

# Ezekiel 5:5-11 Matthew 24:1-51 Deuteronomy

28:15-68

Sunday 10/8/2006

## I. The Systematic Study of Scripture and the Seven Judgments

We want you to receive the Word of God in the way that God intends to give it to your heart this morning. We have been coming through a systematic study of the Scriptures. We have been a church for a little over three years. We have seen our leadership rise to the top, men and women who have actively pursued understanding the Bible and laying it out.

We have been through every book of the Bible on a Sunday morning, where I broke down each book so that you could have an understanding of its context. Then we put our people together in small groups. We had about 80 people sign up to come through each book of the Bible, and they have their own study groups. I meet with them about every other month in our groups. In fact, we did one last night, and we are in the book of Leviticus right now.

On Sunday morning, we have been using this time, along with Thursday night, where on Thursday night you can ask questions about what you are studying. We have used Sunday morning to add to all the material we are giving you. I have shown you how God, when He put the Bible together, put together within the Bible His own systematic theology. There is a way that God wants you to learn the Word of God, to learn it correctly. We have been basically just following the Bible and coming through the system that God has provided for us in the Word of God.

We have learned a number of things. We have come through the seven mysteries in the Bible, and I showed you how they began to pull together. Then we went through some other series of sevens. Right now, we are on the seven judgments. The Bible says all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The first thing it is profitable for is for doctrine. So, we have been coming through, laying out Bible doctrine in relationship to the Bible itself.

A couple of weeks ago, we started the seven judgments. If you remember, I showed you how throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, you have what we call dispensations. Those dispensations are built around seven people groups in the Bible. We call them the family of God. We began to come through and show you how the seven judgments in the Bible relate to these seven people groups.

The Bible looks like a complicated book. It really does. It can be very intimidating as you leaf through it and see 66 books, 1,189 chapters, and 31,176 verses. It is a very intimidating book as you look at it. But God never designed the Bible to be a hard book to understand, as long as you use the format which God designed His book to be studied by. We have been breaking it down systematically.

I showed you that we looked at the first three judgments, and I showed you how the first three judgments all deal with the Christian. We talked about the first three judgments and that little phrase: sinner, son, and servant. Every man and woman is judged at Calvary's cross as a guilty sinner. Once you trust Christ as your personal Savior, as you go through your daily life, God does not deal with you as a sinner anymore. God deals with you now as His son. We talked about the daily walk of the believer and how God has provided for us a way to have a walk with Him that is pleasing to Him.

The last judgment we talked about the last couple of weeks was the judgment seat of Christ. There, you are not judged as a sinner. You are not judged as a son. Those judgments take place at Calvary and as you walk your life for the Lord. At that judgment, you are judged as a servant: sinner, son, and servant.

## II. The Judgment of the Nation of Israel: The Tribulation Period

Today, we are going to go to the next judgment in the order of its happening throughout history in the Bible, and that will be the judgment of the nation of Israel. When you begin to study the judgment of the nation of Israel, this is commonly called the Tribulation Period. The whole of our society is permeated with the concept of the coming Antichrist and the Tribulation Period. It is hard to find a movie on TV in the evening that does not have something connected with it. It is the theme of many plots and many books throughout our society. Most of it is not very correct, but it gives the general concept that most people understand about the Tribulation Period as far as its concept.

Without a doubt, in the Bible, it is probably the second greatest doctrine taught outside the second coming of Christ in the Old Testament. There are literally hundreds of passages in the Old Testament that deal with the Tribulation Period, the time that God judges the nation of Israel. I know that this judgment does not directly affect you and me, and I know that we are not going through the Tribulation Period. The Bible teaches that we are going to be raptured out before that happens. So, I know directly the judgment of the nation of Israel really does not affect me, but it does affect me as far as understanding the Scriptures as God is laying them out and seeing God's plan of what He is trying to do.

You can go to Psalms 48:11, Psalms 36:6, Psalms 105, Psalms 97. You will find some of the more prominent references: Jeremiah 1, Hosea 6, Zephaniah 3, Ezekiel 23, Revelation 6-19. Those whole chapters all deal with the Tribulation Period when God deals with the nation of Israel.

I asked you to come to Ezekiel 5 this morning, and this is going to be the text by which we start. It gives you a sense of purpose of what we are looking at here.

