

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH

IVz. Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching (cont.)

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 21^f) First Watch c. 7:15 P.M. Wednesday, 12th Nisán (April 1), A.D. 33. Lesson: **Conditions on Earth When The Son of the (Hu)Man Returns to Earth** Mt. 24:37-42; Mk. 13:32-37

Introduction: Having examined the Lessons that The Lord Jesus taught in The Temple to the multitude and His disciples during the day on Wednesday, we then considered:

I. His exit from The Temple (6:30 P.M.) and

II. His prophetic teaching on the journey up to and upon The Mount of Olives.

After answering the disciples three questions concerning when and what signs they were to look for to indicate the Time of His Return To Earth to set up His Kingdom, He then told The Parable of The Fig Tree followed by a description of life on Earth and told five more parables. It was noted that The Lord Jesus made a clear distinction between His return in the air and His Return to the Earth to set up His kingdom with some similarities in the signs before each occurrence with the seven year Tribulation period for Israel prophesied by Daniel to occur between the two phases of His Second Advent with the Rapture, Coming for His Church in the Air before The Tribulation and His Parousia, Coming back to Earth to set up His Millennial Kingdom after The Tribulation.

A-C. Answering the Three Questions asked by Four Disciples (c. 6:40-7:00 P.M.).

The Lord Jesus answered the three questions that Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him (Mk. 13:3,4) concerning when the destruction and demolishing of Jerusalem and the Temple, His coming Parousia to set up His Kingdom, and the consummation of The Age would take place. After answering these three questions (c. 6:40-7:00 P.M.), The Lord Jesus taught a very significant and pertinent parable to His disciples.

D. The Parable of The Fig Tree and All The Living Trees c. 7:00 P.M. (Lk. 21:29,30; Mt. 24:32-36; Mk. 13:28-33; Lk. 21:31-36).

We considered six factors in connection with this unique parable concerning The Fig Tree and The Living Trees: 1. The Symbolism of The Fig Tree and All The Living Trees, 2. The Sign of The Fig Tree, 3. The Significance of The Time, 4. The Certainty of Termination, 5. The Secrecy of The Exact Time, and 6. The Seriousness for Every Regenerated Disciple to Continually Watch and Be Ready.

1. The Symbols of The Budding Fig Tree and All The Living Trees.

a. The Fig Tree Symbolizes the Nation of Israel.

(A) We related The God's description of The Land to the young generation of Israel, His chosen people, as they were about to enter The Promised Land based upon keeping His commandments **or** perish! (Please read Deut. 8:6-8,11,19,20). The God Himself described the land as one of plenteous harvest in addition to wheat and barley, vines and fig trees (v. 8). Later in Scripture The God referred to Israel as His Vineyard (Isa. 5:1-7) and The Fig Tree (Hosea 9:10).

(B) The nation of Israel in The God's determined plan was for every man to dwell safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, which occurred under Solomon's peaceful forty year reign from c. 1003-963 B.C. (1 Kings 4:25). But soon thereafter

Israel ceased to obey more and more until Isaiah in his day prophesied (c. 748-712 B.C.) of The Day of The LORD'S vengeance (34: 8) that "the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Isa. 34:4). Then again this was referred to by Jeremiah prophesied (Jer. 5:17), also by Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Zechariah.

b. All The Living Trees Symbolize all the Reestablished Gentile Nations Significant to Israel. So many nations have sprung up or battled into existence as a nation since Israel was approved by The UN on Nov, 29,1947 and declared to be a nation at Tel Aviv on May 14,1948. By 1980 there were at least 152 member nations with many more springing up in the succeeding thirty two years.

2. The Sign of The Budding Fig Tree (Mt. 24:32,33; cf. Lk. 21:30,31).

This occurrence indicates two aspects of the impending Parousia, The coming Presence of The Lord Jesus Christ back to Earth.

a. The Summer is approaching and is near (Mt. 24:32 cf. Lk. 21:30).

Prophetically summer indicates the fulfillment of Messianic teaching and the introduction to the final age before Eternity and the Millennial Reign of The Messiah and the gathering together of His Elect Ones "by-means-of the four winds from extremities of The Heavens to the extremities of them" (Mt. 24:31 APT; Mk. 13:27).

b. The Parousia, The Coming Presence of The Lord Jesus Christ, The King of kings and that The Kingdom of The God is near at ^odoors.

