

The Olivet Discourse

I. What is the Olivet Discourse?

1. The Olivet Discourse is a name given to the teaching that Jesus gave to His disciples on the mount of Olives concerning the coming destruction of the temple, Christ's second coming, and the end of the world (**Mat 24:3**).
2. The discourse is recorded in **Mat 24:1-51**, **Mar 13:1-37**, and **Luk 21:5-36**.
3. When shown the buildings of the temple by the disciples, Jesus told them that it would be completely destroyed (**Mat 24:1-2**).
4. The discourse was then prompted by the disciples asking three questions:
 - A. When shall *these things* be? (**Mat 24:3**)
 - i. "These things" is the destruction of the temple and the events surrounding it.
 - ii. The phrase "these things" and "those days" are very significant and crucial to correctly interpreting and understanding this prophecy.
 - B. What shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled/come to pass? (**Mar 13:4; Luk 21:7**).
 - C. What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world? (**Mat 24:3**)
5. The disciples thought that the temple would stand until the end of time and that its destruction would happen at the second coming of Christ at the end of the world.
6. A careful examination of the discourse, comparing all three gospel accounts, will show that Jesus answered all three questions and made a clear distinction between the first two questions and the last question, showing that they did not happen at the same time.
 - A. The time of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem could be known and escaped from if the warning signs were heeded.
 - B. The time of Jesus' coming and the end of the world could not be known nor escaped from, so constant vigilance is required.
7. The base text for this study will be Matthew's account, as it is the most detailed; Mark's and Luke's account will also be frequently made reference to.
8. A spreadsheet which compares the accounts of the discourse accompanies this outline and should be consulted.
9. The discourse will be examined in the following sections:
 - A. Section 1 - Mat 24:4-13 c/w (Mar 13:5-9; Luk 21:8-13)
 - B. Section 2 - Mat 24:14-29 c/w (Mar 13:10-25; Luk 21:14-26)
 - C. Section 3 - Mat 24:30-31 c/w (Mar 13:26-27; Luk 21:27)
 - D. Section 4 - Mat 24:32-35 c/w (Mar 13:28-31; Luk 21:28-33)
 - E. Section 5 - Mat 24:36-51 c/w (Mar 13:32-37; Luk 21:34-36)

II. Section 1 - **Mat 24:4-13** c/w (**Mar 13:5-9; Luk 21:8-13**)

1. Jesus began the discourse warning the disciples to be careful that no man deceived them concerning these events (**Mat 24:4**).
 - A. This warning was as important then as it is today, as divers and false interpretations of Christ's prophecy abound.
 - B. Take heed that you be not deceived.
2. The events in Mat 24:5-13 directly apply to the lead up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, but they are also typical of the time prior to Christ's coming and the end of the world.

3. Many would come in Christ's name saying "I am Christ" (**Mat 24:5 c/w Mar 13:6 c/w Luk 21:8**).
- A. This would happen in the near future, as Jesus said concerning it: "and the time draweth near" (**Luk 21:8**).
 - B. This can happen in two ways:
 - i. A false teacher can come and say that Jesus is Christ.
 - a. There were false teachers who crept into the churches unawares prior to 70AD (**Acts 15:1,5 c/w Gal 2:4**).
 - b. There are plenty of false teachers today who proclaim that Jesus is Christ and deceive many.
 - ii. A person can come and claim to be Christ, saying, "I am Christ".
 - a. This happened in the days prior to 70AD.
 - b. "According to Josephus, the noted Jewish historian, twelve years after our Saviour's death, a certain impostor named Theudas persuaded a great multitude to follow him to the river Jordan which he claimed would divide for their passage. At the time of Felix (who is mentioned in the book of Acts), the country of the Jews was filled with impostors who Felix had put to death EVERY DAY — a statement which indicates that there were "many" of such in those days!

"An Egyptian who "pretended to be a prophet" gathered 30,000 men, claiming that he would show "how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down."

"Another deceiver was Simon, a sorcerer, who led people to believe he was the great power of God (See Acts 8). According to Irenaeus, Simon claimed to be the Son of God and creator of angels. Jerome says that he claimed to be the Word of God, the Almighty. Justin relates that he went to Rome and was acclaimed as a god by his magical powers.

"Origen mentions a certain wonder-worker, Dositheus, who claimed he was the Christ foretold by Moses. Another deceiver in those days was Barchochebas who, according to Jerome, claimed to vomit flames. Bar-jesus is mentioned in Acts 13:6 as a sorcerer and false prophet. These are examples of the deceivers of whom history says there were "a great number", and of whom Jesus had prophesied that there would be "many." (Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible*, page 54)
 - c. This will also happen near the end of time when the man of sin will say that he is God (**2Th 2:3-4**).
4. There would be wars, rumors of wars, and commotions, nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there would be famines and earthquakes in divers places (**Mat 24:6-8 c/w Mar 13:7-8 c/w Luk 21:9-11**).
- A. There would be wars, rumors of wars, and commotions.
 - i. This happened prior to 70AD.

- a. "Before the fall of Jerusalem, four Emperors came to violent deaths within the space of 18 months. According to the historian Suetonius (who lived during the latter part of the first century and the beginning of the second), Nero "drove a dagger into his throat." Galba was run down by horsemen. A soldier cut off his head and "thrusting his thumb into the mouth", carried the horrid trophy about. Otho "stabbed himself" in the breast. Vitellius was killed by slow torture and then "dragged by a hook into the Tiber." We can understand that such fate falling on the Emperors would naturally spread distress and insecurity through the Empire.

"In the *Annals of Tacitus*, a Roman who wrote a history which covers the period prior to 70 A. D., we find such expressions as these "Disturbances in Germany", "commotions in Africa", "commotions in Thrace", "insurrections in Gaul", "intrigues among the Parthians", "the war in Britain", "war in Armenia."

