



*Intermediate Shabbat of Pesach*

April 27, 2024

*Torah:* Exodus 33:12-34:26; Numbers 28:19-25

*Haftarah:* Ezekiel 36:17-37:14

*Ketuvim Sh'lichim:* Matthew 28:1-10

*Shabbat shalom mishpacha.* Welcome to the time of the end, “the end of days.” Today, right now, is the best time to believe in G-d and His Son Yeshua, because if you don’t, in the near future you have almost a 100 % chance of spending your eternity somewhere in black, darkness, totally isolated from anything positive. What and where this place is, is a mystery, but it is a reality. Believing that his son Joseph was dead, Jacob said: 35 ..., “*For I will go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.*” So his father kept weeping for him. (Genesis 37:35b TLV). In the *Tanakh*, *sheol*, שְׁאוֹל, is interpreted to be the place of the dead, that is, where their spirits exist. While, some Bible translations translate it as grave, Scripture doesn’t explain the term *sheol* and this definition is an interpretation by scholars. According to Strong’s Online Concordance, the term *qever*, קֶבֶר, means the actual grave, but I agree with the TLV which translates *qever* as *sheol* in Psalm 86. David said: 13 *For great is Your lovingkindness toward me. You have delivered my soul from the lowest part of Sheol.* (Psalm 86:13 TLV). Referring to the lowest part of *qever*, David does seem to be referring to a place of the dead spirits rather than just being in his grave. Yeshua referred a place of spiritual judgment called *Gehenna*: 22 “*But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be subject to judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca’ shall be subject to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be subject to fiery Gehenna.*” (Matthew 5:22 TLV). It is said that He was referring to the Hinnom Valley, *Gehinnom* in Hebrew, as a physical representation of that spiritual place. At that period in time, the Hinnom Valley was a smoking garbage dump where trash was constantly burning. It was also the place where thousands of infants had been sacrificed to *Molekh* over the hundreds of years that the shrine which Solomon built for his Egyptian wife existed. We don’t have time to get into a discussion of the eternality of the human spirit but, we believe, along with orthodox Judaism, that our spirits do not die. Solomon wrote: 7 *Then the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.* (Ecclesiastes 12:7 TLV). Spirit is the Hebrew, *ruach*, רוּחַ, but we also believe that our bodies will also be resurrected along with our spirits. *Sha’ul* wrote: 50 *Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and what decays cannot inherit what does not decay.* 51 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—* 52 *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.* (1Corinthians 15:50-52 TLV). We very strongly believe this and that our bodies whether cremated or decaying in the grave, will be transformed into a body like Yeshua had when He rose from the dead, glorified bodies if you want to call them that. The point is, that death does not end it for human beings and each person has to make a decision. We can decide for Yeshua, Jesus, or we can decide against Him. That is the reality which we are now facing, especially because Israel is once again a nation and end-time events are unfolding, just as Scripture says they will.

Does it matter what you believe? We believe that Yeshua is not only our Messiah, but also our Savior. We believe just as the Church does, that salvation is by ADONAI's grace through faith and nothing else. Our faith, our trust is believing that Yeshua paid the price for our salvation by becoming the ultimate sin sacrifice. By trusting in Yeshua, we receive the promise of eternal life. But, beyond that, does it matter what you believe? I believe it does.

