

The Forsaken Gospel

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MAIN VERSES

[Luke 17:20](#) • [Matthew 6:10](#) • [Isaiah 65:16](#) • [Isaiah 66:22](#) • [2 Peter 3:12-13](#) • [John 1:1](#) • [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) • [John 16:7](#) • [Matthew 5:16](#) • [John 17:14](#) • [Acts 2](#) • [2 Corinthians 4:10](#) • [Matthew 15:33](#) • [1 Corinthians 15:58](#) • [Isaiah 9:2](#) • [Deuteronomy 6:15](#) • [Matthew 6:4](#) • [John 20-21](#) • [Genesis 1](#) • [Genesis 3](#)

The Forsaken Gospel

Shabbat shalom, everybody. You have to excuse me. I may cough a little bit today. Not trying to be rude and disruptive of the message, so I brought my water with me. Today I wanted to speak about a topic that has been on my heart for the past few months, and you've probably seen it seep out in some of the messages at times. It's a message that has become very dear to me. And today's message title is The Forsaken Gospel—the gospel that has been deserted, the gospel that has been abandoned. The gospel that Yeshua taught, that Paul speaks about, that the disciples understood: what it was and what they were to say and how they were to portray this wonderful good news to the world when they were dispatched.

You see, in the 1830s, a man by the name of John Nelson Darby popularized a theory of escapism by zealously promoting something called the pre-tribulational rapture. Anybody ever heard of that? Now, this message is not about the pre-trib rapture, post-trib rapture, mid-trib—it's not about the rapture. But this message is about the effects of what messages like that and theories like that have had on the greater body of Messiah. The theory goes that as Christians, we will escape this wretched world before it meets its ultimate fate of doom and gloom and utter destruction. This theory was picked up by the Scofield Reference Bible and took hold in the believing community, especially in the United States in the 20th century, and it has been a pillar, a foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ ever since.

A Different Gospel

When I was growing up, I was taught that the gospel was the good news—because it was. As I matured in my faith and began reading the Scriptures, I began to realize that the gospel taught

in the Bible was not the same gospel that I was taught in church. It was still good news, don't get me wrong, but it was a far different good news than what I was taught and what I grew up with. You see, I was taught that we were all damned to hell. Let's just be honest. Oh, thank you—I had one. That'll work too.

I was taught in church that we were all damned to hell and we're going to die and we're going to go to hell. And then it gets worse because you're going to burn. And it still gets worse than that because you're going to keep burning because you're going to be alive while you burn. And it's just not a very good place to be. And so we promote this and say, "But wait, wait—there's good news." Well, what's that good news? Well, if you believe in Jesus, then you won't burn. You will escape where the world is going, and you get to go to a place called heaven. Ain't that some good news? I mean, come on now. That's pretty compelling good news. So what do you do? Do you want to be saved? Amen. Of course. So we get saved.

A Life of Fear

And you spend your life going to church every single week, praying every single day, and telling your kids that they must always believe in Jesus so much they don't end up where the entire world is heading. The world is going to get progressively worse. You think it's an evil place now? You just wait. The train has left the station, ladies and gentlemen. There's nothing that you can do to stop it. The world is going to get so bad that there will be war, famine, crime, genocide, disease. And to make it worse, this beast will rise at the end and release the ultimate tribulation upon all the earth. And there is nothing that you can do about it. Nothing that you can even imagine.

Unless, of course, you have read the Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, then you get a glimpse of what it's going to be like. But here is the good news: if you believe in Jesus, God will come and get you before this horrible tribulation and you will escape it. Now let's go preach this to the entire world. Guys, this is the good news of Jesus. This was the pseudo-gospel of John Nelson Darby. The gospel that—wow—we get to escape this wretched place and we don't have to do anything. We just believe in Jesus and poof—we don't have to experience any of that stuff, get involved with any of this worldly stuff because it's going that place anyway. It's not where we belong.

Easy, But Not True

This is the version of the gospel that most of us grew up with and became immensely popular, not because it was true, but because it was easy. Prior to obsessing about end times and this fanatical view of the apocalypse running your life and ruining your life at every single step—you're scared and you're looking for the end times to come. Because as soon as you see something on TV or YouTube or some blog or article somewhere, oh, the end times are here, guys. Oh, terrorists did this. Oh, something happened in Assyria. Oh, this happened. The president is the Antichrist. I know it. This time it's true. This is how the faith of the Son of God is running the majority of believers' lives today. I don't care what denomination you are.

And for some reason, we search for things that make us scared, or at least things that make us think that the end is coming near, to give us the hope and reassurance that I'm saved, which means I'm a believer. Prior to this mindset being established, prior to this mindset infecting the greater body of believers in the Messiah, believers were actually trying to change the world on a massive scale, working to create new social systems that serve the broken world around them, uplifting the poor and oppressed, becoming warriors to fight the social tragedies that strengthened cultures contrary to the kingdom of Yeshua.

The Original Mission

Their mission was to help those around them experience God's will on earth as it is in heaven—the presence of the kingdom, not far away, not when you die and go somewhere, but here and now. The presence of God's kingdom here and now, on earth now, to show what God's message of reconciliation really looks like, to show God's good news through their actions and not their petty message of escapism and sensational fear. But after Darby's passion took root in the believing community, a route of distraction, a route of pushing the end-time archetype, we became more obsessed with looking for something that makes us scared, causing us to get excited about escaping the possible end, instead of looking at the people that we see suffering and dying on TV and wondering, "Why didn't we help?"

