



AN ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 24

...LESSON 1 – THE CONTEXT OF MATTHEW 24

.....judgment upon that generation / lamenting the city /
destruction of temple...

...LESSON 2 – PRE-MATURE SIGNS OF DESTRUCTION

.....wars, famine, earthquakes, false Christs...

...LESSON 3 – WARNINGS TO THE CHRISTIANS.

.....hated, betrayed, delivered up & put to death...

.....watch for the abomination of desolation...

...LESSON 4, now fleeing a condemned city...

MATTHEW 24:15-18

flee to the
mountains

...a horrible fear seized upon the seditious, in so much that many of them ran out of the city, as though it were to be taken immediately...
(JOSEPHUS, WARS, Bk 2, Ch 19, Sct 6)

After the calamity had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink... (JOSEPHUS, WARS, Bk 2, Ch 20, Sct 1)

...a great multitude ... fled to those mountainous parts that lay over against Jerusalem, while that part which was left behind was in a great measure destroyed... (JOSEPHUS, WARS, Bk 4, Ch 8, Sct 2)



...read 24:16-18

...[Josephus] tells of people fleeing from the city in the months leading up to the siege...

.....Quote #1 – early in the war, before the siege took hold... (66-67 AD, Judea was run over with Roman soldiers, in an attempt to restore order)

.....Quote #2 – Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, had come to Judea to restore order (the Jews had killed their own governor). He met little success, and was chased away; dying shortly thereafter (Tacitus suggests from vexation)...

.....Quote #3 – those who had understanding fled to the mountains...

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MATTHEW 24:15-18

...those that were at Jerusalem were deprived of the liberty of going out of the city, for as to such as had a mind to desert, they were watched by the zealots; and as to such as were not yet on the side of the Romans, their army kept them in, by encompassing the city round about on all sides. (JOSEPHUS, WARS, Bk 4, Ch 9, Sct 1)

...he who had escaped the tyrant within the wall, was destroyed by the other that lay before the gates. So that all attempts of flying and deserting to the Romans were cut off, if any had a mind to do so. (JOSEPHUS, WARS, Bk 4, Ch 9, Sct 10)

eventually it was
TOO LATE

So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city. (JOSEPHUS, WARS 5:12:3)

...too late!

...[the zealots] were killing their own people, if they thought to desert...

...[again, the zealots] had multiple “fail safes” to keep people in...

...[again, zealots within] and the Romans outside...

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MATTHEW 24:19

...the upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine... (JOSEPHUS, WARS 5:10:3)

...snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said, 'O, thou miserable infant! For whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? ...Come on; be thou my food... As soon as she had said this she slew her son; and then roasted him, and ate one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed... (JOSEPHUS, WARS 6:4:4)

**not pregnant
OR NURSING** 

...children are a blessing, but in such a drastic condition as Jerusalem's destruction, it would not be so...

...[Josephus] – dying in the upper rooms...

...[Josephus] – a woman killing her own child...

...aside from these atrocities, consider the difficulty trying to flee a war zone with young children or while pregnant...

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MATTHEW 24:20

HEROD WOULD HAVE MARCHED ON TO JERUSALEM

“...unless he had been hindered by the depth of winter. This was the impediment that lay in the way of this his entire glorious progress... (JOSEPHUS, WARS 1:17:6)

HEARING OF TROUBLES IN ROME, VESPASIAN

“...as much as his passion excited him to avenge his country ... was restrained by the consideration of his distance therefrom, because fortune might prevent him ... especially as it was still the winter season.” (JOSEPHUS, WARS 4:10:2)

**not winter
OR SABBATH**

VESPASIAN WOULD HAVE REDUCED “...the eastern parts of the empire to peace...” but “...winter was his hindrance...” (JOSEPHUS, WARS 4:8:1)

...[Herod the Great, 38 BC] was impeded by winter...

...[Vespasian, 67 AD] was hindered by winter...

...[Vespasian, 69 AD], news of civil war in Italy; but prevented by winter to end...

...if these great military leaders were impeded, hindered & prevented by winter, what do you suppose such conditions would do to the elderly? to nursing mothers? to large families? etc.

...winter (Nov-Apr); some snow, but not cold enough to stay (so cold & muddy)...

