

1 Cheshvan 5778 (21/10/17) **First Winter Series: The Sky is Falling, The Sky is Falling** J. M. Terrett

Bereshit/Noach      In the Beginning/Noah (Rest) Which direction Are You Being Pulled In?

Torah:                   Genesis 1:1-6:8 and 6:9-11:32

Haftarah:                Isaiah 42:5-43:10 and 54:1-55:5

Brit Chadashah:        Revelation 22:6-21

                            Mathew 24:36-46

Reading:                Jack, page 165, Psalm 139 and 29.

Jewish Hero:            Jeremiah

Torah carrier:           Aaron

The first eleven chapters of Genesis deal with the earliest years of human history and describe four events that describe who we are and how G-d's great mercy and compassion have allowed our generations to continue to survive as we continue our generational pilgrimage towards our Messiah's return and the great Day of Judgment.

We are not the descendants of apes and monkeys whose ancestors fought their way from primeval sludge, aggressively evolving to our current stage of development on our way to higher and higher forms of existence. We are a unique species, created in the spiritual and moral image of G-d, which expresses itself in two genders for the purpose of procreation. In our initial encounter with our mortal enemy, our first ancestors disobeyed the clear, direct order of G-d and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, causing our generational exclusion from the garden of Eden.

It also set in motion the generational struggle between the redemptive purposes of G-d which would eventually lead to the intervention of our Messiah and desire of our enemy to bind all of humanity in darkness and depravity. At the centre of this struggle would be the two pressure groups of humanity, on the one hand, the righteous core, struggling to find meaning and purpose and on the other, the wicked core striving to satisfy the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride life.

When Cain succumbed to call of sin which was crouching at his door it set in motion the first struggle between the two core groups of mankind: the descendants of Seth (the righteous core) and the descendants of Cain (the wicked core). Over a long, slow generational struggle, the righteous core slowly lost ground until, by the time of Noah only one family out of all the families of mankind had not succumbed to the wicked darkness of sin.

To prevent the final extinction of righteousness on earth G-d intervened and sent a year long, worldwide flood to drown the wicked hordes of darkness, while He preserved our eight of our ancestors. The face of our planet was forever changed and when a new descent into sinfulness was about to engulf the survivors of the flood in even a shorter time then it took their ancestors, G-d again intervened and divided the human family into different peoples who each spoke a different language and scattered them across the globe.

He then selected one family to serve as a thread to weave the scattered children of Adam and Eve back into a single new man. Next week we will begin to study the generational journey of the descendants of Abraham who will both to form a durable righteous core (a great nation) and will give birth to the Redeemer and Messiah, who would draw the righteous core of all mankind back into the fold of G-d (a blessing to all nations).

The Haftarah deals with the wonder and power of the calling our Redeemer and the spiritual riches it offers to those who accept this calling and who are pulled in the direction of our Father's Kingdom in our blessed Messiah. The New Testament portions speak of both the final wonder and beauty of the Heavenly Kingdom, which shall dawn at the end of the ages and also of the suddenness of its arrival. Just as the flood burst forth upon the unsuspecting darkness dwellers in the time of Noah, whose membership in the wicked core prevented them from heeding the warnings of G-d, so the final end shall take our wicked world by surprise, as the second great darkness sweeps across it to consume its burgeoning wicked core. Which direction are you being pulled in?

### **The Sky is Falling, The Sky is Falling and Other Myths about the Return of the L-rd**

(First Winter Series for B'hai Chayim)

(Seven Biblical Signs of the End of the World and the Return of the L-rd)

When I first considered teaching this series about what the Bible actually says about the return of the L-rd and the end of the world, I was very cautious and not a little nervous. This was not because I am full of uncertainty about the hard fought positions I have battled my way to embrace, but because of the effect that talking about the end of the world seems to have on many ordinarily calm and rational, spiritually sweet believers.

