When Will the Messiah Return?

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MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
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WHEN WILL THE MESSIAH RETURN?

THE DANGERS OF PRE-TRIBULATIONISM

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as *TWOT* for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)
CJSB: Complete Jewish Study Bible (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
ECB: *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encylopaedia Judaica*
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: Greek New Testament
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: King James Version
Lattimore: The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)

LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: Septuagint
m. Mishnah
MT: Masoretic Text
NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)
NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: New English Bible (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: New International Version (1984)
NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)
NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
NKJV: New King James Version (1982)
NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
NLT: New Living Translation (1996)
NT: New Testament
OT: Old Testament
REB: Revised English Bible (1989)
RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition
v(s). verse(s)
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
Vul: Latin Vulgate
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)
WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

THE END-TIMES: WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT?

When a person becomes a new Believer in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) and embarks into his or her own study of the Scriptures, there can be many questions, as answers to many topics are sought, especially in regard to the Last Days or the end-times.[iii] A critical question asked by many who are searching is: **"What should I expect?"** A person may confide is his or her friends or Bible teachers with various questions and inquiries, and in many cases may accept their views at face value. But after further examination, though, a Bible student may find such views of Scripture to be inaccurate or incomplete.

As we tread into the Twenty-First Century, many are expecting prophetic related events to occur, such as the rapture or a great evangelistic revival, so the question "What should we expect?" poses some legitimate concern in light of what many are predicting and anticipating.

What should you expect? The answers can be found in the pages of the Bible. Not surprisingly, the Disciples asked Yeshua a similar question:

> "As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (Matthew 24:3, NASU; cf. Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7).

Yeshua then proceeded to speak in what is commonly called the Olivet Discourse. It is recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Matthew 24 is widely considered the most thorough of all the chapters, and provides an excellent outline of what God's people should expect concerning the End of the Age. I will follow the dialogue the Messiah gives in this text, and provide my own commentary. While you will see many things which you have probably already heard in others' teachings on the Last Days, you will also encounter some of my own unique approaches, some of it from an

[iii] This chapter is reproduced from J.K. McKee, *Introduction to Things Messianic* (McKinney, TX: Messianic Apologetics, 2022).

interpretation of the text, and all of it conditioned by my Messianic experience.

INTENSE DECEPTION

> **"And Yeshua answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Messiah," and will mislead many'"** (Matthew 24:4-5, NASU; cf. Mark 13:5-6; Luke 21:8).

Yeshua began His teaching on the end-times, by explaining to His disciples the need for them not to be misled or deceived. This sort of deception could involve any number of matters. It could include Biblical teachings on salvation, the end-times, general doctrine, and/or the need for the Messiah's followers simply to be on guard as to what they hear or study pertaining to faith.

Many in today's generation are deceived, living perverse or ungodly lifestyles. This unfortunately includes many who profess to be born again Believers, yet do not live a life consistent with the Holy Scriptures and the example of the Messiah. Consider how the Apostle Paul wrote Timothy,

> "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these" (2 Timothy 3:1-5, NASU).

While these sinful things have been present in the lives of people for centuries, they are disturbingly growing to a great degree among people who claim faith in the Lord.

Another important statement of the Messiah's to contemplate, is how He warned, "For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah!' and they will lead many astray" (Matthew 24:5, NRSV). The exact intention of the verse can be cryptic, as Yeshua said that many would come in His name saying, "I am the Messiah." Does this mean that there will be people proclaiming Yeshua to be the Savior? Or, does this mean that there will be people saying that *they* are "the messiah"?

It can be noted that there have been many disturbed individuals throughout religious history, either claiming to be "Jesus Christ reincarnated" or "the messiah." If you go to Israel on a tour, you may encounter people actually claiming to be any number of Biblical characters,

from King David to John the Baptist to Elijah the Tishbite, telling you that the end is at hand—the so-called phenomenon of Jerusalem Syndrome. Also, we need to recognize how there are many religious figures which come in "the name of Christ" who are "miniature messiahs" unto themselves, or to their followers. Such personalities may have blind followings of those who do not question or confirm Biblical truth in their teachings. Anyone claiming the authority of the Messiah must be tested by Scripture, to see if what he or she says is truly upheld by the Word. Otherwise, such a person may fall into the category of those claiming the name of the Messiah, who the Lord has issued warnings about.

In reference to His First Coming, Yeshua said, "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him" (John 5:43, NASU). Yeshua asserted how He was acting on the authority of His Father, whereas another—or others—would come in their own authority and would be received by the masses. As it is prophesied of the antimessiah/antichrist, "he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven" (Revelation 13:6, NASU). The antimessiah will come on his own merit and deny the authority of the Creator God, whereas the true Messiah came on the authority of His Father.

