

May 1st, 2022

# The Ruin of Israel and the Riches of the World

1 Corinthians 15:25; Luke 21:20-24

## He's not in the corner

There is so much to cover today so I'm going to quickly remind you where we've been. The Apostle Paul wants to show us what Jesus is doing *right now* in Heaven between His first and second coming. Jesus is not waiting in His corner *waiting* for the bell to ring so He come out swinging. Jesus is currently subduing His enemies in this age. v.25 of our text: "For he must reign *until* he has put all his enemies under his feet." He will not return until He has accomplished this.

## The plundering of Satan's house

Last week we heard of the first enemy Christ put under His feet: Satan. He was the strong man Jesus bound (**Matthew 12:29**) so that he might not deceive the nations any longer (**Revelation 20:3**).<sup>1</sup> This is *not* Satan's world, the nations are now the inheritance of King Jesus (**Psalm 2:8; Matthew 28:18**). In this age, it is Satan's kingdom that is losing ground, not Christ's. As Jesus promised the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church (**Matthew 16:18**).

## Your house is left to you desolate

This morning, we will see how 1st century Israel was Satan's greatest ally in his war against Christ. Multiple times Jesus identifies Israel as being under the control of Satan (**Matthew 12:43-45; John 8:44**). In **Revelation 2:9** and **3:9** they were called a synagogue of Satan. **1 Thessalonians 2:15** says those Jews of that generation opposed all mankind. As such Israel was the most wicked nation on earth in the first century, not only for rejecting her long-prophesied Messiah,

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<sup>1</sup> Before the cross, all nations were under Satan's dominion, because Adam forfeited his privilege as vice-regent due to sin. After the cross, Jesus Christ the Second Adam reclaimed that dominion the first Adam lost and now God the Father has put all things in subjection under His feet (**1 Corinthians 15:27**).

but murdering Him, and seeking to destroy His Church. Therefore King Jesus destroyed them—He put them under His feet—at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This is what He specifically prophesies in Matthew **24:1-35**. Make no mistake, next to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the fall of Jerusalem is the most significant event in world history to this day. Not only did her destruction forever mark the end of the old age—an end to temple worship, sacrifices, the priesthood, the theocracy—her destruction turned out to be the greatest blessing to the world. Paul specifically calls this out in **Romans 11:12**—that Israel’s great sin of rejecting Christ meant *riches for the world*. Her destruction indeed meant the end of her persecution of the Church, but *even more* it meant that Christ has taken the kingdom from her and has given it to every tribe, tongue, and nation under heaven (**Matthew 21:43**). The gospel has now gone global. Christ put Israel under His feet. Christ left Israel’s house desolate so that the world would receive the greatest blessing conceivable.

### *The Big Idea...*

When Christ left Israel’s house desolate in A.D. 70 (i.e. He put her under His feet) He unleashed an inconceivable blessing on the world

☆ Our Doctrine

☆ Our Duty

☆ Our Delight

## I. Our Doctrine

### **The analogy of faith**

I hope it’s clear *why* we are looking at other passages this morning as we unpack **1 Corinthians 15:25**. When Paul says “For he must reign *until* he has

put all his enemies under his feet” it begs the question what *enemies*? The text doesn’t indicate. But that’s *why* we have the whole Scripture. Other Scriptures tells us what enemies Christ has put under His feet.

### **Matthew’s indictment**

With that being said, we are going to turn to **Matthew 24** to see how Christ prophesied how Jerusalem would be put under His feet in A.D. 70. Matthew’s whole gospel is an indictment against the Jewish nation for their rejection of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist told them in **Matthew 3:7** that the “axe is [already] laid to the root of the trees.” Jesus told them in **Matthew 11:24** “But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.” When Jesus entered the temple near the end of His ministry (**21:23**), He gave the parable of the tenants in the vineyard, essentially recounting all of OT history how the Jews constantly killed the prophets God sent and would ultimately kill God’s only Son (**21:33-39**). Because of this, Jesus tells them in **v.43** “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.”

