

# Masterwork of the Messiah

## Expositional Study Of Matthew's Gospel

*Fakes, Phonies, & The Faithful: Part 3*

Matthew 23:25-39

Written By

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Prophet after prophet had, for hundreds of years, called Israel to repent and follow God and God's life-giving laws. By and large, no one listened. Oh, the people listened all right, but to all the wrong voices, to the political and religious leadership who simply told them what they wanted to hear; you know, a positive, uplifting message, as opposed to a negative, discouraging, though truthful one. Jeremiah chapter two captures Israel's repulsive response to all of God's prophets:

“To whom shall I speak and give warning that they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed and they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them; they have no delight in it” (Jeremiah 6:10).

When a people continually rejects the Word of God spoken through God's messengers, when they continually embrace error over truth, darkness over light, eventually they surround themselves with those who will only tell them what they want to hear, while they will actively oppose those who tell them what they need to hear. Such describes Israel's disposition which continued all the way to their fall in 586 B.C. Prophet after prophet called them back from the edge of the spiritual, political, financial abyss, yet none would listen.

Now, on another day in another time, the Messiah, the ultimate prophet as prophesied to come in Deuteronomy 18, stood before Israel's godless leaders, and that same propensity to cast off the voice of the prophet reached its zenith in their open, hateful response to His life, teaching, and ministry. There on the temple mount, a mere three days before they would kill the messianic prophet of all prophets, Jesus, in the style of a Jeremiah or an Ezekiel, took them to task, seeking to pronounce a divinely ordained judicial judgment upon them for their failure to lead the people toward a living, personal relationship with God. Instead, these pompous, prideful, prestigious men had led the people away from God with their false teaching concerning the path of righteousness.

So, with the cross looming on the near horizon, with truth and error hanging in the balance, Jesus confronted and castigated them self-righteous men, and all those who bought into their hellish teaching. He did it in the form of seven poignant, powerful woes. I'm sure they got the message, though they didn't chose to heed it. The disciples, on the contrary, did get the message. At the end of this scathing rebuke of the entire Pharisaical religious system, they clearly understood one central truth: *they were to live differently as God's new priests, rejecting all the things the Pharisees prided themselves in, while embracing the godly character Jesus evidenced and taught about* (Matthew 5-7).

From Christ, the disciples also learned there is a time when godly people must speak up and out, in a loving, though serious, sober fashion, when false teaching seeks to dupe and destroy countless souls. Yes, when a nation and its leaders drag its people into the abyss of erroneous belief in order to control them, to perpetuate their power, and to oppose God and His teachings because of their love of false teachings, then it behooves the Lord's people to stand firm and verbally expose the error in hopes of regaining said culture.

Such is the motif from Matthew 23 for us as the Lord's new disciples in our day. We restate it so it is firmly embedded in your heart and mind.

## Oppose False Teaching & False Spirituality (Matthew 23:13-39)

Have you? Will you? Although our Christless, carnal culture doesn't like it, we must, maybe I need to say that again, *we must* address the fact of ...

### The Reality (Matthew 23:13-33)

What's the divine reality for anti-Christ behavior? Condemnation. To choose spiritual error over spiritual truth, to embrace false spiritual teaching (be what it may) over true spiritual teaching based, of course, on the proper reading/interpretation of the Word of God, is to court certain divine judgment. In the biblical section before us in this study, Jesus boldly addressed the three last of the seven areas where the religious leaders of His day had gone wilfully off the spiritual, religious rails, dragging the rest of the nation off with them into a disastrous train wreck of epic proportions.

His fifth woe exposed another evil the religious elites perpetuated:

*False Religionists Confirm Image* (Matthew 23:25-26). The mantra or motto of the Pharisees and Sadducees couldn't be missed: *Image is everything*, especially when it came to religion. Put differently, spirituality, to them, was tied intrinsically to the commitment you evidenced toward

all the external rituals and ceremonies. Never mind the inner spiritual man. Never mind the condition of the soul. No. What mattered most concerned how much time you devoted to a rigid, perpetual observance of religious activities.

<sup>25</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. (Matthew 23).

“For” is a *hoti* clause (ὅτι) denoting the reason why Jesus classified these men as charlatans. The reason? They were more concerned about the external ceremonial cleansing of a cup and a dish, than they were concerning the filth which stained their souls, filth like robbery and self-indulgence. The present tense nature of the word to cleanse (καθαρίζετε) can be grammatically classified as a customary or habitual present, stressing their relentless devotion to making sure they drank only from cups or ate from dishes that were not defiled.<sup>1</sup> They meticulously washed their hands a certain way to make sure they didn’t contaminate a cup or a plate, and a cup or a plate had to be properly washed so as to remove any form of defilement. Everyone had seen these religious leaders show off their devotion to “holiness” by their strict adherence to washing everything when it came to a meal.

