

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Opening Caveats

1. *Other Interpretations*: Smarter people than me have other views and systems of thought related to the details of Yeshua's second coming.
2. *Read & Study Yourself*: It is important that each person not take my word for it, but to read the Scriptures personally. If you can't see what I'm sharing in the Scriptures then reject what I'm teaching. *These Jews were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they eagerly received the message, examining the scriptures carefully every day to see if these things were so.* Acts 17:11
3. *Future Prophetic Events*: looking to the future related to prophetic passages is a decidedly (at times) imprecise action. Because of this we should exercise humility when talking about these topics.

A. Why Talk About the Return of Yeshua

1. *A Prolific Subject Prominent Within the Scriptures*
 - a. Prophecy occupies one-fifth of Scripture. And of that one-fifth, one-third of that focuses on the second coming. There are over 650 general prophecies in Scripture, of which half of them concern Christ. And out of the 330 or so that concern Christ, 225 of those point to His second coming. Of the 46 Old Testament prophets, less than 10 speak of His first coming; 36 speak of His second coming. There are over 1,500 passages of the Scripture that refer to the second coming: ***1 out of every 25 verses in the Bible. For each time the Bible mentions the first coming of Messiah, it mentions its second coming eight times. For each time the Bible mentions the atonement, it mentions his second coming two times.*** Jesus referred to His return 21 times. And over 50 times in the New Testament, we are enjoined to be ready for His return. Excerpted from a 1999 John MacArthur sermon. Full sermon can be found here: <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-202/worshiping-the-worthy-lamb>
 - b. 150 chapters in the Bible speak predominantly about this coming Day. http://www.mikebickle.org.edgesuite.net/MikeBickleVOD/2008/150_Chapters_on_the_End_Times.pdf
2. *Significantly Neglected Topic*: The topic of Yeshua's return has been seriously neglected.
3. *Thematic Regularity*: The festivals provide a regular reoccurrence at looking at important themes. As we align ourselves with YHWH's calendar we find it harder to ignore certain themes. The fall festivals, Hanukkah, and Purim all have second-coming themes within their observance.
4. *Scoffers Related to Yeshua's Second Coming*: Scoffers will increase in their mocking specifically related to the second coming. It is important for us to grow in our understanding of this so we can have a joyful endurance and understanding related to this topic.
³*Above all, understand this: In the last days blatant scoffers will come, being propelled by their own evil urges* ⁴*and saying, "Where is his promised return? For ever since our ancestors died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation."* 2 Peter 3:3-4
5. *The Right Kind of Faith*: having a "false optimism" that states (falsely in my opinion) that these things largely already happened or that we will be raptured out before this time will have a demoralizing and disheartening (potentially damning) effect on those when these things begin to take place.

C. Good & Bad News: I think most all of us do not enjoy or appreciate difficult news. We would rather have good news. But, there are a number of times in the Scriptures when God gives His people bad news so they can prepare...before the ultimate good news—which is His return to forever be with us as His people. The coming Hanukkah story is one such example. On the other end of this coming story, there is incredibly good news. But there is bound to come a little trouble first.

D. Prophetic Factors

1. Double Reference/Fulfillments (Type): In the case of a type, or a typical prediction, the seer's eyes are fixed on the closer of the two events exclusively. In other words, details of the prophecy are completely satisfied by the earlier event or person. Yet scripture states (either in the original passage or elsewhere) that there is also a subsequent event or person foreshadowed by the prediction (McCallum).
2. Gaps "Telescoping": When the prophet predicts one event or person, followed without notice by a reference to a later event or person, it constitutes a "prophetic gap." It should be noticed in this case, that the predictive material referring to the later event will not fit the earlier event. Neither will the description of the earlier event fit the later event. There are very few pure gap prophecies (McCallum).
 - a. Isaiah 11:1-5; 61:2-3 (Luke 4:16-30); Daniel 7; Daniel 11:20-45; Matthew 24; Mark 13
3. Non-linear Prophecies: future prophecies are intermixed throughout the Scriptures and are not in chronological order—even in the same biblical book.
 - a. Chiasmic Structures: this step-ladder type sequencing of information is largely foreign to a western understanding
4. Takes a Diligent Searching Out
 - a. Observing the festivals provides a consistent, annual time to look at the biblical prophecies that point forward to the time directly preceding Yeshua's return. These happen three times a year [Fall festivals, Hanukkah, Purim].
5. Future Things: We're searching out future things. In light of this, it is important to maintain a humility and teachability as we prayerfully study these things.
6. It's God's Idea: God put these things in the Scripture because (presumably) He knew they would be important for us to know.