### **The 7 woes**

When we arrive at **chapter 23**, Jesus summarizes in one place all the wickedness of the Jews in that generation. J. Marcellus Kik says here:

“In this terrible chapter Christ like a lawyer sums up the crimes which the leaders of the nation have committed...In a series of woes Christ denounces the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites[**v.13<sup>2</sup>**], blind guides[**v.16<sup>3</sup>**], fools[**v.17**], whited sepulchers[**v.27**], serpents[**v.33**], and generation of vipers[**v.33**]. He accuses them of shutting up the kingdom

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<sup>2</sup> also cf. v15, 23, 25, 27, 29

<sup>3</sup> also cf. 24

against men[v.13]. He accuses them of extortion[v.25], false teaching [v.16-22], of lack of judgment, mercy and faith [v.23-24].”<sup>4</sup>

In all He pronounces 7 *woes* against them. And then He pronounces their most dreadful judgment. Look at v.35-38 “...so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon *this generation*. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>38</sup> *See, your house is left to you desolate.*” All the righteous blood from Abel to the last prophet they murdered was going to fall on that generation. Meaning, Jerusalem was the most wicked city on earth.<sup>5</sup> And what *precisely* was their sentence? Their complete annihilation by the Romans in 70 A.D.

### **Not one stone**

Enter **ch.24**. Look at v.1 “Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.” They heard the dreadful sentence—“*See, your house is left to you desolate*”—and it seems they couldn’t take it in. They pointed to the temple and in essence said “Surely, Master, you did not mean that this Temple will become desolate!”<sup>6</sup> Jesus

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<sup>4</sup> J. Marcellus Kik, *An Eschatology of Victory*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1971), pg. 79

<sup>5</sup> “Jerusalem was the wickedest city on earth when our Lord left the world. It was a city which had stoned the prophets and killed those whom God sent to call it to repentance. It was a city full of pride, unbelief, self-righteousness, and desperate hardness of heart. It was a city which had just crowned all its transgressions by crucifying the Lord of glory.” J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, Vol. 2, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2020), pg. 386

<sup>6</sup> Kik, pg. 81

responds in the clearest terms in v.2 “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, *there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.*”<sup>7</sup>

### A paradigm reset

Now what follows in v.3-35 are among the most controversial verses within Evangelicalism. What I’m about to offer may be a major paradigm shift for some of you. Over the last 150+ years America has been inundated with Dispensational Theology. To be evangelical in America is *nearly* synonymous with being Dispensational. Dispensational theology essentially puts all these prophecies of Jesus *in the future*. Specifically, the abomination of desolation (v.15), the Great Tribulation (v.21), the sun and moon being darkened (v.29), the Son of Man coming on the clouds (v.30)—Dispensationalism says are all in future.<sup>8</sup> What I want to propose is that all these things up to v.35 already happened in 70 A.D at the dreadful destruction of Jerusalem. That may sound strange, but it’s actually the modern view that’s strange. What I’m about to teach is the view of great teachers of the past such as Puritan John Owen (1616-1683), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) and R.C. Sproul (1939-2017).

### The first key verse

There are two key verses that unlock what this passage is saying. The first key is v.3. Here the disciples ask three questions that set up Jesus’ answer in v.4ff. They ask “Tell us, when will these things be [i.e. *when will the temple be destroyed*], and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Now from their perspective they are asking the same question in three different ways. They assumed that *the only way* the temple could be destroyed *is if* the end of the world came. Calvin says this here:

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<sup>7</sup> “Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-101), the Palestinian Jewish historian of priestly decent who compiled a history of the Jewish people for the Romans, was an eyewitness to these events. His *Wars of the Jews* was written about A.D. 75, five years after the fall of Jerusalem. He wrote of the temple’s destruction that “there was nothing to make those who had come thither believe it had ever been inhabited.”” Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, (Atlanta, GA.: American Vision, 1999), pg. 69

<sup>8</sup> Though the events Jesus predicts were fulfilled by A.D. 70, this doesn’t preclude some similar events such as wars, famines, earthquakes, false prophets, apostasy etc. from happening throughout history.

