

## **Matthew 24 Series - Acts 1 continued**

### **Part 11 in the Series - I am Not a Preterist**

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The title of today's message is, Matthew 24 Series - I am not a Preterist - Part 12.

I have every intention today of continuing our study on Matthew 24, in continuing to prove that the Second Coming of Christ has already occurred - the implication thereby being - that the Kingdom of God in its full and complete implementation - is a present-reality - AND - it is the responsibility of every living, breathing creature to conform to His Kingdom and Christ's Kingship - right now.

But before I do so, I am going to take a little bit here and discuss some of the emails with questions, that I've been receiving as a result of these messages.

And, before I get into today's message, here's another song that you'll probably remember from long ago. Sing along with me if you feel led. I hope this song is real in your life, today.

Alright, through many years now, I have been accused - falsely I might add - through the years of being a "preterist." I want to clear the air right now - and let everyone know that I am not a "preterist."

But I would then expect people to object and say, "But you believe in Fulfilled Bible Prophecy" just like the "preterists" do. To which I would respond - that is only partially true.

I absolutely, unequivocally believe that ALL - and I'll repeat that so there is no misunderstanding - I believe that ALL Bible prophecy has been fulfilled. There is nothing prophesied in God's Word that has not been fulfilled - already - but I am not a "preterist."

Here's my history - my testimony on the matter. For as long as I can remember, I have had no other desire than to be in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I've told this story before, and it doesn't hurt to repeat it. I was raised in the independent, fundamental, Baptist church movement. This was a movement which was

in its hey-day in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. It was a movement that boasted of America's largest churches, particularly Sunday schools and claimed the most quote "souls won for Jesus." It had a large American prominence and a large world-wide presence with its missionary outreach.

For some reason, as a child, I was drawn to, enamored with, consumed by, this movement. And when I say a child, I'm telling you that my earliest recollections are around the age of 5. In fact, my most vivid memories of childhood involve my "church experiences."

Now, let me say this. I was drawn in by the excitement, the enthusiastic preaching, the music, and by what I remember as "fun fellowship." There seemed to be lots of smiles and happiness from what I remember at a very young age.

But with all the entertainment value that drew me in - it was my desire to be a preacher that consumed me - even at that very young age. I don't know if the church you went to had the little kid that was always on the front row dressed in his little green suit, singing as loudly as he could and then listening intently to the preacher - but if you did - I was that little kid.

My salvation experience was nothing memorable compared to the conversion stories of the great notorious sinners or criminals. I was just a little boy who one day felt totally consumed with my need to publicly confess to the world that I was giving my life to Christ.

I still have all but two of the Bibles that I had growing up. My first Bible was the children's KJV with the blue cover and the beautiful pictures and drawings throughout the pages. My next Bible was an adult Bible with adult sized type and the children's pictures had been replaced with maps and other grown up drawings tracing the steps of Christ and the missionary journeys of Paul. I was so happy to have that Bible. Quickly, the blank pages began to fill up with notes that I would write when the preacher said something that really hit me hard.

My memories of growing up in the Baptist church were of not being able to get enough of the teachings of the Word. One thing that I took from the Baptist preacher of the 1960s and 70s was that we were supposed to believe the book for what it said. "God said, I believe it, that settles it" is one of the sayings that I wrote in my Bible.

As I grew older, I held to that belief system and as my naivete of the church movement

began to fade, I realized that a lot of what I had been taught was lip-service. But for me - it was not.

The first kink in the armor came when I was very very young and I heard the Baptist preacher talk about "God's chosen people" in the Middle East. In his next sentence he talked about how it was against the law to preach in Jesus' name in the Middle East.

As a child - could not have been more than 7 years old - I was appalled at the concept that God's Chosen people would outlaw preaching in the name of Jesus. To me, that was absolutely ridiculous.

At the age of 10, my Dad took me to see the Bob Jones film, "A Flame in the Wind." It was about a young man who would not stop preaching Christ and was persecuted, tortured and eventually burned at the stake by the Catholic inquisition.

This was monumental in my life and would later be a key-turning point for me.