.....Nov, 9-14 C | Dec 4-10 C | Jan 4-10 C | Feb 1-10 C | Mar 6-11 C | Apr 6-14

.....

MATTHEW 24:20

“So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath.

(NEHEMIAH 13:19)

not winter
OR SABBATH

“Nor is it lawful for us to journey, either on the Sabbath day, or on a festival day.”

(JOSEPHUS, ANTIQUITIES, 13:8:4)

...the law commanded that no work be done on the Sabbath, nor travel in excess (Ex 16:29)...

...[Nehemiah] commanded the gates of Jerusalem be shut because people were buying & selling, carrying burdens, etc. rather than keeping the day holy...

.....it is possible that this practice to close the gate stuck, and was still observed in Jesus' day...

.....even if the gates were open, the Jews might impede the Christians on the Sabbath; or some of the Christians may have scruples about traveling on the Sabbath...



...read 24:21; cf. Lk 21:24, “...edge of the sword, led away captive...”

...“time of the Gentiles” – some seek to apply this to modern times –
CONTEXT. It is about Jerusalem & the Roman siege & destruction...

... “fullness of the Gentiles” (Ro 11:25) is a different topic (discuss
another time)...

...some seek some modern fulfillment of Mt 24:21, concluding that
greater atrocities have and/or will happen than what took place in 70
AD in Jerusalem...

.....note, greater atrocities may have happened in other places, but
the context limits this text to Jerusalem and what had & what will
happen there...

...[look at just some of the] details of the “great tribulation” that
came...

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“But when they went in numbers into the lanes of the city with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook without and set fire to the houses whither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest, and when they were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses, that is, of such as died by the famine; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching any thing. But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men’s blood.” (JOSEPHUS, WARS, 6:8:54)

...the Roman soldiers, killing with sword & fire, couldn’t stomach what they found...

...how much blood has to be shed to be able to put out fires???

...6:9:2, the Romans slew the aged & infirmed; the young & healthy were sent to the Egyptian mines, or sent as slaves throughout the provinces, or killed as entertainment in the theatres...

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“...the number of those who were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself, for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army...
(JOSEPHUS, WARS, 6:9:5)

“...neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world.” (JOSEPHUS, WARS, 5:10:5)

...Josephus gives a tally of the captives & dead – 1,197,000

.....there have been genocides much larger in number than this; but nothing on this scale had happened or would happen again in Jerusalem...

...[Josephus] made a statement similar to Jesus' statement...

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MATTHEW 24:22

but for the
elect's sake

“...days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you to the ground; and they will not leave in your one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.” (LUKE 19:43-44)

“...Titus therefore encompassed the city with this wall...” (JOSEPHUS, WARS, 5:12:2)

“Now as Vespasian was returned to Caesarea, and was getting ready, with all his army to march directly to Jerusalem, he was informed that Nero was dead... Wherefore Vespasian put off at first his expedition against Jerusalem...”
(JOSEPHUS, WARS, 4:9:2)

...read 24:22

...a number of circumstances worked together to facilitate the escape of those who understood the prophecy...

...[Vespasian] was coming, but turned back. Affording an opportunity to get out...

...the city was shortly thereafter fully encompassed (with Titus coming swiftly) and impossible to escape from...

...[Luke 19:43-44] / [Titus encircled the city]...

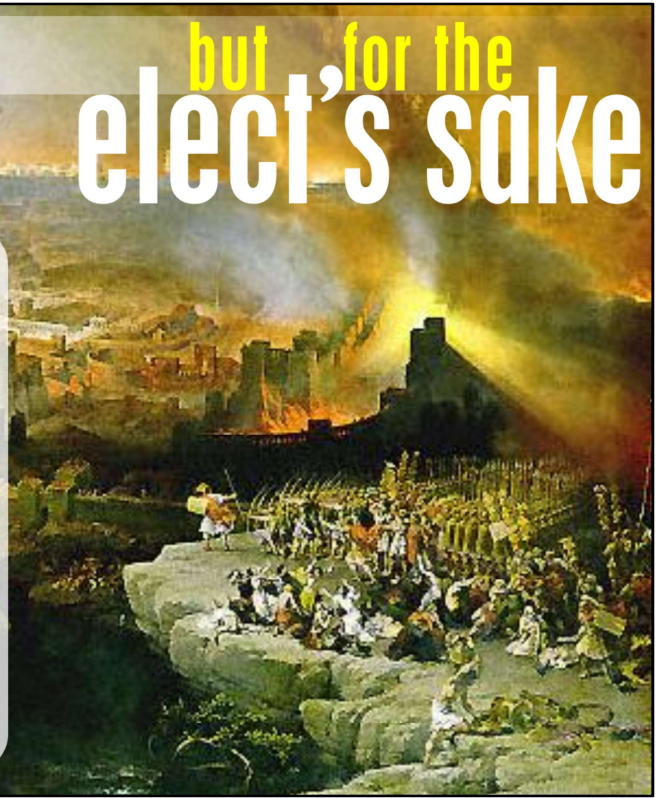
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MATTHEW 24:22

