–12; 7:21–27; 8:11–12; 11:22–24; 13:36–43, 47–50; 16:27–28; 19:28–30; 22:29–32; 23:39) however, it is within the Olivet Discourse that Jesus is most emphasized as the seer of the future.

With Jesus as prophet, then His prophecy is important to hear and heed. Most Christologies acknowledge Jesus as a prophet but very few spend much time developing His prophecy. The role of prophet is to communicate the prophetic message. So we turn to the Olivet Discourse as a concentration of Jesus' prophecy.

### Olivet Discourse<sup>15</sup>

The Olivet Discourse emerged out of the context of the rejection and judgment of the Jewish leadership and the contrasting majesty of the Temple (with beautiful stones and votive gifts) associated with this Jewish leadership (Mt. 23:1–24:1; Mk. 12:38–13:2; 14:58; 15:29; Lk. 19:44; 20:45–21:5; Jn. 2:19; Acts 6:14).<sup>16</sup> Josephus states that, “The Temple was built of hard, white stones, each of about 32 feet in length, 12 feet in height and 18 feet in width.”<sup>17</sup> These were huge ornate white marble stones (decorated with gold) prompting the disciples' comments about the Temple's dazzling beauty.<sup>18</sup> This refurbishment of the Temple began in 19 B.C. under King Herod's reign and was finally completed in 63–64 A.D., just a few years before the city and Temple were destroyed.<sup>19</sup> Jesus' prediction emphasized the certainty of the destruction of the Temple without any stone left upon another, which will not be torn down.<sup>20</sup> Technically, the Temple stones were dislodged in two steps. First the fire in the Temple destroyed the Temple and Josephus describes how on 5 August A.D. 70, some Romans dislodged the stones to get at the gold that was melting off them.<sup>21</sup> Then Titus had ordered the city to be raised to quarter the tenth legion, leaving the three towers on the Northwest corner of the city to remain standing. N. T. Wright claims that Jesus identified the Temple's destruction as the definitive proof of His role as prophet.

As a prophet, Jesus staked his reputation on his prediction of the Temple's fall within a generation; if and when it fell, he would thereby be vindicated. As the

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<sup>15</sup> C. Marvin Pate and Douglas Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet: The New Testament and the Great Tribulation. Studies in Biblical Literature 54* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 301–25, 401–467.

<sup>16</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 71.

<sup>17</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 25.11.3.

<sup>18</sup> Josephus, *War* 5.5; *Sukkah*. 41b; *Baba Bathra* 4a; Tacitus, *History*. 5.8.

<sup>19</sup> Darrel Bock, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), vol. 2, p. 1660.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 24:2 and Mark 13:2 emphasize the destruction by the double negative οὐ μὴ with aorist passive subjunctive. Jesus prediction of the destruction of the Temple follows the pattern predicted by Habakkuk (*Liv. Proph. Hab.* 12; 2 *Bar.* 6.7–9). Additionally, *T. Levi* 10.3 predicts that the curtain of the temple will be torn so that their sins would no longer be concealed, which is similar to what happens in Jesus' death (Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38; Lk. 23:45).

<sup>21</sup> Josephus, *Wars* 6.220–270.

kingdom bearer, he had constantly been acting...in a way which invited the conclusion that he thought he had the right to do and be what the Temple was and did, thereby implicitly making the Temple redundant. The story he had been telling, and by which he ordered his life, demanded a particular ending. If, then, the Temple remained forever, and his movement fizzled out (as Gamaliel thought it might), he would be shown to be a blasphemer. But if the Temple was to be destroyed and the sacrifices stopped; if the pagan hordes were to tear down stone by stone; and if his followers did escape from the conflagration unharmed, in a re-enactment of Israel's escape from exile in doomed Babylon- why then he would be vindicated, not only as a prophet, but as Israel's representative, as (in some sense) the "son of man."<sup>22</sup>

This destruction of the Temple refers to at least the destruction of the second Temple ordered by Titus and carried out by the legions of Rome in 70 A.D. However, in 118 A.D. Hadrian was initially open for Jews to rebuild the Temple but then refused and began to reconstruct the city into a Gentile city named Aelia Capitolina. During the three years of the Bar Kochba rebellion (133–5 A.D.), the high priests with rabbi Akiva controlled the Temple site and regularly sacrificed to the Jewish God.<sup>23</sup> The resulting Roman conquest included a leveling of the Temple court by Hadrian in 135 A.D and the remaking of the site into a Temple of Jupiter, placing his own equestrian statue on the site of the Holy of Holies.<sup>24</sup> The fact that the Temple was destroyed (by Titus and Hadrian) as Jesus claimed demonstrates that He is the definitive Prophet.

Mark and Luke render the destruction of Herod's Temple to be the judgment issue for this context: 1) for the discussion emerges from description of the abuses of devouring widow's households through Temple giving, and 2) and Mark and Luke does not extend the contextual development on to establishing Kingdom, as does Matthew (Mk. 12:40–13:2; Lk. 20:47–21:7). So for Mark and Luke, judgment of the Temple is the major issue in the Olivet Discourse.

Matthew extends the Olivet Discourse into the establishment of Kingdom (Mt. 24:30–25:46). Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple as He was walking away (Mt. 24:1–2). This forsaking of the Temple by Jesus pictorialized the divine rejection of the Temple (Mt. 23:38; 24:1–2). Following this comment, Jesus and the disciples continue to discuss this topic as they move across the Kidron Valley to ascend the Mount of Olives (Mt. 24:3; Mk. 13:3; Lk. 21:37). From the Mount of Olives with the sun setting over the Temple, the disciples ask when would these things occur and what would indicate when all this destruction would take place (Mk. 13:4; Lk. 21:6–7, 37).<sup>25</sup>

Matthew extends this sign question to include Jesus' coming and the end of the

<sup>22</sup> Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), p. 362.

<sup>23</sup> *Dio Cassius* 69.12.1–14.3.

<sup>24</sup> For 70 A.D. destruction see: Josephus, *War* 7.1.1; *Bell.* 7.1; for the destruction after 135 A.D. and Hadrian's making of the Temple site into a temple of Jupiter see: *Dio Cassius* 69.12.1–14.3. This remaking of Jerusalem included sighting a temple to Aphrodite where the Christians venerated as Golgatha and Jesus' tomb.

<sup>25</sup> The plural  $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha$  does not refer to several questions but to the plurality of Temple stones destroyed or the expansiveness of the Temple destruction (Mt. 24:3; Mk. 13:4; Lk. 21:6–7).

age to judge and establish Kingdom (Mt. 24:3).<sup>26</sup> Since the disciples are asking about Jesus' coming and He is already there, this question has in view Jesus' coming out as King to establish His Kingdom. The disciples are not thinking about Jesus leaving them for a couple millennia, they are anticipating He will come out and establish His Kingdom soon (e.g., Acts 1:6). That is, instead of focusing this judgment on historically past Roman conquest as advocated by Marcus Borg<sup>27</sup> and N. T. Wright<sup>28</sup>, or the scholarly consensus of focusing this judgment eschatologically (following J. Weiss<sup>29</sup> and A. Schweitzer<sup>30</sup>), the textual data and second Temple context indicates that both are in view. As early as Ephrem the Syrian this view was expounded that Jesus in this passage is both speaking of the historical punishment of Jerusalem and simultaneously referring to the end of the world before His Kingdom.<sup>31</sup> Such an idea had been described by *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, which used the lens of Jerusalem's first destruction as a model of the contemporary events of its second destruction. The answers given by Jesus to these two questions provide information, especially in Matthew, to indicate simultaneously when the Roman destruction of the Temple would occur and when eschatologically Jesus will come for Kingdom reign. Whereas, in Mark and Luke the destruction of Herod's Temple is primarily in view, in Matthew the same answers refer to two separate times. In all the synoptics, the discussion climaxes in the coming of the Son of Man for His judging of the earth, but Matthew extends this coming further into the Son of Man's coming Kingdom reign.

Matthew and Mark identify that some of the answer predicted is merely the beginning of birth pangs (Mt. 24:8; Mk. 13:8).<sup>32</sup> The metaphor 'birth pangs' is used repeatedly in Jewish literature as a metaphor of painful events and for those events which precede the Messianic Kingdom (Isa 13:8; 26:17–18; 66:7–9; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 49:22; 50:43; Hos. 13:13; Mic. 4:9–10; Jn. 16:20–22; 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 2:1–12; Rev. 4–19).<sup>33</sup>

The first evidence toward Temple destruction and the establishment of Kingdom is some claims to be Messiah and the Mosaic prophet (Mt. 24:5, 23–24; Mk. 13:5–6; Lk. 21:8).<sup>34</sup> In Jesus' evaluation, these are attempts to deceive His disciples. Before this prophecy was spoken, several in the Herodian family claimed to be the king of the Jews

<sup>26</sup> The article governs the two substantives connected with the conjunction, pulling "coming" and "end" together into the same question.

