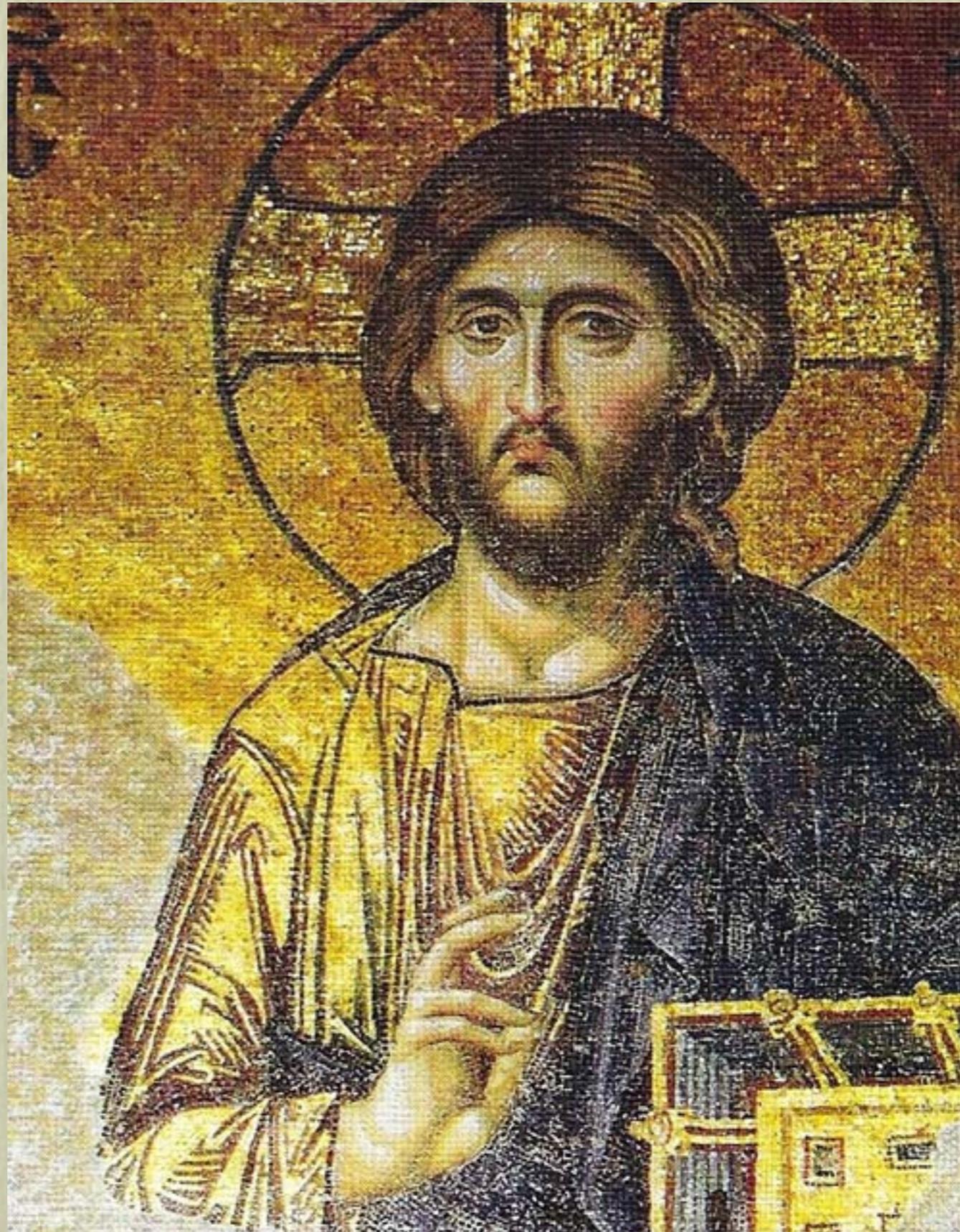


12. The choice for and against God's Messiah : Matthew 20:20 - 24:2



Suffering and Service : Matthew 20:20-23 (Mark 10:35-40)

The mother of the sons of Zebedee (see 27:56) came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” He said to them, “You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

Matthew 20:24-28 (Mark 10:41-45)

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant (διάκονος), and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave;

just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (διάκονεω), and to give his life a ransom (λύτρον) for many.”