In my experience, battle lines are quickly drawn and everything and anything which is happening around the world and in the news is taken as a definite sign that the return of the L-rd and the rapture are just around the corner and it can happen at any second.

From the early 1800's on various groups of evangelicals have been preaching the imminent, this any second return of the L-rd, in a complicated scenario that has come to be labelled dispensationalism. I was led to the L-rd by people who fully embraced its teachings and dutifully embraced them, because everything else they taught me seemed to line up so well with the Scriptures. Boy, was I in for a big, sad surprise.

When Rav Sh'aul (Paul) was exhorting the Corinthian congregation to fully come to their senses and to abandon every infection of carnality that had plagued them and nearly destroyed them, he made an interesting statement about the way believers should know each other. He said that in the world, we knew people according to the flesh and that we even knew the Messiah according to this false system of values (2 Cor. 5:16). In this sense, carnality does not just refer to sexuality, but to all and any of the works of the flesh, including anger, strife, bitterness and what we call in Hebrew *lashon hara* (evil tongue or evil speech).

When it comes to theology, and especially to discussing the end times, the works of the flesh seem to have a field day with fighting and bickering and accusing and lots of breaking the bonds of peace and destroying the bonds of love. I do not want to do this in my series, nor do I want to encourage this, even though you will see that my views are seen by many as radical and even heretical. However, I have been called worse – may the L-rd prevent me from ever following suit. When you fight fire with fire, a lot of innocent people get burned.

Many fine believers believe some of silliest junk and are not open to discussing the reasons of the foolish hope which is within them and Rav Sh'aul warns us about the damage that arguments can cause in the body of our Messiah (Gal. 5:15). This is because the wrath of man does not accomplish the will of G-d (James 1:20). We are to firmly and wisely correct sinful behaviour and exclude those who refuse to repent (I Corin. 5:9-13), but when discussions of theology lead to arguments, we are just playing into the hands of the enemy (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

So let us embark on a discussion of what will be the final fulfilment of the hope that is within us, but let us do it with great humility and meekness (I Pt. 3:15) and a determination not to be drawn into any of the end of the world brawls that are popular with too many believers (I Tim. 5:22). First I want to hit you with a fancy word – eschatology, which means the study of the end of the world and the return of the L-rd.

As citizens of the coming Kingdom of our beloved Messiah, we need to learn all we can about when we can expect this kingdom to arrive, so that we do not become distracted by the meaningless foolishness of this fading world – and also so that we do not become discouraged when it seems like the L-rd is taking a long time to come back.

There are two key passages which I want to read with you: Acts 1:6-11 and Matt. 28:18-20. We will never know the times which the Father has established for the return (not the day, nor the month, nor the year, nor the season). Our job is to be filled with His spirit and to take the message of His love to the ends of the earth (generationally). It is a waste of time to stand around staring up into the clouds, because He shall come back as He went up – in His own good time.

In the interim, He will be with us daily right up until the end and guide us as we make disciples in His name and according to His Word, unto the ends of the earth (generationally). So instead of always whining like impatient kids in a car on a long journey: “are we there yet”?, we need to get busy and be about the Master's business, because the time is short and He is not willing that any should perish (2 Pt. 3:9).

As we get into some of the principles upon which a careful study of eschatology should be based, let me give you the biggest and the most central, the cornerstone upon which all theology should be based. Let's read the following verse together: Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Corin. 2:17 and I Corin. 4:6 (with Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:5, 6; Jer. 23: 28,29). Our Eschatology should be firmly based on the Bible, nothing more, nothing less.

This rabbi has what is called a high view of the Scriptures and any time you are willing to spend some quality time asking me why I hold to this position in the face of all the howling voices of modern liberal, evolutionary criticism, you are always welcome to attend our Thursday evening

Yeshiva Bible study – but in a pinch, I could fit you in pretty well any time which works for both our schedules. I believe the Bible possess infallibility and was penned through plenary inspiration (2 Pt. 1:20, 21), with functional inerrancy (what we have today is as close to the original manuscripts, as if we possessed the original manuscripts, even though, in most cases, sadly, we don't). Let's move on to the concepts, which are few and simple.

