

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Lesson 80, Chapter 24 Continued

Last week I installed a framework for us to try to better comprehend not only what we have learned thus far in the Gospels about Yeshua's role in Redemption History, but also about the several stages of it. And that beginning in Matthew 24 in particular so very much of what Jesus says is about things in the far future to His era. These future things are what in modern times we refer to as the End Times. Scholars call the study of these same future things *eschatology*.

Part of the point of the discussion was to draw our attention to the reality that redemption does indeed have a history and that Jesus's activities are directly involved only in part of it. Further that redemption is a process, not an event, and it does have a known and definable beginning and end. The beginning came upon Adam and Eve's rebellion against God and thus committing the first sin; so was born the need for redemption. The long process ends only upon the destruction of the current Universe (along with the earth we presently live upon), and with it the re-creation of a new system to form a dynamic that has never before existed; a dynamic in which all barriers between creatures and Creator are erased, in which evil and its leader are eliminated, and therefore sin, decay, and death become impossibilities.

I will be incorporating a number of prophecies from the biblical Prophets that in most cases Yeshua will be referring to in His own prophecies that are not attempting to be disguised as new ones or as replacements for the originals, but rather He will be adding information, clarification, and context (much like John does in the Book of Revelation) about what was long ago spoken and written down. I will also be speaking about application and some Church doctrines that I think are misguided and can lead us into chasing our tails instead of running after

the truth.

Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 24.

READ MATTHEW CHAPTER 24 all

The general nature of Matthew chapter 24 presents Yeshua as a prophet in the sense of one who can see the future. What can be so demanding of us is to decipher the meaning of the things He says as it pertains to *WHEN* these things are to happen. Are they only connected to Yeshua's era? Are they only just a few more years away (such as in Paul's day)? Or are they only to take place in some very distant and unclear future? We have learned in many earlier Torah Class lessons in both the Old and New Testaments that one of the attributes of Old Testament prophecy is that prophesied events tend to happen somewhat immediately, and then happen again at a later time, and sometimes yet again in a far later time. The tendency is for Bible scholars and commentators to pick and choose from an either/or mindset as to which of the fulfilled prophesied events is *THE* actual prophesied event, with the other fulfillment-like events being mere coincidences or contrived look-alikes.

As hard as it can be for us to do... and especially for those listening who are Seminary or Theological School students... we must re-calibrate our thinking about the realities of prophetic fulfillments to match what the Scriptures tell us versus what our vast array of Christian denominational doctrines tell us. And as of late there are also many works of fiction about the End Times that further muddy the waters of our thinking on the subject. These fictional works can become mixed together with what the Bible says, and so sometimes Believers can think that whatever is portrayed in those novels is an accurate account of what will happen and how End Times events will look. For example: the Rapture. This mysterious event is, in modern times, most popularly depicted as Believers suddenly flying up into the air, apparently naked, with their clothing either fluttering back to earth or left behind neatly folded from the place they were launched. Could this be true? I can't say that it is impossible; but the Bible certainly doesn't suggest the nature of the Rapture as this. Rather this kind of portrayal comes from the fertile imaginations of fiction writers. The unintended consequence is that this is how many Evangelical Christians so smitten by these books honestly think the Bible tells us that the Rapture is going occur. So if it doesn't happen like that, then many will not believe it when it *has* occurred.

We (you) should not feel alone or think this tendency to be misled is a new dynamic, or that we are biblically uninformed about this dilemma. Christ Himself has warned us about this. He has been openly challenging the doctrines and beliefs of the Hebrew faith as it was currently being taught and enforced by the Jewish leadership of His day. He stood nearly alone in His resistance and reformation. And when I say doctrines I mean it in the sense of the term as it is used in contemporary times as opposed to its technical meaning. That is, doctrines as a list of faith principles established and believed by a group of humans, said to be the proper interpretations of the Holy Bible with all other interpretations being wrong. This is the same worldview as what the Jews refer to as Traditions. So the primary shared characteristic of Jewish Traditions and Christian doctrines is that they are manmade. This is not to say that all Traditions and doctrines are incorrect; but many are... and at times dangerously so. Often they are established with the result that God worshippers become divided up into segments, with each segment becoming loyal to a particular sect, denomination, or leader.

