

Study Series 7 Lesson 4: Matthew 24:29-31 (Matthew 24: Transitional period – Fulfillment of Hebrews 8:13)

MATTHEW 24 “OLIVET DISCOURSE” (Verses 29 - 31)
(Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 21)

5. COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (Matt. 24:29-31):

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 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 His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

A) (Matt. 24:29) IMMEDIATELY AFTER THOSE DAYS – Jesus said that **immediately after the tribulation of those days**, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

(1) **Immediately**: This is ‘**immediately**’ after the signs that have been discussed in verses Matt. 24:4-28. This cannot be 2000 years in the future! The word ‘**immediately**’ is used by Matthew in his gospel and it “**always**” means **right now**, not future. (Matt. 3:16, 4:20, 22; 8:3; 13:5; 14:22; 27, 31; 20:34; 21:2-3)

(2) **Sun, moon and stars**: These represent nations in Scripture. There is a well-known Bible interpretation rule called the hermeneutic “**law of 1st mention**.” This 4th rule is a fancy way to say that the 1st time a doctrine is spoken about in the Bible is where we need to study to get the fundamental inherent meaning of that doctrine.

(**Read**) Genesis 37:9-10 is the first place in which these terms “sun, moon and stars” are given to us. In this passage, Israel is described as “the sun, the moon and the stars” bowing down to Joseph in a dream. (Gen. 37:9-10).

According to this rule, if a writer is wanting to relay something different to his audience than was originally taught in this “law of 1st mention,” then he must explain the change to his audience, and if there is **no** explained change, then the correct way to interpret the passage is through the original doctrine taught in the passage it first appeared.

Understanding this rule, and keeping in mind that the apostle John was a Hebrew Christian with his predominant ministry being to the Jews (Gal. 2:9), and that he was writing to his 1st century Christian audience, which was full of Hebrew Christians well knowing the Old Testament scriptures and historic background, makes it all the more clear that it is **Israel** being referred to with the symbolic language of Matt. 24:29, as it also is of the “woman clothed with the sun, the moon and twelve stars” in Rev. 12:1.

In the Bible, when the sun, moon and stars are high in the sky, it is a sign of God’s favor. When they go dark it is a sign of God’s judgment upon nations. This is **not** to be taken literally. If physical stars fell to earth, the earth would be destroyed. If the physical sun was darkened, the earth would freeze. (Bible passages described different “nations” as having **their** “sun, moon, stars” covered, darkened, sun go down, blotted out, dissolved...in other words, “**their**” rulers, powers, authorities, kingdom or world destroyed: Babylon → Isa. 13:9, 13; Egypt → Ezek. 32:7-8; Edom → Isa. 34:4-5; Northern Kingdom of Israel → Amos 5:20, 8:9).

- (3) **Spiritual Sodom and Babylon**: In Matthew 24:29, Jesus refers to Isaiah 13:10, about the judgment on Babylon, and portions of other O.T. passages to tell them what will immediately happen next. (Isa. 24:23; Egypt: Ezek. 32:7-8; Northern Kingdom of Israel: Amos 5:20; 8:9; Zeph. 1:15). Jerusalem is referred to as a spiritual Babylon, spiritual Sodom, and spiritual Egypt. All of these are under God’s judgment because of wickedness, hypocrisy, and non-belief. (Rev.11:8; 14:8; Isa. 1, 10, 3:8-9; Deut. 28:59-61, 32:32; Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 16:35-49, 23:3, 8; Lam. 4:6; Gal. 4:22-30). Jerusalem is the most evil of all because of being given special favor by God in a covenantal marriage relationship, and yet still outright rejecting the Messiah (see: Matt. 23:37). The “sun, moon and stars” are the picture that Jesus gives to His disciples of His soon coming judgment of Israel and destruction of Jerusalem – the end of their “Old Covenant world.”