*Ezekiel 5:5-11*

*Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.*

*And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, and have not walked in them.*

*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you;*

*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.*

*And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations.*

*Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.*

*Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.*

The first verse here makes a great statement. It shows you that there is something special about not only the nation of Israel but the city called Jerusalem. When you begin to understand your Bible, you begin to realize that the nation of Israel are God's chosen people. They have not always done what is right, as we will see today as we come through it. Today is going to be a little bit of a history lesson as much as it is a Bible lesson, but you cannot separate the God of the Bible from the God of history.

You are probably going to leave here today better informed about not only what was going on down through the history of the nation of Israel but what is going on in our own world today. It does not take a ton of bricks to fall on somebody's head today to know that what is going on in the Middle East and what is going on around the world, no matter how NBC, ABC, CNN, and all the other news outlets try to paint it, or how our own government does not understand what the real issue is, the bottom line of the issue today is simply that we are coming down to the last moments of the last day before the Lord Jesus Christ comes back. What you are seeing in the Middle East had been predicted long before the events took place. We are at the very verge of seeing all these things unfold.

He says in Ezekiel 5, "This is Jerusalem." There is something special about that city called Jerusalem. I could bore you with hours of history this morning, not only military history but secular history and even Bible history. We would all come to the same conclusion at the end of the day: everything on this world, through the history of the world, has revolved around that city. That city has been the focal point of everything in history. It is the beginning of the Bible where it started, and it is the end where the Bible ends in Revelation 21. It was the beginning of all life. It is also going to be the end where it all winds up. Everything in between has built about "This is Jerusalem." He says, "I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about

her." God chose the nation of Israel because He had a purpose and He had a plan for that nation. He wanted to accomplish something through the nation of Israel.

### III. Israel's Historical Journey and God's Covenant

When it comes to a biblical layout of the nation of Israel, it is simple. When you look at history, looking from our standpoint 2,600 years since Israel came into the land, and you see all this stuff that goes on, it is a very complicated thing if you try to look at all the pieces of it. But if you just begin to understand one great concept and you follow that line of reasoning, it makes it a lot easier.

Here it is: In the Old Testament, God wanted a literal nation unto Himself. The difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is simple: In the Old Testament, God is calling out a nation to Himself. In the New Testament, God is calling out a bride for His Son, the church. If you just take those two concepts and begin to work with that, you are going to get a lot from the Bible and be able to build on it.

In the Old Testament, God wanted a nation, a literal nation that had a literal capital, Jerusalem. That is why Ezekiel 5:5 says, "This is Jerusalem." You are going to find that all history is built around that concept. You would not get this if you went to a secular university and studied ancient history. They would not tell you that there was a time in the history of this planet when all the nations on this planet knew of God and feared God, and that God had a capital in Jerusalem under a man named Solomon, that the whole world revered God or at least acknowledged God.

The Bible lists, around 1000 BC, the nations that are going into Jerusalem. The great story is Queen Sheba, and Queen Sheba comes in, and Solomon shows her everything that God has given him and shows her the nation of Israel, the capital Jerusalem. The Bible says that she is just without spirit. She just says, "I cannot believe this." She says, "Of a truth, what I heard is truth. There is no other God like yours. There is no other nation that has what you have." Back then, all the nations of this planet recognized Jerusalem, recognized the nation of Israel, and understood what it was. You would not get that today, but you get that from the Bible. Jerusalem was the capital, and God had a plan. He called out this nation from which God, in the Old Testament and in eternity, will fulfill the promise that God gave to Abraham.

In Genesis 15, God said to Abraham, "Someday your seed is going to be like the stars of heaven. Someday all the nations of this planet are going to get blessed through you and your people, the nation of Israel." Now, you know why people do not like the Jew down through history. You know why the nation of Israel has been a nation that all the nations have tried to destroy. One of the reasons is that concept: that they are God's chosen people. God has picked them as a nation over all the other nations, and very frankly, most of the other nations do not appreciate it.