The bottom line is that much of what Yeshua is prophesying will happen BOTH in or near His day and then again in the future. Naturally it was easier for the Jews of His day to grasp and mentally picture what the prophesied event will look like and how it could happen in their time, versus what it could look like and happen in some unknowable distant future. It is the same for us. When we read about the End Times and the Apocalypse in Jesus's prophecies, and John's in the Book of Revelation, we subconsciously form a mental picture based on the context of how things currently look and exist in our day (in this case, in the year 2021). And if these End Times events were to happen within a decade or so, perhaps we have formed a pretty accurate mental picture. But if they were to happen beyond that relatively short timeframe? Then I promise you that as we gather today, we have no real way of knowing what it's all going to look like, or to factor in the coming world-changing events like the Covid pandemic, or the development of new ever-more intrusive technologies, or of the evolution of societies and national governments either towards extreme religion or extreme secularism, or of the waning and rising power of nations, or of what seems to be never-ending and ever-increasing deadly cataclysms, and more. Yeshua spoke on that problem for us, if only we'll take notice and heed His words. So in Matthew 24 listen carefully as Christ reveals the future and how we are to respond to it.

In verse 1 the location of what has been going on since about chapter 21 is going to change. So far, since Christ's arrival in Jerusalem, all has centered around the

Temple. To be clear: not the Temple in the sense of the actual Sanctuary where the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies exist behind a huge veil. But rather in the sense of the vast Temple grounds where there were numerous places to meet and teach. This was Herod's Temple. Herod the Great had spent enormous sums of money and many years totally remodeling and expanding the Temple grounds, as well as beautifying the Temple Sanctuary building. In Yeshua's time the Temple Mount had grown to 35 acres or so. While that may not seem so terribly large to us, in that day it was monumental and was seen as one of the wonders of the world that wealthy gentiles would travel long distances merely to marvel at its size and magnificence.

It was along His way to outside the city walls of Jerusalem and then across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives that Christ's disciples sort of wondered out loud about the stunning nature of the Temple and Temple Mount. They didn't really ask a question of their Master, and weren't necessarily looking for a lesson; it was only casual conversation as they strolled by. But Yeshua used the occasion to make a prophecy about the Temple. Mark 13 and Luke 21 both report on this same conversation, making it clear that the disciples were specifically pointing out the enormous size and quantity of the many finely cut stones used in the construction. Yeshua's response put a damper on their enthusiasm. He says that the Temple (meaning the Sanctuary and the huge walls of the entire Temple Mount area) would not only be destroyed but also disassembled. It is mostly from this comment that the bulk of modern era Bible scholars and commentators conclude that the Gospel writers must have put fake prophetic words into Christ's mouth. That is, these scholars claim that what the Gospel authors did was to write well after the destruction of Jerusalem and dismantling of those walls that would come in 70 A.D., or some 35 or so years after Yeshua spoke the prophecy. So the Gospel writers were looking in hindsight, back to when the Temple was destroyed, and so Jesus never actually said anything about the fate of the Temple, but their words do make Him look like a seer and a prophet.

I want to pause here momentarily. While I know this can be hard to accept for followers of Messiah Yeshua, the unseemly truth is that some of what is written and taught about Christ in the Bible is seen by even somewhat conservative Bible scholars as but fictional narrative added by the Gospel writers for effect. The same scholars that do so very well in translating the Greek into English (and into other languages as well), and agree that indeed this is what the earliest Gospel texts that we have actually say to be true, don't themselves believe all the

substance of it. So, for instance, they claim that all but the End Times prophecies of Jesus that are meant for the far future are but fraudulent (if well intentioned) claims by the Gospel writers. They are writing about events that had already happened by their day, so they were able to put fake words into Christ's mouth that we could someday look back and marvel at what He seemed to foreknow. Naturally this conclusion filters down to Seminaries and eventually what is taught from the pulpit. In fact, belief in the inspiration of the New Testament is on the wane, and so a newer trend is to take what comes in the Gospel accounts prior to Yeshua's resurrection with a rather large grain of salt, and only what comes after is to be taken more seriously.

So let me state for the record that all of us at Seed of Abraham Ministries who teach believe that the Gospels are indeed the inspired word of God and that when we read of Christ prophesying, it was true prophecy that was prophesied before the fact. The reality is that if this were not so, then we all belong to a failed religion and follow a false Messiah, or at least one who is very different from what the Gospels claim.