Some believe in the theology of Dispensationalism, believing that G-d has divided time into periods in which He works differently. Not everyone believes dispensationalism the same way, but most of its adherents today at least recognize what is called the Church Age. It is said to have begun at Pentecost in the 1<sup>st</sup> century when three thousand were saved, supposedly the birthday of the Church. But, someone forgot to notify *Shimon Kefa*, Simon Peter, because he kept going to the Temple. When Yeshua appeared to *Sha'ul*, He apparently didn't tell him he was in the Church Age because one of the last things *Sha'ul* said before leaving Israel for Rome was "I am a Pharisee." According to GotQuestions.org, "The Church Age corresponds with the dispensation of Grace. In prophetic history, it falls between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27)." Daniel 9:26 speaks of a prince who will come and destroy the city. We agree with everyone else that this prince was the Roman general Titus who destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 CE. Daniel 9:27 says: *27 Then he will make a firm covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.* (Daniel 9:27a TLV). According to Dispensationalism theology, there is a time period of almost two thousand years, from 70 CE when the Temple was destroyed, verse 26, into our near future of the 21<sup>st</sup> century before verse 27 occurs. Is this true? Why do so many Christians believe it? Probably, it is because Reverend Scofield included Dispensationalism in his Scofield Reference Bible in 1909 and people have been reading it for more than a hundred years.

But, I am not trying to convince everyone to not believe it. We all have free will and are free to believe what we want. Yeshua said we could. He told *Shimon Kefa*: *19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will have been forbidden in heaven and what you permit on earth will have been permitted in heaven."* (Matthew 16:19 TLV). Forbidding and Permitting, also referred to as Binding and Loosing, are rabbinic terms used in ancient Israel to describe congregational authority. Yeshua said to *Kefa* and by extension to His whole Ecclesia, His body of followers: "You have the authority to interpret Scripture." And, we all interpret it. But of course, we will also ultimately have to stand before Him and explain our interpretations. I am not trying to convince those outside of this place not to believe Dispensationalism, but I am trying to convince you, those whom ADONAI has sent here. And, I also know that I don't have it all right and will ultimately have to answer to Yeshua for the things I got wrong. *9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when that which is perfect has come, then that which is partial will pass away.* (1Corinthians 13:9 TLV). When Yeshua returns, everything will become clear because He will explain it to us. *2 Then many nations will go and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Adonai, to the House of the God of Jacob! Then He will direct us in His ways, and we will walk in His paths." For Torah will go forth from Zion, and the word of Adonai from Jerusalem.* (Micah 4:2 TLV).

But, we do need to know. The theology of "The Rapture" is a false hope and "the Church" will not be raptured out before the Great Tribulation begins. The question is often asked: "Are you pre-trib, mid-trib, or post-trib? A beloved former pastor had the best answer. He said: "Pan-trib. I believe everything will pan out all right." And, he was right. We are in

Yeshua's loving arms. How did all these "tribs" come about? They came about through the theology of Dispensationalism. We've covered this in detail in the past, but it's been a good while and time to look again.

One of the major beliefs of Dispensationalism is about what is called "The 70th Week of Daniel," believing that it has not yet happened. What is the origin of this belief which has come to be so prevalent today? Briefly stated, this theology says that Daniel 9:27 did not take place in the same time period as the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-26, the preceding 3 verses. We read Daniel 9:27 a moment ago and it speaks about someone making a covenant for one week. Dispensationalism's interpretation says that this week is a week of years, seven years. It goes on to state that for one-half of the week, 3 ½ years, he, the Anti-Christ, will put a stop to the Temple sacrifice and grain offering. This makes the assumption that the Temple has been rebuilt and the offering of sacrifices has been restored so they can be offered for the first 3 ½ years of the 7 year period. But, in the middle of the week, 3 ½ years, he will end the sacrifices and offerings and begin the Great Tribulation. Dispensationalism says that verse 27 refers to a far future time, the time of the end. How did this understanding come about?