Yet, according to Christ, they, once again, focused on the minors not the majors. They were so worried about becoming defiled and contaminated by cup or a plate; they paid no attention to the inner contamination of their souls by sins like robbery and self-indulgence. How did they rob? They financially fleeced worshippers through the exorbitant, inflated prices they charged for temple sacrificial animals, and they lined their pockets with monies (kickbacks) they received from all the money-changers on the temple mount. Further, Jesus said they were self-indulgent, and the Greek word He chose, viz., *akrasia* (ἀκρασία), lexically meant to lack self-control or incontinence.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly enough, in 1 Corinthians 7:5, 9 Paul uses it in reference to sinful, sexual urges. True, since this word is connected with the former by the coordinating conjunction “and” (καὶ), it could denote that when it came to getting monies from worshippers they lacked complete self-control. The picture is of a greedy, monstrous man with an insatiable appetite for more and more money. Wedded to the sexual connotation it condemned them for being perverted by giving into sinful, sexual desires. Either way, these religious leaders spent all their time looking good to others, while inwardly they lived spiritually compromised lives. Don’t think that propensity is long gone. Not for a minute. Just stay in tune with our times and you’ll see what I mean.

What did Jesus tell them to do to rectify their problem?

<sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

Don’t miss the fact Jesus changed from the plural to the singular with the word Pharisee. Was He speaking to one in particular? Perhaps. Regardless, by switching the number He purposefully made His words less abstract and more personal. Obviously, He sought to wake the sleeper from his prolonged spiritual stupor.

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond The Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996): 521.

<sup>2</sup> Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies In The New Testament*, Vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scriber’s Sons, 1887): 125.

The solution to this woe, according to Christ, was simple: *Focus on the inner man as opposed to the outer man.* A right relationship with God, a true spiritual cleansing, is always about the inner as opposed to the outer. Let me be clear: We are born spiritually defiled, dirty and destined for an eternity without God in a place of torment. Paul's teaching in Romans couldn't be clearer:

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—(Romans 5).

Adam's willful sin became my sin, your sin. Adam's spiritual death became my death and your death. As it was, and is, just for a ref during the World Cup to penalize an entire team for the misdeed of one player, so it was and is just for God to judge us through the misdeed of the one, Adam. His purposefully disobedience to God's command brought spiritual uncleanness on us all, thereby contaminating the inner man with the contagion of sin.

How, then, does a spiritually stained person find and secure cleansing before a holy God? Good question. Several other places in the New Testament use the same word for cleansing Jesus used in relation to the Pharisees. By looking at those references we gain much needed insight into the answer of all answers. This particular reference from the book of Hebrews is a case in point:

<sup>22</sup> And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed (καθαρίζεται ) with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

<sup>23</sup> Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; <sup>25</sup> nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. <sup>26</sup> Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9).

Christ shed blood represents the sacrifice of all sacrifices insofar as His blood could, and will, cleanse the repentant sinner, once and for all, from the sinful stain on his inward soul. Yes, Jesus's sacrificial death was so perfect it put away or ended the need for animal sacrifices as prescribed in the Torah.

Wake up!

- You don't get cleansed by doing religious works.
- You don't get cleansed by how many times you say a certain memorized prayer.
- You don't get cleansed by how many times you pray with special religious beads in your hands.
- You don't get cleansed by being baptized by means of certain mode.
- You don't get cleansed by being faithful to show up for worship.

- You don't get cleansed by being careful what you will or will not listen to.

The only way for your filthy, dirty, dead-ridden spiritual man to find cleansing is by placing your faith in the Savior, Jesus, who spilt His sacrificial blood for you. Have you taken care of this issue yet? The Pharisees, like so many, didn't. They chose to retreat into their love of ritual observances to hopefully secure a standing with God. I'm sure today they wish they had chosen differently. You, on the contrary, can choose Christ over ritualistic works, be what they may. The moment you do that you, my friend, get a mystical bath in the only blood which can make the sinful soul as white as snow. Like the old hymn says:

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus; What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh! precious is the flow that makes me white as snow; No other fount I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Right now, this very moment, God knows the condition of your cup, your spiritual life, and there are only two options: one, it is either clean on the inside and the outside based on your faith relationship with Jesus, or two, it is soiled in the inside and you duped into thinking your religious activity will be enough to possibly earn you a standing in God's kingdom. In light of these two options, I think a prayer is most appropriate, "Lord, show me, right now, the condition of my cup so that I might be cleansed and obtain an eternal, personal relationship with you."