(4) **Power of the heavens**: This is cosmological symbolic language which describes the passing away of the Old Heavens and Earth, epitomized on earth in the visible removal of the obsolete Old Covenant system, temple and people by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. There is a major consummative change from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant that is taking place. The **already obsolete Old Heaven and Earth animal sacrifice cosmological world order**, epitomized in the ceremonial system of the temple, the sacrifices, the temple priests, circumcision, etc. are all now forever removed. Jesus had fulfilled the law. He was the promised Messiah. The Jewish leaders refused to recognize Him and continued on with the old **obsolete** ceremonies and Laws. Their trust was in their own works and **not** faith in Jesus → they too are now judged and destroyed. The **New Heavens and Earth cosmological world order through the blood of Christ is fully consummated**. The conquered spiritual realm has been fully gathered and consolidated under the throne of Christ (**read** Rev. 11:15), and His New Heaven and Earth Kingdom is fully consummated reuniting “heaven (**unseen** realm) and earth” (**seen** realm) **through the finished redemptive work of Christ** (**read** Eph. 1:10).

(5) **Old Heavens and Earth OC earthly kingdom is shaken**: This Old Heaven and Earth animal sacrifice cosmological world order, and its earthly epitome in the ceremonial system of the Old Covenant was always only temporary. It was promised to be shaken and replaced by the New Heavens and Earth eternal Covenant and Kingdom through the blood of Christ → which could not be shaken.

Hebrews says: “**Once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.**” (**Heb. 12:26**). This is the description of the replacing of the Old Heavens and Earth animal blood cosmological world order (**both** the effect and operation in the **seen** realm on earth, as well as the operations and spiritual order in the **unseen** heavenly realm), its epitome in the Old Covenant temple system, and the receiving of the New Heavens and Earth eternal New Covenant Kingdom **based on the finished redemptive work of Christ**. (Heb. 12:27-29). (***Other “earthly” shakings**: Isa. 13:13, 51:16; Mic. 1:3-4; Psa. 18; Jer. 4:23-28; Ezek. 32:7-8; Hag. 2:20-22; 2 Sam. 22:8-16)

(6) **Son of Man in heaven**: Jesus is telling His disciples what will happen in their generation. In verse 24:30, He shifts to discuss what the unbelieving Jews will see when the temple is destroyed. Later, in answer to Caiaphas' question: "Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God!" (Matt. 26:63-64). Jesus spoke to Caiaphas and the entire Sanhedrin, "hereafter YOU will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matt. 26:64). The Greek of this text is in the **second person plural**. Jesus was not just addressing Caiaphas, but was **addressing the Sanhedrin as a body**, and that some of them would see the coming (*Parousia*). (This goes back to the same words Jesus promised some of His disciples that they would "see" Him coming in His Kingdom in Matthew 16:27-28).

It is important for us to understand, as "five senses" creatures, that the operations of God go far beyond what we can experience or see in our realm. The entire spiritual realm (God, angels, demons, those already departed) is in a sphere that we cannot experience with our physical senses. There is tremendous activity going on all around us continuously in the unseen realm and our physical five senses have no idea about it.

What do we have happening at the coming (*Parousia*) of Christ? We have some promised interaction between the seen and unseen realms → however, far more was going on in the unseen spiritual realm than ever was revealed to those in the seen realm.

By nature, we are always thinking that things revolve around us → thus we impose upon scriptures our notions that all the events described around the *Parousia* were to be things that all could visually see. While there definitely was the promise of a Christophany and angelophanies in the seen realm at the *Parousia* → many fail to understand that just as God was said to "come" many times in the OT, besides a few occasions of reported spiritual realm experiences and angelophanies (2 Kings 6:17; 2 Sam. 5:23-24, et al), almost all of the activity in the unseen spiritual realm at these "comings" were **never seen visibly**. In the seen realm the visual realities were mainly restricted to just seeing one nation coming and destroying another.

Yes, in the *Parousia* of Christ there most definitely was the promised **visible** Christophany and angelophanies, but those were mere moments of the curtain to the unseen realm being rolled back for a glimpse into the coming battle in the unseen spiritual realm. For those in Judea, their main observances would be seeing the visible earthly attacks of the Roman armies as multitudes of their people died throughout their land, culminating with their beloved city Jerusalem and temple being destroyed (Luke 21:20-24).

Recall that Jesus had promised His 1st century Hebrew audience that His coming was predominantly going to be “in like manner” to how His Father had come in judgment in the past (read John 5:19, 22).

