

All Nations Hear the Gospel by A.D. 70

Mark 13:5-10



We are studying the Olivet discourse in Mark 13 which deals with eschatology– the study of end times. I'm sure that there are some who would say, "Why do we need to study prophecy, it is confusing and divisive?" That's a good question that is very easy to answer. We are studying prophecy because we are studying the book of Mark and this is part of the book of Mark. We are not picking and choosing we are looking at all that Mark wrote. And just for your information did you know that about 27% of the Bible is prophetic material. There are more than 1800 specific prophecies in the Bible. So to ignore prophecy or eschatology is to ignore one fourth of the Bible.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2 Timothy 3:16 NASB)

How much of Scripture is profitable? All Scripture! This includes prophecy.

This is our third study in Mark 13. We have introduced the chapter in its context and we have evaluated the disciples' questions. Now we want to begin to look at Jesus' answer, this will take us several weeks. This morning we want to look at verses 5-10.

As we begin to look at Jesus' answer we must keep in mind the context. The disciples mention the temple and Jesus says:

And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down." (Mark 13:2 NASB)

In response to this shocking statement the disciples ask:

"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:4 NASB)

The disciples asked Jesus, "When will the temple be destroyed? When will one stone not be left upon another?" And they also asked, "What will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" Remember from our last study that "all these things" according to Matthew include the destruction of the temple, the parousia of Christ, and the end of the Jewish age.

The word translated "sign" is Greek semeion, which means: "a sign or distinguishing mark whereby something is known, sign, token or indication." It can also mean "an event that is an indication or confirmation of intervention by transcendent powers, miracle, portent." The disciples want to know what are the signs of the end. With the questions in mind, we move to Jesus' answer:

And Jesus began to say to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. ⁶ Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many. (Mark 13:5-6 NASB)

Who is the "them" and the "you" in verse 5? It is the disciples. Please keep this in mind as we move through this chapter. Jesus is speaking to His disciples. Whatever Jesus' answer means; it must have meaning to them. Any application that we make to ourselves from Scripture can only be made after we

understand what it meant to the original audience. Keep in mind the principle of **original relevance**. Why do I belabor this point? Because most folks today miss it. Many Bible commentators view Mark 13:5-23 as events of the Church age leading up to the Tribulation (which they view as yet future). They say these signs indicate that the end of the age is approaching (in our time).

James Stuart Russell in his book, "[The Parousia](#)," says this on Mark 13:5-13, "*It is impossible to read this section and fail to perceive its distinct reference to the period between our Lord's crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem. Every word is spoken to the disciples, and to them alone. To imagine that the "ye" and "you" in this address apply, not to the disciples to whom Christ was speaking, but to some unknown and yet non-existent persons in a far distant age, is so preposterous a supposition as not to deserve serious notice.*"

The Lord begins with a warning against expecting His immediate *parousia*. He doesn't want them to be deceived by false Christs that would soon be appearing. He wants them to understand that He will be gone for what might seem to them like a long time (forty years actually).

He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return."¹³ "And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.' (Luke 19:12-13 NASB)

Jesus was going to leave them to receive His kingdom, and in between His departure at the Ascension and His Second coming, these are the things that would be happening to them.

FALSE MESSIAHS

"Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many. (Mark 13:6 NASB)

"*I am He!*" is a reference to the Jewish Messiah. Matthew makes this clear in:

"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. (Matthew 24:5 NASB)

Luke adds the phrase "*the time is at hand*":

And He said, "See to it that you be not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is at hand'; do not go after them. (Luke 21:8 NASB)

Jesus was not talking about something that would take place hundreds or thousands of years later! Jesus was warning His disciples about something that was drawing very near in their time! Jesus makes this very clear later in our text when He says:

"Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. (Mark 13:30 NASB)

Who is the "you" here? It is still the disciples. Notice also that He says, "**This** generation" not "**That** generation." Jesus is telling His disciple that all of the things He is talking about in this chapter will happen within their generation—which biblically was forty years.

The disciples were entering into a new phase of life upon the death and resurrection of Christ. Things would begin to happen that would rattle their lives and question their devotion to Christ. So Jesus begins with the first command: ***"See to it that no one misleads you."*** The idea is that some would come forth claiming a revelation from God that was different from what Christ had told them.

