

# Matthew 24:1-14 Commentary

**NOTE: CLICK [MATTHEW 24 COMMENTARY](#)  
[ON ONE PAGE](#)  
[REVISED AND UPDATED](#)  
TO AID YOUR STUDY OF THE OLIVET  
DISCOURSE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

## THE OLIVET DISCOURSE: CONFUSING OR ENLIGHTENING?

**Introduction** - Some have described the so-called **Olivet Discourse** (because it was spoken on the Mount of Olives) in Matthew 24 as the most difficult section to interpret in the entire Gospel of Matthew. While I would agree it is undoubtedly the most *contentious* section, it is not necessarily the most difficult to interpret. If one applies the principle of letting the **plain sense** of the text simply say what it says without superimposing any preconceived bias or **system of theology** (be it dispensational, covenant, reformed, preterist, etc), it is amazing how understandable the passage becomes. In short, one needs to **read Matthew 24-25 literally**. (Note: I did NOT say "dispensationally!") Literal is defined as "**taking words in their usual, natural or most basic sense as opposed to reading them in figurative, metaphorical, mystical or allegorical sense.**" That is the approach taken in these notes - to come to the Scriptures as a little child, totally dependent on our Teacher, the Holy Spirit, seeking to not add to the text or look for any hidden meanings (cf warnings against this mode of interpretation - Dt 4:2; 12:32; Pr. 30:6; Jer. 26:2, 2Ti 2:15, Rev 22:18-19).

**In short, if the plain sense of the text makes good sense in context, one should seek to make no other sense out of it lest it end up making no sense (nonsense)!**

In the interest of full disclosure, it should be emphasized that the notes you are reading diligently seek to avoid anything that might be construed as **preterist interpretation** (See also [Preterism - Wikipedia](#)). The major danger of this mode of interpretation is that it interprets unfulfilled prophecies in such a way as to effectively relegate them to the past, and in so doing the import of what God's Spirit is seeking to teach is lost on both present and future generations, especially those who will be alive when these prophecies literally begin to unfold!

Wikipedia has a very interesting statement in the article on the [Olivet Discourse](#) - "In each of the three gospel accounts, **the sermon contains a number of statements which at first glance seem predictive of future events**. However, modern Christian interpretation diverges as to the meaning of the additional topics in the discourse." I do not know the author of this article but it seems that when they allowed the text to speak for itself, devoid of personal bias or one's particular system of interpretation, the text seemed to be "predictive of future events!" Would it be that everyone who reads this great sermon, would read "**at first glance**" as it were! I cannot emphasize too strongly, the moment the reader begins to jettison an unbiased, plain sense reading of the text, the ability to interpret the words of Jesus literally becomes "colored" and is swayed by the "experts" rather than the by the common sense of the text!

As **John MacArthur** says "The teaching of the Olivet discourse is much debated and frequently misunderstood, **largely because it is viewed through the lens of a particular theological system or interpretive scheme** that makes the message appear complex and enigmatic. But the disciples were not learned men, and Jesus' purpose was to give them clarity and encouragement, not complexity and anxiety. The intricate interpretations that are sometimes proposed for this passage would have left the disciples utterly dumbfounded. It is preferable to take Jesus' words as simply and as straightforwardly as possible." (Bolding added) ([The MacArthur New Testament Commentary- Matthew 24-28](#); see also his related sermons listed above)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Next to the Sermon on the Mount and the parables in Matt. 13, no part of Matthew has suffered more misinterpretation than His discourse on the Mount of Olives. Many cults use Matt. 24:1-41, along with Dan. 9:20-27, to "prove" that Christ has already returned! Even well-meaning evangelicals confuse the issue by applying this section to the church in this age. It is important that we get an overall view of the Olivet Discourse before we examine the details. (Expository Outlines)

**D. Edmond Hiebert** writes that the Olivet Discourse "is a prophetic unveiling of the future for His disciples, yet its specific aim is to

warn, exhort, and encourage them to faith and obedience." ([The Gospel of Mark- An Expository Commentary](#) - recommended - anything by Hiebert is excellent!) (Bolding added for emphasis - Should this not be the goal of all study of prophecy -- not to make us smarter sinners, but to make us more like our Savior!)

**Hiebert** goes on to address the criticism of "scholars" regarding the authenticity of Jesus' words in this discourse (comments on Mark 13 but applicable to Mt 24 and Luke 21) - "As has been true to all prophetic portions of Scripture, the Olivet Discourse has received varied interpretations. It has also been the subject of much critical and skeptical discussion. While radical scholars have charged that the discourse is wholly unauthentic, many scholars adopt a mediating position in holding that in its present form, the discourse contains only fragments of the genuine teaching of Jesus. It is held that the present account was built around a "Little Apocalypse" which some Christian prophet produced and ascribed to Jesus. But the critics' rejection of portions of the discourse as unworthy of Jesus was mainly to their subjective dislike of the apocalyptic element. Devoid of all documentary evidence, the hypothesis is incapable of proof and not necessary. **The discourse contains nothing that is unworthy of Christ Himself.** It lacks the highly figurative language of Jewish apocalyptic writings and has a strong note of moral exhortation, an element almost entirely lacking in apocalyptic works. Cranfield holds that this chapter "does give us substantially our Lord's teaching" and appropriately goes on to ask "whether the disparagement of this chapter by much recent scholarship has not resulted in a serious impoverishment and weakening of the Church's life." There seems to be no sufficient reason for rejecting this chapter as giving the authentic teaching of Jesus. Certainly, Mark presented it as such. The teaching is consistent with his portrait of Jesus the Son of God (Mk 1:1) in this Gospel." ([Ibid](#))

**Ray Stedman** - There are many predictive passages in both Old and New Testaments, but none is clearer or more detailed than the message delivered by Jesus himself as he sat on the Mount of Olives overlooking the city of Jerusalem during the turbulent events of his last week before the cross. These words have immense significance for us for they are a revelation of the ultimate fate of earth. From his point in time (about A.D. 32\*) he looks ahead to foretell the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the disturbances connected with that singular event. He looks on across the centuries and outlines the perils that lie between his first and second coming, thus describing the very age in which we live. He looks past the present day to that time which he calls "the end of the age" and sets its events before us in searing and vivid detail, culminating in his own return to earth and the ushering in of a new day. ([The Long Look Ahead - Matthew 24:1-3](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** gives us some practical guidelines as we study the Olivet Discourse (these guidelines are from his commentary on Mark 13, Mark's version of the Olivet Discourse, but are applicable in principle to the study of Matthew's version of the Olivet Discourse.) :

**To begin with**, we must study this discourse in the light of the rest of Scripture, especially the Book of Daniel. The prophetic Scriptures harmonize if we consider all that God has revealed.

**Ed comment:** If you are interested in prophecy, I would strongly suggest first doing a serious, in depth study of the book of Daniel (studying it by carrying out your own careful **observations** and not by just reading commentaries on Daniel many of which do not interpret the text literally) which will give you a firm foundation for interpretation of the NT prophetic sections such as the Olivet Discourse and the Revelation. As a corollary, if you study the Olivet Discourse **without** an understanding of "God's Plan for the Ages" as clearly laid out in a literal reading of Daniel, Jesus' words will be difficult to understand in the context of God's overall plan! You will also be dependent on the opinions of the commentaries and the author's general approach to interpretation, which often is not literal! I would add that one can simply not understand the book of the Revelation unless one has first studied the parallel prophetic passages in Daniel. The best course I know for studying the Book of Daniel is Precept Ministries two part study which I highly recommend = [Daniel 1-6 - Living Out a Biblical Worldview](#) and [Daniel 7-12 -Gaining Understanding of the Time of the End](#). You could then supplement your study with the comments I have written based on over 30 years of studying the Book of Daniel from a literalistic perspective - see Daniel Commentary Verse by Verse. Notice the recommended order - first your personal study under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit and second the commentary, for only then will you be able to "comment on the commentary" including the one I have compiled!

**Second**, we must see the practical application of the discourse. Jesus did not preach this sermon to satisfy the curiosity of His disciples, or even to straighten out their confused thinking. At least four times He said "Take heed!" (Mark 13:5, 9, 23, 33) (**Ed:** cf similar warnings in Mt 24:4, 23, 26) and He closed the address with the admonition, "Watch!" While studying this address can help us better understand future events, we must not make the mistake of setting dates! (Mark 13:32) (**Ed:** cf Mt 24:36).

**Third**, as we study, we must keep in mind the "Jewish atmosphere" of the discourse. The Olivet Discourse grew out of some questions asked of a Jewish rabbi by four Jewish men, about the future of the Jewish temple. The warnings about "**false Christs**" (**Ed:** "false Messiahs") would especially concern Jews (Mark 13:5-6, 21-22) (**Ed:** cf Mt 24:4-5, 23-24), as would the warning about Jewish courts and trials (Mark 13:9)(**Ed:** Not mentioned by Matthew). The Jews would especially appreciate the reference to "**Daniel the prophet**" and the admonition to flee from **Judea** (Mark 13:14) (**Ed:** cf Mt 24:15). ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

So as we study Jesus' Olivet Discourse it is important to **let the text say what it says**, reading it **literally**, keeping **context king** and seeking where possible to allow **Scripture to explain Scripture**.

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** helps us establish the context noting that the

Olivet Discourse of the Messiah occurred between two significant events. Immediately preceding the Olivet Discourse, the Messiah spoke the final words of His public ministry, found in Matthew 23:1-39, which contains the denunciation of the leadership of Israel, especially for their guilt in leading the nation to reject the Messiahship of Jesus. With these words, the public ministry of the Messiah as a prophet came to an end, and for the remainder of His last few days on earth, He would deal exclusively with His disciples. In Mt 23:37-39, Jesus also laid down the precondition to the Second Coming, in that He will not return until the Jewish leaders ask Him to return. Just as the Jewish leaders once led the nation to reject His Messiahship, a day must come when they will lead the Jewish people to accept His Messiahship. Immediately after the Olivet Discourse came the preparation of the last Passover and the first Lord's Supper. These events came just before His death. During the last Passover and the first Lord's Supper, the famous Upper Room Discourse occurred, in which there was a transition in the Messiah's ministry from prophet to priest....The basic purpose of the Olivet Discourse is to answer the question: When and how would the Messianic Kingdom come into being?....The Olivet Discourse answers this question. To get a complete picture, all three Gospel accounts must be studied. Not one Gospel writer recorded everything Jesus said on that day, and each one recorded only the information most relevant to the theme of his own Gospel account. For that reason, it is necessary to study all three accounts, because only then is it possible to get a total picture of what Jesus said during the closing days in His office as prophet. ([The Footsteps of the Messiah- A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events](#))

**Matthew 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: Kai exelthōn (AAPMSN) o Iesous apo tou hierou eporeueto (3SIMI) kai proselthōn oi mathetai autou epideixai (AAN) auto tas oikodomas tou hierou:**

- **came out of:** Mt 23:39 Jer 6:8 Eze 8:6, 10:17-19, 11:22,23 Ho 9:12
- **point out:** Mk 13:1,2 Lu 21:5,6 Jn 2:20)

## **THE OLIVET DISCOURSE: THE TEMPLE'S BEAUTY ADMIRER**

**On what day of "Holy Week" did this discourse take place?** Tuesday Evening (cp Mk 11:19, [See note on "Holy Tuesday"](#), cf [Passion Week or Holy Week](#))

**John Phillips** observes that "The King had passed final judgment on the nation of Israel (cf Matthew 23:38-39). All that remained was the cross. But first, in an astonishing prophetic discourse, the King gave His disciples a sketch of the general tenor of the new church age that was about to be inserted into time, and then went on to speak of the end-time events that would herald His coming again. This important prophetic statement gathers together the main threads of Old Testament end-time prophecy and the threads of New Testament prophecy, weaves them into an imposing fabric of eschatology, and embroiders the fabric with flashes of insight from the Lord's omniscient foreknowledge." (Exploring the Gospel of Matthew)

**Warren Wiersbe** sets the stage for Matthew 24 commenting that "The Olivet Discourse grew out of some questions the disciples asked when Jesus told them that the temple would one day be destroyed. First, they wanted to know **when**. This answer is not recorded in Matthew but is given in Luke 21:20-24. Second, they asked about the sign of Christ's return. This is answered in Matthew 24:29-44. In their final question, they asked about the sign of the end of the age. Christ's reply is in Matthew 24:4-28. ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Gotquestions** - It is important to recognize that Jesus' teaching in this discourse is in reference to Israel and not the Church. Christ was speaking of God's future program for Israel. Other passages to consider when studying the Olivet Discourse are Daniel 9:24-27 and Revelation 6:1 - 19:21, which refer to the future seven-year period called the tribulation. God's program for the Church concludes with the rapture, which is not taught in the Olivet Discourse. The rapture of the Church is found in John 14:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. In Matthew 23:1-37, 38-39, Jesus had spoken to the Pharisees concerning judgment. This can be seen in the "woe" statements in that chapter. ([What is the Olivet Discourse?](#))

**David Platt** - Jesus' prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming are a call for His disciples to trust in His authority, persevere in His power, and long for His return. (Exalting Christ in Matthew)

**THE GLORY DEPARTS**

## THE TEMPLE!

**Jesus came out from the Temple** - "All the discourses since Mt 21:23 have been in the Temple courts." (A T Robertson) **This final departure of Jesus from the Temple marked the end of His public ministry!** Mark 13:1 has a similar phrase "He was going out" (present tense) picturing Him in the act of leaving. The statement about Jesus' leaving the Temple is not found in Luke 21:1-6 which at least raises the possibility that the latter discourse was delivered in the Temple complex. However most commentators consider Luke 21 as part of Jesus' classic Olivet Discourse.

**Fruchtenbaum** points out that "Actually, at that time, the Temple buildings were not yet completed. The Temple Compound was begun by Herod the Great in 20 B.C., but it was not finished until A.D. 64, only six years before its destruction. The words of the Olivet Discourse were spoken in the year A.D. 30, and so the building of the Temple Compound had been going on for fifty years. They would continue the building for another 34 years." ([The Footsteps of the Messiah- A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events](#))

**Was going away** - The **imperfect tense** (continuous action) gives us a vivid description of Jesus. One can picture Him as He keeps on walking away from the Temple for **the last time**.

So here we see Jesus the One Who alone possessed "**glory** as of the only begotten from the Father" (Jn 1:14-Eastern Gate (just as did the **Shekinah glory** - Ezek 10:19-[see description](#)) which was also the likely route of His "Triumphant Entrance" into Jerusalem (cp Lk 19:28-48) two days earlier ("Palm Sunday"). However the glory of will one day return, because the Glorious One will return! Indeed, Ezekiel prophesies that "the (**Shekinah**) glory of Jehovah (cf Jesus - Jn 1:14-note) would one day in the future come into the **Millennial Temple** "by the way of the gate facing toward the East." (Ezekiel 43:4-[see Golden Gate](#); [See related note on "The Gate to Prophecy"](#))

### Related Resource:

- The Stepwise Departure of The Glory of the LORD from Solomon's Temple

**Tony Garland** makes an interesting observation that there is a "parallel with Jesus, the Glory of the Lord, departing the Temple to the Mount of Olives and the Shekinah Glory which departed in the same manner in Ezekiel's day (Ezek 11:22-23-note cf. Mt. 23:38). In both cases, some time thereafter the Temple was destroyed." ([See depiction of the departure of the Shekinah glory in Ezekiel 8:1-11:25](#))

**Jesus (2424)(Iesous)** is [transliteration](#) of the Greek Iesous, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew name [Jehoshua \(Yehoshua\)](#) or [Jeshua&nbsnnbsp;\(Yeshua\)](#) which mean Jehovah is help or Jehovah is salvation. Stated another way the Greek Iesous corresponds to the OT [Jehoshua \(Yehoshua\)](#) which is contracted as [Jeshua \(Yeshua\)](#). NET Note on Jesus - The Greek form of the name Iēsous, which was translated into Latin as Jesus, is the same as the Hebrew Yeshua (Joshua), which means "Yahweh saves" (Yahweh is typically rendered as "LORD" in the OT).

**His disciples came up to point out the Temple buildings to Him**- Mark says "**one of His disciples**" (Mk 13:1) apparently acted as spokesman for the group and directed Jesus' attention to the magnificent structures. The Synoptic Gospels do not state specifically why they did this. However keeping the context in mind, they may have been motivated by the fact that Jesus had just stated "Behold, your house (the Temple) is being left to you desolate!" (Mt 23:38 - discussed more fully in comments below on Mt 24:3) Luke 21:5 says "some were talking about the Temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts." (Lk 21:5) **Aren't we all like the disciples, awe struck by the beauty of man made edifices, but sadly often minimizing the super-human Beautiful One Himself!**

**The Temple (See [Herod's Temple](#)) buildings** - Construction of the Temple had begun nearly 50 years earlier under the direction of Herod the Great and would still be ongoing 40 years later when it was utterly destroyed! (cf Eccl 1:2-3!) The summit of Mount Zion had been dug away to leave a plateau of 1,000 feet square. At the far end of it was the Temple itself (**naos**). It was built of white marble plated with gold, and it shone in the sun so that a man could scarcely bear to look at it. Between the [Lower City](#) and the [Temple Mount](#) lay the [Tyropoeon Valley](#), and across this valley stretched a colossal bridge. Its arches had a span of 41 1/2 feet, and its spring stones were 24 feet long by 6 inches thick. The Temple area was surrounded by great porches, [Solomon's Porticos](#) and the Royal Porch (Acts 3:11-12). These porches were upheld by pillars, cut out of solid blocks of marble in one piece. They were 37 1/2 feet high, and of such a thickness that three men linked together could scarcely put their arms round them. At the corners of the Temple angle stones have been found which measure from 20 to 40 feet in length, and which weigh more than 100 tons. How they were ever cut and placed in position is one of the mysteries of ancient engineering. **Little wonder that these Galilean fishermen looked and directed Jesus' attention to them. Others are like Herod who focused on the trappings of "religion" at the expense of a relationship with the Righteous One!**

**Hiebert** - According to Josephus, part of it was built of strong, white stones each measuring twenty-five cubits long, eight high, and about twelve in breadth (37 1/2' — 12' — 18'). Some of these massive stones weighed more than one hundred tons. The plural **buildings** denotes the Temple proper as well as the various courts with their chambers and magnificent colonnades, all of which rested on the platform which Herod the Great had constructed for the enlarged Temple area. Luke mentioned also the costly votive offerings with which the temple was decorated (Luke 21:5). The Herodian Temple was recognized as one of the architectural wonders of the Roman world. ([Ibid](#))

#### Related resources:

- Jewish Christian Alfred Edersheim's [Temple--Its Ministry and Services](#)
- [Josephus - scroll down page to "Chapter 11" for discussion of Temple](#)
- [Tacitus-Book V Chapter 8](#) described the Temple as "enormous riches"

**The Temple buildings** - The disciples focused on the exterior of the Temple. Jesus focusing on the real meaning of the Temple, which was supposed to symbolize the presence of God. And of course Jesus knew that not only was much (most) of the religious activity associated with the Temple a sham, He also knew that the religious leaders would soon reject Him as the God that the Temple symbolized.

