

Online Grace Bible School

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**Online Grace Bible School
Phase 5
The Kingdom of God, Then**

1) Did Jesus Return In AD 70?

Some believe that all the prophecies of Jesus in Matthew 24 and Revelation were largely or completely fulfilled in the events of AD 70. They say Jesus returned spiritually in judgment. *Preterism* is from the Latin word *preter* meaning 'past'. Many of the things we consider future they see as past. They say that the old covenant ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and God finished with Israel. Did Jesus return then?

The disciples asked 2 questions in Matt.24:3. 1) When will the fall of Jerusalem be? 2) What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age? They assumed the two were parallel or synonymous. Jesus said:

- ✓ The destruction of Jerusalem would be in their lifetime and they would see it approaching, Matt.24:16-20
- ✓ But end of the world would be at the end and no one knows the day or hour, Matt.24:36, 42. It would take place after the times of the Gentiles and the end of the gospel age, Matt.24:14; Luke 21:24

How do we know that...

- ✓ Matthew 24 is not limited to the destruction of Jerusalem, and that this was not the Great Tribulation?
- ✓ The destruction of Jerusalem was not the judgment of Israel, who are replaced by the Church?
- ✓ The Bible's references to 'the last days' are not referring to the last days of the Old Covenant?

1) The Christians alive during A.D. 70 believed the 2nd Coming was a future event

The oldest extra-Biblical Christian document known to exist is *The Didache*, written at the end of the 1st century. It was cited by many of the church fathers. This document shows that those who lived through the events of AD 70 regarded the events spoken of in Matthew 24-25 as yet to be fulfilled.

2) None of the Early Church leaders mentioned Christ's 2nd Coming as having already occurred

None of the leaders in the Church of the first 3 centuries following the original disciples taught that Jesus returned in the 1st century. None! This idea was foreign during the first 5 centuries of the church and then only mentioned sporadically after that until about 400 years ago. This is a major point!

3) The Book of Revelation was written approximately 25 Years after the events of AD 70

There is compelling evidence for this.

4) The Great Tribulation is a worldwide catastrophe and not restricted to Jerusalem

Mt 24:21. The Great Tribulation will be unique and unprecedented.

5) The Old Covenant ended at the Cross, not the destruction of Jerusalem

'In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete' (Heb.8:13). The new covenant began after the resurrection and replaced the old covenant. 2 covenants did not run concurrently for several years.

6) God has not finished with Israel

Matt.23:39. The Jews did not cry *that* while Titus and His armies were destroying their temple and city and took their wives and children into slavery! See also Rom.11:25. 'All Israel will be saved.' (11:26). Zech.12:10.

7) The 'times of the Gentiles' goes beyond the first century

They will last for as long as Jerusalem is occupied by Gentiles and the gospel is being preached to the nations

8) Jesus will return visibly

Matt.24:30. This verse is in all 3 of the Olivet accounts. See also Acts 1:9-11; Rev.1:7.

A similar teaching circulated in the Early Church and was refuted by Paul, 2 Tim.2:17-18; 2 Thes.2:1-3. It unsettled some and shook the faith of others. It is doing a similar thing today and needs to be rejected.

2) The Beginning of the End

Matthew 24:8. These things are not signs of the end of the age but the *beginning* of the end. We can translate 'sorrows' as 'birth pangs'. Birth pangs before a baby arrives usually begin slow and are manageable, but become more intense, closer together, and less manageable approaching delivery.

The world has experienced these 'sorrows' for some time. Near the end they will increase with rapidity, like birth pangs, Matt.24:33. They will be more numerous and more fearful than before, see Lk.21:11,25-26.

Wars and rumours of wars

There have always been wars but they are increasing in intensity. There have been 300 wars in Europe in the past 300 years and two world wars in the last 100 years. During the seven years of World War 2, 54,800,000 people, both military and civilian, died as a result of that war world wide. Since World War 2 there have been at least 12 limited wars in the world, 74 rebellions for independence, and 162 social revolutions.

Famines

The world faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the UN was founded in 1945 with more than 20 million people in 4 countries at risk of starvation and famine, the UN humanitarian chief has said.

Pestilences

Until the 20th century epidemics did not afflict the whole world at one time. Only in the last century did a disease affect every nation on the globe at the same time. Immediately after WWI, a flu epidemic spread worldwide killing 20,000,000 people. Today diseases that were thought to be defeated are returning, including cholera, tuberculosis, diphtheria, bubonic (black) plague, malaria, etc.