Not only shall the Jews be able to conclude that summer is near, but also that the anticipated and longed-for Kingdom of The God is near and indeed at the doors.

3. The Significance of The Time (Mt. 24:34; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 21:32).

The four disciples inquired of The Lord Jesus how they would know the time of His Coming Parousia. His answer indicated what must take place first before He comes again to Earth. This generation refers to the generation of people referred to in the immediate context, namely those who behold The Fig Tree, namely Israel budding and all the living trees, namely the newly established or reestablished Gentile nations sprouting up. This generation of those people shall not entirely (every single one of them) die off of themselves or through disasters or warfare until all these things come to pass. Some one or several of these people shall still be living until all these things come-to-pass.

4. The Certainty of Termination of The Age.

Because The Lord Jesus Christ never spoke from His own thinking, but from His Father's, His words shall never fail. Therefore the termination of The Age by His, Parousia (Coming Presence) is as certain as His birth, His perfect sinless Life, His crucifixion, and His Resurrection-Ascension.

5. The Secrecy of The Exact Time (Mt. 24:36 cf. v. 30c).

Although The Lord Jesus gave full and complete conditions that must be fulfilled first before His Parousia can occur. And from all those considerations an exact time was not given but those stipulations of what must precede His Parousia gave indication which

can enable discernment of the nearness thereof, but leaves a certain indefiniteness, thereby encouraging, yea urging persistency of focus and keeping constantly in mind that He **is** coming soon.

6. The Seriousness for Every Regenerated Disciple to Continually Watch and Be Ready (Lk. 21:34-36).

This is a serious matter and a deep concern that The Lord Jesus had for His Disciples and for us, both you and me. He urged us to supplicate, to implore, to earnestly and urgently intreat The Throne of Grace for ourselves to be faithful and persistently endure to the end. We all must seriously take heed to His warning to diligently watch, and while watching, persistently supplicate for ourselves in every season of time, whether it seems that the time is getting closer or there is a seeming respite of disaster occurrences or other kinds of disturbance.

Now we shall resume our study with Our Lord's Discourse on The Conditions on Earth to occur following the sprouting of The Nation of Israel and all the nations to come into existence or to resume existence after a long dormancy. Thus it is **now** in this present time.

E. Conditions on Earth When The Son of the (Hu)Man Returns to Earth c. 7:15 P.M. (Mt. 24:37-42; Mk. 13:32-37).

The Lord Jesus Christ declared Four Prevailing Behaviors Predominating upon The Earth before That Sudden Catastrophe Overtakes Humanity by the appearance of The Son of The (Hu)Man to Earth as Conquering King. These are: 1. A Disastrous Event of Sudden Destruction; 2. A Dynamic Event Causing Separation and Division; 3. A Determining Event Testing Security of Domicile from The Thief; and 4. A Disclosing Event Revealing Laxity of Stewardship.

1. A Disastrous Event of Sudden Destruction (Mt. 24:37-39; cf. Lk. 17:26,27 cf. 1 Pet. 3:20).

“³⁷In-fact even-as the days^[Gen. 6:1-13] of-the **Nōeh**, so also the coming-presence of-The Son of-The (Hu)Man shall-be. ³⁸For even-as they-were-existing ^[locative&v]in-the days which |were| before the deluge^[cataclysm], nibbling and drinking, marrying-a-woman and giving-out-women-in-marriage until which day **Nōeh** ^[Gen. 7:1]entered into the ark. ³⁹And they-did-not-know^[from-experience] until the deluge came and it-carried-off^[utterly-destroyed every-one (Lk. 17:27e APT)] all individually. In-this-way also the coming-presence of-The Son of-the (Hu)Man^[generic] shall-be” (Mt. 24:37-39; Lk. 17:26,27 APT).

a. In the days of Noah the people were occupied with material, physical, and social living with no consideration of the spiritual and eternal aspects of life, nor consideration for The God even though The Spirit of The **LORD** had been striving with mankind for two thousand one hundred years. Then for 120 more years the message that His messenger, Noah brought to the people was rejected and no preparation for the future and life after death was made nor even considered.

b. They ignored the message that His messenger brought, but more they resisted persuasion to prepare for an event of which they could not conceive, never happened before and therefore was ignored (1 Pet. 3:20).

