

End of the Age, Coming of the Messiah, Rest of God (Part 6) - Regathering from Around the World

October 31, 2015

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/xf6qs67/end-of-the-age-coming-of-the-messiah-rest-of-god-part-6>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue (verses and quotes are italicized for easier reading). Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

The Messiah's Two Comings and the Heavenly Jerusalem

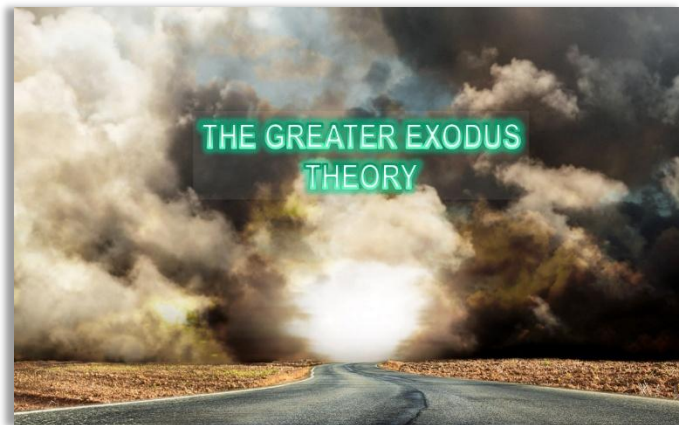
This transcript, originating from a **Corner Fringe Ministries** message by **Pastor Daniel Joseph**, offers a detailed **eschatological analysis** titled "*End of the Age, Coming of the Messiah, Rest of God (Part 6)*." The message critically examines the **Greater Exodus Theory**, which posits a future physical return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, asserting that this theory misinterprets crucial biblical prophecies. Daniel argues that passages often cited for the physical regathering, such as Ezekiel 37's **Valley of Dry Bones**, actually describe the **resurrection of the dead** and the arrival of the **Heavenly Jerusalem** (Kingdom of Heaven), rather than a literal, geographical restoration in this age. The text further uses New and Old Testament references to support the idea of **one Messiah coming twice** and emphasizes that true **biblical restoration** and inheritance are spiritual, not tied to the present "bondage" of the earthly Jerusalem, urging believers to focus on the **Great Commission** and the **heavenly inheritance** to come.

[Daniel Joseph]

Shabbat Shalom. I want to keep our community in prayer. As Craig opened up earlier, praying for our community, we are in some serious spiritual warfare, the likes of which I've never been in in my life. I can tell you how serious it is. It's intense, some of the things that I've been going through and experiencing. So, keep us in prayer.

Also, just FYI, little baby Mason is going to be having surgery this coming Wednesday. And so, keep her in prayer as well. We want to pray for her, and we've got a group of people who will be fasting and praying for her that day. We want her to come out of there better than ever. Amen?

We're going to continue in our study today, which is The End of the Age, the Coming of the Messiah, and the Rest of God.



Over the last couple of weeks, we've been looking at a particular eschatological belief system, and that is the Greater Exodus Theory. And just to kind of recap, to refresh your memory, this is, and I'm oversimplifying, basically a theory that states that people believe that there's going to be a physical return in the last generation to the physical land of Israel. It's commonly understood that this is going to take place. People are going to follow the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

This is the most important part: the event of that happening constitutes the fulfillment of all those various biblical prophecies regarding the regathering. You think of Jeremiah 16, Jeremiah 23, Jeremiah 30, Ezekiel 20, and Deuteronomy 30. We could go on and on. All these prophetic passages that exist supposedly apply to this scenario. It's very important. Well, today, we're going to continue to look at the Greater Exodus Theory and we're going to get to the heart of the matter and begin to separate the facts from the fiction. We're going to look at how the Bible describes this exodus without injecting any man-made ideologies or conclusions.

We're going to get right to it. There's a little bit to cover today. I want to take you to one of the most, if not the most, prominent regathering passage in all of scripture. It's really risen in its level of importance and focus in recent times, especially considering Israel becoming a nation-state again.