Earthquakes (see graph)

Persecution

Matt.24:9-10. Hatred for Christ will manifest in hatred for His people. There will be betrayal and martyrdom.

Deception

Matt.24:4-5. People will turn to false prophets. There have been more people claiming to be Christ in the last century than ever before. One of the greatest temptations in difficult times is to follow blindly anyone who promises only good times, etc. The lie of the New Age Movement is 'You will be like gods...' (see Gen.3:4-5). The main teaching of the New Age Movement is that the Christ spirit is within all of us. 'We are little gods'. This spiritual deception is of such great concern that Jesus reiterated the warning twice more in this chapter, Matt.24:11&24. The end times will be rampant with deception and false teaching. Cults, other religions and finally apostasy in the church (2 Thes.2:3; 2 Tim.4:3-5).

How are we to understand all these things? The judgment of God? Persecution? Deception? No. The consequences of a world which has rejected God. Satan is the god of this world. The 2nd coming will be at a time when humanity has become so depraved that it will resemble carrion ready to be devoured by vultures.

- ✓ Rom.8:20&21, understand that these birth pangs are the physical manifestations of the earth and its people groaning under the increasing sin in the world, anticipating redemption when Christ returns. They give advance warning. They will increase in intensity, yet will give birth to the glorious age to come.
- ✓ Whilst the god of this world continues to wreak havoc on humanity the Church is called to reach out with God's rescue plan through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. In the times of Jesus, the Word of God could be spread in only two ways: direct word-of-mouth or parchment. The number of methods for transmission of the gospel today has increased exponentially. Satellite television, cable, internet, podcasts, DVDs, mass printed materials, have enabled the Gospel message to explode around the world.

3) The Sign of His Coming

When will the 'end of the beginning' occur? Jesus spoke much about the end of the age in this chapter (Matt.24:3, 6, 13). What event will mark this transition? Not the destruction of Temple in AD 70. Some claim the term 'end of the age' was not referring to the end of the world but end of the old covenant age. But the same term is used in Mt.28:18-20 & Mt.24:14. The old covenant ended at the Cross, Col.2:14.

So what is the sign of the end? What people say is a sign is probably not a sign, e.g. Matt.24:23&26. Warning: There will be much deception; people claiming to give us signs of His return. So don't listen to those who say he *has* come (AD 70) or *is about to come*. Don't be deceived by world events or people claiming to have a key or sign that will give us a date or time.

Then Jesus gave the sign, Matt.24:30. The sign of Jesus' coming is His coming! There is *no* advance sign or warning of His coming. He comes when he comes and the people alive then will know it when it happens. He is referring to the rapture. The rapture is the sign of the end, see Matt.24:31; 1 Cor.15:51-52; 1 Thes.4:16-17.

Matt.24:27. Like lightning He will come in a rapid and unexpected manner. Many will look for him in the desert or in secret places, signs leading up to His appearing, etc.; but it will all be useless to do so as it is useless to look to any particular part of the heavens to know where lightning would next flash.

This sudden, unexpected return of Jesus can only refer to the rapture, not the 2nd Coming. In this point they are completely different. Therefore, Matthew 24:36-25:30 must describe the rapture, not the 2nd Coming. Jesus likened his appearing to a thief in the night (24:43). However at the 2nd coming Jesus will not appear suddenly or without warning, as does a thief. He will return on the back of many signs.

So the analogy of the thief is appropriate for the rapture when He will appear suddenly, unexpectedly, without signs or warning to take his Church. This is illustrated by the Noah analogy, Mt.24:37-39. In both the Noah and Lot illustrations the righteous are removed from the sphere of judgment, and the unrighteous are left for judgment. At the 2nd coming the unrighteous will be removed and the righteous will remain to inherit the kingdom, (Mt.13:41-43).

The conditions described in the Noah & Lot illustrations are incompatible with the 2nd coming. These two illustrations both make the point that life will be normal at the time of this appearing, with people going about their mundane activities of eating and drinking, marrying, buying and selling, planting, and building, right up to the moment of the rapture. But this is not the case concerning the conditions at the 2nd coming. At the 2nd coming the earth will be at the peak of catastrophic judgment, with half of mankind having already perished and the earth left in ruins, Isa.13:11-13, and the world will be in the midst of the most destructive war ever (Rev.9:13-17), etc. There is nothing normal about the time leading up to the 2nd coming.

