

## **Study Series 7 Lesson 1: Matthew 24:1-14 (Matthew 24: Transitional period – Fulfillment of Hebrews 8:13)**

Keeping with this understanding of the second purpose of the **two-fold** coming of Christ:

- 1) John the baptizer **was** said to be the promised **Elijah** prophesied of more than 400 years earlier by Malachi – whose ministry was to “prepare the way of the Lord,” of which it says the Lord will “**purify the sons of Levi**” ... “**before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.**” (Mal. 3 & 4; Matt. 11:10; 14 and 17:10-13)
- 2) Jesus came to **Israel** as their Messiah, but **they** rejected Him. He told His disciples, as well as many others, that **He had come only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**, and that his disciples were **not** to go to the Gentiles or Samaritans, but **only** to go and warn the cities of Israel to “repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand.” (Luke 9:20-22; 17:25; Matt. 21:42; Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6-8; 1 Cor. 1:23; Matt. 13:10-13, 15:24)
- 3) Jesus said He would be the “sign/warning” to **His generation**, as Jonah was to the generation in which he lived. (Matt. 12:39-42; Luke 29-32; Jonah 3:1-4)
- 4) Jesus spoke in parables to the OC Israel crowds so that **they** would not understand Him and turn to Him and repent and accept Him as their Messiah, as their OC judgement had been sealed many hundreds of years ago from all their harlotry and breaking their covenant with God, who was said to have been their husband and in a marriage with them. And now their promised judgements, promised from as far back as Deut. were going to soon be fulfilled **upon their generation**. (Isa. 6:8-11; 61:1-2)
- 5) Jesus tells the OC leaders and people that the Kingdom of God is going to be removed from **them**, **they** were going to be cast out where there is weeping & gnashing of teeth, & **their people destroyed miserably**, & **their city burned up** when God sent armies to carry out His justice. (Matt. 21:33-45; 22:1-10; Isa. 5:1-7; Amos 7:8; 8:2; Luke 13:6-9)
- 6) Jesus said that upon **that generation before Him**, in His time, **all the blood** from all the righteous shed on the earth from Abel through Zechariah, was going to be judged upon **them**, as it was **them (OC Israel)** who killed all the prophets, and that they are said to have **had almost filled up the “measure of their father’s guilt”** – and **their house** was going to be left to **them desolate**! (Matt. 23:31-39; Luke 11:49-51; 13:22-29)

## MATTHEW 24 “OLIVET DISCOURSE” (Verses 1-14)

(Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21)

1. CONTEXT OF HIS DISCOURSE: Jesus is bringing about the change from the Old Covenant Jewish system and physical kingdom to the New Covenant gospel eternal Kingdom. After the Cross, He would come again soon to destroy Jerusalem, the temple and many of the Jewish people. This is to put an end to the remaining wayward physical nation/kingdom of Judah in God's plans (The kingdom of Israel was destroyed in 722 BC by the Assyrians. The remaining kingdom of Judah is often simply referred to as Israel). This wrath and judgment against the remaining of Israel (kingdom of Judah) is for their rejection of Him as the promised Messiah and for their disobedience.

A). The temple in Jerusalem had become a DEN OF THIEVES. (Matt. 21:12-13).

B). The Old Covenant Jewish leaders would not enter the kingdom of God because they DID NOT BELIEVE in Jesus as the Messiah. (Matt. 21:32).

C). The kingdom of God would be TAKEN FROM ISRAEL and given to Christians. (Matt. 21:43).

D). Jesus' wrath was AGAINST OLD COVENANT ISRAEL and He identified them as Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites. (Matt. 23:13-29).

E). Jesus said that His wrath would come UPON THIS GENERATION of Old Covenant Israel. (Matt. 23:31-36).

F). Jesus declares that the Old Covenant Temple would be DESTROYED. (Matt. 23:38).

2. TIMING OF HIS COMING: Jesus makes it clear that His second coming in judgment will be sometime during this current first century generation of His disciples.

A). Those first century Jews were to “repent” for the Kingdom of God was AT HAND. (Matt. 3:2, 4:17; 10:7, Mark 1:15, Rom. 13:11-12; Jam. 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:7 = Greek: *Eggiken*: literally means, “has drawn near.”, (and many other verses))

B). The time is NEAR. (1 Cor. 7:29-31, Phil. 4:5, Heb. 10:25, 1 John 2:8, 18, Rev. 1:3, 22:10).