Did such false Messiahs arise and deceive many in the generation of the disciples prior to the destruction of Jerusalem? Yes! We have a biblical and historical record of many such false Messiahs:

"For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody; and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. And he was slain; and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. (Acts 5:36 NASB)

According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, twelve years after our Lord's death, Theudas persuaded a great multitude to follow him to the river Jordan which he claimed would divide for their passage. *"The land,"* says Josephus, *"was overrun with magicians, seducers, and impostors, who drew the people after them in multitudes into solitudes and deserts, to see the signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God."*

At the time of Felix (who is mentioned in Acts 23-25), the country of the Jews was filled with impostors who Felix had put to death every day; a statement which indicates their great number in those days! An Egyptian who pretended to be a prophet gathered 30,000 men, claiming that he would show how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down. Origen mentions a certain wonder-worker, Dositheus, who claimed he was the Christ foretold by Moses.

We see another of these false Christs in:

Now there was a certain man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; 10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." (Acts 8:9-10 NASB)

According to Irenaeus, Simon claimed to be the Son of God and creator of angels. Jerome says that he claimed to be the Word of God, the Almighty. Justin relates that he went to Rome and was acclaimed as a god by his magical powers.

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. (1 John 2:18 NASB)

Notice how John, writing in some where around A.D. 65, doesn't say it is the "last days" but the "last hour." As they have heard from their Lord, many antichrists would come.

These are examples of the false Messiahs of whom history says there were "a great number," and of whom Jesus had prophesied that there would be "many."

Greswell, in his work "On the Parables," calls attention to the remarkable fact that, while many of these false Messiahs appeared in the interval between our Lord's Ascension and the Jewish war, there is no evidence that any one arose claiming this title before the beginning of His ministry.

WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

"And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end. (Mark 13:7 NASB)

Wars are NOT a sign of the end, as the end of verse 7 clearly tells us. He will tell them later in this chapter that when they see a war, not hear of one, they are to flee.

Did the disciples hear of wars, rumors of wars? Yes, they did! There were wars in the tributaries of Rome and all over Palestine, Galilee, and Samaria in A.D. 66, preceding the destruction of Jerusalem.

In the Annals of [Tacitus](#), a Roman who wrote a history which covers the period prior to A.D.70, we find such expressions as these: "Disturbances in Germany," "commotions in Africa," "commotions in Thrace," "insurrections in Gaul," "intrigues among the [Parthians](#)," "the war in Britain," "war in Armenia."

Among the Jews, the times became turbulent. In [Seleucia](#), 50,000 Jews were killed. There was an uprising against them in Alexandria. In a battle between the Jews and Syrians in Caesarea, 20,000 were killed. During these times, Caligula ordered his statue placed in the temple at Jerusalem. The Jews refused to do this and lived in constant fear that the Emperor's armies would be sent into Palestine. This fear became so real that some of them did not even bother to till their fields.

But though there would be wars, and rumors of wars, Jesus told his disciples:

"And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end. (Mark 13:7 NASB)

"*That is not the end.*" What end is he talking about? Let's keep in mind their question, they wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed which would mark the end of the Jewish age. Barnes says, the end here referred to is, "the end of the Jewish economy; the destruction of Jerusalem."

Wars, and rumors of wars were not signs of the end; to the contrary, the Lord wanted them to know that these things were NOT signs of the end. None of these things would be the sign which would cause the disciples to flee into the mountains.

"For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. (Mark 13:8 NASB)

NATION FIGHTING NATION

The word "nation" here is the Greek word [ethnos](#), which means: "a race." Several years ago I was talking to a man who used this verse to prove that we were in the end times and that the Second coming would be soon. He said, "The word 'nations' is 'ethnos' and just look at all the fighting between ethnic groups today, the end is near."