You see the difference. There are two types of believers today: those that look at the TV and say, "Wow, this world is awful," and those that look at the TV and say, "Wow, what can we do? Is there anything we can do?" After the passion to establish God's kingdom was replaced by sensational fear and escapism—what I call it—Christianity took a radical change. I said before, it became easy.

The Message Changed

Church missions, trips, and evangelical outreach became more about getting people's attention through maybe putting on some skits or playing some music, getting everyone's attention, and then giving a little message: "Hey, everybody who just saw our skit, would you ask Jesus into your heart today? Would you raise your hand?" And people would sincerely want to raise their hand and become a believer and be a follower of Yeshua today. And if you're running the missions, fantastic. I just fished some men. I did my job. Check off the list and we go home, and we never ask them, "Tell me about your life. How's your family? How's your marriage? How's your job? How's your health? How is your experience right now in this world that we live in?" No. They got Jesus now. They're good. That's it.

The good news of Christ is not about escaping the world. It's about transforming it. The invitation Yeshua gave to follow him was not simply about walking the same geographical direction—here are my footsteps, oh, I got it, I'm walking on the way. It was an invitation to empty ourselves like he emptied himself into the world, becoming his agents, his ambassadors of reconciliation, to be the soothing aloe ointment to a hurting world that surrounds us in every direction. Something that he spoke about very much, a lot of the time.

The True Message of Yeshua

The message of Yeshua was never about raptures and escaping. The message of Yeshua was never even about dying and going to heaven. Read the Gospels. That was not a priority. Go forth and teach all nations that when they die, they'll go to heaven? That's not what we find. Now, what happens after we die? I have lots of discussions on that. I hope we go to heaven. That'd be great. Whatever. That's not what this message is about. The message is: if that wasn't the focus in the first century, if that wasn't the goal of where people were walking towards, if that wasn't the doctrine of the gospel, then what was?

The message of Yeshua was always about the fact that the kingdom of God has come. And you're invited to enter in and live in the reality of his presence right now. Instead of leaving for heaven, Yeshua invited us to reproduce it on earth, in the world. So we have a great slide here. I love it. Here we go. [Luke 17:20](#) states, and being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God cometh—I got my King James in here. He answered them, and you know who he is, right? That's Yeshua. He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say lo here or lo there, for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

It's not something that you're going to observe.

The Kingdom of God is Within You

It's not some big climactic event that's going to take place. It's not some regathering of some specific people, or it's not some big explosion that's going to take place, or it's not something that you're going to be like, "Oh, it's over there. Oh, this happened, so it must be the kingdom of God. It's not over here." No, no. The kingdom of God is within you. Or in newer translations like the ESV, it says in your midst—in the midst of you—is the kingdom of God. It's not something that is brought externally. It's not something that you go to. It's something that you carry out. Or if we go with the modern translation, in the midst of us, it's something that we carry out.

I have a great slide from an author and a Christian scholar I look up to in many ways, and I don't agree with everything he believes or says. I've got to have that disclaimer. His name is Nicholas Thomas Wright. He's an Anglican bishop with a really cool accent. One of his recent books was called *The Day the Revolution Began*, and he was basically recounting what the four gospels actually say about the gospel and what took place at the cross. It was a day that a revolution began in creation. And so I wonder if I have the quote here. Yeah, he states that we humans are called to stand at the intersection of heaven and earth, holding together in our hearts our praises and our urgent intercessions, the loving wisdom of the creator God and the terrible torments of his battered world. The work of the cross is not designed to rescue humans from creation, but to rescue them to creation.

Restoring Mankind to Creation

The entire journey is back to Eden, right? So mankind has to be restored to go back to Eden to do their job that was in Eden, which was to till the garden, defend the garden, take care of the garden, and subdue the earth. Subdue means to govern, to have the authority of God to go out on the earth carrying his banner for his kingdom, make worshipers around the earth, and be the image bearers of God on earth, on the creation that he created. He redeemed mankind for the sake of his creation, not to redeem mankind and just hit the delete button. Now we're in heaven. The clouds are soft. That wasn't the point. That was never the point. But escapism is so much easier.

Watching the news and feeding yourself fear of the end times is so much easier. And I say that because I've been there. Anybody? Anyone just sit there and watch Facebook? Facebook, you watch one video and then it automatically loads the next one as it scrolls up and you'll be stuck there for like a day. It's amazing. YouTube channels, oh, end times prophecy. Look, the beast is

rising over here. Jade Helm is coming. Really? And then when stuff like that comes and goes, we just act like we didn't know about it and we didn't get all worked up about it.

It's so much easier to say, "Wow, I'm really a believer now because I'm probably going to go through some persecution and that'll prove that I'm a believer," and then I get checked off. It's so much easier to point fingers and blame MTV and Disney for the downfall of the integrity of the world. It's so much easier to look around and judge the world of its condition than it is to stand up like a first century believer and walk into the world boldly, vulnerable, unashamed, and praising God.