"Among the Jews, the times became turbulent. In Seleucia, 50,000 Jews were killed. There was an uprising against them in Alexandria. In a battle between the Jews and Syrians in Caesarea, 20,000 were killed. During these times, Caligula ordered his statue placed in the temple at Jerusalem. The Jews refused to do this and lived in constant fear that the Emperor's armies would be sent into Palestine. This fear became so real that some of them did not even bother to till their fields." (Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible*, page 55)

- ii. Wars and rumors of wars are not signs that indicate the end of the world is imminent, as the condition of the world will be just the opposite when Christ returns (**1Th 5:3; Luk 17:26-30**).

B. There would be famines.

- i. This happened prior to 70AD.
 - a. There was a great famine in the land in the days of Claudius Caesar which hit Judea hard (**Act 11:27-29**).
 - b. "Historians such as Suetonius and others mention famine during those years. Tacitus speaks of a "Failure in the crops, and a famine consequent thereupon." Eusebius also mentions famines during this time in Home, Judea, and Greece." (Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible*, page 56)

C. There would be earthquakes in divers places.

- i. This happened prior to 70AD.
- ii. "Tacitus mentions earthquakes at Rome. He wrote that "frequent earthquakes occurred, by which many houses were thrown down" and that "twelve populous cities of Asia fell in ruins from an earthquake."

"Seneca, writing in the year 58 A. D., said: "How often have cities of Asia and Achaea fallen with one fatal shock! how many cities have been swallowed up in Syria! how many in Macedonia! how often has Cyprus been wasted by this

calamity! how often has Paphos become a ruin! News has often been brought us of the demolition of whole cities at once." He mentions the earthquake at Campania during the reign of Nero. In 60 A. D., Hierapous, Colosse, and Laodicea were overthrown — Laodocia being so self-sufficient that it recovered without the Imperial aid furnished other cities. In 63 A. D., the city of Pompeii was greatly damaged by earthquake. There were earthquakes in Crete, Apamea, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, and Judea." (Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible*, page 56)

- iii. Earthquakes abound today.
- iv. Near the end of time there will be a great earthquake (**Rev 16:18**).
- 5. The disciples would be brought before counsels, rulers, and kings, beaten in synagogues, imprisoned, persecuted, and killed (**Mat 24:9-13 c/w Mar 13:9 c/w Luk 21:12-13**).
 - A. This happened prior to 70AD.
 - i. Peter and the other apostles were beaten by a Jewish council (**Act 5:40-41**).
 - ii. Stephen was killed (**Act 7:54-60**).
 - iii. There was a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem (**Act 8:1**).
 - iv. The disciples were haled to prison (**Act 8:3**).
 - v. James was brought before king Herod and was killed (**Act 12:1-2**).
 - vi. Peter was put in prison (**Act 12:3-4**).
 - vii. Paul and Silas were beaten and put in prison (**Act 16:22-24**).
 - viii. Paul was brought before a council (**Act 23:1**).
 - ix. Paul was brought before king Agrippa (**Act 26:1-2**).
 - x. Paul eventually was brought before Caesar (**Act 28:19 c/w Phi 4:22**).
 - xi. Paul was eventually martyred in Rome (**2Ti 4:6**).
 - B. The disciples who endured to the end and heeded Jesus' warning and headed for the hills when they saw Jerusalem compassed with armies (**Luk 21:20-21**) would be saved the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem (**Mat 24:13**). (More on this later.)
 - C. There will be great tribulation for Christians in the end times as well.
 - i. In the last days perilous times shall come (**2Ti 3:1**).
 - ii. Perilous *adj.* - 1. Fraught with peril; causing or occasioning great danger; full of risk; dangerous; hazardous.
 - iii. The devil will (and does) make war with the saints (**Rev 12:17**).
 - iv. This war will end in death for many of them (**Rev 13:15**).
 - D. In a more general sense, those who endure persecution until the end of their lives show the evidence that they are saved eternally (**Mat 24:13**).
 - i. Those who endure temptation will receive a crown of life (**Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10**).
 - ii. Those who endure persecution until the end of their lives or until the end of time when Christ returns show the *evidence* that they are the elect of God who will be saved from wrath on judgment day.

III. Section 2 - Mat 24:14-29 c/w (Mar 13:10-25; Luk 21:14-26)

- 1. In this section of verses, Jesus focuses on the disciples' primary questions: "when shall these things be?" and "what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" in which they were referring to what Jesus said about the buildings of the temple being destroyed (**Mat 24:1-3; Mar 13:4**).