<sup>27</sup> Marcus Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984) scholarly version and popularized version *Jesus: A New Vision* (London: SPCK, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892), translated and edited by R.H. Hiers and D.L. Holland as *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM Press, 1971).

<sup>30</sup> A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: A & C Black, 1954 published first in German in 1906/ Second edition: SCM Press, 2000 published first in German in 1913).

<sup>31</sup> Ephrem, *Comm. Diat.* 18.14 follows the Jewish pattern that earlier events characterize a later time (Dan. 9:27; 11; *Jub.* 23.11–32).

<sup>32</sup> *IQH*11 indicates that among similar birth pangs as here, it include a Messianic baptism and temptation time.

<sup>33</sup> *IQH* 3; *IQM*; *1 En.* 99.1–100.6; *Sib. Or.* 2.153–73; 3.538, 635–51; *Jub.* 23.11–25; *4 Ezra* 4.51–5.13; 6.17–24; 13.29–32; 15.1–16.78; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 27.1–15; 48.31–41; 70.1–10; *Apoc. Ezra* 3.11–15; *b. Sanh.* 97a; 98ab; *b. Šabb.* 118a; *b. Ketub.* 11a; *Gen. Rab.* 42.4.

<sup>34</sup> *Apoc. Elijah* 3.1 claims that the son of Lawlessness will say "I am the Christ."

and argued their claim in the Roman senate: Herod the Great,<sup>35</sup> Archelaus and Antipas.<sup>36</sup> Others are claimed to be messianic king by their followers, namely: Judas son of Ezekias, Herod's servant Simon, Athronges,<sup>37</sup> Tholomaeus,<sup>38</sup> Theudas,<sup>39</sup> Judas the Galilean and his two sons Jacob and Simon,<sup>40</sup> Eleazar ben Deinaeus and Alexander,<sup>41</sup> Menahem, son of Judas, the Galilean and Simon bar Giora or "the proselyte,"<sup>42</sup> Vespasian,<sup>43</sup> and Simon ben Kosiba of the Bar Kokhba rebellion.<sup>44</sup> All of these claimed messiahs came and went as moments of Jewish rebellion against their Roman overlords. Many of these same individuals are heralded by their followers to be the Mosaic Prophet and to bring in the Kingdom, which Matthew treats as a synonymous role as Messiah. For example, from the mid forties till the uprising of the Jewish war in the mid sixties all of these claimed to bring in this Kingdom: Tholomaeus,<sup>45</sup> Theudas,<sup>46</sup> Judas the Galilean and his two sons Jacob and Simon,<sup>47</sup> Eleazar ben Deinaeus and Alexander,<sup>48</sup> and an unnamed "imposter" who had promised his followers "salvation and rest from troubles."<sup>49</sup> They were all executed for the separate rebellions that they led. During this time, several other brigand bands also fostered rebellion but were crushed. Then as the Jewish revolt rose in 66 A.D., several others claimed to be Messiah and prophet.<sup>50</sup> Again in the 133–35 A.D. Jewish rebellion, Bar Kochba claimed to be Messiah as "a luminary who came down to them from heaven and was magically enlightening those who were in misery."<sup>51</sup> However, Matthew emphasized that this characteristic of Messianic pretenders would especially occur in the eschatological expression of great tribulation (Mt. 24:21–24).<sup>52</sup>

It is possible that there will be other false prophets (Mt. 7:15; 24:24). Apart from the previous declared Messiahs or Mosaic Prophet, there are other false prophets not known as Messiah. For example, around 36 A.D. a unnamed Samaritan convinced the population to follow him to Mt. Gerizim to find the Temple implements but none were

<sup>35</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 14.158–160, 420–430 which incurred the wrath and denouncement of the Jews (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.172–176; *War* 1.208–215; and from Qumran [*T. Mos.* 6.2–6]).

<sup>36</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 17.149–166, 206–218; *War* 1.648–655, 2.1–13.

<sup>37</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 17.7, 10.5–6; *War* 2.4.1.

<sup>38</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.5.

<sup>39</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.97–99; Acts 5:36 may identify this event in the company with movements led by Judas the Galilean and Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>40</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.1; 20.102.

<sup>41</sup> Josephus, *War* 2.253.

<sup>42</sup> Josephus, *War* 2.17.8.

<sup>43</sup> Josephus, *War* 6.5.4.

<sup>44</sup> Dio Cassius, *Hist.* 59.13.3; Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 31.6 identifies that during the Bar Kochba rebellion, rabbi Akiva demanded that Christians deny Jesus as Messiah to affirm Simon as messiah; *Y. Ta'an.* 68d; Eusebius, *HE* 4.6.2; luminary is used metaphorically of 'king' by Themistius, *Orationes* 16.204c; a Jewish letter dated 6 Nov. 135 A.D. describes "Simon bar Kosiba, the Prince of Israel" to be in the third year of his reign; coins also identify him as lawful ruler. After the defeat, some punned his title as Simon bar Kozeba, "son of disappointment."

<sup>45</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.5.

<sup>46</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.97–99; Acts 5:36 identifies this event in the company with movements led by Judas the Galilean and Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>47</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.102.

<sup>48</sup> Josephus, *War*, 2.253.

<sup>49</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.188.

<sup>50</sup> Josephus, *War*, 6.5.2; 7.11.1; *Ant.* 20.5.1.

<sup>51</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 4.6.2; luminary is used metaphorically of 'king' by Themistius, *Orationes* 16.204c.

<sup>52</sup> *Didache* 16 concurs in keeping this as an eschatological quality.

found,<sup>53</sup> in the 50's A.D. an Egyptian prophet is identified in this role claiming that Jerusalem walls would collapse at his command but they did not (Acts 21:38),<sup>54</sup> and some that remain unnamed as prophets promising salvation to those who followed them into the wilderness but some of their promises like crossing the Jordan on dry land went unfulfilled.<sup>55</sup> One of these unnamed prophets in August of 70 A.D. promised the Jews fleeing into the Temple courts that they would receive "tokens of their deliverance" and help from God" but the Romans still conquered them.<sup>56</sup> It is possible that there will be such false prophets in the eschatological future before Christ would return as well (Rev. 13:11–17).

Early birth pains include potentially frightening wars and rumors of wars, as evident by nations and kingdoms at war with each other (Mt. 24:6–7; Mk. 13:7–8; Lk. 21:9–10). At this time, Paul claims that there will be those who promise "Peace and safety" (1 Thess. 5:3) but will be overwhelmed by war. Perhaps this will be like the *Pax Romana* at the end of a Roman lance, as Tacitus recounts, "To plunder, to butcher, steal, these things they misname empire; they make a desolation and call it peace."<sup>57</sup> For example, throughout Jesus' ministry and Pontus Pilate's procuratorship (A.D. 26–36), N. T. Wright identifies seven local rebellions which Pilate crushed.<sup>58</sup>

- 1) Pilate tried to bring Roman standards into Jerusalem, but backed down after a mass protest.<sup>59</sup>
- 2) He used money from the Temple treasury to build an aqueduct, and crushed the resistance that this action provoked.<sup>60</sup>
- 3) He sent troops to kill some Galileans while they were offering sacrifices in the Temple, presumably because he feared a riot.<sup>61</sup>
- 4) He captured and condemned to death the leader of an uprising that had taken place in Jerusalem, involving murder; he then released the man as a gesture of goodwill during the Passover feast.<sup>62</sup>
- 5) At the same Passover, he faced a quasi-messianic movement, having some association with two ordinary revolutionaries.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.85–87; P. W. Barnett, "The Jewish Sign Prophets," *NTS* 27(1980): 679–97.

<sup>54</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.168–72; *War* 2.261–3; Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.21; *b. Sanh.* 67a(?).

<sup>55</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.167–8, 188; *War* 2.259.

<sup>56</sup> Josephus, *War* 6.285–6.

<sup>57</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola* 30.

<sup>58</sup> N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 174.

<sup>59</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.55–59; *War* 2.169–174. A similar incident occurred when Vitellius was sent to fight Aretas in A.D. 37: see *Ant.* 18.120–123.

<sup>60</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.60–62; *War* 2.175–177; Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.6.6–7.

<sup>61</sup> Lk. 13:1.

<sup>62</sup> Lk. 23:19–25. Luke's description of Barrab's activities (committing murder during an insurrection in the city) reads just like a sentence from Josephus.

