

Matthew 24 Fulfillments Documented

By *Ed Stevens -- Then and Now -- April 14, 2013*

INTRODUCTION

To make any significant progress in interpreting Biblical prophecy, we are always forced to ask (and answer) two very critical questions:

1. What does the Bible actually teach about the **TIME** of fulfillment?

2. And what does it teach about the **NATURE** of fulfillment?

A. This lesson will focus on the NATURE question, in relation to the Second Coming (or Parousia).

B. In dealing with the NATURE issue, we will look not only at what Scripture says about it, but more especially at external **HISTORY**.

C. There is a scriptural principle first introduced by Moses, and reinforced by Jesus and the Apostles, which defines exactly what kind of historical evidence is useful. It is only that which is "at the mouth of two or more reliable eyewitnesses. II Notice that Moses and Jesus and the Apostles did not require "inspired" eyewitnesses, but rather simply a multiple number of reliable eyewitnesses.

D. But even with multiple reliable eyewitnesses, uninspired historical testimony can NEVER overturn inspired Scripture. It can only support Scripture and help elucidate Scripture.

E. So, we will only be using the most historically-reliable information available, and only for the purpose of encouraging us in our belief that these things DID occur at the **TIME** they were supposed to, as well as enlightening us with a clearer understanding of the **NATURE** of their fulfillment.

F. And the best way to do that is to tie it directly to the Biblical prophecies. We will deal with a number of different Biblical texts, but the focus of this lesson will be on the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and its parallels (Mark 13, Luke 17 and Luke 21).

G. So, let's take a look at Matthew 24 in the context of Jewish, Roman, and Christian history in the first century to see if we can document the fulfillment of **IIALL THESE THINGSII** in the first century before AD 70.

I. Notice Matt. 24:1-3 --

Matt. 24:1 Jesus came out from THE TEMPLE and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the TEMPLE BUILDINGS to Him.

Matt. 24:2 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."

Matt. 24:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples 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?"

They were NOT asking about the destruction of another rebuilt temple way off into the future. They wanted to know "WHEN" that first century temple which Jesus was pointing to, and which they were gazing at, would be destroyed. So unless we want to accuse Jesus of playing games with them in his answer, we have to assume that He answers their "WHEN" question in the following verses.

"WHEN" does Jesus say "ALL THESE THINGS" (including the dismantling of that temple) would occur?

The answer is in Matt. 24:34 -- "in this generation."

Well, did "that generation" SEE "all these things" occur within their lifetime? This is where historical documentation from the first century will be very useful. And I just happen to have a little bit of it down below. Let's look at it.

Note that each of the events listed in the following chart (pages 6-11) has a corresponding entry on pages 12-26 where the full text of some of the best and most representative of the references are printed out for you to read.

	PREDICTED EVENT	SCRIPT. REF.	FULFILLMENT
1	"not one stone left upon another"	Matt. 24:2	Wars 7.1-3 (7.1.1) Wars 7.376 (7.8.7) Wars 7.115 (7.5.2) Wars 7.29-31 (7.2.1) & Footnote Adam Clarke and Barnes Notes ct. Wars 6:228 (6.4.1); 6.232 (6.4.2); 6.264-5 (6.4.7.); 6.316-7 (6.6.1); and 6.413 (6.9.1)
2	"sign of your coming and the end of the age"	Matt. 24:3	Wars 6.288-296 (6.5.3) Tacitus Hist 5.13 Yosippon ch. 87 Midrash Rab. Lament. 2:11 (Prologue 49-50) Wars 6.250 (6.4.5) --Revolution of Ages (Gk. <i>chronon periodois</i> - revolvings or rotations of the times, or the changing of the ages by the end of one age and the beginning of another)
3	"many false Messiahs ... showing great signs and wonders to mislead the elect" (Theudas, Judas of Galilee, the Egyptian, Manahem, Eleazar b. Ananias, Simon b. Giora, John of Gischala, Eleazar b. Yair, Zealots, Sicarii, Bandits, Robbers, deceivers, et al)	Matt. 24:5, 24	Wars 2.433-434 (2.17.8) Wars 2.258-263 (2.13.4-5) Wars 2.652-654 (2.22.2) Wars 4.503-510 (4.9.3-4) Antiq 20.97-102 (20.5.1-2) Antiq 20.167-172 (20.8.6) ct. Acts 5:36-37 (Theudas and Judas the Galilean); [ct. Antiq 17.271 (17.10.5) and footnote, Wars 2.56 (2.4.1); 2.118 (2.8.1)], Euseb. 2.11.2-3 (Theudas); Acts 21 :38 (the Egyptian); Euseb. 2.21.1-3 (the Egyptian); Antiq 18.4,9,23 (18.1.1-6), [ct. Eleazar ben Yair at Masada -- Wars 7.252-254 (7.8.1)]
4	"wars and rumors of wars" (<i>inside Palestine</i>) Caligula tried to put altar in the Temple in AD 39; Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome in AD 49; Zealots were always trying to push for revolt	Matt. 24:6;	Acts 18:2; Wars Preface (1.4); Wars 2.184-187ff (2.10.1); Wars 2.264-265 (2.13.6); Antiq 20.177 (20.8.7); Antiq 20.184 (20.8.9); Antiq 18.6-8 (18.1.1); Euseb. 2.5.4-2.6.8