To summarize:

- ✓ Jesus told his disciples 'You can't know when I will return, and even I don't know it. Only the Father knows.' After His resurrection the disciples still pressed Jesus on the matter, (Acts 1:6). Again, Jesus told them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority' (v.7).
- ✓ Despite Jesus' clear teaching, many Christians throughout the centuries have repeated the mistake wanting to know the time of His return. Some have tried to impress others that it will certainly come in their lifetime, and very soon. But history has proven Jesus right and every forecaster wrong. We cannot know 'when'. The only 'sign' that the disciples will have of Jesus coming will be his actual coming. This 'sign' will have no predictive value because it comes too late.
- ✓ We are not to watch signs but watch over our own lives, Matt.24:42, 44. The main point is to look forward to the Lord's return and meanwhile to live responsibly, faithfully, and courageously until He returns. (24:45&46).

4) Flood-proof Salvation

Matt.24:37-41, Jesus likened His coming to the time of Noah. Noah was born 1056 years after creation. What kind of world was it? After the fall, Cain murdered Abel and went out of the presence of God. Seth replaced Abel. There was a godly seed and an ungodly seed. But then an intermingling. Men of renown, i.e. known for their violence and corruption, committing great wickedness. They were given 120 years to repent.

Gen.6:5-8. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. This is the first mention of grace. Its meaning: where sin abounds, God's grace abounds much more. What is grace and what did grace do for Noah? See Gen.6:9.

- ✓ It justified him. It made him righteous, by faith.
- ✓ It made him 'perfect in his generations'. Heb. *tamin* = without blemish. He was uncontaminated by a world that was corrupted. Note, 'generations' (plural). Noah knew his father, grandfather, and although his great grandfather Enoch had been taken out of the world before Noah was born, yet Noah knew Enoch's father, grandfather, great grandfather and great-great grandfather, i.e. Adam's grandson. In fact Adam's son, Seth, had been dead only 14 years when Noah was born. He witnessed Babel and was co-existent with Abraham for 50 years. God can keep us in our generation!
- ✓ He walked with God. The secret of a person who survives the disaster of his age is that he walks with God.
- ✓ Gen.6:11. The earth was corrupt and its end had come. But Noah's generation was unaware and carried on living as always - eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. They failed to realize their peril until it was too late. Suddenly, the flood (cataclysm = carrying away, being swept away) came upon them.
- ✓ Society, as in the days of Noah, will be in a state of total moral disintegration. Iniquity will reach full measure, 2 Pet.3:3-7. Just as sudden and disastrous for this world will be the rapture, Matt.24:40-41.
- ✓ Gen.6:14. God's way of escape was an ark, a picture of Christ. It was covered with pitch in order to be preserved through judgment. The word 'cover' is *kapher*. See Lev.17:11. Jesus endured the wrath of God.
- ✓ The bow in the sky was directed heavenward. There is no arrow, as if it has been discharged. A rainbow is the joint product of a storm and sunshine. Grace shining against a backdrop of sin.
- ✓ The date the ark rested on Mount Ararat was the exact date, centuries later, Jesus rose from the dead.
- ✓ Gen.7:1. This is the first time the word 'come' is used in the Bible. 'Come', not 'go' (NIV).

Was there any excuse for those who perished? God never leaves Himself without a witness:

- 1) Protoevangelium (Gen.3:15), followed by sacrificial system. Adam & Eve, Abel, Noah all offered sacrifices
- 2) There was a continuous prophetic voice in the earth: **Enoch**, (Jude 14-15); **Methuselah** means 'when he dies it will come.' *'Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech'* (Gen.5:25). *'Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son'* (Gen.5:28). (187+182 = 369). *'Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth'* (Gen.7:6) (369 + 600 = 969). *'So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died'* (Gen.5:27); Lamech, (Gen.5:29).
- 3) The rapture of Enoch, (Heb.11:5).
- 4) The ministry of the Holy Spirit, (Gen.6:3).
- 5) Noah: a) The *first* of these testimonies was the building of the ark indicating that something was about to happen (1 Pet.3:20). God never judges without first making a way of escape and salvation. The *second* witness was Noah's preaching righteousness for 120 years in which he constantly warned the people concerning the judgment of God. The *third* witness was the gathering of the animals into the ark.