Recall this one example of YHWY “coming” in Isaiah 19:1, “Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst.”

Few, if any, students of the Word believe that God was actually visibly seen on a cloud by anyone during the period of His judgment He did through the Assyrian army against Egypt (Isa. 19:23, 20:4). In fact, most have no difficulty in acknowledging that while there was a literal judgement against Egypt, this apocalyptic description is not to be taken literally or visibly of God going back and forth through Egypt riding on a cloud personally enacting vengeance on the people. So, while Christ did promise the Sanhedrin that they would visible see Him at His *Parousia*, where is it imposed that for His entire Parousia events that He was to be visibly seen by those on earth? The OT Hebrew language and depictions, and even other NT passages, clearly dictate otherwise. Let’s look further at this verse:

“Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’” (Matt. 26:64)

When the high priest heard Jesus say this, he tore his clothes and accused Jesus of blasphemy. Why? Because he knew what ***coming on the clouds of heaven*** meant → that Jesus was claiming to be God, and was promising He would come in judgment against **them**. The Jewish council, before whom Jesus spoke these words, knew that cloud-comings were woven throughout the OT scriptures. Did they deem Him deserving of death because He claimed He could ride on a cloud, or because He had just stated, in familiar language which all of them knew so very well, that He was God, and that He was going to come in judgement upon them just as His Father had done upon other nations throughout the past → by sending another nation to destroy them (Rome) (John 5:19, 22)?

B) (Matt. 24:30a) THE SIGN IN HEAVEN – and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth (Greek: “ge” = land) smite the breast... (YLT)

(1) This tells us that the “sign” of the Son of Man would be seen. This sign appears in heaven (Greek: *ouranos*). The “tribes” refer to the Israelites. The New Testament uses tribes for the twelve tribes of Israel. The tribes are the summation of the Jewish people. “Tribes of the earth” is never used in the Old Testament. The Greek word for earth is “ge” and also means “land”. The context determines the meaning. Since Judea is being indicated (24:16), and the audience is “you”, Jesus’ first century audience, a global event is not being discussed – He is looking at and talking directly to the Old Covenant Hebrews standing in front of Him.

(2) This same word “ge” is used in Luke 23:44, referring to the local area of Jerusalem. It is best translated “darkness fell over the whole land,” **not** the whole earth. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman legions was the heavenly “sign” to the Old Covenant Jews that Jesus was the Christ. They mourned when they finally realized this, 40 years after His crucifixion and resurrection → within that generation as He promised.

C) (Matt. 24:30b) COMING ON CLOUDS - ...and they will see the Son of Man Coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

(1) The sign is the fact or proof that the Son of Man **had already received His kingdom** and was returning to destroy those who did not want Him to rule over them.

- (**Read**) Luke 19:12-15, 27 in the parable of the nobleman gives us the prelude to Christ’s *Parousia*. Verse 1 parallels the ascension of Christ in Acts 1:9 where He **went away to receive the Kingdom**.
- Luke 19:15 states that **after** he received the kingdom he **then** returned.
- Verse 27 tells us what was to happen to those in verse 14 who did not want him to rule over them.

- This story would have been **absolutely stinging and fully understood by His Old Covenant Hebrew audience**. As they were well aware that when both Herod and Agrippa each went away to Rome to receive right to rule over their kingdoms, the Jews both times sent a delegation to Rome saying to Caesar that they did not want Herod nor Agrippa to rule over them. Upon Herod's return from receiving his kingdom he did the very thing Jesus was threatening here, and Herod killed his enemies. **Christ's Parousia was going to do the exact same thing against those disobedient OC Hebrews who had rejected Him**.
- His coming (*Parousia*) was going to remove the kingdom from OC Israel and give it to His New Covenant church. (Matt. 21:43-45).
- He would "destroy those murderers, and burn up their city." (Matt. 22:7)
- **Read** Dan. 7:13-14 is referencing the same event as Luke 19. Christ's **glorification** took place "**at the ascension**" (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Tim. 3:16) when He went to the Father to receive the Kingdom: John 12:16, 23, 13:31, 17:4-5, 7:39; Acts 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:21; Phil. 3:21; 2 Cor. 5:16; 1 John 3:2.
 - i. He received the Kingdom **at His ascension** described in Dan. 7:13-14.
 1. Christ commenced His "**millennial**" reign in His Kingdom at the ascension when He went to the Ancient of Days (**read** Psa. 110:1-4; Acts 2:30-35).
 2. He reigned in His **millennial** Kingdom until all of His enemies were put under His feet (**read** 1 Cor. 15:25).
 3. **After which time** Christ returned **with His Kingdom** to judge those (OC Hebrews) who did not want Him to reign over them (Luke 19:27; Matt. 24:30), and at His return the saints then take consummated possession of the Kingdom (**read** Dan. 7:22).