5	"nations rise against other nations" (<i>outside Palestine</i>) (Jews hoped that their comrades beyond the Euphrates would support them in their revolt)	Matt. 24:7	Wars 7.79 (7.4.2) Wars 6.341 (6.6.2) Wars 1:5 (Preface, sect. 2)
6	"famines" - starvation during the siege was so bad that one woman, Mary the daughter of Eleazar from the village of Bethzub, killed and ate her infant son (cannibalism).	Matt. 24:7	Acts 11 :28 (during reign of Claudius AD 44-48); Euseb. 2.8.1 ; Antiq 20.101 (20.5.2); Antiq 18.8 (18.1.1) (during siege); Wars 6.421 (6.9.3); Wars 6.197-208 (6.3.3-4) (cannibalism during sieoe)
7	"great earthquakes" See the list of all these in my First Century Events book.	Matt. 24:7, Lk. 21 :11	J. Marcellus Kik (<i>An Eschatology of Victory</i> , p. 93); Barnes Notes on Matt. 24:7; Clarke's Com.; Fourfold Gospel; Wars 4.286-287 (4.4.5) (durinc war)
8	"plagues"	Lk. 21 :11	Fourfold Gospel (Plague in Rome in AD 60); Barnes Notes; Wars 6.421 (6.9.3); plagues in Jerusalem during siece,
9	"terrors and great signs from heaven" -- "on the earth is distress of nations with perplexity" -- "men fainting from fear and expectation of things coming"	Lk. 21 :11,25-26	Wars 6.288-289 (6.5.3); Wars 6.296-299 (6.5.3); Yosippon ch. 87; Wars 4.286-287 (4.4.5); Wars 2.649-650 (2.22.1); Tacitus Hist. 5.13
10	"deliver you to tribulation" ... to the Sanhedrin ... prisons ... flogged in the synagogues ... stand before governors and kings as a testimony" -- "arrest you and hand you over" -- "persecute you"	Matt. 24:9, Mk.13:9-11, Lk. 21 :12	The whole book of Acts, Paul's epistles, plus James, Peter, Jude, and John's epistles mention this persecution. John in Revelation says he was arrested during the tribulation.
11	"kill you" Acts 7:54-60 (Stephen killed); Acts 12:1-2 (James brother of John was killed in AD 44);	Matt. 24:9	Euseb. 2.8.2; Antiq. 20.200 (20.9.1); Euseb. 2.23.1-4,10-18 (James brother of Jesus killed); 2 Tim. 4:6; 2 Pet. 1 :14-15
12	"hated by all nations"	Matt. 24:9	Acts 19 especially (Ephesus) Eusebius records this also