As might also be suggested, those coming in the name of the Lord, while truly not being of the Lord, are in violation of the Third Commandment (Exodus 20:7). When religious leaders come in the name of God claiming "God told me this" or "the Lord showed me a vision"—and such statements are blindly followed and have no substantial basis to them—those making the claims might very well fall into the category which Yeshua has warned about in Matthew 24:4-5.

It should be the goal of all Believers to be well versed in the Holy Scriptures and be able to discern what is happening, especially with those who claim Yeshua in some way. As James the Just taught, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (James 1:22, NASU). In "doing" God's Word, Believers are required to have discernment![iv]

[iv] Note that one significant area that requires discernment, where myriads of people have been found speaking presumptuously, regards failed end-time predictions—where people pick Date X for the Second Coming and then nothing happens.

WARS AND NATURAL PHENOMENON

> **"You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but *that* is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs"** (Matthew 24:6-8, NASU; cf. Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9-11, 25-26).

Yeshua foretells that there will be rumors and talk of wars. Any well-researched political analyst should be able to tell you that there are patterns and events occurring throughout the world which can lead to gross global instability. Volatile regions such as the Balkans, North Korea, Northern Ireland, Taiwan, and the Middle East indicate that any number of events could occur—ranging from small-scale terrorism to a rogue state detonating nuclear weapons. Since September 11, 2001 and the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, all are aware of the threat of global terrorism. Since 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, all are also aware of the threat of biological diseases, and what they can do both economically as well as socially.

Yeshua has also said that in addition to wars and rumors of wars occurring, there will be various natural phenomena taking place. As many noted pre-millennial prophecy teachers have taught, the past half of the Twentieth Century saw a rise in the recorded occurrences of: natural disasters, including earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and drought. These things, of course, have always existed, but in the Last Days there are going to be catastrophic global changes which negatively affect far more people than they had in the past.

Probably the most important aspect of Yeshua's admonition in this chapter is witnessed in His statement, "All these *are* the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:8, KJV). Although these various signs are important, they do *not* necessarily signal that the Messiah's return is right around the corner. Many of these various phenomena have been occurring for the past century, and God's people today should expect that they will continue well into the Twenty-First Century at a steady pace. It would be complacent for any of us not to follow both the talk of world conflict and the occurrence natural of disasters. As the Lord has stated, "*those things* must take place; but *that is* not yet the end" (Mark 13:7b, NASU). These are various roadmarkers that God's plan is moving forward, but they do not compose *the sign* that the Last Days are ready to be consummated.

PERSECUTION OF BELIEVERS

"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another" (Matthew 24:9-10, NASU; cf. Mark 13:9, 11-13; Luke 21:12-19).

Yeshua issued warnings that those who have faith in Him will be taken before political and religious leaders and be killed. He further explained,

> "But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to *the* courts, and you will be flogged in *the* synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them...When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:9, 11, NASU).

Today such persecution does exist, but we think that is often limited to areas where belief in Jesus is illegal or taboo. In the West, many today who believe in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) have not had to experience the type of persecution mentioned here, where one's life is actually in danger because of the gospel. Total worldwide persecution of Believers is a major sign that God's people are in the Last Days. Quite shockingly, the Messiah also warned of betrayals which would take place by those in whom His followers may trust the most—their own family:

> "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put *some* of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name" (Luke 21:16-17, NASU).

Many of us should be able to recall from world history how many children in dictatorial countries were conditioned to spy on their parents, to see if they held resentment to the authoritarian regime or were in any way opposed to it. Many parents who did not approve of the deeds or policies of Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, or other despotic leaders were often imprisoned, beaten, and executed. Will such a situation exist again when the antimessiah comes to power? It is guaranteed.

Yeshua taught that when His followers would be persecuted and brought before the authorities, to "not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:11, NASU). The Lord further directed, "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you

utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute" (Luke 21:13-15, NASU). And, as Paul so eloquently wrote, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*" (Ephesians 6:12, NASU).[v]

The Messiah plainly taught, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, KJV). He also prayed to His Father, "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*" (John 17:15, NASU). Our call as His followers is to "sanctify Messiah as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15, NASU).

Believers in the Messiah Yeshua are told to expect persecution. It will be on an intense rise as His return approaches.

FALSE PROPHETS

> **"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many"** (Matthew 24:11, NASU).