Sit Back and Criticize

The modern gospel has taught us that our job is to sit back and criticize how awful the world is, and look how disgusting it has become. The modern gospel has taught us to just keep sitting in our rocking chairs, drinking sweet tea and sharing Facebook links or talking about big sensational stuff that's going on that reveals the disgusting age in which we live. And we feel justified in our mission, sitting back and saying things like, "Wow, they sure do need Jesus." Or sorry, in the movement, we say, "Bo Yeshua Bo." We feel justified in looking out and being like, "Man, I can't wait for Jesus to come back so he can just fix all this. The disgusting world that we live in, guys, this world of abhorrent lifestyles and agenda, this world that has come to accept the most vile and troublesome falsehood and realities is the way it is because we're not doing anything about it."

The world is waiting to see the ways of God lived out. The world is waiting to see an example. The world is going to act its own way if there are no examples set. What did Yeshua call his disciples to do? What did Yeshua call the new creation, supposedly new creations, of those who are in covenant with God through him to do? Follow me. Be an example of me. Walk like me. Walk into the cities that you know may be dangerous. Walk into the situations that may be dangerous. Walk into the areas of the city. Man, no one wants to touch these people. No one wants to touch this person. Even if he may be diseased, pray over him. Even if it's just, "Hey, can I pray for some peace in your life right now?" No one wants to do that. And so the world thinks that no such things exist. So you see 10-year-olds dressing up in drag on Facebook. So you see these disgusting things that are... The things that 10 years ago we saw creeping into our nation and creeping into all the Western culture, and we looked at it and said, "Wow, what a disgusting thing this minority is doing," or "this thing that is accepted in the world."

And apparently the example that we set wasn't strong enough to keep it a minority, and it has now become a majority-recognized thing. But it's just easier to look back and say, "Oh, that's just so against the ways of God. I can't wait till Yeshua comes back and takes us away from here." The standards of God are not being lived for the world to see, at least to the point that they should be. I'm in the boat with you. If that's the conclusion, I believe it is. I'm there with you. Instead, we've made a habit of griping about how awful it is, and we teach our kids that, "Don't worry, it'll be okay, because one day we're going to leave earth. Don't worry, one day you just stay true to the faith, and one day we'll go to heaven or whatever." That was never the plan according to the Bible.

The Example of Good Works

In [Matthew 5:16](#), Yeshua states, he reiterates, he says, that they, the world, may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Now, that's easy, and that's easy. Oh, yeah, good work. So we're going to do something. The whole door is open for folks, and if someone needs help with the bills, we'll write them a check, help them out a little bit. Is the Christian body doing their job and showing their works if the world is not glorifying the Father? Because Yeshua said that the followers are going to do the works, the good works, and the result will be glorifying the Father. We're missing something there.

I'm not just saying it. I'm not just saying Hebrew movement, Messianic movement. I'm saying the entire Christian, Catholic, the entire world population of those who proclaim Jesus Christ as their Savior, we're missing something. Two billion of us on the planet. Thirty percent of the planet should be able to change and make an impact.

Praying for His Disciples

Let's slide here. It's [John 17:14](#). It states, "I have given them thy word." So a little bit of a background. So Yeshua's in the garden, right? And the passion is starting, if you will. And he's in the garden and he's about to be arrested. And the day of the revolution is about to begin. And he's praying to the Father. And this is Yeshua's prayer to the Father. And I want you to listen about you. The Son of God is praying for you at this moment. And he states, "I have given them thy word and the world hated them because they are not of the world. Even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou should take them from the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. And thou did send me into the world. Even so sent I them into the

world. And for their sakes, I sanctify them. That way themselves may also be sanctified in truth."

God, Father, this is what Yeshua is saying: "Father, don't take the agents of the ministry that you have planted here out of the world. Don't take them away. Don't escape. Give them the ability to overcome the evil one." To overcome—I don't think that's in there. I think in the Greek it just says the evil. So give them, it's a personified evil. So give them the ability to overtake evil, to not be overcome by what makes the world do what it does that is against your kingdom, but allow them to stand strong, to almost push, you guys, to push the evil out of the way so that light would shine. Allow them to walk in the dark places like I have, and to not be overcome by what makes the world do what it does that is against your kingdom. And allow me to shine. Allow your kingdom to shine.

The Gift of the Spirit

We recently had an anniversary of the giving of the Spirit, illustrated in [Acts 2](#). We call it Pentecost or Shavuot, right? Did you guys have a good time? I had a great time. What was the purpose of the Spirit being given? I have some slides here. [John 16:7](#) gives you one of the answers. Yeshua talking: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away. And if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I'll send him to you." So this Comforter, which we know to be the Holy Spirit, if Yeshua leaves, he's going to send this Spirit.

The Comforter, Reconsidered

This spirit that dwells in him will come and dwell in you. That's a big deal. And so we see this word, comfortable. Comfort, comfortable. We see this comforter, this word that's describing the Spirit. It's funny, because that's what the King James says, and that's how we've all been taught, right? Pretty much every other translation, in the Middle Ages, the word comforter was a good translation. In 2017, newer translations of the Bible, scholars getting together, they're looking at the Greek and they're saying comforter isn't exactly what that word means, and all of its attributes now, to what that Greek says in our culture now. So here's what a lot of the ESV, NLT, NASV, this is what they say. They say, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. For if I don't go away, the helper, the advocate, will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." The Holy Spirit wasn't given to comfort you for the loss of Yeshua and to comfort you that you're going to go to heaven someday. That wasn't its function. The point of the Spirit being given was to be a helper. A helper of what? What's it going to help me with?

Math? What's it going to help me with? That's one of the things it actually says, convict the world, right? A helper and advocate to bring God's kingdom from heaven to earth, to do what Yeshua did.