“...they had considered from childhood that the temple would stand to the end of time and had the idea deeply rooted in their minds, that they had not thought that the temple could fall down as long as the world’s created order stood. So as soon as Christ said the temple would perish, at once their minds turned to the consummation of the age.... They link the coming of Christ and the end of the world with the overthrow of the temple as inseparable events.”<sup>9</sup>

So they were confused. They linked the destruction of Jerusalem with the end of the world and Christ’s return. But Jesus is not confused. In His answer, he separates their question. He begins by answering *when* Jerusalem would be judged and the temple destroyed.

### The second key verse

That brings us to our second key verse. Look at **v.34**. “Truly, I say to you, *this generation* will not pass away until all these things take place.” Throughout Matthew’s gospel, the phrase “this generation” always means the contemporary people that was being spoken to (cf. **Matthew 11:16; 12:41; 12:42; 12:45**).<sup>10</sup> In fact just look back to **23:35-36**. Right after Jesus pronounces His 7 woes, He tells them: “...on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth...[**v.36**] Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon *this generation*.” Clearly He *means* the contemporary people that lived during Jesus’ time.<sup>11</sup> There is no sufficient argument linguistically or theologically that would force us to adopt a different meaning less than a chapter later. Therefore “this generation” in **24:34** *means* the contemporary people that Jesus was speaking to. In other words, as Keith Mathison says here “...the events of which Jesus speaks in this passage

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<sup>9</sup> Source: <https://postmillennialworldview.com/2019/06/11/matthew-243-and-olivets-structure/> Accessed April 30, 2022

<sup>10</sup> Our dispensational brethren take the phrase “this generation” to mean *not* the contemporary generation of Jesus’ time, but rather the future generation that sees all these things take place.

<sup>11</sup> That generation would experience the days of vengeance (Luke 21:22). That’s why Jesus wept over them “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem” in v.37-39 because they were to experience God’s wrath for rejecting the Christ.

(v.4-31) will be fulfilled by A.D. 70, one generation from the date He made the pronouncement.”<sup>12</sup> So then what about the end of the world? Didn't you say Jesus separated the disciples' questions? Yes. Beginning in v.36 through the end of **chapter 25** Jesus speaks about His second coming and the end of the world.<sup>13</sup> But since our focus is how Jesus is putting His enemies under His feet in history, we are focusing on v.4-31. Regarding the events in these verse, Jesus specifically says in v.34 “Truly, I say to you, *this generation* will not pass away until all these things take place.”

### The cheat sheet

Now there is no way to explain everything here in a thorough manner with the time we have left. I provided a cheat sheet for you in your bulletin—so you can review it at your own leisure. We will just hit the highlights. I would be happy to go over any parts you don't understand in next week's Q & A Sunday School. Now remember the question Jesus is answering in v.4-31: the disciples asked in v.3 “*when will these things [the desolation of Israel] be?*” The false christs, wars and rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes and persecutions are the signs leading up to it. These are easily seen as taking place before A.D. 70, just check

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<sup>12</sup> Keith A. Mathison, *Postmillennialism: An Eschatology of Hope*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1999), pg. 111

<sup>13</sup> Notice Jesus begins v.36 with the word "But." The word "but" is an adversative conjunction. An adversative conjunction expresses opposition or contrast between two statements. By using this word "but" Jesus is clearing up their misunderstanding. The destruction of Jerusalem is not the end of the world. To sum up: v.4-31 deal with the destruction of Jerusalem while v.36 thru the end of ch.25 deal with the end of the world.

out your cheat sheet later.<sup>14</sup> For my time I want to look at 5 events that Jesus said happened by A.D. 70.