<sup>63</sup> N. T. Wright writes "On Jesus of Nazareth see vol. 2 Josephus' account in *Ant.* 18.63–4 is notoriously controversial (see the discussion in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.—A.D. 135)*. Revised and ed. M. Black, G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman in 3 vols. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973, revised 1987], 1.428–41), but it seems to me that some parts of it at least are likely to be original. The crucial sentence *ho christos houtos en* does not mean, as is usually supposed, 'this man was the Messiah,' but, because of the position of the article, "'the Messiah" was this man.' The implication is that Josephus expects his readers to have heard of someone who bore, almost as a nickname, the title '*ho christos*' (cf. Suet. *Claudius* 25, *impulsore Chresto*), and is simply identifying this person with



6) He provoked public opinion by placing Roman votive shields, albeit without images, in the palace at Jerusalem, which according to Philo annoyed Tiberius almost as much as it did the Jews.<sup>64</sup>

7) Finally, he suppressed with particular brutality a popular (and apparently non-revolutionary) prophetic movement in Samaria. For this he was accused before the Roman legate in Syria, who had sent him sent back to Rome.<sup>65</sup>

Additionally, there was a near rebellion in Judea and Alexandria provoked by Caligula's contemptuous disregard of Jewish concerns during the reign as emperor (37–41 A.D.). Through wars Claudius I incorporated into the Roman Empire the kingdoms of Mauritania in 42 A.D., Lycia in 43 A.D., Tracia in 46 A.D. and Britain during the 40's. Additionally, Nero put down an uprising under Queen Boudicca in Britain during 60–61 A.D. Then the war finally came to Judea during the Jewish revolt of 66–73 A.D., bringing the conflict to the people Jesus addressed. Again, Jews brought Roman conquest to themselves in the Bar Kochba rebellion (133–135 A.D.) Perhaps, the potentially frightening words would argue for a literal detail going beyond the one frightening war in Judea to several eschatological wars which will cause fright in Judea. Later in Luke's account, as Jesus carried his cross, He announced that there would be a horrible time of fear to be hid by the mountains and hills (Lk. 23:28–31). Such eschatological wars were a Jewish-Christian expectation (Isa. 66:16; Rev. 6:4).<sup>66</sup> Ultimately an eschatological holy war will occur between God and Satan (Rev. 12; 19; 20:7–10).<sup>67</sup>

In contrast to these wars, the Kingdom era would be known as a time of universal and lasting peace (Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:5; Nah. 1:15; Zech. 9:10).<sup>68</sup>

In the wake of these wars there were often famines. Prophecies of famines often accompanied military destructions in the ancient Near East (e.g., Jer. 15:2; Ezek. 5:17; 14:13; Acts 11:28). However, there were also famines more commonly in Judea than merely in the wake of war (e.g., Acts 6:1; 11:28–29). Perhaps, Luke's combining plagues with famines helps to expand these famines from warfare to be ultimately signs from heaven (Lk. 21:11). Mark and Luke indicate that these are earthly signs showing their divine source (Mk. 13:4, 8; Lk. 21:11). Certainly eschatological judgments would expand these famines and plagues many times over (e.g., Rev. 6:5–8; 18:8).<sup>69</sup>

An additional birth pang is the earthquakes in various places (Mt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11). The only record of earthquakes just before Jerusalem was destroyed are those

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the one he is now describing. On Jesus' followers: it is highly likely that some at least of Jesus disciples believed themselves to be involved in a movement of national liberation. The title of one of them, Simon *ho Kananaios* (Mk. 3:18) or Simon 'called *Zelotes*' (Lk. 6:12) probably indicates known revolutionary tendencies."

<sup>64</sup> Philo, *Leg.* 299–306. N.T. Wright suggests that there were probably many more of these events that Josephus probably passed over.

<sup>65</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.85–89.

<sup>66</sup> *Sir.* 39.30; *Wis.* 5.20; *Jub.* 9.15; *1 En.* 56.7; 62.12; 63.11; 90; 91.11–12; 100.1–2; *Pss. Sol.* 15.8[7]; *Sib. Or.* 3.797–99; 4.174; *4 Ezra* 6.24; 9.3; *2 Bar.* 27.4, 6; 40.1; 48.32, 37; 70.3–8; *Jub.* 23.16; *1QM*; *1QH* 11.34–36; 14.29–35; *b. Sanh.* 97a; *b. Meg.* 17b; *m. Sota* 9.15.

<sup>67</sup> *1QM* 15.12–16.1; 17.5–8; *11QMelch.* 13–14; *1QH* 11.34–36; 14.29–35; *4QFlor.*; *1QSb* 5.20–29; *T. Levi* 18.12.

<sup>68</sup> *Sib. Or.* 2.29; 5.780; *1 En.* 10.17.

<sup>69</sup> *4 Ezra* 6.22; *2 Bar.* 27.6; 70.8; *LAB* 3.9; *Apoc. Abr.* 30.6; *b. Sanh.* 97a.

in Laodicea during A.D. 17<sup>70</sup> and Jerusalem during A.D. 67–68.<sup>71</sup> Remember the earthquakes of Cyprus in 76 A.D. and Pompeii during A.D. 79 occur after Jerusalem destruction but would be relevant for the Bar Kochba rebellion of 133–5 A.D.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, Josephus reports that one of the omens for the 70 A.D. destruction was a very local shaking and a voice from the Temple saying “Remove hence.”<sup>73</sup> Certainly eschatological judgments include earthquakes with devastating consequences many times over (Isa. 5:13–14; 13:6–16; 29:6; Jer. 4:24; Ezek. 38:19–20; Joel 2:10; Hag. 2:6; Zech. 14:5; Hab. 3:3–6; Rev. 6:8, 12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18).<sup>74</sup>

Jesus warns His disciples about the impending persecution and opportunity to demonstrate the gospel of the Kingdom. Mark 13:9 warns the disciples to be on “your guard” and the second person plurals (through the account) press these impending events into the lives of disciples. Matthew calls this persecution of the disciples “tribulation” (θλίψιν). That is the disciples go through this tribulation (Mt. 24:9). Those who deliver the disciples to tribulation include: Jewish leaders,<sup>75</sup> Gentile kings and governors,<sup>76</sup> and family members and friends.<sup>77</sup> This persecution will be an expression of their hatred, arresting, flogging and killing the disciples on account of Jesus (Mt. 24:9; Mk. 13:12–13; Lk. 21:12, 16–17; Acts 7:60–8:1; 12:1–2; Rev. 6:9–11).<sup>78</sup> It also leads to an opportunity for a testimony where the gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole world as a witness to all the nations (Mt. 24:14; Mk. 13:9–11; Lk. 21:13–15). Jesus urged the disciples not to prepare to defend themselves nor be anxious beforehand about what they are to say, for utterance of what to say will be given you in that hour (Mt. 10:19; Mk. 13:11; Lk. 21:15). Luke records that Jesus will give them utterance and wisdom which none of the opponents will be able to refute. Whereas, Mark explains that the Holy Spirit will provide in that hour what they will speak. The disciples found this promise to be proven in their lives (Acts 4:1–22; 5:12–42; 7:22–26). Luke reassures the disciples that they would not die (Lk. 21:18), while all the synoptics clarify that some of them would die (Mt. 24:9; Mk. 13:12; Lk. 21:16). Perhaps Matthew’s greater eschatological emphasis has him develop that falling away damns (σκανδαλισθήσονται; Mt. 24:10–12;

<sup>70</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 2.86.

<sup>71</sup> Josephus, *War* 4.4.5; Andreas of Caesarea, *On Rev.* 6.12.

<sup>72</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* 14.27; 15.22.

<sup>73</sup> Josephus, *Wars* 6.5.288–309.

<sup>74</sup> *I En.* 1.6–7; 102.2; *IQH* 3.12–13; *As. Mos.* 10.41; *T. Mos.* 10.4; *4 Ezra* 5.8.1; 6.13–16; 9.3; *2 Bar.* 2.7; 27.7; 70.8; *T. Levi* 4.1 *LAB* 3.9; *Sib. Or.* 3.714; *Apoc. Abr.* 30.6, 8ff; *b. Sanh.* 97a.

<sup>75</sup> Since they will deliver the disciples over to synagogues (Lk. 21:12) and they are a major opposition in the context (Mt. 22–23; 26:57–27:10; Mk. 12; 14:53–65; Lk. 20; 22:47–71; Acts 4; 5:12–42; 6:8–8:3; 9:2; 13:45; 14:2–5, 19; 17:5–9; 18:6, 12–17; 21:27–23:16; 24:5–9; *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17.2; Bar Kokhba ordered the execution of Christians [*I Apol.* 31.6]).