- A. Speaking of the destruction of the temple, Jesus said: "*the days* will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another" (**Luk 21:6**).
 - i. Jesus refers to the events in this section as "those days" (**Mat 24:19,22,29**).
 - ii. "Those days" were "the days" when the temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed.
- B. But when Jesus refers to the second coming, He calls it "that day" (**Mat 24:36**), "the day" (**Mat 24:38**), and "a day" (**Mat 24:50**).
- 2. Before the destruction of Jerusalem would come, the gospel must first have been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations (**Mat 24:14**).
 - A. **Preach** v. - 1. a. *intr.* 'To pronounce a public discourse upon sacred subjects' (J.); to deliver a sermon or religious address (now usually from or on a text of Scripture). 2. a. *trans.* To proclaim, declare, or set forth by public discourse (the gospel, something sacred or religious).
 - B. Mark's gospel records Jesus as saying that the gospel must first be *published* among all nations (**Mar 13:10**).
 - C. **Publish** v. - To make public. I. 1. a. *trans.* To make publicly or generally known; to declare or report openly or publicly; to announce; to tell or noise abroad; also, to propagate, disseminate (a creed or system).
 - D. The definitions show that to publish is to preach; the scripture shows the same thing when compared with itself (**Rom 10:15 c/w Isa 52:7**).
 - E. Publishing the gospel does not mean printing it in books in the languages of all nations, but rather to publicly declare it to them.
 - F. The apostles did that very thing in the first century prior to 70AD.
 - i. The "great commission" was given by Jesus to the apostles (**Mat 28:19-20; Mar 16:15**).
 - ii. They fulfilled it to the letter (**Mar 16:20; Col 1:6,23**).
 - iii. On the day of Pentecost there were Jews from "every nation under heaven" which heard the gospel (**Act 2:5**).
 - iv. The gospel was published in all the world and to every nation.
- 3. Jesus then gave the disciples the culminating sign to look for in order to know that the desolation of Jerusalem and the temple was nigh: *the abomination of desolation* (**Mat 24:15; Mar 13:14**).
 - A. The abomination of desolation was spoken of in the book of Daniel (**Dan 9:27; Dan 11:31; Dan 12:11**).
 - B. Many wild theories have been offered to explain what the abomination of desolation is.
 - C. But there is no need to speculate.
 - D. By simply comparing Matthew's and Mark's account with Luke, it is crystal clear that the abomination of desolation was Jerusalem being compassed with armies (**Mat 24:15-16 c/w Luk 21:20-21**).
 - E. This happened, as history records, in 66AD when the Roman general Cestius laid siege to Jerusalem.
- 4. When the disciples saw Jerusalem compassed with armies, they were to head for the hills (**Mat 24:15-20; Mar 13:14-18; Luk 21:20-23**).
 - A. It would be so critical to get out of Jerusalem when they had the chance that they were not even to come back into the house from the housetop or the field to get possessions or clothes from the house (**Mat 24:17-18**).

- i. This same warning was given to the disciples regarding the second coming of Christ (**Luk 17:31**).
 - ii. In both cases, it would be very important to not look back.
 - B. It would be lamentable to be pregnant or to have a sucking child in *those days* during the siege of Jerusalem (**Mat 24:19**).
 - C. They were to pray that their flight out of Jerusalem to the mountains would not be in the winter or on the sabbath day, as that would make fleeing more difficult (**Mat 24:20**).
 - D. Fleeing to the mountains while being pregnant or having sucking children during the winter or on the sabbath day would be of no consequence concerning the day of Christ's return.
 - E. But these warnings would be very appropriate for fleeing the city of Jerusalem to escape the desolation.
 - F. God gave the Christians in Jerusalem who believed Jesus' words an opportunity to obey Him and be spared the great tribulation to come when Cestius retreated from besieging the city.
 - G. "And now it was that a horrid fear seized upon the seditious, insomuch that many of them ran out of the city, as though it were to be taken immediately; but the people upon this took courage, and where the wicked part of the city gave ground, thither did they come, in order to set open the gates, and to admit Cestius as their benefactor, who, had he but continued the siege a little longer, had certainly taken the city; but it was, I suppose, owing to the aversion God had already at the city and the sanctuary, that he was hindered from putting an end to the war that very day. It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired from the city, without any reason in the world." (Josephus, *Complete Works of Josephus - Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, Ch.19:6-7, p.631-632)
 - H. The Christians who were in Jerusalem when Cestius left besieging the city remembered and heeded Jesus' warnings and got out of Jerusalem and Judea.
5. There would be great tribulation leading up to and climaxing in the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem (**Mat 24:21-22**).
- A. Tribulation *n.* - 1. A condition of great affliction, oppression, or misery; 'persecution; distress; vexation; disturbance of life'
 - B. This tribulation would be unparalleled in world history, both prior and subsequent to it (**Mar 13:19**).
 - C. The following is a lengthy quote from Ralph Woodrow in his book *Great Prophecies of the Bible* (pages 70-76) detailing the great tribulation in Jerusalem, in which he quotes extensively from Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*.
 - D. "Josephus, the Jewish historian who was an eye-witness to these events, wrote a full and detailed account of the tribulation that fell upon that land and people in and prior to 70 A.D. His account, *Wars of the Jews*, was published about 75A.D., at a time when the events of which he wrote were still fresh in the memory of thousands. Since he was not a Christian, no one can accuse him of slanting his material so as to match the prophecy Christ had given. Nevertheless, the history he recorded fully confirms the fulfillment of the prophecy Jesus gave about the "great tribulation" which came upon that land and people. The references we will give in this chapter are from Josephus.

"The trouble in Jerusalem began over differences between the Jews and the Romans. Some of the Jews felt they should revolt against Roman rule; other felt that they should refrain from such actions and hope that a peaceful agreement could be reached. The Jews who favoured revolt became very violent and began to kill those who disagreed with them. Troops were sent in to control the mob. War was on! Not only at Jerusalem, but throughout the land trouble broke out.

"“Every city was divided into two armies . . .”, Josephus says, “and the preservation of the one part was in the destruction of the other; so the daytime was spent in *shedding blood*, and the night in fear — which was of the two the more terrible . . . It was then common to see cities filled with *dead bodies*, still lying unburied; those of old men mixed with infants, all dead and scattered about together; women also lay amongst them, without any covering for their nakedness: You might then see the whole province full of *inexpressible calamities* while the dread of still more barbarous practices which were threatened, was everywhere greater than what had been already perpetrated.” (II, 18:2).

"The Jews in Alexandria that revolted against the Romans “were destroyed *unmercifully*; and this, their destruction, was complete . . . houses were first plundered of what was in them, and then set on fire by the Romans; wherein *no mercy* was shown to the infants, and no regard had to the aged; but they went on in the slaughter of persons of every age, till all the place was overflowed with blood, and fifty thousand of them lay dead upon heaps.” (II, 18:8).

