

## Reading Matthew 24

### Key questions:

- (1) Christ is dealing with two questions, not one or three, namely “When will the temple be destroyed?” and “What will be the sign of your coming and the consummation of the age?” (v. 3). Where in Matthew 24 is Jesus answering which question? Where is He speaking of the age of the destruction of Herod’s temple (the church age), and where does He speak of the sign of His coming and of the end of the age?
- (2) The “abomination of desolation” is one referred to by Daniel in some sense (v. 15). The phrase occurs four times in Daniel. Daniel 8:13, 9:27, and 12:11 all refer to the work of antichrist at the midpoint of the seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy. Daniel 11:31, the only other mention, refers to the sacrifice of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. Can v. 15 be the destruction of the Herodian temple in A.D. 70? If not, how would the disciples “see” the events of v. 15?
- (3) The at-any-moment imminence of the coming of the Son of Man must motivate Christ’s disciples with an at-any-moment readiness for that coming (vv. 36-51), yet the coming of the Son of Man appears to happen after the great tribulation (v. 29). In what sense, then, is the second coming of Christ something imminent that motivates believers now to readiness in holy living?
- (4) The generation in which Christ lived would see the fulfillment of “all these things” (v. 34). In what sense is this true?

### Comments:

24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Jesus refers to the destruction of Herod’s temple (which Jesus and His disciples were looking at) by the Roman general Titus in A.D. 70.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, **Tell us, when** shall these things be? **and what** shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?

Mark tells us that there were four such disciples – Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark 13:3). They want to know first when Jesus’s prediction of the demise of Herod’s temple would happen, and second what sign would portend His eschatological coming and the end of the age. The word translated *coming* is *παρουσία*. It can refer either to the result of someone’s coming, i.e. his presence (the opposite of absence in Phil. 2:12), or the act of someone’s coming (Phil. 1:26). In this context, that Jesus answers a question about the act of His coming is clear from Matt. 24:42-50, where the Lord speaks of His second coming with the word *ἔρχομαι*, which only refers to the act of coming. The questions disclose the belief of the disciples at this point that Jesus would come again at some point and in some way. Jesus affirms this belief. In addition, the resurrected Christ would teach them more about this second coming (Acts 1:3). He would teach them that the consummation of the age would include the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6).

Israel’s new covenant promise clearly guarantees the reunification of Israel and Judah into a single eschatological kingdom (Jer. 31:31-37; Ezek. 37:15-28). Although neither Mark nor Luke mention the second coming in these verses (Mark 13:4, “the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished”; Luke 21:7, “the sign when these things are about to come to pass”), it is the distinct purpose of the Gospel of Matthew,

written to Jewish Christians, to emphasize the importance of Gentile nations during the church age in the plan of God revealed in the Old Testament for the consummation of the age (Matt. 4:12-16; Isa. 9:1-2). Note how Jesus speaks of the gospel being preached to all the nations prior to the end (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10). The eschatology of Matthew 24 connects these dots, God's plan for the Gentile nations of the church age and God's plan for the future of Israel, showing how the church age relates to God's dealings to restore again the kingdom to Israel. Chapter 24 is Matthew's explication of how Jerusalem would someday say again, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39).

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but **the end is not yet.**

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these are **the beginning of sorrows.**

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall **endure unto the end**, the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and **then shall the end come.**

Verses 4-14, with the time-sensitive phrases, "the end is not yet" (v. 6), "the beginning of sorrows" (v. 8), "endure unto the end" (v. 13), and "then shall the end come" (v. 14), describe a period prior to what Jesus is referring to as "the end," what the disciples called Jesus's coming and the consummation of the age. This is a description of the era of God's plan that includes the destruction of Jerusalem's temple in A.D. 70, because it is Jesus' answer to the question, "When shall these things [the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem mentioned in v. 2] be?" (v. 3). Here we have a general description of conditions that prevail during the church age. According to the dispensational timeline, the applicability of these verses to the disciples who were listening to Christ on the Mount of Olives and to us today is direct.