## 1. The gospel will be proclaimed in all the world

v.14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” Certainly this didn’t happen before A.D. 70 right? Remember v.34, Jesus said it did. How do we reconcile this? The word “world” here *often* refers to the Roman empire (Luke 2:1; Acts 11:28; 24:5). As Ken Gentry points out “The Western hemisphere is not in view” *here*.<sup>15</sup> The nations in view here are those that belong to Rome—the known world. And Scripture tells us that these nations all heard

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### <sup>14</sup> False christ

Jesus answers, ‘before Jerusalem is destroyed’ false christ will lead many astray (v.5). The book of Acts records many false messiahs in the early church (Acts 5:36-37). John said “now many antichrists have come” (1 John 2:18). Also cf. 8:10; 21:38; 2 Tim. 3:8 (cf. Ex. 7:10-12).

### Wars and rumors of wars

He continues, ‘before Jerusalem is destroyed’ there will be wars and rumors of wars (v.6). J. Marcellus Kik reports that during this time period: “In Rome itself, four emperors came to a violent death in the short space of eighteen months...There was an uprising against [the Jews] in Alexandria. In Seleucia 50,000 were slain. In Caesaria a battle between Syrians and Jews brought to death about 20,000 Jews.” [Kik, pg. 93]

### Famines, earthquakes and persecution

Continuing, there must be famines (v.7). The book of Acts records multiple famines before A.D. 70 (Acts 7:11; 11:27-29). There must be earthquakes (v.7). Scripture records multiple earthquakes before A.D. 70 - Matthew 27:54; 28:2; Acts 16:26. Additionally, there will be great persecution in the Church (v.9-12). Before A.D. 70 the church was constantly attacked, imprisoned, persecuted and hunted down - Acts 4:3; 4:17; 5:40; 7:54-60; 8:1; 9:1; 12:1-3; 14:19; 16:22-24; 18:12; 24; 25; 2 Cor. 11:24-26; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16; 4:14-16; Rev. 1:9.

**NOTE:** Though the events Jesus predicts were fulfilled by A.D. 70, this doesn’t preclude some similar events such as wars, famines, earthquakes, false prophets, apostasy etc. from happening throughout history.

<sup>15</sup> Mathison, pg. 112-113



the testimony of the gospel.<sup>16</sup> Paul says in **Colossians 1:23** the gospel “...has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven.” **Romans 10:18** “...their words [have gone] to the ends of the world.” Several other places could be cited.<sup>17</sup> The point is, that the entire Roman empire had indeed heard the gospel before A.D. 70.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. The abomination of desolation<sup>19</sup>

**v.15** “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).” Our Dispensational friends put this in the future describing a forthcoming anti-christ who will enter a future temple and commit some gross act of idolatry such as declaring himself to be god or the like.<sup>20</sup> The problem is Jesus said in **v.34** that this *desolation* would happen in the generation *then living*. So this already happened. What is it then? We don’t have to guess because Luke tells us in his parallel account. **Luke 21:20** reads “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies [the Roman armies led by Titus], then know that its *desolation* has come near.”<sup>21</sup> When pagan symbols of worship carried by the Roman army were brought into the holy city, every religious Jew would have considered that sacrilege. Jesus is warning His elect here that if they see this happen, then

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<sup>16</sup> Beginning at Pentecost, we see that there were Jews from every nation of the world present when Peter preached the gospel. **Acts 2:5** “Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.”

<sup>17</sup> cf. Col. 1:6, Romans 1:8; 15:14-32; 16:25-27; 2 Tim. 4:17; Acts 19:10.