The book of Genesis is about the formulation of the nation of Israel. In the beginning of Genesis, God creates the heavens and the earth, and all of that. Then you get to a man by the name of Noah. When Noah comes on the scene, Noah goes through the flood. From Noah come his three sons: Ham, Shem, and Japheth. From them, the whole world is populated. Then it goes right on

from there, and pretty soon, in the line of Shem, comes a man named Abram. Abram is a man that God sees and says, "I like that guy." God says, "I am going to take that guy and I am going to do something with him." God takes Abram. He begins to have a relationship with him. He sees in Abram's heart all that He is looking for in a world that is totally against God, in a world that is against everything that God does. He sees a man who really wants to follow God. So, He takes Abram and He changes his name to Abraham. Abram means "high father." At one time, Abraham was a very rich man; he had everything. But when he met God, God changed his name. When God changes your name in the Bible, He changes your direction in life. He called him no longer Abram, but Abraham, which means "father of many nations."

From that comes the covenant with the nation of Israel. In the book of Genesis, we have the formulation of the nation of Israel. We see the great patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. They start out doing everything with God, and God brings them through. God draws them, God pulls them together, and God begins to work them. Finally, at the end of Genesis, God gets them down into Egypt.

In Genesis 50, the last chapter in the book of Genesis, the nation of Israel is down in Egypt. When I taught you the book of Exodus, I showed you a great truth. In Genesis 49, when Jacob and Joseph and his father are all down there, he finally gets all his family. They reveal themselves to each other. The whole family moves down into Egypt. The Bible says in Genesis 49, when they all go down, 66 people go down into Egypt. In Exodus 12, when they come out of Egypt, two million plus people come out. God formalized them in Genesis, and then in Exodus, He forged them into a nation. They are down in Egypt for 400 years, and in that 400 years, they are being forged into a nation.

In Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, God brings them out. Those four books all deal with the same time period: the 40 years of their wandering. They are wandering, coming out of Egypt. God says, "I am going to take you to a promised land." That promised land is called by a number of things in the Bible. It is called the Promised Land, first of all, because the nation of Israel had to keep the promises that God gave them to stay in the land. It is called Canaan's land sometimes because the Canaanites had it, and they had to kick them out. We talk about it being Palestine today. All these are terms you are going to find in the Bible, and they are all talking about the same place. If you were looking at a map in the Middle East right now, that land that God promised to Abraham would start over here in Egypt, run all the way to Iraq, and then all the way up to the top where modern-day Turkey is. That is the land which we know as the land of Palestine. The nation of Israel does not have near that now. For 2,600 years, they had nothing, but now they have a foothold over there. We see God regathering them because God wants to accomplish what He promised Abraham.

So, in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, we see them break out from Egypt. They move toward the land for 40 years. Then we come to the book of Joshua. Joshua is a book that shows them entering into the land. In Joshua, they fight the great battles. They fight the battle of Jericho, where they marched around the city seven times and the walls fell down. They fight the great battles at Ai. Here is where they enter into the land, and here is where in Joshua 1, we find the key to Israel's success. This is where you really find out what Israel was supposed to do,

because in Joshua 1, you find one of the greatest outlines for you and for me that you are ever going to find. It is built around one word: courage.

When Joshua wrote the book down, he recorded what he and God said. Here is what God said to Joshua: "Joshua, it is going to take courage. Courage is going to be the key to stay in that land. But Joshua, it is not going to be courage in the sense of armies. It is not going to be courage in the sense of artillery or airstrikes. It is not going to be courage in the sense of a great mobile army. No, it is going to be courage in the words that I give you, that in those words lies your victory."

There is a three-point outline in Joshua 1, which to this day is one of the great messages that God has for us. He said, "Joshua, it takes courage:"

1. To believe the Word of God.
2. To obey the Word of God.
3. To rest in the Word of God.

That is a great little outline because that is what it takes for you and me. It takes you and I courage in the world that we live in to believe in that book. It takes courage in the world that we live in to obey what that book says. In the midst of this turmoil, in the midst of what is going on around us today, it takes courage to rest in the book.

We come into the book of Judges, and we are going to take Judges and then First and Second Samuel all the way up to Second Chronicles, the last chapter in Second Chronicles 36. That period runs about 900 years. Where we saw in Genesis the formulation, and we saw in Exodus and Leviticus the establishment, now we see in Judges up through Second Chronicles the establishment of the monarchy of Israel. We see it get to its highest point. We see it come to the point where it starts out with their first king, Saul, and the last king, Zedekiah. There are 900 years thereabouts in that time period. We watch Israel come up to a high point with David and Solomon, and then we watch them start to decline as they come down through history.

