

Matthew 19-04-14b

And we're ready now to return to our study in Matthew chapter four. And in our first session, we discovered that for purposes known and instigated by God's Holy spirit, there is a good deal of information, uh, that is not in the account, uh, numerous events have transpired time has passed between Matthew chapter four, verse, uh, 11 and verse 12. And so when we pick up at verse 12, now, when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he departed to Galilee and leaving Nazareth.

See verse 13, leaving Nazareth. Why did he leave Nazareth? Because a prophet is not without honor, but it's his own country. And they tried to throw him off the brow of the hill.

So leaving Nazareth and that of course is passed without comment, but that's, that's saying quite a lot as we know from looking at the other accounts, Luke in particular, uh, he's leaving Nazareth for a good reason. There is no longer a receptive crowd there. They were initially glorifying and saying how great he sounded and all of that.

But when the import of the message strikes their hearts and they realize the conviction that it carries, their attitude changes. And it is a reminder of several things, not the least of which is that just gaining entree and getting the chance to speak to people, uh, is not the same as reaching them with a converting message. Uh, you can entice, you can cajole, you can lure, you can bait and switch.

You can do a lot of things. Uh, people may come and listen, but often when the truth of God's word strikes the heart, it is going to divide people into two groups, those who respond and those who react, those who accept and those who reject. And it has always been that way.

It will always be that way. Jesus will say in the future from this point, I have not come to bring peace, but a sword and it will divide, even dividing families. So that's what happens in Nazareth.

And so they are going to, uh, leave Nazareth in verse 13 and come and dwell in Capernaum, which is by the sea in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali. We have two things to cover and I couldn't figure out which order to cover them in. So I'm going to cover them backwards.

Because I do want to move forward in Matthew chapter four, but I also want to address something about that section that Matthew left out because I find it really interesting. It's not original to me. I ran across it in my perambulations and investigations, but it is, uh, persuasive.

It partakes of the kinds of things that we often see in scripture. And I want to cover that

as well. But let's finish this section here and make it at least, uh, through verse, um, into the 18 through 22 section.

So he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah, the prophet saying, the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. Galilee of the Gentiles. Aren't these people all Jewish up there? Why is it called Galilee of the Gentiles? The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, light has dawned.

Now, what is your, what is your instinct? What is your, uh, plan of action here? Once we see this old Testament allusion, what does it make you want to do? This is your hyperlink, right? This is the footnote. This is just the brief notation of where to go look for everything that is being said. This is from Isaiah chapter nine verses one and two.

So put a marker there at Matthew chapter four and go back to Isaiah chapter nine. In the same way that we saw the Lord Jesus quoting in the synagogue in Nazareth from Isaiah chapter 61, we find a quote here from the prophet Isaiah chapter nine. You might remember that in the great Isaiah scroll, and you can see a virtual copy of the great Dead Sea scroll of Isaiah that's in the shrine of the book in Jerusalem.

They've got a virtual copy of that online. I haven't looked at it in some time, but if it's still as it was when I last looked, you can actually, they've got the entire thing. Remember, it's a round building and they've got the thing in a curved case and they've got the thing in a curved case.

And actually, I guess you'd be going counterclockwise because you're reading right to left. But you can see that entire scroll all the way around. And online, you can just scroll the thing.

Be sure you go left and you can see the thing. It's a great Isaiah scroll. One of the things you will notice in that scroll is there are no chapter divisions and there are no verse markers.

It just flows, right? The chapters were not in the ancient text. Capitalization was not in the ancient text. In most cases, sentence breaks were not in the original.

You occasionally will see paragraph divisions and that's about it. And that's important because when we come to 9, 1 and 2, we're not at the section that we want to look at. We're in the middle of the section we want to look at.

But if you found Isaiah chapter 9, you will see the quote here, beginning in verse 1, where it says, the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, middle of the verse, afterward more heavily oppressed, the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, people who walked in darkness seen a great light. That gets you to the spot in the scroll where you

want to read. But here's what we want to look at.

Why is this quoted in the Gospel of Matthew? Turn back in the scroll to chapter 8, verse 11. This is the beginning of the section. Chapter 8, verse 11.

And my suggestion is that when we get back to Matthew chapter 4 and Zebulun and Naphtali, you want to annotate Isaiah 8, 11 through 9, 7. 8, 11 to 9, 7. This is the chunk that our hyperlink has taken us back to. And this is what people familiar with Isaiah would remember, this section. The chapter 9 break is very unfortunate.