We're going to go to Ezekiel 37:1-8 and we read the following—¹ *The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.* ² *Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry.* ³ *And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O LORD God, You know."* ⁴ *Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!'"* ⁵ *Thus says the LORD God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live."*

Verse 6: *I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD."* ⁷ *So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone.* ⁸ *Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.* Imagine walking and experiencing this, literally—how epic and dramatic this must have been for Ezekiel.

Now, read what happens in Ezekiel 37:9—*Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the LORD God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live!"'* [emphasis added]. What is this passage talking about? It's talking about the resurrection of the dead. That's what it is, and it's not hard to figure out. The dead have just risen and were given life. This is all about the resurrection of the dead.

Think about what Yeshua says in John 5:28-29—²⁸ *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice* ²⁹ *and come forth.* (They will hear His voice, which tells us that He's going to speak, and the dead are going to respond. And He says the dead in Messiah are going

to rise up.) *Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

Consider Job Chapter 14. The chapter is talking all about the resurrection of the dead. Job says in Job 14:15—*"You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands."* And so there's a voice that speaks at the end. That voice is what raises the dead. This happens simultaneously with the great trumpet blast. We notice in Ezekiel 37:9—*Thus says the LORD God* [emphasis added]. The LORD is speaking. It's His voice that causes the dead to rise.

Think about another passage: John Chapter 11. What did Yeshua do in John 11? He went to the tomb of Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, and what happened was amazing. We have to understand that the whole event was symbolic of something that is greater and is yet to happen. It was symbolic of the resurrection of the dead because of what Yeshua does. Let's see what Yeshua does in John 11:43—*"... He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!'"* Lazarus rose from the dead at Yeshua's words.

What is happening in Ezekiel 37:9? The LORD is speaking and He says, *"Come from the four winds."* It's the same thing happening here as in John 11. This is describing the regathering, the greater exodus, but we have all these additional details that are very important to understand because they confine this event into a specific eschatological timeline.

Something else in regard to this statement, *"Thus says the LORD God: 'Come from the four winds,'"* that I want to draw attention to. Yeshua actually speaks the same thing in the New Testament. He uses the same terminology in the exact same context. What's even more ironic about this is where in scripture He does this. He does this in Matthew Chapter 24, that chapter that we've been covering so comprehensively. That chapter is all a dialogue in response to the apostle's question as to when will these things be. They're asking Him about the end of the age. What will be the sign of His coming? What will be the end of the age? When will it happen?

And this is how Yeshua responds. Read His words in Matthew 24:30-31—³⁰ *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* ³¹ *And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together from one end of heaven to the other.* What is happening here? It's the regathering, also called the greater exodus. They will gather together His elect from the four winds. Just as it was written in Ezekiel Chapter 37—*"Come from the four winds."* Here we see Yeshua saying that His elect are from "one end of heaven to the other," which are the four winds.

Going back to Ezekiel 37:10-11—¹⁰ *So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.* (What is Israel identified as when one takes a closer glance at the Exodus and the Torah? It's identified as a great army, or collectively the armies of Israel.) ¹¹ *Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!'"* There is a lot more going on here, but it's outside the scope of this teaching. It is an absolutely profound statement. All these bones, which Ezekiel sees throughout this global graveyard and that receive back their flesh and breath, are the whole house of Israel.

Continuing in Ezekiel 37:12—*Therefore prophesy and say to them, Thus says the LORD God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."* This is the prophesied resurrection of the dead. We see that when the LORD speaks, the

dead respond and they rise up. We know from 1 Thessalonians what happens next. They go to meet the LORD in the air. Here we read, "You're going to be brought into the land of Israel." This brings up a question: Is it speaking of the physical land of Israel that we know of today? Or, is it dealing with something entirely different? All we need to do is read the New Testament, and we'll find out it is the latter.

This reference here to the land of Israel is of great significance. The term itself is a reference to the Kingdom of Heaven. And as we continue throughout the weeks, this will become more apparent and clearer. The land of Israel is the same as saying the Kingdom of Heaven, and when we understand this, it changes everything. It changes how we read this context, and how we read into the prophecy of what is going to happen and what would constitute the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Many might ask, "Isn't what we're reading right now in Ezekiel Chapter 37 actually happening? Aren't the Jewish people returning to the land of Israel? Isn't that the fulfillment of the prophecy, and couldn't you liken that physical return to the dead being raised?" After all, they haven't been a nation for almost 2,000 years, right?