(2) This Matt. 24:30 verse depicts Jesus as High Priest coming out from the Holy of Holies in the heavenly temple (Heb. 9:24, 28), descending as King of Kings from the highest heaven **with the Holy of Holies and the Kingdom He had received**. He was coming in His Kingdom as He had **promised** in Matt. 16:27-28 before all of His "eagerly waiting" first century followers had died. He was bringing it to earth to consummate it in the church where He will set His sanctuary and dwell in the midst of His people forevermore (Ezek. 37:26-28; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3).

(3) The Destruction of Jerusalem and the temple through the instrument of the Roman armies was the “sign” to the Jews that the Son of Man had conquered all of His enemies and was reigning and ruling over the world (both in the seen and unseen realm). That destruction by the Roman armies would be a major visual sign to them of so many unseen things that were going on in the spiritual realm, and it was to be proof to them that He had come on the clouds of heaven in His Kingdom He had received from His father. The destruction of Jerusalem was the manifestation of the power and glory of the Son of Man. It was proof to the first century Old Covenant Jewish people that Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah. **(Same Hebrew metaphoric Hyperbole language as describing the Father’s “coming” in OT as the same way: Isa. 19:1; Psa. 18:7-12; Jud. 5:3-5, 13; 2 Sam. 22:8-16; Like Manner: John 5:19-22)**

(For other verses on the Biblical usage and meaning of the word “clouds” please refer to “**Study Series 5b Hebraic Language Symbolism**” in the back of Study Series 5: Psa. 97:2, 104:3; Jer. 10:13, 51:16; Ezek. 30:3; Joel 2:1-11; Nah. 1:3; Zeph. 1:14-15; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:61-62; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7, 14:14).

(4) To “see” the Son of Man coming did not require that all would literally have to see Jesus physically coming from heaven. The Hebrew concept for the word is more like Matthew 5:8. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” God is “invisible”, but “see” means to be personally aware of or perceive God. By being born again, we “see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). The meaning we are given is **both**: 1) We are able to personally perceive/understand and belong to the Kingdom of God; 2) We are guaranteed to literally see God and His heavenly Kingdom when we die and go to heaven. The events occurring in AD 70 would cause the tribes of Old Covenant Israel to recognize that what Jesus had been saying was true. He was indeed the Son of Man and the Messiah.

(5) “See” the Son of Man coming.

- Greek = *Horao* → Stongs Concordance 3708 Definition: I see, experience, perceive, discern.
- Helps Word-studies: *horáō* – properly, *see*, often with *metaphorical* meaning: "to see with the mind" (i.e. spiritually see), i.e. perceive (with inward spiritual perception).

Even though the Greek meaning of this word does not necessitate that anyone would literally have to see Jesus physically coming, we have other promises in the Bible that the *Parousia* would have aspects of it which some would “**visibly**” see (Matt. 26:64; Luke 21:25-26; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7).

→ Historians record some very clear and profound **visible signs seen among the people in Judea**. We looked extensively into this in **Study Series 7 Lesson 3a2**. Let us just recall one section from the 1st century Hebrew historian writings of Sepher Yosippon (The book was generally understood to have been authored by the first-century historian as a version produced for his fellow Jews.) *(A Mediaeval History of Ancient Israel.*

Translated from the Hebrew by Steven B. Bowman. Excerpts below from Chapter 87 "Burning of the Temple"), where it records:

- **For one year before Vespasian came, a single great star shining like unsheathed swords was seen over the Temple.** And in those days when **the sign** was seen it was the holiday of Passover and during that entire night the **Temple was lit up and illuminated like the light of day**, and thus it was **all seven days of the Passover**. All the sages of Jerusalem knew that it was a **malevolent sign**, but the rest of the ignorant people said that it was a benevolent sign.
- *... Now it happened after this that there was seen from above over the Holy of Holies for the whole night **the outline of a man's face**, the like of whose beauty had never been seen in all the land, and his appearance was quite awesome.*
- Moreover, in those days were seen **chariots of fire and horsemen, a great force flying across the sky near to the ground coming against Jerusalem and all the land of Judah, all of them horses of fire and riders of fire**. When the holiday of Shavuot (Pentecost) came in those days, **during the night the priests heard within the Temple something like the sound of men going and the sound of men marching in a multitude going into the Temple, and a terrible and mighty voice was heard speaking: "Let's go and leave this House.**

Historical Notes: Much of the aforementioned writings in the Sepher Yosippon is verbatim with what was recorded by two other famous non-biblical historians, including the Jewish historian, Josephus (AD 37–100) and the Roman historian, Tacitus (AD 56–117), who have written about that tribulation that occurred between AD 63–70. Please refer to our **Study Series 7 Lesson 3a1 and 3a2** for the extensive documentation of their recording of the above events, and much more.

D) (Matt. 24:31) GATHERING THE ELECT - Jesus tells His disciples that in addition to His being on the throne and reigning and ruling in His Kingdom, He will send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and gather together His elect from one end of heaven to the other.

Ezekiel foresaw the coming of the new tabernacle (Chpt. 37), and the glory of God descending upon it (Chpt. 43). Jesus foretold His coming in the "glory-cloud" when He would "gather together" the elect (Matt. 24:30-31). (Important note: It is interesting and significant that in Matthew 23:37, Jesus spoke of His desire to gather together Israel/Jerusalem to Him. He uses a distinctive Greek word *episunagoge* for gather. Israel refused to be gathered to Christ. Thus, He pronounced doom on the old temple. However, He said the gospel of the kingdom would be proclaimed into all the world (*Oikoumene* = known world, Roman Empire), and then the end would come (Matthew 24:14). He had promised that at the end of that age He would come in the glory-cloud and "gather together" (*episunagoge*) the elect (v. 31). While the word *episunagoge* in and of itself does not denote a rapture (or snatching away), when looking at this verse in conjunction with 1 Thess. 4:17 which is speaking of Christ's second coming (*Parousia*) when He would descend from heaven and catch together (rapture) His dead saints from out of Sheol/Hades (who were already in the unseen realm), and the living saints would be caught together with them (thus be translated into the same unseen realm), and both go to meet Christ in the air "where He was," and knowing that He descended from the heavenly spiritual realm, and was to return to heaven with His bride for the wedding in His Father's house (Rev. 19:5-9), and to sit on His heavenly throne, and those saints were to "always be with the Lord," then it corresponds perfectly that Matt. 24:31 is inferring the same doctrine of a rapture.)

In John 11:51-52 the high priest unknowingly to himself prophesied of this coming gathering when he said: "that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that (Jewish) nation only, but that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The Greek meaning of the word "gather" means to synagogue (See also Jam. 2:2; Heb. 10:25; and is the same meaning in the OT as Deut. 30:4), and was depicted in the OC through the shadows and types of God's Festal calendar He gave to Israel in Lev. 23:36, which would find its true antitype spiritual fulfillment in the body of Christ in the NC church, where we are told God would then Dwell/Synagogue/Tabernacle with His people in the "living temple" as revealed in Eph. 2:20-22.