"In one hour, over 20,000 were killed in Caesarea and the battle continued until “all Caesarea was emptied of its Jewish inhabitants . . . Galilee was all over filled with fire and blood, nor was it exempted from any kind of misery or calamity.” (III, 4:1).

"Such *horror* was in the land that one prominent man, in order to save his family from a worse fate, took a sword and killed first his aged father and mother, his wife and children — all submitting to it willingly — and then took his own life. (II, 18:3).

"In Jerusalem, those of the revolting party were known as Zelots. They “fell upon the people [who disagreed with them] as upon a flock of profane animals, and *cut their throats*.” In this way, 12,000 of the more eminent inhabitants perished. “The *terror* that was upon all the people was so great, that no one had courage enough either to weep openly for the dead man that was related to him, or bury him . . . those that mourned for others soon underwent the same death with those whom they mourned for” (IV, 5:3).

"Slaughter continued until “the outer temple was all of it overflowed with blood, and that day they saw 8,500 dead bodies there.” Included in this number were “those that a little before had worn the sacred garments and presided over the public worship, which were cast out naked to be the food of dogs and wild beasts.”

"Even those who came with sacrifices were slain, "and sprinkled that altar . . . with their own blood; till the dead bodies of strangers were mingled together with those of their own country, and those of profane persons with those of priests, and the blood of all sorts of dead carcasses stood in lakes in the holy courts themselves." (V, 1:3).

"The noise also of those that were fighting was incessant, both by day and by night; but the lamentations of those that mourned exceeded the other . . . their calamities came *perpetually*, one upon another . . . But for the seditious themselves, they fought against each other, while they trod upon the dead bodies as they lay heaped one upon another, and taking up a *mad rage* from those dead bodies that were under their feet, became the *fiercer* thereupon . . . and when they had resolved upon anything, they executed it without mercy, and omitted no method of *torment* or of *barbarity*." (V, 1:5).

"No wonder Jesus said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children" (Lk. 23:28), knowing that all these things would come upon that generation!

"Jesus had said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand" and surely this was true of Jerusalem. Many Jews were killed *by Jews*, not by the enemy outside the walls. Josephus says that the Jews "never suffered from the Romans anything worse than they made each other suffer." Such madness and insanity shows the validity of Jesus' words when he likened that generation to a man who becomes demon-possessed, so that his latter state is worse than the first. (Mt. 12:43-45).

"As Jerusalem became surrounded by the Romans, food became scarce within the walls of the city. Many of the Jews went by night into the valleys in search of food. These were caught, "tormented with all sorts of *torture*" and then crucified in the sight of those on the walls. About 500 every day were thus killed until the number finally became so great that there was not room enough for the crosses, nor enough crosses for the victims. Often several were nailed to the same torture stake. Imagine the torment of those who would see or hear of their loved ones being thus tortured a short distance from the walls. Many had their hands cut off. (V, 11:1, 2).

"Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families; the upper rooms were *full* of women and children dying by famine; and the lanes of the city were *full* of the dead bodies of the aged; a kind of *deadly night*, had seized upon the city." (V, 12:3).

"Thus did the miseries of Jerusalem grow *worse and worse* every day . . . the multitude of carcasses that lay in heaps one upon another was a horrible sight, and produced a pestilential stench." (VI, 1:1).

"The number of those that perished by famine in the city was prodigious, and their miseries were *unspeakable*. For if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did anywhere appear, a war was commenced presently, and the dearest friends fell fighting one another about it . . . Children pulled the very morsel that their fathers were eating,

out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do to their infants: and when those that were almost dead were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives . . . The seditious . . . also invented terrible methods of *torment* to discover where any food was, and they were these: to stop up the passages of the privy parts of the miserable wretches, and to drive sharp stakes up their fundamentals! and a man was forced to bear what it is *terrible* even to hear.” (V, 10:3).

"One woman of prominence killed her infant son and roasted him. After eating half of the body, the other half was hid. Shortly after this, certain seditious Jews came to search her house. When they smelled the scent of roasted flesh, they threatened to cut her throat immediately if she did not show them what food she had prepared. She then uncovered the remaining half of the little body, saying: “Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself! Do not you pretend to be either more tender than a woman, or more compassionate than a mother.” But even those hardened men were horrified at the sight and left the house trembling. (VI, 3:4).

"Surely these things were a fulfillment of the warning that had been given centuries before. “The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far.., a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the *old*, nor shew favour to the *young* . . . And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down . . . And thou shalt *eat* the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters . . . The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward . . . her young one that cometh from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall *eat* them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.” (Deut. 28:49-57).

"Some who tried to escape from the city after it had been surrounded by the Roman armies, swallowed pieces of gold in order to take them unnoticed. Word got out that such was being done and many of those who tried to escape were *cut open* by the enemy to see if they had swallowed any gold. “Nor does it seem to me that any misery befell the Jews that was more terrible than this, since in one night about 2,000 of these deserters were thus dissected.” (V, 13:4).

"Finally the Roman armies broke through the wall and an enraged soldier caught the temple afire. “While the holy house was on fire, everything was plundered that came to hand, and ten thousand of those that were caught were *slain*; nor was there a commiseration of any age, or any reverence of gravity; but *children*, and *old men*, and profane persons, and priests, were all slain in the same manner . . . The flame was also carried a long way, and made an echo, together with the *groans* of those that were slain . . . nor can one imagine anything either greater or more terrible than this noise . . . Moreover, many, when they saw the fire, exerted their utmost strength, and did break out into groans and outcries . . . Yet was the *misery* itself more terrible than this disorder; for one would have thought that the hill itself, on which the temple stood, was

seething-hot, as full of fire on every part of it, that the blood was *larger* in quantity than the fire, and those that were slain *more* in number than those that slew them; for the ground did nowhere appear visible, for the *dead bodies* that lay on it.” (VI, 5:1).