Most won't pray that prayer. Most on the temple mount that day with Jesus didn't. But you can step apart from the crowd and chose differently. Will you ... or will Christ's woe be spoken over you in eternity? You definitely have a decision to make.<sup>3</sup>

A sixth woe Jesus leveled against the Pharisees, I'm sure, hit the hardened spiritual soil of their lives like a daisy cutter bomb:

*False Religionists Contaminate Others* (Matthew 23:27-28). Moving from tableware to the setting of tombstones, Jesus drives this concept home in this fashion:

<sup>27</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Stinging words.

If the Mosaic Law taught anything, it highlighted the contaminating nature of sin, a concept our culture certainly doesn't want to think much about. Numbers 19 is a case study of how to avoid contamination. At one point it gives some illumination which is applicable to our text:

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<sup>3</sup> For those who do make this decision, let me point out the need to work on the inner man never ceases. In fact, true spirituality, or growth and maturation in Jesus, is focused on the submission of the inner man to the teachings of God. One of the best discussions of this inner motif is woven throughout the book by the late Francis Schaeffer titled *True Spirituality*. It's a must read for former Pharisees.

<sup>14</sup> This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days. <sup>15</sup> Every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, shall be unclean. <sup>16</sup> Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died *naturally*, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days (Numbers 19).

To touch a tombstone/headstone, therefore, which was associated with a dead body, made a would-be worshipper immediately unclean for seven, long days. If you had just traveled to Jerusalem from a far distance, only to be defiled by contact with a headstone you can see how frustrated and discouraged you could become. Hence, to solve this problem, Jews applied a white chalk/lime mixture to tombstones, especially at Passover, to make sure nobody inadvertently bumped into one. Walking along the winding roads leading up to Jerusalem at feast time, must have been somewhat beautiful, as Christ says, as you saw the glistening white tombstones dotting the landscape.

The morbid metaphor severed as a perfect image of a Pharisee, according to Jesus. Outwardly they looked white, or holy. Their passionate and overly zealous commitment to observance of a blinding array of religious rituals gave them this public appearance. This represented the condition of their outer man.

The inner man, however, was morally and spiritually black, being full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. How ironic. They who boasted in their love and adherence to the law of God were lawless in their hearts. They were just smoke and mirrors, a walking deception to everyone around them. And, just like with an unmarked tombstone, anyone who came in contact with them became contaminated by their sinful ways. They contaminated by ...

- Calling you to question the identity of Jesus.
- Teaching you that holiness is something you achieve through religious observances of rituals.
- Creating superstition in your heart, or causing you to fear by not following what they, the religious elites taught.
- Fashioning doctrines God never fashioned.
- Communicating that a holy image is more important than a holy heart.
- Teaching you how to lie to others and feel good about it.
- Teaching you with how argue against God.
- Teaching you how to question the Word of God without ever submitting to it.

And so on and so forth. These men were only about contamination, not transformation. Maybe you've bumped into one.

Maybe it was a church.

I remember the first, and only, time I went to the National Cathedral. Quite impressive from a structural standpoint: massive stone columns, intricately carved gargoyles on the steep roofline, artistic and thematic stained glass windows, lofty ceilings, a wonderful organ, priests in priestly garb, gorgeous and colorful grounds to mention a few things.

What I couldn't fathom, however, were the book titles in the basement bookstore: *The Wisdom of Compassion* and *My Spiritual Journey* by Dalai Lama, *A Year With Rumi: daily Readings*, assembled by Coleman Barks with the goal of helping us gain comfort and hope through the poems of the famous Sufi mystic; books on Taoism, books on New Age, as well as others. One the first level there is the appearance of a deep reverence for the Trinity; however, in the basement, things are much different. Down there, truth is relative. Down there, all religions are viable and acceptable. Down there, the Bible is just one of many holy books. Down there is darkness.

Maybe you attended a church like that. If you did, I'm sure it contaminated you to some degree.

Maybe it was your father. He was known for his spiritual rules, regulations, and rigidity. He let you know what you could watch, listen to, or who you could be with, and his words were always limiting and exacting. At church, he checked all the boxes. He sang in the choir. He was an usher. He served on a committee here and there. He showed up for work days. But as you grew up you couldn't help but notice the glaring compromises in his life, you know, things he engaged in which contradicted what he taught you. Publically, he projected "whiteness," but privately and inwardly, you progressively saw "blackness" as he failed to have a faith relationship with Jesus Christ. His "faith" was nothing more than an outer show which only served to contaminate those closest to him.