Let me answer the question this way, and let me preface by stating the following. The fact that the children of Israel, the Jewish people, have returned to the land after almost 2,000 years, is not even up for debate. It is both miraculous and prophetic. It is absolutely by the hand of God, without a doubt. All we need to do is study how this unfolded in 1948. Study the wars that happened in 1967, the Six-Day War, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The reports, videos, and the testimonies of the soldiers all show the gravity of this event.

There was an report where two soldiers put to flight close to 100 men. Why? The enemy soldiers were trembling and shaking with fear because they looked out and saw a great army of angels. We don't have time to get into this in this lesson, but the point is that the LORD is bringing the Jewish people back to Israel. The fact that they're a state today is miraculous, and it was only by the hand of God. And yes, it is prophetic. In this sense, you need to understand that in the Bible there are prophecies of finality. End-time prophecies that require Israel to be living in the land. It's the only way these things can be fulfilled. Zechariah Chapter 14 is a perfect example. Zechariah Chapter 14 cannot be fulfilled unless the Jewish people are living in the land.

But having said that, I ask the question, does the fact that the Jewish people have physically returned to the land constitute biblical restoration? And I would tell you, not even close. Not even close. What did the apostles say? Let's go back to Acts 1:6—"**LORD**, (the apostles are referring to what happens after the resurrection) *will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?*"

Let's put this once again into historical context. In the first century the Jewish people were firmly planted in the land and living off it. Also, they had a functioning temple. And finally, they had peace. Up until the 60s A.D. and forward, that's when things began to break down. They had peace, a temple, and they were dwelling in the land. Two out of those three do not exist in the land of Israel today.

The first-century Jews had a superior case scenario compared to what the Jewish people are experiencing today. The Jewish people coming back to the land does not biblically constitute the restoration of Israel to which they were promised. Because all we need to do is read the papers and look at what is happening. For one, they don't have control of the Temple Mount, it's desolate. There's an abomination

of desolation sitting on the Temple Mount right now. Their people are getting butchered. They're getting stabbed with knives. People are lobbing rockets into Israel. There's more hatred for the Jewish people than at any time on record. None of this constitutes restoration.

There's not a Jewish person living in the land that would tell you, "We have been fully restored," and this is imperative. When we attempt to study Bible prophecy, we need to understand this—the Jewish people, whom God came to redeem, have not been restored. Nor did the physical return to the physical land constitute restoration.

Dr. Michael Brown is a renowned scholar and I like to quote him from time to time; I have a profound respect for him. He makes the following statement in regard to the Jewish physically going back to the land. Listen to what he says in his book *60 Questions Christians Ask about Jewish Beliefs and Practices*: "*Should all Jews move back to Israel?*" According to the book, the Jewish people all returning to the promised land is part of what constitutes the restoration. Think about the Exodus. Were there any Jewish people that were left back in Egypt? The Bible does not say that any were left behind in Egypt. They were all taken out to be brought into the promised land.

So, Dr. Brown asks, "*Should all Jews move back to Israel?...Do the scriptures clearly call all Jews worldwide to return to the Land, and are there pragmatic reasons for all Jews to be in Israel?...For Jewish followers of Jesus, their responsibility is to study the Word of God, seek His face, and live wherever the LORD calls them to live as part of their Great Commission and Kingdom responsibility—be it in America, Russia, Israel, or anywhere else. There is simply nothing in the scriptures that clearly states otherwise, especially if the individual has a sense of calling to be serving in a particular place. Where does the New Testament hint at anything other than this? And aren't Jewish believers called to be a light to the nations?*"

A profound assessment. Let us understand what he's saying. He's making the point that nowhere in the New Testament is there a shred of evidence, not one single verse, that indicates that the Jewish people are to return to the land to receive their inheritance. That's the whole point of living in the land: inheritance and rest. Dr. Brown writes that when we read the New Testament, there's not even a hint of it. Not even a fragment of a verse.

