

Matthew

24: 1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things?

Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." 3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Mark

13: 5 And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 6 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and will deceive many. 7 But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.

9 But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

14 "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

15 Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house.

16 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Luke

21:7 So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?" 8 And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them. 9 But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately." 10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. 13 But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 By your patience possess your souls.

20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors!

34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.
35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

17 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 18 And pray that your flight may not be in winter. 19 For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. 20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days. 21 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, He is there!' do not believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 23 But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand. 24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven. 28 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors!

30 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.
31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

32 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. 34 It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35 Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning--"

23 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25 "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. 27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." 29 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. 31 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

32 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place.
33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

"The Destruction of Jerusalem"

Two week ago our journey through the Gospel of Luke brought us to some questions that the disciples asked of Jesus. As I explained, my plan is to cover these questions and our Lord's answers in three messages.

- Two weeks ago we focused on the questions that were asked
- This morning we will consider the answers that were given
- And the final message next week will focus on the proper application of all this for our lives

Jesus has proclaimed to the disciples that Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed, with not one stone remaining...

- As they stood in the glory of Herod's Temple with some of those 'stones' standing forty feet tall! The disciples then asked Jesus a two-part question:
- When will this happen?
- And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?

Previously we focused on why these questions were begin asked...

How they related to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70...

And the importance of Jesus giving them a warning to not be deceived, a warning that we must still heed today!

I pointed out that there are many deceptive and false teachings regarding these passages presented today by Christian leaders in American churches. There were lots of reactions to how I handled this, with many glad that I was clearly presenting the contrast and some concerned that saying they were practicing the type of deception used by Satan might not have been appropriate since they are Christian brothers and sisters. Before going forward, I do want to make sure I am clear in what I am saying about that: These brothers and sisters are very wrong at this point, but I am not questioning their faith or even implying that we are somehow 'holier than they are.' I used the example of Peter for that very reason and so I want to quickly review the confrontation that Jesus had with Peter where he was so wrong about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus:

Mark 8:29 "[Jesus] said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." [Matthew adds that the Father revealed this to Peter!] 30 "Then [Jesus] strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him. 31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke this word openly." [Here we have a clear teaching that Peter did not want to hear] "And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Jesus was not removing Peter from his position as a disciple...

Jesus was not saying Peter had lost his salvation or any such thing...

Jesus was simply pointing out that Peter was questioning what God had clearly said would happen, JUST as Satan had done in the garden!

So as we study how Jesus answers these straightforward questions with straightforward answers, we must take care not to do the same AND warn others who do!

- With that in mind, I want to now dig into the answers that Jesus gives, remembering that this is not going to be an eighty part series on the end times!

I want to focus on three precepts that will not only help us understand these answers, but Lord willing, assist us in our study of the Scriptures in other areas as well...

- First we must allow the obvious to be the obvious!
- Second we must take care to properly understand Biblical language
- And finally we will see there is often future applications from prophecies that have been completed in the past

Perhaps one of the best examples of letting the obvious be the obvious is Daniel chapter two where God gives Daniel the details and interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream: I won't go over all the details, [it can be some edifying homework] BUT it is certainly a good place to let the obvious be obvious: The King in his dream sees a great image or statue: We are TOLD that the head of gold is Nebuchadnezzar and the three earthly kingdoms that follow are obviously from history: Persia, Greece and the Romans. By the time of Christ, the Roman empire was dividing and then the 'stone cut without hands' which is Jesus, comes and establishes His Kingdom which crushes these earthly empires and fills the earth

This is what Luke is teaching here in his orderly account and what we clearly see in the teachings of Paul in I Corinthians 15 and certainly the Book of Revelation.

Those who believe that the Kingdom of Jesus is somewhere in the future, after the rapture of the Church and a time of tribulation, must present a tortured view of this same image in the King's dream: Its legs instead of being the Greek and Roman empires that historically and logically follow Persia, instead become the church, divided east and west, which comes long after the coming of Jesus. Those ten toes I was taught were to be the common market of Europe! All of this is done so the Kingdom of Jesus can be off in the future and it is the same type of deception that Peter would have brought if Jesus had allowed him to doubt the importance of His death, burial and resurrection

As I pointed out in the last message, we must allow the Bible to shape our thinking and NOT bring our thinking or ideas to the Bible looking for proof texts.

- So with that in mind I want us to consider a couple of VERY obvious things in the answers that Jesus provides for the simple questions the disciples asked.

The first is near the end of the texts I have underlined: The disciples have asked WHEN do these things take place and I think it is pretty hard to argue that Jesus does not give an obvious answer: In ALL THREE accounts Jesus says they will take place in "this generation" [*and in Matthew is it is the second time Jesus says this!*] This word generation is used 85 times in the Bible and it ALWAYS means a generation of people in the usual way that we use that word. SO, if we let what is obvious be obvious, then Jesus is saying ALL these things will take place before the generation of people He is speaking to will pass away.

History tells us that the Temple and Jerusalem were completely destroyed about forty years later in AD 70 BEFORE this generation had passed away.

IF someone wants any of these events to be yet future, then they must come up with a VERY unobvious definition of generation!

The timing is pretty obvious, so let's tackle a tougher one: What is the abomination of desolation spoken of by the Prophet Daniel... It has been the subject of MUCH debate and again, we should let the Bible be obvious where it is obvious. Note the underlined portions earlier in the text:

Matthew and Mark both refer to the abomination of desolation spoken of by the Daniel the prophet...

- Then the warning is given that when they see this those in Judea must flee to the mountains
- They are to do so without turning back!

The same warnings to flee and not turn back are found in Luke verse 21: But look at verse 20: "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near!"