About 35 years after Jesus's prophesy, the Temple was indeed destroyed by the Romans and the stones of the walls disassembled. With some recent excavations under what is called Robinson's Arch, there have been found hundreds of these enormous stones that the Romans had pushed over the top of the Temple Mount foundation into heaps of rubble. Tourists have full view of it today.

I highly recommend for study of the Temple in its various stages and eras perhaps the most extensive, up to date, and beautifully illustrated book that exists today. It is a Carta Publishers of Jerusalem book by Leen Ritmeyer called The Quest. There's not a lot of places where you can obtain it, but is available at HolyLandMarketPlace.com.

Verse 3 moves us to the Mount of Olives. After telling His disciples what was going to happen to the Temple Mount that they so admired, they naturally wanted to know when. Mark says it was only Peter, James, John and Andrew that were sitting there with Christ at the moment, asking the question of "when?" Before we address Yeshua's answer, make note that knowing what we know in our time with so much history in our rear-view mirrors, and when considering especially Zechariah's, Ezekiel's and Jeremiah's prophecies of a new Temple that is to come later, then this prophetic fulfillment of the Temple's destruction must be

taken in a rather typical fulfillment fashion: it happens, and then it happens again in the future. In other words, Jesus is speaking not only of the 2nd Temple (Herod's Temple) being destroyed, but also of a 3rd one being built and then it being desecrated and destroyed (or at least significantly damaged) in a far future time. In fact, later still a 4th Temple seems to be prophetically described in the Prophets, one that comes during the Millennial Kingdom days. Whether this is a brand-new Temple or a reconstructed 3rd Temple I'm not at all sure because the Holy Scriptures don't give us enough definitive information about it.

As for the destruction of the 3rd Temple (something that does not yet exist) and of Jerusalem, we need to go to the 14th chapter of Zechariah.

CJB Zechariah 14:1 *Look, a day is coming for ADONAI when your plunder, [Yerushalayim], will be divided right there within you. ² "For I will gather all the nations against Yerushalayim for war. The city will be taken, the houses will be rifled, the women will be raped, and half the city will go into exile; but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city." ³ Then ADONAI will go out and fight against those nations, fighting as on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which lies to the east of Yerushalayim; and the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, to make a huge valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. ⁵ You will flee to the valley in the mountains, for the valley in the mountains will reach to Atzel. You will flee, just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of 'Uziah king of Y'hudah. Then ADONAI my God will come to you with all the holy ones. ⁶ On that day, there will be neither bright light nor thick darkness; ⁷ and one day, known to ADONAI, will be neither day nor night, although by evening there will be light. ⁸ On that day, fresh water will flow out from Yerushalayim, half toward the eastern sea and half toward the western sea, both summer and winter. ⁹ Then ADONAI will be king over the whole world. On that day ADONAI will be the only one, and his name will be the only name.*

The Prophet Amos adds a little more to this.

CJB Amos 2:4-8 ⁴ Here is what ADONAI says: "For Y'hudah's three crimes, no, four- I will not reverse it- because they rejected ADONAI's Torah and haven't observed his laws, and their lies caused them to fall into error and live the way their ancestors did; ⁵ I will send fire on Y'hudah, and it will consume the palaces of Yerushalayim. ⁶ Here is what ADONAI says: "For

Isra'el's three crimes, no, four- I will not reverse it- because they sell the upright for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes, ⁷ grinding the heads of the poor in the dust and pushing the lowly out of the way; father and son sleep with the same girl, profaning my holy name; ⁸ lying down beside any altar on clothes taken in pledge; drinking wine in the house of their God bought with fines they imposed.

These prophecies describe what happened to Jerusalem and the Temple in Bible times (to a degree), and what will happen again to a greater degree. We know that the Lord has not yet set foot on the Mount of Olives and split it in half, so this event is of course future to us. This provides a good example of how the Prophets and prophecy operate. In some ways it helps us to understand them, in other ways it can make the how and when a bit harder to discern.

