

Calling the Bride

“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” – John 8:32

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WHY JESUS HAS TO BE THE MESSIAH

I was surprised to learn that the Hebrew scholars do not regard Daniel on the same level as the other prophets. The reasons they give is that there can be no prophet during a captivity and Daniel did not receive his instructions directly from God but through intermediaries - angels. Therefore they do not include Daniel's prophecies with the other prophets. They ignore the fact that Daniel received visions directly from the Lord and he would have had to hear personally from God in order to interpret dreams, which he did. I think the real reason Daniel is not taken seriously is because none of his prophecies line up with what the Jews want to believe about their future in the latter days.

The Jews envision their messiah coming and ruling the world with them. The Christians also believe that they will rule with the Messiah Jesus when He returns. However, because the Jews have rejected the true Messiah Jesus, they are operating outside of the will of God. They are currently pushing for the building of the third temple and they believe that the messiah will not come until the temple is erected. Then the messiah, who they see as a mere man, will come and instigate a world peace, the Jews will be exalted and everything will be wonderful. They fail to take into consideration that if their messiah is a mere man, then that perfect world will only last as long as his lifetime. Enjoy it while you can.

There are prophecies of a world healed of its infirmities, but in order to understand how the Bible reveals the fulfillment of a coming utopian future, we must begin by examining Daniel's prophecies and how they co-ordinate with the rest of scripture.

One of Daniel's portraits of the future is in the ninth chapter of his prophecy which is known as the “Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.” In this chapter we are shown that Daniel had been reading the prophet Jeremiah and he discovered that Jeremiah had foretold that the captivity would last seventy years. We can imagine Daniel's exhilaration when he realized that their seventy year sentence had reached its conclusion. This knowledge propelled Daniel into a heartfelt and earnest prayer of repentance for his sins and the sins of his people. In response to that prayer, Daniel was visited by an angel who revealed the secrets of the future to this one who was to God “greatly beloved.”

Daniel is told that Jerusalem, which had been destroyed would be rebuilt along with the temple. The city would be destroyed again, but before that an anointed one would be killed (Daniel 9:26). Some translations interpret anointed one as Messiah. Now let's stop here and take a look at the history that has already been fulfilled.

After the captivity, the Jews were restored to the holy land. The Persian king Cyrus ordered the temple to be rebuilt. Jesus came before that temple was destroyed, and He prophesied that the city would be annihilated because she “did not know the time of her visitation” (Luke 19:44); that the Messiah had come. Her rejection of the “anointed one” resulted in His being killed. The city and the temple were destroyed by Titus in 70AD (just as the Lord had prophesied), forty years after Jesus' death and

resurrection from the dead.

This fulfills Daniel's prophecy perfectly. Even if the Jews did not recognize Jesus as the messiah at that time, they still acknowledge that He did miracles. The secular Jewish historian Josephus also recorded that Jesus did miracles, which certainly would qualify Him as being anointed. So we see in Daniel's prophecy the anointed one killed before the destruction of the city, and the “prince that is to come” emerges from the people who destroyed the city in 70 AD (verse 26).

We have to understand at this point, the element of duality in this prophecy in regards to the city's invasion and destruction. It may happen again. Jesus' prophecy in Matthew twenty-four is clearly speaking about another attack on Jerusalem in the generation before He returns.

Today the Jews have returned and are returning to the nation of Israel. They are currently awaiting a “prince that is to come,” who they believe will be their long awaited messiah. But Daniel's prophecies do not reveal a benevolent deliverer, but quite the opposite. Another piece to the puzzle is added in Daniel's chapter eleven.

This chapter is in two parts. The first part from verses twenty-one through thirty-one describes the advent of Antiochus Epiphanes, an evil ruler who was dedicated to destroying the Jews' religion. Antiochus was eventually defeated by the Maccabees which is foreshadowed in verses thirty-two through thirty-five of Daniel's prophecy. These verses serve as a bridge that transitions us to the picture of the final prince that is to come, the antichrist, (Daniel 11:36-45) of whom Antiochus is a foreshadow. We can see that this villain will be operating through the great tribulation of the latter days, also prophesied by Jesus which is known as the time of Jacob's trouble (Matthew 24:21, Daniel 12:1). In Daniel's prophecy we see that this time continues until the very end and all history cumulates at the last judgment at the feet of the Ancient of Days, God Himself.

Then we have to ask, where is the Jew's vision of them ruling the world from Jerusalem with their messiah in prophecy? When are those prophecies of a warless world fulfilled?

So far we have seen that the “anointed one” that was killed before the destruction of the second temple was Jesus, who prophesied that He would return as “lightning” (Matthew 24:27). It is here we need to examine Zechariah's prophecy which was deposited through his pen by the Lord to complete the picture of the future initiated by Daniel.

We see in verses one and two of Zechariah's message, that Israel is enduring yet another brutal captivity. This correlates to the time of Jacob's trouble which is the tribulation. This judgment was prophesied by Ezekiel. God would bring Israel's enemies upon them (Ezekiel 36:16,) and this captivity would continue until the Lord's return as we are shown in Zechariah's prophecy.