13	"many will fall away"	Matt. 24:10	2 Thess. 2:3 reminds them of the apostasy that was about to occur; Gal 5:1-4; 2 Tim 1 :15; 4:10; Rev. 2:2-10 and 3:10; 2 Pet. 2:15; 2 Thess. 1 :4; 2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 3:12; 12:3; 1 Tim. 1 :19; Jude 4-23; 1 In. 2:18-24
14	"betray one another" -- brothers, fathers, children will betray their brothers, parents, children, relatives and friends ... and have them put to death"	Matt. 24: 10, Mk.13:12, Lk.21:16	2 Cor 11 :26; Gal 2:4; Acts 23:16; Antiq 18.8 (18.1.1); War 2.466 (2.18.3); Euseb. 2.25.2 Cf. War4.310-311 (4.5.1)
15	"hate one another"	Matt. 24:10	2 Cor 11 :26; Gal 2:4; Acts 20:29-30; Lk 6:22; 1 In. 2:9-11; 3:13-15; 4:20; Wars 7.262 (7.8.1); Antiq 18.7-8
16	"many false prophets ... showing great signs and wonders to mislead the elect"	Matt. 24: 11, 24	ct. Acts 8:9-11; 13:6-8; 21 :38; Wars 6.285-288 (6.5.2-3); Wars 2.258-262 (2.13.4-5) Antiq 20.169-170 (20.8.6); Euseb. 2.21.1; 3.8.1
17	"lawlessness is increased"	Matt. 24:12	Acts 23: 1-3; Antiq 20:200-203 (20.9.1); War 7.253-273 (7.8.1); War 4.556-563 (4.9.10); 4.184 (4.3.10); Josephus says Zealots and religious leaders kept laws only selectively (if at all).
18	"most people's love will grow cold"	Matt. 24:12	Seven cities in Revelation had these characteristics already by the time it was written in AD 62-64
19	"the one who endures to the end shall be saved" Those who lived until the Parousia were saved from the wrath poured out on the Jews, and taken to be with Christ in the unseen spiritual realm.	Matt. 24: 13; ct. Matt 10:22; Mark 13:13	Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Thess. 1 :7; 1 Cor. 15:52-53; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Thess. 5:9-10; 2 Tim. 4:18; 2 Tim. 2:10; John 14:3; Matt. 24:31; 2 Thess. 2:1; Matt. 19:28; 2 Tim. 2:12

20	<p>"gospel preached in the whole world ... to all the nations ... then the end [of the age] will come"</p> <p>"in the whole world" -- see Lk. 2:1; Acts 11 :28; 19:27; Rev. 3:10; 12:9; and 16:14. ct. Antiq 15:387 (15.11.1)</p> <p>"to all the nations" -- see Matt. 28:19; Mk. 13:10; Lk. 21:24; 24:47; Acts 10:35; Rom. 1:5; and Rom. 16:26;</p> <p>See also: Rom. 1 :8; 10: 18; and Col. 1 :6, 23.</p>	Matt. 24:14	<p>Euseb. 2.3.1 and 3.8.11; 1 Clement 5:7; ct. Wars 6.442 (6.10.1) "all the habitable earth"; Antiq 8:297 (8.12.2) "the whole earth"; Antiq 8:329 (8.13.4) "all over the habitable earth"; Antiq 10:209 (10.10.4) "[Romans] dominion over all the earth"; Antiq 10:274 (10.11.7); Antiq 11:292 (11.6.13); Antiq 12:121 (12.3.1); Antiq 13:77 (13.2.4); Antiq 14:110 (14.7.2); Antiq 19:1 (19.1.1); War 1:426 (1.21.12); War 2:362 (2.16.4); War 2:363 (2.16.4); War 2:388 (2.16.4); <u>War</u> 4:262 (4.4.3); War 4.324 (4.5.2); War 5: 17 (5.1.3);</p>
21	<p>"abomination of desolation ... standing in the Holy Place" -- "standing where it should not be" - - "Jerus. surrounded by armies"</p> <p>Florus brought Roman armies into Jerusalem to seize all the Temple gold - see the detailed explanation of this in my <i>First Century Events</i> book (Apr 66)</p> <p>ct. Wars 2:210 (2.11.3) the Romans considered it abominable when blood of their countrymen was shed in their pagan temples.</p> <p>Josephus tells how the blood of priests and common people was shed inside the Temple. [Wars 5.11ff (5.1.3)1</p>	<p>Matt. 24: 15, Mark 13:14 Lk. 21 :20</p>	<p>Wars 4.201-203 (4.3.12)</p> <p>Wars 4.215 (4.3.13)</p> <p>Wars 4.242 and 4.261-262 (4.4.3); Wars 4.313 and 318 (4.5.1); Wars 4.437 (4.7.6); Wars 4.151 (4.3.7) and 4.388 (4.6.3); Wars 4.558-565 (4.9.10); Wars 5.442-445 (5.10.5); Wars 6:316 (6.6.1); Wars 6.428 (6.9.4); Wars 4.163,171,181-183 (4.3.10); Wars 7.262-270 (7.8.1); Antiq. 20:166 (20.8.5); Antiq 20.165 (20.8.5) -- The Sicarii murdered in the temple, thus polluting it. Wars 5: 17 (5.1.3); Wars 2.455 (2.17.10)-- "abomination" used in reference to Priest Eleazar's murder of Roman garrison on Sabbath. Euseb. 3.5.4 and 3.7.4-9</p>
22	<p>"those in Judea will flee to the mountains" -- acc. to Eusebius, Christians had fled from Judea a few years before the war</p>	Matt. 24: 16-20	<p>Wars 2.556 (2.20.1); Too late to flee later, see Wars 4.565 (4.9.10); Euseb.3.5</p>

