

A photograph of an olive grove with a stone path leading through the trees. The trees are lush green, and the path is made of light-colored stones.

OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries
and MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS

A photograph of a sunset over a city skyline. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow across the sky and silhouetting the buildings in the distance.

AUGUST 2023 THE END-TIMES

What Should We Expect?

PART 1

OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries
and MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS

Cover Image: Timo Volz via Unsplash

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

*Outreach Israel Ministries
and Messianic Apologetics*

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts

All Believers in Israel's Messiah are to be regarded as a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Jewish and non-Jewish Believers are to respect one another in mutual love as brothers and sisters, and are to work together for the salvation of the Jewish people and return of Israel's Messiah.

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be studied and heeded by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the Believers after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

Outreach Israel News is the monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries, a non-profit organization with an emphasis on reaching, teaching, and encouraging the Messianic community. Subscription to **Outreach Israel News** is without cost and supported only by donation.

Members of the Board:

Mark Huey
Margaret McKee Huey
Mark and Lynn Davis
Heather Wood Smith
Lionel and Lori Stuber
John McKee
Jane McKee

Mark Huey
director

Margaret McKee Huey
office manager

J.K. McKee
Messianic Apologetics

Taylor and Maggie Willetts

Outreach Israel Ministries
P.O. Box 516
McKinney, TX 75070

Phone: (407) 933-2002

Web: outreachisrael.net / outreachisrael.blog
messianicapologetics.net / messianicapologetics.blog

© 2023 Outreach Israel Ministries
OIM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational ministry

OIM UPDATE

August 2023

J.K. McKee

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

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

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

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

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

THE END-TIMES

What Should We Expect?

PART I

Intense Deception

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

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

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

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

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

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

It can be noted that there have been many disturbed individuals throughout religious history, either claiming to be “Jesus Christ reincarnated” or “the messiah.” If you go to Israel on a tour, you may encounter people actually claiming to be any number of Biblical characters, from King David to John the Baptist to Elijah the Tishbite, telling you that the end is at hand—the so-called phenomenon of Jerusalem Syndrome. Also, we need to recognize how there are many religious figures which come in “the name of Christ” who are “miniature messiahs” unto themselves, or to their followers. Such personalities may have blind followings of those who do not question or confirm Biblical truth in their teachings. Anyone claiming the authority of the Messiah must be tested by Scripture, to see if what

he or she says is truly upheld by the Word. Otherwise, such person may fall into the category of those claiming the name of the Messiah, who the Lord has issued warnings about.

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

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

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

Wars and Natural Phenomenon

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

Yeshua foretells that there will be rumors and talk of wars. Any well-researched political analyst should be able to tell you that there are patterns and events occurring throughout the world which can lead to gross global instability. Volatile regions such as the Balkans, North Korea, Northern Ireland, Taiwan, and the Middle East indicate that any number of events could occur—ranging from small-scale terrorism to a rogue state detonating nuclear weapons. Since Septem-

¹ Note that one significant area that requires discernment, where myriads of people have been found speaking presumptuously, regards failed end-time predictions—where people pick Date X for the Second Coming and then nothing happens.

ber 11, 2001 and the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, all are aware of the threat of global terrorism. Since 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, all are also aware of the threat of biological diseases, and what they can do both economically as well as socially.

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

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

Persecution of Believers

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

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

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

Today such persecution does exist, but we think that is often limited to areas where belief in Jesus is illegal or taboo. In the West, many today who believe in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) have not had to experience the type of persecution mentioned here, where one's life is actually in danger because of the gospel.

Total worldwide persecution of Believers is a major sign that God's people are in the Last Days. Quite shockingly, the Messiah also warned of betrayals which would take place by those in whom His followers may trust the most—their own family:

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

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

Yeshua taught that when His followers would be persecuted and brought before the authorities, to “not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit” (Mark 13:11, NASU). The Lord further directed, “It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute” (Luke 21:13-15, NASU). And, as Paul so eloquently wrote, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*” (Ephesians 6:12, NASU).²

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

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

² The armor of God in Ephesians 6:13-17 is directly derived from the Tanach, per Paul's quotes from Isaiah 11:1-5; 59:14-18 (cf. Wisdom 5:17-20).

False Prophets

“Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many” (Matthew 24:11, NASU).

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

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

In the category of false prophets, this does sadly include many in the contemporary charismatic movement who claim to be “modern day prophets of God,” but whose motivation is mainly to promote themselves and see so-called “signs and wonders” rather than see people turn to Him in repentance.³ We can also include many teachers who have actually claimed to be “prophets,” who have made false predictions and prognostications about contemporary world events and the Last Days, yet in the long run have led people astray *and* have been responsible for turning people off to the prophetic message of Scripture altogether.