15 When **ye therefore shall see** the abomination of desolation, **spoken of by Daniel the prophet**, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).

The parenthetical at the end of v. 15 encourages us to be careful with our interpretation at this point, likely because Jesus is signaling a double entendre. The difficult challenge for interpreting this verse is understanding in what sense the disciples Jesus addresses would see something Daniel the prophet called "the abomination of desolation." One detail of interest at this point is that, whereas Jesus uses the plural *ye shall see*, only John (of the four disciples in Jesus's audience) lived long enough to see the destruction of the temple of Herod in A.D. 70. Were Jesus referring exclusively to A.D. 70 here, it seems that He would have used the singular referring to John

alone, for He knew the future of these men as their sovereign (John 21:18-22). Note also that while Mark mentions the “abomination of desolation,” he does not say that Daniel spoke about it (Mark 13:14). Luke’s Gospel refers only to the related siege of Jerusalem by Titus without mention of an “abomination of desolation” (Luke 21:20). Finally, Titus’s attack resulted in the burning of the temple. There was no desecrating sacrifice in the sanctuary under Titus as described by Daniel. Clearly, there are pointers here both toward and away from A.D. 70.

An “abomination of desolation” is mentioned 4 times in Daniel, once with reference to the act of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. (11:31), and three times with reference to the act of the antichrist at the midpoint of Daniel’s 70th week (8:13, 9:27, 12:11), what dispensationalists refer to as the day of the Lord and the great tribulation (2 Thess. 2:1-4). Daniel never refers specifically to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 (although some preterists see A.D. 70 in Daniel 9, the chronology does not fit; the chronology of the 69 weeks works very well for the crucifixion in A.D. 31, but this is not true for the mid-70<sup>th</sup>-week abomination of desolation and the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70; the weeks are periods of seven years, so 3.5 years after the crucifixion of Christ, the point where Daniel pins the abomination of desolation, is A.D. 34.5, not A.D. 70). However, A.D. 70 does have in common with these events of Daniel a key characteristic – the Roman desecration of the temple. In each case, the “abomination of desolation” refers to both the desecration of the holy place of the temple in Jerusalem and to Roman intrusion. In this sense, the disciples of Christ in A.D. 70 “saw” a destruction of the temple that Daniel spoke about, because they saw an event that mirrored exactly the events that would fulfill Daniel’s prophecy.

Therefore, it is possible to understand Jesus’ reference to the abomination of desolation “spoken of by Daniel the prophet” in v. 15 as a prediction that the disciples would see the same kind of abomination that Daniel talks about, rather than that they would see a specific fulfillment event of one of Daniel’s prophecies. Though the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 was not one of the events Daniel specifically predicted, this event was characterized by the same features as the abominations Daniel speaks of. Understood this way, verse 15 of Matthew 24 may well refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 as one of the meanings in a double entendre. Jesus is saying His disciples would see this happen. Here are some further considerations in favor of this understanding:

- (1) History records that Jewish Christians who saw Titus coming did exit the city prior to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. They evidently remembered and heeded Jesus’ warning here.
- (2) Luke’s mention of the siege seems to be a clear reference to the events of A.D. 70 (Luke 21:20).
- (3) This understanding provides a bridge between the Lord’s reference to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 (v. 2) and His instruction on the tribulation of the Day of the Lord – the sign of His coming and the consummation of the age. He refers to the destruction of the temple because it is an historic type that looks very similar to the events of Daniel that He wants to refer to as He speaks about the consummation of the age, the second meaning in the double entendre bridge from A.D. 70 to Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Jesus gives the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 a name coming from Daniel (“abomination of desolation”) because He wants to emphasize that this event would be a prophetic type of the destruction that Daniel mentions as part of the coming day of the Lord or great tribulation. Just as the Jews had to flee Roman intrusion and destruction in those days, so also would they need to do the same when the antichrist executed his abomination of desolation midway through the 70<sup>th</sup> week period as described by Daniel’s prophecies.
- (4) Jesus’ use of the destruction of the Herodian temple as a typical illustration of Daniel’s future abomination of desolation follows a prophetic pattern found also in the book of Joel, where the prophet used a locust invasion that people experienced to prophetically point as a type to the future

judgments of the day of the Lord (Joel 1:1-20; note verse 15). What the locust are to Joel's day of the Lord prophecy, the destruction of Herod's temple is to Jesus' day of the Lord prophecy.

