

Matthew 24
The Destruction of the Temple (24:1-35)
& Second Coming (24:24-25:46)

Parallel passages: Mark 13, Luke 21

The first 34 verses of Matthew 24 deal with the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70AD by the Romans and from verse 35 and following is the second coming of Jesus, and not the secret rapture of the church. Keep in mind that in verse 35 Jesus said that “all these things will happen before this generation passes away.” There are signs to the Temple’s destruction; but concerning that day (the end of the age the disciples ask about) there are no signs or warnings.

23:37-39 – “Your house is left to you desolate.” Jesus is letting them know of the Temple’s destruction.

24:1-2 – the disciples hear that line and point out the magnificence of the buildings...surely, he doesn’t mean they will be torn down. Jesus brings clarity...not one stone will be left on another.

24:3 – the disciples ask for a sign for the destruction. What will be a sign of Jesus’ coming and the ‘end of the age?’

- End of the age – Greek word *sunteleia* (συντέλεια)

24:4-28 – notice in Jesus’ answer all the occurrences of ‘you.’ Over 10 in our English Bibles...Jesus is telling *them* that they will see what occurs in these verses. All of these are warning signs to get out of Jerusalem...the Romans would surround it and destroy it. In fact, in 66AD the Romans did surround it during the winter on a Sabbath. They then withdrew to deal with other conflicts. When they left the Christians left soon after, knowing the prophecy of Matthew 24.

24:6 – the ‘end’ is not yet come. They asked about the *sunteleia*, assuming that if the Temple is destroyed it certainly has to be the end of all things. Jesus, though, is not talking about the *sunteleia* (end of the age), but the *telos* (τέλος) which is a Greek word meaning the end of a process, life, etc. In this case, the end of the Temple.

24:13 – “this Gospel will be preached to the **whole world**.” The Greek word here is *oikoumene* (οἰκουμένη) and is translated ‘Roman Empire’ in every other occurrence (like in Luke 2:1...in those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken over the whole **Roman Empire**).

24:29 – This is quoted from Isaiah 13:10ff when the Assyrians were to destroy the Babylonian Kingdom. The world didn’t end then, and it will not end in Matthew 24. The Apocalyptic Literature of the Bible often uses highly symbolic language and speaks from the perspective of the nation being judged. In this case, Israel is being judged, their temple destroyed, and they feel like their world is over.

24:30 – ‘The Son of Man coming on the clouds.’ This has to be the second coming, right!? Look at Isaiah 19:1 or Ezekiel 30. God comes ‘riding on the clouds’ in judgment. The Jews recognized this language as judgement language.

24:31 – ‘Gather his elect...’ The Greek word for gather is *episunago* (ἐπισυνάγω) and is used for the gathering of Christians. It is also used in Matthew 23:37 when Jesus says he longs to gather and protect the Jews just like a mother hen gathers her chicks.

24:34 – this generation will not pass away...how long is a generation? According to Exodus, 40 years. That’s how long Israel had to wonder in the desert to wait for that generation to die off so that the people of God could enter the promised land. Jesus says these words around 33AD...making 70AD within the 40-year time frame. Notice that he says that *all* these things will happen before the 70 years are up.

24:36 – ‘but concerning that day, no one knows the day or the hour.’ There is a major shift that is happening in our text. Jesus goes from talking about signs, signs and more signs to an event that has no signs and no warnings. He affirms that this is something only God the Father knows...

24:37 – “As it was in the days of Noah...” How was it in Noah’s day? There were two groups on earth – a righteous and unrighteous. A saved group, and an unsaved group. Which group was left behind, and which was taken in this story?

24:39 – “flood came and took them all away.” Which group did the flood take away? The wicked. Who was left behind? The Righteous...

24:40-41 – why do we now assume the opposite will happen? Why do we assume that the wicked will now be left behind, and the righteous will be taken away? What in the text indicates this shift?

24:42-44 – therefore keep watch...you don’t know when Jesus will come again. We must all be ready.

More ‘Rapture’ passages: Matthew 13 (parable of the field; parable of the net). In each of these parables, which group is taken away first? Which group is left behind?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

4:13 – this passage is to give us hope; not only for us, but also for those that have already passed.

4:14 – ‘loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God.’ What about this says secret?! This is a loud proclamation and an event for all to hear and see.

4:15 – ‘**coming** of the Lord.’ Greek word *Parousia* (παρουσία). This word means the arrival of a King.

4:17 – ‘**meet** him in the air.’ Greek word *apantesis* (ἀπάντησις). Going out to meet a King just outside the city limits and then escorting him into the city. Never leaving and going away...always going out and escorting back.