<sup>76</sup> Mt. 27:11–66; Mk. 13:9; 15; Lk. 21:12; 23; Acts 12; 24–26; Nero’s persecution of Christians, Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44; *1 Clement* 6; *Did.* 16.3–5; Christians no longer welcome under the protection of Judaism as a traditional religion were accused and martyred for not offering to Caesar (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96; *Martyrdom of Polycarp*).

<sup>77</sup> Mk. 13:12; Lk. 21:16; Jn. 9:20–23; *Jub.* 23.16, 19; *I En.* 56.7; 70. 7; 99. 5; 100.1–2; *4 Ezra* 5.9; 6.24; *2 Bar.* 70.3, 7; *b. Sanh.* 97a; *b. Sota* 47b.

<sup>78</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 20.200–201; Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 31.6 identifies that during the Bar Kochba rebellion, rabbi Akiva demanded that Christians deny Jesus as Messiah to affirm Simon as messiah.

18:7–9). Matthew further explains that many false prophets will arise<sup>79</sup> and mislead many and because of the increased lawlessness,<sup>80</sup> most people's love will grow cold. There may be some evidence of this coldness of love late in the first century (1 Jn. 2:18–23; Rev. 3:15–16)<sup>81</sup> but this seems to have more eschatological proportions (2 Thess. 2:1–12; Rev. 13). All the synoptics remind the disciples that within the two ways perspective, the one who endures to the end, will be saved (Mt. 24:13; Mk. 13:13; Lk. 21:19). After all this the end will come (Mt. 24:14).

Further warnings are given to the disciples surrounding the event of abomination of desolation, which Daniel spoke about (Dan. 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Rev. 9:27; Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14; Lk. 21:20). Daniel describes an eschatological event of a seven year period by a covenant between Israel and a Gentile Messiah. In the middle of this period (three and a half years in) the Jewish sacrifices and grain offerings will be stopped, and the pinnacle of the summit of the Temple will be defiled by an abomination that makes desolate (Dan. 9:27; 12:11). However, Daniel also predicts a similar abomination of desolation which Antiochus Epiphanes did desecrating the sanctuary and cutting off the regular Jewish sacrifice (Dan. 8:3; 11:31). Antiochus settled his score with high priest Jason who had dethroned Menelaus as high priest. In 168–7 B.C. Antiochus killed 30,000 Jews, suppressed Jewish religion, suspended sacrifices for about three years, and later set up an altar and a statue of Zeus Olympus in the temple over the altar of burnt offering, upon which he then sacrificed a pig.<sup>82</sup> *1 Maccabees* 1.54–56 describes this desecration as “a desolating sacrifice.” The Maccabean response to this was to stand firm even at the expense of their lives. For a few years the Jews wrenched Israel out of foreign control. When Israel was re-conquered, Gaius tried to erect a statue of himself in the Temple, and the Jews reaction echoed that of the Maccabees.<sup>83</sup> Some also see that this abomination might refer to Caligula's attempt to desecrate the Temple in 40 A.D by having his own statue set up in the Holy of Holies.<sup>84</sup> However, especially Luke makes it clear that the abomination of desolation that is referred to here is during a siege as in the Jewish revolt, which would exclude Caligula's attempt from being included (Lk. 21:20). Presumably, Jesus' teaching to the disciples gives the possibility for another historical abomination of desolation occurring in the Jewish revolt of 66–73, where the Romans surrounded and took Jerusalem and ruined the Temple. In the midst of the rebellion Josephus describes that the Zealots defiled the Temple by occupying it, allowing criminals to plunder and roam freely in the Holy of Holies, and perpetrated murder within the Temple itself.<sup>85</sup> Upon taking the Temple, the tenth legion further abominated the Temple by sacrificed to their standards standing in the Holy of Holies. Perhaps also the marble statue of a pig (the tenth legion mascot) at the South gate of the Temple also contributes to this abomination. The Jewish revolt against Rome ended in the destruction

<sup>79</sup> Corroborated in the first and second centuries by: Josephus, *Ant.* 20.5, 97–99, 102, 188; *War* 2.253; 7.11.1; Eusebius, *HE* 4.6.2.

<sup>80</sup> Lawlessness in eschatological days: 2 *Bar.* 41.3; 48.38; *m.Sota* 9.15; *b. Sanh.* 97a.

<sup>81</sup> *1QpHab* 2.1–10; *1 En.* 90.22–27; 91.7; 93.9 *Jub.* 23.14–17; *4 Ezra* 5.1–2.

<sup>82</sup> *1 Macc.* 1.54–64; 6.7; *2 Macc.* 6.1–5; 8.17.

<sup>83</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.257–309.

<sup>84</sup> Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 8.2; Jerome, *Comm. on Mt ad loc.*; G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien*, *NOTA* 8 (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 132–76; R. Eisler, *The Messiah and John the Baptist* (London: Methuen, 1931), pp. 314–15.

<sup>85</sup> Josephus, *War* 4.3.7, 10; 4.5.4; 5.13.6; 6.2.1; *1QpHab* 11.17–12.10.

of the Temple and capture of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. by emperor Titus' decision to demolish the entire city except for the western wall and three towers.<sup>86</sup> Then, Jerusalem was established as a Roman city with the Tenth Legion occupying the city and over 800 retired Roman soldiers and was brought in by Titus to repopulate the city of Jerusalem. In 132 A.D. Bar Kochba led a revolt reacting to these Roman measures. In the wake of this later revolt the Temple site was further abominated by turning it into a temple to Jupiter and an equestrian statue to Emperor Hadrian was established within Holy of Holies.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps, these continuing Roman measures should be viewed as continuing stages of the abomination of desolation. With several abominations of desolation already having occurred, it is possible that there may yet be future expressions to realize this metaphor in the eschaton after the pattern and chronology of Daniel. That is, an abomination of desolation three and a half years after an international treaty with Israel and a three and a half years before the climactic expression of the Kingdom begins.

Jesus exhorts those in Judea who see Jerusalem surrounded by armies to flee to the mountains quickly, not bothering to gather up goods from the house or cloak from the field (Mt. 24:15–19; Mk. 13:14–17; Lk. 17:26–35; 21:20–23). Such a flight from wickedness is underscored by Jewish eschatological response (Isa. 15:5; Jer. 16:16; 49:8; Ezek. 7:16; Amos 2:15–16; Nah. 3:18; Zech. 14:5; Mt. 3:7; Rev. 12:6).<sup>88</sup> Such flight during threatening time repeatedly saved the lives of those who left quickly (e.g., 2 Sam. 23–24).<sup>89</sup> Luke repeatedly emphasized that the disciples were to swiftly flee without reservations, even warning them of what happened to Lot's wife. The third person statements probably indicate the special circumstances for flight that each in the disciples' lifetime may face: some being on roof tops, some being in the field, and some being pregnant.<sup>90</sup> Because of this warning, Christians during the Roman siege of Jerusalem fled to Pella in the decapolis region rather than the caves in the mountains which were the traditional hideout of the area (Ezek. 7:16; Mt. 24:16; Mk. 13:14; Lk. 21:21).<sup>91</sup> The fact that Jesus' prophecy recommends flight to the mountains and the historical destination of Christians was in the foothills of the Jordan valley confirms that these statements were written predicatively rather than after the fact. The third person statements may also refer to Daniel's prediction concerning the urgency of Judean inhabitants and disciples to flee the eschatological abomination of desolation. The first century disciples (and presumably the eschatological ones also) should pray beforehand that their flight may not be in winter (perhaps because of a lack of provisions in the fields<sup>92</sup> or the tendency for winter rains<sup>93</sup>), nor on a Sabbath (which would limit distance traveled by the traditions), thus hindering escaping safely. Then (τότε, Mt. 24:16, 21,

<sup>86</sup> Josephus, *War* 7.1.1; Eusebius, *Ec. Hist.* 3.5.4.

<sup>87</sup> *Dio Cassius* 69.12.1–14.3; Eusebius, *Chronicle* “Hadrian, year 19;” *Demonstratio Evangelica* 6.13.

<sup>88</sup> *1 Macc.* 2.28; *2 Macc.* 5.27; *T. Mos.* 9.6; *Ps. Sol.* 17.16–17; *Liv. Proph. Jer.* 15; *Asc. Isa.* 4.13; *Apoc. Elijah* 4.21.

<sup>89</sup> E.g., *1 Macc.* 2.28; *2 Macc.* 5.27; Josephus, *War* 5.10.1; Epiphanius, *Haer.* 29.7; 30.2; *De Mens. et pond.* 15.