**Temple** ([2411](#))(**hieron**) referred to a building which was set apart and dedicated to the worship and service of the gods. In the NT **hieron** was used to designate the **entire complex**, the entire sacred enclosure, with its porticos, courts, and other subordinate buildings. The Greek word **Naos** referred to the Temple proper, including the inner sanctuary, composed of the outer room, the Holy of Holies and the innermost Holy Place. When our Lord taught in the Temple, He taught in the **hieron**, in one of the temple porches. He expelled the money-changers from the **hieron**, the court of the Gentiles. When the veil of the Temple was rent at the time of the death of our Lord (Mt 27:52, cp Heb 10:19-22-note), it was the veil of the **naos**, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. When Zacharias entered the Temple to burn incense (Lk 1:9), he entered the **naos**, the Holy Place where the altar of incense stood while the multitude were in prayer outside in the **hieron** the temple complex (Lk 1:10).

**Matthew 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.": o de apokritheis (APPMSN) eipen (3SAAI) autois ou blepete (2PPAI) tauta panta? Amen lego (1SPAI) humin ou me apthete (3SAPS) ode lithos epi lithon os ou kataluthesetai (3SFPI):

- 1Ki 9:7-8 Jer 26:18 Eze 7:20-22 Da 9:26,27 Mic 3:12 Lu 19:44 2Pe 3:11

## THE OLIVET DISCOURSE: THE TEMPLE'S DESTRUCTION DECREED

#### Related passages:

Luke 19:44+ 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."

Mark 13:2+ And Jesus said to him ("one of His disciples" - Mk 13:1), "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."

Luke 21:6+ "As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."

**Do you not see all these things?** - In Mark 13:2 Jesus asked "Do you see these **great buildings**" (cf "it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts" - Lk 21:50) thus acknowledging the magnificence of the Temple complex.

**Hiebert** says the disciples were "justified in viewing it with admiration. The words ("Do you not see...") may be viewed either as a question or an assertion. If they are a question, Jesus asked the disciple(s), "Is your attention centered on the grand material structure?" If they are an assertion, Jesus acknowledged that the disciple(s) was occupied with the grandeur before Him. To view the reply as a question seems preferable. In either case, His words fixed attention on the material temple itself in preparation for His astonishing announcement." ([Ibid](#))

**Truly** (Amen) ([281](#))(**amen**) when used by Jesus before a saying was to stress the truth and validity of the sayings by His own acknowledgment of them. The idea is "I solemnly assure you."

**Not one stone here will be left upon another** - Up to this time during the day (it was probably toward Tuesday evening now - cf Mk 11:19) Jesus had been teaching (cf Mk 11:20-12:44), acting as the "**forth teller**" but now He switches to "**foreteller**" uttering a dramatic prophecy that would soon come to pass. Jesus predicted the complete and utter destruction of the Temple, a prophecy that was fulfilled in 70AD. Jesus had foretold metaphorically of the destruction of the "Temple" of His body (Jn 2:19, Mk 14:58, Acts 6:14), but now He spoke of a literal destruction of the holy Temple, not His holy body. Although some of the stones which were set in place by Herod the Great in his expansion of the Temple complex are still visible on the southeast corner of the Temple Mount, that does not at all invalidate the literal fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, because He was referring to the stones of the actual Temple of which not a stone remains **left upon another**.

**Not one stone...upon another** (Literally = "stone upon stone") - In Matthew's version Jesus uses a strong **double negative** (*ou me*) signifying absolutely not one stone of the Temple would remain intact. His negative emphasis is even stronger in Mark 13:2 for He uses the double negative twice - "Absolutely not even one stone will be left upon another which will absolutely not be torn down." His prediction was stated about as dogmatically as it could be stated in the original Greek!

**John MacArthur** adds that Jesus' words that **not one stone here will be left upon another** "would be fulfilled literally in A.D. 70, when the Romans, the human means of divine wrath (**Ed**: Notice this point! cf "Nebuchadnezzar...My servant" = Jer 25:9, 27:6), erected scaffolds around the walls of the temple and its buildings, filled them with wood and other flammable material, and set them on fire. The intense heat from the fires caused the stones to crumble. After it was further dismantled and sifted to find all the melted gold, the rubble was thrown down into the Kidron Valley. Only the huge foundation stones remained largely intact. Those stones, however, were not part of the Temple itself, but supports for the retaining wall." (See [Luke 18-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** - The Temple was actually destroyed by fire, contrary to the order of Titus, who had hoped to spare the edifice; but later, he gave orders to demolish the entire city and Temple. ([Flavius Josephus. Wars of the Jews 6.1-6.92](#); [Flavius Josephus. Wars of the Jews 7.1.1](#)) (**Ibid**)

**Leon Morris** has a point of application regarding the destruction of the beautiful Temple - Jesus is making clear that, while the temple was undoubtedly a wonderful building, the disciples should not be beguiled by its beauty. What matters is that God's people should live godly lives. When they do not, disaster in some form is inevitable. (BORROW [The Gospel According to Matthew](#))

#### **SOME CONTEXT ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE & JERUSALEM**

In the Old Testament, Jehovah, through the prophet Jeremiah, had given a clear warning to Israel concerning the impending destruction of the Temple

"Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," declares the LORD. But go now to My place which was in [Shiloh](#), where I made My name dwell at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because you have done all these things," declares the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you but you did not answer, therefore, **I will do to the house which is called by My name**, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. (Jer 7:11-14, cf Ps 78:60-61)

Prophecy is like a jigsaw puzzle and just as one is enabled to solve the puzzle by first finding the most obvious pieces (the corners), so too one is enabled to unravel a controversial chapter like Matthew 24 by finding the obvious pieces. And so we need to keep the context in mind and compare Scriptures that relate to the context. **What was the context? What had Jesus just declared in Matthew 23:37-39?**

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! "For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me **until** you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (Mt 23:37-39)

**Comment: To what house does He refer?** This is clearly a reference to their beloved Temple (and city of Jerusalem). In the Old Testament Daniel 9:26 (see commentary) had prophesied "after the sixty-two weeks (plus the 7 weeks = 69 weeks = 483 years) the **Messiah** would be cut off (the Crucifixion of Jesus - Hebrew word = **karath** = speaks of a violent death) and have nothing, and the people (Romans) of the prince who is to come (Antichrist) will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its (Jerusalem's) end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; **desolations** are determined." As discussed above it may have been because Jesus pronounced this judgment on Jerusalem and the Temple that the astonished disciples immediately drew

His attention to its beauty and magnificence.

**Ray Stedman:** All of this (**Ed:** Referring to the Olivet Discourse) comes at the close of the most blistering sermon He ever delivered. It was addressed to the Scribes and the Pharisees, and consisted of a series of "woes" pronounced upon the hypocrisy of these religious leaders (Mt 23:2, 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29). They were supposed to be the teachers of the people but were actually hindering them from knowing the truth of God. Jesus began His ministry with a series of **eight blessings** (the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1-12), and He ended it with a series of **eight woes**. Nothing arouses more vehement anger in the heart of God than religious hypocrisy. Throughout the Scriptures, God's most scorching terms are reserved for those who profess to know Him but who behave quite contrary to their profession- especially for the self-righteous. ([The Long Look Ahead - Matthew 24:1-3](#))

It is worth noting that almost 500 years earlier Daniel had foretold the Crucifixion of the **Messiah** and the desolation of Jerusalem by the Romans. But in the midst of wrath ("your house...left to you desolate") God remembers mercy, for He is a merciful (mercy filled) God! And so in Mt 23:39 Jesus gives a prophetic promise which begins with the word "**until**" which marks the time when Israel will bless the **Messiah** Who returns in the Name of the LORD at the end of this age. Why will they call Him "**blessed**" in the future and not at the time He walked among them? Most Jews rejected Jesus as the **Messiah** in His first advent (Jn 1:11), but when He returns, the Spirit of grace and supplication will be poured out on the Jews (Zech 12:10) and one-third will be saved (the "all Israel" of Ro 11:26-27, Zech 13:8-9). It is those saved Jewish people who will shout out Psalm 118:26 (where Mt 23:39 changes "*one*" to "*He*" and Lk 19:38 changes "*one*" to "*the King*" for at that time He will indeed be "King of kings and Lord of lords!" Amen! [Rev 19:16]). In summary even in Matthew 23:38-39, Jesus prophesied of the coming destruction of the House of God, the Temple, which occurred in 70AD. But He also prophesied about His future return as King of kings at the end of this age! Now as we read Mt 24:3 we can better understand why the disciples ask Him not only about the timing of the destruction of the Temple but also about His return at the end of the age.

**Compare other Scriptures related to the destruction of Jerusalem.** In Luke Jesus gives a parallel prophecy of the coming destruction of Jerusalem...

And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "**If you had known in [this day](#)**, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For (term of explanation) the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because (term of explanation) **you did not recognize [the time of your visitation](#)** (see [episkope](#))." (Luke 19:42-44)

**Comment:** In Luke 19:42 the phrase "[this day](#)" might be better translated "the day" because the definitive article ("te" = the) precedes "day" (hemera) and marks it as a very specific, unique day. In context, "this day" is further described by Jesus as "[the time of your visitation](#)." What is unique about "this day" and "the time of your visitation." It was **the very unique day** when Jesus presented Himself to the Jews as their **Messiah** and King entering Jerusalem riding on a colt (Lk 19:35-38; cp Mt 21:7-9 "the donkey and the colt") as the Jews cried "**Hosanna [Save Now]** in the highest!" (Mt 21:9) They were crying for salvation (from Rome) but not for salvation (from sin) and so they missed their long promised **Messiah**. Jesus' is very clear that they should have "known in this day" that it was "the time of visitation." But is Jesus being unfair? How could they have known this specific day? Is there any place in the Old Testament Scriptures where God had foretold of this unique day? Since we know God is never unjust or unfair, we know that there was clearly a prophecy that foretold of "this day." That prophecy is found in the Seventy Weeks which were specifically "decreed for your people (Israel) and your holy city (Jerusalem)" (Da 9:24-27). That incredible prophecy foretold to the day when the **Messiah** would come into Jerusalem, but also foretold that He would be crucified and that Jerusalem would be left desolate, just as Jesus had predicted. **For a more detailed explanation of what is probably one of the greatest prophecies in all of the Bible see the commentary notes on each of the specific verses - Daniel 9:24; Daniel 9:25; Daniel 9:26; Daniel 9:27.**

**Matthew 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?": Kathemenou (PMPMSG) de

**Amplified** While He was seated on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately and said, Tell us, when will this take place, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end (the completion, the consummation) of the age?

**Darby** And as he was sitting upon the mount of Olives the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be, and what is the sign of thy coming and the completion of the age?

**KJV** And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

**NET** As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

**ESV** 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 close of the age?"

**NIV** As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

**NLT** Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world? "

**YLT** And when he is sitting on the mount of the Olives, the disciples came near to him by himself, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these be? and what is the sign of thy presence, and of the full end of the age?'

- **Was sitting:** Mt 21:1 Mk 13:3,4
- **the disciples:** Mt 13:10,11,36 15:12 17:19
- **Tell:** Da 12:6-8 Lu 21:7 Jn 21:21,22 Ac 1:7 1Th 5:1-11
- **the sign:** Mt 24:32,33,43
- **the end:** Mt 13:39,40,49 28:20 Heb 9:26)

**Ray Stedman** - Having said this he left the Temple, and the disciples went with Him. Silently, they walked **down** through the valley of Kidron and **up** the other side to the Mount of Olives. There Jesus took his seat, upon one of the rocks that overlooked the city and the Temple area (**Ed**: The higher elevation enabled them to look down on a panoramic view of the city).. The disciples were troubled and confused. They could not understand His actions or His words concerning the Temple. The Temple was the center of the nation's life and they regarded it with holy awe as the very dwelling place of God among His people. Its beauty was famous throughout the earth and they could not believe that God would allow any harm to come to it. So they began to point out to Jesus the strength and beauty of the Temple. ([The Long Look Ahead - Matthew 24:1-3](#))

**As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives** - (the posture of a teacher, cf other references to Jesus seated - Mt 5:1; 13:1; 15:29; 19:28; 22:44; 23:2; 25:31) "The **final** teaching section (Mt 24:3-26:1) begins like the **first** with Jesus sitting on a mountain (Mt 5:1) and concludes with a similar ending (Mt 7:28; 26:1)." (Lowery - Bible Knowledge Key Word Study) Mark adds the small detail that Jesus "was sitting on the Mount of Olives **opposite the temple.**" (Mk 13:3) The Mount of Olives is about 150 feet higher and due west of Temple Mount, separated by the Kidron Valley, giving one a panoramic view of the holy Temple and the holy city (**See picture**). The fact that the disciples **came to Him** suggests that He had already walked ahead of them possibly "in silent meditation." (Hiebert)

**The Mount of Olives** - How apropos that Jesus' delivered this message giving details of the His glorious return (Mt 24:27-30). The disciples may have known (but not fully understood) the prophecy of His return in Zechariah 14:4 - "And in that day His feet will stand on the **Mount of Olives**, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the **Mount of Olives** will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south." Not only would Jesus return to the **Mount of Olives** but He would soon ascend back to the Father from the **Mount of Olives** (Read Acts 1:9-11, 12).

**Warren Wiersbe** reminds us as we read the Olivet Discourse it is vital that we "We must keep in mind that the "atmosphere" of this discourse is Jewish. Jesus talked about **Judea** (Mt. 24:16), the **Sabbath** (Mt. 24:20) (**Ed**: And in Mark's version mentioned **synagogues** - Mk 13:9), and the prophecies of **Daniel** concerning the Jewish people (Mt. 24:15)...Though there are definite applications to God's people today, the emphasis is on **Jerusalem, the Jews, and the temple**. Our Lord was not discussing His coming for the church (The Rapture), for that can occur at any time and no signs need precede it (1Cor 15:51-58; 1Thes. 4:13-18).



"For the Jews require a sign" (1Cor 1:22); the church looks for a Saviour (Phil 3:20-21)." ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**The disciples came to Him privately** (cf Mt 17:19) - The Olivet Discourse was not a public teaching, but was given only for the ears of believers. Mark gives us the names of the four disciples who came to Jesus - "Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately." (Mark 13:3) These were the first four disciples Jesus had called at the outset of His ministry and they comprised His innermost circle. Then the four disciples asked three questions.

## THE DISCIPLES' QUESTIONS

(1) When will these things happen?

(2a) What will be the sign of Your coming?

(2b) What will be the sign of the End of the Age?

**Parallel passages** - Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:3-4; Luke 21:7 (Remember that to best understand Matthew 24-25, it is important to study the related passages in Mark and Luke).

**When will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?**- This is two questions with the second question having two components (some interpret it three questions - Walvoord, Fruchtenbaum - see below).

**Fruchtenbaum** comments that "All together, three questions were asked which, at the same time, included requests for three signs." ([Ibid](#)) He explains that in the Luke passage the disciples asked not only **when** (just as in Matthew) but what is the **sign** that will identify that these things are about to take place. Matthew asks only when but do not mention a sign.

**Thomas Constable** on the other hand comments that "The disciples asked Jesus two questions. The first was, **'When will these things be?'**" The second question had two parts as is clear from the Greek construction of the sentence. It linked two nouns, **"coming"** (**parousia**) and **"end"** (**sunteleia**), with a single article, **"the"** (Gr. to), and the conjunction **"and"** (Gr. kai). **What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"** ([Matthew 24 Commentary](#))

**Blomberg** agrees that "By not repeating the definite article ("the") before "end of the age," Matthew's rendering of Jesus' words is most likely linking the coming of Christ and the end of the age together as one event ([Granville Sharp's rule](#))." (NAC - Matthew)

What is the significance of the fact that there is only one article governing the **coming** and the **consummation** (end)? This suggests that the disciples viewed **the coming** and **the consummation** as two events which were distinct, but closely connected. This will be discussed more fully below.