It is all based on those three things that God gave them in Joshua 1. It is simple: God said, "Look, I do not care how many armies you have. I do not care how much military might you have. It is not about that. If you stay with the word that I gave you, nobody will stand before you." Israel's history is simple: God says, "You obey the book, you get My blessings. You dump the book, you get My cursings." That is what happened. Israel dumped God and dumped the Word of God. They dumped the Word of God, they dumped God. They get into Baal worship. They get into all the stuff that is going on out there.

It comes down here, and at the end, our timeline would be right about 606 BC. In 606 BC, Israel has turned her back on God. She has turned her back on the Word of God. She is steeped in Baal worship. She is doing all the things that the nations are. God says, "I have had it." God calls down Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon and Sennacherib out of Assyria. They come down, one of them in 587 BC, the other one 606 BC, and they destroy Jerusalem and they carry it off. For the next 400 years, God has nothing to do with the nation of Israel. In fact, in Second Kings 24:20, God Himself says He has cast them out of His presence. Why? Because they did not stay with

the word that God gave them. God had a job for them to do. He had a mission He wanted them to accomplish. He wanted to be to them their God, and they would be His people. They sold Him out for another god. They dumped His word for the word of Baal. They dumped His sacrifices and took their own children and offered them up to the fire of Molech or any of these gods. Finally, God said, "I have had it."

## IV. The Times of the Gentiles and Israel's Postponed Kingdom

When Nebuchadnezzar comes down, he destroys the nation of Israel. God sends him down, and we enter into a time in history and a time in the Bible called the Times of the Gentiles. It runs about 400 years. When Christ shows up in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Israel by this time has lost God, lost God's Word, lost God's power, and lost God's presence. They are in total apostasy. They have now two religious groups, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, that you do not even find in the Old Testament. They have added to the law.

When Christ shows up, and God now sends His Son to be their Messiah and their King, they kill Him. They crucify Him. They say, "We have no king but Caesar," and they put Him on a cross and they killed Him, and they reject Him. You will find that recorded for you in the first 28 chapters of Matthew. Matthew 1 right up through Matthew 28 is a record of the breakdown as it falls apart. He shows up in Matthew as the King. You have the kingly line. He shows up to the nation of Israel, being heralded by John the Baptist. He shows up there. He does His Old Testament signs and wonders, what they are looking for. In Matthew 12, they reject Him, and everything is downhill from there.

When that happens, God now postpones Israel's kingdom, and He turns to the Gentiles and says, "Okay, I called out a nation to be My people. My people He likens to His wife in the book of Hosea. He says, 'She has rejected Me.' So right now, I am going to postpone what I am doing with My people Israel, and I am going to put them on the back burner. And now I am going to turn My attention to the Gentiles because I have a Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I wanted to give to be their King. They did not want Him. They killed Him. So what I am going to do is I am going to get a bride for My Son."

So, He turned to the Church Age. You are living in it right now. If you are saved here this morning, if there was some time in your life when you trusted Christ as your own personal Savior, you now have a Bridegroom waiting for you. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Right now, we are engaged. We are going to a wedding and a marriage, and then we have a thousand-year honeymoon planned. That is the whole Bible. The whole Bible is built around the Old Testament, God calling out a group of people for Himself, Israel, and then the New Testament, after Israel says, "No thank you," then He turns His attention to the church, you and me. That is why from the book of Acts up to the rapture of the church, which has not happened yet, God has been in a period of time called the Church Age, where Israel is on the back burner, getting farther away from God every minute, because God is taking His attention to calling out a Gentile bride, the church, for His Son.

But they are still His people. This is the great message in Romans 11, which is probably the handbook of Christian doctrine for the church. It is one of the greatest books in the Bible. In the book of Romans, what he does there is he explains to the Christian, almost chapter by chapter, what we are supposed to do and what we are not supposed to do. In Romans 11, he deals with this: "Now look, guys," he says, "you are Christians. You are a member of the body of Christ. We are saved. We are in the church. You have to get the right understanding about the nation of Israel because there are some people floating around here that are saying God is finished with them. There are some people floating around here that are saying God is finished with the Jew, and the church has taken the place of the Jew." That is not true. God has temporarily put them away, but He is not finished with them. Right now, He has His attention on you and me, the church, but He has not forgotten about Israel because God is not going into eternity with His Son having a bride but God not having His people.