No one perished in the flood who could claim he had no warning. All in the ark were saved.

5) Watchful Leaders

'Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming' (Matt.24:42). 'Watch' is used frequently throughout the New Testament. E.g. Matt.25:13; 26:38,40,41; 1 Pet.5:8; Rev.3:2). It means to stay awake and be spiritually alert, especially in the light of the coming of the Lord.

Matt.24:45-47. Jesus' exhortation to watchfulness turns to church leaders. Christ is the Lord of the household of faith, Heb.3:5-6. He has left his house in the care of his servants, Heb.13:7. They are to be watchful, Heb.13:17. How do they do this?

- ✓ By feeding God's people on the Word, Acts 20:20.
- ✓ Food in due season, Mk.4:33; John 16:12. The greatest need for God's people is firm foundations.
- ✓ Faithfulness in this will lead to greater responsibilities in the next age, Lk.19:17&19; 1 Pet.5:4.
- ✓ Matt.24:48-49. There is a danger that the Lord's apparent delay will lead to bullying those in their care.

What is the difference between righteous authority and authoritarianism?

- ✓ Righteous authority is divinely appointed leadership within the family, church and society for the purpose of ordering life on earth. All biblical authority is delegated by God. No one has inherent authority over another. He is exercising God's authority, for God's purpose, i.e. edification, 1 Cor.3:5.
- ✓ Its purpose is to build up, not tear down, 2 Cor.10:8; 13:10.
- ✓ Its character is to appeal, not command, 2 Cor.1:24; 2 Cor.10:1&2; 2 Tim.4:2.
- ✓ Righteous authority is characterized by voluntary submission to loving leadership. Those who lead are not to demand mindless submission, nor attempt to violate the conscience of others.
- ✓ Authoritarianism is the corruption of authority, attempting to usurp control of another person's life by demanding unquestioned submission. Submission is something *given*, not taken. If it's taken its control.
- ✓ Control robs a person of the freedom that Christ purchased for them with His own blood, Gal.5:1.
- ✓ Whilst everyone is subject to righteous authority, no one should come under the unrighteous control.

How does authoritarianism manifest itself?

- ✓ By intimidation, i.e. using authority, aggression, threats, power, blackmail, etc. to force one's will on another person.
- ✓ By legalism. Legalists use guilt to manipulate others into unquestioned submission. Legalism always pulls in the opposite direction to the cross. It says that the cross is not enough. People need rules and regulations. The moment we come under a system of rules we cease to be Christ-dependent and become dependent upon the person who gave us the rules.

God has set up a system of checks and balances to ensure that submissive relationships do not become abusive. Everyone who has authority must themselves be in submission to others. No one should ever be called upon to submit to another who is not submitted to godly authority.

True spiritual authority is characterized by:

- 1) A servant heart, Matt.20:25-26.
- 2) A gentle spirit, 1 Thes.2:7.
- 3) An exemplary life, 1 Cor.11:1; 1 Pet.5:2-3; Phil.3:17). It is example that truly influences, 1 Tim.4:12.

6) Don't Be Smart...Be Wise

Matt.25:1. In a Jewish marriage, the bridegroom accompanied by his close friends went to fetch the bride from her father's house and bring her back in a procession to his own house where the marriage feast was held. At various stages along the route friends would join the procession. Everyone brought their own torch because of the unlit streets. The lamps were oil-fed. The wise would bring a flask of additional oil.

This parable has been subjected to many interpretations. Let the Bible interpret itself:

- ✓ **Virgins** are never represented in Scripture as being anything other than believers. The Church collective is the Bride; but the virgins individually are believers invited to be part of the Bride, 2 Cor.11:2.
- ✓ Virgins signify believers from the aspect of life (wise or foolish) rather than stewardship (faithful or unfaithful)
- ✓ All had lamps that are lit and burning. They all had gone out in faith to meet the bridegroom.

- ✓ **Lamps** represent the spirit of man, Prov.20:27. A lamp is created, not to produce light but to bear it, i.e. to make it possible for the potential in the oil to be released.
- ✓ We are called to let His light shine in the world, Matt.5:14-16; Eph.5:8; Phil.2:15.