To learn that, we must go back and look at some history. There is evidence that this whole end-time scenario was actually invented, invented to counteract rising pressure from the protestant churches of Europe against the Catholic Church. The Protestant Church reformers of the 16th century were beginning to teach that the Catholic Church was the "whore of Babylon" depicted in Revelation 17:3-6. These verses describe a woman on a scarlet beast. Of her, *Yochanan* wrote: *6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the kedoshim and with the blood of the witnesses of Yeshua.* (Revelation 17:6a TLV). The Protestant reformers were saying that this woman was the Catholic Church. In the year 1585 CE, a Catholic priest, a Jesuit by the name of Francisco Ribera, began to write a book, a futuristic view of Scripture with the premise that Revelation would not be fulfilled until the end of the Christian era. He invented an end-time Babylon, a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, and an end-time Anti-Christ, all of this, presumably, to take the heat off the Catholic Church and the Pope, which was then being applied by the Protestant reformers. In his book, he proposed that the first few chapters of Revelation apply to ancient pagan Rome and the rest, he assigned to a future period of 3½ literal years, which would occur immediately prior to the second coming of the Messiah. He also proposed that the Anti-Christ, a human person, would persecute and blaspheme the saints of God, rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, abolish the Christian religion, deny Jesus Christ, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God, kill the two witnesses of God, and conquer the world. This Futurist view of Revelation interprets the prophecies about Anti-Christ as a future literal man who deceives the world. In this view of Scripture, there is a gap of around 2000 years between the 69th week and 70th week of Daniel 9.

There is more to this story because another Catholic priest, also a Jesuit, Manuel Lacunza, wrote a book in 1782 about 200 years later, building upon Ribera's story. In his book, Lacunza, a non-Jew, claimed that he was a Jew who believed in Jesus and that his name was Rabbi Juan Ben-Ezra. His book was entitled "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty." In his book, among many other things, he stated that the Church would be taken up to be with the Lord 45 days before Jesus' final return to Earth. During those 45 days, while the Church was in heaven, God would pour out His wrath upon the wicked remaining on Earth, which incidentally, would include all of the non-Christian Jews. After Lacunza died in 1801, his views were taught in Spain and published as a book in 1812. Fourteen years

later, in 1826, it was translated into English. Soon thereafter this theology appeared in Scotland.

Another event which occurred in that general time period was a vision by a Miss Margaret McDonald in Scotland. In the year 1830 there was a revival of the “gifts” which began to be manifested among some people living in the lowlands of Scotland. They experienced what they called the outpouring of the Spirit. It was accompanied with speaking in “tongues” and other charismatic phenomena. On one particular evening, the power of the Holy Spirit was said to have rested on Miss MacDonald while she was ill at home. She was very sick and thought she was dying. For several hours she experienced manifestations of prophecy and vision. The message she received during this prophetic vision convinced her that Christ was going to appear in “two stages” at His Second Coming, and not at a single coming as most everyone formerly believed. Her vision revealed that Christ would first come in glory “to those who look for Him” and then come again later in a final stage “when every eye would see Him.” This vision of Miss MacDonald’s represents the initial source of the modern “Rapture doctrine.”

Also at this time, there was a man in London named John Darby, one of the founders of a group of Christians called “The Plymouth Brethren.” Darby visited Scotland during the 1820s where he may have heard about the Ribera/Lacunza theology as well as the vision of Miss McDonald. Darby apparently built upon her vision and it became a foundational part of what was then called Darby’s “Secret Rapture Theory” which he revealed in 1830. He also used portions of the Ribera/Lacunza materials to develop his theology of “Dispensationalism,” and is considered to be the author of modern Dispensationalism.

Darby also made many visits to Canada and the United States and expounded on this theology in the places where he spoke in the mid-1800’s. He died in 1882. C. I. Scofield was a minister in the United States who later heard about Darby’s theology and became enamored with it. At the time, Scofield was working on a new, annotated Bible, and because he was so taken with Darby’s theory, he decided to include the Dispensational scheme of interpretation in his new Bible. The Scofield Reference Bible later became the most widely read Bible in the English language. First published in 1909, how many has it influenced? If it’s in a Bible, it must be true, right?