‘You were bought with a price’ (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23)

Matthew 20:29-34

(see Mark 10:46-52)

As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. There were *two* blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, “*Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!*”

κύριε ἐλέησον

Jesus stood still and called them, saying, “What do you want me to do for you?” They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” *Moved with compassion* (see 9:36; 14:14; 15:32), Jesus *touched* their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Remember what Jesus has said about the crowds that do not see (13:13-14) and their blind leaders (15:14).

B: Confrontation in Jerusalem Matthew 21:1 – 22:46

I. Matthew 21:1-9

(Mark 11:1-10)

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” *This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, “Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, **lowly**, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey”* (Zechariah 9:9). The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “Hosanna (Psalm 118:25) to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Matthew 21:10-11

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

2. Jesus clears the Temple Matthew 21:12-13 (Mark 11:15-19)

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’ (Isaiah 56:7); but you are making it a den of robbers (Jeremiah 7:11).”

The climax of the Gospel focuses on the way Jesus gave his life and the way God was faithful to Jesus by raising him to life.

Jesus' public ministry is presented to us so that, having been enlightened, we can more profoundly contemplate Jesus' dying and rising.

Following Mark, Matthew contrasts Jesus' teaching and practice with that of the Jewish leaders and locates the contrast in Jerusalem. In the synoptics, this is the only time Jesus is in Jerusalem. He is there a number of times in the Gospel of the Beloved Disciple.

The debates we are about to watch give us some idea of the kinds of debates and discussions that occurred in Antioch between the Jews who followed Jesus and the Jews who did not.

Matthew 21:14-17

The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became angry and said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself (Psalm 8:3)’?” He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

3. No fruit on the fig tree : Matthew 21:18-22 (Mark 11:12-14, 20-25)

In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. And seeing a **fig tree** by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once. When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?”

Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have **faith** and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.”

‘When I wanted to gather them, says the Lord, there are no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree; even the leaves are withered, and what I gave them has passed away from them’(Jeremiah 8:13).

4. By whose authority? Matthew 21:23-27 (Mark 11:27-33)

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

5. Doing God's will : Matthew 21:28-32

‘What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went.

The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’

Jesus said to them, ‘**Truly I tell you**, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.

For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not **change your minds** and **believe** him.

6. Parable of the landowner's son Matthew 21:33-41 (Mark 12:1-9)

“Listen to another parable. There was a **landowner** who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his **slaves** to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another (see 23:35; 2Chron 24:21). Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his **son** to them, saying, ‘**Surely they will respect my son.**’

Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘Surely they will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants *who will give him the produce at the harvest time.*”

The rejected stone : Matthew 21:42-46 (Mark 12:10-12)

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’? (Psalm 117:22-23)

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.” (inspired by Isaiah 8:14 & Daniel 2:44-45)

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realised that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, *because they regarded him as a prophet.*

7. The wedding feast of the king's son : Matthew 22:1-14

Matthew 22:1-7 (compare Luke 14:16-21)

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a **wedding banquet** for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. (70AD)

Matthew 22:8-10 (compare Luke 14:22-23)

Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Matthew 22:11-14

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants (διακόνοις), ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

‘Put on Christ!’ (Romans 13:14) READ Colossians 3:12-14

For many are called, but few are chosen.”

8. Tax to Caesar? Matthew 22:15-17 (Mark 12:13-14)

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?”

Revolt of Judas in Galilee in 6AD

Archelaus deposed from his post as ethnarch of Judea, Samaria and Idumea 6AD

Roman Imperial Province with its own 'prefect' of equestrian rank: Coponius. Quirinius, imperial legate to Syria, charged with taking a census for purposes of taxation (on agricultural production).