Also, at the age of ten, every midweek service that we attended my Dad would have Lester Roloff playing on the radio. Lester Roloff became a childhood hero of mine. If you don't know who Lester Roloff was, he was a preacher who died in the early 1980s - and there are some people who believe to this day - that the government sabotaged his plane and killed him a plane crash. Lester had been in a decade long fight with the state of Texas over his homes for wayward boys and girls. And it was because Lester would not take a license from the state to run his homes.

After seeing the persecution of men of God throughout the Scriptures, and then seeing A Flame in the Wind, I was firmly convinced that if the "government" was persecuting a believer, I was going to be on the side of the believer. In my understanding of things today, Lester didn't have it all figured out, but he sure had that part of it figured out. The people and ministry of God are to be solely under the headship of Christ.

At the age of 12, I surrendered my life to preach the gospel of Christ. By the time I was 12 years old, I was a regular voice on the weekly television broadcast of our local Baptist church. From the age of 12 up, I always had a "trio" that sang in church on a regular basis.

I'm not telling you these things as some sort of merit badge but simply as a background as to how I'm going to finally answer the question concerning preterism.

When it was finally time to go off to Bible college, I remember like it was yesterday, sitting in a Baptist history class. The professor, who was actually a longtime friend of our family, had made the statement, "Whether you like it or not, the Baptist church traces its roots from the Catholic church."

I couldn't take it. I believed then, as I do now, that the true Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ never sprang from the Catholic church and that if there is a distinct line that these guys claim to have found - then there is an indistinct line that has been hidden and that line leads directly to Christ and has never been part of a denomination or officially recognized, government sanctioned church.

So I jumped up from that class and called out to the professor, "Maybe your Baptist church came from the Catholics, but mine didn't."

Of course, all that I now know concerning the Baptist church, I would not have an argument with that professor.

But I will absolutely, unashamedly say that there is a line of faith totally separate and distinct from all denominations and churches and that line goes directly to the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples and that line is traced with the blood of men and women who would not compromise the Lordship of Christ over their lives and in the face of relentless torture and persecution, they would bow their knee to none other than King Jesus.

This event in my Baptist college experience is indelibly marked in me and it was another kink in the armor that made me scratch my head in wonder.

It wasn't enough to cause me to waver in my Baptist heritage - the one that I had somehow created in my mind that was more my hopes and desires for my forbears as opposed to what the truth really was.

Not long after that experience, Pastor Everett Sileven, who goes by the name Ramsey now, was in a battle with the state of Nebraska concerning his church school. I didn't know much about Pastor Ramsey, but I knew that if the state of Nebraska was attacking him, I was on his side.

In a pastoral theology class at this same Bible college, one of the preacher boys had asked the professor what he thought about Pastor Ramsey's stand in Nebraska. The professor responded, "Pastor Sileven is an idiot!" That was it for me and a few months

later I had left Bible college and entered into full-time ministry in a Baptist church.

I was now living my dream. I was in "full-time Christian service" as it was called back then. And of course, I was all in. Up to my neck consumed and involved with my calling. I was there everytime the doors were opened and even when they weren't. One Sunday morning, we had a terrible snow storm and dangerously frigid temperatures. My car wouldn't start. So I walked the several miles to the church building and ended up with a touch of frostbite on one of my ears.

Being that close to the "church ministry" I began to see things that didn't seem quite right to me. I slowly began to question some of the things I was seeing, and the answers that I came back to me, were concerning. Things like, "Sometimes we have to look the other way for the sake of the ministry." Or, "is it ever ok to tell a lie to protect the ministry?"

For someone who was so consumed with the Word, it became increasingly more difficult for me to reconcile what I was seeing with my own two eyes and with what I knew concerning the teachings of Christ and the principles contained in the Scriptures.

Eventually, I was shown the door. My dreams were shattered.

It was at this point, the lowest point in my life to that time, I fell on my face before God and pleaded with him to make himself known to me. I was at a point in time where I needed to absolutely make sure that I knew what I believed and why I believed it.

I was already seen as somewhat of a rebel in that my beliefs concerning the "jews" were not what good little Baptists were so believe. My beliefs concerning the 501(c)(3) church were definitely not what good little Baptists were supposed to believe. But look where I was now.

The rich Baptist church didn't want me. The poor Baptist church didn't want me.