In fact, he draws our attention to the Great Commission. What was the Great Commission to the Jewish apostles and Jewish believers? Matthew 28:19—*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations*. We see this start to happen in the Book of Acts and forward into the epistles of Paul. Did the Jewish people go ahead and send out letters to the Gentiles and say, "If you want to hear about the LORD, come to my house"? They didn't do that. They went out throughout the world to the nations.

So, they actually left what is identified as the Promised Land to spread the Gospel. What a blessing it was that the Jews left their homeland to present to the Gentiles the Gospel of Yeshua. We read in Matthew 28:19-20—¹⁹ *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* ²⁰ *teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* Amen.

In response to the Great Commission, the apostles did exactly what Yeshua told them to do. Twelve men went out, and they changed the world forever. They went out with the most powerful message the universe has ever known, and they transformed the world with it.

Let's go back to Matthew Chapter 24, because I want to put all this into an eschatological timeline. Yeshua says in Matthew 24:14—*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.* This is interesting. Yeshua indicates the end will come until the work of the nations is completed. This begs the obvious question. Where are these believers who are preaching the gospel going to be at the end of the age? They're going to be throughout the earth. And what will be the response to the Gospel being preached? There'll be communities everywhere.

As narrated in the Book of Acts, Paul's going out with other believers and they're witnessing. They witness to the Jew first and then to the Greek. They went to the synagogues, which existed all over the world because of the diaspora. Synagogues were spread out all over the world, and the apostles were going out to them and preaching the Word. I challenge anyone to find one verse where Peter, Paul, or any other apostle instructs anyone preaching the Gospel to stop what they're doing and return back to their homeland. Their concern was the nations to accept the gospel of the Messiah Yeshua, so that they may receive eternal inheritance. When the apostles asked Yeshua in Acts 1:6, *"LORD, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* it was because they knew that the current land was not what they were promised.

When the apostles went out, they went to their people first, the Jewish people, and gave them exactly what the prophets promised them—the Gospel of Yeshua. That will bring them into perfect rest, and Israel will be restored through that message.



Years ago, I really spent a great amount of time studying the temple. Here is a picture of part of it. Half of the picture is cut open so that you can see inside. This is Solomon's temple. The Holy of Holies is visible. Inside, there is the Ark of the Covenant, and nearby are the menorahs. There is the altar of incense

and the table of showbread, which was placed further up. All of these items carry deep and profound prophetic significance.

When we look at how the table of showbread was set up, it was twelve cakes, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. They were set in two rows. Everything's established on the testimony of two. There are many spiritual messages in the house of the LORD. The menorah has seven branches. What was its purpose? It gave light. In the the Book of Revelation we read about about the seven churches. It was symbolic of the menorah itself—the completion the whole of the church, which was to be light to the world. The objects in the temple carried messages that were deeply prophetic.

In regard to this lesson, there's something that needs to be brought to attention. The brazen laver made of bronze. This is what the Kohanim did when they went into the temple; they had to wash themselves. It was similar to a mikvah. They had to wash their hands and feet.

Understand something very important. When the Kohanim arrived for service; if they didn't wash, they died. Washing of the body was very important and it wasn't an option. If we want to approach the LORD, we must go through a form of baptism.



It's interesting to note that at the bottom of the laver there are twelve bronze oxen. Twelve bronze oxen. What do oxen represent in the Torah? At times, we find in the Torah that oxen represent men. Not just any men, but leaders, shepherds, judges, elders, those who go out to protect and defend the sheep, and those who protect the community from sin and who make judgments.

The commandment to not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain was referring to leaders. It was talking about the righteous men of God keeping sin out of the camp. Keeping things clean and orderly, the way they should be. Isn't it interesting that there are twelve oxen at the bottom? We can see that there are three oxen pointed in each direction. And look at where they're pointed. They're facing out and looking in every direction to the four corners of the earth.