That’s how it all began. The theology of “the Rapture” originated with a girl with a fever who either had a vision or a delusion. This is not against speaking in tongues or prophecy because both are scriptural. It is also not against the actual event which is described in both 1Thessalonians 4 and 1Corinthians 15. 1Thessalonians states: **<11>** *16 For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the blast of God’s shofar, and the dead in Messiah shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left behind, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air—and so we shall always be with the Lord.* (1Thessalonian 4:16-17 TLV). I certainly believe that this will happen and am looking forward to it. But the “Dispensational Rapture Theology” is not just about 1Thessalonians 4, it is also wrapped up in the 70th Week of Daniel being brought into the future and divided into two three and one-half year time-periods and a “great tribulation” presided over by the Anti-Christ. There is no question that we are experiencing tribulation right now. We see the persecution and murder of Yeshua’s followers worldwide, but it is not the Great Tribulation because that happened in the year 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. That is the context of Yeshua’s words in Matthew

24:21, they are about the destruction of Jerusalem, something which He said would not happen again.

What is the evidence for a human Anti-Christ? It is primarily the writings of Ribera, Lacunza and Darby because there is no real Scriptural evidence of what they state. To begin with, the word Anti-Christ is nowhere to be found in the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible. Daniel 9:27 doesn't say "Anti-Christ." It only says he. Who is the individual referred to as "he?" Reverend Ellis Skolfield, of blessed memory (<https://www.ellisokolfield.net/>), Skolfield with an "l," not C. I. Skofield, the Bible publisher, says this: "Dispensationalism tells us that this man will: 1. Appear at the end of the age. 2. Rule the world for 3½ years as a good leader and 3½ years as a monstrously evil leader. 3. Have the temple rebuilt. 4. Reinstate temple sacrifices for the first 3½ years. 5. Turn against the Jews for the second 3½ years. Stop temple sacrifices in the middle of the 7 years. 7. Cause all to worship him. 8. Start the battle of Armageddon. 9. Persecute the Great Tribulation saints and anyone else he can get his hands on. 10. Miscellaneous other legends, including that as 666, he is Satan incarnate." This is a good summation of what Dispensationalism teaches. But, is it true? Reverend Skolfield didn't believe it!

The word "Anti-Christ" is found in the writings of Yeshua's disciples, but only in one place and there, only four times. In the Greek, it is *antichristos*, meaning, "one who opposes Christ." Where are these references? They are in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> John: 1John 2:18, 1John 2:22, 1John 4:3, and 2John 1:7. *Yochanan* tells us that this is a "spirit" which was already in the world at the time of his letters. Specifically, it is a spirit which denies both the Father and the Son and denies that Yeshua has come in the flesh. I believe that this is the very same spirit which occupied the Syrians who desecrated the Temple in the days of the Maccabee's. I believe this spirit was also motivating the Romans who destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 CE. It is also the motivating spirit in Islam. It's very difficult to see how the 10 statements about the Anti-Christ you just heard could be constructed from just these four verses written by John.

I have gone back in my notes to 2010 for some of this material. Back then, almost fifteen years ago, we heard much about Islam as a religion of peace. Yasser Arafat (died 2004) said that over and over. But the world media didn't bother to check out his definition of peace. Peace in Islam means that it is a time when the land in question, in Arafat's case, Israel, has come totally under Islamic control. That was the peace that Arafat sought, and what the Palestinians continue to seek today. They have never just wanted the so-called West Bank or Gaza. Back then, here at Beit Shalom, we learned first-hand from an Egyptian Christian Islamic scholar that peace is what you will hear in a country when Islam is coming from a position of weakness. "Islam is a Religion of Peace" was a slogan placed on billboards and the sides of transit buses in the United States before 2010, the time that I originally wrote these words. I also wrote in 2010: "But in places where their numbers are greater, such as France, Holland, and England, they are exercising more and influence on the populace, many have attained elected office and are bold enough to hold frequent demonstrations." In 2024, we are now far beyond that. We have elected Muslims in the United States and the crowds are very emboldened here. Just look at what is going on at some of our universities right now with their protests against Israel. This is something we should expect. The Bible tells us so.