Have you read the rest of the book of Acts? The Spirit's given, and that's in chapter 2. What happens? The rest of the book of Acts, is that something a comforter does? "It's okay, buddy. Oh, you live in a hard world now that you follow Yeshua. It's all right." That was not the work of the Spirit for the rest of the book of Acts. That Spirit was an advocate for the Father, an advocate for the kingdom of God reigning on earth, and a helper to establish that reign with the greatest amount of integrity through the walk of the followers who had the Spirit. The kingdom was not meant to come as this powerful theocracy, if you will, through a certain denomination or a certain church that would force it on the world through violence. That was a pagan concept. That's what the Romans did, right? Force rule on the world through violence. It wouldn't come in the form of a large group of people coming in. It definitely wouldn't come in the form of a bunch of Hebrew rooters arrogantly parading around on Facebook showing off knowledge. That's not how the kingdom of God is going to be established either. As I heard one minister say, the method of the kingdom would match the message of the kingdom. That is how the kingdom of God will continue to be established on earth. The kingdom will expand through the believers who are empowered by the Spirit of the living God, and they would go out into the world, vulnerable, suffering, praying, praising, misjudged, misunderstood, vindicated, and celebrating always, because they understood the truth. Or as Paul states in [2 Corinthians 4:10](#), always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifest in our bodies.

The Nicene Creed and the Vacuum It Left

This type of attitude didn't necessarily start with Darby and the pre-tribulational rapture. That's what really affected the U.S. in the 20th century, though. You guys ever heard of something called the Nicene Creed? It's a foundational creed to the Christian faith. It's something that's said in most churches every week. I mean, it's a foundational creed. It's a pretty cool creed. It was... do I have it? I do have it. We're a real part of it here in a minute. It's called the Nicene Creed because it was created in Nicaea, modern-day Turkey, and it was established at the Council of Nicaea in 325. You will learn a lot about the Council of Nicaea if you read the history of the Council of Nicaea. There's a bunch of misunderstandings of what took place at the Council of Nicaea, but it's an interesting piece of history, is really all I'm trying to say. And then in 381 AD, an amendment was placed on the end of the creed, and it's pretty much the same

creed across the Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, a lot of Protestant churches, with a few minor details changed here and there. But it's basically a foundational declaration of faith in Christianity as a whole today for most denominations, right?

We're not going to read the whole thing, but it starts out, "I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, all that is seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made." No wonder it became popular. But over here in the red, I highlighted a section that I want you to pay attention to, and it states, "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end." It's a pretty exciting section of the creed. You get excited about that, and that would become part of your daily focus whenever you would say this creed. It's interesting, because neither Catholic nor Protestant theology has made huge attempts to explore what exactly was meant by what was stated here in the 4th century. When we're looking back, and we're like, well, exactly what it says, this leaves what Tom Wright calls a vacuum to be filled by various kinds of dualisms. Western Christianity has allowed itself to embrace some types of dualism, if you will. And this conclusion, where the ultimate destiny of God's people, the ultimate focus of God's people, those who put their faith in him, is heaven. That's our destiny. This is one of the places where it started with this creed, or that this creed helped motivate, because no one wanted to explore specifics on it. That's our ultimate destiny. That's what we're shooting for. That's our ultimate goal, which turns into our ultimate mission, because if we have an ultimate goal, then everything that we do is for the goal, right? And so that's very easy for Darby to make his claims of escapism, and for it to infiltrate and blow up like it did. That's it.

A Revolution That Shook All Creation

And this heaven has been taught as a domain or a place that is completely and totally detached from earth. The goal of this Christianity, if you will, the prize, conversion, repentance, justification, sanctification, and the salvation through Yeshua, is all seen in regard to leaving earth and going home to a place called heaven. I grew up in a church like that. Did anyone else? Maybe, maybe not, maybe some of you did. That was the goal. "I can't wait to get there." It's not a bad thing. I mean, you know, if we're going to spend all eternity with the Father one way or another, that's definitely something to look forward to, but I dare say that's not the foundation of the gospel. That may be a blessing that comes from it. I don't believe this is how first century believers saw what was happening around them.

For the early believers, the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah launched a revolution that impacted not just them, not just Judea, but all of creation felt the tremors of what happened on the cross. And I will always be bold about saying that. Guys, the cross, what happened on the cross was the most revolutionary thing since the dawn of creation. And for some reason, in so many different fellowships, and I fear this, we have come to a place where we accept minimizing that to make room for other things that are worthless. It literally launched God's promise of a new creation for mankind to dwell in, a place where heaven would not be a domain apart from earth, but a heaven that would come to earth.

Kingdom of Heaven, Kingdom of God

When we speak of the kingdom of heaven, what do you guys think of? It kind of invokes a magical castle with a king and some, you know, horses tromping around, some magical people, but in a heavenly place with clouds, right? Kingdom of heaven, medieval, in heaven. That phrase is only used in the book of Matthew, 68 other times in the Bible, and across 10 other books in the New Testament, it's referred to as the kingdom of God. Kind of puts a different imagery on it, right? You no longer get the castle or the horses out front or whatnot. You think of something a little bit more static, solid, dense. What is the kingdom of God? It's the kingdom in which God reigns. It's the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is in your midst. It is among you. It is in you. The kingdom of heaven is not simply in heaven. It is God's reign.