<sup>90</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.5.3; *Sib. Or.* 2.190–192 and *2 Bar.* 10.13–14 also describes the pregnant and suckling of kids as a hindrance in that day.

<sup>91</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.5.3; cf. discussion by Robert Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 774–5.

<sup>92</sup> E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark* (Richmond: Knox, 1970), p. 273.

<sup>93</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 18.8.6.

23) in those days (Mk. 13:19; Lk. 21:22–23) there will be a great tribulation (θλίψις μεγάλη)<sup>94</sup> such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. This indicates that Jesus is especially describing the eschatological climax abomination of desolation greater than these historical past expressions of the abomination of desolation (Mt. 24:21).<sup>95</sup> Matthew identifies this abomination of desolation as the greatest tribulation of all time for the Jews. That is, greater than such extreme persecutions as the Holocaust. So I see this “great tribulation” as still future in the eschaton. Luke personalizes these vengeful days as great distress (ἀνάγκη μεγάλη) for Israel’s land, with wrath (ὀργή) to the Jewish people (Lk. 21:23–24). The expression of this wrath against Jews has many falling by edge of the sword and being led captive into dispersion among many other ethnic groups (ἐθνῶν). During this dispersion Jerusalem will be dominated by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. John the Baptist and the Essenes at Qumran believed themselves to be living at the brink of the coming of the eschatological wrath (Mt. 3:7, 12; Lk. 3:7, 17).<sup>96</sup> This Lukan description better fits the first and second century conquests which brought on the dispersion of Jews and Gentile domination of Jerusalem which has lasted until recent times in the history of Israel. However, all the synoptics draw the account into the eschatological context. Matthew and Mark point out that unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short (Mt. 24:22; Mk. 13:20).<sup>97</sup> The elect are disciples of Jesus alive on earth during this great tribulation gathered by the Son of Man into His salvation (ἐσώθη; Mt. 24:22, 24, 31; Mk. 13:20, 22, 27). These righteous sufferers have the glory and the dominion of Adam restored for them in salvation (Rom. 5; 8:17–25; 2 Cor. 4:7–5:21).<sup>98</sup>

To enable these elect to come into Kingdom, the gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to all ethnic groups before the end shall come (Mt. 24:14; Mk. 13:10). If the “all nations” is seen as with reference to the Roman context then the extensive spread of gospel during the first century fulfills this statement from the Indus valley to Spain and from northern Gaul to southern Ethiopia. This gospel spread began at Pentecost with many ethnicities represented (Acts 2:8–11). Wherever disciples traveled, they fulfilled aspects of this promise. If the “all nations” is taken in a more extensive manner, then it should fund missionary activity to fulfill the Great Commission, to all ethnicities before Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom. Through this means the end time promise of Gentile salvation will be realized (Isa. 45:15; 60:15–17; Mic. 4:13).<sup>99</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Eschatological imagery from *Sib. Or.* 3.185–90; also Rev. 7:14.

<sup>95</sup> Mark 13:19 drops the adjective “great” and adds that the tribulation is the most severe since God created the world. The greatness of difficulty of those end times is underscored (Jer. 30:7; Joel 2:2; Rev. 16:18; *IQM* 1.9–14; *1 Macc.* 9.27), but some authors use similar language to describe tribulation now behind Israel (Josephus, *Bell.* 1.12; *T. Mos.* 8.1). Similarly, Eusebius (*Ec. Hist.* 3.7.2) uses “great tribulation” to describe the conquest of Jerusalem during 70 A.D.

<sup>96</sup> *IQH* 11.18, 28.

<sup>97</sup> *Sir.* 36.8; *4Q385* frag. 3; *LAB.* 19.13; *2 Bar.* 20.1–2; 54.1; 83.1; *2 Esdr.* 2.13; *Barn.* 4.3; *Apoc. Abr.* 29.13; *Trimorphic Prot.* 44.16; for texts of these cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:351.

<sup>98</sup> *IQS* 4.22–23; *CD* 3.18–20 with 4.18; 6.10; cf. *IQH* 4.15 with 2.16; 3.17–21; *2 Bar.* 15.7–8, 14; 25–27; 32; 48.29–47, 70–74; 51.3–11; *4 Ezra* 7.48 with 7.113–23; this is not to be identified with the cutting short of the rainy season (as in *1 En.* 80.2), which is a judgment on sinners’ crops.

<sup>99</sup> *T. Judah* 24.5–6; *T. Levi* 18.9.

These elect are vulnerable to deception so the time will be cut short (Mt. 24:22, 24, 31; Mk. 13:20, 22, 27). This attempt to deceive is especially evident in claims by false christs and false prophets that the Christ is at some particular place (Mt. 24:23–26; Mk. 13:21–23). Though great signs and wonders are used to deceive, the disciples are warned not to believe these false claims about Christ.

The coming of the Son of Man is not hidden in houses or the wilderness but visible for all to see like lightening flashing across the sky (Dan. 7:13–14; Mt. 24:27, 30; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27).<sup>100</sup> Daniel's presentation of the Son of Man as cloud rider coming up to the Ancient of Days to receive His everlasting dominion, is shifted in second Temple Judaism<sup>101</sup> and New Testament to now describe the Son of Man's cloud riding from the Ancient of Days to come to earth to enforce His Kingdom onto the willing and unwilling. Thus the coming of the Son of Man is a very real visible coming. This is not to be confused with a spiritual or personal coming like the coming of the Holy Spirit<sup>102</sup> nor a vision at one's death (Acts 1:11; 7:56; 9:4–7). Jesus will return bodily from the heavens riding on the clouds, visible for all, conquering to establish His Kingdom (Dan. 7:13; Mt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 19:11–16)<sup>103</sup> so that no one need be deceived. It is recognizable as the coming of the Son of Man like the location of a dead animal in the desert can be recognized by the vultures flying over it (Mt. 24:28).<sup>104</sup> Luke especially recognized that the Jewish people had ability to analyzing the weather, which makes them even more culpable in analyzing the age (Lk. 12:54–59). It is like a farmer reading the coming of summer by noticing the signs in the leafing out of a fig tree (Mt. 24:32–33). This generation that experiences these evidences will not pass away until all is accomplished (Mt. 24:34). It is guaranteed to happen because Jesus' words will not pass away (Mt. 24:35; Lk. 21:33). This certainty of Jesus' words is described in the same manner as that of the divine word (Ps. 119: 89, 160; Isa. 40:8; 55:10–11).<sup>105</sup> That is, when these events take place, Christ's coming is eminent, and thus the need to watch the signs and be alert.

Preceding the day of Christ's coming there will be cosmic disturbances as evidence of Messiah's coming (Isa. 24:18–23; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Mt. 24:29; Mk. 13:24–25; Lk. 21:25; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:12–13; 8:12).<sup>106</sup> The sun and moon will be darkened and the stars will fall from the sky. Admittedly, this language of upheaval has been used metaphorically in contexts that could be argued as now past (Isa. 13:10; 34:4; Ezek. 32:7;

<sup>100</sup> *Ep. Jer.* 61; *4Q246* 2.1–2; *2 Bar.* 53.9. Lightening also occurs with divine theophanies and judgment (Ex. 19:16; Pss. 18:14; 144:6; Zech. 9:14; Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.56; *LAB* 11.4).

<sup>101</sup> *1 En.* 37–71; *11Q13*; *4Q400-5*; *11Q17*; *4 Ezra* 13.26, 52; *Baruch* 29; *Tg. 1 Chron.* 3.24; *b. Sanh.* 38b.

<sup>102</sup> Though the arrival of the Holy Spirit is an obvious eschatological phenomenon: Joel 2:28–29; Acts 1:6, 8; 2:1–21; *IQS* 4.3–4; 8.12–16; *Sib. Or.* 4.46, 189; *2 Macc.* 7.23; 14.46.

<sup>103</sup> *Jub.* 1.28; *1 En.* 62.3; *T. Mos.* 10.7.

<sup>104</sup> Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 3:355–6 surveys eight views and concludes that this is the consensus of recent commentators and is also supported by *Apoc. Pet.* E 1.

<sup>105</sup> *Bar.* 4.1; *Wis.* 18.4; *4 Ezra* 9.36–37.

<sup>106</sup> *IQH* 11.13; *Sib. Or.* 2.194, 200–2; 3.81–93, 796–808; 5.344–350; 7.125; 8.190–2, 233, 413; *1 En.* 80.4–6; *As. Mos.* 10.5–6; *T. Levi* 4.1; *4 Ezra* 5.4–5; *2 Bar.* 70; 70.2; *T. Mos.* 10.5; *Apoc. Elijah* 5.7; *B. Sanh.* 99a; this is not to be identified as fulfilled with the rending of the Jerusalem Temple's external veil with stars sown on it as was suggested by: D.C. Allison (*The End of the Ages has Come* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985], p. 33).