What does Jesus say to this type of person? There is death about you, but I would like to give you life; real, vibrant, eternal life. Will you take Him up on His challenge? And what are we to take away from this as disciples? Good question. We are to realize that our inner lives, which are holy and white before God, are to bring constant transformation to the lives around us. How are the lives around you faring? Are they changing to be more God-honoring, more God-fearing, and more God-sensitive because you are around? Show me a home where there is life in the inner man and I'll show you a home where there is radical change. Does this describe your home? Does this describe this church?

Christ's seventh, and final woe, captures the logical end of those who embrace a form of religion while rejecting the Messiah and His gospel.

*False Religionists Counter God's Messengers* (Matthew 23:29-33). Put differently, these types of people speak as if they are pro-Christ, when in reality, they are anti-Christ. Listen and learn:

<sup>29</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

Archaeological evidence, from the time of Christ, demonstrates there was a big building surge in the Kidron Valley (also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat) located between the Mount of Olives and the Temple mount of monuments for dead prophets. It is quite possible that ornate,

costly stone tombs, like that of the Zechariah, were under construction as Christ spoke.<sup>4</sup> Again, we must say, “How ironic.”

To appease their own consciences and to project to the people their holiness and love for



God and God's Word, these devious religious men dared to build monuments to dead prophets that they would have opposed and killed if given half a chance. As Jesus taught:

<sup>31</sup> So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

Powerful words. Christ, who knew of their murderous intent all along to martyr Him easily identified these

blood-thirsty, anti-God men with men Israel had seen before throughout their sordid, sad history (Matthew 12:13; Mark 3:6; Luke 22:2). Their robes and rituals, even their ornate, costly tombs to the prophets didn't fool him for a minute. He saw through the ruse to their motives. In just three days they would commit the ultimate murder by killing the prophet of all prophets, Jesus, the Messiah.

Trust me on this one. All those, religious types, who say they are for tolerance, who just want Christians to get along with all other faiths, will be the first in line, when things go south in our country, to attack followers of Christ with more than words. Their platitudes, car bumper stickers, books, and pamphlets which sound all so nice and accepting, serve to merely disguise hearts full hatred and anger toward Christ and Christianity. As in Christ's day, time will tell.

What was Christ's closing counsel in this condemnation section?

<sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.

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<sup>4</sup> **Tombs of the prophets.** By this name are called four monuments at the base of the Mount of Olives, in the valley of Jehoshaphat; called at present the tombs of Zechariah, Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and St. James. Two of them are monoliths cut out of the solid rock; the others are merely excavations, with ornamental portals. “They appear,” says Dr. Thomson, “to be quite extensive, consisting of winding or semicircular galleries, passing under the mountain more than a hundred feet from east to west, and terminating in a rotunda about eighty feet from the entrance. There is no authority for the name which they commonly bear.” Possibly they were in sight of our Lord when he spoke, and were pointed to by him. The reference would be all the more telling, if, as has been conjectured, the Pharisees were engaged in constructing the tombs of Zechariah and Absalom at the time that the Lord addressed them, and that the chambered sepulchres of James and Jehoshaphat, lying between those two, were the sepulchres which they were garnishing at their entrances. Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. Vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887):126.

Translated, all the hatred which has been directed against God's messengers would now filled to the brim with their rejection and execution of the prophet, Jesus. So, Jesus challenged them to go and do what they were going to do. But then He added this warning:

<sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

To reject the Christ is to forfeit heaven and inherit hell. Are you a Christ-rejector? You need to reconsider while there is still time. In Brawley, California, which is a town near my home town, Brooks Hamby, the salutatorian of Brawley Union High School, was barred by the school administration from making any mention of God in his speech for fear he'd proselytize people or, at least, break the Establishment Clause. Three drafts of his proposed speech were rejected for their Christian content, so the brave young Christian, who is now headed for Stanford University, stood up and spoke about the need for standing up in life for what you believe and speaking about regardless of the opposition.

The school has responded by hiring a legal team for the next three years. I guess they really do oppose the faith, don't they? They are, unfortunately, not alone. They will be alone on judgment day, however. They need to reconsider their position, I think.<sup>5</sup>

If you are a Christ-receiver, I have to ask, "Are you prepared to speak to our sin-loving culture, our false religion embracing people about the reality of divine condemnation for their wicked ways?" It is not a positive message, but one which just might move some of them toward the Savior.

In addition to the reality of condemnation Jesus leveled against the wayward religious men of His day, he next turned to reveal what I'd call ...