## FIRST QUESTION: WHEN?

**Tell us, when will these things happen** - What are **these things**? This refers to the destruction of the Temple, which He had foretold in Mt 23:38 and again in Mt 24:2. The disciples did not ask **"why"** (presumably they understood why judgement had to come) but **"when?"**

Matthew 24 and Mark 13 do not record when the Temple would be destroyed, although they do record signs regarding when it would be made desolate (Mt 24:15, Mk 13:14). The answer to **when** the Temple would be destroyed is recorded in Luke 21:20 where Jesus foretold that **"when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand"** This clear sign would signal the beginning of the end of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple, a prophecy that was literally fulfilled in 70AD, confirming Jesus as a true prophet, Whose coming had been foretold by Moses in Deuteronomy "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." (Dt 18:15, 18, cf tests of a true prophet - Dt 18:20-22)

See [Chart Summarizing the Three Signs in the Olivet Discourse](#)

**Hiebert** has an interesting and astute analysis of **these things** - **These things** again relates to the Temple, but the question (of the disciples) assumes that the destruction will be part of the complex events culminating in the consummation of the age and the inauguration of the messianic kingdom. His prophecy of the destruction of the temple naturally led them to think of Zechariah 14 and its eschatological portrayal. This implication is more clearly indicated in Matthew's formulation of the question. "When shall these things be, and what is the sign of thy coming and [the] completion of the age?" (Darby). **Completion of the age (sunteleia)** is the noun form of the verb in Mark, rendered "shall be fulfilled," ([sunteleo](#)) denoting that the things mentioned will be brought to their close, or final fulfillment. **All (panta) (Ed:** This refers to the parallel passage in Mk 13:4) stands emphatically at the end of the

sentence to stress **the total consummation of these crisis events** ("*to semeion hotan mello tauta sunteleisthai **panta***"). They were eager to know what **sign** or visible portent would enable them to recognize the inauguration of these cataclysmic events. Clearly, they did not foresee the long interval between the two events (**Ed**: Some would say "three" events) . The **local event** (**Ed**: destruction of the Temple) became blended into the **eschatological** (**Ed**: His parousia and end of the age). This use of the **local event** in the foreground as the type of **eschatological event** is seen in the Old Testament in Joel's presentation of the Day of the Lord (**Ed**: E.g., Joel 1:4 describing the local locust plague and the **Day of the LORD** in Joel 1:15). This prophetic use of the local crisis as a type of the end time teaches us that each age has its own judgment pointing to the certainty of the final judgment. ([Ibid](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

Indeed, if the disciples knew their OT prophecies, Jesus' prophecy regarding the Temple and His subsequent establishment of the Messianic Kingdom would have naturally led them to think of Zechariah 14:1-21, for Zechariah 14:2 describes a battle against Jerusalem, Zechariah 14:3,5 describes Messiah's victorious return (cp **parousia** - arrival and presence) and Zechariah 14:8-21 describes the conditions of the subsequent Messianic Kingdom.

**A few thoughts to ponder** - Remember that in 2016 we read Jesus' prophecies almost 2000 years later and we know that the Temple has been destroyed in 70AD and we know that Jesus has not physically returned to bring this present age to its consummation and inaugurate His Messianic Kingdom. But if we place ourselves in the sandals of these four disciples on the mountain with Jesus, when they asked about the Temple destruction, they did not see a gap of 2000 years between the fulfillment of these prophecies (Temple destroyed, Jesus' arrival, end of this age). In their mind they clearly associated Jesus parousia (presence - see discussion below) and the consummation of the age (and beginning of the next, the Messianic Age). Indeed, from Acts 1:6 their question indicates that they thought the end of this age and the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom was to come soon, probably in their lifetime. After all they were on the same Mount of Olives as they were in Mt 24:3 when Jesus had first disclosed His prophecy. The difference was that now Jesus had been crucified and resurrected, returned to life from the dead. And they understood that truth now. And so here they were on the Mount and Jesus had indeed in one sense returned or "come" to them again (recalling that parousia means an arrival and a presence), this *coming* of course being from the grave not from clouds. And so one could easily see how they might interpret this as His *parousia* (arrival and presence) as fulfilled. No, the Temple had not yet been destroyed, but His coming back to life and *coming* to them would signal that this was the end of the age and soon the Messianic Kingdom would begin. Just a few thoughts to ponder!

**John MacArthur's** sermon on [The Signs of Christ's Coming, Part 1](#) gives a summary of first century Jewish eschatological expectations which helps us "get inside the disciples' heads" and better understand why they were asking Jesus what they asked. In other words, one might think that the mention of the Temple's destruction would generate a question related only to that topic. However they also asked about the **coming of Messiah** and the **consummation of the age**. It is clear that in their minds all three were related, but as alluded to above, they had no concept of the **gap of time** that would separate the Temple's destruction from the coming and consummation.

#### **Related Resource:**

- Discussion of **Time Gaps in Interpretation of Prophecy**.

**Ray Stedman** - In Luke 21:20, we have other details of this predicted overthrow of the city and the Temple. There Jesus adds, **But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.**" Forty years later, the Roman armies under Titus came in and fulfilled the prediction to the very letter. With Titus was a Jewish historian named Josephus who recorded the terrible story in minute detail. It was one of the most ghastly sieges in all history. When the Romans came the city was divided among three warring factions of Jews, who were so at each others' throats that they paid no heed to the approach of the Romans. Thus, Titus came up and surrounded the city while it was distracted by its own internecine warfare. The Romans assaulted the walls again and again, and gave every opportunity to the Jews to surrender and save their capital destruction. During the long siege a terrible famine raged in the city and the bodies of the inhabitants of the city were literally stacked like cordwood in the streets. Mothers ate their own children to preserve their own strength. The toll of Jewish suffering was horrible but they would not surrender the city. Again and again they attempted to trick the Romans through guile and perfidy. When at last the walls were breached Titus tried to preserve the Temple by giving orders to his soldiers not to destroy or burn it. But the anger of the soldiers against the Jews was so intense that, maddened by the resistance they encountered, they disobeyed the order of their general and set fire to the temple. There were great quantities of gold and silver which had been placed in the Temple for safekeeping. This melted and ran down between the rocks and into the cracks of the stones that formed the Temple and the wall around it. When the Roman soldiers finally took the city, in their greed to obtain this gold and silver they took long bars and pried apart these massive stones. Thus, quite literally, not one stone was left standing upon another. The Temple itself was totally destroyed though the wall supporting the area upon which the Temple was built was left partially intact and a portion of it remains to this day, called the **Western Wall**. In this remarkable fulfillment, confirmed so strongly by secular history, is convincing proof that God will fulfill every

other part of this amazing message fully and literally. As Jesus himself said in the discourse, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ([The Long Look Ahead - Matthew 24:1-3](#))

In fairness, a number of commentaries feel that in Matthew 24 Jesus did answer the first question about *when* the destruction of the Temple would occur. These commentaries interpret Matthew 24:15-22 as a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem which was fulfilled in 70AD. The commentary you are reading however interprets the **abomination of desolation** in Mt 24:15ff literally and in light of Daniel 9:27-**note** as a prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction which is yet future. Matthew 24 and Mark 13 do not describe the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, although some who interpret it as yet future, also see either a past fulfillment ("double fulfillment") or a "type" or shadow of the yet future destruction. Luke 21:20-24-**note** presents a clear and distinctive sign (the Roman army surrounding Jerusalem) of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70AD. It follows that both Matthew 24 and Mark 13 focus primarily on disciples' second and third questions regarding the timing of the **Second Coming** and the end of the age.

## THE SIGN OF HIS COMING

**What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?**- As alluded to above the Greek construction clearly links these two events together. While the phrase Your coming naturally suggest Jesus Second Coming to most modern day readers. As discussed below the noun for coming (parousia) can have more than one meaning, so which meaning was intended by the disciples?

**Why did they ask Jesus about His coming?** Had He just mentioned His coming? In fact He did in Mt 23:39 "For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" And so He said that the Jews would not see Him again until they said "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord." And the **END OF THE AGE** refers to this current age that is going to usher in the coming of Jesus Christ.

**Fruchtenbaum** explains that "This question did not concern the Rapture of the Church because the Rapture is imminent and can happen at any moment, having no warning sign preceding it. However, the Second Coming will be preceded by a sign, and the disciples asked what the sign would be." ([Ibid](#)) **Comment:** I realize that not every reader will agree with Fruchtenbaum's analysis especially if you are post-tribulation or mid-tribulation rapture. (**See related study** on the verb **harpazo** in 1Th 4:17 which describes the church's seizing or "rapture.")

**Related Resource:** See **Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming**

**Coming** ([3952](#))(**parousia**) means presence, arrival, coming, an appearance, or a presence after having been gone. **Parousia** was used as a near technical term in secular Greek for the visit of a king or emperor or for the appearance of a god.

According to the Greek Lexicon **BDAG** **parousia** had 2 basic meanings:

- (1) the state of being present at a place - presence (e.g., 2Cor 10:10 = speaks of Paul's "personal presence")
- (2) the arrival as the first state in presence - coming, advent.
  - (a) Of human beings = Phil 1:26.
  - (b) In a special technical sense referring to coming of Christ (1Cor 1:8, 2Th 2:8) and once to the coming of the Antichrist (2Th 2:9).

It is notable that the only use of **parousia** in the Gospels is in Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, 39. Mt 24:30 describes the "Son of Man **coming** on the clouds" but the Greek verb for **coming** is *erchomai* not *parousia*. It is interesting (and appropriate) that **parousia** in the secular Greek writings often referred to the visit of an emperor! (cp Second Coming Rev 19:11-13 and Rev 19:16)

Think about the disciples' request about His **coming**. What does that imply? Clearly it implies He would depart. Why would they think He was going to depart? If we examine the context, we note that Jesus did allude to His departure in Mt 23:39 stating "from now on you shall not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" In other words, He predicts there is a time when Israel will not see Him. While the disciples may not have fully understood what He meant, the language clearly implies He would not be seen for a time and then He would be seen again ("until you say..."). Another passage the disciples may have had in mind was the Parable in Luke 19:11-15 where we see a "nobleman (~Jesus, Who) went to a distant country" and later "returned after receiving the kingdom." (Lk 19:15) This parable discusses the faithfulness of the nobleman's servants while he was absent. And finally as discussed above the disciples may have recalled Zechariah 14:1-21 which describes Messiah's return to rescue embattled Jerusalem (cp Zech 14:2-3, 4, 6).

So the disciples were requesting a **sign** of His arrival/presence after departure or a **sign** of His future Second Coming, depending

on which way they were using **parousia**. Most commentaries feel the disciples were referring to His future coming (but see Stedman and MacArthur below). Regardless of which way one interprets the disciples' question about His **parousia**, clearly Jesus used **parousia** to describe His future coming.

## PAROUSIA INTERPRETED AS CHRIST'S ARRIVAL/PRESENCE

Here are two examples of interpretation of parousia in Mt 24:3 as meaning **presence** rather than **Second Coming**:

(1) **Ray Stedman** writes that the disciples did not understand that Jesus must die, be resurrected from the dead, ascend to heaven and come again from heaven. Therefore **Stedman** feels that when the disciples asked for a sign of His **coming**, their emphasis was on "His **presence** in the nation as its King. But, as we shall see in our Lord's answer, He treats it as a legitimate inquiry concerning his Second Advent." (Read Stedman's reasoning in his sermon - [The Long Look Ahead - Matthew 24:1-3](#))

(2) **John MacArthur - Coming** translates **parousia**, which has the basic meaning of presence and secondarily carries the idea of arrival. The disciples' question might therefore be paraphrased, "*What will be the sign of Your manifesting Yourself in Your full, permanent presence as Messiah and King?*" They did not use parousia in the specific and more technical sense that Jesus used it later in this chapter (Mt 24:27, 37, 39) and as it is often used elsewhere in the New Testament in referring to His second coming (see, e.g., 1Th 3:13; 2Th 2:8; 1Jn 2:28). They were not thinking of Jesus' returning, because they had no idea of His leaving, but were thinking rather of His perfected Messianic presence, which they expected Him to manifest presently. (See [Matthew 24-28 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#); see also his related sermons listed above)

## THE SIGN OF THE END OF THE AGE

**The end of the age** - Notice that KJV translates it as "the end of the world" but that is not an accurate translation for Matthew uses **aion** (age) not **kosmos** (world).

**Fruchtenbaum** explains that the disciples "asked for a third sign, and that was: "*What will be the sign that the end of this age has begun?*" In rabbinic theology of that day, the rabbis spoke of two ages: **this age**, in which we now live; and **the age to come**, the Messianic Age. The question is: "What is the sign that the last days of **this age** have begun and that will lead to **the Messianic Age**? All together, then, there were three questions in which the disciples asked for three signs to watch for **Ed**: [See Table below](#)). Jesus answered these questions, but not in the same order as they were asked. He answered the third question first, the first question second, and the second question third. Nor are all three answers found in all three accounts. While Matthew and Mark recorded the answers to the second and third questions, they ignored the answer to the first question. It is Luke who recorded the Messiah's answer to the first question." ([The Footsteps of the Messiah- A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events](#))

**Thomas Constable** agrees that "By asking the question this way clearly the disciples believed that Jesus' **coming** (prophesied in Mt 23:39) would **end** the present **age** and introduce the **Messianic Age**." ([Matthew 24 Commentary](#))

In summary, by linking Jesus **coming** with **the end** the disciples probably believed that Jesus' **coming** would **end** the **present age** and bring in the **Messianic Age**.

## SCRIPTURES ASSOCIATING SECOND COMING WITH MESSIANIC AGE

The Jewish people failed to recognize Jesus' mission to die as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29), and instead held fast to the hope that He would soon bring in an earthly Messianic Kingdom. While He did not come the first time to bring in the Messianic Kingdom (He would have if Israel had not rejected Him), His return would usher in His glorious kingdom. We see this truth echoed in other passages including ones from Matthew, Luke, Acts and even the OT prophet Daniel.

(1) **Matthew** - In Matthew 19 Jesus had promised His disciples a place with Him in His future earthly kingdom. They just failed to grasp how far in the future this would be fulfilled!

Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the **regeneration** when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging (present tense) the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mt 19:28, cf Luke 22:28-30; cf "Kingdom of God" in Luke 22:16-18 and similar promises to all believers = Rev 3:21 [-note](#), Rev 20:4-6 [-note](#))

**MacArthur** explains that **regeneration** here "does not carry its normal theological meaning of personal regeneration (cf. Titus 3:5). Instead, Jesus was speaking of "the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time" (Acts 3:21). This is a reference to the earthly kingdom described in Rev 20:1-15, when believers will

sit with Christ on His throne (Rev 3:21). (MacArthur Study Bible)

Mt 19:28 appears to be a reference to a literal, earthly kingdom, for in heaven there will be no need for the disciples (apostles) to sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. This passage is also evidence that God is not "finished with Israel" as is taught in [Replacement Theology \(Supersessionism\)](#) unless one interprets "Israel" in this passage as the Church! Even **D A Carson** says the most likely interpretation is that "the twelve apostles exercise judgment over the twelve tribes of Israel physically and racially conceived." (Expositor's Bible Commentary-Matthew)

**(2) Luke** - Luke 19 records another passage that supports the premise that the Jews (including the disciples) were eagerly looking for the imminent appearing Messianic King and Kingdom.

And while they (Jewish crowd including the disciples) were listening to these things (What things? Lk 19:10), He went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they (which would include the disciples) **supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.** (Lk 19:11)

**John MacArthur:** Their anticipation was growing with each passing mile and is even suggested by the Greek verb translated **appear**, which is a nautical term for something becoming visible on the horizon (cf. Acts 21:3). But that earthly kingdom would be delayed, and Jesus would first be rejected by His people (John 1:11), killed, and raised from the dead to provide the sacrifice for salvation. At His return He will establish His earthly millennial rule (cf. Rev. 20:4-6).

**Thomas Constable:** The connection between Jesus being almost at Jerusalem and the kingdom appearing immediately implies that the believers in the crowd expected Jesus to begin the kingdom when He arrived there. Jesus had just told Zaccheus that salvation had come to his house that day (Lk 19:9), but salvation would not come to Israel for some time. Even though the Son of Man had come to seek and to save the lost (Lk 19:10), the national deliverance of Israel would have to wait. What follows (Lk 19:12-27) is another of the many passages in Luke that records Jesus' teaching about the future. (**Ed:** Quoting Tannehill who adds) "In Luke 19:11 the disciples are pictured as expecting something that should have been and could have been apart from the rejection of Jesus. But because of this rejection, the Messianic Kingdom for Israel does not come immediately, as the disciples mistakenly hoped. We see that in Luke-Acts the problem of eschatological delay is intertwined with the problem of Jewish rejection." ([Luke 19 Commentary](#))

**Walter L Liefeld** - Obviously this parable teaches that Jesus predicted an interval of time between His ascension and return. For the time when the kingdom will be restored to Israel, see the beginning of Luke's second volume (Acts 1:6-7). (Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1984)

**(3) Acts** - It is notable that the very last question the disciples ask Jesus before His ascension was about the timing of the Messianic Kingdom.

And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, **'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?'** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8-**see commentary on Acts 1:8**)

**Comment:** Notice that Jesus did not correct their belief but explained they the timing of "times or epochs" were in the hands of His Father. He did teach them that they had another mission which was to carry the Gospel to ends of the world. There is little doubt that some 40+ days earlier the disciples' question in Matthew 24:3 reflected their belief that Jesus was about to set up His earthly Messianic Kingdom.

