

(12) Jesus Tells the Future (Mt. 24:1-51; Mk. 13:1-37; Lk. 21:5-36)

1. This episode combines with the next for what is commonly called The Mount Olivet Discourse.
 - a. During the Passion Week it was Jesus' practice to teach in the temple each day, retiring to Mount Olivet each evening (Lk. 21:37-38).
 - b. Meals and sleeping were evidently in the home of Simon the Leper in Bethany (Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9), with Lazarus, Mary & Martha close by (Jn. 12:1-8).
 - c. Normally, prayer would take place in Gethsemane (Jn. 18:1-2).
 - d. Somewhere on Mt. Olivet, a series of powerful prophesies would be delivered two days before the cross (Mt. 26:2; Mk. 14:1-2).
2. As they depart the temple, the disciples express how awesome it appears to them (Mt. 24:1; Mk. 13:1; Lk. 21:5), prompting Jesus to prophecy its complete destruction—down to the very last stone (Mt. 24:2; Mk. 13:2; Lk. 21:6).
3. Peter, James, John, & Andrew led the private questioning (Mk. 13:3 cf. Lk. 21:7 and esp. Mt. 24:3).
 - a. The Olivet Discourse is a private message to His disciples. The 1st century rejecters of Christ are not warned, but the Tribulational disciples of Christ will certainly pay close attention.
 - b. The disciples' questions and the Lord's answers must be carefully sorted out.
 - 1) The time inquiries (when) locked in on the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem as well as additional things spoken of in that context ("these things") (Mt. 24:3a; Mk. 13:4a; Lk. 21:7a).
 - 2) The additional things spoken of in that context clearly included Jerusalem and her desolate house (Mt. 23:38; Lk. 21:20).
 - 3) The sign inquiries (what) are hampered by finite and flawed understanding that only envisions a single temple destruction (Mk. 13:4b; Lk. 21:7b). This finite and flawed understanding also links the temple destruction with Jesus' return and the end of the age (Mt. 24:3b).
 - 4) The Lord's answers, as recorded in the synoptic narratives, were more specific than the disciples realized. When the Lord's answers are carefully sorted out, a fuller and clearer understanding of Jerusalem eschatology will result.
4. The disciples must be forgiven their ignorance, as no prophet of Israel prior to Jesus ever distinguished the two advents of Messiah with any clarity (1st Pet. 1:10-12). All OT messianic prophecies therefore can be categorized as first and/or second advent prophecies.
5. Jerusalem & Temple destruction prophecies require careful searches and inquiries similar to dispersion and regathering of Israel prophecies.
 - a. Babylonian captivity & return prior to first advent.
 - b. Global dispersion & return prior to second advent.
6. Jerusalem & Temple destruction prophecies look forward from the perspective of the time they were uttered and may not distinguish with precision which actual destruction is in view.
 - a. Moses, Isaiah & Jeremiah prophecies might pertain to the Babylonian destruction and/or the Roman destruction.
 - b. Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah & Jesus prophecies antedate the Babylonian destruction and therefore must pertain to the Roman destruction, *but* . . .
 - c. Jerusalem & Temple destruction prophecies pertaining to Roman destruction may reference either the 70^{AD} Roman destruction and/or the eschatological Roman destruction. This is where studies of the Mount Olivet discourse must be careful.
 - d. The Apostle John's prophecies antedate the 70^{AD} Roman destruction and leave only the eschatological Roman destruction as a possible fulfillment. This is why Tribulation and Second Advent studies must reject preterism.
7. The Gospel of Matthew supplies the fullest narration of the disciples questions.
 - a. When will these things happen? Luke records Jesus' answer to this question (Luke 21:20-24), but Matthew & Mark omit it.
 - b. What will be the sign of your coming? Jesus answers this question last after he answers the last question first (Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Lk. 21:25-28).
 - c. What will be the sign of the end of the age? Jesus answers this question first by describing what is not yet the end (Mt. 24:4-14; Mk. 13:5-13; Lk. 21:8-19), and then by describing the sign of the end (Mt. 24:15-28; Mk. 13:14-23, but not Luke).

8. Question #3: What will be the sign of the end of the age? Answered by “not yet” circumstances (Mt. 24:4-14; Mk. 13:5-13; Lk. 21:8-19), followed by the sign of the end (Mt. 24:15-28; Mk. 13:14-23; omitted by Luke).