C). The things which must SHORTLY take place. (Matt. 12:32, Acts 17:31, 24:25, Rom. 8:18, 13:11-12, Eph. 1:21, Col. 2:16-17, 2 Tim. 4:1, Heb. 10:1, 27, 1 Pet. 4:17, Rev. 1:1, 22:6-7).

D). I am coming QUICKLY. (Heb. 10:37, Rev. 3:11, 22:12, 22:20).

E). Jesus told His disciples that when YOU see these things, the time is NEAR (at the door). (Matt. 24:33, Jam. 5:7-9).

F). Jesus told His disciples that THIS GENERATION will by no means pass away till ALL THESE THINGS take place. (Matt. 23:36, 24:34, Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32).

G). History does show us that all the elements of this prophecy occurred before all of the disciples died.

### 3. SIGNS OF HIS COMING (Matt. 24:1-14):

A). Jerusalem To Be Destroyed (Matt. 24:1-3) (also see **Appendix 1** on the next page):

<sup>1</sup>*“Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup> 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.” <sup>3</sup> 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?”*

- 1) End of the Age = Greek: *suntelias tou aionos*. This very unique Greek phrase is **only** used 4 times in the entire NT (Matt. 13:39-40, 24:3, 28:20; Heb. 9:26). After Matthew 13:39-40, in verse 51, Jesus asked His disciples if they understood what He meant and they answered, “**Yes.**” So, sometime later in Matthew 24 when Jesus says the exact same unique phrase, and that it was within their generation, that He was going to destroy the temple, the centre of their Old Covenant world, and upon hearing that is when they asked Him “when will be the ‘end of the age?’” (Old Covenant age they were **currently** living in. Jesus had **not** gone to the cross yet, **nor** established the NC age) → they knew exactly what the ‘end of the age was.’ Hebrews 9:26 also clearly states that the “end of the ages” was at the time Christ was crucified → we all know that was within the 1<sup>st</sup> century generation.
- 2) Matthew 24:3 discusses the end of the AGE, which you will also notice with that phrase is included the Greek word *aion*, **not** *kosmos* (1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 1:1-2; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20).
- 3) This refers to the end of the Old Covenant system, aka: JEWISH (MOSAIC) AGE.
- 4) The use of “COMING” in relation to JUDGEMENT is an Old Testament concept, also used in the New Testament. (Egypt = Isa. 19:1; Assyrian captivity of Samaria and Jerusalem = Micah 1:1-4; Babylon = Isaiah 13; Destruction of Edom = Isaiah 34; Assyrians surrounding Jerusalem then defeated by God = Isa. 30 then 37; Israel by Assyria in 722 BC = Amos 8:8-9; Metaphoric talk of the Lord doing the fighting = Rev. 2:4-5, Rev. 2:16)

## **Appendix 1:**

**(i): Matthew 24:1-3** As Jesus' disciples had just heard His prediction of "desolation" for the temple and city, they no doubt felt bewildered and wondered, "Lord, you cannot mean this temple!" They must have been astonished when Jesus told them that the temple was going to be destroyed, with not one stone left upon another (**v. 2 and see Josephus in Wars VII:1:1.**). So they were naturally curious about how and when those things were going to take place.

The disciples' question involved three interrelated events: **(1)** the time of the temple's destruction; **(2)** the signs that would signal Jesus' Coming; and **(3)** the sign that would bring about the end of the age. Compare parallel passages in **Mark 13:4** and Luke 21:7; 20-22 and **19:43-44**. The disciples' questions were related to the destruction of the temple and the end of the Jewish economy and to nothing else. There is no basis for a 2000-year "gap theory."

Many modern Bible interpreters think that the disciples wanted to know about the end of the planet. But the disciples did not ask about the end of the "world" (Gk. *kosmos*). Rather, with the temple and city as their main focus, they asked about the end of the "age" (Gk. *aion*). In Strong's exhaustive concordance, it says of the word *aion*, "specific (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future)." See also Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Ephesians 1:21.