Yeshua speaks specifically about this in the Lord's Prayer, [Matthew 6:4](#). You guys are familiar with this, right? "After this manner, therefore, pray you." So Yeshua's teaching his disciples. "Yeshua, we know you're kind of a big deal. We're followers. We got a good feeling about you. How do you say we should pray?" So Yeshua's fixing to tell us how to pray. Is that a big deal? No, the things that Yeshua prays for, those are the kind of big deals. I mean, we pray, "Father, I pray I can pay my bills this month. Father, I pray that my diabetes gets better, help me control my blood sugar." It's a legitimate prayer. "Father, I pray for my fellowship around me. I pray for every single one of you guys. Father, I pray that, you know, some of us maybe, I pray it don't rain today." We have our prayers, right? So when Yeshua prays for something, it's a petition to his Father. It's a big deal, right? So this is how you should pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven, holy is thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors, and bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, of the evil one." Do you see what he said there?

May your kingdom come. He didn't say, may we come to your kingdom. May your kingdom come and may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. So don't take us to where you are.

Come down to your creation and establish your reign here that we have rejected for so long. Make heaven kiss earth and make them become one. Renew creation with your reign. This is how you should pray. That's kind of a big deal, right? The prayer of Yeshua was that God's reign would overtake the world around us. So what does God's reign look like? Cliché, I don't know. Maybe it's just too simple. It looks like Yeshua. That's what God's reign looks like. It's amazing because the world teaches us that we should hate our enemies. The world teaches us that we should go after them with unforgiveness and get vengeance on them. And then here comes Yeshua representing God. Not the world's kingdom, but the kingdom, the reign of God. He says, no, that's not how it works in the reign of God. In the reign of God, you're going to pray for your enemies. You're going to forgive your enemies. And then when you pray for your enemies, it's not like praying for them to go away. You're going to pray that God blesses them. You're going to lift their names up before the almighty God so that they would be noticed in some positive way. That's how it works in the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of the world. See the difference? He walked it out and he said, follow me. Walk like me. Do as I do. Love as I love. Serve as I serve. Establish God's kingdom like I am establishing God's kingdom.

The New Creation Anticipated

This new heavens and new earth was something anticipated that would come by a great act of God and the prophets, specifically Isaiah. Some of you may be familiar with these verses. From about [Isaiah 50](#) through the end of Isaiah, those last chapters really speak of a time of new creation. They speak of a time where God is going to restore the world, and nothing is going to be able to stop his focus and his love and his power to be able to restore all things. And so it's a fascinating set of things, a fascinating section of the Bible to read with Yeshua in mind. And so [Isaiah 65](#), 16 states, 'Then whoever invokes a blessing in the land shall bless by the God of faithfulness. And whoever takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of faithfulness, because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from sight. I am about to create new heavens and new earth. Former things shall no longer be remembered or come to mind.' Right? And so this was something that in the first century, it was anticipated in first century Judaism. They understood that this is something to get excited about. New heavens and new earth, right? Everything's going to be changed. God's going to bring this great glory. One chapter later, [Isaiah 66](#), 22 states, 'For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your descendants remain, and your name will remain.' There it is again, a chapter later. This is the climax of God's love and His restoration of all things.

Former Things Shall Not Be Remembered

And I want you guys to notice something down here. What does this line say? The former things what? Former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. So would it be too far to say that when the heavens, new heavens and new earth come, the restoration of all things come, when the new heavens and the earth come, that the former things are not to be remembered or come to mind? No. So those kind of go together. Okay, let's stick a pin in that, okay? Because we'll come back to that. Even in the first century, we see Peter invoking some very heavy apocalyptic writing styles when he's speaking about the glory of Yeshua. And he says in [2 Peter 3](#), 12, 'Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire.' Notice the question mark. He's kind of emphasizing something in a way with apocalyptic literature. It was a lot of times over-exaggerated, but you could see people kind of writing with a grin on their faces, like, this is a big deal, right? And so he has that question mark there. 'But in accordance with his promise, we wait for the new heavens and the new earth, where righteousness is at home.' So what's going to be at home in the new heavens and new earth? Righteousness, right?

Righteousness at Home

And so we continue seeing this motive, if you will, throughout Scripture, where even in the Old and the New Testament, we have this fascination with a new heavens and a new earth. And it's clear that throughout Christian history, the idea of heaven is important. And it's very important for the past 2,000 years. Many denominations talk about heaven, heaven, heaven, heaven, heaven. But we see that the early believers were not interested in the way that current believers are interested in what happens to you right when you die. They were interested in a topic that most of us have probably forgotten about—the final creation, the final act of God that will set in motion the restoration of all things. The new heavens, the new earth being joined together and the resurrection of the body that will create new humans that will live in this new world.

A Journey Through Scripture

So I want to take a journey through Scripture to help us understand where we are and why we are here. So you guys still with me? I know I've been talking fast because I'm really passionate about this topic and about the gospel. I love the simplicity of the gospel because the gospel saves. The gospel changes the soul. The gospel changes the heart in its simplest form. But the gospel isn't just simple if we take a closer look at it. It's something amazing, right? And so I get excited about this specific topic because of this. So I'm jumping ahead in a series that I hope to

present soon on how the gospel makes sense and how Yeshua and Paul showed others what happened the day Yeshua died and what happened when He was resurrected? Remember that it talks about them being fulfillment just as the Scripture says and going back to the Torah and the prophets and showing all these things and the people who He showed these things to, oh, it all makes sense now.