II. THE PAST HANUKKAH STORY

A. The Basic Story of Hanukkah

1. Oppression
 - In 168 BCE, the Jewish Temple was taken by Syrian-Greek soldiers. The emperor Antiochus dedicated the temple to Zeus, setting up a statue of Zeus in the temple and defiled the Temple further by sacrificing pigs on the altar.
 - Then in 167 BCE, Antiochus oppressed the Jewish people further by making the observance of Judaism illegal—forbidding them from observing their biblical practices and holy days under the threat of death. He also ordered all Jews to worship Greek gods.
2. Resistance

1 Maccabees 1:62 *62Yet there were many in Israel who stood firm and found the courage to refuse unclean food.*

 - Jewish resistance began in the village of Modin, near Jerusalem. Greek soldiers forcibly gathered the Jewish villagers and told a village leader to bow down to an idol and eat the flesh of a pig. Once the leaders acquiesced, the people were most likely to follow. A Greek officer ordered Mattathias, a priest and leader in the village, to comply to their demands, but he refused. When another villager stepped forward to cooperate on Mattathias' behalf, the priest became outraged. He drew his sword and killed the villager, then turned on the Greek officer and killed him too. His five sons and the other villagers then attacked the remaining soldiers, killing all of them. They fled to the hills and though vastly outnumbered they took action and started a guerrilla war against their foreign oppressors.
3. Triumph & Celebration
 - The small band eventually conquered the oppressors and came to Jerusalem with the intent of cleansing and rededicating the temple. Upon doing this, they had an 8 day celebration; which became known as Hannukah (or the Feast of Dedication) which was initially celebrated as a sort of delayed festival of tabernacles. On the 25th of Chislev (which became the first night of Hanukkah), they dedicated the altar and offered a sacrifice.

B. The Prophetic Backdrop

1. *Book of Daniel Was Available*: At the time of this past Hanukkah story, the Jews had the book of Daniel to inform them, help them, and give them hope during the time of great oppression.
2. *Daniel Speaks About This Story*: There are two specific places in Daniel where he receives revelation from YHWH pertaining to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.
 - a. Daniel 8:9-14, 23-26—seems to include a foreshadowing of the coming Anti-Messiah? Some more recent scholarship would see Daniel 8 as having a future fulfillment
 - b. Daniel 11:21-35
 - i. “Daniel 11 has enormous theological value. First, the reality of the God of the Bible is demonstrated. Campbell relates: “In the first 35 verses there are at least 135 prophecies which have been literally fulfilled and can be corroborated by a study of the history of the period.” (Miller, 312-313).
 - ii. Daniel’s description of the military and political intrigue of the Greek empire is so accurate, that secular historians (who do not accept that prophecy exists) assume that the Book of Daniel must have been written five hundred years after the fact! Avner Boskey
 - iii. God disclosed this historical summary to the prophet to prepare the Jewish people for the coming crisis—Antiochus's persecution. Biblical revelations of the future are given by the Lord to his people to exhort faithfulness, to encourage during difficult days, and to comfort in suffering (Miller, 234).
3. *Affirms the Scripture’s Supernatural Revelation*: there is a God in heaven who reveals these matters. God is omniscient and omnipotent and has supreme knowledge and power over history.
 - a. God knows the future
 - b. God plans the future
 - c. God reveals the future
4. *Gives Believers Confidence for the Future*: since the previous prophecies have been fulfilled, the subsequent promises of deliverance and triumph will just as assuredly come true.
 - a. When we know the future, Believers stand firm
 - b. God’s people will do exploits
 - i. Judas Maccabeus would (most likely) have been familiar with Daniel and it would have inspired him to godly action
 - c. God’s people will bring understanding

³³ *Those of the people who understand shall instruct many... they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering....35 Some of those of understanding shall fall (martyrdom), to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.*
(Dan. 11:33-35)