23	"woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days ... your flight not be in winter or on a Sabbath"	Matt. 24: 19-20	Euseb.3.7.1-2 Wars 6.201-213 (6.3.4); Nursing mother slew infant son for food in the famine during the siege; Antiq. 13.252 (13:8.4) - no travel on Sabbath
24	"great tribulation ... such as has never occurred in the past, nor ever will again in the future" --	Matt. 24:21	Wars Preface 1,4 (1:1,1:11-12); Wars 5.442 (5.10.5); Wars 6:429 (6.9.4) Euseb. 2.26; 3.6
25	"tribulation cut short for the sake of the elect" Cut short by the outbreak of the war, and the Rapture shortly afterwards. Jews had to turn their attention to the war effort.	Matt. 24:22, Mk.13:20	Cestius left unexpectedly, allowing refugees to flee -- Jews began war prep. Wars 2.531 (2.19.4) Wars 2.539-540 (2.19.6) Wars 2.556 (2.20.1)
26	"days of vengeance .. that all things written will be fulfilled" -- "great distress and wrath" -- "fall by the sword ... led captive into all the nations ... Jerusalem trampled under foot by Gentiles"	Lk. 21 :22-24	Wars 2.650 (2.22.1); Wars 6.193-219 (6.3.3-5); Wars 6.413-435 (6.9.1-4); Wars 6.428-442 (6.9-10); Wars 7.1-3 (7.1.1) Euseb.3.7.4-9
27	"coming of the Son of Man" will not escape their notice, just like lightning which flashes from east to west	Matt. 24:27	Wars 5.266-274 (5.6.3) plus footnotes -- "here comes the son" Wars 6.288-300 (6.5.3); Euseb. 3.8.5; Tacitus Hist. 5.13 Yosippon ch. 87
28	"wherever the corpse is, there the eagles [Roman armies] will gather"	Matt. 24:28	Wars 6.369 (6.7.2) Wars 3.123 (3.6.2); Wars 6.316-317 (6.6.1)
29	"immediately after the tribulation ... sun darkened, moon gives no light, stars fall from the sky" -- "signs in sun and moon and stars"	Matt. 24:29, Lk. 21 :25	Cities being burned caused smoke to darken the sun and moon. Astrological phenomenon were also seen above Jerusalem. Wars 6.288-300 (6.5.3); Euseb. 3.8.5; Tacitus Hist. 5.13 Yosippon ch. 87
30	"(demonic) powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Satan thrown down - book of Rev.)	Matt. 24:29	Wars 6.288-300 (6.5.3); Euseb. 3.8.5; Tacitus Hist. 5.13

31	"sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky" [SIGNS]	Matt. 24:30	Yosippon ch. 87 Wars 6.288-300 (6.5.3); Euseb. 3.8.5; Tacitus Hist. 5.13
32	"all the tribes of the land will mourn"	Matt. 24:30	Wars 2.649 (2.22.1); Wars 2.455 (2.17.10)
33	"see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory" -- "Son of Man will be revealed" fPAROUSIAI	Matt. 24:30, Lk.17:30, Lk. 21 :27	Yosippon ch. 87 Wars 6.288-300 (6.5.3); Euseb. 3.8.5; Tacitus Hist. 5.13
34	"He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" [RAPTURE]	Matt. 24:31, Mk.13:27	Wars 6.288-300 (6.5.3); Euseb. 3.8.5; Tacitus Hist. 5.13 Yosippon ch. 87 This was the rapture.