

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG311 – The Fast of Tisha B'Av

Welcome to this podcast, I am glad you could be with us today. This is *Growing in God* with Gary Hargrave, and this is a very special podcast, because we are talking about the Fast of Tisha B'Av. The Fast of Tisha B'Av, if you are not familiar with it, falls on the ninth day of the month of Av on the Jewish calendar. The Fast of Tisha B'Av commemorates mainly the destruction of both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, but it also remembers other tragic events in Jewish history which took place on the ninth of Av. So this is a time of fasting and mourning over the things that have transpired on this specific day; and again, as I said, mainly we are looking at the destruction of both the First and the Second Temples.

In Luke the twenty-first chapter, Yeshua actually speaks about the destruction of the Second Temple; therefore it really comes into play during this time, because He addresses the reality of this event before it happens. In His discourse, I want to find some help for us in how to relate to this day of Tisha B'Av, to the Jewish people, and to Israel. So let's begin by reading some portions out of Luke 21. I will begin at verses 5-9, HCSB.¹ It says,

As some were talking about the temple complex, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, He said, "These things that you see—the days will come when not one stone will be left on another that will not be thrown down!"

"Teacher," they asked Him, "so when will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"

Then He said, "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.' Don't follow them. When you hear of wars and rebellions, don't be alarmed. Indeed, these things must take place first, but the end won't come right away."

Christ is addressing their looking at the Temple and how beautiful it was. This was Herod's Temple, which was very elaborate, very beautiful. It was one of the wonders of the world. And He says that not one stone that they are looking at will be left standing, but they will all be thrown down.

We also see this addressed in Matthew the twenty-fourth chapter; and I want to read it also in the beginning, number one, to emphasize the fact that what Yeshua is saying is repeated for a second time in the Gospels, which of course makes it important that it would be repeated. But also, it is worded just a little bit differently, so the explanation needs to really take on the whole when you read these prophecies. And many do, trying to figure it out, because this encompasses the days of tribulation, it encompasses the time of the end, and it encompasses Christ's explanation of these times. So when we look at Matthew 24, you will see that it is worded a little bit differently, but we are speaking of the same events.

¹ Holman Christian Standard Bible.

Matthew 24, verses 1-6,

Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars."

Now again, remember, when Christ is addressing these things, He is directly addressing Jerusalem, He is addressing Israel, the Jewish people. And it is important, if you are going to go back and try to really unpack what is being said here and put it into some type of interpretation, that you be focusing it on Israel, on Jerusalem. I think this verse 6 is very important right now in our time, because many say, "Oh yes, we have been hearing of wars and rumors of wars around the world forever." Well, He is not necessarily addressing rumors of wars around the world; He is talking about the destruction of the Temple. He is talking about events that are going to happen in Jerusalem, talking about events on the Temple Mount, etc. So when He says, "You are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars," that is significant at the moment, because Israel right now is in a war, and there are also rumors of another war to take place. So you could say that this is very poignant to what Christ is speaking of.

But going back to the issue of Tisha B'Av, we see that He is talking about the Temple. He is talking about the destruction of Herod's Temple, the Second Temple, and this is part of what is being fasted over and mourned over during this day of the ninth of Av. Christ goes on to talk about all of these events, which we generally encompass into the concept of end-time events, that these are the end days because this ends with His coming. So let's go down to verse 24 of Luke 21, and we will focus on that for a moment. It says, "They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." So again, He is very specifically addressing these events about the destruction of the Temple. Let's read it again, verses 24-28, HCSB.

"They will fall by the edge of the sword and will be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and there will be anguish on the earth among nations bewildered by the roaring sea and waves. People will faint from fear and expectation of the things that are coming on the world, because the celestial powers will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. [Verse 28:] But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near!"

In a sense, verse 28 is going back and encompassing all these events that He is talking about. So when these things begin, then you are to take a certain position, which is that you are to stand up, you are to lift up your head, because your redemption draws near. We are not to be focused on these events that are taking place; we are to look up, we are to reach into the heavenly places to be focused on God, to be focused on Christ and what They are doing in bringing forth the Kingdom – not consumed in fear, like it says many people are because they are focusing on these events which we refer to as times of tribulation. So again, Matthew is talking about these same concepts and these same events. We know

that this is what he is addressing, and we know that this is what is going to take place; and these things do in fact take place, beginning back with Christ.

We have to remember that when we talk about end-time events, we realize that the birth of Christ was the beginning of the end time. Christ being on this earth, Christ going to the Cross, Christ suffering, being resurrected, being received up into heaven in the Ascension – all of these were really the beginning of end-time events. And so, we have to carefully discuss this idea of the end time, because we have been into the end times now for a few thousand years. That is really what we are recognizing as the truth for us walking today, especially as Christians with the understanding and revelation that we have.

So then as Christians, when we come to this time of Tisha B'Av, what are we doing? What are we recognizing? Why are we focused on this? I think it is important for us to focus on this because there is a purpose that we have. I want to look at Isaiah the fortieth chapter, verses 1-2. It says, "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." I think this is directly addressing the Gentile Christian world at this time, of what we are to do, part of our role at this time. Certainly, I believe it is part of our role in joining with Israel during the time of Tisha B'Av, during the time of fasting. We can fast with them, we can mourn with them over what happened to the Temple, over these other historical events in Jewish life. But I believe we are also given something in our prayer, in our intercession, in our prophecy, to comfort Israel, to comfort the Jewish people, to speak kindly to Jerusalem. It was Jerusalem that was devastated, and that is what is being fasted about – the destruction of the Temple in Israel. And not only was the Temple destroyed, but Jerusalem was ravished in the destruction that took place under Roman rule. So, we are looking to be a voice of comfort during this time of Tisha B'Av, and I want us to really enter into this with a lot of faith.

