

PRELIMINARY

This month we will conclude our study of Christ in the OT. Including today, there will be three remaining sessions in this study. On May 1 I will begin a study of the two Thessalonian letters, which both have an emphasis on the end times, making the next class, in some respects, an appropriate coda to the conclusion of *this* class.

PREFACE

Human beings are notoriously short-sighted; they cannot see over the horizon. God, on the other hand, not only is not short-sighted, He can see backwards to before time began all the way to when the progression of time, as we know it, will end—and all in the same moment!

So, as we have seen in this study, when God makes a promise, He keeps it. But what makes His promises potentially frustrating for man, is that the fulfillment of any given promise may come tomorrow, may come a year hence, a generation hence, or several thousand years hence! Further complicating things, His promise may have an initial, *partial* fulfillment that does not exhaust the potential, fuller realization of the promise.

Thus Israel, based on its study of their Scriptures (OT), knew there would some day be a Messiah, and that that Messiah would be a king. They placed great stock in this promise—but they were short-sighted. They rejected—and still reject—Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah because they did not see in Him the fulfillment of their idea of a king: all powerful, ruling with a rod of iron, vanquishing all enemies. Jesus *was* that sort of king—just not yet. That realization is somewhere over the horizon.

In this session we will see, first, what Israel saw in their Scriptures. Then we will see, in the NT, the moment—still future—when those promises will come to full fruition. And, as in our previous session, we'll not concern ourselves with the ordered sequence of events; that will come in our study of the Thessalonian letters. We will just examine the prophesied moment in time.

JEREMIAH 33

We begin in the book of Jeremiah. In Chapter Thirty-three Of Jeremiah Yahweh addresses His prophet, and after briefly describing the scene as it is (the imminent fall of Jerusalem to Babylonia) He informs Jeremiah that there will come a day when all this is reversed—that there will come a day when Israel will be restored, the two nations reunited, and Jerusalem will stand as a shining light to the nations of the world.

Read Jeremiah 33:6-9.

Most of us—especially those who have had major surgery—can attest to the fact that repair and healing are very often accomplished through pain. The Lord describes a wonderful time of restoration. He speaks of cleansing the nation of its sin and rebellion, of restoring its good name. But, as we will see, that restoration will come as a result of pain, suffering, and death for some.

Meanwhile the Lord takes this opportunity to remind Jerusalem, through Jeremiah, that He has not forgotten His covenant with the house of David.

Read Jeremiah 33:14-18.

To the ancient Hebrew this was Messiah-talk. This “Branch of David” would “execute justice and righteousness on the earth.” Naturally any Jew would hear in this, *Messiah will come and execute justice against all those who have been persecuting us*. True, but what they ignored was that this same Messiah would execute justice against *them*, as well. They had been so rebellious and sinful against their God, abandoning His righteous laws for vile and despicable practices, that Jerusalem was about to be destroyed, and them sent into exile. That, too, was part of His justice.

The trustworthiness of all these promises—the eternal Davidic line, the eternal priesthood (both fulfilled in Messiah), the restoration of Israel after Messiah judges the nations (including Israel)—all could be confirmed by simply paying attention to the clockwork regularity of Yahweh’s creation.

Read Jeremiah 33:19-22.

Does the sun rise every morning? Does it set every night? Do the stars come out when it is dark? The Lord said to Jeremiah, *My covenant with Israel is as dependable as night following day*.

PSALM 2

I’m not sure we, still in flesh, can comprehend the full cosmic impact of the resurrection of Christ, which we just celebrated last Sunday. As mere humans, limited in our understanding, limited in our perception, we rejoice in the fact that Jesus our Savior conquered the grave and still lives. Certainly true, of course.

But for a window onto the meaning of the resurrection from heaven’s perspective, look at what Paul said to the Jews at Antioch in Acts 13, where Paul quotes Psalm 2.

Read Acts 13:30-34.

As Walter C. Kaiser points out,

[In Christ’s resurrection] the end has already begun overtaking the past. The first resurrection Sunday is the “today” in the mind of the psalmist. God has given Christ a name, rank, and authority that correspond to the new turn of events His plan took when He rose from the dead. “Begetting,” in this sense of the term, means the establishment of the official relationship and the installation into a new sphere of service...

Remember what Jesus said to Pilate, when asked if He was the king of the Jews? Jesus said, in part,

“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.” (John 18:36)

Jesus the Messiah is no mere king of a tiny Jewish nation. As Jews from time immemorial have said as part of their blessing before each meal, He is “King of the world.” The moment He stepped out of the tomb, that reign began, and will culminate in His return to earth in power and judgment and, yes, wrath. When He returns His kingly scepter will be, as it were, a “rod of iron.”

Psalms 2—one of the most cinematic Scripture passages in the Bible—famously narrates the moment Christ returns and takes the Davidic throne on Mount Zion. The scene opens with the nations of the world in open rebellion against both Yahweh and His Anointed One.

Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,
“Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!” (Psalms 2:1-3)

Note: the nations—*goyim* (Gentiles)—are battling both Yahweh and His Messiah. And what is Yahweh’s response to this war against God?