- Since this must take place in "this generation" how can it be anything but the armies of Rome?

The abomination of desolation spoken of by the Prophet Daniel is the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of God by the Roman armies.

- This may stand in stark contrast with what is presented in many Christian fiction novels and movies today, but it is clearly what the Bible teaches and that is where we should stand!

So now let's move from the obvious to the not so obvious... The modern Christian who holds to the pre-millennial view that all of this is yet future will turn to us at this point and say how can you believe all of this has been fulfilled when MUCH of it obviously has not?

- You can see many of the examples they might throw up in the texts in all three Gospels.

Luke is the easiest of the three Gospels for us to explain because 'signs in the sun, in the moon and in the stars' and such sound like figurative language. BUT surely we have not yet seen "the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

They really think they have us over a barrel with Matthew and Mark:

- When has the sun been darkened or the moon ceased to give its light?
- The stars have not fallen from heaven!
- When have the angels gone out with a great trumpet to gather God's elect?

Teachers for the past two hundred years have led many Saints astray by convincing them that these things spoken in the Gospel MUST be events that are yet future, despite the clear proclamation from Jesus that they will take place in THAT generation!

- The simple answer comes with our second precept, that we must understand Biblical language

To illustrate this, I want to draw from a Psalm that was in our daily readings last month. Turn with me if you have your Bibles to Psalm 18, which we would have read from our daily reading on February 18th:

- FIRST time I had seen this, which is why we encourage you to read Psalms & Proverbs thru twice each year!

In this case it is important to note the introduction, which is inspired unlike the notes or headings we have in many of our Bibles!

“A Psalm of David the servant of Jehovah, who spoke to Jehovah the words of THIS song on the day that Jehovah delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul”

- **Here we are CLEARLY given the historical context of what David is speaking about**

In human terms, the ascension of a new king and the consolidation of power is no big deal, but in God’s plan the rise of David and the defeat of his enemies IS a big deal. The Messiah would be called “The Son of David” and the throne of David would stand forever. So, let’s see what type of language the Lord uses to describe such an event: *Explain the events to the children...*

In this Psalm, King David recounts what happened beginning with verse four: Psalm 18:4

“The pangs of death surrounded me, And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. 5 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon Jehovah, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, even to His ears.” *David cries out to God and He responds in order to establish the throne of David...*

7 “Then the earth shook and trembled; The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, Because He was angry. 8 Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. 9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down With darkness under His feet. 10 And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters And thick clouds of the skies. 12 From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire. 13 The Lord thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire. 14 He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe, Lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them. 15 Then the channels of the sea were seen, The foundations of the world were uncovered At Your rebuke, O Jehovah, At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils. 16 He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me, For they were too strong for me. 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But Jehovah was my support. 19 He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me.”

Now again we can read the accounts of this deliverance in the history books of the Old Testament, but let me ask you:

- **Will you find hail and coal falling down?**
- **The foundation of the hills being shaken?**
- **Did the Lord thunder from heaven?**
- **Were the foundations of the earth uncovered?**

David is using, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, what we refer to as apocalyptic language. For example, the nation of Israel is often referred to as the land or earth, in contrast to the Gentiles which are seen as the sea.

- **So when Saul is replaced by David there is a shaking of the foundation of the earth.**
- **God uses strong language to describe a very significant event.**

So if this type of language is used for describing this shift from Saul to David, it should not surprise us at all to see Jesus describe the destruction of Jerusalem with similar language.

There is much more apocalyptic language in the Book of Revelation and as my son-in-law Greg Uttinger and many others have rightly stated:

- **IF you are not familiar with the Old Testament language and symbols you will get VERY lost in the Book of Revelation!**

Well as you can imagine I could give many more examples of both some obvious things to see and apocalyptic language used in the Bible, but I hope these examples will be of help.

- **The final precept I want us to quickly see this morning is that just because a prophecy has been fulfilled in the past, it does NOT mean that it has no application for God's Saints in the future...**

We find an example of this in all three accounts where Jesus warns the disciples about how they are going to be treated and the persecutions they will face from the false shepherds of Israel and the forces of Rome over the next 40 years. We see this beginning at verse 12 in Luke 21:

“12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. 13 But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.”

- **We will see the literal fulfillment of this prophecy in the lives of the Disciples as we study the Book of Acts.**
- **We know from history that Rome became the great persecutor of the Church prior to AD 70.**

So Jesus was not a false prophet, but the warnings and comfort from these verses did not end in AD 70. Think about how many times down through church history these words of Jesus have brought comfort to Saints facing great challenges or persecution.

- **I am pretty sure that Martin Luther would have sought comfort here the night before he faced his accusers at the Diet of Worms.**
- **These are verses that we still should use to teach our own covenant children about how the Lord cares for His Saints in times of crisis!**

We will spend our time next week, Lord willing, considered how all of this applies to our lives today... How and why our view of these prophecies and what is commonly called the end times has a tremendous impact on how we function in the Kingdom of Christ.

I want to close today with just a quick application from the end of our Lord's discourse that is given in Matthew's Gospel: Whether we think that Jesus goes on to answer another question about the end of time or is still talking about the coming of Jesus to judge Jerusalem in AD 70, there is a lesson to learn about how we should live here: Jesus concludes by saying:

Matthew 24:44 “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. 45 “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Again we see those two paths and we must chose wisely because even though we do not know exactly when our Lord will return...

We each know we WILL face His return, either at His 2nd Coming or at the day of our death.

- So let us chose to be those wise servants who the Lord finds serving Him well upon His return!

Communion Meditation: Psalm 110:

“1 A Psalm of David. The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." 2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! 3 Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. 4 The Lord has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." 5 The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. 7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head.”