So, there is coming a time where God is going to judge them, and in that judgment, that chastisement, the nation of Israel is going to say, "Hey, I better get my act together. There is something to this thing." So, we see for a period of time, and this starts about the book of Acts, God postpones Israel's kingdom. He turns His attention to the Gentiles. Now we have what Romans 11:25 says:

*Romans 11:25*

*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

Right now, Israel is half blind. He means by that there are some Jews who get saved, but the majority of the nation of Israel cannot see Christ. If you talk to an Orthodox Jew in Jerusalem and you mention the name of Christ, he turns his head and spits every time you mention the name Christ. Christ is an absolute anathema. They hate Him. Right now, the nation of Israel, if you understand anything about the Old Testament and you see the structure of Israel in the Old Testament and what they were, and you compare them to what they are today, there is no comparison. They are absolutely totally apostate and away from God in everything that they do.

So, down through the Church Age: 100 AD, 200 AD, 500 AD, 800 AD, 1000 AD, 1200 AD through the Crusades, 1500 through the Reformation, 1600, 1700, 1800, 1900, 2006, here we are. God has turned His back on the nation of Israel while He turns His attention to the body of Christ. But He is not done with them yet.

## V. The Tribulation Period: Purpose, Events, and Prophetic Fulfillment

This is where we enter into the fourth judgment, and this judgment is the judgment of the nation of Israel in the Tribulation Period. God has a Tribulation Period for one purpose and one purpose alone: and that is to put His people through a time when they will turn back to Him. We have already seen it where we read in Ezekiel 5 that there is never going to be a time like what they

are going to go through on planet Earth. In that Tribulation Period, where God judges, He pours out. They have rejected His judgments in the Old Testament, so those judgments are going to be poured out. God gave them light; they rejected the light. When you reject God's light, God turns it into lightning, and the lightning is going to fall in the Tribulation Period. You are going to find that your Bible in the Old Testament is all about that.

Your Bible has three applications:

- Historical application:
- Inspirational application:
- Prophetic or doctrinal application:

The definitive chapter on the Tribulation Period in the Bible is found in Matthew 24. It is the whole chapter. Matthew 24 is a great passage. I have found through my 30-some years in the Bible that every subject in the Bible usually has a definitive passage. In other words, one passage that really clearly defines it. What I try to do in my Bible is to try to find those places and then take all the other corresponding places and run them back to that definitive passage. It is quite a lengthy task, but it is worth doing if you ever want to really seriously lay out the Scriptures. But in Matthew 24, the whole chapter, you have the definitive passage on the Tribulation.

The Tribulation Period runs seven years. Right now, we are in the Church Age. Any moment, anytime now, an event called the rapture of the church is going to take place. This is where the church is taken off this earth and it goes up to the judgment seat of Christ, which we have talked about the last three or four weeks. While they are up there, through a seven-year period, this is where God begins to turn His attention back to the nation of Israel, and He puts them through a time that is unlike any time in the history of planet Earth.

A man called the Antichrist shows up. When the Antichrist shows up, he deceives the world. This seven-year period called the Tribulation is divided into two sections, two sections of three and a half years apiece. In the first three and a half years, the Antichrist shows up. It will be a lot like this: we are sitting here in church, rapture takes place. Immediately, somewhere in the next few months, a man is going to appear, probably already alive. He is going to show up either through politics or religion. He is called the Antichrist. When he shows up, he is going to solve all the strife in the world. He is going to make peace between the Muslims and the Jews. He is going to make peace between all the different religions on the Earth. Of course, it will be easy to end because we will be gone. He will get up and he will talk about the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. He will talk about peace, peace, peace, peace, and everybody will fall in love with him, and he will just lead the world down the rosy path.