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:

21 **For then shall be great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

This warning was heeded by Christians prior to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. It was certainly applicable to those facing the crisis in A.D. 70. But here there is also a typological transition to a future time of difficulty unique in the world's history. A warning against the acts of antichrist at the midway point of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (Daniel 9:27) is clearly also in view, for the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 is a prophetic type of what will happen in the great tribulation that is without precedent (v. 21).

This great tribulation will dwarf the events of A.D. 70, for it is without parallel in world history, unlike Titus's victory. Horrific though the tribulation of Titus was, with 1 million Jewish deaths after five months of siege, similar examples can be found in history. In 168 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes slaughtered a pig in the holy of holies. Titus executed no such abomination of desolation. The Jewish holocaust at the hands of the Nazis in WW2 seems to be a greater tribulation of the Jewish people, lasting six years with the loss of over 6 million Jewish lives. Titus had no gas chambers. So with the phrase, "for then shall be" tribulation without historical parallel, Jesus has pivoted from the fleeing that would happen in A.D. 70 to the fleeing that will occur in the great tribulation of the opened seals of Revelation 5:1-19:5. We are now beyond the type with the thing signified in full view, Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week foreshadowed by the awful events of A.D. 70. Jesus' point is that the events of A.D. 70 will be horrific because they foreshadow a coming time that will be the worst ever, the days of tribulation brought on by Daniel's mid-week abomination of desolation.

22 And except those days should be shortened, **there should no flesh be saved**: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

The days of the unprecedented great tribulation will be shortened for the elect's sake. Jesus does not say "for your sake," because those to whom He is speaking will not be there in those days. Note the 5<sup>th</sup> seal of Revelation 6:9-11, where martyrs from the great tribulation period cry out for justice. They are told to rest for "a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This "little season" is the "shortened days" of Matthew 24. The great tribulation lasts only 3.5 years more after the abomination of desolation of the antichrist.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

That is, in verses 4-5 and 11. Jesus is circling back to the church age here, which He was discussing in verses 4 and 5.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

Beginning with verse 23, Jesus addresses the immediate needs of his hearers on the Mount again. During the church age, believers must not run after false claims of Christhood. Those claims would often be supported by miraculous signs of false prophets that lead people astray. The inference here is that there would be many events throughout the church age like the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 that would tempt God's people to place their hope in false christs and false religion.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

This is the *coming* the disciples ask about in v. 3. He mentions its similarity to lightning to protect His disciples from deception during the church age. He means, "During the church age, do not accept any lesser substitutes for the coming of Christ." Do not place your hope in anything less than the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13). We have here in v. 27 a reference to the pre-tribulation rapture of the church (see 1 Thess. 4:16-18 and 2 Thess. 2:1-3, where "falling away" means "departure," paralleling the phrase, "our gathering together with Him," both of which reference the rapture of the saints that comes prior to the great tribulation; see also Rev. 7:9-17, where v. 14, "which came out of the great tribulation" can mean "which came away from the great tribulation," i.e., the saints of chapter 7 escape it rather than experience it). This coming is distinguishable from the coming "after the tribulation of those days" (vv. 29-31), for it is comparable to a flash of lightning (i.e., very quick and powerful: "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," 1 Cor. 15:52), not the darkening of the sun. It is the cause of the believer's true hope, not the cause of the mourning of the tribes of the earth here.