1. Literal and literary. What is meant literally should be taken literally: creation, the flood, miracles, the resurrection, the return, the end of the world. What is meant literarily should not be taken literally. He is not literally the Rose of Sharon or the bread of life or the door or the Lion of Judah, or the Lamb of G-d. What a symbol means should be taken literally, not the symbol itself. Our Messiah does not have seven horns or seven eyes and there are not seven spirits of G-d. We could go on and name many others, but we will come back to this throughout this series.

2. Prophecy is conditional and in contextual. The promises given to Abraham were conditional upon his obedience – because he was willing to offer up his first begotten son, Isaac, because, and unlike his father, he obeyed and went to Canaan (site of the original garden of Eden). When the conditions of a promise or of a prophecy are not fulfilled, neither is either the prophecy or the promises.

When our people returned from the Babylonian captivity, they were told they would never have to be displaced ever again, as long as they walked with G-d and kept His commandments. They did not fulfil the conditions of the promise and look what happened.

Also prophecies are contextual – given at a certain time to a certain people and cannot be applied outside their original time or outside the people to whom they were addressed, unless this was directly and clearly specified in the prophecy itself. You cannot kidnap Daniel's supposedly missing week and apply it to a supposed seven year tribulation, nor take prophecies made against specific ancient nations and randomly apply them modern nations with different names who live in different locations and at different times.

3. Prophetic diplopia. Prophecy cannot have a double fulfilment, unless it is open ended like Gen. 12:2, 3 (become a great nation and be a blessing to all nations – no time limit, not specific location). Double vision can sometimes be corrected by special lenses or by a surgical intervention. What do think would correct prophetic diplopia (serious Bible study and learning how to discern the truth before you go on-line (a theological crap sniffer/alert)

4. Dispensationalism. 2 P. 3:8 says that a day is like a thousand years with the L-rd. It does not say a day is a thousand years, but some theologians took this and grabbed the seven days of creation (six active days and the seven day of rest) and came up with seven thousand years of human history, with each thousand year time period having a special designation. The last thousand year period is supposed to be a millennium of peace before the end of the world.

5. Great Tribulation. Rev. 7:14 mentions a great tribulation of unspecified length, but Rev. 2:10 mentions one lasting 10 days. Dispensationalists take Daniel's supposedly missing week and by some kind of theological hocus pocus, turn it into seven years. Acts 14:22 says we must go through much tribulation in order to enter the Kingdom, but I guess great is more than much, or

is it?

Revelation is full of symbolic numbers and if any of them is to be taken literally, all of them have to be, but if all of them are taken symbolically, none of them can be taken literally, so I have no trouble understanding that a ten day tribulation is literary and not literal.

6. Secret rapture. The word for rapture in Latin means to snatch and appears in I Thess 4 where we are snatched from our bodies after the dead are resurrected. I Corin. 15 says this occurs at the last trump, but nowhere in the Bible does it say that this event is secret or hidden. The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise and the living shall be snatched from their bodies. No where in the Bible is there even an indication that any of this will occur before a seven year great tribulation or before a literal thousand year millennium.

7. Literal Millennium. In the Bible a thousand years is used as a symbol of G-d's great mercy for those who love Him and who keep His commandments (Exodus 20:6). It is used in connection with a thousand generations and is a symbol of G-d's patience (Jer. 32:18; Deut. 7:9) and faithfulness to keep His promises to as thousand generations (Ps. 105:8). It appears abruptly in chapter 20 of Revelation; a book which is full of symbolic numbers and literary descriptions, both of the majesty of G-d, His Messiah and His angels and of the horror of Satan and his henchmen.

