

Lesson Eight — The First Coming of Christ

Day One — The Prophecies of The Messiah

Day Two — His Birth

Day Three — The Identity of Jesus

Day Four — The Offer of the Kingdom

Day Five — The Offer Rejected and Withdrawn

Last week we barely scratched the surface of the Words of the Prophets with respect to establishment of Israel's theocracy, it's fall, the scattering of the people, the future re-gathering of the nation, and the reestablished of the kingdom. During the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, the kingdom was divided, as the people continued in disobedience. Eventually, both kingdoms were destroyed — the Northern kingdom was scattered amongst the Gentile nations, the Southern kingdom was exiled to the Gentile nation of Babylon, and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. Seventy years after the Southern kingdom was exiled, a remnant was allowed to go back to their land, and rebuild. With Jews back in the land, and some four hundred years later some of the prophecies concerning a Messiah were fulfilled. But we know that the time for Israel as a whole to be brought back and placed in their land in a theocracy, wherein the Jewish people would be able to live peaceably is yet future, a time prophesied by all the prophets.

In the Old Testament, we have been able to glimpse, at least in part, what God had begun to reveal — His plans and purposes for the ages. In the Old Testament, *some of the unfolding picture was held in mystery*. Now with the completion of God's Word, we are able to grasp the picture with much more detail. Now, as we begin to peruse the pages of the New Testament, we will begin to see more of the details of God's eternal plan.

Isaiah was a pre-exilic prophet predominantly sent to the Southern kingdom during the time the Northern kingdom was taken captive and scattered. In spite of the warnings that Isaiah spoke, along with several of the other pre-exilic prophets, the Southern kingdom, with some exceptions during the reign of certain righteous kings, continued to spiral down and away from the Lord. Isaiah prophesied to kings and to a generation who were unaffected by the impact of God's Word. The Southern kingdom went into Babylonian captivity about a generation or so after Isaiah gave his message, about 140 years after the destruction of the Northern kingdom.

Shortly after the onset of the Judah's captivity, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. Then, after the Medes and Persians overtook Babylon, and after the 70 year period of Judah's captivity, Judah was allowed to go back to their land and rebuild Jerusalem, the wall and the temple. There were three post-exilic prophets — Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi — each telling of the plans the Lord has yet for Israel. After the Word of the Lord came to Malachi, the final prophet, there was a long period of silence from Heaven — 400 years.

The prophesy of Amos came to bear on the Jews. Amos, after being told by a priest to leave the Northern kingdom and go prophesy in the Southern kingdom (Amos 7:12), uttered these words:

Amos 8

11 “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD...”

**So there was silence.
The voice of Heaven was not heard by the ears of
earth.
...for 400 years.
...four hundred long years!
And...
A woman who was called barren,
bore a son, and they called him John.
Suddenly a bright light shown in the darkness...
...a star shining in the east.
A virgin had conceived and had borne a Son, and
they called Him Immanuel, “God with us.”
Then a voice was heard...
...a voice crying in the wilderness
...calling the people to “Repent,
for the Kingdom of the Heavens was at
hand.”**

Day One — The Prophecies of the Messiah

Begin your week in prayer. Pray for continued understanding. Ask the Holy Spirit to be your Teacher. And be sure to praise God for Who He is!

For 400 years, God did not raise up a man to speak His word. For 400 years there was silence!

Centuries prior, the prophet Nathan had prophesied to King David an awesome promise —

II Samuel 7

12 “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me...”

Write out the last statement printed above —

Then the prophet Isaiah added more details concerning this promise —

Isaiah 7

14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

And —

Isaiah 9

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore

What do these prophecies mean?

Yes, the Jews knew that “Immanuel” meant “God with us” (Mt. 1:23). God’s presence *had been* with His people before in Shekinah Glory, from the time He hovered over Sinai, to the time His presence filled the temple in the days of the kings. Here Isaiah told them to expect GOD to come *in human flesh* — born of a virgin.

How could it be? A *virgin* to give birth to *God* as the *Son of God*? Let’s read about how the story unfolds.