Yeshua's warning in Matthew 24:11 is a reemphasis of what He said previously in Matthew 24:4b: "See to it that no one misleads you" (NASU). Yeshua warned that false prophets or those not speaking the truth would deceive or fool many people in the end-times. Today, these sorts of individuals may preach religious tolerance or that they are the only ones with "the truth." They may vary from having a massive following to a small following. Yeshua hardly limited false prophets to any one denomination or group, so it would be naïve of any Messianic person to think that false prophets could somehow not *ever* be Messianic, in addition to being Christian, Jewish, etc. The admonition to His followers continues to be ***to test*** what one hears by the words of Scripture, and a witness of the Holy Spirit. As the Messiah said regarding false teachers and false prophets,

> "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble" (Luke 17:2, NASU).

In the category of false prophets, this does sadly include many in the contemporary charismatic movement who claim to be "modern day prophets of God," but whose motivation is mainly to promote themselves

[v] The armor of God in Ephesians 6:13-17 is directly derived from the Tanach, per Paul's quotes from Isaiah 11:1-5; 59:14-18 (cf. Wisdom 5:17-20).

and see so-called "signs and wonders" rather than see people turn to Him in repentance.[vi] We can also include many teachers who have actually claimed to be "prophets," who have made false predictions and prognostications about contemporary world events and the Last Days, yet in the long run have led people astray *and* have been responsible for turning people off to the prophetic message of Scripture altogether.

Not surprisingly, the Tanach (Old Testament) also has issued warnings to God's people regarding the rise of false prophets:

> "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the LORD. They keep saying to those who despise Me, "The LORD has said, 'You will have peace'"; and as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, they say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.' But who has stood in the council of the LORD, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath, even a whirling tempest; it will swirl down on the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; in the last days you will clearly understand it" (Jeremiah 23:16-20, NASU).

The Lord Himself issued warnings that there will be false prophets in the Last Days. Many of these false prophets will doubtlessly say things like, "You will have peace" and "Calamity will not come upon you." It could be easily argued that *this is the same message promoted by many who support a pre-tribulation rapture escape.* Many pastors today tell their congregations, "There is no verse in the Bible that says you have to experience one second of the Tribulation." This is a very strident claim for such people to make, especially when one of the next admonitions Yeshua issued to His followers was that they were to endure to the end. (Many pastors are not purposefully deceptive, but instead say this as a sound byte to stir the crowd, not having really examined the relevant passages of Scripture.)

Could some of these individuals perhaps classify as being false prophets as described by Jeremiah? As the Lord said, "in the last days you will clearly understand it." If we are living in the Last Days, then are things beginning

[vi] Please understand that as a continuist I fully believe that the gifts of the Spirit are for today. The most significant of such gifts are "all joy and peace in believing" (Romans 15:13, NASU). Contrary to this, I fear that many so-called signs (undocumentable within the broad window of canonical or deutero-canonical Scripture, Church tradition, and much of Church history through the Protestant Reformation) like gold flakes, diamonds and rubies, or "manna" appearing on Bibles—as seen at many charismatic conferences today—likely constitute false signs. (That is, if they are not some kind of staged parlor tricks.)

to make more sense? If we are not quite living in the Last Days, then what else needs to be understood?

LAWLESSNESS

> **"Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold"** (Matthew 24:12, NASU).

Yeshua's admonition, in regarding a future rise of *lawlessness*, is often a topic which contemporary evangelicalism does not tend to address. Many who do address this, only classify the coming lawlessness as exclusively being some kind of societal anarchy or gross dismissal of constitutional law and justice. But, as the Apostle John asserted, "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4), meaning that this is a dismissal of God's Torah or Law. The CJSB notably renders Matthew 24:12 as, "many people's love will grow cold because of increased distance from *Torah*." To us as Messianic people, this verse has two critical components.

Socially, much of the foundation for civilized Western society comes from a basis in the Ten Commandments and in the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), the Torah or the Pentateuch. Current liberal trends in theology, however, have rendered the Tanach or Old Testament to little or no affect, the Bible has largely been removed from schools, and many treat God's Word as a collection of fairy tales. The Torah, specifically, includes an important moral and ethical code, *and* the consequences for breaking it. Penalties such as death were incorporated into Scripture, so that when a society such as Ancient Israel saw the result of what happened by murdering, kidnapping, raping, or committing a host of other high offenses—it would deter that crime from being committed. The text of Matthew 24:12 not only implies that people will not want to love their neighbor as the Torah commands (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5; cf. Matthew 22:36-38; Mark 12:28-31), but that society will have devolved to the point of significant lawlessness—direct defiance of God's Law—being commonplace. *And the sad thing is that people will really not seem to care about it.*