It appears six time in the first part of the chapter and is one of the places in the book which talks about the binding and the defeat of Satan. It precedes a description of a literal resurrection of all the dead, the final judgment and the casting into the lake of fire of those whose names are not written into the Lamb's Book of Life. When I say that the thousand years refers to the believer's rule and reign with the Messiah until He returns as a parallel to the use of a thousand years to describe the mercy and goodness of G-d towards those who love Him and keep His commandments, many scoff and mock such an idea. (Even though there is strong biblical backing for this idea)

The great evangelical theologian, George Eldon Ladd, said he could see no reason for a literal thousand year reign and could not explain it or fit it into the greater picture of the final victory of the Gospel – it is just there. Well, nothing in the Bible is just there. Everything has a purpose, whether it is a mighty symbol or an awesome literal truth.

I Corin. 15 says that our Messiah is ruling and reigning now, until He has put all enemies under His foot and that the last enemy He must subdue is death, then He will turn the reign back over to the Father. He would never rule and reign in a literal kingdom on the earth after having subdued the enemy and then let the enemy rebel. Once G-d's kingdom is established on earth, there will be no enemies left to challenge it, it will be eternal.

However, both our rule and reign with our Messiah in this life and our spiritual resurrection with Him in this life (Col. 3:1-3; Rom. 6:3-13) are spiritual realities we experience daily as we walk with Him according to His Word. To argue that the millennium is not a symbol in a book where all the other numbers are symbols is pretty hard to prove, since there is no indication that a transition from symbolic to literal has been made when it comes to talking about the millennium.

As we go through this series, I want you to study, to pray, to think and to dialogue, both with your rabbi and with each other, not to draw battle lines to either defend my eschatology or to

attack it. We need to grow in both grace and knowledge of both the L-rd and of His Word and walk according to the truth we have received and let Him guide us when we encounter something which doesn't add up – gently, meekly and with respect.

I gradually abandoned dispensationalism over a twenty year period because it does violence to the Scriptures and teaches both that the L-rd can come at any second and that any prophecies which are not fulfilled, will be fulfilled either during a supposed seven year Great Tribulation or during a literal thousand year Millennium.

I want to see if what I am taught is really in the Scriptures. I want to study to show myself approved unto G-d. I do not want to misrepresent the Scriptures or go beyond that which is written. I want to distinguish between what is meant literally and what is meant literarily.

Our L-rd came at the fullness of time according to all that was written of Him in Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets (Luke 24:44, 45). He will only return when all that is written about His return in these same documents is fulfilled. This is the only fullness of time we are waiting for. These are the only times appointed by G-d that we believe in.

We must be careful never to teach or adopt the traditions of men or the fables of men, so that what we are building upon the rock of our blessed Messiah is built of fire proof gold, silver and precious gems, and not flammable hay, wood and stubble.

Join us as we go through this series from now until Chanukah as we learn more about the seven signs of the end of the world and the return of the L-rd. Be careful of all the modern chicken little's who are crying: 'the sky is falling, the sky is falling' and don't let the fox trick you into his cave where he can consume you and take you captive to do his will.

Many people oppose me when I teach this. They agree with my seven signs and respect my biblical approach to eschatology, but they still cling to some or all of the myth of dispensationalism and waste their time trying to figure out if the rapture will be pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation and do not question whether they are failing to distinguish between a literary symbol and a literal truth.

I believe in the rapture of the living and the resurrection of the dead. I believe in tribulation and I believe in G-d's mercy to a thousand generations and I believe that I am spiritually resurrected with my Messiah and that I can rule and reign with Him in this life, as I wait for His return. I also believe in the big bang – not at the beginning of the universe, but at its end. The moment He returns the universe will explode with a big bang and the elements will melt and the earth will dissolve – so there will be nowhere to hold a literal thousand year reign. I'm holding out for the eternal kingdom when the heavenly Jerusalem is going to come down.

Do not be deceived and have a blessed rest of the Sabbath! Shabbat shalom