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

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the LORD. They keep saying to those who despise Me, “The LORD has said, ‘You will have

³ Please understand that as a continuist I fully believe that the gifts of the Spirit are for today. The most significant of such gifts are “all joy and peace in believing” (Romans 15:13, NASU). Contrary to this, I fear that many so-called signs (undocumentable within the broad window of canonical or deuterocanonical Scripture, Church tradition, and much of Church history through the Protestant Reformation) like gold flakes, diamonds and rubies, or “manna” appearing on Bibles—as seen at many charismatic conferences today—likely constitute false signs. (That is, if they are not some kind of staged parlor tricks.)

peace”’; and as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, they say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you.’ But who has stood in the council of the LORD, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath, even a whirling tempest; it will swirl down on the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; in the last days you will clearly understand it” (Jeremiah 23:16-20, NASU).

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

Could some of these individuals perhaps classify as being false prophets as described by Jeremiah? As the Lord said, “in the last days you will clearly understand it.” If we are living in the Last Days, then are things beginning to make more sense? If we are not quite living in the Last Days, then what else needs to be understood?

Lawlessness

“Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12, NASU).

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

Socially, much of the foundation for civilized Western society comes from a basis in the Ten Commandments and in the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), the Torah or the Pentateuch. Current liberal trends in theology, however, have rendered the Tanach or Old Testament to little or no affect, the Bible has largely been removed from schools, and many

treat God's Word as a collection of fairy tales. The Torah, specifically, includes an important moral and ethical code, *and* the consequences for breaking it. Penalties such as death were incorporated into Scripture, so that when a society such as Ancient Israel saw the result of what happened by murdering, kidnapping, raping, or a committing host of other high offenses—it would deter that crime from being committed. The text of Matthew 24:12 not only implies that people will not want to love their neighbor as the Torah commands (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5; cf. Matthew 22:36-38; Mark 12:28-31), but that society will have devolved to the point of significant lawlessness—direct defiance of God's Law—being commonplace. *And the sad thing is that people will really not seem to care about it.*

The second aspect of this involves how Yeshua's followers are to approach the Torah. Much of contemporary Christianity believes that the Torah or Law of Moses was abolished by Jesus, that (any of) the commandments given at Mount Sinai are no longer for Believers to consider as righteous instruction to be followed, and that the Law was "nailed to the cross." But has such an approach really helped contemporary Christianity? *Not at all.* The truth of the matter is that *the penalty* of the Torah pronounced upon sinners was what was placed and absorbed by Yeshua on the tree (Colossians 2:14). The penalty of the Law was nailed to the cross; the Law itself was not. In regard to the Last Days and God's Torah, Yeshua notably said,

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

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

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

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

Jude attests to those “who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality” (ESV). Licentiousness is one believing himself or herself to have the license to do as one pleases, regardless of God’s instruction, and perhaps even regardless of Divine consequences. *Many evangelical Believers today are expressing a great interest in the Old Testament*, because they know that by widely ignoring it the contemporary Church has not at all been helped. Contrary to the unrighteous, God’s people faithful to Him will be following *His Commandments* in the Last Days (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). As the Apostle John’s words should remind us, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3, NASU), as one’s heart and motives are transformed by His Spirit. Even though lawlessness may be present, righteousness will shine through (Daniel 12:3)!

Enduring to the End

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

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

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

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

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

The endurance of which Yeshua spoke is striving forward in one’s salvation granted to the redeemed by Him. A person physically surviving the Tribulation period, does not guarantee him or her a position in His Kingdom, especially since it is prophesied that at the Day of the LORD—the focal point which occurs at the close of the Great Tribulation—God says “I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir” (Isaiah 13:12, NASU). This could imply that no one survives, or very very few survive this future time period, and the ones to repopulate the Millennium are those living persons who go up to meet Yeshua at His appearing, being transformed but never having died (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

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

The Gospel of the Kingdom

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

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

It has to be recognized how Matthew 24:14 says that the good news or gospel will *only* be proclaimed or declared to all nations—and with that there are even multiple definitions as to what the term “nations” means. Some feel it means lit-

eral countries, while others feel it means various ethnic groups. Some take this verse and believe that not only will the gospel be preached, but that millions upon millions (or billions) of people will come to faith in the Lord. In contrast to this conclusion, 2 Thessalonians 2:3 prophesies that the end “*will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction” (NASU). The key word here is *apostasy*; it is a departure or rejection of the faith, not a massive embracement of it.⁴

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

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

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

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

The Messiah instructed His Disciples to fulfill a Great Commission by declaring the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection—so that others might repent and come to the knowledge of Him and be trained properly in faith (Matthew 28:18-2). But another crucial admonition involves how His followers are to pray and see that the Kingdom comes, just as Yeshua prayed, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10, NASU).

⁴ Grk. *apostasia*; “defiance of established system or authority, rebellion, abandonment, breach of faith” (Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000], 120), or “defection” (H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 107).

The Messiah's followers are to pray that *the Lord comes to Earth to establish the Kingdom*.

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

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

The September 2023 issue of Outreach Israel News will continue this teaching, with Part 2 of "The End-Times: What Should We Expect?"