The second aspect of this involves how Yeshua's followers are to approach the Torah. Much of contemporary Christianity believes that the Torah or Law of Moses was abolished by Jesus, that (any of) the commandments given at Mount Sinai are no longer for Believers to consider as righteous instruction to be followed, and that the Law was "nailed to the cross." But has such an approach really helped contemporary Christianity? *Not at all.* The truth of the matter is that *the penalty* of the Torah pronounced upon sinners was what was placed and absorbed by Yeshua on

the tree (Colossians 2:14). The penalty of the Law was nailed to the cross; the Law itself was not. In regard to the Last Days and God's Torah, Yeshua notably said,

> "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law **until all is accomplished.** Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17-19, NASU).

Yeshua clearly said that the Torah and Prophets would remain valid instruction *until all the prophecies contained in them* were completed or accomplished, which has yet to happen. In fact, they will not be fully accomplished until the New Jerusalem comes to the New Earth at the end of the Millennium, and the redeemed enter into eternity. Yeshua directed that those who keep the commandments of the Torah, and encourage others to do so, would be considered great in the Kingdom of God. Penalties would be assigned to those who would not teach the significance of the Torah's commandments.

If God's Torah is not followed, then great problems will manifest themselves. As Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law" (NASU). The lessening of Biblical ethics and morality can be directly traced to people disrespecting the Torah and Tanach. There is a severe warning seen in Jude about how lawlessness can secretly creep in:

> "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Yeshua the Messiah" (Jude 4, NASU).

Jude attests to those "who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality" (ESV). Licentiousness is one believing himself or herself to have the license to do as one pleases, regardless of God's instruction, and perhaps even regardless of Divine consequences. *Many evangelical Believers today are expressing a great interest in the Old Testament*, because they know that by widely ignoring it the contemporary Church has not at all been helped. Contrary to the unrighteous, God's people faithful to Him will be following *His commandments* in the Last Days (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). As the Apostle John's words should remind us, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (1

John 5:3, NASU), as one's heart and motives are transformed by His Spirit. Even though lawlessness may be present, righteousness will shine through (Daniel 12:3)!

ENDURING TO THE END

> **"But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved"** (Matthew 24:13, NASU; cf. Mark 13:13; Luke 21:19).

Many who study prophecy are perplexed by Yeshua's statement, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13, KJV). What does this mean?

So far, we have reviewed warnings and admonitions of Yeshua as they pertain to end-time deception and various phenomena which will exist in the time period prior to His return. The Messiah stated in Luke 21:26 that during this time, "Men's hearts [will fail] them for fear…for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (KJV). The Great Tribulation or second-half of Daniel's Seventieth Week will be unlike any other the world has ever seen or ever will see again (Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:19). Consequently, it is said that in the days prior to the Messiah's physical return to Planet Earth,

> "Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb'" (Revelation 6:15-16, NASU).

While there will be physical hardship during the Great Tribulation, the sort of endurance that Yeshua noted in Matthew 24:13 should not be concluded as one having to physically survive this time in order to experience eternal redemption—but instead that a person must endure in faith and not give up. Will those with weak faith give up their hope of salvation in favor of the antimessiah/antichrist? God's people need to know (regardless of if we are facing "the end" or not) that their call is to "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:12, NASU; cf. Philippians 3:14). We are told to never give up no matter the cost!

The endurance of which Yeshua spoke is striving forward in one's salvation granted to the redeemed by Him. A person physically surviving the Tribulation period, does not guarantee him or her a position in His

Kingdom, especially since it is prophesied that at the Day of the LORD—the focal point which occurs at the close of the Great Tribulation—God says "I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir" (Isaiah 13:12, NASU). This could imply that no one survives, or very very few survive this future time period, and the ones to repopulate the Millennium are those living persons who go up to meet Yeshua at His appearing, being transformed but never having died (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

The most critical inference of the Messiah telling His followers to endure, is that they are to have strong faith in Him and in Him alone. How many contemporary Christians, when put through difficult trials or tribulation, may actually be seen to abandon Jesus? How many will truly endure and make the required sacrifices? *If one is born again and filled with the Holy Spirit*, then endurance in faith should come no matter what happens.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

> **"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come"** (Matthew 24:14, NASU; cf. Mark 13:10).

The issue of the salvation message or gospel being proclaimed to the far reaches of Planet Earth, is one which has intrigued many (tele-)evangelists, especially those who place a high emphasis on prophecy. Many noted ministries have purchased vast amounts of television airtime, and others have launched their own satellites which they claim will be responsible for reaching the last groups of people who have never heard of Jesus before the Second Coming. Others believe that this passage speaks of a coming great revival which is to take place before the Messiah's return.