It was then, that I took my Bible and opened to what I thought was a random passage of Scripture. That passage of Scripture was Matthew 16.

As I began reading and found my way to verse 24, now, I'm not going to sit here and tell you that bright lights began to shine or crazy miraculous things began to occur around me - but when I read verses 24-28 I literally began to shake my head at what I was reading. I had read this passage of Scripture hundreds of times before in my life.

Everyone who has ever claimed even the slightest relationship with Christ is familiar with this passage.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

[25] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

[26] For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

[27] For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

[28] Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Yet this time, for some reason, it was speaking to me in a way I had never seen before.

I had just read that Christ said TO HIS DISCIPLES, 2,000 years ago - "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

I had read that passage many many times before, but this time it was different.

So, I continued reading and by the time I had finished Matthew 24 - my head was spinning. I realized in those few short hours - that everything I had been taught concerning the Second Coming of Christ had been untrue.

Realize and understand with me, please that I had been born and raised a fundamental, premillennial, pre-tribulation rapture Baptist. That was all I knew. I had never even heard of anything else. Of course, there was premillennial, amillennial, postmillennial - but what in the world was this?

I believed the Scripture was telling me that the Second Coming of Christ had already occurred - and as I began to meditate on this it led me to the vast implications of what it all means.

The past occurrence of the Second Coming of Christ means that the Kingdom of God was fully and completed implemented in the world when that great and notable day of the Lord came.

And it came exactly as the prophets of old foretold and it came exactly when our Lord said it would come and the wrath to come that was prophesied by the prophets and by Our Lord came exactly upon the generation - time and people that Jesus said would not pass away until all these things be fulfilled.

Again, at this time in my life, which was over 30 years ago, I had never heard of anyone, anywhere believing, let alone teaching, that Christ had already come again and was not going to return to this earth to set up a future Kingdom.

As I have shown in our previous messages in this series, this belief system will completely obliterate the lie that there are people in this world who call themselves jews - but have never accepted Christ - and that they somehow - are God's Chosen people.

This belief system exposes the fools who are constantly setting dates for a phony rapture that will never happen because it has already happened and the Scriptures do not prophecy another rapture.

As I continued my studies in the Scripture, passages of Scripture began jumping off the pages at me in ways I had never seen before.

I have mentioned many times Hebrews 9:26 which says as clearly as it can be said that Christ died "in the end of the world." When I read through the book of Colossians and saw as clearly as it can be said that the "gospel was preached to every creature which is under I heaven..." I began to fill with courage to begin sharing with others what I was learning.

I began having small Bible studies in my little apartment where I was teaching Fulfilled Bible Prophecy and the implications being that the Kingdom of God was a present-day reality - all the while - not knowing that there was anyone else, anywhere, that believed that Bible prophecy had been fulfilled.

One day, I was at an office where I had conducted business with a man and he had a copy of the "Spotlight" newspaper that used to be published weekly out of Washington, D.C. If I remember correctly, it had kind of a libertarian style slant, maybe, I don't totally recall.

But anyway, for some reason, I was reading the letters to the editor. I came across a man who - and I can't even remember why he wrote his letter to the editor - it may

have been in response to some futurist article or something - but this man was writing about Bible Prophecy already being fulfilled. I couldn't believe it. At that time, I did not know anyone else who believed this.

Back in those days, if you had a name and a city, you could dial 411 and would more than likely get a phone number. So when I got home that evening, that's what I did.

I was able to reach the man who had written the letter to the editor, and it was then that I first heard the word "preterist." This man let me know there was a movement going out there called "preterism." He told me about some of the people involved and I was very excited to hear these things.

By this time now, I had already written the book, *The Religion of the New World Order* and I had printed quite a few copies of the book. When I told this man about the book, he got excited, also, and this gave me the opportunity to talk with some of the "leaders" of the Preterist movement. For those of you who have heard of the Preterist movement, if I named names, you would be very familiar with all the names I could toss out.

As I began to speak with these guys, it wasn't long before I felt a chill. The more these guys knew about me and what I was teaching as the implications of Fulfilled Bible Prophecy - the more they withdrew from me.