For the first three and a half years, he makes an alliance with Israel. He helps the Jew, and he helps this and helps that. For three and a half years, the Bible says in the book of Thessalonians that the world is under a false peace and a false safety. Then, at the middle of that three and a half year period, called Daniel's 70th week in the book of Daniel, after Daniel 7 and 8, at the middle of that week, that three and a half year mark, he breaks his covenant. He turns against the nation

of Israel. The Antichrist sits down in the temple in Jerusalem, claims to be God, demands the whole world to worship him, and he puts the mark of the beast on your head or your forehead. Then everything goes downhill from there. He attacks the nation of Israel, tries to wipe them out. They run into the wilderness, and now the plagues, all of the wrath of God, falls down on all of this Earth for three and a half years. This Earth goes through an absolute bloodbath, and the Jew is severely persecuted.

In the midst of that last three and a half years, when they are going through literally hell on Earth, God reveals Himself to the nation of Israel, and they say, "We killed the Messiah." They come to their senses, and then they respond to God. Then God leads them down through the wilderness to a place that is called Armageddon. Armageddon is a valley. It is ringed by mountains. There have been 138 battles in the history of man in that valley. That valley is the bloodiest valley on planet Earth. It has mountains all around it. It is about 136 miles around. The Antichrist and all his armies trap those Jews down there, going to wipe them out. When they trap them down there and are going to wipe them out, they are defenseless. They have nothing. The Antichrist, the devil who hates Israel (Revelation 12 and 13), has come to the place where he is going to wipe out and destroy the nation of Israel. This is where the Bible says, "Lift up your head; your redemption draweth nigh." It is like the old Western movies, how the settlers are traveling across the prairies, and the Indians start attacking. They always circle the wagons. The Indians are always running around in a circle, and the settlers are trapped. In every movie, it was modeled after this: the settlers and the homesteaders are surrounded. The Indians are coming around, yelling and shooting, riding, wanting to scalp and kill them. Right when it looks like you are down to your last bullet, right when it looks like you have no more water, no more food, and the Indians are coming in, off in the distance, you hear the cavalry, and here comes a whole stream of horses. That is Revelation 19. They are going to be trapped down there in the valley. The Antichrist, just like it looks like it is over, here comes the Lord, and here we come with Him. He is going to get defeated right there. It is over with. It is done. It is finished.

Those events coming through help you understand. The whole world right now is breached and set up with the Middle East, with America and the nations, and everything that is going on. The whole world is ready right now for somebody to come in and solve all the problems. It is not going to be the Democrats or the Republicans. Somebody is going to come on the scene after we are gone and simply say, "Look, I have got the answers to everything." This whole world is so wracked without God. It wants peace so desperately. It wants everything worked out that they are just going to buy into it just like that. That is when it is going to start to unfold. You and I are going to be gone.

In Matthew 24, this is what you have.

*Matthew 24:1-2*

*And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.*

*And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

They are on the Mount of Olives at the temple. This is where Christ is coming back. If you know Zechariah 14, you know that He comes back to the Mount of Olives. That is where He steps off the horse. The mountain cleaves. He walks through the Eastern Gate, and He sets down on the throne in Jerusalem. So, this is the exact site that the Lord is sitting on right now with His disciples, that He is coming back to after this thing works its way through.

*Matthew 24:3*

*And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*

They ask Him two questions: "What is the sign of thy coming?" and "What is the end of the world?" The rest of this chapter, from verse 4 to the end of the chapter, is Him answering those two questions. He comes down and He talks about there shall be famine and pestilences, and all this is taking place in the Tribulation Period.

*Matthew 24:15*

*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*

This is the abomination of desolation, talking about Daniel 11 and Daniel 8. This is when the Antichrist sits down at the middle of the three and a half year mark.

*Matthew 24:16-20*

*Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:*

*Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:*

*Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.*

*And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!*

*But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:*

*Matthew 24:21*

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

*Matthew 24:22*

*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

"The elect" is Israel.

*Matthew 24:29-31*

*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, 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.*

*And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Then from verse 32 through 51, you have the great parable of the fig tree. The great parable of the fig tree shows you the time element. The great parable of the fig tree tells you that when Israel buds forth its leaves, you know that you are at the end of it. Israel budded her leaves in 1948. For 2,200 years, she was without a nation, without a country. In 1948, after a precarious time through the Balfour Declaration all the way back to 1917, in 1948, Israel budded her leaves and began to put forth the fruit that she will give to God at the Second Coming of Christ.