<sup>18</sup> For a contrast between Matthew 24:14 and the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 see Kik, pg. 101

<sup>19</sup> For a different perspective of this event, see James B. Jordan in *Matthew 23-25: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary*, (Powder Springs, GA.,: American Vision, 2022), pg. 120-126

<sup>20</sup> Source: <https://www.gotquestions.org/abomination-desolation.html> Accessed April 30, 2022

<sup>21</sup> “Why then was the Roman army designated “the abomination of desolation?” The Roman army carried ensigns consisting of eagles and images of the emperor to which divine honors were paid by the army. No greater abomination could meet the eye of the Jew than the ensigns to which idolatrous worship was rendered.” Kik, pg. 102

Jerusalem's time of wrath has come. He gives them specific instructions in **v.16-20** on what to do.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. The great tribulation

**v.21** "For then there will be *great tribulation*, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be." This is not a global tribulation. How do we know? Because **v.16** says that if those Jews living in Judea *at that time* just fled to the mountains, they could escape it. "But Pastor Josh, Jesus says that this event was so terrible it will never be equaled. It's true that 1M Jews died but how does that compare with the global flood or the Nazi Holocaust?" Well we have to make correct comparisons. Jesus said all the blood from righteous Abel to Zechariah would fall on that generation (**23:35**).<sup>23</sup> That can be said about no other generation. Just read Josephus's history on the fall of Jerusalem and you will sense the wrath of God on that generation. The destruction of the temple was *the end* of God's covenant with Israel as a nation. He tore the kingdom away from her. (**Matthew 21:43**). It wasn't just the amount of dead bodies. It was God's divorcing Israel. Indeed no other national tribulation can be compared to this one. God put an end to the Old Testament world.

### 4. The de-creation of Israel

**v.29** "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Our Dispensational brethren take this verse to mean *the end of the world*. But again, look at the context. Jesus says "immediately" this is going to happen after the tribulation of A.D. 70 not 2,000 years later. How then could this have already happened?

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<sup>22</sup> "The flight of Christians from the city before the final siege occurred during an unexpected and temporary withdrawal of the Roman armies. History tells us that many of these Christians fled to a rock fortress in Pella, which is about sixty miles northeast of Jerusalem." Mathison, pg. 113

<sup>23</sup> Additionally He said that those were the days of vengeance (Luke 21:22). And Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 that "...wrath has come upon them at last!"

Turn quickly to **Isaiah 13**. This language of de-creation—the sun and not giving it's light, the stars falling—is symbolic language God has already used to describe the horror of a nation coming under God's judgment. At the beginning of **Isaiah 13**, notice the subtitle “The Judgment of Babylon.” What does the prophet describe the fall of Babylon is like? Look at **v.10** “For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.” God uses this same language when He judges Egypt (**Ezekiel 32:7-8**).<sup>24</sup> Think about it. Imagine you are in Ukraine right now, and your country is under attack, buildings are collapsing around you, death and destruction everywhere, would it not feel like the sun and moon itself were falling out of the sky? God employs this de-creation language to describe what it is like when a nation comes under His judgment.<sup>25</sup>

### 5. The coming of the Son of Man

Back to **Matthew 24**, perhaps the most controversial verse. **v.30** “Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, *and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*”<sup>26</sup> This certainly did not happen in A.D. 70 right? Well remember in **v.34** Jesus said that generation would see this fulfilled as well. How? Well again the OT uses this same language of the Lord coming on the clouds whenever He is judging a nation. When He judged Egypt, we read in **Isaiah 19:1** “Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt.”<sup>27</sup> What's interesting about this particular verse is that two atheists—Bertrand Russell and Christopher Hitchens—have claimed that Jesus is a false prophet

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<sup>24</sup> Also see Isaiah 34:4-5; Amos 5:18; 8:9; and Acts 2:17-21.

<sup>25</sup> By the way this makes the best sense of Peter's quotation of Joel in Acts 2:17-21. By including the de-creation language (v.19-20) he's urging the Jews of that generation to believe the gospel because judgment is coming upon their nation.