**ESV Study Bible:** The place of the disciples' assembly was the **Mount of Olives** (Acts 1:12), at the foot of which lay Bethany (Luke 24:50). The disciples asked Jesus when He would restore the kingdom to Israel because they concluded from His resurrection and the promise of the Spirit that the Messianic era had dawned and the final salvation of Israel was imminent. However, they were probably still expecting the restoration of a military and political kingdom that would drive out the Roman armies and restore national sovereignty to Israel, as had happened numerous times in the OT. Jesus corrected them, **not by rejecting the question**, but by telling them (Acts 1:8) that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit, not in order to triumph over Roman armies but to spread the good news of the gospel throughout the world. In other words, the return is in God's timing; in the meantime, there are other key things believers are to do. (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**Thomas Constable** adds: The Old Testament associated Spirit baptism (**Ed:** Just promised by Jesus in Acts 1:5) with the beginning of the Messianic (millennial) **kingdom** (Isaiah 32:15-20; Isaiah 44:3-5; Ezekiel 39:28-29; Joel 2:28-32, 3:1; Zechariah 12:8-10). It was natural therefore that the disciples would ask if that **kingdom** was about to begin in view of Jesus' promise that the Spirit would baptize them in a few days. **"This time"** refers to **"not many days from now"** (Acts 1:5). In the Septuagint, the term "restoration" (Greek **apokathistemi**) technically refers to God's political restoration of Israel (Psalms 16:5; Jeremiah 15:19;

Jeremiah 16:15; Jeremiah 23:8; Ezekiel 16:55; Ezekiel 17:23; Hosea 11:11). [Note: J. Carroll, Response to the End of History, p. 146, footnote 124.] The Gentiles had taken the Jews' kingdom from them dating from Nebuchadnezzar's conquest in 586 B.C. Clearly the messianic kingdom is in view here. [Note: See Darrell L. Bock, "Evidence from Acts," in A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus, pp. 187-88; and Ladd, p. 1125.] "In the book of Acts, both Israel and the church exist simultaneously. The term **Israel** is used twenty times and ekklesia (church) nineteen times, yet the two groups are always kept **distinct**." ([Acts 1 Commentary](#))

**Richard Longenecker** - The question the disciples asked reflects the embers of a once blazing hope for a political theocracy in which they would be leaders (cf. Mark 9:33-34; 10:35-41; Luke 22:24). Now the embers are fanned by Jesus' talk of the coming Holy Spirit. In Jewish expectations, the restoration of Israel's fortunes would be marked by the revived activity of God's Spirit, which had been withheld since the last of the prophets. But though his words about the Spirit's coming rekindled in the disciples their old nationalistic hopes, Jesus had something else in mind. (Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1984)

**(4) Daniel** - It is possible the disciples were familiar with Daniel's prophecies, including the prophecy in Daniel 2 which clearly linked Jesus' Second Coming (symbolized by the **Stone**) with the end of this age (The Stone will **crush the statue** representative of Gentile powers and Gentile dominion will come to an end when the Stone comes!) and the establishment of His Messianic Kingdom.

"You continued looking until a **Stone** was cut out without hands (the supernatural Stone = Jesus - Ps 118:22, 1Pe 2:4-8), and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. 35"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain (symbolizes a "kingdom" - cp Da 2:44) and filled the whole earth. (**Da 2:34-35-Commentary**)

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a **kingdom** which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 "Inasmuch as you saw that a **Stone** was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy." (**Da 2:44-45-Commentary**)

**Comment:** The **Stone** symbolizes Christ Who at His return will put an end to Gentile dominion (symbolized by the crushing of the **statue**), thus bringing an end to this age, at which time God will set up His **Kingdom** which will **fill the whole earth**. We see the same truth taught in Daniel 7:13-14-**note** where the **Son of Man** is given a **Kingdom**. (Quoted by Jesus as the "**sign**" of His coming in Mt 24:30; cf the same pattern of the end of the age and of Gentile rule and the beginning of the next age, the Messianic Kingdom in Da 7:26-27-**note**)

**The sign** - Earlier Jesus has referred to the scribes and Pharisees who had asked for a **sign** as "**an evil and adulterous generation**." (Mt 12:38-39, cp Mt 16:1-4). He did not rebuke the disciples' request for a sign, for their request was not a manifestation of unbelief but of belief. They believed He was coming again and His coming would be associated with the end of the age. They wanted a warning **sign** regarding the coming events which they clearly believed would soon come to pass.

The parallel passage to Mt 24:3 is found in Mark 13:4 which reads...

"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

**Sign** ([4592](#)) (**semeion** akin to **semaino** = to give a sign; **sema** = a sign) is a distinguishing mark by which something is known, an object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the probable presence or occurrence of something else. Below are the three questions (or two questions with the second having two parts) and the **signs** that signify they are about to take place. Notice that Matthew and Mark do not record the disciples asking Jesus for a **sign** regarding the destruction of the Temple. However, Luke 21:6-7 records

"As for **these things** which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down." And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, **when** therefore will these things be? And **what will be the sign** when **these things** (What things? Lk 21:6 in context = utter destruction of the Temple) are about to take place?"

Note that the **sign** in Luke 21:20 is not the same as the **sign** in Mt 24:15. They are clearly distinctly different signs and to attempt to say they are identical signs is an example of not letting the plain sense of the Scriptures say what they say. The result of course will be an incorrect interpretation. To reiterate, Matthew 24 is indeed a difficult prophecy but the **three signs** are not difficult to identify unless one comes to the text with a preconceived bias or a desire to make Jesus' words fit one's particular system of theological interpretation. And if one fails to read the text **literally**, a difficult prophecy becomes even more difficult to accurately interpret!

**THREE SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS\*\***  
**THREE SURE SIGNS**

<b>The Prophetic Event</b>	<b>The Sign</b>	<b>The Timing</b>	<b>The Scripture</b>
(1) <b>Desolation of Jerusalem</b> <b>Destruction of Temple</b>	<b>WHEN YOU SEE...</b> <b>Jerusalem</b> <b>Surrounded</b> <b>by Armies</b>	<b>Fulfilled</b> <b>70AD</b>	<b>Luke 21:20</b>
(2) <b>The End of the Age</b>	<b>WHEN YOU SEE...</b> <b>Abomination of Desolation</b> <b>Standing in the Holy Place</b>	<b>Yet</b> <b>Future</b>	<b>Matthew 24:15</b>
(3) <b>The Second Coming</b>	<b>THE SIGN...</b> <b>The Son of Man</b> <b>Coming in the clouds</b>	<b>Yet</b> <b>Future</b>	<b>Matthew 24:30</b>

\*\* Events (2) and (3) are linked because the Second Coming marks the "end of the age" thus many writers say the disciples asked only two questions, the second having two components.

**The end of the age** - KJV has "end of the world" but as **Vincent** says it is more correctly a reference to "the existing, current age," not to "the end of all time." So Jesus is not referring to the end of the world but **the end of the age**. The definite article is present signifying the specific **age** they were living in at the time. It is the same **age** we are living in today. The next age is the Messianic Age which of course identifies me as one who takes Scripture literally and believes in a coming time when Messiah rules and reigns on earth. The Messianic age will be followed by the next "age" of the New Heaven and New Earth.

**The End** (Consummation) ([4930](#))(**sunteleia** from **sun** = together or an intensifier + **teleo** = to finish) describes the bringing of something to a successful finish. In a word the noun **sunteleia** means completion, conclusion, close, end, consummation. It is used 5 times by Jesus Himself in the phrase the "**end of the age**." (Mt 13:39, 40, 49, 24:3, 28:20). The only other NT use is by the writer of Hebrews who describes "the **consummation** of the ages." (Heb 9:26).

**MacArthur** commenting on **end** explains that **sunteleia** is "a compound word that refers to completion, as in the final culmination of a planned series of events. In the disciples' minds **the end of the age** would accompany Jesus' full manifestation of His Messianic power and glory, bringing to a close the era of man's sin and rebellion against God and ushering in the divine kingdom of righteousness and justice (**Ed: The Millennium 2; The Millennium 3**). Jesus used the phrase **the end of the age** in the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the dragnet, where in both cases it represented the gathering of the wicked by God's angels in preparation for judgment (Mt. 13:39, 49). He also used the phrase at the conclusion of the Great Commission, assuring the disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the **end of the age**" (Mt. 28:20). The disciples' question was about the ultimate end of the age, not simply the end of an era or epoch of history, but the final end to the present world system of darkness and sin-an end they expected soon." (See [Matthew 24-28 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#); see also his related sermons listed above)

**Of the Age** ([165](#))(**aion**) usually refers to some aspect of time past, present or future depending on the context:(**1**) as a segment of contemporary time = lifetime (1Ti 6:17), present age (Lk 16.8, 20:34 = "sons of this age", 1Cor 3:18, 1Cor 1:20, Titus 2:12 = "live....godly in this present age;" Mt 12:32, Mt 13:22 = "cares of this present age" = also in Mk 4:19; 2Ti 4:8 and Ro 12:2 = "this world" = this present age and its ungodly thoughts and actions; 2Cor 4:4 = "god of this world" = of this present age; The end of this period = Mt 13:39-40, 49, Mt 24:3, 28:20); (**2**) of time gone by past, earliest times (Lk 1.70);(**3**) of prolonged and unlimited time = eternity (1Ti 1.17); (**4**) of time to come eternity = age to come (Lk 20.35, BDAG says "the age to come" corresponds to "the Messianic period"); idiomatically (with preposition **eis** = into) literally into the age = forever, eternally (JN 6.51); In another idiom **aion** means literally into the ages of the ages = forever and ever, forevermore (Heb 1.8); (**5**) plural, as a spatial concept, of the creation as having a beginning and moving forward through long but limited time = universe, world (Heb 1.2; 9.26; 11.3)

**The end** - This phrase occurs 9x/9v in Matthew's Gospel and 4 of the uses are in Matthew 24 (Mt 24:3, 6, 13, 14). Five times Matthew uses the specific phrase "**the end of the age**" and every time the noun for "**end**" is **sunteleia**. In the other 4 occurrences of "**the end**" the noun for "**end**" is **telos**.

Here are all the uses of **the end** in Matthew...

Matthew 10:22 "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured **to the end**

who will be saved.

Matthew 13:39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the **end (sunteleia) of the age (aion)** ; and the reapers are angels.

40 "So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the **end (sunteleia) of the age (aion)**.

49 "So it will be at the **end (sunteleia) of the age (aion)**; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous,

**ESV Study Bible:** The judgment that will follow the Son of Man's **return** at the close of the **age to establish His kingdom** in its fully realized form. (Bolding added for emphasis). (**Ed comment:** Notice how this note rightly connects Christ's coming with the consummation of this age and commencement of His Kingdom.)

Matthew 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 (sunteleia) of the age (aion)**?"

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**.

13 "But the one who endures to **the end**, he will be saved.

14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then **the end** will come.

Matthew 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the **end (sunteleia) of the age (aion)**."

**Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you: kai apokritheis (APPMSN) o lesous eipen (3SAAI) autois blepete (2PPAM) me tis humas planese (3SAAS):**

- Jer 29:8 Mk 13:5,6,22 Lu 21:8 2Co 11:13-15 Eph 4:14 5:6 Col 2:8,18 2Th 2:3 2Pe 2:1-3 1Jn 4:1)

## **JESUS BEGINS TO ANSWER THE DISCIPLES' QUESTIONS**

This passage marks the beginning of Jesus' formal Olivet Discourse, a teaching which is also found in Mark 13 and Luke 21. The Discourse is longest in Matthew (Mt 24:1-25:46), and Luke's account (Mt 21:5-36) contains some independent material.

### **INTERPRETATIONS OF Matthew 24:4-14**

There is clearly not a consensus on how to interpret Mt 24:4-14 even among those who are conservative and interpret the Scripture literally. Here is a brief survey of the various scenarios

**(1) Interpretation of Mt 24:4-14** as a description of the general events of the Church Age from Jesus' day leading up to the last seven year period (aka **Daniel's Seventieth Week**) referred to as the Tribulation.

John Walvoord

**(2) Interpretation of Mt 24:4-8** as general events of the Church Age and Mt 24:9-14 as particular signs of the end of the age.

**H A Ironside**

**Dwight Pentecost** divides interprets Mt 24:4-8 as descriptive of general signs in the present Church age and Mt 24:9 as marking the beginning of the last seven years of Tribulation.

**Dwight Pentecost** - Mt 24:4-8 describe first half of tribulation; Mt 24:9-14 - last half of tribulation

**Tony Garland** on Mt 24:4-8 - Jesus also warned against deception: Don't interpret the general characteristics of the interadvent age (wars, rumors of wars, false Messiahs, famines, pestilences, earthquakes) as an indication that the end has come. These



are just the "beginning of sorrows" or birth pangs - the much more intense time of "delivery" is yet to come. Don't be "Christian Littles" running around crying "the sky is falling!"

**Kay Arthur** - When He describes THE END Jesus says **THEN** they are going to deliver you up to persecution (Mt 24:9). The **Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Place** (Mt 24:15) parallels the end time event when Jews will be delivered up to tribulation. So when the Abomination of Desolation stands in the Holy Place, the Jews are to flee to the mountains (Mt 24:16ff) because they are going to be delivered up (Mt 24:9)....So Jesus is saying to the Jews to run away. The following two verses seem to describe parallel events: Mt 24:9: "Then they will deliver you to tribulation." Mt 24:15 "When you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION .. standing in the holy place" So Jesus is showing the Jews what is leading up to HIS COMING and what is leading up to THE END.

**(3) Interpretation of** all of the events in Mt 24:4-14 as occurring in the seven year tribulation.

#### **John MacArthur**

**Warren Wiersbe** - Matthew 24:1-44 indicates that our Lord was discussing events that will take place on earth during the time of **Tribulation**. (See Matt. 24:8, where "birth-pangs" are a symbol of the **Tribulation**; and see also Mt 24:21, 29). After the church has been suddenly taken out of the world, there will be a period of "peace and safety" (1Th 5:1-4) followed by a time of terrible suffering. Many Bible scholars believe this period will last seven years (Da 9:24-27). It is this period of "**Tribulation**" that Jesus described in the Olivet Discourse. At the end of that period, Jesus will return to the earth, defeat His foes, and establish the promised kingdom.

**Thomas Constable** - The Jews believed that a seven-year period of time will immediately precede Messiah's coming to rule the world.

"Our Rabbis taught: In the seven-year cycle at the end of which the son of David will come . . . at the conclusion of the septennate the son of David will come."

"The idea became entrenched that the coming of the Messiah will be preceded by greatly increased suffering . . . This will last seven years. And then, unexpectedly, the Messiah will come."

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**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** - Daniel's seventieth week has two clearly marked halves (Dan 9:27). There is an amazing correspondence between the order of the seals in Rev 6 and the order of events in Mt 24:4-14. Thus these verses must be placed in the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation, after the Church has been raptured. 5. Saying, I am Christ (cf. Rev 6:1, 2; first seal: Anti-christ). Though such tendencies may develop during the church age (I Jn 4:3), the specific reference is to the final Antichrist and his associates. There is no record of any person's claiming to be Christ between A.D. 30 and 70. 6. Wars and rumors of wars (cf. Rev 6:3, 4; second seal: warfare). 7. Famines (cf. Rev 6:5, 6 third seal: famine). Pestilences and earthquakes ( Cf. Rev 6:7, 8; fourth seal: death for one-fourth of the earth). 8. Beginning of sorrows. Literally, of birthpains, suggesting the travail shortly to be followed by a happier day. 9. Shall kill you (cf. Rev 6:9-11; fifth seal: martyrs). 11. Many false prophets . . . shall deceive many. Cf. II Thess 2:8-12. 12. The love of many shall wax cold. The severity of these calamities will cause the majority of Israel to abandon any pretense of piety. 13. But the distinguishing mark of the saved Jewish remnant will be their enduring in faith to the end. 14. Gospel of the kingdom. The good news of salvation in the Messiah, with the emphasis that the Messianic kingdom is about to be established. This message will go into all the world during the Tribulation through the efforts of the two witnesses (Rev 11:3-12) and the sealed remnant of Israel (Rev 7).

**(4) Interpret** the events in Mt 24:4-14 as fulfilled in the past.

They interpret Mt 24:15 as fulfilled in the past

They interpret the phrase "**the end**" as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

**R. T. France** (The Gospel of Matthew - NICNT) - "(Comment on Mt 24:6) The period from the 30s to the 60s (**Ed**: Speaking of 30-60 AD) was relatively peaceful in the Roman empire as a whole, but in the east there were wars with Parthia in and after AD 36, and a more local war between Antipas and the Nabatean king Aretas in which the Romans became involved in AD 36-37...the disciples must not get things out of perspective, or be panicked into imagining that "**the end**" is imminent (**Ed**: For France "**the end**" is the destruction of the Temple)....The question which Jesus is here answering was about when the temple would be destroyed, and that is the "**end**" most naturally understood here....(Comment on Mt 24:7) Such historical records as we have for the first century mention **earthquakes** in Asia Minor in AD 61 and in Italy in AD 62, in Jerusalem in AD 67, and another serious earthquake at an unspecified earlier date in Palestine. A widespread **famine** around AD 46 is mentioned in Acts 11:28....(Comment on Mt 24:8) In later rabbinic literature the phrase "**the labor pain** (always singular) of the Messiah" comes to be used almost as a technical term for the period of suffering preceding the Messiah's coming...It gains its sense from the context, and the context here is of the suffering of Jerusalem which will be more fully described in Mt 24:15-22....(Comment on Mt 24:13) whoever stands firm throughout the historical process which will culminate in the destruction of the Temple will be saved. in the destruction of the temple will be saved. But it is not easy to see what sort of "*salvation*" fits that scenario. (**Ed**: Could it be that it is difficult to see because the interpretation is incorrect?)....(Comment on Mt 24:14) This saying ("The gospel...preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations") comes unexpectedly here, not only because it provides a note of hope and triumph in an otherwise threatening context, but also because, like Mt 26:13, it already envisages a world-wide proclamation of the good news. (**Ed**: France is forced to jettison for a moment his historical past fulfillment stance writing)...the implication seems to be that the "**end**" will not come until the proclamation has already reached "**all over the world.**" (Bolding added)

**Albert Barnes** - It is recorded in the history of Rome that violent agitations prevailed in the Roman empire previous to the destruction of Jerusalem.

As **Hiebert** says "Instead of giving them the **sign** they had requested, Jesus began by alerting them to **false signs.**"

As **John MacArthur** says "The answer **Jesus** gave is the longest answer (**Ed**: 97 verses in Mt 24-25) given to any question asked in the New Testament, and its truths are absolutely essential for understanding His return and the amazing events associated with it. It is the revelation of our Lord, directly from His own lips, about His return to earth in glory and power (Mt 24:30)." (See [Matthew 24-28 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Jesus' first words are a warning echo a warning from the first sermon (Mt 7:15-23; cf. Mt 18:12-14).