Amos 5:20; 8:9; Zeph. 1:15).<sup>107</sup> Josephus describes some heavenly upheaval as omens of the 70 A.D. destruction, namely: a star and comet that looked like a sword over Jerusalem and the clouds looking like armies attacking cities.<sup>108</sup> However, when the language is climaxed by the entrance into the everlasting Kingdom, as it is here in the Olivet discourse, it remains as a vivid astronomical indicator of when the Kingdom will begin (Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Mt. 24:28–29, 32–35; Mk. 13:24–30; Lk. 21:25–32; Rev. 6:12–13; 8:12). The fact that these cosmic disturbances continue to be used to describe the eschatological circumstances after the Jerusalem conquest had occurred shows that the Biblical writers expect them to really occur in the sky (Rev. 6:12–13; 8:12). This darkening of the heavens is more supernatural than a natural description of cloud cover because the powers of the heavens are shaken. Likewise the earthly impact is extreme with dismay, perplexity and men fainting from fear (Lk. 21:25–26). All the tribes of the earth will see the Son of Man and mourn their judgment (Mt. 24:30). Jesus will come powerfully sending forth His angels to gather His elect from all over the world (Mt. 13:41; 16:27; 24:30–31; 25:31; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27–28; Rev. 14:15–19).<sup>109</sup> The sound of a trumpet or *šophar* horn will signal their gathering (Joel 2:1; Zeph. 1:16; Zech. 9:14; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16)<sup>110</sup> much like it has called Jews to gather for Sabbath or other sacred occasions (Num. 10:10; Josh. 6:5; 1 Kgs. 1:34; Ps. 81:3; Isa. 27:13; Jer. 4:5).<sup>111</sup> This gathering is presented in similar language as the Jews being gathered from dispersion (Isa. 27:12–13).<sup>112</sup> This visual and audible coming indicates that redemption is near.

In the same way as before the impending Noahic judgment, no change in lives was made (Mt. 24:37–39). Like Noah's flood, when the Son of Man comes all the people not among the protected elect will be taken away in judgment (Mt. 24:39–41).<sup>113</sup> Men and women will be carrying on their normal occupation and then many will be taken away in judgment<sup>114</sup> (not in rapture) while others beside them are left to go into the

<sup>107</sup> Besides these times of conquest, *Sib. Or.* 5.152 claims creation was shaken at the appearance of Nero and 4 *Ezra* 4.18–19 speak of cosmic disorders at the giving of the Law. On this basis, N. T. Wright (*Jesus and the Victory of God*, pp. 354–355) argues that this metaphor then only means “an earth shattering event!” rather than actually describing cosmic events.

<sup>108</sup> Josephus, *Wars* 6.5.288–309.

<sup>109</sup> Angels often accompany a theophany (Deut. 33:2; Isa. 6:2–7; Ps. 68:17). Angels aid in the gathering of damned and elect (Jer. 51:53; *1 En.* 1.6–9; 54.6; 62.11; 63.1 *Apoc. Elijah* 3.4; *Asc. Isa.* 4.14; 4 *Ezra* 4.26–37; 9.17; 2 *Bar.* 70.1–2; *b. B. Mes.* 83b; *Midr. Ps.* on 8:1). Additionally, Gabriel blows the *šophar* for gathering into Kingdom (*Quest. Ezra B* 11; *Gk. Apoc. Ezra* 4.36).

<sup>110</sup> *Ps. Sol.* 11.1; *Did.* 16.6; *Apoc. Abr.* 31.1; *Shemoneh Esreh* benediction 10; *Quest. Ezra B* 11.9; *Gk. Apoc. Ezra* 4.36; for texts of these cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:363.

<sup>111</sup> *t. Sukk.* 4.11–12; *IQM*; *Par. Jer.* 4.2; *Roš. Haš.* 26a.

<sup>112</sup> *Bar.* 4.36–37; *1 En.* 57.2; *Ps. Sol.* 11.3; this is not just a re-gathering from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity as Brant Pitre proposes (*Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement* [Tübingen/Grand Rapids: Mohr Siebeck/Baker, 2005], pp. 4, 35–130), but of the continuing dispersion under any Gentile domination, including Greek, Roman and more recent as well.

<sup>113</sup> The flood is an eschatological image: *IQH* 11.14, 29–36; *Sib. Or.* 3.689–91; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.2.3; *1 En.* 14.19; 17.5; 67.13; 4 *Ezra* 13.10–11; 2 *En.* 10.2.

<sup>114</sup> In Matthew 24:40 the “then” (τότε) connects verse 40–41 with the prior verse 39. Thus the phrase “took them all away” (Mt. 24:39; ἤρεν ἅπαντας, οὕτως ἔσται) which means judgment should be taken as a synonym for the phrase “will be taken” (Mt. 24:40–41; παραλαμβάνεται), indicating that they will be taken away in judgment, not rapture.

Kingdom (as in Mt. 13:30, 42–43, 49–50; 24:51; 25:10–13, 30). The Kingdom is already planned but only part of these plans are revealed to God’s faithful now (e.g., Dan. 2:28, 44).<sup>115</sup> The fact that no one knows the day or hour (except the Father) increases the need for Jesus’ disciples to be alert (Mt. 24:36, 44; Mk. 13:32; Acts 1:7).

Therefore, the disciples are to be alert, watchful and prepared (γρηγορεῖτε) for they do not know which day our Lord is coming and all that has been said will come upon those who dwell on the earth (Mt. 24:42; Mk. 13:33–37; Lk. 21:34–36; Acts 1:7).<sup>116</sup> This alertness is extended in a practical way of praying in order that they might escape all these things when they take place, so the disciples might stand before the Son of Man. This alertness is illustrated by Mark with a parable of a man taking a journey, who left his slaves in charge with tasks, commanding the doorkeepers to stay on the alert. “Therefore be on the alert-for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrowing, or in the morning, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you, I say to all. Be on the alert!” (Mk. 13:35–37). This alertness is a common theme among Jewish parables as well.<sup>117</sup> Matthew recounts several parables on the alertness theme but the most pointed develops a faithful householder who would prevent his house from being broken into by a thief as a parallel to the disciples’ alertness to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man (Mt. 24:42–44). Luke had earlier presented this same parable to emphasize the disciples need to be ready in a full commitment to the Kingdom (Lk. 12:37–40). The *Gospel of Thomas* tells this parable twice, first in verse 21 to teach this alertness theme, and then again in verse 103 to indicate an alert person will be blessed.

Another Olivet discourse parable which Matthew recounts on the alertness theme emphasizes the prudence of being ready for the coming Kingdom (Mt. 25:1–13). Luke also tells this parable in a previous setting of full loyalty to the Kingdom, connected with the previous parable on alert stewardship to stop a thief (Lk. 12:35–36). Such a parable and the wisdom of being alert are common among Jewish parables.<sup>118</sup> The kingdom may be compared to ten virgins waiting for a bridegroom to arrive. With all the imagery of the coming of the Son of Man in the context, the bridegroom’s coming refers to the Son of Man’s coming. Five virgins were prudent and took extra oil for their lamps. Five virgins were foolish, not taking enough oil. When the bridegroom came, the foolish recognized their lack but had to try to remedy it by additional purchases which meant they were not ready for the wedding feast. The prudent virgins were ready and went in to the wedding feast and the door was shut. Such a feast fits within the second Temple Jewish framework of the Messiah’s eschatological banquet celebrated with righteous in Kingdom. A Messianic banquet for the righteous is a metaphor for Kingdom (Isa. 25:6–9; Lk. 14:15; 22:16–18; Rev. 19:9).<sup>119</sup> The closed door to those who were ready indicates

<sup>115</sup> *IQpHab* 7.4–5, 8; *IQS* 3.23; *IQM* 3.9; *IQH* 12.23; *1 En.* 9.6; 103.2; *4 Ezra* 14.5.

<sup>116</sup> *Mek.* on Ex. 16:32; *Der Eres Rab.* 10; *Ps. Sol.* 17.21; *2 Bar.* 21.8; 48.3; 54.1; *4 Ezra* 4.52.

<sup>117</sup> A similar parable on this alertness theme is in *Tos. Sotah* 15.7.

<sup>118</sup> A similar parable of Ben Zacchai occurs in *B.T. Šabb.* 153a with wise and foolish invitees. This follows two parables which contrast the wise from the foolish in *B.T. Šabb.* 152a and b. Likewise, in *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 3.9.1 there is a foolish traveler who did not seek the protection of a military post on his travels, when he could, so that once night fell and he was terrified, he was then refused. Sometimes, as in *Mek.* on Ex. 19:17, God is presented as coming with fire to light the escort of a bridegroom.