Back then, Muslims said: "All we want is peace" and then would point to certain *suras*, verses, in the Koran, to prove it. The Koran is supposed to be unchangeable and free from

any inconsistencies, but that is far from true. For the first ten years of his promotion of his god, Allah, Mohammed lived in Mecca and tried very hard to bring Christians and Jews into his religion. His writings during that time reflect the *sura*, the section, which says that Christians and Jews are our friends. For example, *sura 2*, verse 62 says: “Surely those who believed,” that is, the Muslims, “and those who are Jews and Nasara,” the Jews and the Christians, “and the Sabeen,” the idol worshippers, “whoever believe in Allah and the last day did a good deed so they will have their *ajoor*,” their wages, “with their Lord and no fear on them, and they will not grieve.” What this is saying is: “According to Mohammed, Christians, Jews, and idol worshippers will have a place in heaven.” That’s intended to make you think Islam is also for you. But, actually, it does not work. This verse is an abrogated verse, a verse no longer in effect. After Mohammed left Mecca and went to Medina, he became much more militaristic and his messages from Allah were that these earlier verses were superseded. A later command in the Koran, *sura 3*, verse 85 says: “And whoever desire any other religion except Islam so it will not be accepted from him in the hereafter he will be among the losers.” The earlier verses give the impression that the Koran is a kind book, but there are many later verses which abrogate the earlier ones. *Sura 9*, verse 29 says: “Engage in war with those who do not believe in Allah, etc...” That is what we are seeing today. Not only are the ordinary Muslims more militant, but the very radical ones are attacking ADONAI’s chosen nation and threatening to attack us here in the U.S. We’re not against them as people, in fact we pray for their salvation believing that many will renounce their false belief and trust in Yeshua in the end.

What is the threat facing us today? Is it the Anti-Christ or is it the antichrist spirit in Islam? We can no longer say that it’s just “radical Islam,” because almost every Muslim is becoming radical and taking with them many sympathetic non-Muslims, making them also radical supporters of Islam. Who, or what, is Israel’s end-time enemy, ADONAI’s enemy whom Yeshua will return to destroy? *Sha’ul* wrote to the congregation at Thessalonika: *1 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, concerning the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and our gathering together (rising to meet Him) to Him, 2 not to get shaken out of your mind or disturbed—either by a spirit or a word or a letter as if through us—as though the Day of the Lord has come. (2Thessalonians 2:1-2 TLV)*. Apparently, someone had told the Thessalonians that Yeshua had already returned and they had missed it. That’s a lie that has been continued through the centuries. *Sha’ul* continued: *3 Let no one deceive you in any way, for the Day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the one destined to be destroyed. (2Thessalonian 2:3 TLV)*. Who is “the man of lawlessness?” Dispensationalism would have you believe that it’s the Anti-Christ. I don’t believe that and believe that this man was Mohammed. *4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in the Temple of God, proclaiming himself that he is God. (2Thessalonians 2:4 TLV)*. According to [www.Bibleref.com](http://www.Bibleref.com), “This description of the man of lawlessness seems to fit the false prophet, although many Bible teachers believe he is the head of the Revived Roman Empire, who is described as the beast that rises out of the sea.” (Revelation 13:1). However, [www.Gotquestions.org](http://www.Gotquestions.org) says: “The man of lawlessness in 2Thessalonians 1:1-12 is the Antichrist who will come on the world scene at the beginning of the Day of the Lord. This Day, sometimes called the “end times,” starts after the rapture of the church in 1Thessalonians 4:13-18 (cf. 1Thessalonians 5:1-11). It is good to note that the Day of the Lord is not a twenty-four-hour period of time; rather, it is an extended period of time that includes the seven-year tribulation, the return of Christ to put down all rebellion against Him, the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth, the final defeat of Satan, and the Great

White Throne Judgment.” What this tells us is that everyone is guessing. There are three different opinions right here.