28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

This idiomatic expression is used by the Lord to describe a result of the flash of lightning in verse 27. The words "shall be gathered together" are used of the eagles of this verse and of the gathering together of the elect in v. 31. In Matthew, the words in the original are related, but slightly different. But the parallel verse in Luke 17:37 does use the same word used for the gathering together of the eagles that Matthew uses for the elect in v. 31. Luke 17:22-37 connects this gathering of the eagles to the taking of people from beds and fields the way that Lot escaped Sodom's destruction (v. 29), the material we have in Matt. 24:40-43. It would appear that this metaphor is a reference to the gathering of the elect for the Battle of Armageddon. They are the eagles, not the carcasses. They return with their victorious Lord having been gathered by Him to be nourished by His ultimate victory over His enemies (Rev. 19:11-16).

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

"The tribulation of those days" once again looks ahead to the unprecedented great tribulation period, as in v. 22. Here are some celestial signs that will signal the second coming itself at the end of the great tribulation. The sign of celestial phenomena is predicted twice by the prophet Joel (2:31-32, a prophecy of the coming of God's

Spirit at Pentecost; and 3:15-17, a prophecy of the second coming of God's Son, the Messiah). Jesus here refers to the second of these. The great tribulation immediately precedes the second coming of Christ to finally restore the kingdom to Israel.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Verses 30-31 are a reference to the second coming after the great tribulation. Something clearly not imminent in the sense that we know that it comes 1290 days after the great tribulation marked by the abomination of desolation in Dan. 9:27 (Dan. 12:11). The gathering together of the elect from one end of heaven to the other implies that many of the elect are already in heaven, not on earth (Mark 13:27 has the phrase, "from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven"). Those gathered from heaven accompany Christ at His second coming (Rev. 19:14). Those gathered from earth see Him come.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

The part of all of this that the disciples would see is the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Jesus says that when they saw that, the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, this would be a period in which the lightning like coming of the Son of Man in heaven (v. 27) and the beginning of the great tribulation (vv. 21, 29) are imminent, to be followed by Jesus' second coming to earth to destroy His enemies and restore the kingdom to Israel (v. 30). At that point in history, the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, believers are to understand that the end of the church age can happen at any moment.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Some of the younger Jewish contemporaries of Christ would witness the fulfillment of what Christ had said about the destruction of the Herodian temple in A.D. 70. But more to Jesus's point here, the Jewish people as a whole would not pass away until all Christ had spoken of would be fulfilled. In other words, Israel would survive the times of the Gentiles and receive the restoration of her kingdom according to the Lord's promise. The new covenant promised the future of their nation after the destruction of their nation, and God would keep this promise for them. This is what both Jeremiah and Ezekiel said about Israel in the face of a destroyed Jerusalem under the judgment of God (Jer. 31:35-37; Ezek. 37:15-28).

In v. 34 of this chapter, *generation* is the word γενεά, which BAGD defines as *family* or *descent*. Note that the Bible often speaks of a lineage of people as a "generation" (Gen. 5:1, 10:1, 11:27) as does Matthew at the beginning of His Gospel, so labeling the lines of Abraham and David, which led to Christ. There Matthew uses a related word (γένεσις, Matt. 1:1). The word in v. 34 can mean a generation in the sense of one stage in a lineage of people (Matt. 1:17), but it is also often used by Christ as a reference to the Jewish people as a whole in contrast to Gentiles (see Matt. 12:39, 41-42, 45, 16:4; cp. 1 Cor. 1:22, where it is the Jews who especially seek after a sign; Luke 11:50-51, where "this generation" is held responsible for the blood of all the OT martyrs; in Luke 17:25, Christ was rejected by "this generation"; in Luke 16:8, the word is used of the lineage of the non-Jews, the sons of this age). So the generation of Abraham, his lineage—the Jewish people, would not pass away until all that Christ spoke of about the sign of His coming and the end of the age was fulfilled. In spite of great sin and suffering, the nation of Israel will be there at the very end to say some day from Jerusalem, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39). In that day, all Israel, provoked to jealousy by Gentiles during the church age, shall be saved (Rom. 11:11, 26).

