

MAY 22-28, 2023

JS-Matthew 1; Matthew 24–25; Mark 12-13; Luke 21

“THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME”

Summary: *JS-Matthew 1. An extract from the translation of the Bible as revealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet in 1831: Matthew 23:39 and chapter 24.*

Matthew 24. Jesus foretells the doom of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple—Great calamities will precede His Second Coming—He gives the parable of the fig tree.

Matthew 25. Jesus gives the parables of the ten virgins, the talents, and the sheep and the goats.

Mark 12. Jesus gives the parable of the wicked husbandmen—He speaks of paying taxes, celestial marriage, the two great commandments, the divine sonship of Christ, and the widow’s mites.

Mark 13. Jesus tells of the calamities and signs preceding the Second Coming—There will be false Christs and false prophets—He gives the parable of the fig tree.

Luke 21. Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem—He tells of the signs to precede His Second Coming and gives the parable of the fig tree.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How can “less” be “more?”

Maintaining the
Biblical Temple
required funds, and

the donation process was made more convenient by providing thirteen wooden boxes with trumpet-shaped bronze cones to guide the monies into the collection boxes that were placed at the bases or plinths of the colonnades of the Court of the Women. This area became known as the Treasury. The sound these coins made against the metal cones would have signaled how much the person offered at the Temple. This practice was known hundreds of years before Jesus’ time. “Also, we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God;” (**Nehemiah 10:32**) Since the offering money for donations as well as paying for your own animal sacrifice could

not be pagan money, “money changers” would be there to exchange pagan money to authorized temple coins. More wealthy donors would change a larger valuable coin into smaller temple coins that made quite a clatter as they slowly dropped coin after coin into the temple offering boxes. Most synagogues have “charity boxes that are reminders of the period of the First Temple in Jerusalem, which they suggest was the prototype charity box. “The Temple was falling into a poor state of repair, so the High Priest made a hole in the cover of a box, which he placed conveniently near the entrance before the altar, so that all contributions could be dropped in.” (https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/390485/jewish/A-History-of-the-Charity-Can.htm) Jesus contrasted the donations that the wealthy people gave with the two mites of a widow, whose meager offering made little “noise.” “And he looked up, and saw the

rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in but she of her penury (poverty) hath cast in all the living that she had.” (Luke 21.1-4)

What other reasons were monies collected at the Temple?

In addition to bringing your own “first-born – unblemished” animal (sheep, goat, calf, doves) to the Temple as a sacrifice, there were payments connected to those sacrifices. “And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.” (Exodus 30:15-30) For those whose animal failed the sanctity/blemish tests or for those travelling greater distances, an additional charge was made to purchase the sacrifice. It is interesting to note that Jesus’ Disciple, Judas, was “selling” the sacrifice as he betrayed Jesus and then later in remorse threw the money back onto the temple pavement before he hanged himself. In terms of “offerings,” there must have been some rivalry concerning the liberality of giving for the temple. The wood, the incense, the wine, the oil, and all other requisites for the sacrificial services, as well as gold and silver vessels, were contributed with an extravagant hand. Thereby, certain families obtained special privileges by their giving enthusiasm, that their wood would always be used first for the altar fire. People leaving the whole or part of their prosperity to the Temple must have been a usual or even an often occurrence.

How does a small thing like “figs” figure in my life?

The poignant information that adds to the subject of the signs of the times is the

pattern of the destruction and building of Jerusalem, as well as the scattering and gathering of Israel. Old Testament history records the prophesy and the subsequent fall of the Lord’s City with the resulting exile of the Jews. The destruction of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar is noteworthy.

The scattering is always followed by a gathering. The imagery of “first figs” and “second figs” as stated in a previous lesson supplement, helps us understand the modern interpretation of the signs. “The LORD showed me . . . two baskets of figs . . . set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.”

“. . . the good figs . . . and the evil . . . Thus saith the LORD . . . Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.” “For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land . . . I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.”

“And as the evil figs . . . So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land . . . I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.”

(Jeremiah 24:1-10) There may be a parallel in the parable of the fig tree when the first fruit allows the wheat and tares to grow together. But in the second fruit, when the Lord comes, judgement will be passed, and the tares removed. Sins and hurt will be exposed and a way provided so that they can be removed, and the people become redeemed.

What “scattering” did the Prophet Lehi and family escape?

“Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon who, in 586 B.C.E., destroyed the first Temple in Jerusalem and exiled the majority of the Jewish population of Judea. He reigned from 605 to 562 B.C.E., a period in which Babylon and Egypt were the two great powers of the civilized world, and during most of that time he was engaged in almost continuous battle with Egypt over the territories of Syria, Palestine, and the surrounding region. In 597 he captured Jerusalem for the first time, deposed the Judean king, Jehoiachin, and appointed in his place a king of his own choice, Zedekiah. Several years later, while he was engaged in battle in the far east, Zedekiah together with the king of Syria revolted against his rule, but he returned in 588 and laid siege to Jerusalem. In 586, he captured the city, and on *Tish'ah be-Av* he had the Temple destroyed, carried off a large part of the population into captivity and put Zedekiah and other Judean notables to death. Daniel and the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were eyewitnesses to all these events and the biblical books bearing their names testify to the political and spiritual crises which confronted Judea during this period. According to the Book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar suffered greatly for destroying the Temple. He was beset by dreams which he could not understand. One of them, a vision of a magnificent tree cut down in its prime was interpreted by Daniel for the king as a personal warning of many years of madness that were about to come upon him, during which time he would eat grass and live like an animal. ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) Notwithstanding some scholarly members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint's discussion of the exactness of Lehi's departure date from Jerusalem, Lehi, his family and close friends left approximately 600 year BCE. In the Israel