"The burning of the temple is especially significant in that the very date on which it was burned by the armies of Titus, was the *same date* that Nebuchadnezzar had burned it centuries before! This seems like more than a mere accident. “But, as for that house, God had for certain long ago doomed it to the fire, and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of the ages: it was the tenth day of the month Ab, upon which it was formerly burnt by the king, of Babylon”! (VI, 4:5).

"As the temple burned, the Jews knew all hope for deliverance was gone. The aqueducts and the city sewers were crowded as the last place of refuge for the hopeless. When these were searched, two thousand people were found dead there, and those that yet remained alive were dragged from thence and slain.

"The scriptures had warned: “And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you” (Deut. 28:68). Josephus tells how those that survived were led away captives, some being taken into *Egypt!* “As for the rest of the multitude that were above 17 years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines . . . and sold the rest of the multitude with their wives and children, and every one of them at a low price, and that because such were sold were very many, and the buyers few.” (VI, 8, 9).

"There were 97,000 that were sold as slaves and 1,100,000 people that perished during the fierce tribulation of those days. “Now the number of those that were carried captive during the whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished in the whole siege, eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation, but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army . . . the multitude of those that therein perished exceeded all the destruction that either men or God ever brought upon the world.” (VI, 9:3, 4).

"Josephus summed it up in these words: “I shall therefore speak my mind here at once briefly: — that neither did any other city suffer such *miseries*, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in *wickedness* than this was, *from the beginning of the world.*” (V, 10:5).

"Josephus says the calamities which befell the Jews were “the *greatest* of all those, not only that have been in our times, but, in a manner, of those that *ever* were heard of; both of those wherein cities have fought against cities, or nations against nations . . . it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were.” (Preface, p. 427)." (Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible*, page 70-76)

- E. Those who make light of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD and do not consider it to be the "great tribulation" that Jesus spoke of in Mat 24:21 have obviously never read the historical accounts of it.
- F. As Jesus said, those days were shortened for the sake of the elect so that the death toll was not 100% (**Mat 24:22**).
 - i. Josephus recorded that the death toll was about 92% (1,100,000/1,197,000) with the remaining 8% being carried away captive.
 - ii. "Now the number of those that were carried captive during the whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished in the whole siege, eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation, but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread..." (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, VI, 9:3)
 - iii. Not all were killed, some were saved by being led away captive into all nations (**Luk 21:24**).
- G. Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled (**Luk 21:24**).
 - i. Time is divided into three sections in the scripture which accord with God's covenants.
 - a. 1st time period: Adam to Moses - the time preceding the law of Moses, the old covenant (**Rom 5:14**).
 - b. 2nd time period: Moses to John the Baptist - the time of Israel being God's nation and kingdom which was governed by the law and the prophets, the old covenant (**Luk 16:16**).
 - c. 3rd and final time period: John the Baptist to the end of time - the time in which the kingdom of God was preached and setup and was given to the Gentiles who are governed by the new covenant (**Luk 16:16 c/w Mat 21:43**).
 - 1) This period is the last time (**1Jo 2:18; 1Pe 1:20**).
 - 2) These are the last days (**Heb 1:2**).
 - 3) This period is the "end of the world" (**Heb 9:26**).
 - 4) Last adj. - Following all others; coming at the end. 1. a. Following all the others in a series, succession, order, or enumeration; subsequent to all others in occurrence, existence, etc.
 - 5) There is no time after the *last* time, which is why it's called the LAST time.
 - ii. The times of the Gentiles began when God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles when Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius (**Act 15:7; Act 14:27**).
 - a. From this point and forward, the church began the transition from a predominantly Jewish church to a predominantly Gentile church.
 - b. For about 1500 years, it had been the times of the Jews, but beginning in the days of the apostles the times of the Gentiles began.
 - c. Therefore, since the times of the Gentiles began in the last time (**1Jo 2:18**), the times of the Gentiles is the last time.
 - d. Therefore, there is no time after the times of the Gentiles.

- e. Therefore, the times of the Gentiles will last until the last day of time.
- iii. Since we are still in the times of the Gentiles, Jerusalem is still therefore being trodden down of the Gentiles.
 - a. There is strong evidence that the "Jews" in the modern-day nation of Israel are, for the most part, Gentiles (Khazars) whose ancestors converted to Judaism around the 8th century.
 - b. Therefore, the majority of them are not Jews by blood.
 - c. They are not Jews religiously either since the Old Testament religion was completely done away with by God at 70AD and rendered impracticable after the temple was destroyed.
 - d. They are they "of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie" (**Rev 3:9**).
- 6. Jesus then warns them again as He did in Mat 24:5,11 that false Christs and false prophets would arise who would show great signs and wonders, whom they should not believe (**Mat 24:23-28**).
 - A. Consider the following from Josephus which confirms Jesus' words, that false prophets arose and that great signs and wonders were seen prior to the destruction of Jerusalem:
 - B. "A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes." (Josephus, *Complete Works of Josephus - Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Ch.5:2, p.741-742)
 - C. "Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year." (Josephus, *Complete Works of Josephus - Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Ch.5:3, p.742)
 - D. "Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus, [Nisan,] and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which lasted for half an hour." (Ibid)
 - E. "At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple." (Ibid)
 - F. "Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night." (Ibid)
- 7. The coming of Christ would be public and unmistakable, not secret (**Mat 24:26-28**).
 - A. Jesus here declared that anyone who says that Christ will/has come secretly is not to be believed (**Mat 24:26**).
 - B. Pre-millennial dispensationalists to this day teach that Christ will return secretly and invisibly to rapture the church.
 - C. Believe them not.