It shouldn't even be there. This chapter should begin at 8, 11 and extend through 9, 7, in my humble opinion. So that's what we're going to read.

Look at Isaiah 8, 11. We're going to go through this quick. For the Lord spoke thus to me with a strong hand and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Do not say a conspiracy concerning all that this people call a conspiracy.

Do not be afraid of their threats. Do not be troubled. The Lord of hosts, him you shall hallow.

Let him be your fear and let him be your dread. If you've been following along on Thursday nights in our Psalm study, Psalm 119, and done Aleph and Bet and Gimel and Dalet with us, this strikes a familiar note, doesn't it? You've got a choice to make between paying attention to the princes, and they're speaking, and they are sitting and making threats, or you can trust God. You can be motivated by what you see in circumstances, or you can be motivated by your relationship with God.

Do not look around and say, It's a conspiracy. Just because all the people are saying it's a conspiracy, you might think back to the old Russiagate thing that's been going on now pretty much ever since Mr. Trump got in office, and the thing has been so thoroughly eviscerated, and yet there's still people running around saying, Conspiracy, conspiracy, because they can't believe that there wasn't some kind of outside help involved. Do not say a conspiracy concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.

The Lord of hosts, him you shall hallow. Let him be your fear. Let him be your dread.

He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Does it ring a bell? What do you think happened in Nazareth at the synagogue? The Lord Jesus, fulfilling this very section of Isaiah, quoting another section of Isaiah, becomes a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

And what do they try to do? You remember the 40 days testing? Cast yourself down, the angels will bear you up. What if he had said, Eh, go ahead, throw me off the brow of the

hill, see what happens. Angels come down, waft him gently to a soft landing.

Jesus knows his scripture. And to whom is he looking for provision? Who decides the timing and the nature of provision? To demand of God that he provide a particular kind of provision at a particular time is putting the Lord to the test. Jesus has already passed that test.

And this is the second time in the overall gospel accounts that we see Jesus put up at a height and not availing himself of what he could claim as one of God's promises. He could just say, try it, see what happens. But he doesn't.

Instead he walks through their midst. Why? Because he hallows the Lord of hosts. The Father is his fear.

The Father is his dread. He is more concerned about pleasing the Father and he knows the time is not yet. Remember in John where he says he did not trust himself to any man.

He knew what was in man and he didn't expect to change their minds and change their hearts with a miracle. The sign identified him to people who were looking. But a sign will not convince people who are reacting.

The sign will identify him to people who are anxious to accept, who are watching and looking and seeking. It is not going to change the minds. Do you not think that the devil and all of his fallen angels have seen everything that God can do? They were on hand for creation.

They've seen all of Jesus' miracles. Why do they not change their minds? They've got a different agenda. They've got a different set of priorities.

They have rejected God. Be aware that you cannot push, you cannot drag, you cannot cajole, you cannot persuade people into something they are not personally interested in. If they are not actively seeking, you are going to at best plant a shallow seed.

And it may spring up and look great, but when the heat comes, it is going to wither and it is going to brown, it is going to shrivel and it is going to be dead. Many, many ministries have celebrated people walking forward, filling out cards, making commitments, this, that and the other. The proof is over time.

You cannot persuade someone who isn't seeking. We can respond to those who are seeking. But we look to the Lord of hosts.

Him you shall hallow. Let him be your fear. Let him be your dread.

He will be as a sanctuary to you. Psalm 91, abide in the shadow of the Almighty. He's my rock, my fortress, my refuge.

Take shelter under his wings. Delivers us from the snare of the fowler and the perilous pestilence, right? He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, who are allegedly, ostensibly God's people, and a trap. You don't ever hear this in revivals and evangelistic pushes.

I'm here to tell you all about God, who is a trap and a snare and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. He's going to fall on you and crush you to powder. He's going to ensnare you and trap you and drag you out of the way.

Trap and a snare. Many among them, verse 15, shall stumble, they shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken. This is the judgment of God on them.

Why? All day long, I've held up my hands to a disobedient and stiff-necked people. I call, you do not answer. We have a covenant, you do not keep it.

You do not hallow God. He is not your fear and he is not your dread. He's not your priority.

And because of that, you're going to stumble, you're going to fall, you're going to be snared, you're going to be taken by God. Look at verse 16, bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. This will be understood, bind it up and seal it among the disciples.