**Ray Stedman** says Jesus "Big Point" is "Don't Be Fooled! - In our understandable haste to come to the great events He predicts for the future, let us not miss the heavy emphasis He makes in this opening word. It is the dominant note of this whole discourse. **The age will be a time of great uncertainty as to the meaning of events.**

**Ed comment:** Case in point - one of the finest expositors of our day Dr John MacArthur fell prey to this temptation to read the **signs of the times** -- He was preaching on [Is the Doom of the World Near?](#) in 1972 when the 7 member European Union was planning on adding 3 more members to give it a total of 10. This rightly reminded him of Daniel's prophecy of a coming 10 nation confederacy (cf Da 7:24) and prompted this comment -

From The Los Angeles Examiner, are you ready for this shock? Los Angeles Examiner, October 29th, the last - 1971, listen. "*The British decision to join the common market has brought Western Europe to the threshold of its strongest union since the nations involved were tied together as part of the Roman Empire 15 centuries ago.*" God said the Roman Empire would be revived in the end days. You are seeing it happen. ([Ref](#))

Don't take this wrong - I love Dr MacArthur's verse by verse expository teaching. My point is that if someone as competent as Dr MacArthur is vulnerable to potentially misinterpret the **signs of the times**, then **ALL** of us are potentially in danger of misreading the **signs of the times**. I know because I have been guilty of doing so! As someone once wisely cautioned me, don't obtain your eschatology from the newspaper!

**Stedman** continues "It will be frightfully easy to misinterpret and therefore be misled. The phrase "lead astray" forms the structure around which the whole message is built. He used it again in Mt 24:5...again in Mt 24:11...Once again in Mt 24:24...Because of this continuing possibility, the Lord's exhortation throughout the message is, "**Watch!**", i.e., keep your eyes open. Evaluate! Test! Try the spirits! Bring everything to test that you might understand the true character of movements and pressures, for the predominant note of the age will be one of **deceit and confusion**. Then he proceeds to show to these men that they are already confused in their thinking that the end of the age lies immediately ahead. From Mt 24:5 through Mt 24:14 he clearly indicates that there would be a

rather long, indeterminate period before the end of the age would begin (**Ed**: Some see the long age in Mt 24:5-8, but then see Mt 24:9-14 as occurring at the end of the age). These men knew from the prophet Daniel that the end of the age would not be a single spectacular event but a series of events, covering several years (**Ed**: I presume Pastor Stedman is referring here to **Daniel's Seventieth Week**). The Lord begins carefully to trace the age which they could not see, the parenthesis of time in which we now live. If we note carefully the time phrases He employs to lead up to the answer to the disciples' question we shall have no difficulty with this section. He is most emphatically not giving so-called "**signs of the times**" here. To the contrary, he repeatedly indicates that He is tracing the age. For instance, he says in Mt 24:6, "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet." ([The Age of Confusion - Matthew 24:4-14](#))

**See to it** (look, beware, take care, take heed) [991](#)(**blepo**) basically means to have sight, to see, to look at, then to observe, to discern, to perceive with the eye, and frequently implies special contemplation (e.g., often in the sense of "keep your eyes open," or "beware".) Vine adds that **blepo** expresses "a more intentional, earnest contemplation. In Lk 6:41 = of beholding the mote in a brother's eye; Lk 24:12 = of beholding the linen clothes in the empty tomb. Acts 1:9 = of the gaze of the disciples when the Lord ascended."

Notice that Jesus does not give a suggest but uses the **present imperative** which means we are to make this our habitual practice, something possible only as we yield to the filling and empowering of the Spirit of Jesus. The **Amplified Version** reads "Be careful that no one misleads you [deceiving you and leading you into error]."

All three synoptic Gospels begin with the warning to not be misled (Mt 24:4, Mk 13:5, Luke 21:8) so clearly Jesus' top priority is to avoid deception. But by what would they be misled? Luke's version has Lk 21:8 "See to it that you be not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, '**The time is at hand**'; do not go after them" So they are not only claiming they are Messiah but also claiming they know the time is at hand. A desire to know or predict the future is an inherent curiosity of most people and presumably it is to this curiosity that these false Messiah's make their appeal.

**Misleads** (deceives) [4105](#)(**planao** from **plane** which describes "a wandering" and gives us our English word *planet*) means to cause one to wander (cf first use in NT of "straying" sheep = Mt 18:12-13) or to go astray from a specific way. To cause someone to hold a wrong view and thus be mistaken. To delude or cause one to wander from the Truth of God's Word. In Mt 22:29 Jesus used **planao** to refute the false belief of His detractors declaring "You are **mistaken** (NIV = in error; NET = deceived; ESV = wrong), not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God."

**Planao** is in the subjunctive mood, the mood of possibility (implying that we might be misled)!

So the question arises as to how these individuals will be able to lead others astray. It is their claim that they are the Messiah and this claim gives authority and authenticity to whatever they say. **And what do they say that misleads others?** Matthew and Mark do not directly state what it is these false Messiahs say. Luke however does give us a clue for he records they claim "**The time is at hand**." (Lk 21:8) Does this refer to the time of the Temple destruction or the time of the end? It is hard to say for sure. The point is that they mislead others with their claims of knowledge of future events.

Notice also that in His initial reply, Jesus does not specifically address disciples' three questions, but instead commands them to not be misled, explaining that there will be **many** who will claim to be the Messiah and they will mislead **many** (not a few but many)! And to misinterpret Matthew 24:15ff is tantamount to misleading **many** readers who choose to read a commentary, rather than choosing for themselves to observe the words of Jesus and interpret them as one would normal, plain spoken language, not looking for humanistic hidden meanings, but for Spirit revealed truth.

**THOUGHT** -Indeed, if you are reading these notes, you might pause for a moment and ask the Father that He would allow His Spirit to guide you into all the truth of Jesus' last words to His disciples (including us) and to edify and equip your heart and mind that you might grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Matthew 24:5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many: polloi gar eleusontai (3PFMI) epi to onomati mou legontes (PAPMPN) ego eimi (1SPAI) o Christos kai pollous planesousin (3PFAI):**

**Amplified** For many will come in (on the strength of) My name [appropriating the name which belongs to Me], saying, I am the Christ (the Messiah), and they will lead many astray.

**ESV** For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.

**NIV** For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

**NLT** for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah.' They will deceive many.

- Mt 24:11,24 Jer 14:14 23:21,25 John 5:43 Ac 5:36,37 8:9,10 Rev 13:8)

## **THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SIGNS TO WATCH FOR**

**For - term of explanation - What is Jesus explaining?** As alluded to above, Jesus is explaining how one might be misled into believing claims made by such as we are at the end of the age.

As Jesus goes on to explain, false Messiahs, wars and rumors of wars are not "signs of the times" and do not signal the end of this age. These things occurred in Jesus' day and are still operative 2000 years later which is a further indication of that they do not herald the end. As Jesus later makes very clear that of "that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." (Mt 24:36) He will give some signs that will signal the end of the age is near, but Mt 24:4-7 are "non-signs."

## **FALSE MESSIAHS**

**Many** - Not just one or two but "many!"

**In my Name** - This is more literally *upon or on My Name*, "that is, on the strength of; resting their claims on the Name Messiah." (Vincent) They are personally claiming to be the Messiah.

**Warren Wiersbe** on I am the Christ (Messiah) - The Jews have often been led astray by false prophets and false christs. The rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:1-2 is the Antichrist, that final world dictator who will lead the nations astray. He will begin his career as a peacemaker, signing a covenant with Israel to protect her from her enemies (Dan. 9:27). Israel will welcome this man as their great benefactor (John 5:43).

**I am (ego eimi)** - This Greek phrase is the well known "**ego eimi**" which is the Name Jehovah uses of Himself in the Septuagint of Ex 3:14

"And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" The English version of the Septuagint is "And God said to Moses, "I am The One Who Is." And he said, "Thus shall you say to the sons of Israel, 'The One Who Is has sent me to you.'" (Comment: It follows that these false Messiahs are in essence saying they are "**Yahweh!**")

**Hiebert** - The first person after the time of Jesus Christ definitely known to have claimed to be the Messiah was Barcochba, the leader of the last great Jewish revolt in A.D. 132.

**Am (1510)(eimi)** is a verb which basically expresses being and so means "to be," "to exist," "to happen" or "to be present." and is one of the most common verbs in the NT (2462x in all its conjugations in 2098 verses; the exact form **eimi** is found 287 verses - see below). Strictly speaking **eimi** is the first person singular present tense, indicative mood; a prolonged form of a primary and defective verb. Because **eimi** is used so frequently in such a variety of contexts, the following discussion is at best **asimple summary** of the manifold uses of **eimi**. Click **here** and scroll down to ready **Thayer's** full discussion of **eimi**.

**Eimí** is the usual verb of existence, meaning to be or to have existence. For example, in Jn 1:**1eimi** is used 3 times all in the imperfect tense (Gk = "*en*") to describe the Word's (Jesus') continual existence, continual presence with His Father and continual existence as God.

**Ego eimi** - Jesus Himself used **ego eimi** to express His eternal self-existence (without beginning, without end) in Jn 8:58 = ""Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am**." He was saying He was Yahweh (I Am the One Who Is). Jesus is clearly claiming that He is God! The Jehovah's Witness New World Translation (2013) translates Jn 8:58 incorrectly as "I have been" which Greek scholars say is absolutely incorrect! Compare other "**I Am**" statements by Jesus = Jn 4:26, 8:24, 28, 13:19, 18:5, 6 ["they drew back and fell to the ground!" = His Name "I Am" literally knocked an entire band of from 300-600 soldiers backward abruptly and hard onto the ground! His Name is indeed powerful!], Jn 18:8. see similar use in Ex 3:14 above). In Ge 17:1 God addresses Abram declaring "I am (**ego eimi**) God" (cp similar uses in Ge 26:24, 31:13, 46:3, Ex 3:6, 7:5, 8:18, 14:4, 18, 20:2, 29:46, etc). Note that there are about 174 uses of "**ego eimi**" in the Septuagint and 48 uses in the NT, but not all uses refer to God (e.g., Mt 14:27). There are 24 uses of **ego eimi** in John's Gospel and most do refer to the Messiah. E.g., in the first occurrence, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman "**I Am**" (**ego eimi**) (Jn 4:26) when she made a reference to the Messiah (Jn 4:25). In fact **ego eimi** introduces His great "I am" statements in John = "I am"... "the bread of life" (Jn 6:35, 41, 48, 51), "the Light of the world," (Jn 8:12), "the door" (Jn 10:7, 9), "the good shepherd" (Jn 10:11, 14), "the resurrection and the life," (Jn 11:25), "the Way and the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6); "the true

Vine" (Jn 15:1, 5). At Paul's conversion on the Damascus Road Jesus told him "I am (ego eimi) Jesus Whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:5). In the final use of ego eimi in Scripture Jesus affirms "**I am** the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." (Rev 22:16)

**Friberg** summarizes **eimi**:

**I. as a predicate "be," relating to what exists;**

- (1) to denote God's existence (Heb 11.6); the one who is, exists (Rev 1.4)
- (2) to denote Christ's self-designation of Himself = I am (Jn 8.58)
- (3) to denote temporal existence live (Mt 23.30, "before the world **was**" = Jn 17:5)
- (4) to denote a sojourn in a place stay, reside (Mt 2.13)
- (5) to denote what happens, such as phenomena and events be, take place, occur, happen (Jn 9.16)
- (6) with indications of time (Jn 4.6b)
- (7) of what is on the scene (MK 8.1) or available (Acts 7.12)
- (8) impersonally estin followed by an infinitive = it is possible (Heb 9.5)

**II. as a copulative verb;**

- (1) linking subject to predicate (Mk 3.11);
- (2) introducing an explanation or equivalence in another language tou/tv estin and o [estin that is, which means (Mt 27.46; Mk 3.17);
- (3) constructed with a variety of adverbs, prepositions, nouns, etc., translated according to the context (BORROW [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Louw-Nida** lists 8 nuances of **eimi**:

1. be, exist (Mt 11:29);
2. be identical, exact correspondence (Mk 3:11; 1Jn 2:22, 25);
3. exist, without contingency (Heb 11:6);
4. happen, occur (Mk 14:2);
5. be in a place (Lk 2:49);
6. be possible (Heb 9:5);
7. belong to a particular class (Lk 19:2; Jn 1:1);
8. represent, stand for (Gal 4:25), (BORROW [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : based on semantic domains](#))

Note there is a multitude of forms for this verb as is common for copulative verbs in many languages. A little study in a grammar for the time, aspect, and action markers will bear much fruit your Greek reading.

**Eimi** - 287 verses (Note these are the uses of the actual verb **eimi**, not the manifold related conjugations of the basic verb) -

Mt 1:19, 23; 2:13, 15; 3:11; 7:11, 13f; 8:8f; 9:13; 11:29; 12:7, 34; 16:15, 22; 18:20; 19:5, 14; 20:15; 22:32; 23:30; 24:3, 5; 26:24; 27:24, 43; 28:20;

Mk 1:7, 45; 3:17; 5:18, 21, 25, 41; 8:3, 27, 29; 9:10, 21; 10:8, 14; 11:32; 12:42; 13:6, 33; 14:62; 15:7, 46;

Lk 1:7, 18f, 80; 2:26; 3:5, 16, 23; 4:16; 5:8; 7:6, 8, 41; 8:2, 9, 38, 40, 42; 9:18, 20, 32; 10:39; 12:15; 13:28; 14:8; 15:19, 21, 31; 18:2, 11, 16; 19:22; 20:36; 21:7f; 22:3, 27, 33, 49, 58, 70; 23:7f, 12, 15;

John 1:15, 20f, 24, 27, 30, 41, 46f; 2:9; 3:21, 24, 27f; 4:9, 26; 6:35, 41, 48, 51, 65; 7:28f, 33f, 36, 50; 8:12, 16, 18, 23f, 28, 58; 9:5, 9, 18, 24; 10:7, 9, 11, 14, 33f, 36; 11:21, 25, 32, 39, 51; 12:26; 13:13, 19, 33; 14:3, 6, 9; 15:1, 5, 27; 16:32; 17:11, 14, 16, 24; 18:5f, 8, 17, 25f, 35, 37; 19:11, 21, 38, 41; 20:7;

Acts 2:12; 3:10; 4:13, 36; 7:44; 9:2, 5; 10:21, 26; 13:25, 47f; 14:4, 26; 15:32; 16:21; 17:20, 28; 18:10, 25; 19:25; 20:26; 21:9, 11, 39; 22:3, 8; 23:6; 24:10; 25:10; 26:15, 26, 29; 27:2, 23, 25;

Ro 1:14; 2:1f; 4:17; 7:14; 8:9; 9:9; 11:1, 13, 17; 13:1; 15:12;

1 Cor 1:12; 2:5; 3:4, 21; 6:16; 7:5, 26, 29; 8:7; 9:1f, 19ff; 10:6; 11:8; 12:15f; 13:2; 15:9f;

2 Cor 8:22; 11:19; 12:10f; 13:6f;

Gal 3:21; Eph 2:4f, 20; 4:9, 18; 5:31; Phil 4:11; Col 2:5, 10; 3:5; 1Th 2:6; 2Th 2:4; 1Ti 1:15; 2:12; 2Ti 4:3; Titus 1:16; 3:11; Philemon 1:9;

Heb 7:23; 8:7; 10:10; 12:21; 1 Pet 4:11; 2 Pet 1:13; 3:5; 1 John 2:19; 5:7;

Rev 1:8, 17f; 2:23; 3:17; 4:11; 14:4; 18:7; 19:10; 22:9, 12, 16

**I am the Christ** - Matthew alone has the phrase "**I am the Christ**" (tantamount to saying "I am the Messiah" - cf Mt 24:5NLT), whereas Mark and Luke have the phrase "**I Am**" ("ego eimi") which is clearly used in a Messianic sense.

**Tony Garland** - Non-Jewish claimants (in complete contradiction to Scripture) Wikipedia lists 27 people who have claimed to stand in the role of Jesus within the 19th and 20th centuries alone.<sup>6</sup> Some are names we recognize from the news headlines: (1) Sun Myung Moon: considered within the Unification Church as the Messiah and the second coming of Christ. (2) Jim Jones: claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus, Buddha, Vladimir Lenin, and Father Divine prior to leading a mass suicide of his followers. (3) Marshall Applewhite: claimed to be Jesus and the Son of God prior to leading his Heaven's Gate cult mass suicide to rendezvous with a space ship hiding behind the comet Hale-Bopp. (4) David Koresh: leader of the Branch Davidian religious sect in Waco, Texas. Claimed to be "the Son of God, the Lamb."

