

The First Question of Matthew 24:3

Matthew 24:1

1 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away

from the temple-symbolical movement by our Lord as He moves away from the Temple.

...1 when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

how magnificent and beautiful they were in Herod's Temple

(Mark 13:1-2 and Luke 21:5-6)

Matthew 24:2

2 And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

Lapse of time between verses 2 and 3

Matthew 24:3

3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples

Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mark 13:3)

...3 came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

The disciples ask two questions:

Question-1 When will these things happen?

That is when will this temple be destroyed?

This will be in A.D. 70 by the Roman Empire.

Question-2 What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age. The answer to this question will not be at the same time as the destruction of the temple, nor have these two things yet occurred in history.

Dr. Dwight Pentecost in *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ: A Study of the Life of Christ* points out the following in reference to the questions by the disciples.

“THE QUESTIONS SHOWED THAT THEY HAD ARRIVED AT CERTAIN CONCLUSIONS. . . . TO THESE MEN CHRIST'S WORDS CONCERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM WAS THE DESTRUCTION PREDICTED BY ZECHARIAH THAT WOULD PRECEDE THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH. IN JEWISH ESCHATOLOGY TWO AGES WERE RECOGNIZED: THE FIRST WAS THIS PRESENT AGE, THE AGE IN WHICH ISRAEL WAS WAITING FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH; THE SECOND WAS THE AGE TO COME, THE AGE IN WHICH ALL OF ISRAEL' S COVENANTS WOULD BE FULFILLED AND ISRAEL WOULD ENTER INTO HER PROMISED BLESSINGS AS A RESULT OF MESSIAH' S COMING”, that is the millennium.

Now as we go through our Lord's answer to these disciples and indeed to all of us we will see that Matthew does not record any answer by our Lord dealing with the near destruction of the Temple He will concentrate on the days of the Tribulation and Christ's return.

The First Question

...3 when will these things happen?

Therefore, Jesus was prophesying the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.

Jesus had just earlier spoken of Israel's
Matthew 23:38

**38 house [Temple] is being left to you
desolate**

And Jesus Christ had spoken about the Temple in 24:2 about a
time when

**...38 not one stone here shall be left upon
another, which will not be torn down**

Matthew does not record Jesus' answer to the first question. But
Luke does record it in Luke 19:43-44.

Luke 19:43

**43 "For the days will come upon you when
your enemies will throw up a barricade
against you, and surround you and
hem you in on every side,**

A careful study of Josephus shows this is a description of the
Roman siege against Jerusalem ending in its destruction in
A.D. 70.

Luke 19:44

**44 and they will level you to the ground
and your children within you, and they
will not leave in you one stone upon
another, because you did not
recognize the time of your visitation."**

We have seen over and over a biblical description of the
destruction of Jerusalem by the Seven Headed Dragon.

(Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome 1 and Rome 2—in The Tribulation)

Luke also gives the fulfillment of this first question.

Luke 21:20

20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.

Luke 21:22

21 “Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;

Luke 21:22

22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.

Luke 21:23

23 “Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;

Luke 21:24

24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

(the above underlined phrases support that this is speaking of Roman invasion in A.D. 70)

People, including scholars and students of the Bible are often confused when studying all the passages dealing with the destruction in A.D. 70 and desecration of the temple in the Tribulation. You have to be very careful when you study Daniel, Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 19.

Dr. Randall Price has noted six major differences between the A.D. 70 Temple and the Temple of the future tribulation period spoken of in Matthew 24.

1. The Temple described in Matthew 24:15 is not said to be destroyed, only desecrated (see Revelation 11:2). By contrast, the Temple in Jesus' day (or Matthew 24:2) was to be completely leveled:

Matthew 24:2

2 "not one stone would be left standing on another"

(Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 19:44).

2. The Temple's desecration would be **a signal** for Jews to escape destruction (Matthew 24:16-18), "be saved" (Matthew 24:22) and experience the promised "redemption" (Luke 21:28). By contrast the destruction of the Temple in Matthew 24:2 was a **judgment because you did not recognize the time of your visitation [Messiah's first advent]**" (Luke 19:44b) and resulted in the Temple being level[ed] to the ground and your children [the Jews] within you" (Luke 19:44a).