- ✓ **Oil** is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, Isa.61:1; Zech.4:6; 1 Sam.16:13.
- ✓ The oil in the vessels refers to the life of the Spirit in the soul of a Christian. The Holy Spirit in the human spirit gives divine life access to the human soul making it possible for moral image of God to be manifested in humans.
- ✓ Jesus came into the world to function as the perfect man. He offered His humanity to God by the Holy Spirit, (Heb.9:14). The Father gave Himself to the Son by the Spirit.
- ✓ It is through the same Holy Spirit that we offer our humanity to God and He offers His deity to us.
- ✓ But looking within we see much that is contrary to the nature of God, i.e. flesh. But as genuine oil is distinguished from counterfeits by its *properties*, so grace in the soul is known by its characteristics. Oil and water will not mix. They will preserve their distinct properties even when placed together in the same vessel. So the flesh and spirit will not combine in the Christian—but remain in opposition. The spirit will always war against the flesh. It will never be comfortable with the flesh-life.

- ✓ **Vessels** primarily refer to man's soul, the center of his personality. Wise believers allow Christ, as the life-giving Spirit, to flow from their spirit into their soul to saturate and transform them, 2 Cor.3:18.
- ✓ Eph.5:18. Paul makes a comparison in this verse between being filled with the Spirit and being drunk with wine. One who is drunk with wine is under its control. In like manner we are exhorted to come under the Spirit's leading.

- ✓ **'Sleep'** is only used for believers at death, 1 Thes.4:14; John 11:11. It continues till the resurrection.
- ✓ Matt.25:6. **Midnight** is the point between one day and another. It is midnight on earth yet the saints awake to the bridal feast.
- ✓ The first going forth is separation from the world. The second is from the grave, Jn.5:28-29; 1 Thes.4:17.
- ✓ **Wise and foolish.** Believers are sometimes addressed as being foolish, or are cautioned against it, Gal. 3:3. We are all the children of light, but in the parable we see that five were wise and five foolish. Their taking the vessel of oil is the single point which characterizes them as wise or foolish to His eye.

The exhortation of this parable is: *'Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming'* (Matt25:13). Let's be filled with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit.

Don't be smart...be wise! *'Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ'* (2 Pet.1:10-11).

7) Faithful Stewards

Matt.25:14-30. Jesus told this parable to illustrate stewardship. There are three aspects of stewardship:

1) Ability

- ✓ Matt.25:14-15. The rich man gave to his servants talents, abilities. Grace = God-given ability.
- ✓ They are His goods. He owns everything. He is El Elyon, the Possessor of heaven and earth, Psa.24:1; Psa.50:12.
- ✓ God's entrusts His goods to us. This is stewardship. We are stewards of everything we have, 1 Cor.4:7.
- ✓ The character of stewardship is that we possess but do not own. There is less pressure in managing than owning. God never gave us the capacity for ownership. Anything we try to own ends up owning us.

- ✓ Stewardship is our dignity, Psa.8:4-6. When we try to function in ownership we lose our sense of dignity.
- ✓ The desire for ownership usually leads to slavery. This is what happened to Adam, resulting in the transfer of the dominion of the earth from Adam to Satan, and the exchange of his status from steward to slave.
- ✓ When Christ shed His blood, He redeemed us from slavery and gave to us the status of sons of God and stewards, not only of earth, but also of His kingdom on earth, 1 Cor.6:19-20; 2 Cor.5:15.
- ✓ Yet, a steward is more than a servant and manager. We are also heirs of God, together with Christ. We share in the riches and blessings of the household and are also included in the vision of the household.

- ✓ The subject of stewardship figured highly in Jesus' teachings. 17 of 36 parables concern stewardship. The image of stewardship is also used to depict the nature of Christian ministry throughout the NT epistles.
- ✓ This parable shows that God is sovereign in the way He distributes His goods.
- ✓ Some are one talent people, others 2, others 5 talents. To whom much is given, much will be required.

2) Responsibility

- ✓ Responsibility is our response to the ability entrusted to us.
- ✓ The Bible does not speak of the rights of a believer, but the responsibilities.
- ✓ This is not about servitude, but privilege. We are not motivated by guilt or fear but identity.
- ✓ Stewardship, then, has to do with the way we view God and the way we see ourselves. It has the power to shape and mould our understanding of the way we will live our lives. We see it is an awesome thing to be included with Him in the great responsibilities of managing His property and His kingdom.
- ✓ We are workers together with God! Our dignity and worth flows from an appreciation of our identity.