We see in Zechariah that it is God who descends upon the Mount of Olives, the place from which Jesus also prophesied of this event in His Olivet discourse (Matthew 24:3).

When Jesus returns He destroys the world's oppressors including the antichrist and the beast, the last world empire. He then begins His rule from Jerusalem. The prophecies of the time frame of His rule vary in the accounts in the Apocrypha in II Esdras and the Book of Revelation. Esdras is told by an angel that this time will encompass 400 years. In Revelation it is one thousand years. In either case this time is far longer than a mere man can live.

Because Jesus is God manifest in human flesh (I Timothy 3:16), Jesus' reign of peace will last far longer than a man's average lifetime. This is one reason why Jesus had to come twice, once to be the last sacrifice for the sins of the people fulfilling all the foreshadows of the temple services and the prophecies in the Old Testament. After His resurrection from the dead He ascended and received His resurrected body which would enable Him to live forever and reign on earth for such a long time.

This same Jesus who is the image of God (Colossians 1:15) who dined with Abraham, (Genesis 18) will be the finale of all the Jew's expectations and they will finally be able to "Look upon Me (God the Father) whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him (Jesus the Messiah) as one mourns for his only son" (Zechariah 12:10).

When all the prophecies concerning the messiah in the scriptures are taken into consideration, they only paint one portrait, no matter how many attempts are made to circumvent them. Jesus has to be the messiah because there is no other benevolent anointed one appearing in scripture after the destruction of the temple in 70AD. The antichrist, the evil prince that is to come is the false messiah that will deceive the Jews and all those who reject Jesus. According to the notes on Daniel eleven in the Holman Bible, one ancient manuscript describes this "prince that is to come" arriving upon "the wings of horrors."

The Jews will never rule with their "messiah" from Jerusalem, except for possibly a brief interlude of deception before the antichrist demands to be worshipped in the place of God (I Thessalonians 2:3,4), the "abomination of desolation" (Matthew 24:15, Daniel 9:27).

While the Jew's vision will never be fulfilled as they have imagined, the repentant survivors of the time of Jacob's trouble, will be privileged to serve under the Anointed One that was killed, resurrected and supernaturally returns to be the true King as He always was and is, the Messiah Jesus. *Adapted from the book "Why Jesus has to be the Messiah" by H.D. Shively*

Joy at the Wailing Wall

I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God. - Ezekiel 39:29

One of the pastors I know has a technical job that has taken him all over the world. On an assignment in Israel he became good friends with one of the Jewish men he had trained. Through this friendship the pastor received an insider's tour of the Holy land, visiting sites that are not normally included in most of the paid tours.

"This is the place where David slew Goliath," the pastor was told as he gazed at the landscape that sheltered the memory of David's victory over the Philistine giant.

One day the pastor and his friend decided to visit the Wailing Wall, the place where Jews come from all over the world to pour out their prayer requests before God.

During the course of their friendship, the pastor had been sharing his Christian faith with his Jewish friend and had answered the other man's questions about Jesus and why He is the prophesized Messiah.

As the two men neared the wailing wall, the pastor began to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit very strongly. The presence intensified as they reached the Wall and the pastor could not hold back his tears. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit descended from the top of the wall, much like the first outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost described in the second chapter of the book of Acts in the Bible.

"It was like a wave," the pastor told me.

It was so strong it brought both of the men to their knees. The pastor looked over at his friend who was sobbing. It was at that moment the Jewish man received the Lord Jesus as his Messiah.

The Apostle Paul tells us that God has not cast away His people (Romans 11:1). And even though they have rejected Him by their rejection of the Messiah, they are still beloved for "the father's sakes," the patriarchs (Romans 11:28). We are assured by the Apostle, who was himself an Israelite, that among the multitudes of Israel there would be a remnant saved by the grace of the Lord (Romans 9:27, 11:4,5). And ultimately when the Lord comes the second time, the Jews will behold their Messiah who has returned to them supernaturally; *"For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even to the west; so also shall the coming of the Son of man be....the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven (figurative of demonic powers being broken) and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" - Matthew 24:27, 29,30.* Jesus' supernatural return to earth is also recorded in Zechariah 14, where He descends on the Mount of Olives to defend His people who have endured a second captivity under the antichrist.

It is at this time God tells us through the prophet Zechariah that *"I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:9). And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, (God was in Messiah reconciling the world to Himself, II Cor. 5:19) and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10, 11).*

While blindness in part has happened to Israel (Romans 11:25) blocking their view of who Jesus really is, at that day "all Israel shall be saved" as Paul assures us in Romans 11:26. A fountain of mercy and forgiveness shall be released, like the wave of the Holy Spirit that descended upon the pastor's friend, and after a time of mourning, the tears of repentance will turn into tears of abundant joy.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life - Zechariah 13:1, John 3:16.