Museum, the dating of cave graffiti found in an area of Israel close to Lehi (Samson killed a thousand with a jaw-bone of a donkey, *LHI*, in Hebrew), is stated as being close to the Nebuchadnezzar conquering and scattering of Israel.

What was the last major scattering of Israel?

In New Testament history, after the great atonement by the Lord Jesus, similar destruction and scattering were experienced, beginning with Jerusalem. “Upon Herod's death, Jerusalem was ruled by a series of Roman procurators. (One of these, Pontius Pilate (26--36 C.E.) was responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth in Jerusalem.) But the misrule of these administrators provoked the outbreak of yet another Jewish revolt, which soon became a full-scale war. In 70 C.E. Titus and his Roman legions laid siege to the city and then stormed its weakened defenders. The city was burned, its inhabitants massacred, and the Temple destroyed. Of the once-glorious city, only the three towers of Herod's palace and the western wall of the Temple Mount remained intact.” “According to Jewish sources, the Romans razed Jerusalem to the ground and plowed the site over to prevent further settlement. Even so, some Jews managed to return. When the emperor Hadrian tried to establish a Roman colony there, the second Jewish-Roman war broke out with Bar Kokhba leading the Jewish rebels. They were defeated by Hadrian who subsequently decreed that no circumcised person should be allowed into Jerusalem under pain of death.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) The Savior prophesied of the destruction of the temple, a sign of another scattering of Israel. “And Jesus said unto them . . . there shall not be left here, upon this temple, one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.” “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted . . . let them

who are in Judea flee . . . and not return to take anything out of his house.” (Joseph Smith - Matthew 1) Yet in the subsequent gathering, an accountability of their sins becomes a blessing when the Redeemer comes, and true repentance occurs. “And again, this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all the nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked;” “And, as I said before, after the tribulation of those days, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken, then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory;” “And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived, for the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Joseph Smith - Matthew 1)

How does the present gathering of Israel relate to the Old and New Testament “Parable of the Fig Tree?”

The “first fruit,” the first coming of the Messiah, preceded the present time growth of leaves, the latter-day restoration of the gospel to “Joseph” and the return of the keys of the gathering of Israel which includes both “Joseph and Judah.” A remarkable gathering has started. This gathering is reflected in the growth of the Latter-day Saint population as well as the State of Israel, which in the parable of the fig tree is the growth of leaves. This gathering is in preparation for the coming of the Redeemer, which in the fig tree parable is the second fruit. “Between 1948 and 1951 almost 700,000 Jews migrated to Israel . . . From 1955 to 1957 two-thirds of the almost 250,000 migrant Jews went to Israel (from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Poland and Hungary). Half of a further

450,000 migrant Jews went to Israel between 1961 and 1964. (Virtually all Jews left Algeria for France during 1961--62). In the 1980s in two campaigns, Operation Moses and Operation Solomon, virtually the entire Jewish community of Ethiopia was airlifted to Israel. From the area of the former Soviet Union, some 400,000 Jews went to Israel in 1989/91, and many others went elsewhere in the West. In 1992/93 most of the remnant of the Jews in Yemen left the country, many eventually reaching Israel.” “An undoubted change has occurred in the motive for migration since the 1880s. From then on, the main motive was distress. Migrations will continue as new world trouble spots develop.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How have both “houses” or known families of Israel lately grown (gathered)?

Within the first ten years of this century, Israel has experienced a growth of a million Jewish immigrants, mostly from Russian-speaking countries. At that time, the growth would be equivalent to the U.S.A. receiving more than forty million new citizens. Since then, the Israeli Jewish population has grown to add another almost six-million Jews and the Arab population has increased from one to two-million souls. The worldwide sum of Jews is about seventeen million as of year 2023. The membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has grown to a sum of just more than seventeen-million members. Combined, “Joseph and Judah” still, make up just under 1/4% of the world population, however, the contributions to the entire world by Jews and Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are extra-ordinary! Interested in what your “family” has done in the world? Start the research! “Atomic Clock” (the Allan Time Variant guides world’s timekeeping) TV, Digital Science, High

Tech, Low Tech (painted lines on the streets), Man-made Diamonds, etc. (Latter-day Saints) – on the other hand, Disease Cures, Nobel laureates, Bible, Legal system, Sabbath Day, Education

system, Trade, Finance, etc. (Jews). And, simply, consider the “gathering” of both families. The leaves are getting abundant; it is almost time for His second arrival, “The Son of Man shall come!”