 - d. God’s people will endure suffering: God’s honest as He speaks of the future
 - e. God’s people will be refined: suffering (if not wasted) can produce great fruit in God’s people
 - f. God’s people will find rest and will ultimately be victorious; God has marked this final day

III. A COMING HANUKKAH STORY

- A. **The Anti-Messiah** (Daniel 7:8, 11, 19-26; 8:9-14, 23-25; 9:27; 11:36-12:1; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, Revelation 13:1-10)
 1. *Coming Wicked Ruler*: A coming most wicked ruler (known as the AntiChrist, Little Horn, the Beast, the son of perdition, and the lawless one) that has the same core characteristics as Antiochus but multiplied on a larger, more global scale.
 2. *Defiles the Temple*: He will defile the temple in Jerusalem
 3. *Yeshua Conquers Him*: The Greater Judah Maccabee (Yeshua the Messiah) will come to conquer the Anti-Messiah (2 Thessalonians 2:8).
 4. *Future Temple Cleansing*: There will be another cleansing and restoring of a future temple after the Antichrist is destroyed

5. Will Prevail Against the Saints: This speaks of martyrdom. The Antichrist will overcome the saints physically, but they will overcome him spiritually.
- 21 *I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them* 22 *until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.* Daniel 7:21-22
- ⁷ *It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.* (Rev. 13:7)
- ¹¹ *“And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”* (Rev. 12:10-11)
6. Limited Rule: to 1260 days, 42 months, 3.5 years; clock starts ticking with the abomination that causes desolation

B. The Abomination that Causes Desolation (taken from Mike Bickle’s teaching notes)

3 *Don’t be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction.* 4 *He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.* 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

1. Partial Fulfillment (in Daniel 11:31) with Antiochus and the first Hanukkah story.
2. Future Fulfillment: Yeshua called His people “to see” in the future the abomination of desolation, and then pointed us to the book of Daniel to grasp the main Old Testament idea behind it (Mt. 24:15). In the New Testament, our understanding is greatly expanded by what John (Rev. 13) and Paul taught (2 Thes. 2).
- ¹⁵ *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...²¹then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been...”* (Mt. 24:15-21)
3. The Central Event: Yeshua made it clear that Daniel’s “abomination of desolation” is the central event that helps us to understand His view of the end times. Yeshua only identified this one specific political event, which will let His people know that they are in the generation of His return and that the Great Tribulation has started. There are many implications associated with this key event.
4. Restoration of the Temple Services: In order for the Antichrist to put an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, Israel must be a nation, with Jerusalem under its jurisdiction, and the temple must be built on its original site (Solomon’s temple), functioning with sacrifices according to the law of Moses.
 - a. One major obstacle to the temple being rebuilt is that Al-Aqsa Mosque (Islam’s third most holy site) and the Dome of the Rock stand on the Temple Mount (original site of Solomon’s temple). Someone must bring peace to the Middle East before this can happen.
 - b. The abomination of desolation is the single key event that Yeshua highlighted to help us understand many other events that will be connected to this terrible abomination.
5. Biblical References: The abomination of desolation is referred to eight times in the Scripture. Daniel used a form of this phrase four times (8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), two passages quote Yeshua’s use of the phrase (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14), and it is described by Paul (2 Thes. 2:3-4) and John (Rev. 13:12-18).

C. Yeshua’s “Future” Prophetic References to Daniel

1. Abomination that Causes Desolation (Matthew 24:15): Yeshua described it as a coming event
2. Tribulation: The Bible describes this coming time frame three different ways to indicate the assurance of this time frame and to give us hope in the midst of the struggle (3½ years; 1290 days; 42 months)
3. “Coming on the Clouds”: the Son of Man coming on the clouds is a direct reference to the Son of Man approaching the Ancient of Days (the Father) and given all authority and power to rule over the earth (Mt. 24:30; Dan. 7:14).

D. Prophetic Markers: These items will need to be fulfilled before Yeshua’s return.

1. Gospel Fulfillment: The Gospel must be successfully brought to every people group before the end will come (Matthew 24:14)
2. Temple Rebuilt: The temple must be rebuilt in order for the Antichrist to defile it.