We might as well have one more. The man of lawlessness was Mohammed, a man who brought a system which has entrenched itself on ADONAI’s holy Temple mount, proclaiming that Allah is God, the God of the universe. Lawlessness, or *Torahlessness*, is a description of a system which turned completely away from ADONAI’s system of teaching and instruction. The “man of lawlessness” is a system which not only has turned away, but replaces our Creator, ADONAI, the G-d who created the Universe. The entity behind this is none other than *HaSatan*, the adversary of Israel, who is assisted by his demonic forces ranked from the princes down to the ordinary demons.

Whom do you prefer as your adversary, the Anti-Christ or the demonic forces of *HaSatan* through Islam? It doesn’t matter which we prefer. ADONAI has already shown who it is. There is no physical Anti-Christ coming. We dealt with the Daniel 9 prophecy in the message on April 6<sup>th</sup> as explained by Daniel Bruce in his book, *Daniel Unsealed*. Here is a brief summary of his explanation of verse 27. An explanation of all four verses can be found in *Parasha Shemini* of April 6<sup>th</sup> on our website, [www.beitshalom.us](http://www.beitshalom.us). Daniel Bruce decodes the words “seventy weeks” in Daniel 9:24 to refer to 70 *Shavuots*, 70 Festivals of Weeks, that is, 70 Pentecosts and not 70 weeks of years. This is a total of 70 years, not 490 years. Here is Bruce’s explanation of Daniel 9:27, which most explain as referring to the Anti-Christ in the last days: *27 Then he (Yeshua) will make a firm covenant with many (the people of Israel) for one week (7 days, His last week on earth.), but in the middle of the week (I believe it was Wednesday. Dan Bruce says Thursday.) he (Yeshua) will put an end to sacrifice and offering (by dying on the cross in 30 CE and becoming the only effective sacrifice).* I believe that Bruce is correct and recommend that you read his book, *Daniel Unsealed*. Sacrifices continued until the Temple was destroyed, but Yeshua ended their effectiveness for sin in 30 CE, forty years earlier. Yeshua ended the sacrifice, not the Anti-Christ.

The reality of the end times is that the forces of Gog and Magog, an event prophesied by Ezekiel, will soon come against Israel, an event which in my opinion is also synonymous with Armageddon. It’s just one event. Jerusalem will not be destroyed. It was destroyed in 70 CE during the Great Tribulation. Regarding it, Yeshua said: *21 “For then, (Jerusalem in 70 CE) there will be great trouble (tribulation), such as has not happened since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.”* (Matthew 24:21 TLV). Regardless of what we think we understand from other prophet’s writings, it won’t happen to Jerusalem again. Yeshua said it would not. Regarding Gog and Magog, ADONAI said: *21 “I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains”—it is a declaration of Adonai—“every man’s sword will be against his brother. 22 I will punish him with pestilence and blood. I will pour out rain on him, on his troops and on the many peoples with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.”* (Ezekiel 38:21-22 TLV). ADONAI will deal with Gog and Magog. They will actually turn and kill each other as well as being destroyed with rain, hailstones and fire and brimstone, the same thing that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 19:24).

The events unfolding around us are scary. Here in the United States, we may soon have to face what is happening to Yeshua’s followers all around the world, persecution and possibly death. Will we be faithful? Deliverance is coming, but not from our governments or our militaries. Israel must fight for their very survival right now, but their ultimate deliverance will come from ADONAI, the “real” G-d of the universe. His Son, Yeshua, will return and destroy His enemies. *Sha’ul* wrote to the Thessalonians: *8 Then the lawless one*

*will be revealed. The Lord Yeshua will slay him with the breath of His mouth and wipe him out with the appearance of His coming. (2Thessalonians 2:8 TLV). Yeshua will use the same mighty power which He used to create the heavens and the earth, His voice. (John 1:1-3). He will speak and it will be done. The day before He went to the cross for our sins, He said: 25 "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars. And upon the earth nations will be confused by the roaring of the sea and its waves. 26 People will lose heart from fear and anticipation of what is overtaking the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to happen, stand straight and lift up your heads, because your salvation is near!" (Luke 21:25-28 TLV). "Lift up your heads, your redemption draws near." Shabbat shalom!*