Luke 1

5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7 And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years...

...11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. 13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother’s womb. 16 And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, **TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN**, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

List all the things that the angel told Zacharias about his forthcoming son. (Isaiah had prophesied concerning Zacharias’ son John, in Isaiah 40:3.)

A short time later, an angel had another message to give. He appeared to a young virgin named Mary.

Luke 1

26 Now in the sixth month [of Elizabeth’s pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.” 29 But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.”

34 And Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Write out how this pregnancy will occur.

There are five prophecies in v. 32 and 33. List them below:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

4)

5)

Is there any reason to believe that any of these prophecies should be taken in a spiritual (i.e. non-literal) sense?

Mary's response —

38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Mary went straightway to Elizabeth's house.

Luke 1

39 Now at this time Mary arose and went with haste to the hill country, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

What did Elizabeth say about Mary's baby?

What did Elizabeth say about Mary (v. 43)?

Mary's response to Elizabeth —

Luke 1

46 And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. 49 For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. 50 AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM. 51 He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. 53 "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; AND SENT AWAY THE RICH EMPTY-HANDED. 54 He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever."

Make a list of the things Mary says about God.

What does Mary call God (v. 47)?

We'll pick it up tomorrow.

Day Two — His Birth

We will continue today where we left off yesterday. Be sure to begin your study in prayer.

Mary stayed with Elizabeth and Zacharias for about three months, until it came time for Elizabeth's baby to be born. As their son was born, read what Zacharias says:

Luke 1

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, 69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant 70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old — 71 Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; 72 To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, 74 To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

What did Zacharias say that God has done? Especially notice v. 73.

Zacharias continues his prayer, now speaking to his newly born son:

76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; 77 To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, 78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us, 79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace."

What does Zacharias say concerning his son's relationship to Mary's baby (v. 76)?

What will Zacharias' son do?

Now back to what is happening in Mary's life. After staying about three months, she left Elizabeth's house and returned home. Most likely by this time, it would be becoming evident that she was indeed pregnant. The Lord knows all and as Mary trusted God for His timing, God sent an angel to Mary's fiancée, Joseph, to tell him of His plan.

Matthew 1

19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

Notice the identity of Joseph’s lineage (v. 20). From what line did Joseph come?

What did the angel tell Joseph about the baby?

In making these lists of all that the angel and the different people had said about Jesus, we are learning quite a lot about Him. But we have a few more lists to make. Remember, “line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, there a little” (Isa. 28: 9, 10). It’s how we learn!

In order to be counted in a Roman census (for taxation purposes), Mary and Joseph made a trip to Bethlehem, during which time the Baby was born. These events were brought about in order to fulfill a prophecy concerning the birth place of Jesus — that it would take place in the town from which King David came — Bethlehem.

Not far from the city of Bethlehem was a place where shepherds were keeping watch over a flock of sheep. After “Immanuel” was born an angel appeared to these shepherds.

Luke 2

8 And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 And the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ <5547> the Lord <2962>. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.”

First look up these words in the appendix:

Christ <5547>

Lord <2962>

Now make a list of all that the angel told the shepherds about the baby. Include the meanings of Christ and Lord.

Continuing —

13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

Then, on the eighth day, Jesus’ parents brought Him to the temple for His circumcision. Note what an elderly man, having been filled by the Holy Spirit, said of Jesus.

Luke 2

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, 28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 “Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; 30 For my eyes have seen Thy salvation, 31 Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Thy people Israel.” 33 And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed — 35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul — to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

List what Simeon said about Jesus:

We’ll note the words of one more person.

Luke 2

36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. 38 And at that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

From this passage, describe this woman named Anna.

What did she say about the Child?

Before we close for today, look over the lists that you have made and write a brief but concise statement of *who* Jesus Christ is and *why* He came.