One evening, I had been in an hours long conversation with one of the principle figures in the movement and as long as we were talking about Fulfilled Bible Prophecy, the conversation was great. But then, he asked me, "Well, Charlie, what else are you working on?"

As a result of my first book, *The Religion of the New World Order*, I was now getting mail from all over the country. The typical response was, "Ok, you have laid out a good argument for Fulfilled Bible Prophecy, so what does it mean for today?"

So, I began to tell this Preterist preacher that as a result of all this mail, I was working on a new book that was talking about the implications of Fulfilled Bible Prophecy - specifically - that the Kingdom of God was a present-day reality and that Christ is King now and it is the responsibility of every living, breathing creature, to conform to His Kingdom - right now.

Within 30 seconds of me telling this preterist preacher this - he had concluded our conversation - and to this day - we have never spoken again.



It was right then, that the title of that book came to me - "They All Call Him King."

The futurist calls Him King - but when you pin him down on that belief - it will always end up being that Christ is really just a coming King. His Kingdom is only of a purely spiritual nature now - but someday - when He returns - then His Kingdom will be an all encompassing Kingdom.

I have come to find out that the preterist not only believes that Bible prophecy has been fulfilled, but they ultimately believe that even the principles contained in the Scripture are fulfilled and that everything is just relegated to the spiritual realm and as long as you are kind to your neighbor, that's about the extent of Christianity.

I'll give you an example. Years ago, I was reading some comments on an article from the website planetpreterist. It was an article about the "mark of the beast, 666, etc.,." A futurist had engaged some preterists in the conversation and the futurist had made a statement about a chip being put in people's heads or hands.

The preterists were mocking the concerns of the futurist because, of course, 666, the mark of the beast, already fulfilled - just plain stupid and ridiculous to even discuss the subject.

The preterists had made the statement that it was so ridiculous to even discuss micro-chipping that if it ever came to it, and the government made it mandatory for people to have a chip in their hand or in their forehead - they'd be the first ones to stand in line and have that chip implanted right straight in their foreheads.

Afterall, 666, mark of the beast, it's all past, already been fulfilled - so what.

But friends, listen to me, here's the difference in what I'm saying and what the preterist is saying.

I am saying that Not One Word of the Bible was written to me - listen - Not One Word of that Book was written to me or you. The book was written and completed at least 2,000 years ago and not a single one of us were alive. Not a single one of us were living in Ephesus when that written letter was delivered to them.

So, Not one word was written to us - but EVERY word was written for us.

The principles remain. The Laws remain - obviously I'm speaking of what was left over once the sacrificial Laws were removed. The Will and Plan that God has for His people remains. God wants people for Himself.

God has a state - it's called the commonwealth of Israel - so named in Ephesians 2:12 and confirmed again in I Peter 2. God has a Government that He has established on this earth and His desire is that all men, women, boys and girls voluntarily choose that Government as their own.

His Government is perfect. His Laws are perfect. His King is perfect and He has been asking people to Come out from the World and into His Kingdom for over 2,000 years now.

Yes, Revelation 13:18 - THE mark of THE beast of Revelation is history. It's been fulfilled. It's over - however - it is not just THE mark of THE beast that followers of Christ in that first generation were to abstain from - but according to I John 4:3 - followers of Christ are to flee and abstain from anything that is the Spirit of Antichrist. And today, if people cannot see that the modern day social security number in America is the spirit of antichrist - then I don't know what else we can do or say.

There is a U.S. federal statute that requires a social security number for nearly everything transaction that a U.S. citizen can be involved in - and that statute is USC Title 42, Section 666. But today, it doesn't matter because to the futurist - well - it's not for today. And it's going to be an implant - than no where in the Bible did it ever say that. For the preterist - it's already been fulfilled - so it's not for today.

So, instead of true Christians screaming bloody murder about a number that marks people and restricts their freedom, that ungodly practice continues because there's nothing out there preventing the sin - or even vocal opposition to it.

In America, that number is now proudly referred to as one's "social." It's called the SSN. In Canada, good grief, your number is called an SIN number. How in your face do things have to be for people who call themselves God's people before we wake up?

The difference between what I'm trying to get people to see is that the Kingdom of God is about trying to teach people what the Will of God is - on earth as it is in heaven - right now - and then trying to live accordingly.