3. Israel's Leaders Call Out for Yeshua: Israel's leadership must call out for Yeshua as the Messiah to return ("Baruch Haba bashem YHWH") (Luke 13:35)
4. Great Falling Away: (2 Thess 2:3) The falling away won't be unto a vacuum but will most likely be towards a more loving, tolerant, world-wide, politically correct, false-justice religion This religion will have all paths leading to God and no need for Yeshua in an exclusive way or obedience to God's commandments. Perhaps this falling away will also be related to end-time false teaching related to sexual immorality, covetousness, idolatry, and rebellion to delegated authorities (2 Peter 2).

IV. WHY SUCH PROMISED DIFFICULTY & JUDGEMENT?

- A. Battle Over Worship:** There's a battle between Satan & YHWH over worship—who will we worship?
1. Free-Will Lovers: God has always desired (and will ultimately have [Hosea 2:16, Revelation 22:17]) a "spousal" partnership with humans who choose Him of their own free-will. He provided the opportunity for forgiveness through Yeshua's sacrifice that is the only entry point (John 14:6) providing a relational connection between a holy God and a sinful people. Israel was the people who this Promised Seed was foretold to come through. The beginning place of response to God's invitation is for a person to realize their need before Him.
 2. The Storms of Difficulty: The free-will opportunity God provides at its most basic level brings about the evil and difficulty in the world. For people to have the opportunity to love God, means they must also have the subsequent opportunity not to love and serve Him—with real consequences for our choices. Otherwise, we are all robots. The resultant storm proceeds from God's gift of free will; it is the collision of high and low-pressure systems. The high pressure of the redeemed who love God and want to walk in His ways colliding with the low-pressure system of those who hate God, His people, and who detest His ways. The clash of these two groups of people is not neutral or passive and always produces a storm. God's intention is that this storm wakes up the people and shakes them off the fence and into one of two clear camps—either to love and serve Him or to hate Him with its resultant negative actions.
 3. Wheat & Chaff: (Matthew 13:36-43) the righteous and the wicked will "grow together" until the time of Yeshua's return.
 4. Wicked Leaders & Structures: There are really evil, wicked people who worship Satan and/or have aligned themselves with him. An estimated **200 million people** have been killed by wicked leaders in the 20th century alone. Atheistic leaders/governments have had the greatest disregard for human life.
 5. The Difficulty and Subsequent Breakthrough is Producing Greater and Deeper Love: Greater difficulty and suffering can produce greater love and appreciation if we do not "waste" these afflictions.
- B. Bloodguilt of the Land:** The defiling of the land has judgements associated with it
1. Offering children to Molech (Leviticus 20:1): world-wide abortions of the present-day would correlate to this.
 2. Sexual immorality (Leviticus 18:25; Ephesians 5:3-7)
 3. Mediums/sorcery
 4. If the Israelites not holy, God said the land would vomit them out of the land (Leviticus 18:25)
 5. Israel Violating Sabbath Principles: Judah's captivity was tied into violating the Sabbath principles (2 Chronicles 36:21)

V. WHY STUDY THIS?

- A. It's In the Bible in a Prominent Way:** there are over 150 chapters in the Bible that talk about these coming days. God would not have described these times so predominantly if He didn't want us aware of these times.
- B. Perfect Understanding in the Times of the End:** YHWH wants His people to know and be prepared for the future and promises that they will have a complete understanding of these coming events
1. The saints will be aware and prepared and preparing others (1 Thessalonians 5:4)
The anger of YHWH will not diminish until it has finished all he has planned. In the days to come you will understand all this very clearly. Jeremiah 30:24 (NLT)

Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Daniel 12:3

2. The wicked will not have understanding (Daniel 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9)

3. The Prophets' Message: God speaks to His people about the future through the prophets

Certainly the sovereign YHWH does nothing without first revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.
Amos 3:7

C. There Will Be a Great Falling Away: This deception will happen before the AntiChrist is revealed.
2 Thessalonians 2:3

D. This Hasn't Yet Happened (Only prefigured with 586 BC, Antiochus in 168 BC, and 70 AD)

1. Abomination that causes desolation described by Yeshua as something that is yet to happen in the future.

2. The resurrection of the dead has not yet happened. The connection of the abomination that causes desolation is with the time directly preceding the resurrection of the dead (Daniel 11 & 12).