What are they carrying? The message of baptism. What was the Great Commission? Go out into all nations, baptizing them in the name of Yeshua. There's no question about the significance of Solomon putting these twelve oxen under there when you think of the twelve apostles going out in every direction in the world. The Jewish people are going to the four corners of the earth and bringing salvation to the world. This is a very powerful concept.

Moving to Isaiah 11:10—*"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people* (speaking of the Messiah, Yeshua, the Mashiach ben David) *for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.* There's only one Jew that has ever graced this earth, whom the entire world has sought after, and it is Yeshua of Nazareth. There is no other candidate that could even come close; none but Yeshua.

Going on to Isaiah 11:11-12—¹¹ *It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people* (Let's stop here for a moment. It is important that we understand that Orthodox Jews do not believe the Mashiach comes twice. Based on the Tanakh they believe the Mashiach will come once, and they will usually tell you, with all due respect and kindness, "I'm sorry, my friend, you do not know the Tanakh.") *who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea.* ¹² *He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*

The truth is that the Tanakh actually does specify in detail the coming of the Mashiach twice. And this is one example. This is very important for understanding eschatology. The Messiah has to come twice. Again, all things are established on the testimony of two. And here the prophet goes on, that the LORD is going to *set his hand again the second time*. Why, for what reason? *To recover the remnant of His people*. To recover the remnant of Israel.

Let us go to Hebrews because the writer understands this very well. Hebrews 9:27-28—²⁷ *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,* ²⁸ *so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.* This second time, it's to gather and recover the remnant of Israel. There are two comings. There are other places in scripture that also indicate two comings in order to understand eschatology.

I want to share with you a discussion in the Babylonian Talmud about the Messiah and two particular passages that are seen as messianic. It's an amazing conversation and this is how it goes. Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a—*"It is written, 'And behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven' (they're quoting Daniel 7:13–14) and it is written, 'Behold your King comes to you. . . lowly and riding on a donkey' (Zechariah 9:9). What is the meaning of the contrast?*

In other words, in this Talmudic discussion, the Jewish people are saying both of these are messianic prophecies. Daniel 7 says He comes on the clouds of heaven. But when we go to Zechariah, it's a different picture; our King is coming to us lowly, humbly, and on a donkey. It couldn't be farther apart. What is the meaning of the contrast? There are Orthodox Jews who love to get in this discussion. There are some who believe that what they did to reconcile these two passages is that they created two messiahs. The Moshiach ben Yosef and the Moshiach ben David.

The Messiah, son of Joseph, was the humble one. This is the one who would ride on the donkey. That is fascinating because Yeshua of Nazareth, His earthly father, was named what? Yosef. Joseph. And then we have the Moshiach ben David. The Moshiach ben David, Yeshua, was actually of the lineage of David. So, the way they reconcile this is with two messiahs, but it's not two messiahs; it's one messiah coming two times, which scripture tells us would happen.

Well, how does this particular Talmudic discussion reconcile this? *If the Israelites have merit, it will be "with the clouds of heaven," and if they do not have merit, it will be "lowly and riding upon a donkey."* So, in other words, they reconcile by saying it's going to be one or the other. If we merit it, then we'll see Him on the clouds; if we don't, He'll come humbly.

This idea is not entirely inaccurate. When Yeshua came riding lowly on the donkey, not one of us merited His coming. But, when He comes on the clouds of heaven a second time, we will merit His coming

because of the redemptive work He performed in His first coming. Because of His righteousness, we will now merit it. To reiterate, it's not two different messiahs; it's one messiah coming two different times.

Going to Isaiah 27:12—*And it shall come to pass in that day that the LORD will thresh, from the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; and you will be gathered one by one...* This is the regathering. This is the greater exodus. And this passage is critical for us to understand. They're going to be gathered one by one. We need to realize and appreciate the magnitude of this event.

During the regathering, angels are going to come down, literally grab you and personally escort you into the Kingdom of Heaven, back to the King. It will be terrifying when the sky rips open and the lightning flashes from the east to the west. We will see the army of Heaven, the army of Yeshua, coming down as we read about in Revelation Chapter 19, and these angels are coming down in full force to collect the elect of God.