One writer has written, *"In these passages we have two worlds or ages in contrast: 'This world' (age) and the 'world (age) to come'.... The expression 'world or age to come' implies that 'this world or age' must end. Will the 'world or age to come' also have an end? If not, then the expression 'last days' must apply to the closing period of 'this world or age.' Thus, in the end of 'this world' (whatever time is meant) is when God's eschatological program will be completed or consummated."*

Another writer wrote, *"They were asking when time would run out for the temple, the city of Jerusalem and the Covenant promises that were related to the Mosaic system, of animal sacrifices, ceremonial washings and priesthood."*

And another writer wrote, *"Time was divided by the Jews into two great periods, the age of the law and the age of the Messiah. The conclusion of the one was the beginning of the other, the opening of that kingdom which the Jews believed the Messiah was to establish, which was to put an end to their suffering, and to render them the greatest people upon the earth. The apostles, full of this hope, said to our Lord, immediately before his ascension, 'Lord, wilt Thou, at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel?' [Acts 1:6]. Our Lord alluded to His coming to indicate His taking vengeance upon the Jews by destroying their city and sanctuary." This "end of the age" would be the removing of the obsolete Old Covenant temple and system.*

B).The Beginning of Sorrows (Matt. 24:4-8)

<sup>4</sup> and Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in My name, saying, ‘ I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

1) (Matt. 24:5) FALSE CHRISTS – History shows that there were many false messiahs in the period between AD 30 - 70. For example, during the Jewish war there were four messianic movements led by Menahem, Eleazar b. Ananias, John of Gischala, and Simon b. Giora. The Jewish historian, Josephus, said that there were five groups producing false messiahs who were involved in the resistance against Rome at this time. (Parallel Luke 21:7-8 “these things” all grouped as one question. In Luke 21:8 Jesus clearly showing He is speaking to His disciples. Also, see false messiahs already recorded in the Bible: Acts 5:34-37, Acts 8:9-11; 13:6-10).

2) (Matt. 24:6-7a) WARS –

- It is critical to put yourself within the **time** Jesus was speaking these words **to His disciples**. Most of His disciples were either teenagers, or early 20’s at best. They had never seen war, or heard of rumors of war. They were living at the only time in history where there was “no wars or rumors of wars” within the known world (Roman Empire). This time is well documented in history as the *Pax Romana* (aka *Pax Augusta*). This period of time was declared and instituted by Caesar Augustus in 27 BC. This was an empire wide period of time of relative peacefulness and minimal expansion by the Roman military force. This was the period of time from within which Christ spoke these words of Matt. 24:6-7 to His 1<sup>st</sup> century disciples. You can now see the power of the words Jesus spoke to **them** so that **they** would know of the signs to watch for to know the time of the “beginning of sorrows” (v. 8) →when **they** heard of “wars and rumors of wars.”

- This relative peacefulness remained until the time of Emperor Nero (reign AD 54 – June AD 68). However, during the latter part of the reign of Nero, there then began “wars and rumors of wars” throughout the Roman Empire leading up to the period before the destruction of Jerusalem of AD 70. Rome attacked other nations and sent armies to the far ends of the empire to put down rebellions. The Roman historian, Tacitus, reported disturbances in Germany, Africa, Thrace, Gaul, Parthia, Britain, and Armenia. Thousands of Jews were killed in separate city conflicts between AD 59-66. These occurred in Caesarea, Scythopolis, Tyre, Alexandria, Joppa, and several others. Jesus told His disciples that **they** would be hearing of wars and rumors of wars leading up to the end of their generation.

3) (Matt. 24:7b) FAMINES AND PESTILENCES – There were famines and diseases throughout the world of the empire. During the reign of Claudius Caesar, there was a great famine which Luke mentioned in Acts 11:27-28. The Scripture says the famine was all over the world (Gr. *oikoumene* - the whole inhabited world, the Roman Empire). See in Josephus, Antiquities XX:II:5. Josephus also reported deaths that were caused by famine. The church as far away as Corinth participated in famine relief efforts (1 Cor. 16:1-5, Rom. 15:25-28).