Day Three— The Identity of Jesus

Now that we have established the details of Jesus' birth, let's look at some New Testament passages which deal with the purpose of His first coming. Some of these verses will be familiar to you, and some may not be quite so familiar. But putting them together may give us a better grasp of the whole picture. As you read these verses, make a note in the space provided as to *why* Jesus came, *what* He did, for *whom* He did it, etc.

Let's look first at a few passages out of the first chapter of the Gospel of John. There are some interesting facts to gather and ones that may be easily overlooked. We'll just gather the facts for now. Later we'll look at the implications of these statements.

John 1

**1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 He was in the beginning with God...
...14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Describe what these verses say of Jesus.

John 1

15 John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

What did John say of Jesus?

John 1

19 And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 They said then to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

These are interesting questions posed to John, with interesting answers. "I am not *the Christ*." The word Christ means *Messiah, Anointed One*. (Catch what they are asking!) "Are you the Prophet?" (This may refer back to what Moses said about God sending a Prophet just like him [Duet. 18:15-18]). What do these questions reveal about their thoughts concerning One Who is to come?

John 1

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

... 34 “And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.” 35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”

The phrase John uses twice here is an interesting one. In both places he calls Jesus "the Lamb of God." John is speaking of Jesus fulfilling both the Old Testament pictures of the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, the means of redemption, and also His fulfilling the picture of both the sacrificial animal and the scape goat on the Day of Atonement. The Feast of Passover was the an annual feast to remember how God redeemed Israel out of bondage, and the Day of Atonement was an annual feast which allowed for the cleansing of the sins of God's redeemed people. The differences between the two feast days are important to understand, even as we consider John's words here.

The Passover and the Day of Atonement were two feast days separated by seven months, each having two completely separate contexts and meanings. Passover was the day to remember how God redeemed the people out of bondage, and became the reminder of the God-given means of redemption for someone not yet redeemed — faith in the death and shed blood of the lamb. Then seven months beyond that feast, the Day of Atonement was an annual feast day set aside for the cleansing of the sins of *redeemed people* committed that previous year. Two animals were involved on the Day of Atonement, both vicariously dealt with the confessed sins of the people for the year — one was sacrificed (for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness), and the other was led out of the camp alive taking away the sins of the people. Both animals were required in order to fully do away with the sins of the people. It was in this respect that John called Jesus *the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the people*. Jesus was to be the sacrificed animal, a blood sacrifice, for the cleansing of their sins; *and* He was to be their scape goat, for the doing away with the sins — once for all.

With this in mind, go back and read the three verses printed above and see if you understand the meaning a bit differently now.

Continuing in John chapter one, note the description of Jesus:

John 1

40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ). 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Write out what both said about Him. What was emphasized in their statements?

Then, once Nathanael met Jesus, he said:

John 1

49 Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”

Do you notice that the two titles which Nathanael used are related? What is the relationship?

Please write a short review of what you learned in today’s study.

Day Four — The Offer of the Kingdom

It must be seen that the New Testament is *enfolded* in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is *unfolded* in the New. It is an unfinished picture if a student of God’s Word studies only *half* of Scripture and not the *whole*. This is the goal of this study course, to grasp an understanding of the whole.

Yesterday we glimpsed the first chapter in the Gospel of John, in order to get an idea of the thoughts of the people during the presentation of Christ to them. You may want to re-read your summary to have these thoughts fresh in your mind as we begin today. Also remember to pray for your study time.

Today we are going to glimpse some of the statements of and about Christ as to the *purpose* of His coming. It may shed a little different light than what you may have previously thought concerning His first coming. (That’s why it is imperative to pray for understanding.)

First, let’s see what the message was from the forerunner of Christ — John the Baptist. Below are his first recorded words in the Gospel of Matthew. When you come to his quote, underline what John says.

Matthew 3

1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven (lit., *the heavens*) is at hand.”

At this point in your understanding, what do you think is the meaning of John’s words?

Immediately following Jesus’ baptism by John, God speaks from heaven concerning Jesus. Underline what He said.

Matthew 3

16 And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

In order to understand the import of the Father’s statement and in order to understand what the Jews knew this statement to mean, it *must* be related back to the prophecy given in II Samuel 7:12-14a, which we looked at on Day One (p. 123).