- (1) Between AD 30 and AD 70, the forty year “this generation” period of Matthew 24:34, was the transition period for the removal of the obsolete Old Covenant to the consummation of the eternal New Covenant. Christ’s elect Jews spoken of in Matt. 24:22, 24 were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and the gospel needed to go to the four corners of the known world (*Oikoumene*) of that time in order for all of the OC Hebrews to hear the “message/sign of Jonah” – repent or perish (the reminder to them of so many of their OC prophecies were being quoted throughout witnessing, and evidenced in the NT scripture writings, and they were presented as “about to” come to a fulfilling climax). The elect remnant Jews would “hear and see” and believe in the gospel and come to Christ in repentance, but the majority would not (Matt. 13:11-15; Rom. 11:5, 7).
- (2) At the end of this 1st century transitional generation Christ came on the clouds with glory and power and judgement “in like manner” (John 5:19, 22) as the Father had come in the past (read: Isa. 64:1-3). Christ was telling all these things to His disciples, with the climaxing signs of His coming (*Parousia*) seen in the events surrounding the complete destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. This major visual sign of the surrounding destroying armies, and several other signs the living would see, would be part of the visual confirmation of what was taking place in the unseen spiritual realm. In other words, the visual removal of the physical earthly OC temple/priesthood/system those living would see, would be the epitomized sign of the removal of the Old Heavens and Earth and the consummation of the New Heavens and Earth and eternal Kingdom fully consummated with Christ on His throne in the heavenly unseen realm reigning forevermore over both the seen and unseen realms → heaven and earth reunited (Eph. 1:10) (The fulfilling of Heb. 8:13, 9:8, 28, 10:37, 12:22, 26-29; Dan. 9:24, 12:5-7).
- (3) A Trumpet is often associated with the gathering of God’s people throughout the OT. (Read) Isa. 27:12-13 is one example of such an event, and it shows us the metaphoric symbolism of what it is referring to, as there was no known audible literal trumpet blown in the “earthy/physical” realm to announce the judgement when either Assyria or Babylon came to fulfill God’s promised judgements upon OC Israel/Judah. This nonliteral language was familiar metaphoric judgement talk which these OC Hebrews were well aware of from throughout their history. Jesus is the same God of the OT, and this is the same language He used in Matt. 24:31. This is also the same talk Paul, a Hebrew of Hebrews, inspired by the Holy Spirit (same God of the OT) spoke in 1 Cor. 15:52 and 1Thess. 4:16.

While I tend to lean to the side that the above passages were not referring to an audible heavenly trumpet heard in the earthly realm by the people in Judea before their destruction, I can see things either way. The Hebrews were very familiar in their history of angelophanies and supernatural events happening in the earthly realm. Even with the events we looked at in this study, as well as **Study Series 7 Lesson 3a2**, we are told of many supernatural events that were seen, felt and heard → including the great shaking, noise and wind of multitudes of voices leaving the holy of holies of the temple reported by the priests the night of Passover AD 66. Either way it may be, all of the believers were translated (raptured) into the unseen realm and taken to heaven with the Lord, and those unbelievers who experienced these events were all destroyed and not left around to report any of it after AD 70.

- a. It is very helpful, and of critical importance, to see the audience relevance and timing of when is the “In that Day” – (**read**) Isa. 27:9-11, 28:11, 14-16, 18-19, 24:1, 5-6 – This was fulfilled in AD 70.

(4) The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was a SIGN to the Jews that Jesus was active in the heavenly realm as the resurrected Messiah and Son of God. He had fulfilled all of the Old Covenant laws, ceremonies and Feast days. He had done away with the obsolete Old Covenant system. He had consummated the eternal New Covenant and Kingdom. His “true Israel” would forevermore be made up of only true believing Jews and Gentiles (Gal. 3:28-29). A believer (Jew or Gentile), upon their true faith in Christ, are fellow and equal members in the Body of Christ, the living temple of God (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5).

Paul said: “there is neither Jew nor Greek ...**for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s then you are Abraham’s seed (spiritual Israelites), and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:28-29).** (Also see: Col. 3:11, Eph. 2:15-16).

(5) His returning (*Parousia*) consummated His Kingdom, as He raised all of the dead ones/disembodied souls out of their waiting place in Sheol/Hades, changed and raptured the living believers together with them in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:51-52). **All** of the Jewish and Gentile believers who had previously physically died, as well as **all** those believers who were currently alive at the time of this 1st century rapture, were changed and gathered from everywhere within the Oikoumene (from one end of heaven to the other), each was given their new immortal heavenly bodies which were prepared by God (1 Cor. 15:38, 44, 47-50; 2 Cor. 5:1-5), and all were caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the Air, and thus to always be with Him **where He was** → in the unseen heavenly realm (1 Thess. 4:17).