A most challenging portion of verse 3 is when an anonymous one of the 4 disciples of Yeshua's inner circle asks: ***"And what will be the sign that you are coming, and that the 'olam hazeh is ending?"*** The question for us is, what was this disciple thinking and meaning about Jesus "coming"? Typically this is taken to mean Christ's return in the sense that He dies, is resurrected, ascends to Heaven, and stays there until some undefined time in the future in which He returns. Or, as Christians say it, the second coming. Actually this view is quite a leap; there doesn't seem to have been any real or understandable discussion that is recorded in the Gospels about such a thing. In fact, what we'll read about after Christ's death is that the disciples were completely dispirited and figured that their movement and their hopes had ended. Yeshua... their leader... their Messianic hope... was dead and gone, and that was that. They were surprised upon the proof of His resurrection and even then we will read of the disciple Thomas who simply couldn't process the risen Christ standing there talking to him and had to literally place his fingers into the nail holes of Jesus's wrists and the hole in his side from the Roman spear. The point being that if what the disciples meant and were thinking about Christ "coming" the way modern Believers usually take it, then their reaction to His death and the surprise at His revivication makes no sense.

The only intellectually honest way I can reconcile this conundrum is if this disciple meant that he understood that Christ was going to go away somewhere for a time (no doubt alive and unchanged) and then when He decided to come back to Jerusalem as the Messiah, the End of the World would happen. So while the disciple thought of Jesus's absence in the sense of a typical earthly retreat to

someplace safe and remote, perhaps for a few weeks or months (maybe to Qumran with the Essenes?), he was only **incorrect** in that Yeshua's actual retreat would be in a spiritual form to Heaven, and His coming back would happen many centuries later but in an entirely different form and substance.

Where our CJB says ***olam hazeh*** that Hebrew term translates into English as "the present world"... that is, the present age. The Jews saw Redemption History as a 2-part structure. Part 1 is the ***olam hazeh*** (the present age) that comes to an end when the Messiah/Son of Man appears, and part 2 is when immediately the world to come (the ***olam habbah***) appears. For them, the world to come was largely about Israel regaining their independence and then coming into a Golden Age that becomes its own empire. So the idea is that Messiah Yeshua will in time come back to Jerusalem and when he does the current age abruptly ends and next age begins. Considering the urgency in which the disciples and the later Apostles barnstormed the region with the message of forgiveness of sins and the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, they could only have thought that Yeshua's absence was nearing its end. This 2-part structure of Redemption History and the connection between the Messiah and the End Times is what mainstream Judaism of that day thought, it's what the Pharisees taught, and it is what John the Baptist believed to the point that he had a falling out with Jesus over it. Of course, none of these folks could comprehend Christ's return in the context of two separate visits of the Messiah, with a very long period in between, in which only does the second visitation of Yeshua bring us to the Apocalypse and the end of human history... what Christians call the End Times.

Yeshua didn't at first address the where or how of His coming back to Jerusalem. But we must never simply jump over the critical point that indeed His return IS going to be to Jerusalem. Indeed the entire world will somehow look up into the sky and see Him coming, but where He lands is Jerusalem. This destroys any notion that God is done with Israel and the Jewish people. So Christ first responds to the disciple's question with "don't be fooled" and then goes on to list some specific things that WILL happen (these are not hypothetical or symbols). As a born skeptic, what Yeshua says isn't terribly hard for me to accept and do. But for many more of you, you are inherently trusting souls so questioning and challenging what appears to be good, holy and obvious to others is not going to be easy for you. The first case of what is going to happen is that many false Messiah's will appear... some even coming in His name... which could mean literally saying he is Jesus or probably meaning identifying himself as God's Messiah. Such a scenario was actually common within the Holy Land in Yeshua's

day. It was one of the reasons that the more erudite Jerusalem residents turned up their noses at Yeshua because He was just another in a long line of claimants to the Messianic throne.

Perhaps one of the most famous Messiah pretenders to come later was Bar Kokhba who appeared about 100 years after Christ. He led yet another failed Jewish rebellion against Rome and disappointed so many who were certain that he was the Messiah. This series of false Messiahs simply shut down the Jewish hope of a real Messiah that actually fulfilled the prophecies about him, thus making it all the harder for them to accept the true Messiah, Yeshua, who was executed. Josephus even spoke about this sad string of false Messiahs that pestered Israel: "The wretched people were deluded at that time by charlatans and pretended messengers of the deity", he wrote.