“²⁰to-ones resisting-persuasion when once^[for ever] the longsuffering of-The God was-patiently-waiting { } {eagerly-in-expectation (TR) [locative &v]}in-days of-**Nōeh** ^[Gen. 6:3-5,13,14]while-ark -was-being-completely-made-ready, in^[eis for &v] which few, that^[this] is eight souls, were-

brought-safely through water” (1 Pet. 3:20 APT).

That verb ‘ignore’ provides an interesting study that is seldom considered. It means ‘to refuse to take notice of, to reject, to disregard as unimportant or false’ *also* ‘to shut the eyes to, to disregard willfully.’ Its cognate adjective means ‘destitute of knowledge or comprehension, unlearned.’ Therefore because of the lack of knowledge, one refuses to take notice of or rejects Truth. The people in Noah’s day rejected as false what they could not comprehend and resisted Noah’s attempt to persuade them to prepare for the coming catastrophe of extended rain and so great a flood that the whole Earth became deluged and the bodies of all human life on the Earth were destroyed even though they had a huge object lesson and visual aid of seeing the ark, a huge boat, being built over a period of 120 years (Gen. 6:3) before the catastrophe proclaimed as a herald occurred. They acted ignorantly and stupidly.

- c. The deluge (flood) arrived as The God’s Messenger predicted and as His Message was proclaimed to occur. And every human, man, woman, and child who did not heed the warning of The God’s Message and call or summons to enter the ark of refuge was carried away and drowned. And so it is today for all those who do not act upon The God’s Message of Truth.

2. A Dynamic Event Causing Separation and Division (Mt. 24:40-42 cf. Lk. 17:34-36),

“⁴⁰At-that-time two shall-be ^[locative &v]in-the field, the-one-man shall-be-taken-from-alongside and the-one⁺ |other-man| is-being-abandoned. ⁴¹[temporal participle]While ^two-women are-grinding in-the mill-house, ^one-woman shall-be-taken-from-alongside and ^one-woman is-being-abandoned. ⁴²Therefore persistently-watch! Because &you-are-not -aware at-what sort-of hour The Lord of-yours& comes^[aoristic present]” (Mt. 24:40-42 APT).

The aoristic present is an idiomatic use of the present tense. It is used when the writer or speaker views the action as punctiliar. This dynamic event of the Parousia ‘at once’ shall cause a heart-wrenching separation and eternal division of families, friends, and loved ones such as has never before been experienced. There shall be no end to this heartache. Time shall not heal the regret and loss! But forevermore the suffering of eternal loss and eternal separation shall endure. Heaven and The New Earth are at the extreme distance from Hell (during time) and The Lake of Fire in Eternity and are at opposite ends of the spectrum

3: A Determining Event Testing Security of Domicile from The Thief (Mt. 24:43,44).

“⁴³Now know&[from experience] this! “If (and it is not true) the housemaster had-perceived^[been aware] in-what-sort-of watch ^[protective guard] the thief comes^[aoristic present], he-would-have-watched. And he-would-not -have-allowed the-dwelling of-his to-be-digged-through.” ⁴⁴Because-of this yourselves also, &you-become ready-ones! because in what hour &you-suppose not, The Son of-The (Hu)Man^[aoristic present] comes” (Mt. 24:43,44 APT).

This third event relates to one’s body as the dwelling-place of the soul and spirit of the human. Are we really conscious of the fact that the redeemed disciple-saint is not only the dwelling-place of his or her body in which dwell one’s own soul and spirit, but also is the dwelling place of The God by His Holy Spirit? Therefore

you and I both are responsible to secure our bodies from the thief (Sin or Satan) who strive for control of the human body to defile so that The God cannot be glorified not be free to use it until repentance, committed trust in The Lord Jesus Christ, and complete surrender to Him to serve Him as His bonds slave. And what better way to gain that control than to get us to defile our bodies with any kind of sin physically, mentally, or morally! One's body can be defiled by what is put in it, by what is put on it, and by what is done with it. We must keep our bodies pure and holy in order for The Holy Spirit to be at Home in them.