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

A wonderful reference to the reliability of the Book of Daniel, the new covenant promises of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and the words of Jesus Christ in the Olivet Discourse. They are all the Word of God, which is always authoritative, inerrant, and true. The passing away of heaven and earth is a clear reference to the end of the age and the time of Christ's coming. That will happen. But the promise of a future Israel shall not fail.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven [Mark 13:32, and a number of manuscripts containing this text add "neither the Son"], but my Father only.

Inscrutably, Jesus does not know the hour of the end as He speaks with His disciples. Not knowing the hour relates to its imminence, as He explains in what follows. It could happen at-any-moment, and not knowing the hour, Jesus certainly nowhere in this chapter seeks to pinpoint its chronology as the preterist position claims.

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Understand that Jesus believed the biblical account of Noah to be historical. He refers to these days to warn about the at-any-moment imminence of the future events He is referring to. Critical to understanding Him is the truth that when Jesus uses the phrase, "the coming of the Son of Man" here, He is not referring only to the second coming as an isolated event, but rather to the entire day of the Lord, the complete answer He just gave to the disciples' question about the sign of His coming and the consummation of the age, which begins with the heavenly coming like lightning (the rapture of the church, v. 27), includes the great tribulation (and the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, vv. 15, 21, 29), and ends with the second coming (vv. 30-31). Again, the phrase "the coming of the Son of man" is a reference to the entirety of what Jesus refers to in verses 27-31, inclusive of the great tribulation period, so that when He speaks of the imminence of "the coming of the Son of man," He refers to the imminence of the entire day of the Lord, which can start at any moment (after the destruction of the Herodian Temple in A.D. 70 prophesied by Christ in v. 2). No other prophecies of Scripture await fulfillment prior to these signs of His coming and this consummation of the age.

Notice the same practice in the Apostle Paul, who equates "the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him" with "the coming of the day of Christ (*day of the Lord* in newer translations)" (2 Thess. 2:1-2). So, when it comes to these prophecies about the coming of the Son of Man or the coming of the day of the Lord, the rapture, the great tribulation, and the second advent are viewed as a unit, combined parts of the "coming of the Son" or the "day of the Lord." Viewed as a unit, the glorious appearing of Christ for His church, the great tribulation to judge the earth, and the second advent of Christ to restore the kingdom to Israel comprise an imminent prophecy during the church age, one that can start at any time, now that the Herodian temple has fallen. Man must get ready now.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Verses 40-41 describes what happens at the beginning of the day of the Lord, which involves the rapture of the church. It happens as quickly as a flash of lightning (v. 27). Although the "taking away" of verse 39 in Noah's day was a taking away to judgment, here the Lord refers to the imminent rapture of the church, not the judgment of

unbelievers at the end of the great tribulation, whose final demise is not imminent. In Noah's day, the flood took away everyone. The Greek word translated *took away* in verse 39 is *αἶρω*, meaning *to remove*. In the day of the Lord's coming, only some will be taken while others are left (vv. 40-41). Here the Greek word is *παραλαμβάνω*, meaning *to take along, take with, or take to oneself*. In Noah's day, the taking was a removal of everyone under God's judgment. In regard to the day of the Lord's coming, we must be ready for an imminent taking along/with/to Himself by God of only some to escape judgment the way Lot did (Luke 17:29).

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

The disciples must know it could happen at any moment after the destruction of the Herodian temple.

43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Here again, when Jesus uses the phrase "the Son of man cometh," He refers to the equivalent of "the coming of the day of the Lord." Verses 40-44 tell us what happens at the beginning of the day of the Lord or the great tribulation, not at the end during the second advent. This means that vv. 40-44 can be taken as a reference to the imminent rapture of the church, which comes just before the eschatological day of the Lord. This taking/departure, the rapture of the church, is imminent because it is the next thing on God's prophetic calendar, and since the destruction of the Herodian temple, no other prophecy must be fulfilled prior to it.