Another thing that Yeshua says looking forward is that there will be a constant drumbeat about wars near and far away. Don't be frightened, He says, for this is not the end. Just as for any thinking Christian, it's one thing to praise God and beseech Him to return His Son to us so that His Kingdom can be set up forever, but it's another when we put our hands and arms back down to our sides and soberly understand that if we're still here, the odds of surviving the ruthlessness of the Anti-Christ and the terrible battles that lead to Yeshua's return, are slim. The Jews also understood (to some level) that the events involved with Messiah's coming and the End of the World were going to be horrific. In their context, they knew Rome wasn't simply going to throw down their weapons and surrender to Israel's Messiah. Thus Yeshua's comment to "not be frightened" was meant both for those disciples hearing Him speak and for us 2000 years in the future.

Christ teaches His 4 disciples that all these wars and conflagrations they are already hearing about are going to continue to happen; but this does NOT mean the end has come. Yet no matter how much this passage is taught in Churches, every time there are serious wars or terrible atrocities like 9/11 that happen, a goodly number of Christians become certain this signals the End Times. No one alive today fought in WWI and precious few are alive and old enough to remember it. But the reality that we learn of in memoirs and history books is that the horror of it caused the Church in general to believe that this had to be the war to end all wars. This was the biblically foretold Apocalypse. There were Believers that sold everything and went to live in remote places. There were small cultish groups of Christians that even committed mass suicides. What I'm telling you is that no wars or calamities that have happened to this current point in history are

the indicators that the end is near. I only draw the conclusion that the End Times is just around the corner because of the ripeness of Christ's promises with the extensive passage of time since he made them, and because of the one thing that is impossible to set aside as the key to setting the stage for Our Savior's return: the re-birth of Israel as a nation of Jews in 1948. That subject is a big one in itself, and so it's for another time.

Verse 7 says that peoples will fight each other as will nations fight one another. The Greek word that translates as peoples is **ethnos**. Although the CJB translation of this verse does a better job of communicating the meaning than most Bible versions, the more familiar way we read it is:

^{KJV} **Matthew 24:7** *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.*

This translation gives us a wrong impression. The Greek word that is translated here as nation is **ethnos**. It means people or groups of people. Ethnicities and not nations. When we read kingdom against kingdom, the Greek word is **basileia**. It refers to political entities... governments and nations. So ethnic groups and races of people will battle one another, and also governments of nations will send armies of their nations to battle other nations. In Bible times (in general) races and ethnicities (people groups) didn't battle others over race and ethnicity. Some scholars claim that there is no difference between that and tribalism. I think tribalism is quite another thing. Tribalism is, in fact, merely a rather primitive form of government. What we are seeing in our day of brown skinned people battling those of other colors, and black skinned people battling those of other colors, and of white people doing the same ONLY because of skin color differences; and of Asian ethnicities trying to defend themselves against those from other ethnicities... all on account of race and ethnic jealousies... is somewhat new to the world. In the ancient past the motives for such hatred and animosities mostly had to do with religious differences, the want of natural resources, and governments of nations desiring to expand their reach and power. What I'm saying is that the **ethnos** against **ethnos** as very nearly a worldwide dynamic that has little or nothing to do with religion or governments, or natural resources or land, is happening on a scale that we haven't seen historically. And yet, as bothersome and heartbreaking reality as it happens in America and a few other places in the world, Christ says that this, too, must occur... but that is not a sign of the end.

He moves on to other happenings that, again, Christians often take as signs of the End Times but in fact Christ says they are not. He says there will be famines and earthquakes in various places around the world. And if these are any sign at all, it is only of the beginnings of the birth pains. Just so we're clear: this is a metaphor. Yeshua used all kinds of everyday occurrences to make His point. Everyone understood the birth process, and how before a child passed through the maternal waters and was born, first the mother had the beginnings of the birth pains... those first initial twinges that could come days before the labor pains began in earnest. So this is a way of speaking about stages in the End Times process and the very first stage that only WARNS of the imminent entry into the End Times is likened to those first early twinges. The problem is that famines and earthquakes are recorded in the Bible and other ancient historical documents as far back as there was written language. Were these things happening all over the world? Were they less and fewer then than they are now? There's really nothing to prove that one way or the other. It's only that with today's instant communications around the globe that knowing what's going on everywhere at once has become the norm, where even a few decades ago no such thing was imaginable. Thus we are inundated with largely negative news that has the proclivity to scare the daylights out of some, and simply exhaust others.