- D. Just as lightning in the sky is very visible, so will the coming of Christ be (**Mat 24:27,30**).
 - E. There will be nothing secret about the coming of Christ (**1Th 4:16**).
8. Sun and moon darkened, stars falling from heaven, powers of the heavens being shaken (**Mat 24:29**).
- A. Matthew records Jesus as saying that these things would happen "*immediately* after the tribulation of *those days*" (**Mat 24:29**).
 - i. Immediately - 1. Without intermediary, intervening agency, or medium; by direct agency; in direct or proximate connexion or relation; so as to concern, interest, or affect directly, or intimately; directly. 2. With no person, thing, or distance, intervening in time, space, order, or succession; next or just (preceding or following, before or after); closely; proximately; directly.
 - ii. These events would happen with no intervening time between them and the tribulation of *those days* (**Mat 24:21-22**).
 - iii. Though these events (sun and moon being darkened, etc.) would happen directly after the tribulation, they would still begin happening "*in those days*" (**Mar 13:24**).
 - iv. These events would take place in the intermediary time between the great tribulation in 66-70AD and the second coming of Christ (**Mat 24:29-30; Luk 21:24-27**).
 - v. These events are not limited to the destruction of Jerusalem in 66-70AD because they were to happen *after* the tribulation of those days (**Mat 24:29**).
 - vi. These events would not begin happening thousands of years later as an immediate precursor to the coming of Christ, but *immediately after the tribulation of those days*.
 - B. The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars symbolizes a state of judgment, political upheaval, and decline.
 - i. Old age is described with such terminology (**Ecc 12:1-2**).
 - ii. The destruction of Egypt was described as a darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (**Eze 32:2,7-10**).
 - iii. The destruction of Babylon was described nearly identically (**Isa 13:1,9-10**).
 - iv. The darkening of the sun speaks of judgment (**Amo 8:9**).
 - v. This period of political upheaval was not limited to Judea and Jerusalem, but would cause "*distress of nations*" (**Luk 21:25**), and be accompanied by "*the sea and the waves roaring*" (**Luk 21:25**) which are symbolic of disturbances and commotions of among all "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*" (**Rev 17:15**).
 - vi. As was stated before, this period of political upheaval of all nations began in 70AD and will continue until the coming of Christ.
 - vii. "Nor can it be permitted to make the tribulation and the commotions in the heavens a sign of His second coming, in contradiction of His plain teaching as to that event. Rather, must we assume, in harmony with all that Christ has said on that subject, that the fulfilment of this particular part of the prophecy *began from the destruction of Jerusalem*, and is to be seen in all of God's dealings in judgment with "*the higher powers*" (Rom. 13:1), from that time onward. The word "*immediately*" used by Matthew (not found in the corresponding part of

Mark or Luke) signifies merely that the destruction of Jerusalem would be followed immediately by a period (of unmeasured length) which would be characterized by commotions of the sort described. Such disturbances have been, as we have seen, one of the outstanding characteristics of the age, and are a special mark of our own times." (Philip Mauro, *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, p. 272)

- C. The stars would fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens would be shaken.
- i. Angels are powers in heaven (**Eph 3:10; Eph 6:12; Col 1:16; Col 2:15; 1Pe 3:22**).
 - ii. Angels are called stars (**Job 38:7; Rev 12:4**).
 - iii. Devils are involved in the political realm (**Eph 6:12; Dan 10:13,20**).
 - iv. With the destruction of the apostate Jewish order, there was a judgment upon the spiritual forces that had animated it in its apostasy (**Mat 12:43-45; Exo 12:12**).
 - v. At the time of the war in Judea, there was another war going on in heaven and the devil and his angels (powers in heaven) were shaken and cast out (**Rev 12:7-10; Luk 21:31**).
 - vi. Josephus records armies and chariots seen in the clouds in those days.
 - vii. "Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the one and twentieth day of the month Artemisius, [Jyar,] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities." (Josephus, *Complete Works of Josephus - Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Ch.5:3, p.742)

IV. Section 3 - Mat 24:30-31 c/w (Mar 13:26-27; Luk 21:27)

1. In Mat 24:4-29, Jesus focused on the first two questions the disciples asked: when would the destruction of the temple be and what would be the sign when it would be fulfilled?
2. In Mat 24:30-31, Jesus then addressed their third question: what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?
3. Some will take issue with verse 30 referring to the Second Coming since the verse begins with "And then...", which would seem to indicate that the sign of the Son of man appearing in heaven would immediately follow the events of verse 29 in which the sun and moon are darkened, etc.
 - A. Then adv. - II. *Of sequence in time, order, consequence, incidence, inference*. 3. a. At the moment immediately following the action, etc. just spoken of; upon that, thereupon, directly after that; also in wider application, indicating the action or occurrence next in order of time: next, after that, afterwards, subsequently (often in contrast to first).
 - B. Notice that "then" can refer to the next occurrence in order of time.
 - C. In the context of the questions which Jesus was answering, the next occurrence in time after the destruction of the Jerusalem would be the His Second Coming.
 - D. There can be a large period of time between events connected by "and" (**2Sa 12:24**).