**Tony Garland** - Jewish claimants. Wikipedia lists no less than 27 significant Jewish claimants to date. (1) Simon Bar Kokhba was acclaimed Messiah by Rabbi Akiva following the Jewish revolt against Rome of A.D. 115-117. (Bar Kokhba's name, son of a star, is a reference to the Messianic prophecy of Num. 24:17.) (2) In the 5th century, a pseudo-messiah called Moses appeared in Crete. (3) In the 8th century, three pseudo-messiah's appeared (4) Abu Issa Al-Isfahani in Persia (5) Severus or Serene in Syria (6) Yudghan in Hamadan in Persia - "In 1096, it was believed in Salonica that the deliverance had already begun; and in 1121, a Karaite claimant was reported in Palestine. In 1147, the spectacular David Alroy appeared in Mesopotamia and similar figures are recorded in Yemen, Fez, Persia, Spain, and France in the 11th and 12th centuries. Abraham Abulafia was active in Sicily in the 13th century and was followed in Spain by his disciples, Samuel and Abraham. . . . The Spanish persecution of 1391 produced Moses Botarel; the expulsion (1492) was followed by a number of such figures -- Asher Lamlain (1503), Solomon Molcho (c. 1500 - 1532), and others." (7) Shabbetai Tzevi (1621 - 1676) of Smyrna - "The masses were won over by his emotional sermons and fresh doctrines. . . . In [1662 after marrying a young Jewess in Egypt] he returned to Palestine and in 1665, was hailed as king-messiah by Nathan of Gaza but excommunicated by the rabbis of Jerusalem. Returning to Turkey, Shabbetai was joyfully received by the masses and heaped with honors. The fervor spread throughout the Jewish world and rumors were current of a Jewish army which would advance from the Arabian desert to conquer Palestine. In 1666, he went to Constantinople to 'depose the Sultan' but was arrested and confined in the fortress of Gallipoli. Here he held court and received thousands of followers. . . . Messianic expectations ran high throughout Europe and the rabbinate was sharply divided on the issue. However, Shabbetai's behavior evoked the wrath of the Turkish authorities and to save himself from death, he accepted the Islamic faith. Jewry was shaken by his conversion. . . . Nevertheless, he kept in touch with his admirers until his death, which they held would precede his return as Messiah and Redeemer." (8) Jacob Frank (1726 - 1791) - "Declared himself the Messiah and the successor of Shabbetai Tzevi. . . . His mystical activities were alleged to be accompanied by sexual orgies, the function of which was to bring redemption through impurity." (9) Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902 - 1994) - A prominent Hasidic rabbi who was the seventh and last Hasidic leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. Although he himself did not explicitly proclaim to be the Messiah--but only working to bring the Messiah through good works--some of his later statements implied that he thought that he was.<sup>15</sup> During his lifetime many of his followers had considered him to be the Jewish Messiah, and even after his death, some continue to await his return as the Messiah." Garland notes that the "antidote" to the false Messiahs is a visible, global sign (Mt 24:30).

#### **Related Resources Regarding "False Christs":**

- [The Christ of the New Age Movement by Ron Rhodes](#)
- [List of people claimed to be Jesus - 18th thru 21 Centuries - Wikipedia](#)
- [Jewish False Messiahs listed from first to twentieth century - Wikipedia](#)

**Will mislead** (4105)(**planao** from **plane** which describes "a wandering" and gives us our English word "planet") means literally made to wander and so to go or be led (as of sheep in Mt 18:12-13) astray. The idea is that outside influence causes the deception that leads one down the wrong path.

Because eschatology is like a jigsaw puzzle with pieces scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments, it is particularly easy for

deceivers to deceive with their contrived, perverted eschatological programs (cp 2Ti 3:13). Thus it behooves every pastor who seeks to preach the "whole purpose" of God's Word (Acts 20:27) to not shy away from prophecy either because of its difficulty or its controversial nature, for otherwise the body is left to the mercy of those who Jesus warns **will mislead many**.

**Hiebert** adds that "catching people in the snare of their enthusiasm, such pretenders always gain a following, of sorts. Their success makes them dangerous."

**Many - Why?** Because they are good imposters and will convince many that they are the Messiah. Notice also that the adjective **many will come** signifies that this will not be a rare event!

Notice also that clearly the danger of being misled is a key thought in Jesus' answer as the verb **planao** is used 4 times in the Olivet Discourse (Mt 24:4, 5, 11, 24). The imposters in Mt 24:24 are allowed to carry out "**great signs and wonders**" which adds to their ability to deceive **many**. Whether the imposters in Mt 24:4-5 have the same "miracle" producing powers is not clear from the context, but it is certainly possible. These false Christs strictly speaking have the spirit of **Antichrist**, a word which means *instead of* Christ and/or *against* Christ.

**Matthew 24:6** "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: mellesete (2PFAI) de akouein (PAN) polemous kai akoas polemon horate (2PPAM) me throeisthe (2PPPM) dei (3SPAI) gar genesthai (AAN) all oupo estin (3SPAI) to telos:

**KJV** And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: **see** that ye be not **troubled**: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

**NET** You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. **Make sure** that you are not **alarmed**, for this must happen, but the end is still to come.

**ESV** And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. **See** that you are not **alarmed**, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

**NIV** You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but **see** to it that you are not **alarmed**. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

**NLT** And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but **don't panic**. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately.

**YLT** and ye shall begin to hear of wars, and reports of wars; **see, be** not **troubled**, for it behoveth all these to come to pass, but the end is not yet.

**ASV** And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; **see** that ye **be** not **troubled**: for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet.

- **hearing**: Jer 4:19-22 6:22-24 8:15,16 47:6 Eze 7:24-26 14:17-21 Eze 21:9-15,28 Da 11:1-45 Mk 13:7,8 Lu 21:9
- **see**: Ps 27:1-3 46:1-3 112:7 Isa 8:12-14 12:2 26:3,4,20,21 Hab 3:16-18 Lu 21:19 Jn 14:1,27 2Th 2:2 1Pe 3:14,15
- **must**: Mt 26:54 Lu 22:37 Ac 27:24-26)(**but**: Mt 24:14 Da 9:24-27)

## **WARS AND RUMORS NON-SIGNS**

**You will be hearing** - Continually hearing. Wars and rumors are clearly not specific of the end. While the first source of deception was external (false Messiahs), this source is "internal" as it were since it is based on their own misinterpretation of the events of history.

**Wars and rumors of wars** - This is the second false basis (first is false Messiahs) for believing the end is at hand. **Wars and rumors of wars** have been going on throughout the centuries, so they are not a markers of **the end**. Jesus Himself makes it clear that these things "must take place, but this is not yet the end."

**See that you are not frightened** - Wars and rumors of wars are frightening to be sure, but Jesus issues two commands (verbs in **bold red**) to counter the natural human reaction of fear. Both commands are in the **present imperative** which calls for this to be one's lifestyle, one's habitual practice. "**Not frightened**" is preceded by a negative (Gk = "me") which can be translated one of two ways - (1) Stop being frightened, implying this emotion has set in and (2) Don't let this (fright) begin. And remember that whatever God (Jesus) **commands**, He **enables** us to obey. **How?** By daily, moment by moment yielding to and depending on the indwelling

Holy Spirit Who is continually at work in us, continually energizing our wills to obey and giving us the power to obey. Paul says it this way in the letter to the Philippians...

**Work out (present imperative)** your salvation with fear and trembling **for** (term of explanation = explains how we can even obey the command of Phil 2:12!) it is God Who (Who? The Spirit of Christ forever indwells us) is at **work (energeo in present tense = continually "energizing")** in you, both to (**present tense = continually**) **will** and to (**present tense = continually**) **work** for His good pleasure. (Phil 2:12b-note, Phil 2:13-note)

The **New Living Translation** is a helpful paraphrase - "For God is working in you, giving you the **desire** to obey him and the **power** to do what pleases him." (Phil 2:13NLT)

See **(3708)(horao)** is not merely the act of seeing, but also the actual perception of the object. The idea is to take special notice of something and discerning clearly.

**Frightened** (2360) (**throeo** from **threomai** = the cry or wail; **Thayer** says throeo is derived from **thros** = clamor, tumult) means to cry aloud or scream and in the passive sense means to be inwardly aroused, to be disturbed, to be frightened, to be startled. **Throeo** speaks of the alarm occasioned by a sudden cry or of mental uneasiness in general. The **present tense** points to a continued state of agitation following reception of a definite shock and thus describes a state of jumpiness. Jesus does not want this to be the emotional state of His disciples when they hear of **wars**, etc. **Throeo** is used only 3x (Mt 24:6; Mk 13:7; 2Th 2:2) all three uses in the context of eschatological events. Throeo is used once in Septuagint in Song 5:4 to described the woman's "feelings **aroused** (stirred, thrilled within) for him."

Mark 13:7 "And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, **do not be frightened**; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end.

2 Thessalonians 2:2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or **be disturbed** either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

**Throeo** in **Liddell-Scott-Jones** (primarily refers to secular Greek uses) - (1a). cry aloud, (1b). c. acc., tell out, utter aloud, (2) causal, scare, terrify — Pass., to be stirred. moved, of joy.

**Thayer** on **throeo** - in Greek writings to cry aloud, make a noise by outcry; in the NT to trouble, frighten; passive present = to be troubled in mind, to be frightened, alarmed.

**Hiebert** on **those things must take place** - These national convulsions have not been preordained by divine decree but arise as the inevitable consequences of human depravity. They are the natural results of human nature separated from God and ruled by self-interest. They are divinely permitted as part of God's eschatological program for this world, which includes judgment as well as salvation.

**Lowery** on **those things must take place** - The world is a chaotic place. It is the (necessary) consequence of living in a fallen world. Disciples should not think that human or natural disasters, however tragic, signal **the end**. These are but the prelude (Mt 24:8) to a truly catastrophic finale (Mt 24:21). Disciples must keep their balance and stay faithful. (Ibid)

**Must** (1163)(**dei** from **deo** = to bind or tie objects together, put in prison and also root of **doulos**, bond-servant) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. Why are these things a "must?" One interpretation is that they must occur because that is what the sovereign God has decreed and all of "history" is in His hands. Yes, He allows personal choices, but mysteriously and powerfully He will bring all of the events of History to His desired end. As someone has said "History" is His Story!

**But that is not yet the end** - Some (especially the "false Messiahs") may interpret the events in Mt 24:4-6 as signaling **the end**, but it is not. Stated another way, Jesus is saying that these events are not "signs of the times" that signal the end is near. They simply reflect the course one would expect a sinful world to pursue.

Notice also that (contrary to what a number of writers suggest) Jesus is not speaking of the **end** of the Temple nor of the **end of the world**, but of **the end of the age**. **Hiebert** adds that **"The end** is the eschatological goal of history, the final establishment of God's kingdom on earth."

**The end** - Jesus will give a clear, unmistakable visual event in Mt 24:15 that will mark the beginning of **the end** of the age. He does not want His disciples to be misled or frightened by these tumultuous events. It reminds me of folks who during WWII said that Hitler was the Antichrist. While he certainly manifested the spirit of antichrist in slaughtering millions of Jews, he was not the Antichrist because the **abomination of desolation** in Mt 24:15 (and 2Th 1:2-4) had not yet occurred. In fact there was no Temple (holy place) in Jerusalem in which one could have even stood in World War II.



**End** (5056)(telos) means a completion, consummation, goal achieved or result attained. It does not speak of annihilation.

**Matthew 24:7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.: egerthesetai (3SFPI) gar ethnos epi ethnos kai basileia epi basileian kai esontai (3PFMI) limoi kai seismoi kata topous:**

**KJV** For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

**NET** For nation will rise up in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

- **nation:** 2Chr 15:6 Isa 9:19-21 Isa 19:2 Eze 21:27 Hag 2:21,22 Zec 14:2,3,13 Heb 12:27
- **famines:** Isa 24:19-23 Eze 14:21 Joe 2:30,31 Zec 14:4 Lu 21:11,25,26 Ac 2:19 11:28)

**For - term of explanation - What is Jesus explaining?** He is explaining those things which must (will) take place before the end of this present age, before He returns to put an end to lawlessness and bring in His reign of righteousness, that "divine idyllic utopia" the world has been desperately, futilely seeking since the Garden of Eden!

**Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom** - This is confirmation of the preceding statement about **wars and rumors of wars**.

We see a similar prophecy in **Isaiah** - Isaiah 19:2 "So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians; And they will each fight against his brother, and each against his neighbor, City against city, and **kingdom against kingdom**."

**Nation** (Gentile) (1484)(ethnos) gives us our word "ethnic" in general refers to a multitude (especially persons) associated with one another, living together, united in kinship, culture or traditions and summed up by the words nation, Gentiles (especially when ethnos is plural), people (much like "people groups" in our modern missionary vernacular). In somewhat of a negative sense ethnos conveys the meaning of godless (generally idol worshipping) pagans (heathens, cp Eph 4:17, Mt 6:32), foreign nations not worshipping the true God (Mt 4:15). Often ethnos stands in clear contradistinction to Jew (Ioudaios) (Gal 2:14).

While I do not agree with **Arnold Fruchtenbaum's** interpretation of **nation...against nation**, it is presented for completeness. **Fruchtenbaum** writes "To understand what the idiom "**nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom**" means, it is necessary to return to the Jewish origin of these statements....This expression is a Hebrew idiom for a world war. Jesus' statement here is that when a world war occurs, rather than merely a local war, that world war would signal that the end of the age had begun....The sign that the end of the age has begun is the worldwide conflict fulfilled by World War I and World War II."

**Famines and earthquakes** - There is nothing intrinsically specific about these events.

**Matthew 24:8 "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.:panta de tauta arche odinon:**

**Amplified** All this is but the beginning [the early pains] of the birth pangs [of the intolerable anguish].

**KJV** All these are the beginning of sorrows.

**ESV** All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

**NLT** But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

**YLT** and all these are the beginning of sorrows;

**ASV** But all these things are the beginning of travail.

- Lev 26:18-29 Dt 28:59 Isa 9:12,17,21 10:4 1Th 5:3 1Pe 4:17,18

**NOT SIGNS OF THE END BUT  
BEGINNING OF SORROWS**

**But** - This is a **term of contrast**. **What is Jesus contrasting?** It would seem to be all of the tumultuous events described in Mt 24:6 (and possibly Mt 24:5). **Birth pangs** is a vivid, easily understood figure of speech that indicates a birth is coming soon. In context the "birth" of greatest note is the return of the Righteous One, our Redeemer and King Who will crush the Gentile powers (Da 2:34-35, Da 2:44-45) and bring in (*birth* if you will) His glorious earthly kingdom.

**All these things** - **To what does all these things refer?** Many coming in the Name of Jesus and misleading many (Mt 24:5), wars, rumors of wars (Mt 24:6), nations and kingdoms rising against one another, famines and earthquakes (Mt 24:7).

**The beginning of birth pangs** - When **birth pangs** begin, birth generally soon follows. Having delivered a number of babies, it has been my experience that as one gets closer to the actual delivery of the baby, the birth pangs increase in quality and quantity. It would appear that Jesus' figure of speech at least implies that birth pangs (wars, earthquakes, etc) will increase in number and intensity as **the end** draws near.

**Birth pangs** speak of hope for the pain will pass and give way to a "new birth" and in this case it will be a "new age," the Messianic Age which will follow the end of the age.

**MacArthur** - The figure of **birth pains** was commonly used by ancient Jewish writers, especially in regard to the end times. The great modern Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim wrote, "Jewish writings speak very frequently of the labor pains of Messiah." Labor pains do not occur at conception or throughout pregnancy but just before birth. The figure of **birth pains** therefore would not have been appropriate to represent either the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred very near the beginning of the church age, or the church age as a whole....Labor pains do not begin until shortly before delivery time, and they occur with increasing frequency until the baby is born. In the same way, the events connected with the Lord's return will not begin until just before His return, and they will occur with increasing rapidity, building up to an explosion of catastrophic events. The same epoch is pictured in the book of Revelation, as the seal judgments unfold over a period of perhaps years (see Rev 6:1-8:6), the trumpet judgments over a much shorter period of time, perhaps weeks (see Rev 8:7-9:21; Rev 11:15-19), and the bowl judgments over the period of perhaps a few days or even hours (see Rev 16:1-21). (SEE [Matthew 24-28 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

As noted above **MacArthur** interprets the events in Mt 24:4-14 as occurring in the first part of the seven year tribulation. This interpretation seems to be based primarily on the description of Mt 24:4-8 as "**labor pains**" which in normal pregnancy do not begin to occur until shortly prior to birth.

There are parallels between the events Jesus describes in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6:1-14. These parallels do not necessarily signify that Jesus was describing the events in Revelation 6 given the non-specific nature of the events. The parallels include:

1. False Messiahs (Mat. 24:5, 11; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8; Rev. 6:2).
2. Wars (Mat. 24:6-7; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9; Rev. 6:4).
3. Famines (Mat. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10; Rev. 6:5-6,8).
4. Pestilences (Luke 21:11; Rev. 6:8).
5. Persecution (Mat. 24:9; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12-17; Rev. 6:9-11).
6. Earthquakes (Mat. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11; Rev. 6:12).
7. Cosmic Phenomena (Mat. 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:11; Rev. 6:12-14).

**Matthew 24:9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.: tote paradousin (3PFAI) humas eis thlipsin kai apoktenousin (3PFAI) humas kai esesthe (2PFMI) misoumenoi (2PPMPN) hupo panton ton ethnon dia to onoma mou:**

- Mt 10:17-22 Mt 22:6 Mt 23:34 Mk 13:9-13 Luke 11:49 Luke 21:12,16,17 Jn 15:19 Jn 15:20 Jn 16:2 Acts 4:2,3 Acts 5:40,41 Acts 7:59 Acts 12:1,2-5 Acts 21:31,32 Acts 22:19-22 Acts 28:22 1Th 2:14-16 1Pe 4:16 Rev 2:10,13 Rev 6:9-11 Rev 7:14

**KJV** Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

**NET** "Then they will hand you over to be persecuted and will kill you. You will be hated by all the nations because of my name.

**ESV** "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for

my name's sake.

**NLT** "Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers.

**YLT** then they shall deliver you up to tribulation, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated by all the nations because of my name;

**Mark's** version is similar but adds a warning...

But **be on your guard** (present imperative = calls for continual alertness); for (term of explanation - explains why they need to be on guard!) they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. (Mark 13:9)

**Then** (5119)(**tote**) is an adverb that functions as an **expression of time**. **Tote** means at that time or a point of time subsequent to another point of time. Note that this adverb is found in Mt 24:9, Mt 24:10 and Mt 24:14 and generally indicates sequence (a successive order of two or more things).

So in the following section, we will simply observe the plain sense of the text, paying close attention to the three occurrences of the adverb of sequence, **then** (**tote**), the three occurrences of the copulative conjunction, **and** (**kai**), and the one occurrence of the conjunction of contrast, **but** (**de**). By using these simple observation techniques, let's see if this helps us discern what Jesus is describing and whether these events are related. Notice that the characteristics described in Mt 24:9-14 are surrounded by the bookends of "the beginning of sorrows" (Mt 24:8) and "the end" of the age (Mt 24:14).