4. A Disclosing Event Revealing Laxity of Stewardship (Mt. 24:45; Mk. 13:34-37; Mt. 24:46-51).

“⁴⁵So-then who is the faithful and prudent bonds slave, whom the lord of-his appointed-to-position over his household-care [articular infinitive]in-order-to-give to-them their[article as pronoun] nourishment in due time? Mk. 13:34[It is] as a-foreign-traveling human[generic] when-abandoning the dwelling of-his, even after-giving the authority to-the bonds slaves of-his and to-each-one his /work. And he-commanded the doorkeeper that he-persistently-watch. ³⁵Therefore persistently-watch&! For &you-are- not -aware at-what-time The Lord of-The Dwelling is-coming: at first guard of evening[watch from 6-9:00P.M.] or at-midnight or at-cock-crow[4-5:00 A.M.] or ⁰in-morning-guard[prior to dawn]; ³⁶lest by-coming suddenly, He-find you& sleeping. ³⁷Now what-things I-am-saying to-you&, I-say to-all, persistently-watch! Mt. 25:46[Favored-and-joyful-because-of-all-God's-beneficent-gifts]Blessed-one + [is] that bonds slave! whom when coming, the lord of-his shall-find doing so. Mt.24:47 Amen I-am-saying to-you&, 'He-shall-appoint him over all the-possessions of-his.' ⁴⁸But if (and it may be) that /evil bonds slave say [locative &v]in-the heart of-his, The lord of-mine is-delaying to-come. ⁴⁹And he-of-himself-begin to-beat his[article as pronoun] fellow-bonds slaves, then to-eat and to-drink [in company]with the intoxicated-ones+, ⁵⁰the-lord of that /bonds slave shall-arrive [locative &v]in-a-day in-which he-is- not -eagerly-expecting and [locative &v]in-an-hour in-which he-is- not -knowing[from experience]. ⁵¹And him he-shall-cut-into-two-pieces. And he-shall-ordain[lay down] the part of-his [in company]with-the hypocrites. There shall-be the loud weeping and the gnashing of-the teeth” (Mt. 24:45; Mk. 13:34-37; Mt. 24:46-51 APT).

The foreign-traveling human is likened to the Lord Jesus Christ in that He abandoned His dwelling on Earth and went to Heaven. Like that earthly lord who left his possessions in the hands of his bond-slaves to which he gave authority, The Lord Jesus passed on all authority, which was given to Him by His Father, to His disciple-bonds slaves to journey and consecutively disciple people of all nations (Mt. 28:18-20). Then in doing this also, just as the earthly wealthy lord did, The Lord Jesus Christ made His disciples stewards over **all** His possessions. Are you a redeemed disciple of The Lord Jesus Christ? If so, how is your stewardship of all that The Lord Jesus Christ has placed into your control to manage for Him? There is much more of this subject in connection to this appointment to be studied, so we will reserve

that which relates to this passage for next week.

Conclusion: Today we continued to consider The Lord Jesus Christ's teaching and prophesy upon The Mount of Olives. We reviewed His Parable of the Fig Tree, Israel and all the Living Trees, all the Reestablished Gentile Nations Significant to Israel. After relating this parable, He warned again of the seriousness to persist to the end keeping our focus upon our beloved Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we considered The Conditions on Earth When The Son of the (Hu)Man Returns to Earth. The Lord Jesus Christ declared that Four Prevailing Behaviors Predominating upon The Earth occur before That Sudden Catastrophe Overtakes Humanity by the appearance of The Son of The (Hu)Man to Earth as Conquering King. These are: 1. A Disastrous Event of Sudden Destruction; 2. A Dynamic Event Causing Separation and Division; 3. A Determining Event Testing Security of Domicile from The Thief; and 4. A Disclosing Event Revealing Laxity of Stewardship.

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples and us if we claim to be His disciples that it is vitally important to be prepared and spiritually ready for His Return because no one knows the day nor the hour that He shall come. He emphasized the punctiliar aspect of His coming and urged that we care for and protect our bodies so that Satan and Sin as a thief do not break in and steal our spiritual position and condition of purity and holiness. We must keep our bodies from being defiled by what we put in them, by what we put on them, and by what we do with them.

Application: Beginning today what steps will you and I take to be faithful, spiritual, pure, and holy, prepared and ready to meet The Lord Jesus Christ in the air should He come today?

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: **Read and meditate upon: Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching** (First Watch of Night c. 7:30 P.M.): **Stewardship in the Light of His Coming** (Mt. 24:42-51 cf. 2 Cor. 9:6-10; Gal. 6:6,10).