- E. There can be a large period of time and much information between events connected by "then" (**2Ki 12:16-17 c/w 2Ch 24:13-23**). (2Ch 24:14-22 happened between 2Ki 12:16-17)
- F. The potential objection that **Mat 24:29-30** is one sentence divided by a colon is answered by **Mar 13:25-26** where the parallel verses are two separate sentences.
- 4. Whereas Jesus said that there would be warning signs which would give the disciples time to escape the destruction of Jerusalem, there will be no such warning signs which will allow men to know that the coming of Christ is imminent.
 - A. As opposed to the destruction of Jerusalem, the time of which could be known if the warning signs were heeded, the Second Coming of Christ will happen "in such an hour as ye think not" (**Mat 24:44**).
 - B. The sign of the Second Coming will be Jesus Christ Himself coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (**Mat 24:30**).
 - C. At that time the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout (**1Th 4:16**).
 - D. All the tribes of the earth shall mourn (**Mat 24:30**) because He will be coming to take vengeance on the wicked (**2Th 1:7-9**).
 - E. Jesus will then gather together all of His elect from the four winds of the earth (**Mat 24:31**).
 - F. This will be the resurrection where all of God's elect will be caught up to meet Christ in the clouds (**1Th 4:16-17**).
 - G. This day of the Lord will be as unexpected as a thief in the night (**1Th 5:1-3**).

V. Section 4 - **Mat 24:32-35 c/w (Mar 13:28-31; Luk 21:28-33)** - The parable of the fig tree.

1. After answering the question of what the sign of His coming and the end of the world would be, Jesus then returns to the question "when shall these things be" (the destruction of Jerusalem).
 - A. It was as if He said, "Now let me get back to your original question of *when* the temple will be destroyed".
 - B. He did so by telling a parable of the fig tree.
 - C. We know that Jesus switched back to the first questions for two reasons:
 - i. He used the key words "these things" in **Mat 24:33-34** which were the very words the disciples used in their question, "when shall *these things* be?" (**Mat 24:3**).
 - ii. Secondly, He again begins to tell them of signs to look for to *know* when *these things* are near.
 - a. When speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus told them that they could KNOW that it was near (**Mat 24:32-33; Luk 21:31**).
 - b. When speaking of the Second Coming, Jesus told them that they COULDN'T KNOW when it would happen (**Mat 24:36,39,42-43,50; Mar 13:32-33,35**).
 - iii. If Jesus did not revert back to answering the question of "WHEN shall these things be" (the destruction of Jerusalem) in verses 32-34, and by "these things" He was referring to everything He had just said including verses 30-31 about the Second Coming, then His words in verses 32-34 were meaningless. Woodrow says it well:

- iv. "Now then, what did Jesus mean when he spoke of "all these things"? He had just spoken of the Second Coming. Was this a continuation of what he had just spoken, or was he here returning to the original line of thought? If we take it to refer to everything that Jesus had just previously mentioned, the passage would have to read something like this: "When ye see the sun darkened, the moon not giving her light, the stars falling, the powers of heaven shaken, the sign of the Son of man in heaven, all tribes mourning, the Son of man coming in the clouds, the trumpet sounding, the angels gathering the elect from around the world: when ye see these things you will know that it is near, even at the doors." What possible sense would there be in saying that when the Lord is seen coming in the clouds, and all these other things, that they would then know that the Second Coming was nigh? This would be an inconsistent statement." (Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible*, page 90-91)
2. The parable of the fig tree (**Mat 24:32-33**).
- A. What does the fig tree represent?
 - i. The dispensationalists say that Israel is the fig tree.
 - a. On his note on Mat 21:19, Scofield wrote that Mat 24:32-33 is "a prophecy that Israel shall again bud." (C.I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, page 1028)
 - b. This is a strange interpretation, given that it is cited in a verse in which Jesus says to a fig tree, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away." (**Mat 21:19**)
 - ii. Even if Israel was represented by a fig tree in the scripture, Jesus was not referring to Israel as a fig tree in Mat 24:32-34.
 - a. Jesus didn't refer to only the fig tree in the Olivet Discourse, but He said, "Behold the fig tree, *and all the trees*" (**Luk 21:29**).
 - b. If by the fig tree He was referring to Israel "budding again", then He was referring to all nations (all the trees) budding again, which would render the passage meaningless.
 - iii. The parable of the fig tree is a simple illustration from nature that when people see trees sprouting leaves, they know summer is near.
 - iv. As they could know that summer is nigh by the leaves sprouting on trees, so when the disciples saw "these things" (the things Jesus spoke of in verses 5-22) they could know that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple were just around the corner (**Mat 24:33**).
 - v. Furthermore, when they saw "these things", they would know "that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand" (**Luk 21:31**).
 - a. The kingdom of God was at hand beginning in the days of John the Baptist (**Mar 1:15**).
 - b. The kingdom of God is the institution of the NT church (**Luk 22:29-30**) which was being pressed into (**Luk 16:16**) by baptism (**Mat 21:31 c/w Luk 7:29-30**) by both Jews and Gentiles prior to 70AD.
 - c. The nation of Israel had been God's church (**Act 7:38**) and kingdom (**1Ch 17:14; 2Ch 13:8**) for about 1500 years.
 - d. Jesus reformed the church at His first coming (**Heb 9:10**).