## The Road (Matthew 23:34-36)

Speaking here like a prophet, Jesus foretold what would happen after His death at their hands.

<sup>34</sup> Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city,

To read the book of Acts is to see how literally these words were fulfilled. From the arrest of Peter and John for preaching and healing on the Temple mount, the very place Christ gave this prophecy (Acts 3-4), to the hounding of Paul by irate, angry Jews during his three missionary journeys (Acts 13:44ff), Jesus couldn't have been more right about these men.

Why did Jesus utter this prophecy? So that they would know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that all the guilt from all the slain prophets, from Abel, the first godly man to die for his faith, to Zechariah, the son of the priest (2 Chronicles 24:20-22), who was martyred near the holy altar for daring to speak against the people for abandoning God, would be placed on them for killing Jesus, the prophet (Deuteronomy 18).

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<sup>5</sup> Katherine Weber, California School District Tells Student It Has An Obligation To Censor God In Graduation Speech, *The Christian Post* (July 15, 2014), accessed July 17, 2014, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/calif-school-district-tells-student-it-has-an-obligation-to-censor-god-in-graduation-speech-123277>.

<sup>35</sup> so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

God remembers the death of His saints at the hands of godless people, and He will settle scores and bring true, lasting justice.

In Israel's case, that judgment, justice came with the invasion of Jerusalem by the Roman forces of Titus. He destroyed the city in 70 A.D. and leveled their once proud temple. In this we clearly see the workings of a holy God. He is patient, to be sure, but He is just and His justice will be realized in due time. The deaths of Abel to the prophet Zechariah, culminating, of course, in His martyrdom, found their justice at that hands of the Roman army.

<sup>36</sup> Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

And they did, as prophesied.

God's ways have not changed. To every saint slain for their faith, from the Christians who have died at the hands of *Boko Haram* in northeast Nigeria, to the beheading of father *Francois Murad* by the *Al Nusrah Front for the People of Levant*, Al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, there will be the day with the Christ says, "Enough!"<sup>6</sup> At that time, judgment and justice will be swift and sure. Today they are but storing up wrath for the day of wrath (Romans 2), and you can bank on the fact that this day is coming when Christ will most assuredly rid the world of evil when He establishes His messianic kingdom (Matthew 24-25).

Today, we live with *conflagration* to the faith. One day, we will live with the *transformation* of the faith when Jesus appears. Are you prepared, in the meantime, to give a word of warning to those who'd dare oppose the Christ and His followers (Isaiah 3:10; Matthew 10:14-15; Mark 4:22; Colossians 3:25; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)? Are you prepared to share with them the road?

One last thing.

We must be ready to oppose false religious and false spirituality with The Reality of Condemnation, with words about The Road ahead for those who oppose Christ, and we cannot miss the opportunity to participate in what I'll call ...

## The Reach (Matthew 23:37-39)

Here Jesus left condemnation and judgment behind and spoke from deep emotion and love for His chosen people. All He ever wanted to do was embrace and protect them. The familiar imagery of a mother hen and her chick cannot ever be forgotten:

<sup>37</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. <sup>38</sup> Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!

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<sup>6</sup> Revelation 6: 9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" The prayer will be answered, as we learn in Revelation 14:18, 16:7, 18:24-19:21

Jesus will never force Himself on anyone. For hundreds of years His people had only spurned His love, attacked His messengers, and embraced other gods of their own making. Now the day for their desolation and judgment would come because of their murder of Him, the Messiah. But He didn't want it to be this way. They chose this path.

The same truth still applies today. Jesus only wants to lovingly embrace and protect you. Will you come to Him in faith and let Him wrap His nail scarred hands around you?

And while you're thinking about your response to this question, while you are getting inspired to share this question, I must leave you with the closing words of Jesus:

<sup>39</sup> For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

The quote is from Psalm 118:26, a text the Jews had just chanted in Christ's triumphal entry. What does it mean here? It was a word of hope for the Jews. The current generation would be judged for rejecting the Christ; however, there would, however, come the eschatological day when they, as a nation, would recognize and worship Him as the true Messiah. Zechariah prophesied this glorious day (Zechariah 12-14), as did Paul (Romans 11:1ff). Amazing. Regardless of their track record of rebellion, He still had plenty of room for them in His salvific plan. Let us, then, look forward to the day when those whom God first chose, when those who gave us the Law, when those who gave us the prophets, when those who gave us the Christ will turn to Him and be saved. What a day that will be, a glorious day indeed.

Until then ... might we be faithful to oppose false teaching and false spirituality with the brilliant, beautiful light of the gospel of Jesus, the Christ.