<sup>119</sup> *IQSa* or *IQ28a* 2.11–12, 19–21; *’Abot* 3.16–17; 4.16; *b. Ber.* 34b; *Sanh.* 98b; *Gen. Rab.* 62.2; *Ex. Rab.* 45.6; 50.5; *Lev. Rab.* 13.3; *Num. Rab.* 13.2; *Ruth Rab.* 5.6; *Cant. Rab.* 1, 3.3, on Song of Songs 1:3; *Pesiq.*



security but to those not ready, the door indicates banishment. When the foolish virgins arrived, the Lord will say to them that, “I do not know you.” So the issue is that alertness shows evidence of relationship with Jesus. This parable emphasizes the need for disciples to be on the alert, watchful and prepared (γρηγορεῖτε), for you do not know the day, nor the hour of the Son of Man’s coming.

Alertness involves faithful and sensible service (Mt. 24:45–51). Such a theme of faithful wise service is common among Jewish parables.<sup>120</sup> As before, Luke also told this parable in an earlier setting (along with the previous two parables) emphasizing loyalty to the Kingdom (Lk. 12:42–46). The parable reminds the disciples that the blessed slave is the one whom His master finds faithfully doing the tasks which the master left him to do. Matthew drives home this point more acutely because the events of Jesus’ departure are about to shove them out of the nest into the need for faithful service.<sup>121</sup> Such a faithful slave will be put in charge of all the master’s possessions. Whereas, an evil slave disregards the possibility of an imminent return of his master, becoming dissipated, drunk, abusive and concerned for the worries of life that come upon one suddenly like a trap (Mt. 24:49; Lk. 21:34). The master of the unwise slave will come when he does not expect him and will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a metaphor for the real torment in hell. The similarity of the outcome of the foolish slaves to other descriptions of the Son of Man’s judgment on the evil ones indicates the master in the parable is actually the Son of Man who will horribly judge those who disregard his instruction (Mt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 24:51; 25:30). This also implies that the faithful servant of Jesus’ will be a faithful steward of the possessions of Jesus in the Kingdom.

This theme of faithful rewards as a stewardship is evident in the parables of the talents and minas (Mt. 25:14–30; Lk. 19:11–27).<sup>122</sup> The parable of the nobleman receiving his kingdom attempts to slow down disciple expectations for the appearance of the Kingdom (Lk. 19:11–27). While the parable told a week later in Matthew at the Olivet Discourse emphasizes the responsibility to be faithful until the Kingdom comes (Mt. 25:14–30).<sup>123</sup> The parable is also loosely parallel to three second Temple Jewish parables which highlight aspects, which this parable has within it as a whole.<sup>124</sup> However, Matthew’s parable loosely echoes the historical setting strongly echoed by Luke’s parable, that of the journeys undertaken during regime change, first by Herod the Great in 40 B. C. to receive his kingship from Mark Anthony,<sup>125</sup> and then by his son Archelaus to receive the kingdom of Judea and Samaria in 4 B.C. upon the death of his

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*Rab.* 41.5; 48.3; *B. Bab. Bath.* 74b–75a; *Yalqut Shim‘oni*, *Songs*, no. 988; *Sefer Eliahu*, *BBhM* 3.67; *Nistarot R. Shim‘on ben Yohai*, *BhM* 3.80; *Pirke Mashiah*, *BhM* 3.76–77; *S’udat Livyatan*, *BhM* 6.150–51; *Mid. Alpha Beta diR. Akiba*, *BhM* 3.33–34; *Mid. haN’elam*, *Zohar* 1.135b, 136a.

<sup>120</sup> *B.T. Šabb.* 153a; *Eccl. Rab.* 3.9.1.

<sup>121</sup> Matthew’s aorist “put in charge” contrasts with Luke 12:42 future indicating that in Matthew more applicability for Matthew’s day and perhaps in Luke a predictor of the disciple’s responsibility in time.

<sup>122</sup> Also corroborated by *The Gospel of the Nazareans* 2 as reported in Eusebius, *Theophania* 4.22.

<sup>123</sup> Several recognize these parables are told in different settings. Darrel Bock, *Luke*, 2:1527–29 lists some along with him who agree with this view.

<sup>124</sup> *Song Rabbah* 7.14.1 recounts a parable about a frugal wife left for a time by her husband, who reports that she had saved her husband’s trust. *ARNA* 14.6 reports of the anxiety of a man who had the king leave a deposit with him. *Mek. Bachodesh* 5.81–92 tells of a king who set up different responsibilities of two administrators based on their faithfulness and faithlessness.

<sup>125</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 14.14.1–6.

father.<sup>126</sup> In the parable, a certain man went on a journey. Each slave was given money from the master's possessions for business purposes until he returned. When he returned, he ordered his slaves to report on how the business had fared during his absence. The first and second slave had doubled the amount given them, so they received from their master: 1) an affirmation of faithfulness in little things, 2) continued responsibility over many things and 3) were able to keep the money to continue to enable their service. Following the Jewish pattern, promotion to service (number 2 response above) is a reward for faithfulness; "The reward of duty done is a duty to be done."<sup>127</sup> The emphasis of Matthew's presentation is that of faithful servanthood of disciples, rather than the Lukan emphasis told to the religious leaders, with its destruction of rebel citizens and their city. However, another slave had hid the talent given him because he was afraid of the master and did not want to take on this liability.<sup>128</sup> This slave claimed that the master exploited others by taking what he did not lay down, and reaping what he did not sow. In the parable, the master judges the slave by his own standard, which at least would have urged investment in the bank with interest. The fact that the slave did not even do this minimum showed him to be a rebel and just making excuses. His money was stripped from him and given to the one who has ten talents. This action is explained to further emphasize the benefit of responsible living; everyone who has, shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away (Mt. 13:12; 25:29; Lk. 12:48; 19:26).<sup>129</sup> The consequence of this is that the worthless slave becomes another metaphor of hell, being cast out into the outer darkness, in the place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>130</sup>

The sermon closes emphasizing through a parable that the coming of the Son of Man brings judgment in the Jewish pattern (Mt. 25:31–46).<sup>131</sup> When the Son of Man comes in glory, and all the angels with Him then the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne. This statement reminds the reader of the previous statement of the coming of the Son of Man with His angels sent out to collect the elect (Mt. 24:30–31; 25:31). All the ethnic groups (ἐθνῆ) will be gathered before Him and He will separate them into two groups like a shepherd separates sheep from goats. These two groups have essential defining characteristics that mark them out as two distinct animal groups with their distinct ways of life. This is reflective of the two ways, two houses, good crop versus bad, faithful and unfaithful servants (Mt. 7:13–27; 13:24–50; 25:14–32). The Son of Man is the King in judgment from His glorious throne. He will say to those on His right, the righteous, "Come you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Their preparation identifies that they are the

<sup>126</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 17.196–341; *Bell.* 2.80–100.

<sup>127</sup> *m.* 'Abot 4.2; *b. Ber.* 11b.

<sup>128</sup> *b. Bab. Mes.* 42a says "Anyone who buried a pledge or a deposit immediately upon receipt of it, was free from liability."

<sup>129</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 41; *Apoc. Pet.* 83.26–84.6; which is somewhat of an extension of God giving further wisdom to the wise (Pr. 9:9; *b. Ber.* 55a).

<sup>130</sup> Luke 19:11–27 has a king receiving a kingdom and the rebellious citizens as being killed much like took place in 40 B.C. under Herod the Great, and in 4 B.C. under Archelaus. See the discussion of this parable in the chapter of "Jesus as Sage."