Opposed by Judas the Galilean, but the high priest, Joazar, persuaded the people to submit to the census and the tax.



Tax to Caesar? Matthew 22:18-22 (Mark 12:15-17)

Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperor’s.”



(Tiberias Caesar, son of the divine Augustus,
high priest)

Then he said to them, “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

9. God of the Living Matthew 22:23-33 (Mark 12:18-27)

The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.’ (levirate marriage’: see Deut 25:5-6; Genesis 38:8; BUT Lev 18:16). Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. Last of all, the woman herself died. In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her.”

Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’?(Exodus 3:6) He is **God** not of the dead, but **of the living.**”

When the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

10. The commandment of love Matthew 22:34-40 (Mark 12:28-34)

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”

He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”(Deuteronomy 6:5) This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Leviticus 19:18). On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill’ (Matthew 5:17).

‘In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets’ (Matthew 7:12).

11. The Messiah: son or lord of David? Matthew 22:41-46 (Mark 12:35-37)

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: “What do you think of the **Messiah**? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”?’ (Psalm 110:1) If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?”

No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Matthew 23:1-3

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,
'The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat;
therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; (but see 23:16-22)
but do not do as they do, for they do not practise what they teach.

Matthew 23:4 (Luke 11:46)

They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the
shoulders of others (see Acts 15:10); but they themselves are
unwilling to lift a finger to move them.

Matthew 23:5

They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries (Deut 6:8; 11:18; Exodus 13:16) broad and their fringes (Numbers 15:38-40; Deut 22:12) long.

Matthew 23:6-7 (Mark 12:38-39)

They love to have the place of honour at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi.

Matthew 23:8-12

You are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher,
and you are all students.

And call no one your father on earth,
for you have one Father – the one in heaven.

Nor are you to be called instructors,
for you have one instructor, the Messiah.

The greatest among you will be your servant.

All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all
who humble themselves will be exalted.

2. Seven 'laments' : Matthew 23:13-33

1. Matthew 23:13 (Luke 11:52)

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven.
For you do not go in yourselves,
and when others are going in, you stop them.

2. Matthew 23:15

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
For you cross sea and land to make a single convert,
and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell (γεέννα)
as yourselves

3. Matthew 23:16-22

Woe to you, **blind leaders**, who say, 'Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.' You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? And you say, 'Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.' How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it.

4. Matthew 23:23-24 (compare Luke 11:42)

Woe to you, *scribes and Pharisees*, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, *dill, and cumin* (Leviticus 27:30; Deuteronomy 14:22-23), and have neglected *the weightier matters of the law*: justice (mishpat / κρισις), mercy (ἔλεος; see 25:35-39) and *faithfulness* (πίστις). It is these you ought to have practised without neglecting the others. *You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!*

5. Matthew 23:25-26 (Luke 11:39-41)

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! Clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

6. Matthew 23:27-28

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

7. Matthew 23:29-33 (compare Luke 11:47-48)

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, and you say, “If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.” Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. *Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to **hell**?*

3. God's judgment : Matthew 23:34-36 (Luke 11:49-51)

Therefore I send you prophets, *sages, and scribes*, some of whom you will kill *and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town*, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel (Genesis 4:8) to the blood of Zechariah *son of Barachiah* (Jehoiada), whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. (2 Chronicles 24:20-22). (see Isaiah 8:2)

Truly I tell you, all this will come upon **this generation**. (70AD)

Polemic from a community recently excommunicated from the synagogue

4. Lament over Jerusalem Matthew 23:37-39 (Luke 13:34-35)



Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

See, **your** house is left to you, desolate.

For I tell you, **you will not see me again** until you say,

“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Psalm 118:26)

When the Son of Man comes in judgment!

Matthew 24:1-2 (Mark 13:1-2)

As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. Then he asked them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