There are several problems with his view, one of which is **these things are not signs of the end**. Also, Jesus was speaking to the disciples—this had to have relevance to them! Did they see nation rising against nation? Yes! [Josephus](#) says, "At [Caesarea](#) in A.D. 59 the Jews and Syrians contended about the right to the city, and

twenty thousand Jews were slain.” At [Scythopolis](#), over 13,000 Jews were killed. Thousands were killed in other places, and at Alexandria 50,000 were killed. At [Damascus](#), 10,000 were killed in an hour’s time. Jesus is speaking about the conflicts between Gentiles and Jews, which began to take place shortly after this time, and continued until the beginning of the great Jewish war. For some time previously, Gentiles and Jews had been living for the most part, in peace together, but this period was distinguished by wars.

EARTHQUAKES

Did the disciple experience earthquakes in their life time? Yes, they did. [Tacitus](#) mentions earthquakes at Rome. He wrote, "Frequent earthquakes occurred, by which many houses were thrown down," and "twelve populous cities of Asia fell in ruins from an earthquake."

[Seneca](#), writing in the year A.D. 58, said, "How often have cities of Asia and [Achaea](#) fallen with one fatal shock! How many cities have been swallowed up in Syria! How many in [Macedonia](#)! How often has [Cyprus](#) been wasted by this calamity! How often has [Paphos](#) become a ruin! News has often been brought us of the demolition of whole cities at once." In A.D. 60, [Hierapous](#), Colosse, and [Laodicea](#) were overthrown from earthquakes. There were earthquakes in [Crete](#), [Apamea](#), [Smyrna](#), [Miletus](#), [Chios](#), [Samos](#), and [Judea](#). Earthquakes in diverse places!

FAMINES

There was a famine foretold by [Agabus](#) in:

And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. (Acts 11:28 NASB)

This famine is mentioned by [Tacitus](#), [Suetonius](#), and [Eusebius](#), and is said to have been severe in Jerusalem. Josephus says that many people perished for want of food. Judea was especially hard hit by famine and the disciples sent aid to them.

And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. (Acts 11:29 NASB)

Tacitus speaks of a "failure in the crops, and a famine consequent thereupon." Eusebius also mentions famines during this time in Rome, Judea, and Greece. Yes, there were famines in those years before the fall of Jerusalem.

In spite of what Jesus said, "That is not the end," many today take this passage out of context and speak ignorantly about "The signs of the times," trying to show that this battle, serious earthquake, or devastating famine is a sign of Christ's imminent return. ALL these things happened in the time prior to A.D. 70 and the fall of Jerusalem. They are not signs! As we look back over history, when has there been a time when there were not wars, famines, pestilence and earthquakes? These things are not signs. Jesus said to his disciples that these things are the "beginning of sorrows":

"For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth

pangs. (Mark 13:8 NASB)

The phrase “*beginning of birth pangs*” is an image that is sometimes used in the Scripture simply to express great pain; but it is often used of a woman in the pain of child birth. In Isaiah 13:8; 26:17; Jeremiah 4:31; 6:24; Micah 4:9-10, it is used almost as a special term for “the birth pains of Messiah.” In our passage it speaks of the period of distress preceding the return of Christ in A.D. 70. Its use here seems to be expressly chosen to denote the birth pains of a new world. Let’s look at how Jesus uses this phrase:

"A little while, and you will no longer behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." (John 16:16 NASB)

The disciples question Jesus about his statement:

Some of His disciples therefore said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?"¹⁸ And so they were saying, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is talking about."¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not behold Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'? (John 16:17-19 NASB)

Jesus explains himself:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy."²¹ "Whenever a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world."²² "Therefore you too now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you."²³ "And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. (John 16:20-23 NASB)

The disciple would be sorrowful during the Lord’s absence but their sorrow would turn to joy at his return. This idea of a woman in labor is used for the suffering that precedes the coming of the Lord in his kingdom:

"Now, why do you cry out loudly? Is there no king among you, Or has your counselor perished, That agony has gripped you like a woman in childbirth?"¹⁰ "Writhe and labor to give birth, Daughter of Zion, Like a woman in childbirth, For now you will go out of the city, Dwell in the field, And go to Babylon. There you will be rescued; There the LORD will redeem you From the hand of your enemies. (Micah 4:9-10 NASB)

Jesus said, “**These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.**” They were **not signs** to the disciples and they are **not signs** today. They did not signal the end but stretch over the entire forty period between the Lord’s Ascension and Second coming.