<sup>26</sup> “The Greek text of this verse does not state that the Son of Man will appear in the heavens. Rather, what appears is the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. In other words, the destruction of Jerusalem will be the sign that the Son of Man, who prophesied this destruction, is in heaven.” Mathison, pg. 114

<sup>27</sup> Also see Ps. 104:3-4; Nahum 1:3

because this didn't come true in A.D. 70. But they misunderstand what Jesus meant. Jesus isn't teaching that He literally, physically showed up on the clouds in A.D. 70. He's saying that the destruction of Jerusalem was not ultimately the work of Titus and the Romans. Jesus is saying that the desolation of Jerusalem was His work. It was a sign of His coming in judgment as He put Jerusalem under His feet.<sup>28</sup>

### Summa Theologica

In summary, this dreadful prophecy was fulfilled on Israel in A.D. 70. "Ethnic Israel was excommunicated for its apostasy."<sup>29</sup> That synagogue of Satan, that great harlot, that brutal persecutor of Church was put under the feet of the risen and reigning Christ. That's **our doctrine**: When Christ desolated Israel's house in A.D. 70, it was His putting her under His feet.

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<sup>28</sup> How do we know? Because Jesus tells us so in **Matthew 26:64** Turn there with me. This was during His trial before His crucifixion. In **v.63**, the Jews demand He tell them whether He is the Son of God or not. Look how Jesus responds in **v.64** Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, *from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.*" Do you see? It's the same language. Here Jesus is on trial, and He turns it right back on them. In essence, 'You think you are judging Me, but you are the ones that will be judged, when I come from Heaven as the ruling, reigning King and destroy this nation.' Also see Matthew 16:28. Look at what Jesus says to His disciples, some of whom would still be living at A.D. 70. "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Clearly Jesus doesn't mean the 2nd coming here (also see Matthew 10:23 for a similar thought). All those disciples died and He has not yet returned. Jesus meant His coming in the destruction of Jerusalem, when He would establish His global Kingdom, rending it from the Jews and giving it to His peoples from every tribe and tongue and nation (Matthew 21:43 w/ 1 Peter 2:9).

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 What do we do with v.31: "And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Jesus told the Jews that He was going to take the kingdom from them and give it to another *people* (or nation - Mt. 21:43 cf. 1 Pet. 2:9) that would bear fruit. Here Jesus reiterates by saying that when Jerusalem is destroyed He will send out His angels (ἄγγελος - messengers) who will gather His elect (the Church) with a loud trumpet (indicating the Gospel Jubilee - Lk. 4:17-21) from the four winds etc. (all over the earth - Deut. 30:4; Ps. 22:27; Is. 45:22; Lk. 13:29). "The destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple signaled the end of a dispensation limited to one nation and the beginning of a new Israel composed of the elect from all nations of the world." J. Marcellus Kik

<sup>29</sup> David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion*, (Horn Lake, MS.,: Dominion Press, 2007), pg. 214

## II. Our Duty

### 1. Informatory Use

Our first duty is simply to *consider* how Matthew 24 fits with whatever you believe about eschatology. Many who reject the idea that the gospel will experience global triumph before second coming—that the nations will learn war no more, that the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the seas—point to this passage. They say, ‘the world is getting worse and worse, there is still a great tribulation that is coming.’ But as we have seen the great tribulation is not in the future, it’s in the past. The abomination of desolation is in the past. These things took place when Christ put an end to the Old Testament world in A.D. 70. So Matthew 24 cannot be used as evidence that the world is getting worse and worse. If anything, it is evidence that Christ is keeping His promise to put all His enemies under His feet.<sup>30</sup>

### 2. Consolatory Use

That brings us to our second duty, to *comfort* ourselves. I think many evangelicals have the idea that after Jesus Christ died and rose again, that He is done fighting for His Church until He returns at His second coming. Nothing could be further from the truth. Consider how the Christ’s Church was in such danger after Jesus ascended into Heaven. One only has to read the book of Acts to see how disciples were arrested (**Acts 4:3**); beaten (**Acts 5:40**); stoned (**Acts 7:57**); persecuted (**Acts 8:1**); killed with the sword (**Acts 12:2**). The Church was vastly outnumbered, outsmarted, out-resourced. They were but a small remnant in the world and with the whole Jewish nation, and the entire Roman empire against them. By all accounts the enemies of the Church were

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<sup>30</sup> Objection: If someone says “Matthew 24 is a both/and, it is both a prophecy of 70 A.D. and the end of the world, therefore the world is still going to experience this Great Tribulation, the world is still getting worse.” Then I would say the burden is on the person making the objection. If Jesus said in v.34-35 “Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” then we can be sure that these things have certainly already been fulfilled. If there is some sort of double fulfillment you don’t find it in this text. You would have to go elsewhere to prove the hypothesis. But remember a claim is not an argument.