3. The generation of Jews that are alive at the time that the Temple is desecrated will expect Messiah's coming "immediately after" (Matthew 24:29), and are predicted to not pass away until they have experienced it (Matthew 24:34). By contrast, the generation of Jews who saw the Temple destroyed would pass away and 2000 years **(to date)** would pass without redemption.
4. The text Jesus cited concerning the Temple's desecration, Daniel 9:27, predicts that the one who desecrates this Temple will himself be destroyed. By contrast, those who destroyed the Temple in A.D. 70 (*in fulfillment of Jesus' prediction*) -the Roman emperor Vespasian and his son Titus- were not destroyed but returned to Rome in triumph carrying vessels from the destroyed Temple.
5. The time "immediately after" (Matthew 24:29) the time of the Temple's desecration would see Israel's repentance (Matthew 24:30), followed by, as Matthew 23:29 implies, a restoration of the Temple. By contrast, the time following the destruction of the Temple only saw a "**hardening**" happen "**to Israel,**" which is to last "**until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**" (Romans 11:25) -still 2,000 years and counting.
6. For the Temple that is desecrated, the scope is of a worldwide tribulation "**coming upon the world**" (Luke 21:26; compare Matthew 24:21-22; Mark 13:19-20), a global re-gathering of the Jewish people "from one end of the sky to the other" (Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:27),

and a universal revelation of the Messiah at Israel's rescue (Matthew 24:30-31; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:26-27).

This scope accords with the prophesied end-time battle for Jerusalem recorded in Zechariah 12-14, where "all nations of the earth will be gathered against it" (Zechariah 12:3). By contrast the A.D. 70 assault on Jerusalem predicted in Luke 21:20 is by the armies of one empire (Rome). Therefore, if there are two different attacks on Jerusalem, separated by more than 2000 years, then two distinct Temples are considered in Matthew 24:1-2 and Matthew 24:15. Randall Price *Jerusalem in Prophecy: God's Stage for the Final Drama* pp. 251-55

A careful study of the above six points and the passages referred to in them clearly reveals two entirely different events being described: destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 by the Romans and desecration of the temple in The Tribulation by setting up of the abomination that causes desolation by the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire.

The next important issue is

**“WHEN WILL THE EVENTS
OF MATTHEW 24:4-14
OCCUR IN HISTORY?”**

To be candid in this study there are two strong positions in answer to this question.

(OPINION 1)

The first is that these verses refer to the time between the time of Christ's first advent and the beginning of The Tribulation. I mention this one because the well-respected author and past president of Dallas Theological Seminary interprets this passage in this way.

He teaches that verses 4-14 are: "DESCRIBING THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGE LEADING UP TO THE END. WHILE AT THE SAME TIME RECOGNIZING THAT THE PREDICTION OF DIFFICULTIES, WHICH WILL BE CHARACTERIZED THE ENTIRE PERIOD BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, ARE FULFILLED IN AN INTENSIFIED FORM AS THE AGE MOVES ON TO ITS CONCLUSION." (*Thy Kingdom Come*)

(OPINION 2)

"Dr. Walvoord believes that verses 15-26 are SPECIFIC SIGNS THAT DESCRIBE THE TRIBULATION, while verses 27-31 RELATE TO THE SECOND COMING." *Commentary on Matthew*

I cannot say enough of my respect and admiration for this man and his love of the Lord and his place among the scholars in biblical writings. He had a significant role in my graduation from Dallas Theological Seminary.

But if you will look back at our opening outline of Matthew 24-25 by Dr. Merrill Unger, you will see that he titles Matthew 24:4-26 "**Events of The Tribulation.**"

And this is the way I interpret these verses.

Especially verses 4-8 refer to the first part of The Tribulation and correspond with the first four seal judgments of Revelation 6:1-6.

MATTHEW 24:4-8

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.

⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.

⁶ You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but *that is not yet the end.*

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

⁸ But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

REVELATION 6:1-6

THE FIRST SEAL—RIDER ON WHITE HORSE

¹ Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.”

² I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

THE SECOND SEAL—WAR

³ When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.”