Writing about our text one commentator says, “Something far more intense is coming. It is very important here to understand there was both an immediate fulfillment of Jesus’ words and there is a greater fulfillment that is even now yet to come. In a sense the immediate fulfillment was a foreshadowing of a greater

fulfillment yet to come in a time known as the Great Tribulation spoken of in Daniel and Revelation.”

Where in this text or any where else for that matter does Jesus speak of a far distant fulfillment of His words? He doesn't! All this already happened!

TRIBULATION

"But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.
(Mark 13:9 NASB)

Matthew adds that they will be hated and killed:

"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. (Matthew 24:9 NASB)

Who will be delivered to the courts and flogged in the synagogues? Who will be hated and killed? THE DISCIPLES! Now it is certainly true that all Christians who live a godly life will suffer persecution, but He is speaking to the disciples here. Did the disciples experience floggings, hatred and death? Yes! All you need do is read the book of Acts.

"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. (Luke 21:12 NASB)

Notice that Luke adds, *"before all these things,"* showing that the persecutions are to start at the beginning of this period. The persecution of the disciples began immediately after the day of Pentecost.

Mark says that they (the disciples) will be beaten in the synagogues, brought before rulers and kings for a testimony. All this was remarkably fulfilled in the lives of the disciples. Peter and John were imprisoned:

And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.
(Acts 4:3 NASB)

Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned:

And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely;²⁴ and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks. (Acts 16:23-24 NASB)

Paul was brought before Gallio (Acts 28:12), Felix (Acts 24:24), and Agrippa (Acts 25:23). Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7:59); James was killed by Herod (Acts 12:2). As soon as Paul began preaching, he began to experience persecution:

And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him,²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. And they were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; (Acts 9:23-24 NASB)

And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. (Acts 9:29 NASB)

Paul was beaten five times by the Jews:

Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. (2 Corinthians 11:24 NASB)

Jesus said the disciples would be afflicted, beaten, imprisoned; they would be hated for His name's sake and some would be killed; they would be brought before councils, rulers, and kings, for a testimony; they would be given a mouth of wisdom which their adversaries could not dispute. The disciples experienced all of this before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, just as the Lord said they would. It was unmistakably fulfilled in every detail!

GOSPEL PREACHED TO ALL NATIONS

"And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. (Mark 13:10 NASB)

Most Christians today would say there is no way that this happened in the life time of the disciples. Most think that this still hasn't happened. Notice what Matthew says:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. (Matthew 24:14 NASB)

Was the gospel preached in the whole world by A.D. 70? What is the "world?" To help answer this look at:

Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. (Luke 2:1 NASB)

The KJV says, a census was taken of the whole "world". The Greek word used here for "world" or "inhabited earth" is *oikoumene*, [oy-kou-men'-ay] which means: "the inhabited earth" a. the portion of the earth inhabited by the Greeks, in distinction from the lands of the barbarians. b. the Roman empire, all the subjects of the empire." So the census that was taken was not of the whole world but of the Romans empire.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. (Matthew 24:14 NASB)

The word "world" here is also the Greek word *oikoumene*, which is a reference to the Roman Empire. So what this is saying is that the gospel had to be preached to the Roman Empire prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Matthew tells us that after the gospel is preached in all the world ***"then the end shall come."*** What **end** is he talking about here? Remember the disciples' question? *"What shall be the sign of your coming and, and of the end of the age?"* Unless we take this verse clear out of its setting, "the end" in view here is the end or destruction which was to come upon Jerusalem and the temple ending the Jewish age. Jerusalem would be destroyed, but "first" the gospel would be preached unto all nations.

Did this happen? We have seen that everything else so far took place in the life time of the disciples, but did this? Was the gospel preached in all the world before A.D. 70?