Relate God’s statement in Matthew 3: 17 to God’s statement in II Samuel 7:14. What is obvious?

The statement spoken from heaven is clearly the fulfillment of what was previously stated by God in II Samuel. It reveals that Jesus is the One Who was David’s descendant, the One Who would sit on David’s throne, and the One Who would have an everlasting kingdom. Remember Jesus came to the Jews as their King! And as such, he came to offer them *the kingdom of the heavens*. We must get the important meaning of the title “the Son of God.” We must hear it for what it is rather than letting it slip by without understanding its true meaning. (Next week we will work on the meaning of the phrase “kingdom of the heavens.”)

After Jesus’ baptism and sometime either during or after His 40 days in the wilderness, John was taken into custody. When Jesus heard this news, He began preaching the same message that John had preached. Underline His words in both passages below.

Matthew 4

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” ...23 And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom...

Luke 4

41 And demons also were coming out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Son of God!” And rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ. 42 And when day came, He departed and went to a lonely place; and the multitudes were searching for Him, and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from going away from them. 43 But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.” 44 And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

According to these two passages, what was the message Jesus was taking to the Jews? Compare it to the message John had been giving.

From the passage in Luke chapter four, what did the demons say of Jesus?

Jesus states the specific reason why He was sent. Why?

To whom did He give the message?

For the following three years, Jesus did public ministry. He walked the streets of Jerusalem and the surrounding regions, continuing to take this message to the Jews, but not to the Gentiles. It was a message *concerning the kingdom of the heavens*, which had to do with the unconditional covenant made with Abraham in Canaan, and related to the conditional covenant made with Abraham's descendants through Moses at Mt. Sinai. The irrevocable promises made to Abraham and to His descendants concern the land, and his descendants having an inheritance in the land — the Abrahamic covenant. But an *individual's participation* in the promises of this covenant is fully conditional upon their willingness to obey — the Mosaic covenant.

The message of the New Testament, though, had to do with the second realm of the kingdom promised to Abraham's descendants. It had to do with *the heavenly portion* of the kingdom, which can be easily seen as one peruses the pages of the New Testament. The first-born sons of God are in a place to receive a double-portion of the inheritance! And both realms of the kingdom make up the double-portion.

(It is an interesting study to look at a red-lettered edition of the Bible and see what was uppermost on Jesus' mind in His last week on earth prior to His death, even His entire public ministry, for that matter. He gave out the message that was dearest to His heart.)

It becomes very obvious that the focus of His message concerned offering the kingdom of the heavens to Abraham's descendants, the only ones on earth who were in a position to be made such an offer¹. They were the people of God, the only people who had access to the Living God, and the only people who were descendants of the one to whom the promises were given. God was their king. Jesus was God in the flesh, and had come to offer the kingdom in the heavens to them. They only had needed to repent from their sinfulness and receive their King and the kingdom.

Tomorrow we'll see how they responded to this offer. And we will continue to study these things as we work through the next several weeks of study.

That's it for today! Have a nice one!

Day Five — The Offer Rejected and Withdrawn

Thus far this week we have glimpsed the message which was brought by both John the Baptist and the message of Jesus Christ. Both brought an identical message to God's people — the only people on earth who could have been offered this specific message. The message had to do with *repentance* and *the kingdom of the heavens*. Next week, we will delve into the message more fully, striving to understand exactly what it was that was offered to the Jews. But in order to finish up our lesson this week, we will look into something which we already know — the Jews rejected the message and crucified the Messenger, the King.

Today we will look at a few events which took place during the last week of Christ's public ministry, exactly prior to His death. We'll begin on the first day of that week. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Look to see what the crowds were saying on this day —

¹ For more information on this subject see the article in the Appendix entitled ISRAEL A SPECIAL CREATION SEPARATE FROM THE NATIONS.

John 12

12 On the next day the great multitude who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, **13** took the branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and began to cry out, “Hosanna! **BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**, even the King of Israel.”