It's bound and sealed to the outside. You know that Jesus is going to speak in parables. To those who are outside, everything is in parables.

But to you, disciples, I bind it and seal it. I communicate it. I explain it.

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait on the Lord who hides his face from the house of Jacob. God hides his face from whom? Those who aren't looking for it.

God's not going to stick his face down there and make them look. They're not going to see his face unless they look for his face. Hides his face from the house of Jacob.

I will hope in him. Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me. Now, how do you think the Lord Jesus would reflect on this particular section of Isaiah as he looks at his five disciples, these that God has given him, who are seekers, who were down at the Jordan, listening to the message, wanting to know when and how the deliverance would come.

And when it's identified, they're with it. They're there. Here I am and the children the Lord has given me.

We are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts who dwells in Mount Zion, who dwells at the temple. And when they say to you, seek those who are mediums and

wizards who whisper and mutter, should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony. If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

They will pass through it hard pressed and hungry, and it shall happen when they are hungry. They will be enraged and curse their king and their God and look upward. Then they will look to the earth and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish, and they will be driven into darkness.

These are the people of God spoken of here. They will be hard pressed and hungry. When they're hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God.

You remember in the not too distant future, Jesus is going to turn stones to bread and they're going to try to make him king. And Jesus doesn't permit it. Why? He knows this passage.

They will curse the king and they will curse God anytime the bread doesn't come just as fast and just as much as they want. Nevertheless, chapter 9, the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed as when at first he lightly esteemed the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali and afterward more heavily oppressed her by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan and Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in the land of shadow of death upon them, a light has shined. You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy. They rejoice before you according to the joy of harvest as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

For you have broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian for every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle and garments rolled in blood will be used for burning and fuel of fire. Why? For unto us, a child is born unto us, a son is given and the government will be upon his shoulder and his name will be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace. Four names should not be a comma after wonderful.

His name will be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace of the increase of government and peace. No end upon the throne of David and over his kingdom to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

And we have another zeal passage that was quoted when Jesus cleansed the temple. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. So what is the picture here? Jesus knows when he goes to the land of Zebulun and Naphtali that there are some sitting in that darkness in Galilee of the Gentiles who are going to see the light and come to the light.

But what does John say in chapter one? Some men love darkness rather than light

because their deeds are evil. He came unto his own and his own received him not. Prophet has no honor in his own country.

All of this in Nazareth. Well, zeal is my arbitrary turning point here to reverse, as I mentioned earlier, and go back a little bit because one of the things that happened in Passover number one in Jerusalem was the cleansing of the temple. Remember that? John chapter two verses 13 through 17, to which please turn.

He's been up to Capernaum after he turned the water to wine, but then he went down to Jerusalem and the Passover of the Jews was at hand and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple those who sold oxen, sheep and doves and the money changers doing business. When he made a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and the oxen and poured out the changers money and overturned the tables.

And he said to those who sold doves, take these things away. Do not make my father's house a house of emporium. House of merchandise.

Then his disciples remembered that it was written, zeal for your house has eaten me up. And this is Psalm 69.9. And if we were doing John, we would turn there and look at that hyperlink, but it's not our purpose this morning. So the Jews answered and said to him, what sign do you show to us since you do these things? And he basically says at the beginning of his ministry, what he's going to say is, he's going to say near the end, there will no sign be given you, but the sign of Jonah.

It's a three day, three night sign, right? Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. Now, keep your finger here and turn back to Matthew chapter 26. You remember I said that this whole episode was not recorded in the synoptics.

It's not in Matthew. It's not in Mark. It's not in Luke.

In Matthew chapter 26, you have verse 61. During the trial before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council, those who had laid hold of Jesus led him away to Caiaphas, the high priest. This is verse 57.

Peter followed him into distance. He's in the courtyard. The chief priest, verse 59, the elders and all the council.

this is the Sanhedrin, sought false testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days." Where do we have that comment? It's over here in John 1, during the first cleansing of the temple.

What is interesting is, if you go to Matthew 21, we have the account of the cleansing of the temple near the end of Jesus' ministry. Just look at the chapter number, it's chapter

21. Not at the beginning, but near the end.

So, if you go to Matthew 21, you have the triumphal entry, which is today, called Palm Sunday, called the triumphal entry. And you have that whole episode, Hosanna to the Son of David and so forth, all the way through verse 11, the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. Nazareth of Galilee, he's the prophet.