The following section (Mt 24:15-22) is linked to Mt 24:8-14 by the word **therefore**. As Tony Garland explains "It is because of the dangerous characteristics of the end of the age that Jesus then moves on to give explicit instructions concerning the safety of those living in Judea when the end of the age is unambiguously signified by the **"abomination of desolation"** -- the "second sure sign.""

#### (1) What has Jesus just stated?

All these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. (Mt 24:8)

What are "**all these things**?" Those things described in Mt 24:4-7, false Messiahs, wars, earthquakes, famines. All of these "signs" are really "non-signs" because they are very general and have occurred throughout the centuries since Jesus uttered these words. Some suggest that as we see these things increase in number and intensity (e.g., earthquakes), that suggest we are getting closer to the "end" of the end times. However, it seems that this is one of the things Jesus actually warns us about so that we are not misled.

#### (2) What does Jesus describe as the next event?

They will deliver you to tribulation, kill you, hate you (Mt 24:9)

"**You**" refers to Jews and the phrase "**because of My Name**" identifies them as believers.

Notice the phrase "**you will be hated by all nations**" - Global hatred clearly was not true in the first century and helps us identify these events as occurring in the time of the tribulation.

#### (3) What does Jesus next say will happen "at that time" (or "then")?

At that time (**tote** = then) many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. (Mt 24:10)

Who are **many**? Jews.

Why would the Jews **fall away**? because of tribulation, etc. Because it will "cost" to follow Jesus (cf Mk 8:34-38)

**Many** Jews will deliver up others and will hate one another. Global hatred in Mt 24:9 becomes more personalized hatred in Mt 24:10.

#### (4) What will be associated with this time of falling away, etc?

Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. (Mt 24:11)

Notice that in Greek Mt 24:11 begins with **and** (**kai**) (NAS does not translate) which associates verse 11 with Mt 24:10.

It follows that associated with the Jews being delivered up, many falling away, there will also be a rise in false prophets will arise who will mislead many Jews.

## (5) What else will be associated with this time of falling away, rise in false prophets, etc?

Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. (Mt 24:11)

Notice once again that in Greek Mt 24:12 begins with **and** (kai) (NAS does not translate) and **because** (dia) which again associates the description in this verse with the previous passages (Mt 24:10-11).

## (6) What does Jesus teach about this difficult time of tribulation, betrayal, etc?

But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Notice that Mt 24:13 begins with **but** (de) which introduces a contrast.

So Jesus is saying that conditions will be very bad, but the one who endures to the end will be saved.

What does Jesus mean? Clearly one's efforts do not save them. God enables endurance in tribulation times. So clearly the one who endures to the end demonstrates they are genuinely saved.

## (7) What does Jesus teach about this difficult time of tribulation, betrayal, etc?

(And) This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations (Gentiles), and **then** the end will come. (Mt 24:14)

Notice that Mt 24:14 begins with an **and** (kai) in the Greek (NAS does not translate) which is a conjunction that serves to connect what follows with what preceded.

Notice the then which marks sequence which leads to the end. As discussed in more detail in the notes on Mt 24:14, John states that the Gospel will be preached to the entire world in Rev 14:6. Everyone will be able to hear the angelic messenger's presentation. When that event occurs what does Jesus say is next is the eschatological sequence? The end of the age will come. If one reads Revelation chronologically this message is given either at the midpoint of the last seven years or possibly during the last 3.5 years (There is no specific time marker to allow one to give a specific time, but there is no question is toward the end of the book of Revelation and appears to precede the Bowl Judgments.) And so when the world sees that "sign" in the sky, they will know that the return of Jesus and the end of this age are very near.

The question is when is **THEN?** There is not a clear consensus of conservative commentators as alluded to in the comments on Mt 24:4.

That said, if one compares Mt 24:9, Mt 24:15 and Mt 24:21, there does appear to be an association, because Mt 24:21 describes the Great Tribulation (the last 3.5 years of this age) which begins with the sign described in Mt 24:15 which in turn is followed by Jesus' warning to Jews that they need to flee (Mt 24:16-20) because of the coming Great Tribulation.

We know that the visual event of Mt 24:15 will begin the "final countdown" to the end, which is punctuated by the return of the King in glory (Mt 24:30). **So in Mt 24:9 is Jesus here referring to the last 3.5 years which He calls the "great tribulation"**(Mt 24:21)? In this scenario the **"THEN"** would parallel the events of Mt 24:15-21. The rest of the events described in Mt 24:10-14 could then be seen as occurring in this time of great Jewish persecution.

Messianic Jewish commentator **Arnold Fruchtenbaum** as well as well known Bible teacher Kay Arthur favor Mt 24:9 as marking the last 3.5 years. Why? Certainly when 666, the mark of the Beast, is invoked as the rule of the land giving only those individuals the right to buy and sell. At that time the hatred of the Antichrist will be such that all who refuse to follow and worship him, and instead choose to follow the Christ will essentially count their physical life as nothing, for they will be hunted, persecuted and eventually martyred (cp Rev 6:9-10 and Rev 7:9, 14)

**Tribulation** - Does this tribulation refer to a general tribulation or to a specific time period? It does not say 'the tribulation' or the 'great tribulation'. However we know that after they are delivered to tribulation, lawlessness increases, they are hated, the gospel is preached, and then the end comes. **When does THE END come?** When Jesus Christ comes down to earth at **THE END OF THE AGE**. It follows that the events just described (Mt 24:9-13) are also associated with the time of the end of the age.

**You will be hated by all nations** - Nations is **ethne** which can also be translated "Gentiles."

**Who is YOU who will be hated?** While this in some sense surely applies to all believers in Christ for they will be hated because of His Name, we must remember that Jesus is speaking to **Jews** and if we let context rule our interpretation, He is warning **Jews** to **"be on your guard"** (Mk 13:9). Indeed, since He is addressing Jewish believers that are seated on the Mount of Olives with Him, it is likely that He is referring to Jewish believers in the future who will be hated because the Name of Jesus. In addition, we know from other passages that just being Jewish will invoke the wrath of the Antichrist as he will persecute Israel and seek to annihilate her in

the greatest Anti-Semitic movement the world has ever seen. (cp Mt 24:16-20, Rev 12:6, Rev 12-17)

The church father Origen observed, "when the things foretold by Christ shall have come to pass, then there shall be persecutions, not as before in places, but every where against the people of God."

**Matthew 24:10 "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.: kai tote skandalisthesontai (3FPI)polloi kai allelous paradousousin (3PFAI) kai misesousin(3PFAI) allelous:**

**Amplified** And then many will be offended and repelled and will begin to distrust and desert [Him Whom they ought to trust and obey] and will stumble and fall away and betray one another and pursue one another with hatred.

**KJV** And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

**NET** Then many will be led into sin, and they will betray one another and hate one another.

**ESV** And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.

**NIV** At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,

- **many:** (Mt 11:6 13:21,57 26:31-34 Mk 4:17 John 6:60,61,66,67 2Ti 1:15 2Ti 4:10,16)(**betray:** Mt 10:21,35,36 26:21-24 Mic 7:5,6 Mk 13:12 Lu 21:16)

**At that time** (then) (5119)(**tote**) begs the question "**At what time?**" In context the answer is it will be at the time of intense persecution on the Jews, especially Jewish believers. It will be when they are delivered up to tribulation, killed and hated.

**Many will fall away** - Who is "**many**?" Remember that Jesus is addressing Jews and so one answer would be that **many** Jews will fall away from orthodox beliefs. However Jesus surely also means Gentiles who are deceived into worshipping the Antichrist rather than the true Christ. And those who worship the Antichrist (the Beast) will deliver up those who worship the real Christ.

Scripture predicts an apostasy at the time of the end which is both specific and intense.

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (2Th. 2:3+).

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (1Ti. 4:1+)

Sadly one of the highest rated commentaries on Matthew (NICNT) by **R T France** writes "This saying (**many will fall away**) is one of those where it seems to have its most serious sense, of a fall which is not just a temporary setback but involves the abandonment of God's way and **the loss of salvation.**" This is a false teaching, because a genuine believer is one who has been "born again" and **CANNOT** be "unborn!" (cf Jn 10:27-30) Those who fall away may have been Christ professors, but they were never Christ possessors (so to speak)!

**Fall away** (stumble; take offense) (4624)(**skandalizo** from **skandalon**= a trap = put a snare or stumbling block in way; English = *scandalize* = to offend the moral sense of) means to put a snare (in the way), hence to cause to stumble, to give offense. Thayer adds it means "to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey; to cause to fall away," and in the passive (as it is in Mt 24:10), to fall away." Jesus used **skandalizo** 13 times in Matthew in several different contexts. In a context similar to Mt 24:10 Jesus taught "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he **falls away.**" (Matthew 13:20-21) Jesus warned His own disciples that even they would fall away temporarily, a prophecy Peter protested, but which proved true (Mt 26:31, 33, Mk 14:27, 29). Jesus knowing that some would fall away encouraged His disciples (then and now) "These things (The Upper Room Discourse - Jn 13:1-16:33) I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from **stumbling.** (John 16:1)

**Betray one another** - Who is the one who betrays? In context they are those who fall away, professing believers persecute "possessing" believers!

**Will betray** (hand over) (3860)(**paradidomi** from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) means to give or hand over into the hands of another, especially to give them over into the power of another. Matthew has 31 of the 119 NT uses of **paradidomi**, the first use describing John the Baptist being taken into custody (Mt 4:12). Matthew identifies "Judas Iscariot, the one

who **betrayed** Him." (Mt 10:4, cf Mt 26:15, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, 45, 48, 27:2, 4) Jesus had warned His disciples "beware of men, for they **will hand you over** to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues" (Mt 10:17) and "Brother will **betray** brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death." (Mt 10:21)

Jesus used this same verb to warn "Then they **will deliver** you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name." (Mt 24:9)

**Matthew 24:11 "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.: kai polloi pseudoprophetai egerthesontai (3PFPI) kai planesousin (3PFAI) pollous:**

**Amplified** And many false prophets will rise up and deceive and lead many into error.

**KJV** And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

**NET** And many false prophets will appear and deceive many,

**ESV** And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

**NLT** And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people.

**YLT** 'And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray;

- Mt 24:5,24 7:15 Mk 13:22 Ac 20:30 1Ti 4:1 2Pe 2:1 1Jn 2:18,26 4:1 Jude 1:4 Rev 19:20

**Many...many** - **Many** come and **many** are misled indicating they are very good at deception.

**Wiersbe** - This is a warning to Jews, for true believers would not follow a false Christ. We are to watch out for false teachers and false spirits (1 John 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2:1ff). (Expository Outlines)

**Matthew 24:12 "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.: kai dia to plethunthenai (APN) ten anomian psugesetai (3PFPI) e agape ton pollon:**

**Amplified** And the love of the great body of people will grow cold because of the multiplied lawlessness and iniquity,

**KJV** And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

**NET** and because lawlessness will increase so much, the love of many will grow cold.

**ESV** And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

**NIV** Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

**YLT** and because of the abounding of the lawlessness, the love of the many shall become cold;

**RSV** And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold.

**ASV** And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold.

**BBE** And because wrongdoing will be increased, the love of most people will become cold.

- **because:** Jas 4:1-4 5:1-6
- **love:** Rev 2:4,5,10 3:15

**Lawlessness** - The pinnacle of lawlessness is described in Revelation 6-19, especially the last 3.5 years marked by the **man of lawlessness** taking his seat in the Temple and declaring himself to be the "Christ!" (2Th 2:3-4)

**Garland on lawlessness...love...cold** - Love grown cold due to a marked global increase in **lawlessness**. This is not a continual trend throughout church history, but a specific characteristic of **the end**.

**Lowery on lawlessness** - Jesus previously summarized the law as love of God and love of neighbor (Mt 22:34-40). It follows that lawlessness is essentially behavior without regard for God or concern for neighbor. It is behavior that basically focuses on serving

oneself. (Ibid)

**Lawlessness** (458) (**anomia** from **a** = negates what follows + **nomos** = law) literally describes that which is without the law and signifies, not merely the abstract idea, but disregard for, or actual breach of, the law of God. Anomia means "no law," and emphasizes an attitude of disregard for the statutes of God. It means living as if there were no law. A person who rejects God's authority doesn't care what God thinks about his habits. Lawlessness is living as though your own ideas are superior to God's. Lawlessness says, "God may demand it but I don't prefer it." Lawlessness says, "God may promise it but I don't want it." Lawlessness replaces God's law with my contrary desires. I become a law to myself. Lawlessness is rebellion against the right of God to make laws and govern His creatures. Lawlessness signifies everything that is contrary to the will and law of God and is more intentional and flagrant sin. It is direct and open rebellion against God and His ways.

**Matthew 24:13 "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.: ho de hupomeinas (AAPMSN) eis telos outos sothesetai (3PFPI):**

- Mt 24:6 Mt 10:22 Mk 13:13 Lu 8:15 Ro 2:7 1Co 1:8 Heb 3:6,14 10:39 Rev 2:10

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 10:22+ "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who **has endured to the end who will be saved.**

Mark 13:13+ "You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who **endures to the end, he will be saved.**

Luke 8:15+ "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and **bear fruit with perseverance.**

Romans 2:7+ to those who **by perseverance** in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, **eternal life;**

Hebrews 3:6; 14+ but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house **we are, if we hold fast our confidence** and the boast of our hope firm until the end...14+ For we have become **partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,**

### THE MOST GLORIOUS PROPHETIC PROMISE!

**But (de)** is a **term of contrast** which in this context injects the hope that despite the extreme tribulation of the times (Mt 24:9-12), it will still be possible to endure.

**The one who endures** - This statement in one sense describes the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Genuine disciples will endure to the end of their life or the end of this age not by their own efforts but because the indwelling Spirit enables them to endure to the end. Endurance does not save anyone but it demonstrates that one is truly saved! Stated another way, it is not one's endurance (self effort or works) that saves them but that one is able to endure because of the fact that they are saved.

**Lowery on endures** - Disciples are called to patient endurance, "to maintain a belief or course of action in the face of difficulty" (BDAG, 1039; cf. BAGD, 845). This is the essence of discipleship until Jesus' returns: faithful service in his behalf. In various ways this theme is echoed in this closing message." (Ibid)

**Endures** (perseveres) (5278)(**hupomeno** from **hupo** = under, as in under the rule of someone + **méno** = to abide or remain - see study of noun hupomone) means literally to remain under not simply with resignation, but with a vibrant hope. To stand fast, endure or remain in the sense of persevering so that under affliction, trouble, opposition or trial one holds fast to one's belief or faith (Mt 10:22, 24:13, Mark 13:13, James 5:11, et al). The idea is to be patient under, to persevere and to do so bear bravely and calmly (from Thayer).

**NET Note** - Jesus was not claiming here that salvation is by works. He was simply arguing that genuine faith evidences itself in persistence through even the worst of trials.

**The end - When is the end?** It could be the end of one's life (and that is certainly the teaching of the doctrine of perseverance of the saints). **Preterists** feel that this is the end of The Temple and the nation of Israel. However in context, the disciples have asked

about the end of the age (Mt 24:3). The last 3.5 years will be horrible for true believers. It will not be a time when people profess Christ as they do in our day where there is no significant cost for associating one's self with the Christ. In that day it will cost one their life!

**Will be saved** - Does this refer to physical or spiritual salvation? Given the fact that some will die (Mt 24:9), this most likely refers to spiritual salvation.

**Will be saved** (4982)(**sozo**) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. **Sozo** is sometimes used of physical deliverance from danger of perishing (Mt 8:25; Mt 14:30; Lk 23:35; Acts 27:20, 27:31), physical healing from sickness (Mt 9:21, 22; Mk 5:23, Acts 4:9), and deliverance from demonic possession (Lk 8:36). More often **sozo** refers to salvation in a spiritual sense (Mt 1:21).

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about perseverance? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Perseverance of the Saints - is it biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How does the "testing of your faith" produce perseverance \(James 1:3\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are some Bible verses about perseverance? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Matthew 24:14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come: kai keruchthesetai (3SPFPI) touto to euaggelion tes basileias en hole te oikoumene eis marturion pasin tois ethnesin kai tote echei (3SFAI) to telos:**

- **This gospel:** Mt 4:23 9:35 10:7 Ac 20:25
- **Shall be preached:** Mt 18:19 Mk 16:15,16 Lu 24:47 Acts 1:2 Ro 10:18 15:18-21 16:25,26 Col 1:6,23 Rev 14:6)(Then: Mt 24:3,6 Eze 7:5-7,10

**Amplified** And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end.

### THEN THE END WILL COME

**This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come - What is the end to which Jesus refers?** If we let context rule our interpretation, **the end** to which Jesus refers is **the end of the age**, which is the initial question asked by the disciples (Mt 24:3).

**Gospel** (2098)(**euaggelion** from **εἰς** = good + **aggéllo** = proclaim, tell) is literally good news or glad tidings. In the NT euaggelion is used only of God's message of salvation in three senses (1) act of proclamation (preaching the gospel) (1Cor 4:15), (2) the work of evangelization (spread of the gospel) (Phil 4:3), (3) the content of the message as an offer of salvation (good news) (Ro 1:16) (Adapted from Friberg - Analytical Lexicon). In secular Greek it originally referred to a reward for good news and later became the good news itself. The word euaggelion was commonly used in the first century as our words "good news" today. The idea then and now is something like this - "Have you any good news (euaggelion) for me today?" This was a common question in the ancient world. In ancient secular Greek euaggelion described good news of any kind and prior to the writing of the New Testament, had no definite religious connotation in the ancient world until it was taken over by the "Cult of Caesar" which was the state religion and in which the emperor was worshipped as a god (see more discussion of this use below).

**Shall be preached** - There is no doubt about this proclamation's consummation! Jesus sounds a note of certainty using this future tense verb. Yes, the Gospel will encounter great opposition and resistance, but Christ's good news will go forth to all the nations. And what does this signal? When the global proclamation of the Gospel is achieved, Jesus will return bring an abrupt curtain down on this present age. And so the end of the age (Mt 24:3) will come when the mission is completed.