All of these things and the Tribulation, understanding this in its easiest form, is this: God is dealing and judging His people because they rejected Him as their God in the Old Testament, and then they rejected His Son as their Messiah. You are going to find in the Bible this is where God pours His wrath out on the nation of Israel.

I want you to turn to Deuteronomy 28. Historically, it deals with God telling the nation of Israel that if you obey My word, you will have My blessings. If you do not obey My word, you are going to have My cursings. Yet, in a prophetic sense, all this is dealing with the Tribulation Period. This is God prophetically talking about the time that we are studying right now, the Great Tribulation, and what God is going to do.

The whole Bible is about basically two people groups. In the Old Testament, it is the nation of Israel. God called out a nation that was going to be to Him His nation, filled with His people that would worship Him. The New Testament is about a spiritual body for His Son, the church. The nation in the Old Testament rejected God and then killed His Son and went after all the other gods. But God is faithful. If there is anything I have learned about God, it is this: God is faithful. When we are not faithful, God never ceases to be faithful, even when we are not faithful.

In Exodus, where Moses was told to speak to the rock, and the people did not have any water, and they are out in the wilderness. About 15 years before that, Moses had found himself in the same predicament. In that particular case, God said, "Moses, take your rod and crack that rock. Hit that rock with your rod. It will give out water." He did, and water came out. People drank. Some 15 years later, it is a different time scenario, and this time God says to Moses, "Do not hit that thing with a rod, but you speak to that rock." Moses got mad at the people, and instead of speaking to that rock, he took that rod and he whacked that rock again. For that act of disobedience, Moses did not get to go into the Promised Land. But the people still got the water. God came through in spite of Moses's failure. He always does. The fact that Moses disobeyed

God, God still brought the water, but Moses paid the price. God is always faithful, even when we are not.

So, this thing about Israel, I do not care how far they are from God. I do not care how they reject God. I do not care how they reject Christ. I do not care how far they have come along through this thing. It does not make any difference. God is still going to get them back because God is faithful, even when they are not. Those promises God made to Abraham, God made unconditionally, and God is going to fulfill them.

In Deuteronomy 28, in the first 15 verses, you have the blessings. But when you get into verse 15 to the end of the chapter, you have the curses.

*Deuteronomy 28:15*

*But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:*

*Deuteronomy 28:16-19*

*Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.*

*Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

*Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.*

*Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*

*Deuteronomy 28:25*

*The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.*

He is talking about Nebuchadnezzar and Sennacherib when they came down in 606 BC and scattered them the first time.

*Deuteronomy 28:28-32*

*The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:*

*And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.*

*Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.*

*Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.*

*Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thine hand.*

That is talking about the time we are living in up through now. He is talking about the history of the nation of Israel, that once they dumped God, they went to the other nations, and the other nations just took whatever they wanted from them. The list is endless in history. When you look at what the Babylonians did to them, and the Assyrians, when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 606 BC, he slaughtered them. He threw the babies off the walls. He threw the women off the walls. They picked babies up in the air and caught them on the edge of their spears. They slaughtered everybody. They took everything they had.

When you come down through history, look what Titus did to them in 70 AD. Look what Hadrian did to them in 135 AD. Look what England did to them in 1020 AD when they banished them and took all of their property, confiscated their homes, their belongings, their sheep. All this is talking about what is going to happen to the Jew. What took place under Nazi Germany, where it talks about in the Third Reich in World War II, where they took everything from them, and there was no man to help them. In Auschwitz and Treblinka and Mauthausen and Nordhausen, and all those camps, Auschwitz especially, there was a man there called Dr. Mengele, who was called the Angel of Death. His one job was to stand there when the train cars were loaded off, and it says down through here that somebody is going to take your children. When those Jews got off and they were told they were going to a relocation camp, and those train cars pulled into Auschwitz, Dr. Mengele was standing there, and as they came off that train, he had a little riding crop. If he marked you this way or he marked you that way, the women and the old people and the children went this way and went to the gas chambers. The men and the stronger women went this way and got worked to death in a labor camp. Those moms and dads waved to their little kids, saying goodbye, and they never saw those kids again, and they burned them in the ovens after they gassed them.