Matthew 21

8 And most of the multitude spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees, and spreading them in the road. **9** And the multitudes going before Him, and those who followed after were crying out, saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David; **BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; Hosanna in the highest!” **10** And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, “Who is this?” **11** And the multitudes were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Mark 11

8 And many spread their garments in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. **9** And those who went before, and those who followed after, were crying out, “Hosanna! **BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; **10** Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!”

Luke 19

37 And as He was now approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, **38** saying, “**BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

From all four gospel accounts, what seems foremost in the minds of the Jews this first day of Christ’s last week?

As Jesus entered into the city that day, numerous things began to take place in rapid succession. It seems that the hatred on the part of the leadership toward Jesus grew daily. Just a few weeks prior, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the leaders had already decided to look for an opportunity to kill Him. (So adamant had they become in desiring to kill Jesus, that they sought even to put Lazarus to death as well.) With the events of this first day of the week of Passover, they looked for a way to kill Him all the more!

Early in this particular week of Passover, Jesus spent the days walking through the streets teaching the crowds and answering the Pharisees accusations, talking much about the kingdom of the heavens. But in the evenings, He would retreat with His disciples to have some very intimate moments with them, as He continued to teach them and encourage them, again talking much about the kingdom of the heavens. Of course, in His omniscience, He knew His time was growing shorter by the day.

At some point in the final weeks of Christ’s public ministry the leaders, speaking on behalf of the nation of Israel, crossed over the line. There was a defining moment in Matthew chapter twelve when the leaders attributed Jesus’ power to perform miracles to Satan. As a result, here in chapter twenty-one, Jesus mentions the fact that He was going to withdraw the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, which He had been making to them for the previous three years. Let’s read about it.

Matthew 21 (speaking to the Pharisees)

33 “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who **PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER**, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey. **34** And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. **35** And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. **36** Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. **37** But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ **38** But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.’ **39** And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. **40** Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?”

41 They said to Him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘**THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES**’? **43** Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. **44** And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

45 And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. **46** And when they sought to seize Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him to be a prophet.

Who does the landowner represent?

What did the landowner do with the vineyard?

What did the tenants do?

When did the landowner send his son?

What did the tenants do with the son and why?

Jesus asked the next question directly to the Chief Priests and Pharisees. “When the landowner comes, what will he do with the tenants?” How did they answer?

What will the landowner do with the vineyard?

Does the landowner have the right to do this? Why?

What does v. 43 imply that the vineyard represents?

Why will the vineyard be taken from the tenants and given to another people? What are these other people to do?

This is exactly what happened. Due to the continual unrepentant state of the leadership of the Jews, and their sway over the people, Jesus withdrew the offer of the kingdom of the heavens from the Jews and, as we will see next week, was going to offer it to a new man, a new creation. We will study this more in upcoming weeks. But just a few more details need to be filled in before we end for the week. Notice something here. John wrote —

John 12

42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

What do these verses say?

As a result of a lack of repentance on the part of the majority of the leadership and their holding sway over the people, they connived to kill their King. And the very crowd who had begun the week singing praises to the “Son of David” as He rode into the city on a donkey, had another cry —

Mark 15

12 And answering again, Pilate was saying to them, “Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?” 13 And they shouted back, “Crucify Him!”

14 But Pilate was saying to them, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify Him!” 15 And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified.

And so they did! They crucified their King!

So what happened? Has there yet been a change of powers in “the kingdom of the heavens”? The One offering the kingdom to the Jews was crucified by them! So did Satan win? What does this all mean? And what does it have to do with Gentiles, who are not a part of the descendants of Abraham? Where do they fit into all of this? Is this plan of God thwarted completely?

Not at all! It is all a part of God’s overall plan. The fulfillment of these things had to take place in the way of Old Testament prophecies concerning the eternal plans and purposes of God. We’ll see more of the unfolding of God’s plan as we continue. This week’s lecture is an important one. Don’t miss it! See you there.