Look at verse 12 of Matthew 21. Matthew 21, 12. Then Jesus went into the temple of God.

Then, this is after riding the donkey, after the clothes, after the palm branches. Today, Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And he said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.

The blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them. The chief priests saw the things that he did, they're indignant. And he left the city, in verse 17, went out to Bethany and lodged there.

Then the next day he's going to wither the fig tree and so on. You're into the Passion Week, as they call it. So the question has always been, because that account is paralleled, the cleansing of the temple is paralleled in Mark chapter 11 and in Luke chapter 19.

But if you have little parallel passages in your Bible and you're looking at Matthew chapter 21, you'll see Jesus cleanses the temple, Mark 11, 15-19. Luke 19, 45-48. John 2, 13-22.

John has it at the beginning before he even goes north to Galilee. We saw that in our sequence. The other three Gospels have all four Gospels record a cleansing of the temple.

John has it at the beginning, the Synoptics have it at the end, on this day, this day, cleansing of the temple. So the question has always been, one of these crux interpretatum type of things, well, did Jesus actually cleanse the temple twice or only once? And John has relocated this episode to the beginning for theological purposes, and he's sort of taken it out of time. Well, if you remember the next day, the next day, the next day sequence in John, and he goes to Capernaum with his disciples, and is there not many days? Then he went to Jerusalem for the Passover, and he cleanses the temple.

And what does he say on that occasion? It's a different conversation. He says, you're making it a house of emporium. He doesn't say you've made it a den of thieves.

He doesn't quote, my house shall be called a house of prayer. He makes the three-day

quotation. That is quoted falsely and in a twisted form as a part of the evidence in the trial in Matthew, but Matthew doesn't record him ever saying that earlier.

Wouldn't it have been handy if Jesus had said what John records him saying in John 2, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Why wouldn't that be in the Matthew account of the cleansing of the temple? And then he can refer back to it and say, well, he just said four days ago, destroy the temple, and he would raise it up. But they don't find these guys until the end.

They're just digging through the earth trying to find somebody who will bring witness, and somebody remembers two years earlier that Jesus said this when he first came to Jerusalem, and it's garbled. They're remembering it from two Passovers ago. But here's what I want to get to now because there are in fact two cleansings of the temple.

John records the first one. It has many unique details. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the second one.

And when you look at the account in John 2, you'll remember that unlike the second time, in verse 15, Jesus made a whip of cords. Not one of the more popular paintings of Jesus whipping people and animals out of the temple courtyard. It says he made a whip of cords and drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and the oxen, poured out the changers' money, and overturned the tables.

So this is not in our Matthew gospel, but we need to cover it, and there's an interesting illumination on it. And again, this is not my personal insight. I ran across this from a fellow named Dr. Joel McDermott, and I like what he has to say, and I wanted to share it with you.

It makes good sense to me. He concludes, as we do, that there are two temple cleansings, and he says, why? Why would Jesus cleanse the temple twice? One of the arguments that it's two different versions of one event is, why would he do it twice? Once at the beginning and once at the end? And a lot of different explanations have been offered, but I like this one best. Turn with me to the account in John, chapter 2, verse 16.

Take these things away, the tables, the animals, and so on. Do not make my Father's house a house of merchandise, a house of emporium. What works is repeated twice.

Do not make my Father's house a house, right? Then his disciples remembered that it was written, what? Zeal for what has eaten me up? Your house, house, house, house. What do we know about houses that need cleansing? And this was Dr. McDermott's great insight, and I like it a lot. Turn back to Leviticus, chapter 14.

You will remember that Leviticus has a lot of things to say about cleansing. Leviticus, chapter 14. This begins, as we have revisited many times, with the ritual for a cleansed

leper.

The law of his cleansing, being brought to the priest, and so on. But let's pick this up a little bit later in the chapter at verse 33. My New King James has a helpful annotation, a little paragraph break there.

The law concerning leprous houses. Now, leprous in the law is really a mistranslation. It does not mean leprosy.

A house can't get leprosy. Garments, fabrics don't get leprosy. And this is an unfortunate translation.

A better translation would be corruption. There is some corruption involved here. Or an affliction.

There's something growing there that shouldn't be there. This could have been mildew, mold, some other form of corruption. But it is a deathly sign.

If it was a body, it would be gangrene. This is something that grows and corrupts. So every place you see leprosy, we're just going to say corruption.