We do not find this taught in futurism. We do not find it taught in preterism.

Both of these isms are just twists of religion who ultimately are in place to keep people from seeking and finding the Kingdom of God.

They are both wrapped up in playing church. The preterists that I have dealt with over many years are the epitome of II Timothy 3:7

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Most futurists I know are not guilty of this because they aren't interested in learning - they're just waitin' on Jesus with an eye on the sky.

Man, Charlie, you're down on everyone.

That's not true. I was once told by a Baptist preacher that my problem was that I believed in Lordship salvation. I was shocked when my response was, "Well, don't you believe in Lordship salvation, to?" And he responded, "Absolutely not."

He then told me that I believed someone had to be a theologian before they could accept Christ. That isn't true, either, but I certainly believe that the whole counsel of God should be taught to someone who is seeking Christ. At that point, they are able to make a choice. No man builds something without first counting the cost.

I'll assure you that the people alive in the first century during the ministry of Christ had the whole counsel of God preached to them.

Church salvation says get them "converted" as fast as you can so we can fill up a seat and put more money in the offering plate.

I'd argue that nearly "preacher" I ever knew could have quote - "won the rich man to Christ" - even though Christ Himself was not successful.

Now, I am going to backtrack just a little because I have been harsh in my words today. I don't want to lump and label every preterist and every futurist. I will say this, I have known futurists who have been trying to live in the present-day reality of the Kingdom of Christ. But I will say this, too, that when those futurists have been presented with the Fulfilled Bible Prophecy understanding which leads to the implication that Christ is King - now - I've seen them drop futurism so fast it's almost funny.

But to this date, I'm yet to personally know of a preterist - who when presented with the implications of Fulfilled Bible Prophecy - I'm yet to personally know of a preterist who embraces the full implementation of the Kingdom of God on earth today.

I've have so many people try to put me into a classification. Just this past weekend, I had two conversations with people - one looked at my wife who was wearing a dress - and asked if we were pentecostal. Another man asked me what denomination I called myself.

I am simply a follower of Jesus Christ, who believes that all Bible Prophecy has been fulfilled and that the Kingdom of God is a present-day reality today. I believe that Revelation 11:15 is fulfilled:

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

which means that God no longer allows men to have their own kingdoms. Christ alone is King. All the kingdoms, governments that are in place in the world today are in place - not because God put them there - but because the people in those places have by deception, by guns, or by spending power caused themselves to be there for the purpose of controlling other people and for preventing anyone from finding the true God ordained Government - as described in the New Testament.

Hopefully, you would say to me, give me an example. Give me something I can see that shows that what you are talking about has ever even existed.

On my website - the website for which I was arrested - you can find on the Home page at the bottom a link to the New Haven Colony Covenant. Read that document from the 1600s and see what those men did in creating what they called civil government.

There you will see what at one time - made America great. You will see a community of people who built a society solely on the Word of God - according to the teachings of the Scripture. What you will see is called an ecclesia. They clearly stated that all the Laws of their community - everything they needed to Govern themselves - were found in the Scriptures - and all men - signified by raising of their hands - that they assented to that form of Government.

This is what Paul was talking about in Romans 13. This is what Peter was talking about in I Peter 2. This is what Christ was talking about when He said He would build His

ecclesia. When the letters written in the New Testament were to sent to the ecclesias - this is what those communities were.

They were not weekend social organizations. They were communities of people who lived in close proximity with each - not in communes - but in communities and they were trying to implement the Kingship of Christ in their lives and in their community.

Today, the biggest majority of people in America are looking for politicians to change society. The democrats despise the republicans. The republicans despise the democrats. The libertarians think they're both crazy. The so-called Christians think....well, that's ridiculous to even mention.

No one is talking about a return to what made America great. History has all but written the New Haven Colony out of existence.

For me to make the statements, claims and conclusions that I have come to, I realized a long time ago, that I had to have solid Biblical support to make those claims. Afterall, not only is what I'm saying not main-stream - it's not even stream. I'm not the salmon swimming upstream - I'm the fish that doesn't even have a stream.