4) Matt. 24:7b) EARTHQUAKES – There were earthquakes in various places during the first century leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem (Acts 16:26). The seas roared and ships broke apart (Acts 27). We know that earthquakes happen all the time, all over the world. However, according to historical accounts, earthquakes were far from being rare occurrences for that generation. One writer wrote, "And as to earthquakes, many are mentioned by writers during a period just previous to AD 70. There were earthquakes in Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossae, Campania, Rome, and Judea. It is interesting to note that the city of Pompeii was much damaged by an earthquake occurring on February 5, AD 63." Josephus also mentioned that there was a great earthquake in Judea (Antiquities XV:V:2).

C). Enduring Tribulations (Matt. 24:9-12):

<sup>9</sup> *“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

- 1) (Matt. 24:9) PERSECUTION (\* Mark’s Gospel explains exactly who would be the persecutors – read Mark 13:9-13 → which much is direct parallel from read Matt. 10:5-7, 17-23) – The apostles and disciples were hated, persecuted and even killed for their faith and loyalty to Jesus Christ. Examples include: Stephen martyred (Acts 7:54-60), James, brother of John killed (Acts 12:2), Paul stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19). There were Christian martyrs throughout the Roman Empire during AD 30 - 66. Reportedly, most, or all, of the twelve Apostles were killed prior to Jesus coming in judgment on Jerusalem in AD 66-70. (See John 21:22). We have seen many times throughout the New Testament that Christians were persecuted. The unbelieving Jews were the main persecutors of Christians from the time of Christ’s death until AD 70 (Matt. 23:34; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12; Acts 7:54-60; 12:2, 13:45-46, 50; 14:2, 5, 19; 17:1, 5-6, 10-13; 18:5-6, 12-18; 19:8-9; 21:27-32, 36; 22:22-23; 23:12-22; Rom. 8:18-19; 2 Cor. 11:24; 1 Thess. 2:14-16; Heb. 10:32-38). The heathen powers of Rome, especially Nero Caesar, persecuted them for a season beyond that. Most of the Apostles were killed during that time before the destruction of Jerusalem. You might want to read "The Neronian Persecution" in Philip Schaff's The History of the Christian Church, vol. 1, p. 376-390.
- 2) (Matt. 24:10) FALLING AWAY – Some of the people around the disciples deserted and betrayed them. Paul described how Demas did this to him (2 Tim. 4:10). In fact, at one point ‘all deserted’ Paul (2 Tim. 4:16). False believers went out from them, as John records (1 John 2:19).
- 3) (Matt. 24:11) FALSE PROPHETS – This happened during the time leading up to the coming of Jesus in judgment on Jerusalem. Some false prophets are reported by John (1 John 4:1) and by Peter (2 Pet. 2:1). Paul described the Judaizing teachers as false apostles (2 Cor. 11:13). Also see: (2 Tim. 2:16-17; 3:13-14), (Acts 20:29-30).



- 4) (Matt. 24:12) LAWLESSNESS – This was part of the first century. (See: Rom. 6:19, 2 Cor. 6:14, 1 John 3:4, 1 Cor. 5:1-2). “For the mystery of lawlessness is **already** at work.” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). There is no doubt that the first-century church suffered through the ordeal of many falling away and betraying the believers. During that time, many of those calling themselves Christians lost faith under the pressure of the tribulations. Many returned to their corrupted Jewish system and its man-made traditions; they ignored the warnings of Christ and perished in the wars.

D). Endure To The End (Matt. 24:13):

***“<sup>13</sup> But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”***

Jesus told His disciples that at least some of them would be saved physically until the end of the age by following His instructions. Reportedly, some of them did indeed live to see His coming in judgment upon Jerusalem and the end of the Old Covenant Jewish age. (This was not the end of the world as we know it, but the end of the sorrows and tribulations of the Jewish age. It was the final judgment on the Old Covenant age that was described here).

