



AN ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 24

- ⇒ Matthew 24 is referenced extensively in discussions about the end times. However, it is important that we know what end time is being discussed in what part of the text, for the whole is not about the second coming of Christ and the time of judgment.
- ⇒ In our series, we want to take a detailed look at Matthew 24, set into both its Scriptural and historical context. We want to see exactly what the disciples were asking Jesus about, and understand the information which He gave.
- ⇒ For the early Christians, especially those living in Jerusalem, understanding this text was a life & death issue. For us, it is faithful building to see fulfillment of what has already been accomplished, and to ready ourselves for what is to come.

YOU ARE WITNESSES AGAINST YOURSELVES

Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. (MATTHEW 10:16-17)

- ⇒ Before getting into Matthew 24, we want to set the context of Jesus' discourse. In chapter 23, there is a series of 8 woes (13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29). Beginning at v 29...
- ⇒ The Jewish leaders had built elaborate tombs & monuments to commemorate the prophets which their fathers killed. They were not guilty of what their fathers did, but they were cut from the same cloth; they had the same disposition towards the messengers of God (John, Jesus, apostles, ...).
- ⇒ Verse 34, "I will send you prophets..." You will kill them!
- ⇒ Jesus warned His disciples about these things beforehand, Matthew 10:16-17.

YOU ARE WITNESSES AGAINST YOURSELVES

You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers... (ACTS 7:51-52)

- ⇒ The fulfilment of Jesus words can be seen in Acts.
- ⇒ Stephen came speaking God's word, and they did not like it. He gave a history lesson highlighting the Israelite's history of rejecting the messengers of God. Stephen would also be added to that number (verse 58).
- ⇒ Saul was among those who consented to his death. He got permission to go to Damascus to persecute Christians (Acts 9:1-2). In Acts 12:1-3, Herod set his hand against Christians, killing James & seizing Peter, for he saw it pleased the Jews.
- ⇒ In Genesis 15:16, God was waiting for the Amorite sin to be complete before it was just to destroy them. Matthew 23:35-36 is a similar type statement—the sins of national Israel were complete & their destruction was eminent.



**I WANTED TO...
...BUT YOU WERE
NOT WILLING!**

- ⇒ Having been charged with such great wickedness against the chosen messengers of God, the sentence is pronounced. It would be left desolate, it's temple, the hub of Judaism, would be destroyed.
- ⇒ The Lord did not delight in this; He loved His people and the city, but they did not reciprocate. See Luke 19:41-42, which shows His sadness about the fate of the city.
- ⇒ NOTE—these verses in Matthew 23 lead into the discussion of Matthew 24, and serve as the foundation for the primary topic in that chapter—the destruction of Jerusalem and most notably, the temple there.

MATTHEW 24:1-2

**not 1 stone
shall be left
UPON ANOTHER..**

“...it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited. This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind.

(JOSEPHUS, WARS, 7:1:1)

- ⇒ Jesus' disciples were impressed with the construction of the temple. Herod the Great had started repairs and renovations to the temple, which continued for decades (John 2:20). The ornate design is attested to by Josephus (white & green-spotted marble).
- ⇒ Jesus very clearly states that the temple would be destroyed with no even one stone left upon another.
- ⇒ Josephus confirms the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy:
- ⇒ “...the Romans set fire to the extreme parts of the city, and burnt them down, and entirely demolished its walls.” (Josephus, The Wars Of The Jews 7:9:4)

- ❖ Matthew 16:21-22
- ❖ Matthew 20:20-22
- ❖ Mark 8:31-32
- ❖ Mark 9:31-32
- ❖ Mark 10:32-38
- ❖ Luke 18:31-34
- ❖ Luke 19:11
- ❖ Luke 24:6-8
- ❖ Acts 1:6



- ⇒ His statement in verse 2 was done in public (not a sermon, but still in a public setting). The explanation and details of the prophecy were given in private.
- ⇒ Jesus' disciples asked 2 questions (cf. Mark 13:3-4; Luke 21:7), when will this happen and what signs will precede it? In context, the questions are about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (v 2).
- ⇒ NOTE—belief and expectation of the disciples at this time was not consistent with a question about the second coming of Christ, the judgment, a millennial kingdom, etc. (common explanations of the text). His disciples didn't even believe He was going to die and rise again, let alone ascend into heaven or come again. The scope of their question was limited to

Jerusalem and its destruction. They simply did not have the understanding to be asking about His return, His kingdom, the final judgment, etc..

- ⇒ That said, by the wording of their question, it is evident they thought nothing short of the end of the age (end of the world) could effect the destruction of Jerusalem. It seems they conveniently forgot about the devastation under Antiochus Epiphanes and Nebuchadnezzar.
- ⇒ After responding to their initial inquiry (about the temple's destruction), Jesus takes the opportunity to reveal His second coming and the final judgment (latter part of chapter 24 and into chapter 25).
- ⇒ Remember when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was (Matthew 22:35-36). Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5. But He went on to say, "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (v 39). He answered the initial question asked of Him, and then gave some bonus material. So it is in Matthew 24. The initial question is answered in verses 4-35, and then He gives a bonus—telling about the final judgment.

MATTHEW 24:4-5

“...there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.”

(ACTS 8:9-11)

TAKE HEED THAT
no one
DECEIVES YOU

- ⇒ As He gets to the signs, Jesus begins with what we might call the premature signs; that is, some things that will happen well in advance of the destruction. Jesus warned against charlatans. There were many in the time leading up to Jerusalem’s destruction—there are still many in our day.
- ⇒ The Bible specifically tells us about one of them—Simon the Sorcerer. He didn’t claim to be Messiah, but had a following.
- ⇒ There were many others:

“...after the time of Jesus, Dositheus the Samaritan also wished to persuade the Samaritans that he was the Christ predicted by Moses; and he appeared to have gained over some to his views.” (Origen Contra Celsum, 1:57)

MATTHEW 24:4-5

“...it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded by his words.”

(JOSEPHUS, ANTIQUITIES, 20:5:1)

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- ⇒ Josephus noted several imposters and deceivers. Fadus (in the above quote) was procurator of Judea from 44-46 AD. It is interesting that both the deceiver mentioned here and the one spoken of by Origen had “God” (theos) in their names.
- ⇒ Another quote from Josephus:
“...the country was again filled with robbers and imposters, who deluded the multitude. Yet did Felix catch and put to death many of those imposters every day, together with the robbers.” (Josephus, Antiquities, 20:8:5)
- ⇒ Antonius Felix served as procurator of Judea from 52-58 AD.

MATTHEW 24:4-5

“...now these imposters and deceivers persuaded the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs, that should be performed by the providence of God. And many that were prevailed on by them suffered the punishment of their folly; for Felix brought them back, and then punished them. Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives...”
(JOSEPHUS, ANTIQUITIES, 20:8:6)

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- ⇒ Yet another quote from Josephus about deceivers in the years before Jerusalem's destruction.
- ⇒ Next week : Matthew 24:6-10

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