What the Torah Reveals

And those are always verses that I struggled with because I go back to the Torah and I'm like, alright... Son of Man's going to come. He's going to do a lot of miracles. He's going to die, go to trial, cross, resurrect three days later. I don't see that in the Torah. I don't see those specific... I mean, you see little glimpses here and there, but you don't see the whole story bright as day. When Yeshua showed people... Listen, listen, listen. Look at the Torah, look at the prophets. They were like, oh, it's all right there. It didn't take convincing. And so I hope with this upcoming series, we can visit that idea. And I'm really excited about it. So I'm going to take some of the elements of that today. So if you hear me repeat some things over the next few months about the gospel, it's because I'm doing it on purpose because they're important. Everybody agrees by saying amen. It's like you signed a contract. All right. The gospel of John, the gospel that emphasizes Yeshua as the Lamb and most closely associates him with the Passover fulfillment. John also details a very, very, very intentional parallel of creation back there in the first chapter. And there's a striking, striking reason why he uses the same narrative in [Genesis 1](#) to start John off. And that's what we're going to explore in just a minute.

Creation and New Creation

And so as we read in Isaiah, the prophet speaks of something called new creation, right? And the new heavens and the new what? Earth. Earth. Singular. Isaiah almost mirrors the story of [Genesis 1](#) as well to build up this concept, if you will, pointing us to the fact that God will dwell among his people to the capacity and intimacy that he did in the beginning, in the first creation, in [Genesis 1](#). And Israel was a type of what was to come when the Lord dwelt with them, like in [Deuteronomy 6.15](#), 'I'm dwelling among you,' right? We know that sin spoiled the original creation, right? Man was exiled from the garden, from the temple that was the garden in [Genesis 3](#). And Israel, who had the temple in Jerusalem, was exiled because of her constant violations of God's covenant, the relationship.

Breaking Covenant

The more I read Scripture, the more I realize that breaking rules—right? Accidentally breaking rules—doesn't separate. That doesn't violate covenant. You read the story of Israel, and it was constantly breaking of rules, constantly tripping up, breaking commandments, sometimes intentional, sometimes unintentional. As I'm sure I will see as my child gets older, there's going to be some intentional times and unintentional times where he just totally disobeys me, but I'm not going to cut him off. What's it take to cut your child off? It's when Israel stopped wanting the relationship with God and wanted to replace God and wanted to cut the relationship off completely. And that is when God said, you know what? Then if you don't want to be around me, then you don't have to be. Exile, right? And so the exile for Israel was pictured in [Isaiah 9](#), which is a very powerful chapter, as a time of darkness. And I have a verse here, [Isaiah 9, 2](#), and it speaks, it says, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who lived in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined. And so this is describing exile, but not just the exile, it's describing when God is going to end the exile for his people. And it's fascinating because the chapter doesn't catch our attention until we read a few more verses later when we realize, oh, this is the chapter that talks about—right, in verse 6 it talks about, "For a child is born unto us, a son is given, a government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor." That's the same chapter, just a few verses later, so we know who's connected with the ending of the exile. But anyway, so the exile was more than just a physical relocation. We know that when Israel was taken out by Syria and Judea was taken out by Babylon, it was more than just, oh, we got moved to a different land. It was a re-imaging or a parallel to what took place in the garden when mankind got moved out of the garden. It all had to do with the presence of God. It all had to do with mimicking the punishment of what happens when you don't want to be with the Father. Thus, the light dawning and shining in the darkness is the redemptive work of God made manifest through Yeshua if we read the chapter in [Isaiah 9](#). And Yeshua is the light of the... what? So we have this as a type of backdrop, right? As we enter into John chapter 1.

The Word Through Whom All Things Were Made

And so if you would turn with me to John chapter 1, you might want to underline some stuff. It's really cool stuff that I get excited about. And we'll start in verse 1. So John chapter 1, verse 1. And we start out with the very first word: in the beginning, which reminds us of what? It reminds us of [Genesis 1](#), right? Creation. Creation. So John's starting this chapter out talking about something having to do with creation. So in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and He was in the beginning with God. All things came

into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being. What has come into being for Him was life, and the life was the light of all people, and the light shines into darkness, and darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent by God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify of the light so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light, the true light, which enlightens everyone and was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world came into being through him. Yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own and his people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become the children of God, who were born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's only son, full of grace and truth. Powerful, powerful section of scripture.

The Word who was both with God and was God is the one through whom all things were made. As we read John, knowing the anticipations of the first century prophesied in the Old Testament, we should be cued immediately of the dawning of John describing a new creation coming by the means of the same. Without him, nothing was made that was made. Moreover, John melds together creation and returning of exile by referencing back to Isaiah—the light has come, the light has come—the light that shined, darkness did not overcome it. He's referencing back to Isaiah, the light that will come and end the exile from God. And I find this incredible: the light that shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it. The very one whom original creation was made is the one through whom the new creation will come. I truly believe that's what John is trying to start his entire message off about: the glory of the Son of God. [Isaiah 65](#) speaks of a new creation marked by life, blessing, prosperity. What John is preparing us for is the story of how God will bring about a new creation and is through the agent of the original creation, Yeshua the Messiah—the light that overcame darkness.