100 times stronger than her. She should have been swallowed up. She should have been overthrown. But what happened? The Son of Man came on the clouds of judgment. A.D. 70 wasn't *ultimately* an act of the Romans, they were *merely* instruments.<sup>31</sup> A.D. 70 was ultimately an act of vengeance from Christ our Lord. Don't you remember *one of the main reasons* why He destroyed Jerusalem? Because they killed the Christ's people (**Matthew 23:34**). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem the city that *kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!*" (v.37). Beloved, Christ pounded Jerusalem into the dust, because she reached out her hand and persecuted Christ's precious lambs. As a nation, her policy was simple: destroy the church. Christ will not stand for that. Do you see what a comfort that is? In every age of history, the Church has great and fierce enemies. And naturally speaking, the power and strength is always on the side of our persecutors. Yet in every age, Christ rises up and defends His Church. Loved one, what are you anxious about today? Has fear gripped your heart because the future looks uncertain? It's true that many Christians are put to death for their hope in Christ. Maybe that will be you or me. Nonetheless, one thing is invincibly true: our Lord will, in His perfect timing, rise up and defend His own. Every ancient kingdom and empire and monarchy and republic have come to an end. The Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, and Romans<sup>32</sup> have all be overthrown.<sup>33</sup> But the Church remains. Why? Because Jesus Christ is

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<sup>31</sup> "Even Titus acknowledge this as an act of God. "We have certainly had God for our assistance in this war," he remarked, "and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications for what could the hands of men, or any machines, do toward overthrowing these towers?" Kik, pg. 120

<sup>32</sup> If we look at Rome in the 1st century under Nero, we might say "look how bad it is!" But if we simply fast-forward three hundred years under Constantine, we see that Christianity had become the religion of the empire. Christian persecution stopped and the gospel was freely published and received by prince and poor man alike. "Ah but" you say "Rome fell to the barbarians from without and immorality from within in 410 A.D." Yes, and that is exactly what the prophet Daniel prophesied in Daniel 2 would happened when Christ's kingdom came into the world. Those who Kissed the Son were saved and ushered into Christ's kingdom, and the rest were struck with the rod of iron from His mouth. Beloved history is not some collection of unconnected events. Since Christ's time, the rise and fall of every nation can be explained by it's adherence or rejection of Christianity. [Look in Chilton's book on the reason why there is 3rd world nations - pg.43]

<sup>33</sup> "Those nations that resist the authority of the resurrected and ascended Messiah are in danger of being broken in pieces with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9), as was rebellious Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70)." John Jefferson Davis, *The Victory of Christ's Kingdom: An Introduction to Postmillennialism*, (Moscow, ID.,: Canon Press, 1996), pg. 30

her King. Our King rules and defends us. Our King restrains and conquers all His and our enemies.<sup>34</sup> Do not fear what you see in the world today. For, 2,000 years, our risen Christ has been putting His enemies under His feet.