45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

True believers look forward to their blessed hope – the glorious appearing of their great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, at the Rapture, which event will begin "the coming of the Day of the Lord." The prospect of the Rapture causes us to make every moment count for Christ and to warn others of the judgment to come (Titus 2:11-15).

#### **Outline:**

- I. Question 1 – "When shall the destruction of the temple be?" Or, "What will the days of the destruction of the temple be like?" Answer: the church age (vv. 1-14).
- II. Question 2 – "What shall be the sign of thy coming and the consummation of the age?" Answer: the destruction of Herod's temple in A.D. 70 will be the sign Jesus' disciples see. The sign will point prophetically to the abomination of desolation that Daniel puts at the midpoint of Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, the midpoint of the day of the Lord, beginning with the rapture of the church, including the great tribulation, and ending with the second advent's restoration of Israel's kingdom after Armageddon (vv. 15-51).



- III. Applications.
- a. Understand the surety of Jesus' words and plan as the very words and plan of God (vv. 32-35).
  - b. Do not be taken by surprise given the imminent nature of the day of the Lord (vv. 36-44).
  - c. Be a faithful and wise servant of the Lord, looking for our blessed hope, the rapture of the church (vv. 45-51).

**Key questions answered:**

- (1) Christ is dealing with two questions, not one or three, namely "When will the temple be destroyed?" and "What will be the sign of your coming and the consummation of the age?" (v. 3). Where is Jesus answering which? Where is He speaking of the church age, and where of the Great Tribulation?
  - a. Jesus refers to the church age in vv. 2-14 up to the pivot or transition point in verses 15-22. These verses are a reference to the destruction of the temple, which then points ahead as a type of the coming great tribulation.
  - b. There is a prophetic segue here from A.D. 70 to the consummation of the age through the use of double entendre.
- (2) The "abomination of desolation" is one referred to by Daniel in some sense (v. 15). Daniel 8:13, 9:27, and 12:11 all refer to the work of antichrist at the midpoint of the Great Tribulation. Daniel 11:31, the only other mention, refers to the sacrifice of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B. C. Can v. 15 be the destruction of temple in A. D. 70? If not, how would the disciples "see" it (v. 15)?
  - a. Yes, v. 15 refers to the destruction of the temple witnessed by Jesus' disciples as the same kind of abomination spoken of by Daniel, because like those in Daniel, the destruction of the temple was executed by Romans against the Jews and their holy place. Jesus' use of Daniel in referring to the event of A.D. 70 was for teaching His disciples that all events like these during the church age would foreshadow the coming Daniel-predicted event, much like a locust invasion predicted the coming day of the Lord in Joel's prophecy.
  - b. During the church age, the remainder of the time of the Gentiles, there actually would be many such similarities to the suffering caused by the future abomination of desolation (Luke 21:24).
- (3) The at-any-moment imminence of the coming of the Son of Man must motivate Christ's disciples with an at-any-moment readiness (vv. 36-51), yet the coming of the Son of Man appears to happen after the Great Tribulation (v. 29). In what sense, then, is the second coming of Christ something imminent that motivates believers now to readiness?
  - a. Because "the coming of the Son of Man" refers to "the coming of the day of the Lord" (the rapture of the church + the great tribulation + the second coming) in this context, its call for readiness applies to those who are living during the church age (v. 44).
  - b. The rapture of the church precedes the great tribulation period; the second advent comes after it (vv. 27-30).
- (4) The generation in which Christ lived would see the fulfillment of "all these things" (v. 34). In what sense is this true?
  - a. The Jewish contemporaries of Christ would witness the fulfillment of what Christ had said about the destruction of Herod's temple.
  - b. The generation/lineage of the Jewish people would see the fulfillment of all these things—God would preserve them to the end in spite of their being "trodden under foot" during the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24), until the day the new covenant promised to them is fulfilled. Then Jerusalem shall say again together in praise of Jesus Christ, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (23:39).

**The Dispensational Timeline:**