The darkest day in the Gospel of John was on the evening that Yeshua hung on that cross. [Matthew 15:33](#) says that darkness covered the entire land. And we know how the story ends. On the third day, light emerged from the tomb. He was victorious. He was victorious over sin, evil, death. The light overcame the darkness. We see many themes throughout the Gospels and all over Scripture. These are the same themes that were held in first century Judaism. I'm going to bring it back to what I was talking about originally. These two themes that blend together in Scripture and throughout Scripture are creation and judgment. And they join hands throughout pretty much all the prophets and all through the New Testament.

Creation and Judgment, Restoration and New Creation

And if you take away one—creation or judgment—you produce an alternative gospel. What I mean by that is you have the goodness of creation with no judgment. You have no hope except to experience being alive and continuing in an endless cycle of existence. You take away the good of creation and leave only judgment. Well, you have a world that is to be thrown away like a piece of garbage, leaving us in a disembodied state strumming harps in heaven. But creation and judgment, when they go together, like the prophets put them together, you get the new creation. You get a restoration. You get the new heavens and the new earth. Not created out of nothing, but created out of the old thing. God is going to take the old thing and create something new out of it—the existing one. God will take his creation and restore it. And this is the climactic conclusion according to the Gospel of John. See, we're on the first day of the week. I love it. First day of the week, Yeshua stands in a new body, if you will, on the first day of new creation, if I can go there. He stands in a new body—the new creation. The day when God's kingdom is established on earth and all principalities of darkness are disarmed, this was the day that God acted to fulfill his promises. The entire point of [John 20](#) and 21 is that we who believe in Yeshua are to become, in the power of His Spirit, not only beneficiaries but agents of that new creation. I'm not saying that everything has been completed, that all restoration has come to pass. It obviously hasn't, but I believe that the new creation has started and that we're charged to be a part of it.

See, this is why in [1 Corinthians 15:58](#), Paul says, "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." Because Paul so frequently encourages us to run the race, to continue, to persevere, to be immovable in the world, carrying the word of the Lord. As we were put here with power and authority to do something, something, something is why we were placed here. It wasn't to sit around and say, by the power and authority of God, I condemn you. I condemn you, sinner. You're going to hell, and guess where I'm going? That's not power and authority. We were put here to raise the banner of God's kingdom, showing that the former things have no power in this new world through the victory of Yeshua. See, we have [2 Corinthians 5:15](#). I love this verse. I really love this verse. I say this verse a lot. And it states, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone. The new is here." This is New Testament. So I love this because this is one of the newer translations. So I like to look around the parallels. I like to look at multiple translations just to see because a lot of times the Greek is debatable and it can read slightly different here and there. So I got the Aramaic Bible in Plain English just to be, yeah. And I love the way it reads it because it reads it: "All that is in the Messiah is therefore the new creation. The old order has passed away." So if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone and the new is here. The old is gone and the new is here.

The old is gone and the new... So the things that were are now gone and the new is here. The things of old... What's another way of saying that? The former things are now forgotten. The new has come. Paul is quoting [Isaiah 65](#), speaking about Christ coming and instituting, starting the new creation. He's quoting the verse as if saying it has been fulfilled or at least fulfilled in one instance. This gets me excited because it's true. We speak about the gospel as if it doesn't apply. We speak about the gospel as if it truly is a myth. It is true. This happens. This power exists. This new creation exists. The reign of God has been established on earth, and you have been in charge as the royal ambassadors to carry the banner forward. That's the good news, that God made a way back, just as he promised, to be reconciled. Not only that, but he did not allow his promises to go void. Now, his kingdom's here. He reigns. Now go and tell the world all that I've taught you.

Yeshua Raised on the First Day

Fascinating, because I was reading a commentary recently about... And I know one of my friends has just done a four-hour exhaustive study on the topic of new creation. And Ryan White over at Rudentor.com—highly recommend you guys check if this topic interests you. But I was reading a commentary from another author, and he was speaking about, as I suggested, Yeshua being raised up on the first day, but when he died, see, he died, and so he rested on the Sabbath, and then...

Yeshua rose on the first day of the week, symbolizing new creation and raising up. When he spoke those last words, "it is finished," he was asserting what Torah says from Genesis: the creation was complete. It has been completed. The passion of our God to fulfill his promises should never go unnoticed. I'm not going to try to tell you that I understand how the progress we make in establishing God's kingdom now will impact the final product and return of Yeshua and the ultimate conclusion of new creation. There's still more coming. I believe we are charged to be doers of the word.

Workers of God's Kingdom

If we're not workers of his kingdom, why are we charged to show the world what God's justice is, what God's love, what God's forgiveness, what God's mercy, what God's kingdom looks like as imitators of Yeshua? Why are we charged with that if it doesn't matter? We're called to take up the original vocation of the garden: to spread the reign of God, to love others, to fill the earth with worshipers of God. And to take care of the creation that God gave us. This is part of our

job—take care of the animals and the trees of the garden, which God said would expand all over the world.

You think that God wants us to not care about pollution and waste and destroying his creation? You think that God, making you a steward and image bearer of his creation—Adam and Eve—you think that he didn't care if they just trashed the garden? Their job was to take care of the garden, to till the garden, make sure everything's picked up, make sure everything looks nice. And then he said, go to all the world. They weren't supposed to leave the garden. They were supposed to take the garden and make it flourish throughout all the world.

We can only go so far in spiritualizing everything. All the patriarchs are shepherds for a reason: because God's stewardship is more than simply saying, "Hey, I love you." It's stewardship over the entire creation.