- e. For about 40 years, the church and kingdom were in a transitional period while the temple still stood.
 - f. Jesus told the Jews that the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (**Mat 21:43**).
 - g. The transition of the kingdom from the nation of Israel to the nation of God's believing elect (Jew and Gentile) (**1Pe 2:9**) was complete after the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - h. At that time the kingdom of God would enter into its fullness and present form.
 - i. When the disciples saw all "these things" happening of which Jesus warned them, they would know that the kingdom of God was *nigh* at hand, in other words, it was just around the corner (**Luk 21:31; Rev 12:10**).
- B. Jesus then answers the question of "WHEN shall these things be?".
- i. He said that "THIS generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (**Mat 24:34**).
 - ii. This - II. Demonstrative Adjective. 1. a. Used in concord with a noun, to indicate a thing or person present or near (actually or in thought), esp. one just mentioned
 - iii. Generation *n.* - 5. The whole body of individuals born about the same period; also, the time covered by the lives of these. In reckoning historically by 'generations', the word is taken to mean the interval of time between the birth of the parents and that of their children, usually computed at thirty years, or three generations to a century.
 - iv. Therefore, "*this generation*" was the people who were present when Jesus uttered those words.
 - v. Therefore, all "these things" (the things leading up to and culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple) would happen before the generation of people in Jesus' day had passed.
 - vi. Luke records that "This generation shall not pass away, till *all be fulfilled*" (**Luk 21:32**).
 - a. The "all" that would "be fulfilled" (**Luk 21:32**) is all that was written concerning the destruction of Jerusalem: "For these be the days of vengeance, that ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN MAY BE FULFILLED" (**Luk 21:22**).
 - b. It is undeniable that Jesus was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem in verse 22: see **Luk 21:20-22**. - vii. "This generation" was an evil and wicked generation slated for destruction (**Mat 12:39-45**).
 - viii. Jesus said that all the righteous blood of all the prophets whom the Jews killed over the years would come on "this generation" and would end with Jerusalem being left *desolate* (**Mat 23:29-38**).
- C. In order make his futuristic interpretation of the parable of the fig tree work, Scofield redefined *generation* to mean "race, kind, family, stock, breed" and he concluded that "The promise is, therefore, that the generation -- nation, or family of Israel -- will be

preserved unto "these things"; a promise wonderfully fulfilled to this day." (C.I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, page 1034)

- i. Not only is it not consistent with the other usages of "generation" in the book of Matthew, Scofield's definition is not consistent with himself.
 - ii. In commenting on Mat 23:36, Scofield understood well what "this generation" was: "It is the way also of history: judgment falls upon one generation for the sins of centuries. The prediction was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70." (C.I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, page 1032)
 - iii. Furthermore, there is another problem with Scofield's interpretation.
 - iv. "Strangely enough, those who hold that the word "generation" in Matthew 24 means the Jewish people as a race also hold the belief that the Jewish race will never pass away. But if Jesus meant that the Jewish race will not pass away until these things are fulfilled, and if the Jewish race will never pass away, his words were meaningless and he did NOT answer the question: "WHEN shall these things be?" (Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible*, page 92-93)
- D. Jesus' words were so sure that they will outlast heaven and earth (**Mat 24:35**).
- i. Notice that Jesus did NOT say: "This generation shall not pass, till *heaven and earth pass away*."
 - ii. Nor did Jesus say: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *this generation* shall not pass away."
 - iii. It is Jesus' *words* that will not pass away and will outlast heaven and earth, not *the generation* of which He spoke.
 - iv. In the parable of the fig tree, Jesus was speaking of "*this generation*" which was the one *to whom* He was speaking; He was not speaking of a generation at the end of time.

VI. Section 5 - **Mat 24:36-51 c/w (Mar 13:32-37; Luk 21:34-36)**

1. Having just finished talking about the destruction of Jerusalem which would be preceded by signs by which the disciples could *know* it was nigh, Jesus then in contrast speaks of His Second Coming, the time of which could NOT be *known* (**Mat 24:36**).
 - A. When speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus told them that they could KNOW that it was near (**Mat 24:32-33; Luk 21:31**).
 - B. When speaking of the Second Coming, Jesus told them that they COULDN'T KNOW when it would happen (**Mat 24:36,39,42-43,50; Mar 13:32-33,35**).
2. Furthermore, we know that Jesus switched topics from answering the question of "when shall these things be" to "what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world" because he opens up His comments with the word "but" which is a contrasting conjunction.
3. He then speaks of "that day" and "that...hour", rather than "those days" (**Mat 24:36 ct/w Mat 24:19,22,29**).
 - A. "That day" (**Mat 24:36**) is "the day" (**Mat 24:38**) of "the coming of the Son of man" (**Mat 24:39**).
 - B. "That...hour" (**Mat 24:36**) is the "hour your Lord doth come" (**Mat 24:42**) and the "hour...the Son of man cometh" (**Mat 24:44**).
4. Jesus likened the days that preceded the flood of Noah to the days that will precede "that day" of His Second Coming (**Mat 24:37-39**).

- A. In the days leading up to the flood that destroyed the world, they were carrying on with the normal activities of life until "the day" that Noah entered into the ark (**Mat 24:38**).
 - B. They "knew not" that the world was going to be destroyed "until the flood came and took them all away" (**Mat 24:39**).
 - C. Jesus said: "SO shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (**Mat 24:39**).
 - D. So adv. - 1. In the way or manner described, indicated, or suggested; in that style or fashion. Contextually the sense may be 'in the same way', 'by that means', etc.
 - E. The Second Coming will happen in the same way: men will be carrying on with the normal activities of life and know not that the time of Jesus' return is near until *the day* of His coming.
 - F. Men will be working in the field and women at the mill on "that day", unaware that Christ's coming is imminent, and one shall be taken and the other left (**Mat 24:40-41**).
 - G. This will happen on the last day (**Joh 11:24**) when Christ descends from heaven to resurrect the dead and call His saints to meet Him in the clouds (**1Th 4:16-17**).
5. The day and hour of the Second Coming is as unknown and as unexpected as the arrival of a thief in the night, so we must always be watching (**Mat 24:42-44**).
 6. We must never assume that the Lord is delaying His coming and become slack, but we must be ever vigilant because the Lord will come in "a day" when we look not for him (**Mat 24:45-51**).