The law concerning corrupt houses. Now, why is Jesus cleansing his father's house? It's corrupt. They've turned it into a store.

And you know the story there. They would wait for the pilgrim feasts, and people who couldn't herd an animal all the way there for the Passover sacrifice would have to buy one. Well, they said, we've got plenty of animals for sale here, but you can't buy it with common money.

You can't buy it with Roman money. You've got to buy it with temple money. And the exchange rate was confiscatory.

Converting your Roman money, it wouldn't buy a fraction of what it would buy in a regular market. But these were the only animals. They had inspectors.

And any animal you brought, any animal that you bought out in town, or you passed a farm and bought a lamb, they would say, oh sorry, I found a blemish on this lamb. It doesn't qualify. You've got to buy one of our lambs.

But to buy it, you've got to trade your money for our money. But you've got to give us a whole lot of money for a little bit of our money, and then we'll sell you one of our lambs. And so it was a racket.

And they had turned it into this big profit-making scheme. And it was like tourism in towns where they charge you \$9 for a can of soda and all that because they've got you over a barrel. So Jesus sees this corruption taking what was supposed to be a time of

reflection on God and His grace and His provision and His covenant and turning it into this big money-making racket.

Right there at the temple that was supposed to be dedicated to the glory of God, it's dedicated to the making of money. And so He is angry. And that's why He fashions the whip of cords.

But look at what did the law say? Jesus told the leper that he cleanses, go show yourself to the priest, offer the sacrifice that Moses commanded. Well, if Jesus sees his Father's house and it's corrupt, what does the law say in terms of its cleansing? When you have come into the land of Canaan, verse 34, Leviticus 14, which I give you as a possession, and I put a plague of corruption in a house in the land of your possession, and your little NKJV text note says decomposition by mildew, mold, dry rot, etc. He who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, it seems to me that there is some corruption in the house.

Who's the owner of the temple? Whose house is it? It's God's house. Who has given the Lord Jesus His mission? God the Father. So the owner of the house has come to our great high priest according to the order of Melchizedek and said, I think there's corruption in the house.

Remember when the Holy Spirit takes Ezekiel and shows him corruption in the house? The Lord Jesus comes on this first Passover in His public ministry. He's been there many times before throughout His growing up years, but now He's in His public ministry, and the owner of the house has told Him there's corruption here. The priest, verse 36, shall command that they empty the house.

What did Jesus do? He formed a whip out of cords and emptied the house, right? Don't you like this already? What Jesus does is biblical. He goes to the house and empties it out, examines the plague, that all that is in the house may not be made unclean, and afterward the priest shall go to examine the house. He shall examine the plague, and if the plague is on the walls of the house with ingrained streaks, greenish or reddish, which appear to be deep in the wall, is this a deep-set, long-standing corruption? Then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house and shut up the house seven days.

It is to be quarantined for one week, right? And the priest shall come again on the seventh day and look, and if the plague has spread on the walls of the house, the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which is the plague. Take away the stones. Does Jesus have anything to say about the stones of the temple at any point in his career? He is going to come back.

It is not seven years. It is not a week of days. But Jesus is going to return and examine the temple again.

And at the second cleansing, that is when it can't be saved. Look at what it says in Leviticus. The priest shall command they take away the stones in which is the plague.

They shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city, and he shall cause the house to be scraped inside all around, and the dust that they scrape off they shall pour into an unclean place outside the city. Then they shall take other stones and put them in the place of those stones. Take other mortar and plaster the house.

What does Peter have to say about, in fact, what did Jesus name Peter as soon as he saw him? You are a stone. What temple did Jesus talk about when he said, knock this temple down, in three days I will rebuild it? The temple of his body. What does he say about Mr. Stone? About Peter the rock? About Cephas? You are a stone, and on this stone I will build my church.

What will Paul say later? You are the temple. You're the temple of God. You're supposed to be the dwelling place.

What is Jesus doing? He has found the current house corrupt. He's going to give it a chance to recover. He's going to come back.

It has not recovered, and it is going to receive the issue of condemnation. Now what could his disciples have been if the nation had responded? The kingdom is going to be offered by Jesus and his disciples. He's going to take his disciples as other stones.

As Leviticus says, the priest shall take away the stones in which is the plague, cast them into an unclean place. Woe to you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, you whited sepulchers. Inside you're full of dead men's bones, corrupt.