To me, the way we do that is to reach into the Scriptures, reach into the Word that God has brought about what is to befall Israel after these days. So I want to begin with Zechariah the eighth chapter, and begin reading at verses 18-19. It says, "Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, "The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace."'" This is a great several verses, and I will read some more. But before I go on, I just want to remind us that Av is the fifth month of the ecclesiastical year, therefore it falls within this prophecy. The Lord is prophesying about this fast time that we observe during the fifth month of the ecclesiastical calendar, called the month of Av, on the ninth when we celebrate or enjoin this Fast of Tisha B'Av; this is the fifth month. So this prophesy out of Zechariah to me is directly addressing this time that we enter into of Tisha B'Av.

He goes on to say in verses 20-23,

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will also go." So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord.'

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment [or the *tzitzit*] of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'"

We are talking about this fasting that has been taking place for over 2,000 years since the destruction of the Temple, that it is going to turn into a time of feasting and joy and delight. It is going to be a time that ushers in the restoration that God is prophesying. The nations will return and instead of warring against Israel and Jerusalem, they will come to seek the Lord. And that is what I want to do for Israel. That is what I want to do for the Jewish people during this time of Tisha B'Av. Our celebration is, yes, to mourn the fact that it was a very dark time of history to see the Temple destroyed. But also, we realize that we are looking forward to this great restoration that God has prophesied over and over again, the time when this fasting will be replaced by feasts of joy and delight, and the nations will return, not with sword and spear to destroy Jerusalem and the Jewish people, but to go up to the house of the Lord and seek God together with the Jews. What a wonderful prophecy.

So we do. We turn loose our faith in this time to say we are here to "'Comfort, O comfort My people,' says the Lord." We are here to speak kindly to Jerusalem, to remind you of the Word of God that says it will not always be a time of fasting; it will not always be a time of mourning; it will not always be a time of remembering the devastation. But instead, it will be a time of introducing the restoration of God, the blessing of God, and the rebuilding of that which has been torn down.

In Isaiah 41, verses 8-10, we see a fantastic prophecy. It says,

"But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham My friend, you whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts and said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you [Israel is not rejected, the Jewish people are not rejected; they are His chosen]. Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'"

In this time before the restoration begins, when we are still fasting, we have to take on a certain posture, which is to not look around anxiously at what is going on; because today, obviously, it is very traumatic, starting with October 7th. What days we have been in. It is so easy to look around, in this time of mourning, to anxiously wonder, "What will happen? What will tomorrow bring? What are the days ahead going to be like?" But He says, "Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God." And we speak to Israel, "Your God reigns. Your God lives, and He will strengthen you, and He will help you. He will uphold you with His mighty right hand."

Verses 11-14,

"Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish. You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent. For I am the Lord your God, who upholds your right hand, who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.' Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you," declares the Lord, "and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel."

God is on the scene. And during this year of fasting, we want to remind you that God is your Redeemer. You are not to fear. You are not to look around yourself anxiously wondering what further destruction will happen on the ninth of Av. I believe it is time for the end of destruction. It is time for the fast to be turned into a feast, because our God is with you. Your God is the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

I want to go on and read more about these times of restoration. I will begin at Isaiah 61, verses 1-4.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified [God will be glorified in the deliverance and the restoration of Israel and His chosen people]. Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins [the ancient ruins will be rebuilt; as Christ was saying, not one of these stones will remain upon another, but we also know in the prophecies that they will rebuild the ancient ruins], they will raise up the former devastations; and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.

Ezekiel likewise prophesies, in chapter 39, verses 25-29,

Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name. They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their own land with no one to make them afraid. When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations [God will glorify Himself and sanctify His name through Israel and the Jewish people]. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord God.

Beautiful days of restoration. And they will rebuild these ancient cities.

In Amos 9:13-15, it says,

"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will be dissolved. Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them," says the Lord your God.

Jeremiah 30:15-20,

"Why do you cry out over your injury? Your pain is incurable. Because your iniquity is great and your sins are numerous, I have done these things to you. Therefore all who devour you will be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, will go into captivity; and those who plunder you will be for plunder, and all who prey upon you I will give for prey. For I will restore you to health and I will heal you of your wounds," declares the Lord, "because they have called you an outcast, saying: 'It is Zion; no one cares for her.'"

"Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwelling places; and the city will be rebuilt on its ruin, and the palace will stand on its rightful place. From them will proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who celebrate; and I will multiply them and they will not be diminished; I will also honor them and

they will not be insignificant. Their children also will be as formerly, and their congregation shall be established before Me; and I will punish all their oppressors.”

I want to read one more. And again, as we are reading each of these, we prophesy the Word of the Lord again by re-speaking it with faith to Israel and all of the Jewish people, no matter where they live in Israel or the Diaspora. Jeremiah 33, verses 7-9, says,

“I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel and will rebuild them as they were at first. I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me. It will be to Me a name of joy, praise and glory before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good that I do for them, and they will fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it.”

I can't wait to watch that broadcast on CNN – don't you think that will be great? It says, “For they will hear of all the good that I do for them, and they will fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it.” And we do, we minister blessing, joy, and Shalom to Israel. Yes, it is Tisha B'Av, and this year will be another year of fasting and mourning. But also this year, there are many who cry out as the comforters to speak comfort, to re-voice in faith the Word of the Lord that prophesies the rebuilding of the City, the reestablishment of the fortunes of Jacob. And we believe with all of our heart that these things will happen very shortly in the days ahead.

Amen.