E. No Other Day Like It: if the days hadn't been shortened (to 1260 days) no one would survive
(Jeremiah 30:5-7; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21)

F. It's a Part of the Gospel: Yeshua is returning and will rule this earth from Jerusalem with the saints

VI. PREPARING OURSELVES FOR THE FUTURE

A. Cultivate Our Personal Relationship with God: This is our most important commodity: having a secret history with God and cultivating a lifestyle of "getting oil." (Matthew 25:1-12)

B. Watch & Pray (corporately and individually): This involves being a people who study and meditate on the Bible (especially related to the events related to the return of Yeshua) as well as individually and corporately lingering in His presence to talk to Him and listen for His voice.

C. Stay in Biblical Community: this is a strong biblical admonition as we get closer to the time of Yeshua's return.

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:25

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.
Hebrews 13:17

1. Who is watching over your soul? One practical question related to this: Who are the leaders that you are practically submitted to that keep watch over your soul? This commitment to biblical community is a significant safeguard...especially as we get closer to the time of Yeshua's return.

a. Congregational membership is one way that we as Lighthouse elders know who we are specifically called to watch over in any given season.

2. Leadership Teams: As we move more towards "church in the homes" it is vitally important that we as a cluster of Lifeboat house churches have a strong value for an elder team which oversees the groups with a diversity of Lifeboat leaders who are in relationship with and are mutually submissive to each other.

3. Important Caveat: There are no perfect leaders and subsequently no perfect congregations. My counsel is to find the best imperfect group that you can to be committed and submitted to.

D. Have His Heart's Desire as our desire

1. Gospel to the nations/neighbors

2. Compassion on/justice for the widow/orphan/foreigner/the poor (those in need)

3. Love for Israel

E. Understand Suffering's Purpose and the present & coming glory of God

18Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. 19For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Romans 8:18-19

16Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

F. The Right Kind of Faith (The Stockdale Principle): On the one hand, you stoically accepted the brutal facts of reality. On the other hand, you maintain an unwavering faith in the endgame, and a commitment to prevail despite the brutal facts (Collins, 1467-1468).

1. Backstory: The name refers to Admiral Jim Stockdale, who was the highest-ranking United States military officer in the “Hanoi Hilton” prisoner-of-war camp during the height of the Vietnam War. Tortured over twenty times during his eight-year imprisonment from 1965 to 1973, Stockdale lived out the war without any prisoner’s rights, no set release date, and no certainty as to whether he would even survive to see his family again. He shouldered the burden of command, doing everything he could to create conditions that would increase the number of prisoners who would survive unbroken, while fighting an internal war against his captors and their attempts to use the prisoners for propaganda. At one point, he beat himself with a stool and cut himself with a razor, deliberately disfiguring himself, so that he could not be put on videotape as an example of a “well-treated prisoner.” (Collins 1469-1475)
2. Focussing on the End of the Story: “I never lost faith in the end of the story,” he said, when I asked him. “I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade.” (Collins, 1492-1494).
3. The “Optimists” Didn’t Make It: I asked, “Who didn’t make it out?” “Oh, that’s easy,” he said. “The optimists.” “The optimists? I don’t understand,” I said, now completely confused, given what he’d said a hundred meters earlier. “The optimists. Oh, they were the ones who said, ‘We’re going to be out by Christmas.’ And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they’d say, ‘We’re going to be out by Easter.’ And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart.” Another long pause, and more walking. Then he turned to me and said, “This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.” (Collins, 1496-1503)
4. Summary: Life is unfair—sometimes to our advantage, sometimes to our disadvantage. We will all experience disappointments and crushing events somewhere along the way, setbacks for which there is no “reason,” no one to blame. It might be disease; it might be injury; it might be an accident; it might be losing a loved one; it might be getting swept away in a political shake-up; it might be getting shot down over Vietnam and thrown into a POW camp for eight years. What separates people, Stockdale taught me, is not the presence or absence of difficulty, but how they deal with the inevitable difficulties of life. In wrestling with life’s challenges, the Stockdale Paradox (you must retain faith that you will prevail in the end and you must also confront the most brutal facts of your current reality) has proved powerful for coming back from difficulties not weakened, but stronger—not just for me, but for all those who’ve learned the lesson and tried to apply it (Collins, 1506-1512)

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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