We see these pictures all throughout scripture. We read about it in Matthew 24:31. Yeshua says, *"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."* His angels are going to go forth to gather the elect. Think about Elijah. How did he get to heaven? The Lord sent a messenger riding a fiery chariot that came down personally and took him back. Think about Lot. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah was a picture, according to Peter and Jude in the scriptures, of a prophetic story. What happened to Lot? We're told in Genesis 19:16 that two angels *"took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city."* The angels took them by the hands and took them out of the city.

Isaiah 27:12-13—¹² *they will be gathered one by one. O you children of Israel.* ¹³ *So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown* (the great trumpet referred to by Paul in 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 as the last trumpet, right? This is the seventh trumpet of Revelation Chapter 11); *they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.*



We need to ask the question. What Jerusalem is the prophet referring to? Is he referring to the Jerusalem of this age? The physical Jerusalem as we know it today? This one, where we have the Dome of the Rock situated on the Temple Mount with the Islamic Waqf in control? Well, if we let the Apostle Paul answer this question, we might be a little bit surprised because the Apostle Paul tells us this is not the Jerusalem that the prophet Isaiah is referring to.

Listen to what Paul says in Galatians 4:22-24—

²² *For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman—* Now, Abraham had two wives. He had Sarah, and Sarah's maidservant was Hagar. Hagar was a bond servant. She is a bondwoman, and she bore Ishmael to Abraham. Sarah bore Isaac to Abraham—²³ *But he who was of the bondwoman (Ishmael) was born according to the flesh, and he (Isaac) of the free-woman through promise.* ²⁴ *which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from*

Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar. Look at the story of Isaac; an angel came to Abraham and prophesied, “Your wife is going to conceive,” even though she was past the years of child-birth. The Torah is not just a history lesson. There are prophetic implications in all these stories. And Paul demonstrates this in the story of Isaac and Ishmael, they’re deeper than just the characters themselves—they’re symbolic of Bible prophecy.

Galatians 4:25—*for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.* Paul tells us about the Yerushalayim of today—it is in bondage. If we really want to appreciate the gravity of what Paul said, put it back in its historical context. The apostle Paul made this statement in the first century, during a time when the Jewish people were living in peace. During a time when they were going up to the temple and had functioning kohanim (priests). They were dwelling in the land, inhabiting the city of Yerushalayim in a very glorious fashion. And yet, Paul makes this statement that Jerusalem is in bondage with her children.

Why would Paul say such a thing? Paul didn't make this statement because he had some personal vendetta against the city that he himself cherished and felt close to. He went up to the temple and loved the Yerushalayim of his time. He said it because he understood a deeper reality, the truth of the matter. He understood that the Jerusalem of his time was, and still is, in bondage. It's a product of a bondswoman.

Has anything changed since Paul made his statement in the first century? Has anything changed with Yerushalayim, or her state of being in bondage? It's actually gotten worse. We have the abomination of desolation on it—the Dome of the Rock. The children of Israel are not in control of that area. They're harassed if they dare pray on the Temple Mount. Bombs are being lobbed in. The Jewish people are continually being butchered. And the UN today is telling them when and where they can build, and when they can defend themselves against their enemies.

So again, has anything changed from Paul's statement? Is he an ignorant Jew? Did he misspeak? He knew exactly what he was talking about. But, here's the good news after his assertion of bondage. This is what he says in Galatians 4:26—*but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.* That “Yerushalayim is the mother of us all” was the common terminology of how the Jews classified Jerusalem. This is reiterated in the Apocrypha. The very same statements were used in regard to Jerusalem. Being a first-century Jew, he said something that his brotherhood understood. He utilized this statement in regard to the Yerushalayim above.

Galatians 4:27—*For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband."* And so he goes on to prove his statement, and it's amazing how he does it. He goes to the prophets. He doesn't just say, “Well, this is what I think. This is my opinion.” What's fascinating is that if we continue to read this prophecy in Isaiah Chapter 54, it actually goes on to say that Israel is going to be blown out, meaning her borders are going to expand.