It has to be recognized how Matthew 24:14 says that the good news or gospel will *only* be proclaimed or declared to all nations—and with that there are even multiple definitions as to what the term "nations" means. Some feel it means literal countries, while others feel it means various ethnic groups. Some take this verse and believe that not only will the gospel be preached, but that millions upon millions (or billions) of people will come to faith in the Lord. In contrast to this conclusion, 2 Thessalonians 2:3 prophesies that the end "*will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction" (NASU). The

key word here is *apostasy*; it is a departure or rejection of the faith, not a massive embracement of it.[vii]

It is very possible, of course, that both the anticipated apostasy and the good news or gospel message being proclaimed, will be occurring simultaneously. Some will undoubtedly repent and be saved, but others will reject the message and be condemned. Yet there is also another factor to consider, as the message declared is actually "the gospel of the kingdom." *What message will be declared?* This brings us to the heart of what the Tribulation period or Seventieth Week of Israel actually is, as Daniel 9:24 explains,

> "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*" (Daniel 9:24, NASU).

The focus of the Tribulation **is to ultimately restore the Kingdom to Israel** and to make "Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:7, NASU). The Disciples asked Yeshua about the restoration of Israel's Kingdom, just before He ascended into Heaven:

> "So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, 'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.' And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:6-9, NASU).

The Messiah instructed His Disciples to fulfill a Great Commission by declaring the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection—so that others might repent and come to the knowledge of Him and be trained properly in faith (Matthew 28:18-20). But another crucial admonition involves how His followers are to pray and see that the Kingdom comes, just as Yeshua prayed, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is

[vii] Grk. *apostasia*; "defiance of established system or authority, *rebellion, abandonment, breach of faith*" (Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000], 120), or "*defection*" (H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 107).

in heaven" (Matthew 6:10, NASU). The Messiah's followers are to pray that *the Lord comes to Earth to establish the Kingdom*.

As Messianic people, we should all be aware that we are called to play an important part in the proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom of Israel, and the prophesied restoration that is to follow by Yeshua the Messiah taking His place as king from Jerusalem. The restoration of Israel ultimately involves all people who know the God *and* the Messiah of Israel, both Jewish and non-Jewish—meaning that, as important as it has been, such a restoration of Israel *goes beyond* the Zionist movement and establishment of the modern State of Israel. It certainly involves the continued development of the current Messianic movement, Paul's expectations for the salvation of the Jewish people in Romans chs. 9-11, as well as the message of Torah restoration (Micah 4:1-3; Isaiah 2:2-4). Finally and most importantly, it will involve the return of Yeshua Himself and the founding of an enlarged realm of Israel incorporating the redeemed of both Israel's natural descendants and those of the nations, the completion of what James the Just foresaw (Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:15-18). There are many elements of Israel's restoration, some of them known, and some of them not as well known, to many of today's Bible readers, which will be certainly interesting to discuss in the future as events take shape.

Consequently, the message of the good news or gospel being proclaimed to the whole world, likely involves ***both*** the message of personal salvation in Yeshua ***and*** the message of the Kingdom being fully restored to Israel. I personally believe that a substantial portion of this message will be declared by the 144,000 sealed Israelites (Revelation 7:4-8; cf. Jeremiah 16:14-21) during the Tribulation period. In the Last Days it will be evident that the world has rejected the Creator God and is a recipient of His judgment, and it will be forced to deal with the coming King of Israel. Individuals will be given the clear choice, *with all the Tribulation's judgments occurring around them*, to either receive Israel's Messiah into their lives for forgiveness and reconciliation with God—or they will be given the choice of continuing on the road to judgment with the antimessiah and his false regime.

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

> **"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** [Daniel 9:27] **which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath"** (Matthew 24:15-20, NASU).

Yeshua directed His followers to watch for the Abomination of Desolation; it is considered to be ***the sign*** to anticipate, definitively indicating that the Last Days have arrived. He specifically warned those living in Judea and around Jerusalem to escape town immediately following this event, telling them not to worry about their personal belongings. This Abomination is the same one prophesied by Daniel:

> "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week {he} shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate" (Daniel 9:27, NKJV).

From the text of Daniel 9:27, it seems necessary that animal sacrifices must be present for the Abomination of Desolation to occur. As the NASU renders Daniel 9:27b, "in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering." The grain offering very clearly cannot be allegorical as some may try to spiritualize this event, making it something that it is not.