⁴ And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that *men* would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

⁵ When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come.” I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

⁶ And I heard *something* like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine.”

"IF OUR INTERPRETATION IS THE RIGHT ONE THERE MUST BE PERFECT HARMONY BETWEEN THESE THREE:

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY: MATTHEW XXIV:4-44, AND REVELATION VI-XIX." INSISTS ARNO GAEBELEIN, IN HIS *GOSPEL OF MATTHEW*. "I BELIEVE JUST SUCH A HARMONY EXISTS, ESPECIALLY BETWEEN THE OLIVET DISCOURSE AND REVELATION.

THIS IS WHAT CONVINCES ME THAT VERSES 4-14 REFER TO THE FIRST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION." **Gaebelein continues:**

"IF THIS IS THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION, IF MATTHEW XXIV:4-14 REFERS TO THE BEGINNING OF THAT COMING END OF THE AGE AND IF REVELATION VI REFERS TO THE SAME BEGINNING OF THE END AND THAT WHICH FOLLOWS THE SIXTH CHAPTER LEADS US ON INTO THE GREAT TRIBULATION, THEN THERE MUST BE A

PERFECT HARMONY BETWEEN THAT PART OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE CONTAINED IN MATTHEW XXIV AND THE PART OF REVELATION BEGINNING WITH THE SIXTH CHAPTER. *AND SUCH IS INDEED THE CASE*

The Second Question of Matthew 24:3

Matthew 24:3

3 what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Since everything from here on is concerned with The Tribulation and the second coming of JESUS CHRIST, it is most interesting the first thing that JESUS CHRIST says.

Matthew 24:4

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.

Remember that the first great occurrence of The Tribulation is the rise of the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire, also known as *The Antichrist*. So it follows that the first warning to Jews will be, not to be deceived. So as a great shepherd, that JESUS CHRIST is, He begins with a warning about false messiahs.

Verse 5 continues this warning

Matthew 24:5

5 “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.

This brings us to a brief study on *Antichrist*.

1. The term is never used in Revelation. In fact the term appears only in John's epistles of 1st and 2nd John.

1 John 2:18

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

1 John 2:22

22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:3

3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit of the antichrist*, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

2 John 1:7

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as coming in the flesh*. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

2. Meaning of the word: ***against Christ*** or ***another Christ***
The Greek preposition ***anti*** in composition with other words sometimes denotes **substitution**, that is taking the place of another. Therefore, ***false Christ***. However the prefix ***anti*** can also convey the idea of opposition—***against Christ***.
3. Except for 1 John 2:18 the Bible never specifically refers to the coming dictator of the Revived Roman Empire as ***The Antichrist***. While it is based on 1 John 2:18, it is most often used as a designation for that one who is to come as the dictator of Revived Roman Empire. Many scholars of the Bible, those who teach Bible prophecy etc., all use this title for that man. Of course it is most befitting to his character. We saw in Daniel how he will utter unimaginable blasphemies against the true God. This seems to be the way John refers to this coming one in 1 John 2:18
4. In our study of Daniel 9:27 –Daniel’s Seventh Week, we saw that it was in this time that the Antichrist will come into power. After the Rapture of the church, that is after God takes the Church away from the earth, the Antichrist will rise in power as the ‘little horn’ of Daniel 7:24-25. His coming into power is certain, but after the beginning of Daniel’s Seventh Week.
5. While he begins as a political leader, once he has control of most of the earth he will demand that all will worship him. He will institute this worship by setting up the

abomination that causes desolation in the temple in Jerusalem. What is so characteristic of this kind of leader, he will pursue peace but wage war. “HIS UNPRECEDENTED, UNPARALLELED, AND UNRESTRAINED POWER WILL COMMAND WORLDWIDE ATTENTION FOR 42 MONTHS. (*Fast Facts on Bible Prophecy*—T. Ice and T. Demy)

6. For three-and-a-half years this antichrist will slaughter Christians and Jews and usher in a period of history that has never before existed on earth.

7.

Good news!!

Near the end of the 7 years of The Tribulation, our Lord will return and annihilate the antichrist and his god, Satan. And JESUS CHRIST will set up His millennial kingdom.