Probably one of the most common beliefs among Christians is that once the gospel is preached to all the world, Christ will return and the world will end. This is a theme verse of the Christian Broadcasting Network. They are trying to fulfill this verse. Most believers would say that this verse has not yet been fulfilled, the gospel has not yet been preached to all the world. How do we know if it has? Well, Jesus said the end would come once the gospel was preached to all the world. And the end that is in view in this context, is the end of Jerusalem, the end of the Old Covenant age. Since Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, we can assume that the gospel was preached to all the world by then or we would have to believe that Jesus was mistaken. Which one can you live with? How can we find out if the gospel was preached in all the world before A.D. 70? We can go the Scriptures and see if they give us any insight to this matter. Paul declares that the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven:

because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel,⁶ which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; (Colossians 1:5-6 NASB)

if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (Colossians 1:23 NASB)

In Mark 13:10, the Greek word for preached is *kerusso*, (kay-roos'-so); it is in the future tense. But in Colossians 1:23 the same word *kerusso* is in the aorist tense (past). Jesus said that it is to be preached and Paul says in about A.D. 62, that it has been preached to every creature. Paul also said that the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world:

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. (Romans 1:8 NASB)

Notice what Matthews's account of our text says:

"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. (Matthew 24:9 NASB)

Why would the apostles be hated in all nations if they had not preached the gospel in all nations? They were hated by all nations because they preached in all nations:

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, (Romans 16:25 NASB)

The subject here is clearly the gospel. Now look at the next verse:

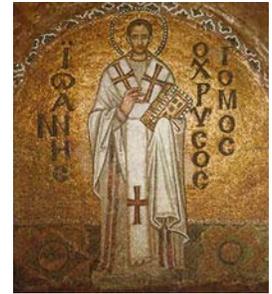
but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

(Romans 16:26 NASB)

So Paul tells us that the gospel had in fact been preached to all nations prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

We know that Paul traveled through Asia Minor, Greece, and Crete; that he was in Italy, and probably in Spain and Gaul (Romans 15:24-28). During this time the other apostles weren't sitting around idle; and there is much proof that within thirty years after this prophecy was spoken, churches were established in all these regions.

Crysostom (375) wrote, *"Therefore He added moreover, 'And this gospel shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come,' of the downfall of Jerusalem. For in proof that He meant this, and that before the taking of Jerusalem the gospel was preached, hear what Paul saith, 'Their sound went into all the earth'; and again, 'The gospel which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven.'"*



Eusebius (325) wrote, *"THUS, under the influence of heavenly power, and with the divine co-operation, the doctrine of the Saviour, like the rays of the sun, quickly illumined the whole world; and straightway, in accordance with the divine Scriptures, the voice of the inspired evangelists and apostles went forth through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."* (Book II, Ch.III.)

Many today say that the gospel has not been preached to all the world and Mark 13:10 has not yet been fulfilled. The Bible says that all the nations of the world heard the gospel preached before A.D. 70. Who are you going to believe? To **deny** that Mark 13:10 has been fulfilled is to deny the clear statements of God's Holy Word; it is to call God a liar.

This does not mean that the gospel was not to be preached after the end had come. It was to be preached for ever and always. Notice the parable of the wedding feast:

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, ² "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son. ³ "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. ⁴ "Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast." ⁵ "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, ⁶ and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ "But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire. (Matthew 22:1-7 NASB)

Notice what he says to his servants AFTER the city is destroyed:

"Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ 'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.' ¹⁰ "And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. (Matthew 22:8-10 NASB)

We dwell in the New Jerusalem in the very presence of God and the invitation is still going out today. Notice the invitation that goes forth from the New Heaven and Earth:

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. (Revelation 22:17 NASB)

This water of life is still flowing. In the restored kingdom, which is a reference to the church, Ezekiel sees a river flowing out of the kingdom:

And he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of the gate that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side. 3 When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles. 4 Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water water reaching the loins. 5 Again he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be forded. (Ezekiel 47:2-5 NASB)

This vision of Ezekiel is *the living waters of the gospel of the kingdom*, which began on the day of Pentecost to flow out from the Temple at Jerusalem. On Pentecost, when the Spirit rushed in a mighty way upon the band of believers, the trickle of living water began as Peter preached the gospel. As time goes on this trickle continues to grow until it is a river. Notice the effects of this river in verse 9:

"And it will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there, and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. (Ezekiel 47:9 NASB)

Whatever this river touches lives! The kingdom continues to grow as you and I faithfully proclaim this message of life to everyone who is thirsty—"Come take the water of life without cost!"

This message was preached by [David B. Curtis](#) on May 20, 2007. Media #367.

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