- a. This subject is ripe for misleading (Mt. 24:4,5; Mk. 13:5,6; Lk. 21:8) and fear-mongering (Mt. 24:6; Mk. 13:7; Lk. 21:9).
 - b. Thomas Ice marks a noted parallel between these warnings and the seals of Revelation 6. If that is a valid comparison to make, then it helps to pinpoint the seals to the first half of the 70th week of Daniel.
 - c. False Christs have appeared throughout the Dispensation of the Church and will continue to appear in the Dispensation of Israel: Age of Tribulation (Mt. 24:5; Mk. 13:6; Lk. 21:8).
 - d. Wars & rumors of wars involving nations and kingdoms, plus famines and earthquakes comprise the “not yet” circumstances of the beginning of birth pangs (Mt 24:6-8; Mk. 13:7-8; Lk. 21:9-11).
 - 1) Wars & rumors of wars could be thought of in our modern terminology of hot and cold war.
 - 2) Nations (ἔθνος ethnos ^{#1484}_{162x}) and kingdoms (βασιλεία basileia ^{#932}_{162x}) address conflicts among ethnic and political rivals.
 - a) Genesis designates lands with an assigned language populated by families organized into nations (Gen. 10:5,20,31).
 - b) Daniel stipulates God’s control over kings and kingdoms (Dan. 2:21; 4:17,25,32; see also 5:19 for peoples, nations, and languages).
 - c) Acts 17:26 demonstrates God’s purpose in every nation and their designated land.
 - d) Rev. 5:9 illustrates Jesus Christ’s work on the cross for every tribe and tongue and people and nation.
 - 3) Arnold Fruchtenbaum authored a compelling, if not conclusive, study relating this idiom to the historical events of World War I and World War II. Messianic Bible Studies [038](#).
 - 4) Natural disasters are normal occurrences, so the episodes described here must be of an increased frequency and/or intensity. Arnold Fruchtenbaum documents the increased frequency of earthquakes through the centuries.
 - 5) The beginning of birth pangs are not the actual birth pangs spoken of throughout prophetic literature (Isa. 13:8; 26:17; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; Mic. 4:9–10; cf. 1 Thess. 5:3).
 - e. Global anti-Semitism will exhibit the greatest ever attempted genocide (Mt. 24:9-14; Mk. 13:9-13; Lk. 21:12-19).
 - 1) From Pharaoh (Ex. 1:15,16) to Haman (Est. 3:6) to Hitler, to Antichrist, no attempt to exterminate the Jews can succeed (Jer. 31:35-37).
 - 2) “They” (Mt. 24:9; Mk. 13:9; Lk. 21:12) are the mislead many (Mt. 24:5; Mk. 13:6) serving the false Christs by persecuting the followers of the Only Begotten.
 - 3) Tribulation and death (Mt. 24:9) will use religious, political and judicial mechanisms (Mk. 13:9-11; Lk. 21:12-15).
 - 4) World hatred will be specifically because of the name of Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:9; Mk. 13:13; Lk. 21:17).
 - 5) Family & culture ties will be rendered meaningless as betrayal will come from even the closest relationships. This includes apostasy by fellow believers (Mt. 24:10-12) and hostility from unbelieving family members (Mk. 13:12; Lk. 21:16).
 - 6) Enduring to the end is not an Arminian theological justification, but a Dispensational encouragement to the enduring remnant in the Tribulation (Mt. 24:13; Mk. 13:13; Lk. 21:19).
 - f. The Sign of the End (Mt. 24:15-28; Mk. 13:14-23).
 - 1) The Abomination of Desolation is the Sign of the End (Dan. 9:27; Mt. 24:15). τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως.
 - 2) This Abomination had a foreshadowing in the days of Antiochus IV Epiphanies (Dan. 8:13; 11:31; 1 Macc. 1:54-58), but the ultimate fulfillment remains future (Dan. 11:36-39; 12:10-13; 2nd Thess. 2:3-4).
 - 3) Let the reader understand (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14) echoes the anticipation of insight (Dan. 12:3,10) for those who read and heed (Rev. 1:3) the full eschatological warnings (from Daniel, Jesus, Paul & John).
 - 4) The Tribulation of Israel is the uniquely tribulational event in all human history (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Mt. 24:21-22; Mk. 13:19).
 - 5) Doctrinally oriented believers will obey the Scriptures by fleeing and hiding.
 - a) The flight must be immediate and rapid (Mt. 24:16-20; Mk. 13:14-18).