He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them. (Psalms 2:4)

scoffs^{nasb,niv}, **hold in derision**^{kjvs,esv} = *la’ag* = a primitive root; to deride; by implication **(as if imitating a foreigner) to speak unintelligibly** :- have in derision, laugh (to scorn), mock (on), stammering.

You can just see Almighty God, sitting upon His throne, holding His sides as He ridicules the puny nations of the earth shaking their collective fists at Him. But then, in a flash (which reveals that He was never *really* amused by their behavior), His laughter turns to fury.

Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
“But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”
“I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord:
He said to Me, ‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.’” (Psalms 2:5-7)

Now, think visually; think cinematically. We have to, somehow, conjure up some fantastical mental imagery to appreciate what is going on here. Think of those swirling, overlapping moments in a film when the director wants to illustrate several different events merging into one, becoming something greater than just the collection of its component parts.

When Christ died on the cross, we know from the gospel narratives that incredibly powerful physical phenomena occurred. Day turned to night, the temple veil was torn in two, there was a tremendous earthquake that split rocks in two and tore open graves. Cosmically, something similar took place when Jesus rose from the grave. Several moments that are, to us, separated by time, are mysteriously connected—even, somehow, synonymous—from the perspective of heaven.

The “installation” of Yahweh’s King (v6), the “begetting” of His Son (v7), Christ’s resurrection, His “[sitting] down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12) after His resurrection, and His return to earth to be installed upon the Davidic throne in Jerusalem—all these are not just *related* to Messiah’s kingship, but somehow, supernaturally spanning all time, swirled into one cosmic event.

There is no superscription assigning this second psalm to King David, but it clearly was written by Him. And it's not hard to imagine David, writing v6, seeing himself being crowned as king in Zion, which has always been a synonym for Jerusalem. But there is another Zion.

Read Hebrews 12:22-24.

See how these events seem to swirl together, losing their connection to any one place or time?—all of which serves to make us seem very small, and God seem very large.

Verses 8 and 9 of Psalm 2 speak of Christ's inheritance and His marching orders.

'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'" (Psalms 2:8-9)

The "Me" is God the Father; the "Your" is Messiah, God's Son; the "them" are the nations—the *goyim*, Gentiles. But we know from other passages that Israel, too, will be judged in this day. The Psalm closes with some sage advice for these people on earth (apparently from the psalmist; no longer Yahweh speaking).

Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.
Worship the Lord with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.
Do homage to [i.e., kiss, worship] the Son,
that He not become angry,
and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Psalms 2:10-12)

ISAIAH 24

In Isaiah 24 we have, a most vivid picture of the earth-shattering judgment that Christ brings with His return. This is world-wide, and affects not just Jew and Gentile, but "the kings of the earth" and "the host of heaven on high." Let's begin at v17.

Terror and pit and snare
Confront you, O inhabitant of the earth.
Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit,
And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare;
For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake.
The earth is broken asunder,
The earth is split through,
The earth is shaken violently.
The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard
And it totters like a shack,
For its transgression is heavy upon it,
And it will fall, never to rise again. (Isaiah 24:17-20)

Now this prophecy reaches its climax in the last three verses.

So it will happen in that day,
That the Lord will punish the host of heaven on high,
And the kings of the earth on earth. (Isaiah 24:21)

Here is universal judgment. No king or emperor or president or prime minister will escape this judgment, and the punishment of “the host of heaven” probably refers to Satan and his evil minions—which we will see in a moment. Verse 22 tells us what will happen to them.

They will be gathered together
Like prisoners in the dungeon,
And will be confined in prison;
And after many days they will be punished. (Isaiah 24:22)

We need to pause for a moment on this word translated “punished,” for here we have, once again, a word that is translated all sorts of ways.

punished, visited^{kjv} = *paqad* = a primitive root; **to visit (with friendly or hostile intent)**; by analogy to oversee, muster, charge, care for, miss, deposit, etc. :- appoint, × at all, avenge, bestow, (appoint to have the, give a) charge, commit, count, deliver to keep, be empty, enjoin, go see, hurt, do judgment, lack, lay up, look, make, × by any means, miss, number, officer, (make) overseer, have (the) oversight, punish, reckon, (call to) remember (-brance), set (over), sum, × surely, visit, want.

All of our modern versions translate this as “punished,” while the KJV translates it “be visited”—which is both more literal and more ambiguous, as the definition of the word points out. The venerable scholar William Wilson writes that “the word includes both a judicial and a merciful visitation.” Which brings us to Walter C. Kaiser’s translation: “released.”

Kaiser interprets this as a foreshadowing of the imprisonment of Satan and his angels recorded in Revelation 20. If it is, then we see that what the prophet Isaiah knew only as “many days,” John specifies as a thousand years.

Read Revelation 20:1-3, 7-8.

Then Isaiah concludes his prophecy on a triumphant and glorious note.

Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed,
For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
And His glory will be before His elders. (Isaiah 24:23)

K&D point out that “the two great lights of heaven [will become] (according to a Jewish expression) ‘like a lamp at noonday’ in the presence of such glory.”

The light emanating from the reigning King, Christ upon the throne of Zion, will be so great that the sun will seem like a 40-watt bulb at noonday in the desert!