All we need to do is go to the Book of Revelation. Look at the dimensions of the city of Yerushalayim. It reaches from Russia to Africa. If what's recorded in Revelation is accurate, the Jerusalem of above is far different than the modern earthly Jerusalem. It's a massive structure, and it corresponds to Isaiah Chapter 54. Her land is going to expand into the nations. It's going to expand into the nations and inherit them.

This New Jerusalem is of the heavenly realm. That is why it's referred to as the Jerusalem above. She's the mother of Saul. We have to understand these are transposable terms for the Kingdom of Heaven. This concept is supported in the New Testament.

In the first century, with the coming of Yeshua, Jewish believers started to see things within scripture that they had never seen before. Things began to take shape and form on a level that the rabbis before them had never taught. Consider Luke Chapter 24. The passage quotes Yeshua saying to His disciples in Luke 24:45, *"And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the scriptures."* Because of that, we find, in Acts and the Epistles of Paul, that the disciples began teaching in ways that the people have never experienced before.

I want to take you to a particular passage in scripture. There is a passage in scripture that is monumental. We're just going to look at it briefly today. With the coming of Yeshua, there was a paradigm shift—a cataclysmic shift in things that would forever change things. This is what it says in Luke 16:16—*The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.*

Here we see the paradigm shift began with the ministry of John the Baptist, a revolutionary Jew with a revolutionary message. What was John's message? It was in Matthew 3:2: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"* And so, it was in contrast to looking at things of the earth and temple from a physical perspective. A radical new message came on the scene: that the people must repent because the kingdom of heaven is drawing nigh.

We will not find that statement anywhere in the Tanakh. Only the message of repentance fills the pages of the Tanakh. The LORD is calling His people to repent. Nowhere in the Tanakh does it say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Something significant happened with the coming of Yeshua. Suddenly, the message being preached is, "No, look straight up!" This was a message that turned the heads of the Jewish people to the heavens for the Kingdom of Heaven to come. Looking for the restoration of Israel.

Let's look at an example in Matthew 6:19-21—¹⁹ *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (which is not here—Shamayim (heaven) (שָׁמַיִם) is not yet on eretz (earth) (אֶרֶץ)), where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* No longer are we to seek an inheritance here on earth. Rather, we're to be focusing on the inheritance that's going to be revealed with the second coming of Yeshua, preceded by the great trumpet blast and the dead being resurrected.

And this is why, with this information, we find Paul saying puzzling things like in Galatians 4:25: *the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.* It's because he had the revelation and knowledge of the Messiah Yeshua. He knew at which point he was in, in regard to the dispensation of time. He believed he was living at the end of the age, and he was right because with the coming of the Messiah, the end of the age began. The final moments of the end began.

The writer of Hebrews, again, seems to talk in riddles, but he puts this all in a context. Hebrews 12:18-20—¹⁸ *For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. ²⁰ For they could not endure*

what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." Now, obviously, the writer is taking us back to Mount Sinai. The children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, where they were brought to Mount Sinai to enter into a covenant with God. And they had to set barriers up around the mountain where neither man nor beast could go because it was holy. Any person or beast that touched the mountain was to be put to death.

Continuing in Hebrews 12:21-23—²¹ *And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling."* ²² *But you have come. To Mount Zion [underline added for emphasis] and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,* ²³ *to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.*

Things changed with the coming of John the Baptist and the gospel of Yeshua. The focus went from the Jewish people coming in to the physical land that God gave them, to looking forward to the New Jerusalem that was to come down from the heavens in the future. The new message God wanted to convey to His people was, "No, look up, look up! Turn your eyes to Me, to Shamayim [heaven]. To your true inheritance."

Today in the modern age, this is why things are getting worse in Israel and Jerusalem. The Jewish people will eventually want to stop looking around for their version of the messiah and instead look up to their true messiah, Yeshua. When they call on Him, He will come. When they say, as recorded in Luke 13:35, *"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"* This repeats the story of Exodus. The LORD heard their mourning, pain and sorrow, and He responded. When He responded was when and where tribulation really began. Many Jews all over the world are crying out to the Lord, and hearing His voice in reply. As a result, more Jews are giving their life to Yeshua.