<sup>131</sup> Dan. 7:9–10, 18, 26; Rev. 20:11–15; *1 En.* 62.2–16; 63:1–12; 90:20–36; *11Q Melch.* 2.132 *Bar.* 72. 2, 6; 73–74.4; *Ps. of Sol.* 17; *4Q246* col. 2; *T. Abr.* A 11.11; 12.1–18; 13.12; *Sib. Or.* 2.239–54, 283–338. Much of this material is nicely laid out in chart form in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:419.

elect from the foundation of the world. The righteous will be recognized by King Jesus for their works, benefiting Jesus Himself. “For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.” These are classic Jewish expressions of righteousness in many judgment texts.<sup>132</sup> The righteous may not even remember when they did these deeds, for they were not doing them to Jesus to gain His favor, they are merely consistent deeds with their character. Perhaps, Jesus develops an early expression of the body of Christ imagery in His substitutionary good deeds imagery. King Jesus points out “to the extent that you did these deeds to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.” Then He will say to those on His left, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.” That is, this everlasting punishment was designed primarily for the devil and his angels but these unrighteous condemn themselves to this fate by identifying with the devil’s side, by neglecting good deeds. “For I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.” The unrighteous may not even remember these neglected opportunities for good deeds because it is their very character to neglect them, but the same substitutionary principle for good deeds applies. King Jesus will answer them, “To the extent that you did not do these good deeds to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.” The unrighteous group is banished by Christ to everlasting punishment without end or annihilation, but the righteous enter into everlasting life, without end. The everlasting quality evident in αἰώνιον guarantees the same everlasting without end for everlasting punishment as for everlasting life (Mt. 25:41, 46).<sup>133</sup>

Messianic Prophet Jesus in the Olivet Discourse identifies evidences for the disciples to use to recognize the Son of Man’s coming to destroy the Temple and His coming to bring in the Kingdom. Both events call the disciples to be alert, watchful, prepared, praying and faithful in service. Such judgment events should make a difference in our lives motivating righteous character evidenced through good deeds. If we align with Christ by demonstrating righteous character through good deeds which meet real needs, we can be encouraged that we are Kingdom bound. We are also warned: everlasting judgment awaits those who disregard these character traits.

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<sup>132</sup> Cf. Job. 22:7; Isa. 58:7; Ezek. 18:7, 16; *T. Jos.* 1.5–7; *T. Jacob* 2.23; 7.24–25; 2 *En.* 9.1; 10.5; 42.8; 63.1; *Mek.* on Ex. 14.19; *b. Sota* 14a; *m. Qidd.* 1.10; *t. Qidd.* 1.13; *Tg. Ps.-Jn.* on Deut. 34:6; *Eccl. Rab.* on 11.1; Justin, *1 Apol.* 67. Much of this material is nicely laid out in chart form in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:426.

<sup>133</sup> This everlasting feature contrasts to the normal second Temple view of temporality in hell then released (*Num. Rab.* 18.20; some texts are often taken this way but are unclear: *Sir.* 7.16; *Sipre Num.* 40.1.9; *Sipre Deut.* 311.3.1; 357.6.7; *’Abot R. Nat.* 16 A; 32.69 B; 37.95 B; 12 months in hell is a familiar duration in Jewish second Temple texts [*b. Šabb.* 33b; *Lam. Rab.* 1.11–12]) or destroyed (2 *Macc.* 12.43–45; *IQS* 4.13–14; *Gen. Rab.* 6.6t. *Sanh.* 13.3–4; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 10.4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 11.5). In the Biblical text there is no dwelling on the punishment like the kind of sadism one finds in: *Apocalypse of Peter*; *Acts of Thomas* act 6; *Sib. Or.* 2.252–312; Tertullian, *De. spect.* 30; Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, section 1 “Hell,” cantos 1–34.

### Echoed in the Arts

In 1865 Gustave Doré crafted wood cuts to portray Jesus' teaching and prophecy ministry. These are two of his woodcuts.



In Frank Herbert's *Children of Dune*, the Messiah Emperor Paul Atreides, also known in Fremen circles by his killing name Maud'Dib, had been absent from the throne since the death of his wife. Under the oversight of his sister Alia, a religion had built up in the temple making him a god. Armed thugs roamed through his empire enforcing worship and obedience to him as their god. Things had gotten out of hand so Paul Atreides resurfaced as a prophetic figure to call down the established religious abuse.<sup>134</sup>

The Preacher's voice boomed into the room over the amplifier pickups beside the window. Alia felt the tremors of it in her bones, began to listen to his words with growing fascination.

"I found myself in the Desert of Zan," The Preacher shouted, "in that waste place of howling wilderness. And God commanded me to make that place clean. For we were provoked in the desert, and grieved in the desert, and we were tempted in that wilderness to forsake our ways."

*Desert of Zan*, Alia thought. That was the name given to the place of the first trial of the Zensunni Wanderers from whom the Fremen sprang. But his

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<sup>134</sup> Frank Herbert, *Children of Dune: Book Three in the Dune Chronicles* (New York: Berkley Books, 1981), pp. 388–340. In the 2002 movie *Children of Dune* directed by Greg Yaitanes and New Amsterdam Entertainment, Paul Atreides is referred to as "the prophet" instead of the preacher.

words! Was he taking credit for the destruction wrought against the sietch strongholds of the loyal tribes?

“Wild beasts lie upon your lands,” The Preacher said, his voice booming across the plaza. “Doleful creatures fill your houses. You who fled your homes no longer multiply your days upon the sand. Yea, you who have forsaken our ways, you will die in a fouled nest if you continue on this path. But if you heed my warning, the Lord shall lead you through a land of pits into the Mountains of God. Yea, Shai-Hulud shall lead you.”

Soft moans arose from the crowd. The Preacher paused, swinging his eyeless sockets from side to side at the sound. Then he raised his arms, spreading them wide, called out: “O God, my flesh longeth for Thy way in a dry and thirsty land!”

An old woman in front of The Preacher, an obvious refugee by the patched and worn look of her garments, held up her hands to him, pleaded: “Help us, Muad'Dip. Help us!”

In a sudden fearful constriction of her breast, Alia asked herself if the old woman really knew the truth. Alia glanced at her mother, but Jessica remained unmoving, dividing her attention between Alia's guards, Farad'n and the view from the window. Farad'n stood rooted in fascinated attention.

Alia glanced out the window, trying to see her Temple Priests. They were not in view and she suspected they had worked their way around below her near the Temple doors, seeking a direct route down the steps.

The Preacher pointed his right hand over the old woman's head, shouted: “You are the only help remaining! You were rebellious. You brought the dry wind which does not cleanse, nor does it cool. You bear the burden of our desert, and the whirlwind cometh from that place, from that terrible land. I have been in that wilderness. Water runs upon the sand from shattered qanats. Streams cross the ground. Water has fallen from the sky in the Belt of Dune! O my friends, God has commanded me. Make straight in the desert a highway for our Lord, for I am the voice that cometh to thee from the wilderness.”

He pointed to the steps beneath his feet, a stiff and quivering finger. “This is no lost djedida which is no more inhabited forever! Here have we eaten the bread of heaven. And here the noise of strangers drives us from our homes! They breed for us a desolation, a land wherein man dwelleth, nor any man pass thereby.”

The crowd stirred uncomfortably, refugees and town Fremen peering about, looking at the pilgrims of the Hajj who stood among them.

*He could start a bloody riot! Alia thought. Well, let him. My Priests can grab him in the confusion.*

She saw the five Priest then, a tight knot of yellow robes working down the steps behind The Preacher.

“The waters which we spread upon the desert have become blood,” The Preacher said, waving his arms wide. “Blood upon our land! Behold our desert which could rejoice and blossom; it has lured the stranger and seduced him in our midst. They come for violence! Their faces are closed up as for the last wind of Kralizec! They gather the captivity of the sand. They suck up the abundance of

the sand, the treasure hidden in the depths. Behold them as they go forth to their evil work. It is written: ‘And I stood upon the sand, and I saw a beast rise up out of that sand, and upon the head of that beast was the name of God!’”

Angry mutterings arose from the crowd. Fists were raised, shaken.

“What is he doing?” Farad’n whispered.

“I wish I knew,” Alia said. She put a hand to her breast, feeling the fearful excitement of this moment. The crowd would turn upon the pilgrims if he kept this up!

But the Preacher half turned, aimed his dead sockets toward the Temple and raised a hand to point at the high windows of Alia’s aerie. “One blasphemy is Alia!”

Shocked silence gripped the plaza.

Alia stood in unmoving consternation. She knew the mob could not see her, but she felt overcome by a sense of exposure, of vulnerability. The echoes of calming words within her skull competed with the pounding of her heart. She could only stare down at that incredible tableau. The Preacher remained with a hand pointing at her windows.

His words had been too much for the Priests, though. They broke the silence with angry shouts, stormed down the steps, thrusting people aside. As they moved the crowd reacted, breaking like a wave upon the steps, sweeping over the first lines of onlookers, carrying The Preacher before them. He stumbled blindly, separated from his young guide. Then a yellow-clad arm arose from the press of people; a crysknife was brandished in its hand. She saw the knife strike downward, bury itself in The Preacher’s chest.

The thunderous clang of the Temple’s giant doors being closed broke Alia from her shock. Guards obviously had closed the doors against the mob. But people already were drawing back, making an open space around a crumpled figure on the steps. An eerie quiet fell over the plaza. Alia saw many bodies, but only this one lay by itself.

Then a voice screeched from the mob: “Muad’Dib! They’ve killed Muad’Dib!”