What Christ is counseling among His followers is patience and endurance. Watchful waiting. Remaining devoted as the world deteriorates. This decay and collapse is to be expected and it is inevitable. Such deterioration is only "abnormal" in the sense that sin and evil are abnormal in relation to the perfection that God originally created. But in light of the way the world became immediately after Adam and Eve broke the 1-rule Torah, it is NOT abnormal for us to experience famines, earthquakes, wars of governments against governments, and (especially as of late) hatred and jealousies of ethnicities against ethnicities, just as it is NOT abnormal for a woman to have birth pains when bringing a new life into this world.

The Greek word to open verse 9 is **tote** and depending on your Bible version it is translated to "then" or "at that time". My concern is this: at WHAT time? When is "then"? Since all the English versions I checked didn't make a paragraph change between verses 8 and 9, and since I can't find any scholars who seemed to even address the meaning of "at that time", then I'm left to my own devices to try to understand it. Therefore without filtering this through denominational or traditional thoughts, it seems to me that this can only be saying that upon the first twinges of

the birth pains that signals entry into the End Times, all that follows begins to happen as well. Therefore, these things listed ARE the initial twinges. And the first "twinge" mentioned is Believers being arrested and handed over to be punished and even put to death, and all peoples (*ethnos*, ethnic groups) hating God worshippers. Since this is a "twinge" and therefore must occur before the Anti-Christ makes his appearance, then it means that things haven't fully deteriorated... at least as the world sees it... just yet. However no doubt the world is merely distracted and deluded and thus blind to reality.

In Yeshua's era and even to the latest of the Apostles (John), getting arrested for religious beliefs, even for mere doctrinal differences within the same religion, was par for the course. So none of this prophecy would have been much of a surprise for Peter, James, Andrew and John to have heard from Christ. However for people like me, in the 21st century, only a few years ago I could never have imagined that in the developed Western world a Christian could be arrested and prosecuted for little more than speaking his or her beliefs out loud... or even within the confines of their houses of worship. Yet, that is happening right now. Speaking out against the gay lifestyle, or against self-determining one's own sex apart from what is clearly biological and anatomic, or pleading for women not to abort their babies, even standing with Israel, has put those of us who say these things in the crosshairs of our Cancel Culture and of law enforcement. Further, because of modern hate speech laws, the freedom to hold to our biblically based moral views and advocate for them are, one at a time, becoming not merely unpopular, but illegal.

Yet let's be clear: what will be the root cause of that hatred against us? Christ says it will be: "Because of Me". The next verse says, within that same context, that many false prophets will also appear and fool many people. What does Yeshua mean by "prophets"? In His day this term had a range of meanings from a seer to a teacher of God's Word. Sometimes the term was used so generically that it carried the sense of a person representing God in some unspecified way. Perhaps a means to think about it is as people that some in the Body of Christ give special attention and authority to. People who claim they know something that the Lord told only them. People who claim they know the date that Jesus is returning, for instance. People who think they can tell you what is going to happen tomorrow. Or simply people who teach God's Word, or doctrines and Traditions that supposedly interpret God's Word. In Yeshua's day this referred mostly to the Scribes and Pharisees but also included the steady stream of charlatans claiming to be the Messiah. In our day the term false prophets means

those whom many in the Church accept as having inspired insight, but God doesn't claim them at all. So how do we as God worshippers sort this out? How can we know who are false prophets? Yeshua has already told us and you will hear this from me regularly:

CJB Matthew 7:15-23 ¹⁵ "Beware of the false prophets! They come to you wearing sheep's clothing, but underneath they are hungry wolves! ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruit. Can people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise, every healthy tree produces good fruit, but a poor tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, or a poor tree good fruit. ¹⁹ Any tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire! ²⁰ So you will recognize them by their fruit. ²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants. ²² On that Day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we expel demons in your name? Didn't we perform many miracles in your name?' ²³ Then I will tell them to their faces, 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'

We'll continue next time in Matthew chapter 24.