- ✓ The first two servants understood this. The third didn't. He was motivated by, a) Fear. The only thing that will conquer fear is faith. To be faithful is to be full of faith. It takes faith to give away what God has given to us. Yet, the more we will give away the more it will be multiplied, Lk.6:38. Use it or lose it; b) Misunderstanding. The man with one talent probably thought he would be expected to return the same as others. But to whom much is given, much will be required. We are only responsible for what we have, not what we don't have; c) Laziness. 'Grace does not make us licensed loiterers' (Spurgeon). Stewardship is not a passive thing. It requires action. Let us work while it is day. We have eternity to rest, Rev.14:13.
- ✓ Success is measured by faithfulness, 1 Cor.4:1-2. God's work is accomplished when His servants faithfully manage resources, fulfill responsibilities, keep promises, carry out commitments, finish tasks, etc.

3) Accountability

- ✓ The men who made use of their talents were commended for faithfulness, Matt25:20-23.
- ✓ *'So then each of us shall give account of himself to God'* (Rom.14:12).
- ✓ Anyone who teaches that this parable is about salvation has not even got the foundation right! Salvation is by faith; reward according to faithfulness. God places the gift before the unsaved; but He places the reward before the saved. The Lord is eager to reward, *'And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work'* (Rev.22:12).

8) When the Son of Man comes in His glory

'When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory' (Mt.25:31).

- ✓ This is not the Great White Throne Judgment. It is the judgment of the nations (Gentiles) who are alive at the return of Christ.
- ✓ Jesus will be the Judge, John 5:22-23. He is at the right hand of God until this judgment, Ps.110:1.
- ✓ Jesus is describing when that time has come, Acts 17:31.

- ✓ He is referred to as the **Son of Man**. He represents the redeemed as the Second Man, 1 Cor.15:47.
- ✓ He took on man's flesh, sin and judgment and now He is qualified to be their Judge, Matt.26:63-64.
- ✓ He will set up His throne to: 1) judge the nations, and, 2) commence His Millennial reign, Matt.19:28.
- ✓ The angels will be His assistants, attending Him at the Judgment, Mt.13:39-42; Matt.16:27.

- ✓ He is also called **the King**. *'Then the King will say...And the King will answer and say to them...'* (Matt.25:34&40). He will take His throne as the King of the Nations, Jer.10:7.
- ✓ He will break the iron will of defiance of the people, Rev.19:11-16; Rev.2:25-28.

- ✓ The nations will be judged according to what they did to **His brethren**. Who are His brethren?
- ✓ 1) Christ's brethren are those who do His will, Matt.12:46-49; Matt.28:10.
- ✓ This will reveal where they stood in relation to Jesus and the gospel during the Tribulation. What did they do to Christ's messengers and message? (Mk.9:41; Matt.10:11-14). These are the sheep.

- ✓ 2) Also, His brethren are **the Jews** who will be hunted down, persecuted and killed during the tribulation, Rev.12:6. Those fleeing will find Gentile friends whose hearts God has opened to receive them and protect them. Only believers would take such risks at the end of the Tribulation. These believing Gentiles will provide the Jews with food, clothing and shelter. They will put themselves at risk by visiting them in prison and perform other acts of kindness for them, Rev.12:14-16.

- ✓ The **goats** are those who worship the Antichrist, Revelation 13:8. They will support the Antichrist in his program of destroying Jews. They will be condemned to eternal punishment.
- ✓ But the **sheep** will both enter the kingdom and inherit eternal life. Eternal salvation is always by grace through faith, totally apart from works. The sheep have justification through faith alone in Christ alone. Good deeds do not save. Nothing is clearer from the Word of God than this. But the sheep will demonstrate their faith by their love to Christ's brethren.

- ✓ This **judgment** will take place in the Valley of Jehoshaphat after the Battle of Armageddon, Joel 3:1-2.
- ✓ Probably only half population will be remaining. God will pronounce judgment upon those nations who persecuted Israel and forced them into 'land for peace' deals, *'Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations'* (Joel 3:12).

- ✓ *'Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'* (Matt.25:34). The kingdom WAS prepared for the sheep.
- ✓ *'Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'* (Matt.25:41). The fire was NOT prepared for the goats. It was prepared for the devil and His angels, but these have joined him in the rebellion.

- ✓ After the judgment, the sheep will enter the Messianic Kingdom and will populate its Gentile nations.

- ✓ These nations will have access to the New Jerusalem in the new heavens and new earth, Rev. 21:24-26.