Moving ahead to Hebrews 13:14—*For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.* There was not a single Jew prior to the first century. Doing so would have probably resulted in death by stoning. The Holy Spirit gave a revelation to the Jewish people, through the Messiah Yeshua, and that message is still with us today—it's to look up for the coming kingdom.

Reading in Hebrews 11:9-10—⁹ *By faith he (Abraham) dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country* (Abraham was promised by God the land of Israel, yet, the writer says he dwelt in it as in a foreign country, as a foreigner). *Dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;* ¹⁰ *for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* Abraham knew that what he was living in was not what God promised, but something greater was to come. He wanted exactly what is mentioned here. He wanted the city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God. In Revelation 21:14 we read—*Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Continuing in Hebrews 11:12-13—¹² *Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.* ¹³ *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off* (They all lived in the land and died in their faith, but still did not receive their promise), *were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

This age we're living in, this world in its current state, is not the promise we've been waiting for. Yeshua said in John 18:36, *"My kingdom is not of this world."* The coming kingdom promised by Yeshua is what we should be putting our focus on.

That is why so much tension is rising in Jerusalem and in Israel, and scattering throughout the rest of the globe with the attacks against the Jewish people and attacks against the Christians for bearing the testimony of the King of the Jews. Satan is attacking us while we are still living in his kingdom.

Reading in Hebrews 11:14-16—¹⁴ *For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

What is that city? It is the New Jerusalem. Revelations 21:1-3—¹ *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth. How does Bereshit (Genesis) (בְּרֵאשִׁית) start? "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." At the very end of the book, what does it say? "I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.* Something epic and monumental will happen in the future. The New Jerusalem is literally going to come down to us.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Paul writes that we will ascend into heaven. That is because we will need to be concealed while His wrath ensues and while He creates a new heaven and a new earth. Afterwards, the New Jerusalem is going to come down, and that will be our ultimate destination. All the sin and corruption will be removed out of it. The unclean things will be burned and melted away. Peter told us this in Second Peter. The New Jerusalem will come down and the earth will be transformed to a perfected state.

Let's close in prayer, and the music team can come up.

[Closing prayer]

Father God, we just give You praise. And looking at the tribulation that is beginning around the world with people receiving persecution and Your people being loathed and hated to a degree that is second to none, LORD. We know that we are coming into the time of Jacob's trouble, and we know Your return is very, very soon.

LORD Yeshua, I pray that You fulfill Your promise to pour out Your Spirit. Pour out Your Spirit. Strengthen us. Give us boldness to speak the name of Yeshua. To not be scared, to not be frightened. To be bold at work. To be bold when we go to the malls. To be bold when we go to the gym. To be bold when we go to the restaurants. To be bold when we go to family functions. To stand fast in truth and in love. May we be a people that shine like the stars of Heaven, LORD, because the light of Yeshua lives within us. And may we bear light, LORD, and may the light dispel the darkness.

We pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to reside in us. LORD, we need You to teach us. To encourage us. To strengthen us. To equip us. To give us the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge that we need.

To hold deception at bay. To not allow the enemy to come in through the cracks. So creepily and stealth-like, LORD. How he gets into our hearts. How he gets into marriages. How he gets into our relationships with our children. How he literally breaks up friendships. We just pray against the attacks of the enemy in the mighty name of Yeshua. We pray against that in this community. I pray against it in every one of our homes.

The devil does not have authority over You, LORD Yeshua. And we call upon Your name. And we take that authority, LORD, over the demonic hosts. Over the principalities and powers in heavenly places. Wicked powers, LORD, that only bow the knee to You. And so, we invite You into our lives, LORD.

If there's any one of you who needs to repent, you need to do it today. And you need to call upon the name of Yeshua. All who call upon the name of Yeshua will be saved. And so, I just impress upon you as we begin these last couple of songs that you seek the LORD with all your heart. Shabbat Shalom.