

## Making All Things New: A Greater World

When the first explorers discovered the Americas they believed they had stumbled upon a whole new world – a primitive untouched land without the taint of European politics and culture. The words of Jesus to the disciples must have seemed no less surprising and unbelievable as he talked about the setting up of his kingdom. Herod's temple upgrades continued for nearly 60 years and were still in process in Jesus day. The improvements to the temple started the conversation between Jesus and his disciples. The disciples were marveling at the beauty of the temple when Jesus reminded them of the clash of kingdoms that would leave these stones so recently replaced strewn all over with no two stones stacked upon another. Jesus vision for the world included so much more than a mere temple upgrade. Jesus had come to introduce a brand-new world filled with new people as announced in Revelation 21:5, "*Behold, I make all things new!*"

In his last temptation, the Devil offered Jesus the world and a way around the cross if Jesus would merely bow to him – the reigning prince of this world. This may have been the only real temptation of the three and Jesus might have fallen for it if he had only come to take over Satan's kingdom, but in truth he came to introduce a whole new world – a world in which God would be king and where everyone and everything is in sync with God for his glory.

### Journey Together:

- 1). What do you look forward to most about Jesus kingdom?
- 2). What are your greatest fears about the return of Christ?
- 3). What do you want others to know about Jesus' new world order?

**Road Map:** Read Matthew 24 & 25

- 4). What prompted the discussion between Jesus and the disciples about the destruction of the temple? What was the connection between the destruction of the temple and the preceding chapter on the woes of the Pharisees?
- 5). What are some of the signs that point to the nearness of his coming? How many of these signs have already taken place?

6). What is the main sign that we are to look for in the setting up of his kingdom?

7). Jesus tells four stories about being prepared for his coming:

- Unjust Steward
- Ten Virgins
- Investing the Kings Gold
- The Sheep and the Goats

What are these stories about? How are they different from one another? How are they similar? How do they help us prepare?

8). According to Jesus answer to his final sermon how are we to prepare for his coming? What is our role for ushering in Jesus kingdom?

9). Why are you most excited about the return of Christ and what preparations do you still need to make to be ready?

**Discipleship challenge:** Jesus is challenging us to prepare and be engaged for a new world order. Practice the sixth competency of discipleship a *Greater World* under Rabbi Jesus this week by imagining the world under the Lordship of Christ and by reminding someone about His vision for the world.

10). How can this group pray for you right now?

### My Journey:

- 1). How has God been using *Journey* in your life this week to do *Great Things* for Him?
- 2). How has God been helping you set up for his kingdom?
- 3). How can this group pray for you today?

## Backstory:

Dallas Willard writes that Jesus view for the world was vastly different from the world we find ourselves in.

*“To his eyes this is a God-bathed and God-permeated world. It is a world filled with a glorious reality, where every component is within the range of God’s direct knowledge and control—though he obviously permits some of it, for good reasons, to be for a while otherwise than as he wishes. It is a world that is inconceivably beautiful and good because of God and because God is always in it. It is a world in which God is continually at play and over which he constantly rejoices.”*

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (pp. 61-62). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

This is the world that Jesus inaugurated for all of us that we might – “seek first the kingdom and His righteousness.” The temple was the place that God directed first Moses in the mobile sanctuary, then Solomon in the first temple for people of God to meet with Him. There was no more sacred place on earth, yet Jesus was condemned for threatening to destroy it (Matthew 26:60, 61), and He prophesied here about its coming demise.

For Jesus, the temple was “*a house of prayer for all nations.*” (Mark 11:17). His problem with the temple was how the Jewish leaders had profaned it by turning it into a market place and limiting its access. But another issue was the size of the temple in relation to God. God had reminded king David thousands of years earlier that the world was His temple and David’s own family would be the human genus of this new structure (Isaiah 66:1, I Chronicles 17). The original temple that Solomon built nor this Second Temple rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity and now in the process of a sixty-year upgrade, would never be able to contain the God of the universes.

Jesus referred to this in His conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4 – “*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.*” There was no physical place large enough for Yahweh. Paul underscored it in His reference about God to the Athenian philosophers in Acts 17 – “*The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.*”<sup>25</sup> *And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.”*

It was important that the disciples get this. Until they realized Jesus picture of God and His relationship they would continue to cling to the only world they knew. They would keep trying to use Jesus and His resources to reshape the world according to their smaller vision. They had to understand the reason Jesus would never bow to the Devil as a way of regaining this world since He did not want it in the first place. Jesus had come to bring an end to this world and to establish a new world system - the kingdom of His Father. To clarify this mission Jesus told four parables of judgment emphasizing the need to prepare for God’s new world order. Each one provides focus for a great new world.

1. Unjust Steward: Prepare through faithful service.
2. Ten Virgins: Prepare for a wedding delay.
3. Investing the Kings Gold: Prepare by advancing the kingdom.
4. The Sheep and the Goats: Prepare by identifying and ministering to Jesus.

The sixth discipleship competency of Jesus is letting go of this world system to fully embrace the *Greater New World* of Jesus. As Jesus once said, “*What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?*” (Mark 8:36). The path of discipleship leads to a new world order under the lordship of Jesus Christ! Disciples are fully committed to this brand new world!