- 1) When we see the phrase "the end," we should ask ourselves, "The end of what?" Jesus was answering questions by His disciples about the destruction of the temple and the "end of the age," i.e., the end of the Jewish dispensation, the Old Covenant order, the old heaven and earth cosmology administration of animal sacrifice. 1 Corinthians 10:11 firmly substantiates that view. Remember Jesus is the End of the Law in Romans 10:4. In 1 Peter 4:7, Peter wrote that the end of all things is at hand. If words mean anything, the prophetic End was "soon" to take place in the early first century. Many commentators and preachers believe that we must preach the gospel to every individual on the whole planet so that Jesus' "second coming" can happen. I believe it is good to be evangelistic and to send out missionaries to every country. However, we must remember that Jesus was speaking to "His generation." We must let Scripture interpret Scripture.
- 2) **Matthew 10:22-23:** Jesus said to His then living disciples, "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute **you** in this city, flee to the next; for truly I say to **you, you** shall not finish going through the cities of Israel (cities of refuge), until the Son of Man comes." This passage restricts the time of the fulfillment of Matthew 24:13, 14 to the first century.

E). Worldwide Gospel (Matt. 24:14):

***“<sup>14</sup> 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.”***

To assist us in the understanding what Jesus was meaning in this verse it is very helpful to look at the original Greek word He was using – it was the word ***oikoumene***, and not *kosmos*. This word is much more confined than the broader word *kosmos*, and in 1<sup>st</sup> century common understanding referred to the political boundaries of the Roman Empire or the ‘inhabited earth’. *Oikoumene* is not a word referring to the entire planet, or all the earth. Much of the confusion among many people has been a result of many Bible translations incorrectly translated the Greek word *oikoumene* (correctly meaning "The inhabited earth," or “known world” or “Roman Empire”). As with our previous studies, it is very important that we let the Bible interpret the Bible. ***Oikoumene*** is the same word which is used in **Luke 2:1; Acts 11:28; 17:6; 19:27; 24:5** (all clearly referring to the Roman Empire). Those verses now better allow us to understand the context and audience of these following verses all using the same word ***oikoumene***: **Luke 21:26; Acts 17:31; Romans 10:18; Revelation 3:10** (referring to the Neronic persecution just about to come); **Rev. 16:14**. Are we supposed to believe that the same word is being used...yet different interpretations? No, the inspired writers are trying to tell us that the gospel was to be preached throughout all the ‘world’ (***oikoumene***: **the Roman Empire**) before Jesus came in judgment upon the temple and city of Jerusalem in AD 70.

This becomes even more revealing when we see how the inspired writers used all of the following verses (and Greek words) to emphatically declare the completion of the mission which was given to them by Christ: First, at the day of Pentecost there were people in Jerusalem from "every nation (***ethnos***) under heaven" (Acts 2:5-11). Those people took the gospel with them as they left Jerusalem after the feast, and became witnesses to the world of their Lord and Savior. Let us take a look at the various ways the Holy Spirit inspired the writers to record how this proclamation of the gospel had been preached throughout the world: Colossians 1:5-6 (***Kosmos***), 23 (**every creature = *Ktisis***)(Paul just said in “**past tense**” that the “**exact same two words**” of the Great Commission in Mark 16:15 were **fulfilled**); Romans 1:8 (***Kosmos***. Did people in Australia and America hear about the faith of the Romans? Clearly the context and scope is speaking of the known world – the Roman Empire); Rom. 16:26 (***ethnos***); Rom. 1:5 (***ethnos***); Acts 21:21 (***ethnos***); Luke 21:24 (**All the *Ethnos***. Did the Romans take them to Australia, America and every country on the globe? Clearly we can see referenced is it was referring to the Roman world to which they controlled); 1 Thessalonians 1:8 (**every place**); 1 Timothy 3:16 (***Kosmos***), 2 Timothy 4:17 (**all the Gentiles**), Titus 2:11 (**all men**).

The inspired Bible writers proclaimed all throughout the New Testament that the gospel **was** preached into all the inhabited area of the known world in the period leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem.

***“..the gospel, which has come to you, AS IT HAS ALSO IN ALL THE WORLD,” (Col.1:6).***

***“..the gospel... was PREACHED TO EVERY CREATURE UNDER HEAVEN,” (Col. 1:23).***

***“.. PREACHED AMONG THE GENTILES, believed on IN THE WORLD” (1 Tim. 3:16).***

***“..in Jerusalem Jews, devout men FROM EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN.” (Acts 2:5).***

(Also, refer to **Appendix 2**: Has the Gospel Been Preached to the Whole World Yet?)