Stewards of What We're Given

We recycle. I'm not going to be blind about the scope of recycling and how much the trash industry actually throws away after recycling, but we try. Something that my wife has always done, and I never understood why: she's always been very against throwing styrofoam in the fire. You know what I'm talking about? I'm like, "Man, it goes in there and it goes away." She's like, "It doesn't go away. They tell us that it burns holes in the ozone. If enough people do it, it destroys the planet. It's definitely not good for the planet."

It's funny because I've seen her mocked because of this attitude. I've literally seen her mocked, and people playfully go and throw big old styrofoam in the fire in front of her just to upset her. And I'm very proud of her for understanding that God has made us to be his image bearers and to carry the same stewardship that was given to Adam and Eve in the garden: to take care of the planet as best as we can, do our part, take care of the animals, and take care of each other because we're all part of his creation.

Didn't think that was the scope? It is. God is just going to destroy the enemy anyway. I've had that mindset before. I've read the end of the book. That's an escapist mentality. It's lazy. Be a shepherd like the patriarchs. Be a gardener like Adam was. Govern and take responsibility for God's creation because that's who you are now. That's your vocation—the people, the animals, the trees. Be stewards of all that God has given to us and show the world the gracious works of his kingdom.

Here and Now

I don't know how this is going to affect the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan—when Yeshua returns, when new creation concludes, whatever that looks like. If a tree I plant today, how will that impact the trees of new creation? I don't know. If I help the poor today, if I help someone out today, how is that going to affect the blessing and prosperity of all the people in new creation? I don't know.

All I know is that God's new world of justice and joy, of love and hope for the entire earth, was launched when Yeshua walked out of the tomb that morning. It was launched. And I know he calls me and you to live in him and by the power of his spirit. And so to be new creation people here and now, not later, not when you get to heaven or when you resurrect—you're new creation now. As a people, God's kingdom is in our midst. And we are to give birth to the signs and the symbols, the evidence of the kingdom of heaven being here on earth now.

The Gnostic Heresy

In the first century, many Judeans sat passively to wait for an act of God to happen. That's not us—not when God acted through Yeshua to inaugurate his kingdom on earth as in heaven. When the temple was destroyed, it threw a lot of wrenches into different communities of Judea and even believers of Messiah about when these prophecies are supposed to come true. There were some groups who thought new creation can't happen now if the temple was destroyed. They missed it. They did not feel the need to bring forth works and signs of renewal of God's creation. They sat back and simply rejected the world around them. It was all rubbish. No big deal. It's all disgusting.

Look at these movies that are airing in the movie theaters. Look at the presidential candidates. Oh, goodness. Look at what those terrorists are doing way over there. Look at all this crime that was prompted because of the poverty in our city. Look at this disgusting world. This is how they looked at the world around them: a place filled with evil and disgust, a place to sneer and look down on, a place that deserves to die. All they sought was a type of divine knowledge that made them feel secure that their souls would at least be saved when their flesh dies out. These people were known as the Gnostics, and they were heretics of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the first century and the second century. They rejected their job as an image bearer, mandated in the garden by God himself.

Isn't that supposedly what Satan did? I don't want to do that. I don't want to be in that position. I don't want to refuse what I'm told.

Called to Work, Not Wait

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that we're to go out and build God's kingdom by our own efforts. I know it's probably coming across that way. I'm saying that we're here to build for God's kingdom. Our actions reflect our hope in Yeshua returning, our actions reflect the mercy, the love, and forgiveness. Every act that reflects God in us, and us walking out as stewards into his creation—this, I believe, is the forsaken gospel.

That through the unfailing blood of Yeshua, the unconquerable love of God's kingdom was established on earth, inaugurating his reign on earth. And through our salvation, we are empowered with the boldness, divine authority, and the same spirit that was carried within Yeshua himself so we could pick up and carry what he established for the sake of God's kingdom instead of passively abandoning it, or participating and holding it back, and then claiming that we are a true follower.

Is this the gospel that you signed up for? To be made new? To imitate Yeshua despite the cost? To recognize the work of the adversary in a world, and instead of criticizing it, knowing that through the power of God we are called to be ministers in it?

More Than a Church Plant

This is not a message that you were healed here just once in this fellowship. The intention is for FIT, Found in Truth Fellowship, to begin moving forward in this message. We're more than just a church plant. We're more than just, "Hey, we meet every Saturday for a couple hours and we have some great praise and worship, and we connect together, and we have some great prayer time, and we have a good message, and we hear the word. Sometimes we eat lunch and then go home." We're more than that—or at least we're supposed to, with the vision that we have and the vision that we're called to do.

We're planning to begin this mission, and I want you guys to keep watch. We'll be making some announcements, hopefully soon. When we schedule an event, something where we're not going to have it here, when we're actually going to go out and do something—it may look like something insignificant, it may not—I would ask: will you join us in taking the first steps of no longer forsaking the gospel that Yeshua left to us in the beginning?

This isn't just a message that you take home and say, "Yeah, I'm a believer now because I know what to do." This is a message that you take home and say, "I'm going to do it. Let's do it. Despite how uncomfortable, despite how dangerous, despite how whatever, I need to stand for

what God's reign stands for on earth." And so I'm very excited about the few things that we're getting together now. The elders are kind of brainstorming right now to put the rubber to the road so that we can begin together to do the calling and hopefully make an impact in God's kingdom here locally. Amen.

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