but for the
elect's sake

“The siege was shortened by various historical events like the stopping of the strengthening of the walls by Herod Agrippa by orders from the Emperor, the sudden arrival of Titus, the neglect of the Jews to prepare for a long siege. ‘Titus himself confessed that God was against the Jews, since otherwise neither his armies nor his engines would have availed against their defenses.’ (Vincent).”
(Robertson’s NT Word Pictures)



...but even after the city was under siege, there were things which minimized the destruction beyond the city...

...[Robertson’s] – the siege wasn’t near as long as many, even Titus, expected...

.....weaker walls, easier to penetrate...

.....the siege was quicker than anyone expected...

.....Titus, “God was against them”...

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MATTHEW 24:23-26

CHRISTS & APOSTLES

...but evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 TIMOTHY 3:13)

Festus sent forces, both horsemen and footmen, to fall upon those that had been seduced by a certain imposter, who promised them deliverance and freedom from the miseries they were under, if they would but follow him as far as the wilderness. Accordingly, those forces that were sent destroyed both him that had deluded them, and those that were his followers. (JOSEPHUS, ANTIQUITIES 20:8:10)

...this is now the 3rd time false christs & false apostles are mentioned (24:4-5, 11)...

...there were a lot if imposters & false christs appearing...

...[Josephus], Festus (58-62 AD)

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MATTHEW 24:23-26

CHRISTS & APOSTLES

...but evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 TIMOTHY 3:13)

...for one Jonathan, a vile person, and by trade a weaver, came thither and prevailed with no small number of the poorer sort to give ear to him; he also led them into the desert, upon promising them that he would show them signs and apparitions... of these many were slain in the fight, but some were taken alive, and brought to Catullus... (JOSEPHUS, WARS 7:11:10)

...again...

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MATTHEW 24:23-26

CHRISTS & APOSTLES

...but evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 TIMOTHY 3:13)

A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets ... who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God... (JOSEPHUS, WARS 6:5:2)

...again...

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MATTHEW 24:27

from east
TO THE WEST

Titus began the wall from the camp of the Assyrians, where his own camp was pitched, and drew it down to the lower parts of Cenopolis; thence it went along the valley of the Cedron, to the Mount of Olives; it then bent towards the south, and encompassed the mountains as far as the rock called Peristereon, and that other hill which lies next it, and is over the valley which reaches to Siloam; whence it bended against to the west, and went down to the valley of the Fountain, beyond which it went up again at the monument of Ananus the high priest, and encompassed that mountain where Pompey had formerly pitched his camp, it returned back to the north side of the city, and was carried on as far as a certain village called 'The House of the Erebinthi;' after which it encompassed Herod's monument, and there, on the east was joined to Titus' own camp, where it began. (JOSEPHUS, WARS 5:12:2)

...the Roman siege came with great power, speed & visibility...

...the city was surrounded, Roman soldiers visible in both east & west...


...the most powerful nation in the world at the time swooped upon Jerusalem, leaving a path of destruction in it's wake...

...[Josephus], he goes on to say that the length of the wall was 40 furlongs (5 miles); it had 13 garrisons posted at various locations; and it only took 3 days to put it up.

...QUOTE, "...the whole was completed in three days, so that what would naturally have required some months was done in so short an interval as is incredible."

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AN **ANALYSIS** OF MATTHEW 24

...next week we continue, looking at Matthew 24:28-31, or further...



...next week we continue, looking at Matthew 24:11-15...