The message that I am preaching is opposed by everyone and everything that can oppose something. It's actually a pretty lonely place to be. But I will not preach anything that I do not believe has solid, Biblical foundation.

Last week, we began with the Second Coming found in the Book of Acts. We went through the first chapter where the disciples were told that they were going to see Christ come again.

We read in Chapter 2 that Peter said - again - as plainly as he could have said - This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel - it shall come to pass in the last days.... Peter told those people, 2,000 years ago that they were seeing the prophecies of Joel that were taking place, before the great and notable day of the Lord come.

I ask you again, how can that be any clearer?

We talked about the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant taking place with the resurrection of Christ. He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ. How can it be any clearer?

We read Peter saying with many words - to those people hearing him that day - to - Save yourselves from this untoward generation. This was reiterated in perfect harmony with the warning of John the Baptist - TO THAT GENERATION - O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come.

Perfect harmony with the words of Christ - when He said ALL these things would come upon this generation.

Perfect harmony when those wicked men said that the blood of Christ be on them and on their children.

Christ told His disciples how to know when to flee the coming tribulation in Matthew 24.

Now Peter, is telling nee converts how to flee from the wrath to come.

We ended last week's message with Acts 3:19-24

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

[20] And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

[21] Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

[22] For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

[23] And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

[24] Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

So here we have Peter speaking directly concerning Samuel - a reference to Peter's Day of Pentecost message concerning the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. In continuing the theme of his message on Pentecost concerning the "last days" Peter says in verse 24 - as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

When Peter was talking about the times of refreshing in verse 19, this is a direct reference to Matthew 19:

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

[28] And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[29] And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

[30] But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

Peter is telling his listeners that Jesus is going to be sent TO THEM to judge Israel.

In Acts 17, Paul had an occasion to preach this same thing at Mars' hill. Look with me to Acts 17 beginning in verse 22:

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

[23] For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

[24] God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

[25] Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

[26] And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

[27] That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

[28] For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

[29] Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

[30] And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

[31] Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

[32] And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others

said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

Paul is calling these men to repentance because the day of judgement was upon them. Verse 30, but NOW commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Why?

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

That day was soon coming. That day was at hand.

What do you think was going through Paul and Silas minds when they were in jail in Acts 16? Do you think they were reminded of the words of Christ from Matthew 24 that

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

When they were in jail and the great earthquake shook the foundations of the jail and opened all the doors and knocked their handcuffs off, do you think they were reminded of the words of Christ from Matthew 24?

Do you think being reminded of the words of Christ gave these men strength and courage to continue preaching - even in the face of torture, jail and worse? Of course it did. They knew that if they endured to the end, they would be saved.

It was the words of Christ recorded in the gospels that those men KNEW beyond a shadow of a doubt - that those words applied to them - is what kept them going and continuing to preach and live the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ.

Christ was not physically there with them - but His words were fulfilled in their lives and Christ's words were the "bread of life" that sustained those men through all that they went through. Hallelujah.

In the book of Acts - we see the final words of Christ to His disciples in reassuring them that the Kingdom of God was near. We see Christ' ascension into heaven as being the beginning of the "little while that they would not see Him, then after the little while they would see him again."

In the book of Acts we see Stephen preaching nearly word for word the same message



that Christ preached in Matthew 23:30-36

And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

[31] Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

[32] Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

[33] Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

[34] Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

[35] That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

[36] Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

We see Stephen as one of the fulfillments of Matthew 24 when Christ said some of them would be killed for His name sake. And we see Stephen looking into the heavens and seeing Christ standing at the right hand of God exactly the way Christ prophesied.

Do not think for one second that the murder of Stephen was not going to be soon revenged at the great and notable day of the Lord when Christ was going to be sent to judge Israel and those jews for all that they had done to the prophets and to God's own Son.

Don't you think for one second that God was going to allow what these people did to Stephen to go unpunished. The murder of Stephen was included in the phrase "to fill up their sins alway" and in the phrase "the wrath to come."

You better believe that imminent return of Jesus Christ to this earth is found in the book of Acts and those Bible characters in that book absolutely believed it - and they believed the words of Christ were going to be fulfilled in their lives.

Next week, Lord willing, we will begin taking a look at Fulfilled Bible Prophecy in the letters of the Apostles.