When God's judgment falls, God's judgments fall. You got that mess because back there, when His Son was hanging on the cross, their King, their Messiah, they made the most unbelievable, stupidest statement in the history of mankind. They said, "His blood be upon us, and on our children." About that time, God said, "Write that down. Mark it down." For the next 2,000 years, God has held them to their word.

*Deuteronomy 28:49*

*The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;*

*Deuteronomy 28:58-63*

*If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;*

*Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.*

*Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.*

*Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.*

*And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.*

*And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

That verse says, just as God saw Israel and rejoiced over them doing what is right, God now in the Tribulation is going to rejoice over their destruction. When God rejoices over your destruction, you are in trouble. Why does God do that? My Bible says in the book of Hebrews, when His Son died on the cross, the Bible says, "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross." Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 55 are the greatest passages in the Old Testament that show about Christ dying on the cross and all of His agony and all the shame and all the reproach. The Bible says right in the middle of it, God poured out His wrath on His Son for you and for me. When you accept Christ as your own personal Savior, you never have to go to hell because in hell, that is where an unsaved man and woman gets the wrath of God poured out on them. I got saved because God's Son paid that wrath on the cross. The Bible says in Isaiah 53 about God and His Son, it pleased Him to bruise Him. God took pleasure in the agony of His Son on Calvary's cross for you and for me.

For Israel to stand there and say, "No thanks," God's wrath for His Son then turns to that nation. Where God rejoiced over His wrath being poured on His Son for Israel and me, if you reject it, God rejoices over your getting God's wrath because of your rejection. The most terrible thing that God ever said to a nation, He said to the nation of Israel: "I will rejoice over destroying you."

*Deuteronomy 28:66*

*And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:*

What a terrible situation to be in. But it all goes back to understanding that they are His people. You and I, we were alienated against God one day, and yet God sent His Son. When He hung on that cross, God did on that cross to His Son everything He would have done to you and I in hell, and God rejoiced at doing it. For the joy that was set before Him, He despised the shame. It pleased God to bruise Him for my iniquities. When I take that sacrifice and go to God and say, "God, forgive me, I am a sinner, and I need Your saving grace," God takes that goodness and He applies it to me. In God's mind, the pleasing of Him dying for me on the cross gets applied to my sin. If you do not take it, God is pleased when you suffer your own consequences.

The same way with Israel. God says, "You are My people. My Son, I brought My Son to you. I gave you My Son. He never did anything wrong to anybody. All He wanted to do was heal the sick, give eyesight back to the blind, unstop deaf ears, and raise the dead. And you killed Him. You crucified Him. He never did one thing, never said one unkind thing, never did anything wrong to anybody, and you took Him and you hung Him on a cross. It pleased Me to give Him for you." And their reaction: "His blood be upon us, and on our children." God said, "Write it down." The history of Israel from that day forward has been God rejoicing in their demise.

God knows there is coming a day when they go through the greatest period of time in the history of this planet, called the Tribulation Period. In that time, just like every one of us, or most of us, the way most of us got saved is our life was going along, and we were having a great time, and then something went bad. Some tragedy befell us. The bottom of life fell out. It does not happen to everybody that way, but so many people go through life, and suddenly God has to jerk the rug out from under them, and they lose everything. They have nothing, and then they find out that they really did not have anything anyway, and they find the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior. Everybody has to go through their own period of tribulation. Israel, as a nation, that is how they find God. They are so far from God right now, there is no other way for God to do it.

So, when we study this judgment, the judgment of Israel in the Tribulation Period, we see where God is dealing as a nation, and God is going to put them through the most horrendous time that this planet has ever seen for one purpose: in the middle of that back-breaking, neck-busting time, where they are run out of Jerusalem and chased and hunted and killed and murdered, and the plagues of the Earth fall down on top of them, they turn back to God and they say, "We were wrong. You were the Messiah. You were our God." They leave this world, and they turn back to God, and God lifts them up from there and restores them to Himself. That is what it is all about. The whole Bible is built around two concepts: the Jew in the Old Testament and the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Gentile and the Church in the Kingdom of God. God has a relationship with a nation, and He wants a bride for His Son. You can take all the Bible and all of history and everything else, no matter how complicated it is, and it all weaves its way in and out of those two concepts. It is not a hard thing.

Next week, we are going to move on to the fifth judgment, and we are going to see what God does and who He judges when He comes back.