One specific debate which exists among pre-millennialists is whether or not the Temple must be reconstructed for the Abomination of Desolation to take place. Arguably, when these prophesied animal sacrifices and grain offerings begin, they will not immediately occur in a rebuilt temple—but first at a sacrificial altar, then a tent-like tabernacle, and then finally a stone temple—if we follow the pattern of the Ancient Israelites and what Kings David and Solomon did before the First Temple was constructed. The argument that a temple *must* be reconstructed partially comes from 2 Thessalonians 2:4, in reference to the antimessiah:

> "[W]ho opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God [*ton naon tou Theou*], displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4, NASU).

This statement from Paul leads many to conclude that the Temple will be rebuilt for the man of lawlessness to show himself as God. Current trends in the Mideast Peace Process and the steady practices of the Temple Mount Faithful, suggest that one day Orthodox Jews wanting to reinstitute the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system will be able to do so, and an ultimate goal of that would certainly be the reconstruction of the Temple. The specifics of how this will take place are anyone's guess at the present time.

It is described how Messianic Jewish Believers in Jerusalem and in Judea will be affected when this event occurs (Matthew 24:16). They are told to flee and leave. A very intriguing phrase is "Pray that you will not have to escape in winter or on *Shabbat*" (Matthew 24:20, CJSB). It should not be surprising that in Israel today, the Old City of Jerusalem is widely closed to vehicles on the Sabbath. When this event does occur, whether on the Sabbath or otherwise, it seems likely that those fleeing will have to make their exit on foot and not car or bus.

Bible readers reach an impasse here with Yeshua's warning of the Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24:15-20, and the parallel accounts in the other Gospels. In Luke 21:20-24, the Messiah spoke of armies surrounding Jerusalem:

> "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:20-24, NASU).

Some have interpreted this prophecy as already having occurred in the First Century, per the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. by the Romans. Although Jerusalem's demise was certainly an important event in Jewish history, it was not the event prophesied in Luke 21:20-24, as Believers at this time did not flee to the mountains, and many had already left Jerusalem by the time of the Roman siege. Yeshua was simply telling His followers that

at the time of the Abomination of Desolation, there will be military forces surrounding Jerusalem. The "times of the Gentiles" will not be completed until Jerusalem is brought to its glory at the Second Coming of Yeshua (cf. Isaiah 62:7).

The Abomination of Desolation is the key event which faithful Believers are commanded to look for. This event signals the midpoint of Daniel's Seventieth Week and the initiation of the Great Tribulation, or the "time, times, and half a time [*idan v'idani'n u'felag idan*]" (Daniel 7:25, NASU; 12:7; Revelation 12:14) in which the antimessiah will "make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Yeshua" (Revelation 12:17, NASU).

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

> **"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short"** (Matthew 24:21-22, NASU; cf. Mark 13:19-20).

Yeshua told His followers that the Great Tribulation would be like no other time the world has experienced, specifically stating, "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:22, NIV). The details of the Great Tribulation and the events which *we can and should expect* are recorded for Bible readers in the Prophets, particularly in texts like Daniel and Zechariah, as well as in the Book of Revelation. This will be a time of great judgment upon the world for its rejection of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah, and many will die. It is implied that not only will many die, but also that if the Messiah does not come back, humanity will inevitably annihilate itself.

The world currently possesses enough weapons of mass destruction to destroy the population of our planet several times over—and so it is quite surprising why we have not destroyed ourselves yet! Some think that the Messiah's admonition of "except those days should be shortened" (Matthew 22:24, NIV), of the time period prior to His physical return, could mean that during the Great Tribulation days will be shortened from their current length of twenty-four hours. This is a possibility to consider due to prophesied Earth changes, and how there will be "a great mountain burning with fire…thrown into the sea" (Revelation 8:8, NASU).

Another possibility is that the Lord saying if the Great Tribulation were ever found to be longer than its specified length of 1,260 days (Daniel 12:11;

Revelation 11:3; 12:6), no one would survive. Given that we are trying to interpret future events, we must consider both of these possibilities.

FALSE EXPECTATIONS

> **"Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Messiah,' or 'There *He is*,' do not believe *him*. For false Messiahs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, *or*, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe *them*. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather"** (Matthew 24:23-28, NASU; cf. Mark 13:21-23).

The Messiah has repeated how His followers need to be on guard against false prophets and false signs which will be present in the time prior to His return. In relation to the Great Tribulation, a particular figure, known as the false prophet, will come and demonstrate signs and wonders pointing to the antimessiah/antichrist as being the true "anointed one":

> "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (Revelation 13:11-15, NASU).