That leadership is prospectively taken out of the way, and Jesus has new leadership in the form of his disciples, new stones. Take other stones, put them in the place of those stones. He shall take other mortar and plaster the house.

Look at verse 43 of Leviticus 14. Now if the plague comes back and breaks out in the house, after he has taken away the stones, after he has scraped the house, after it is plastered, that's the second cleansing of the temple, right? He's come back. He comes and looks, and if the plague has spread in the house, it is an active corruption in the house.

It is unclean. And he shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, all the plaster of the house, carry them outside the city to an unclean place. He who goes into that house at all while it is shut up shall be unclean until evening.

He who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes. He who eats in the house shall wash his clothes. But if the priest comes and examines it, the plague has not spread, then it can be restored.

In this case, when Jesus returns and looks at the temple, on this day, he looks around and leaves, and weeps over Jerusalem. It cannot be saved. There will not be one stone left on another.

So what is going to happen instead? Well, what does Peter have to say, who was present for many of these events? There needs to be a new house. Jesus' body is the new temple. The temple, when it was first built, first constructed out of stones, was filled with God's glory.

The Holy Spirit came and remained on the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit came and remained on the Lord Jesus. That's the glory reappearing, right? That's the glory of God on the new temple as it were.

So, where is the temple now? For a closing verse, flip over to 1 Peter 2. 1 Peter 2, verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you. Flip over to chapter 2, verse 4. 1 Peter 2, verse 5. That was chapter 1, verse 4. This is chapter 2, verse 4. But notice in the beginning of the letter, he talks about incorruptible and undefiled inheritance. Now look at chapter 2, verse 4. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The temple was the place of sacrifice. Paul talks about this in Romans 12. Present yourselves living sacrifices.

You are living stones, holy and acceptable. We should be the temple. But Jesus comes in a priestly role and examines His Father's house, finds it corrupt, identifies the bad stones, identifies the new good stones in His disciples.

The people do not respond. They do not mend their ways. And on this day, the second cleansing of the temple is the time for its evaluation.

It does not pass muster. The corruption is deep. It is ingrained.

It cannot be removed. And so the house is to be destroyed. One stone will not be left upon another.

Destroy this temple, He says, talking about His body, and in three days I will raise it up. After two days, your dead bodies shall live. On the third day, God raises them up.

So one temple cleansing or two, two makes good sense, doesn't it? One, identifying the problem, giving it a chance to heal. It doesn't pass the second inspection, and the priestly pronouncement is destruction. But this first cleansing of the temple has taken

place, and Jesus says, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

That's going to be quoted 17 chapters hence when we get to Matthew. Actually it's 22 chapters hence when we get to Matthew 26 in the trial. Where does that statement come from? Clear back at the first cleansing.

They reject the priest. They reject his authority. They reject his diagnosis.

They think everything is fine. He's told them twice, unfit, unclean. He's there to cleanse it.

They don't accept it. What happens if we fail to avail ourselves of God's cleansing grace? It is inevitable that judgment must follow. We are the living stones.

We pray that God does not, under Jesus' priestly ministry, find corruption in our walls. When we have our plaster scraped and have our bad stones removed, that it avails and we're healed and we're whole and we're fit for sacrifice that is incorruptible and undefiled as spiritual stones coming to Him, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Well, we've managed to cover quite a bit of ground between 411 and 412 of Matthew.

We've seen Jesus come up to Galilee where He's going to begin that ministry, and He's already done some things not recorded in Matthew, but we're going to pick up with Jesus walking beside the sea and formally calling His longtime disciples to full-time following. They had episodic times together. Now they're going to be with Him full-time, full-time Christian service.

So we'll see that beginning next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank You for the illumination that we receive from Your Word, the fabric of Your plan.

Many times there are parts of it that are hidden to us, but You are at work. What You do is significant, and we know what we need to know. You reveal to us what is important for us to focus on.

We pray that as we reflect on these truths and recognize the importance of being ready, of being seekers, of being those who respond when the opportunity is presented to us to serve the Lord Jesus, to abide in His presence, that we will be ready, that we will have been cleansed of our impurities, and that our time spent on this earth representing the Lord Jesus as His body will reflect Your glory, will shine forth a light that draws others to You, those who are seeking, those who are asking, those who are knocking, and that we together can advance forward into the new light of a new day in the coming kingdom, both of the Son and Your own, and that we will be thoroughly furnished at that time for every good work. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.