 - b) Temptations to come out of hiding must be rejected (Mt. 24:23-28; Mk. 13:21-23).

9. Question #1: When will these things happen? Answer given in Luke 21:20-24. Omitted by Matthew & Mark.
- Similarities and differences must be evaluated to properly relate Luke 21:20-24 to Matthew 24:15-28 & Mark 13:14-23.
 - If the differences can be reconciled then the passages ought to be considered parallel.
 - If the differences cannot be reconciled then the passages cannot be parallel (despite the similarities).
 - Numerous similarities in passages that are not parallel often indicates a typology or foreshadowing circumstance.
 - “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies” (Lk. 21:20) is an entirely different context and message from “when you see the Abomination of Desolation (Mt. 24:15).
 - The fall of Jerusalem in 70AD and the global dispersion of the Jewish people is the best way to take vv.23&24.
10. Question #2: What will be the sign of your coming? The final answer given (Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Lk. 21:25-28).
- Sun, moon and stars will be darkened (Mt. 24:29; Mk. 13:24,25; Lk. 21:25), replaced by a single sign appearing in the sky (Mt. 24:30a) that undeniably indicates The Son of Man with power and great glory (Mt. 24:30b; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27).
 - Similar warnings take place at least twice in the Tribulation (Rev. 6:12-16; 8:12; 16:8; 19:17), but mankind goes back to its own ways each time when the heavenly order is restored.
 - The powers of the heavens will be shaken (Mt. 24:29; Mk. 13:25; Lk. 21:26). All the energizing power of the fallen angels and demons is broken, leaving the human armies in dread (cf. Ex. 23:27; Josh. 2:9,11).
11. The Parable of the Fig Tree (Mt. 24:32-41; Mk. 13:28-32; Lk. 21:29-33).
- The Fig Tree is perhaps the easiest parable our Lord ever taught. When leaves appear on the fig tree, summer is near.
 - The Sign of the End (Abomination in the temple), the Great Tribulation of Israel, and the Sign of the Son of Man will make the imminence of Jesus second coming undeniable.
 - Clearly “this generation” in chapter 24 is not the same as “this generation” in chapter 23. The first century generation and the Tribulation generation must be kept distinct (cf. Mt. 21:43-44).
 - Noah’s flood is a vital hermeneutic for the second advent of Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:37-39). The flood “took away” the unbelievers. The taking and leaving (Mt. 24:40-41) must be interpreted in the light of this imagery and not confused with the Rapture of the Church in any way (cf. Mt. 13:30).
12. The Imperative to Be Alert (Mt. 24:42-51; Mk. 13:33-37; Lk. 21:34-36).
- The day and hour of Christ’s second advent is only known by God the Father (Mt. 24:36,42-44).
 - Under any application of imminency, the primary imperatives are watchfulness and readiness.
 - γρηγορέω grēgoreō ^{#1127}_{22x} (Mt. 24:42,43; 25:13; 26:38,40,41; Mk. 13:34,35,37; 14:34,37,38; Lk. 12:37; Acts 20:31; 1st Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2; 1st Thess. 5:6,10; 1st Pet. 5:8; Rev. 3:2,3; 16:15).
 - γίνεσθε ἔτοιμοι gīnesthe hetoimoi. ἔτοιμος hetoimos ^{#2092}_{17x}. See also ἑτοιμάζω hetoimazō ^{#2090}_{29x}.
 ἑτοιμασία hetoimasia ^{#2091}_{Hap.}. ἐτοίμως hetoimōs ^{#2093}_{3x}. προετοιμάζω proetoimazō ^{#4282}_{2x}.
 In the NT, readiness is demanded in three respects: readiness for good works (Tit. 3:1; 2nd Tim. 2:21), readiness to bear witness to the Gospel (1st Pet. 3:15; Eph. 6:15), and readiness for the return of the Lord (Mt. 24:44; Lk. 12:40). TDNT Vol. 2, p.706.
 - In the meantime, while not neglecting watchfulness & readiness, believers strive to remain faithful (πιστός pistos ^{#4103}_{67x}) & sensible (φρόνιμος phronimos ^{#5429}_{14x}).
 - Good & faithful servant is the pronouncement in judgment (Mt. 25:21,23).
 - Faithful & sensible is required of slaves with stewardship responsibility (Lk. 12:42,45).
 - A more developed expectation of sensibility/prudence comes up next in the Parable of the Virgins (Mt. 25:2,4,8,9).