Yeshua the Messiah has admonished, "Behold, I have told you before" (Matthew 24:23, KJV). He has also made the critical statement, "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; *or* 'Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*" (Matthew 24:26, NKJV). The CJSB renders His critical admonition as, "if people say to you…'Look, He's hidden away in a secret room!' don't believe it." Many contemporary Christian people are actually expecting a secret return of the Messiah before the beginning of the Tribulation period.

Paul indeed spoke about "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him" (2 Thessalonians 2:1, NIV), and from this, one sees how that ***both*** the holy ones or saints being gathered to meet the Messiah in the clouds, ***and*** His physical return to Planet Earth, are all part of *the same event*. If this is the case, then the return of Yeshua, according to His own words, "will be like lightning that flashes out of the east and fills the sky to the western horizon" (Matthew 24:27, NIV), **and it will not be a secret event.**

Yeshua warned His followers directly that those who would speak of a secret coming would be speaking falsehoods. Could this possibly be a reference to the popular pre-tribulation rapture doctrine? Not wanting to accuse many of our pre-tribulational brothers and sisters of being "liars," I would simply hope that pre-tribulationists are not hard and fast with their beliefs, and are open to different interpretations should the scenario they expect to not totally play out.

The words of the Messiah direct His followers not to expect a secret return to Planet Earth. He will return from Heaven in the same way He entered into Heaven, meaning "every eye will see Him" (Revelation 1:7, NASU), as opposed to Him only being visible to Believers.

THE GATHERING OF THE ELECT

> **"But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky** [Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15]**, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** [Zechariah 12:10, 14; Daniel 7:13-14] **His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other"** (Matthew 24:29-31, NASU; cf. Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:27-28).

Yeshua's words of Matthew 24:29-31 vividly describe both the Second Coming and what many call "the rapture." Matthew 24:31 details Yeshua the Messiah sending His angels to gather the elect, or all Believers dead and alive, with the sound of a trumpet call. These verses parallel the Apostle Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52:

> "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we

> will be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, NASU; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Many believe that the Messiah's gathering of His own into the clouds occurs at the beginning of the Tribulation period, but according to the Olivet Discourse, **this cannot be.** The idea that Yeshua is *only* speaking in reference to His physical arrival to Earth is very much dependent on *who* the elect are identified to be. Pre-tribulationists widely advocate that God has two groups of elect, Israel and "the Church." And by this same logic they assert that those gathered at this event are those of Israel into the Holy Land, not a gathering of the holy ones or saints into the sky to meet the Messiah in a post-tribulational event.

Our ministry is not of the position that God has two groups of elect, nor are we of the position that Israel and "the "Church" are separate entities. Dispensationalists may claim that the text of Scripture we have just analyzed (Matthew 24:1-31) is strictly for the Jewish people, because "Jesus was speaking to the Jews." Yet by this same logic, anything Jesus said to Jews is not for non-Jewish Believers in Him, so those who are not Jewish should likely ignore most of His teachings in the Gospels. (And not surprisingly, there are ultra- and hyper-dispensationalists who do advocate such false doctrine.)[viii]

What these people first fail to recognize is that if they are born again and have faith in the Messiah of Israel, Yeshua, they have been made a part of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13) or grafted-in as wild branches to Israel's olive tree (Romans 11:16-18). There are only twelve gates to enter into New Jerusalem, for the twelve tribes of Israel (Revelation 21:12), and there is no gate for a separate "Church." And certainly, ***all Believers*** will be ruling and reigning with Him from this city. In the eschaton, all of the righteous will somehow be incorporated into the community of Israel, be they physical Israel or not, by the King of Israel.

Believing that the event spoken of in Matthew 24:29-31 is for Israel is somewhat correct. What pre-tribulationists (and even many post-tribulationists) do not understand is that if they are redeemed, they are a part of the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16)—the redeemed Kingdom of Israel which will rule and reign with the Messiah from New Jerusalem.