### 3. Admonitory Use

Our last duty is to *rebuke* what needs to be *rebuked*. Do you know why the majority of the Jews rejected Christ? Do you know why they stumbled? Because the message of the gospel is so offensive. The religion of Judaism became a religion of self-justification. The Jews knew they were sinners, but they believed that through the sacrificial system and their adherence to ceremony that they could be justified before God. They were shut out of the kingdom because of their good works. John Gerstner once said “The main thing between you and God is not so much your sins; *it's your damnable good works.*” Good works keep more people out of Heaven than sin.<sup>35</sup> How can I say that? Because the only type of righteousness that God accepts is perfect righteousness. If your good works are not works of perfect righteousness, they're damnable. Being a 'good' person outside of Christ is damnable. That's what the Jews were guilty of. Are you guilty of that? Have you resisted coming to Jesus because you think you are a pretty good person? Dear friend, your good works are damnable. You are not good. You were born wicked, without hope. And no matter what you do, you can never change that. You have a stain that runs deeper than your skin color. Your soul is stained black. And the best deeds you could do will never wash you clean. But the blood of Jesus Christ is the lather you need. Christ is calling to you this morning: “Though your skins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” That's the promise if you trust Him. Hope in Him this morning. Don't be like the proud Jew in the 1st century who refused to come to Him. They were cut off, damned, judged, and you will be too

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<sup>34</sup> “...for in less than three centuries the Roman Empire was conquered by these spiritual weapons, and the emperor himself had become a Christian. “This war,” noted Lenski, “could not lead to anything but victory.” Davis, pg. 56

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 21:31 “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you” Mark 2:17 And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

if you refuse Him. Come to Him, He will not refuse you. Call on His name. Here's the great promise of Scripture: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."<sup>36</sup>

Those are **our duties**: 1) We must *consider* that Matthew 24 does not prove the world is getting worse because these prophecies already happened. 2) We must *comfort* ourselves with the truth that Christ is still defeating His and our enemies today. 3) You must rebuke yourself if you think your good works will make you acceptable God.

### III. Our Delight

#### Riches for the world

What's amazing about A.D. 70 is that it unleashed inconceivable blessing upon the world. Christ crushed Israel in order to bring the riches of the gospel to sinners like you and me. Paul says in **Romans 11:11** says "So I ask, did [Israel] stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, *through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles.*" The fall of Jerusalem was a blessing to the whole world. And specifically, it was a blessing for you loved ones. You have been made an heir of salvation. You a wild olive branch have been grafted into the vine. And it wasn't because you were better, or more righteous, than those Jews. Quite the contrary. It was your sins that nailed Jesus to the tree. **1 Peter 2:24** "He himself bore *our sins* in his body on the tree." Did those Jews harden their hearts against Christ? How many times have you done so? Did those Jews walk in self-righteousness, pride and arrogance? Did they trample on others? Did they live selfish, hypocritical, God-ignoring lives? How many times have you done so? Everything these Jews did to deserve this punishment, we likewise are guilty of, if not with our hands then certainly with our hearts. They killed the prophets—so we have often hated and wanted the prophetic

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<sup>36</sup> Romans 10:9



word silenced. They did their good works to be seen by others—how often do we do the same? They scrupulously tithed mint and dill and cumin while neglecting the weighted matters of the law like justice, mercy and faithfulness. Loved ones how often have you simply gone through the motions of being a Christian and have failed to truly—from the heart—pursue mercy? Those Jews put on a great outward appearance but inwardly they were full of uncleanness, they appeared righteous to others on the outside, but on the inside they were hypocritical. Loved ones, how often do we do the same? You see at every point, in our hearts, we are just like them. And Christ crushed them and destroyed that generation, with the express purpose to bring salvation to you. “did [Israel] stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, *through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles.*” Loved ones you do not belong to Christ this morning because you are better than they. You belong to Christ solely, and entirely because of the free grace of Jehovah. “...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”<sup>37</sup> That’s what we ought to away from Matthew 24. But for the grace of God there go I. But for Christ shedding His blood for me, I would have suffered that condemnation. But for His redeeming love, and free election, I likewise would have been cut off. Oh friends, rejoice in your risen Savior this morning. Consider those triumphant words by Charles Wesley.

Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore!  
Rejoice, give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore.

Jesus, the Savior, reigns, the God of truth and love;  
When He has purged our stains, He took his seat above;

His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and heav'n;  
The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus giv'n:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

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<sup>37</sup> Romans 5:8