Who goes through the Seventieth Week of Israel? *Israel.* It should not be overlooked how the Greek noun used throughout the Scriptures commonly translated "church" is *ekklēsia*—the same term which is largely used throughout the Septuagint, or ancient translation of the Hebrew Bible

[viii] A significant example of this kind of theology is represented by C.R. Stam, *Things That Differ* (Germantown, WI: Berean Bible Society, 1985).

into Greek, in regard to the *assembly* or *congregation* (Heb. *qahal*) of Israel. Knowing these things can force one to not only reevaluate the timing of the Second Coming, but also deal with who is *gathered* at that time. If we can establish that "the Church" and Israel are *not* separate entities, then other pre-tribulational arguments lose a huge amount of support.[ix]

It is very important to note that the Hebrew name *Yisrael* or Israel means "God prevails."[x] This is the Divine mandate upon the redeemed in the Messiah. Paul wrote, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Messiah Yeshua" (Philippians 3:14, NASU). One could argue from this, that if you are not somehow a part of the elect of Israel, then you are not part of the elect at all. Today's born again Christian Believers certainly are of God's elect, but many simply do not recognize that their faith heritage within God's Kingdom of Israel is something waiting for them to take a hold of and be blessed by! Even more difficult for them to see, is the need to be overcomers in the difficult times prophesied to come.

Those who have died in the faith and those who are alive at the Messiah's appearing will be brought up into the clouds to meet Him in the air, as the Scriptures clearly attest. The issue which will continue to baffle many evangelical people is not necessarily the event itself, but the timing of it and just who is involved.

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT?

Yeshua the Messiah has issued the following warning: "There! I have told you in advance!" (Matthew 24:25, CJSB). As Believers in Him, we have no excuse not to heed His warnings of the impending judgment which is to befall Planet Earth, nor are we to spurn His admonition that "this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14, NRSV), which includes *both* the good news of personal salvation *and* the news of the Millennial restoration of Israel. The Apostle Paul's words should further encourage us:

> "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8, NASU).

[ix] For a further review of ecclesiology or the study of God's elect, consult the author's publication *Are Non-Jewish Believers a Part of Israel?*

[x] J.H. Hertz, ed., *Pentateuch & Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1960), 124.

There are many other Scripture passages in relation to the Last Days or end-times, such as the Book of Daniel or the Book of Revelation. I chose Matthew 24:1-31 for this article, because it provides a valuable outline of end-time events, and it makes an excellent starting point for those who want to examine Bible prophecy in more detail. Its warnings are also important to heed, as they come directly from the Messiah Himself.

As we continue into the Twenty-First Century, many claiming Yeshua or Jesus as their Savior believe that "life as we know it" is going to end at a moment's notice, and many outside of the faith believe we stand at the dawn of a "new age." Many are expecting apocalyptic events to occur, and then many others believe that nothing will happen. *A mature follower of Israel's Messiah tries to be ready for whatever might occur.* Knowing about the end-times is an important part of our spiritual arsenal.

Yeshua Himself has said, "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*" (Matthew 24:44, NASU), because He will come in a time when most will expect least. Although this verse is usually used erroneously to support the idea of an any-moment pre-tribulation rapture escape, Matthew 24:44 does certainly imply that God's people need to be ready at all times for the return of the Lord. We can each individually go to meet Him at any time (i.e., Philippians 1:21-23), and we do need to be aware of the signs which He warned His followers about which will herald His return.

From the late 1990s through to the 2010s, many have spoken presumptuously about Biblically prophesied events—and a number of them have been associated, in some way, with the Messianic movement. As a result, many others have chosen to ignore prophetic Scriptures. Such an attitude is ill-advised and non-Biblical. Rather, a mature Messiah follower must be objective in his or her approach to the subject matter and be on the alert. Various world events have been set in motion that *can* result in the fulfillment of major Bible prophecies, but there is no guarantee that they *will*. Matthew 24:1-31 is only the starting point. A discerning Believer should be able to approach this subject matter with a cool head and a steadfast heart.

So as a Believer in Yeshua the Messiah, what should you expect pertaining to the Last Days? Certainly, one should be aware of the "birth pains" of wars, rumors of wars, and natural disasters. God's people are also commanded to watch out for false prophets, false teachers, and those who would say that the Lord's return will come in secret. A definite sign to watch for is the Abomination of Desolation in Jerusalem. Today's Messianic Believers should be aware of how the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom—a message involving the salvation of the Jewish people and

Israel's total restoration—is also an important "end-time" sign. Arguably, *it is this final element that has been the most overlooked* (and will be the most complicated to consider).

The need to address issues which surround the emergence of a mature and impactful Messianic community will be on the rise as we move closer to Yeshua's Second Coming—whether it takes place in our lifetimes or not. If the latter is to be the case, then let us take advantage of the opportunities we possess in this time of relative tranquility to prepare posterity for His return! Let us be those who have the answers that the world is seeking. For, it is the righteous behavior of the holy ones or saints which will finally herald final redemption (2 Peter 3:11-12; cf. b.*Shabbat* 118b). We have to know our place, and such a place is to be vibrant men and women empowered by God, accomplishing His tasks!