**Shall be preached** (proclaimed) (1Th 2:13-note). He gave the people exactly what the Emperor bade him give, nothing more, nothing less. He did not dare add to the message or take away from it. Should this not be the example and pattern every preacher and teacher of the holy gospel of God seeks and strives to emulate, yea, even doing so with fear and trembling! ("not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts" see 1Th 2:4-note)

The original meaning of the root word **kerux** was a "herald at the royal court."



**This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world**- This passage is frequently used in missionary conferences to exhort the attendees to take the Gospel to the ends of the world in order to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission to "**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.**" (Mt 28:19) I wholehearted agree with the exhortation in those conferences to **GO** to the lost. The question that arises is will our taking the Gospel to "**all the nations**" bring about "**the end**" of this age? To answer that question, we need to look at another way Jesus' words in Mt 24:14 might be interpreted. To do so let's first look at John's incredible vision in Revelation 14:

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an **Eternal Gospel** to **preach** to those who live **on the earth**, and to **every** nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters." (Rev 14:6-7-commentary)

If one reads John's words **literally**, it is clear that this **angel** (**aggelos/angelos** = messenger) will preach the **Gospel of the Kingdom** in the **whole world**. And if one observes Revelation carefully, it is very clear that there is chronological progression in many of the chapters. And Revelation 14 is inserted at a time which would correspond to the mid-point of the last Seven Year period preceding the horrible time of the 3.5 year Great Tribulation. But even if one did not agree with that timing, anyone who interprets Revelation literally would agree that this worldwide proclamation of the Gospel is very near the end of this age, which is brought about when Jesus returns in Revelation 19:11-16. Therefore I would submit that Rev 14:6-7 could be the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Mt 24:14. Please do not misunderstand - Jesus was quite clear in Acts 1:8 declaring that "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and **even to the remotest part of the earth.**" And so every believer should be involved in some way (going, sending, praying, giving all in the power of the Holy Spirit) so that the Gospel penetrates **even to the remotest part of the earth**

### **GLOBAL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL**

In Revelation 14 John's vision of an angel in midheaven clearly links the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel with the end of the age. Recall that "**the end**" that the disciples asked about in Mt 24:3 was the end of the age. While the global proclamation of the Gospel is not called a sign, it certainly will be seen by everyone on earth and it occurs in Revelation 14 after the Antichrist has set up his rule (Rev 13:5), so it clearly is in the time of the tribulation and most likely the great tribulation (very possibly at the midpoint of the last seven years).

<b>THE SIGN OF THE GLOBAL GOSPEL AND THE END OF THE AGE</b>	
<b>THE SIGN</b>	<b>THE END</b>
<b>This <span style="color: red;">Gospel</span> of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world</b>	<b>THEN the end will come</b>
<b>An angel will preach the eternal <span style="color: red;">Gospel</span> to those who live on the earth Revelation 14:6-7+</b>	<b>The King of kings returns bringing this age to an end Rev 19:11-16+</b>

**Jon Courson** agrees writing - Sometimes I hear preachers say that, on the basis of this verse, we must evangelize the world so Jesus can come back. I personally don't believe that is a correct understanding of this Scripture. Jesus will come back at a time already appointed by the Father. Surely the gospel is to be preached, and surely we are to participate in the process. But the second coming is not dependent upon us, for the greatest explosion of evangelism this world has ever seen will not take place until after we're gone. Revelation 7:3-8, 9, 14 tells us that after the Rapture, 144,000 Jewish evangelists will be anointed. Moses and perhaps Elijah will come back on the scene, working miracles and calling down fire from Heaven (Rev 11:3ff - **Ed**: Note that the identity of the two witnesses is not clear! [See Chart on Identity of Witnesses](#)). (Jon Courson's Application Commentary)

**Warren Wiersbe** adds that " Revelation 7:1-8 teaches that God will choose and seal 144,000 Jewish evangelists who will carry the kingdom message to the ends of the earth (cf the "harvest" in Rev 7:9, 14). This verse does not teach that the Gospel of God's grace must be spread to every nation today before Jesus can return for His church. It is the Lord's return at the end of the age that is in view here."

**Whole** ([3650](#))(**holos**) means all, complete in extent, amount, time or degree = all, altogether, every whit, throughout, whole. Jesus used **holos** in His piercing question "What will it benefit a man if he gains the **whole** world yet loses his life? Or what will a man give

in exchange for his life?" (Mt 16:26, cp Mk 8:34-38, Lk 9:25) In Matthew 26:13 (Mk 14:9) Jesus declared "I assure you: Wherever this **Gospel** is proclaimed in the **whole** (holos) **world** (kosmos), what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her." This exact phrase "whole world" (holos oikoumene) is used by John - "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the **whole world**; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." (Rev 12:9)

**World** (3635)(oikoumene) the feminine participle present passive of oikeo = to dwell or abide) describes the inhabited portion of the earth, exclusive of the heavens above and hell below. The Romans used **oikoumene** in their secular writings to refer to the Roman Empire, for to them their empire equated with the whole world. Finally, in some NT contexts **oikoumene** was used to refer to the inhabitants of the world (see below Acts 17:31, 19:27, Re 12:9-note) Although John uses a different word, the truth is that "The whole **world** (kosmos) lies (keimai) in *the power of (under the sway of) the evil (poneros = wicked) one.*" (1Jn 5:19-note) And what is the "key" that unlocks the door of the jail cell and sets free those under the dominion of Satan? The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only answer to man's sin problem and devil's deception and rule over fallen men's souls.

**Gospel of the kingdom** - This specific phrase is found only 4x in the NT, three times by Matthew (Mt 4:23, 9:35, 24:14) and once by Luke (Lk 16:16). Most writers agree that the Gospel of Matthew is directed toward a Jewish audience and here we see Jesus use this phrase in the context of a description of the time of **the end**. While we cannot be dogmatic, we know that every **kingdom** has a king, and it is as if Jesus' is saying the good news of the **kingdom** will be followed by the good news of the coming of the King, even the King of kings (Rev 19:11-15, 16-note) to set up His **Millennial Kingdom**.

**Kingdom** (932)(basileia from **basileus** = a sovereign, king, monarch) denotes sovereignty, royal power, dominion. Basileia is used most often in the NT to describe God's (Christ's) rule and reign, a rule and reign which in turn most often described by the phrases kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God. Although some scholars attempt to differentiate these terms, it is more reasonable (as discerned from the context) to consider these two phrase as synonyms. Kingdom of heaven is found only in the Gospel of Matthew (32 times) and Kingdom of God is used in the other Gospels (66 times including 4 times in Matthew), 6 times in Acts, and 8 times by Paul. Most observers conclude that Kingdom of Heaven is used by Matthew whose Gospel was addressed primarily to a first century Jewish audience that for the most part would not (and still do not, especially the orthodox) vocalize the Name "God". Jesus' began His ministry proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom (See Tony Garland's discussion - [The Arrival of God's Kingdom](#)) by which, if one receives it and believes it, gains entrance into the Kingdom of God/Heaven, which is simply another way of saying one is "saved" by grace through faith (Jn 3:3, 5, Mt 18:3).

**The end** - Notice the repetition of the phrase **the end** as it is a very important **expression of time** in Matthew 24, where it occurs 4 times - Mt 24:3, Mt 24:6, Mt 24:13, Mt 24:14.

**End** (5056)(telos) means an end, term, a termination, a completion, a consummation, a goal achieved, a result attained, or a realization.

**Richards on telos** - The Greek word group (teleō [verb], telos [noun]) has two basic emphases. The primary concept of "end" is that of achievement of an intended goal. Particularly in eschatological passages the NT picks up the thought of process implicit in the OT. But the NT draws our attention to the conclusion of the process. That end is an extremity, but it is an extremity infused by purpose. Nothing is random; nothing is purposeless. When the end comes, it will bring the achievement of all of God's purposes. The end will be marked by the consummation of God's plans. The other concept implicit in the Greek words indicating "end" draws our attention to persons or to things that have reached an intended goal. In a limited but real sense, achieving a goal means that a thing or person is completed, or perfect. Thus "perfect" in the NT does not suggest sinlessness or flawlessness; rather, it is a mature stage of development in which one's potentials are achieved.

## **CRITIQUE OF A PRETERIST INTERPRETATION OF Matthew 24:14**

**R T France** in one of the "highest rated" commentaries (cf [Challies](#) and [Ligonier](#)) interprets the events in Mt 24:4-22 as primarily **past history**, and it therefore not surprising that he encounters considerable difficulty explaining Mt 24:14 as an event fulfilled in the past writing that "This saying comes unexpectedly here, not only because it provides a note of hope and triumph in an otherwise threatening context, but also because, like Mt 26:13, it already envisages a world-wide proclamation of the good news....In particular, this passage does not speak of worldwide evangelization as the cause of the "end," but as a necessary preliminary. And we have argued at Mt 24:6 that the "end" (telos) in view here is not the "end (sunteleia) of the age" but the **destruction of the temple**, which happened long ago. **In what sense, then, would the good news of God's kingdom be heard "all over the world" before that event occurred?**" (Bolding added) **France** then twists the literal meaning of Jesus' words in fact going so far as to "suggest caution in interpreting it too literally...The point is that the gospel will go far outside Judea, as indeed it certainly did in the decades following Jesus' resurrection.....Unless one insists on a woodenly literal meaning for the phrase, the good news of God's

kingdom was indeed being proclaimed "all over the world" before the temple was destroyed." (**Ed**: France defends his assertion with reference to Col 1:6, Ro 16:26, Ro 10:18, 15:18-24) So France goes to considerable length to avoid a literal interpretation of "to the whole world." He adds to Jesus' words. Jesus did not state the Gospel would "go far outside Judea!" A normal reading of the text is clear -- Jesus meant the **whole world** and then the end would come, the end of the age, not the end of the Temple. This critique of France's analysis is presented as an example of what happens when one adheres to a preterist interpretation, and is forced to "massage" the literal meaning in a vain attempt to try and make it fit with one's preconceived notions.

As an aside if one compares **France's** interpretation in NICNT published in 2007 with his earlier 1985 commentary on Matthew (Tyndale NT Commentary), it seems that he has changed his view writing "In one sense Paul could claim long before AD 70 to have 'fully preached the Gospel' in a large area of Asia and Europe (Ro 15:19), and at many times since then similar claims could have been made with reference to an area far wider than the **oikoumene** known in Jesus' time. **But Jesus' words allow no such calculation.** (**Ed**: Not if one reads them **literally** which it looks like France in fact did in 1985!) **The end** cannot come until the Gospel has reached far outside the Jewish world, but that gives us no warrant for deciding when it must come." **I agree with his 1985 comments!** Notice that in 1985 when France interpreted Mt 24:14 **literally**, he did not equate "**the end**" with the destruction of the Temple as he did in 2007 when he chose to interpret Jesus' words non-literally! So here is the point of this critique: While France's highly rated 2007 NICNT commentary on Matthew has some good material, one needs to keep a Berean mindset (Acts 17:11-note) and be very careful when reading his comments on eschatological passages!

**Preterist Albert Barnes** commented (in the 1880's) on "Then shall the end come" explaining that this refers to "The end of the Jewish economy; the destruction of the temple and city." Not only does he take Mt 24:14 out of the context of the original question about the "end of the age" (Mt 24:3), but he incorrectly states this is the "end of the Jewish economy." I wonder how he would explain the rebirth of the "**Jewish economy**" in May, 1948 when Israel became a nation after almost 2000 years!

**See related discussion: Keep Context King**

## Sign - Semeion

**Sign** ([4592](#))(**semeion**) (akin to **semaino** = to give a sign; **sema** = a sign) is a distinguishing mark or symbol that carries a special meaning or like a simple sign points to something else. In Scripture when **semeion** used of God's miraculous works (that which is contrary to the usual course of nature) it points to spiritual truth.

**Semeion** can be a sign, a mark, a token, or a miracle with a spiritual end purpose. In other words **asign** can be either natural or supernatural. A **sign** is an object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the probable presence or occurrence of something else.

In a number of NT contexts **semeion** takes on the sense of a miracle because of its unusual nature, especially as that which is contrary to the usual course of nature (e.g., Jn 2:23, Acts 4:16, 22 - And the **KJV** translates **semeion** as *miracle* 23x in John).

**Wiersbe** says that a **sign** is "Something that points beyond itself to something greater. It was not enough for people to believe in Jesus' works; they had to believe in Him and in the Father who sent Him (John 5:14-24). This explains why Jesus often added a sermon to the miracle and in that sermon interpreted the sign. In John 5, the healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath opened the way for a message on His deity, "the Lord of the Sabbath." The feeding of the 5,000 (John 6) led naturally into a sermon on the Bread of Life."

**William Barclay** says **semeion** "is John's favourite word. To him a miracle was not simply an astonishing happening; it was not simply a deed of power; it was a sign. That is to say, it told men something about the person who did it; it revealed something of his character; it laid bare something of his nature; it was an action through which it was possible to understand better and more fully the character of the person who did it. To John the supreme thing about the miracles of Jesus was that they told men something about the nature and the character of God. The power of Jesus was used to heal the sick, to feed the hungry, to comfort the sorrowing; and the fact that Jesus used his power in that way was proof that God cared for the sorrows and the needs and the pains of men. To John the miracles were signs of the love of God. In any miracle, then, there are three things. There is the wonder which leaves men dazzled, astonished, aghast. There is the power which is effective, which can deal with and mend a broken body, an unhinged mind, a bruised heart, which can do things. There is the sign which tells us of the love in the heart of the God who does such things for men." ([William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

"In a real sense, one cannot divorce miracle from Deity. God alone is capable of overriding natural law. He can countermand the command of nature." (Detzler)

**Semeion** is found primarily in the Gospels and Acts with 17 uses in John, 13 in Acts, 9 in Matthew, 9 in Luke and 6 in Mark. Revelation uses semeion 7 times. The **NASB** translates **semeion** as follows = distinguishing mark (1), miracle (2), sign (35), signs (39). The **KJV** translates **semeion** much more frequently as **miracle** with the uses as follows = sign (50), miracle (23), wonder (3), token (1).

Twice in Matthew Jesus answered the Jews request for signs declaring "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a **sign**; and yet no **sign** will be given to it but the **sign** of Jonah the prophet." (Mt 12:39, 16:4) He was referring of course to His resurrection as the **sign** of Jonah. In the uses of **semeion** by His disciples in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 there of course was no rebuke for they were not asking out of a heart of unbelief but of belief.

In 2Th 3:17, of writing of the closing salutations, the apostle using the pen himself instead of his amanuensis, his autograph attesting the authenticity of his Epistles.

**MacArthur** comments on use of **semeion** in the Revelation (Rev 12:1, 3; 13:13-14; 15:1; 16:14; 19:20) - **Semeion** (sign) describes a symbol that points to a reality. (**Ed**: Commenting specifically on the "sign" in Rev 12:1) The literal approach to interpreting Scripture allows for normal use of symbolic language, but understands that it points to a literal reality. In this case, the description plainly shows that the woman John saw was not an actual woman. Also, the reference to "the rest of her children," those "who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rev 12:17), shows that this woman is a symbolic mother.

**Charles Swindoll** on **semeion** - Ancient peoples often viewed "signs" in the sky, such as lightning or eclipses, as omens of terrible things to come (Matt. 16:3). The term *sēmeion* could also refer to miraculous feats that pointed to a person's supernatural origin or authority (Mt 12:38). In Revelation the term is used to indicate amazing symbolic visions that point to epochal events (Rev. 12:1, 3), but it also refers to false wonders and miracles used by Satan to turn people away from God (Rev 13:13-14). (Insights on Revelation)

**Wayne Detzler** - In the New Testament there are two Greek words which describe **miracles**. The first of these is **semeion** (literally "sign"). At first this word meant a visible sign which someone saw. For instance, when Constantine was embroiled in battle he saw the sign of a cross and the words, "In this sign conquer." This turned him to Christianity, and he granted toleration to the Christians in 313. So first of all **semeion** meant a real or imagined visible **sign**. Later it came to mean the intervention of the deities in our world. This is the meaning which the Bible attaches to **miracles**, when God breaks into the natural world to accomplish some special feat. A second word is **thauma** (which literally means "to wonder," or "to be astonished"). In this case the miracle is "in the eye of the beholder." The root word behind this Greek term is *thea* ("a vision"), or *theaomai* ("to contemplate"). It is seen in our English word "theater" (literally, "a place of seeing or viewing"). It is in this secondary meaning of astonishment that we see the root of a miracle. What causes one to be astonished or amazed is out of the ordinary. This was especially true in the Greek epic poems, which described many astonishing events. Thus *thauma* speaks of a "wonder," an amazing act, and thus a miracle....The most notable miracle-worker in the New Testament is, of course, the Lord Jesus Himself. It is He who raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Matt. 9:18-26). He too interrupted the funeral procession at Nain (Luke 7:11-17). Having raised a little girl and a young man, He also brought His friend Lazarus back to life (John 11:38-44). (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#) - a useful resource for word studies).

**Zodhiates** on distinction of **sign** and **wonder** (*teras*) - the word *sēmeíon*, "sign," sharply contrasts with the meaning of *teras*, "wonder." For "sign" has a distinct ethical end and purpose whereas "wonder" has the least ethical and unyielding connotation...The prime object and end of the miracle involved and declared in the very word **semeion** is to lead us to something out of and beyond itself. It is a fingerpost of God, as if God were saying, "I do this in order for you to see and understand." The miracle is not valuable so much for what it is as for what it indicates of the grace and power of the doer, or of his immediate connection with a higher spiritual world (Ex 7:9, 10; 1Ki. 13:3; Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3; Heb. 2:4). Thus, the Jews were demanding miracles performed by God, not for the sake of the miracles, but as the finger and voice of God indicating "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). The Jews expected physical miracles. Accustomed to such manifestations under the economy of the Law, they expected God to work that way in the economy of grace.(1 Corinthians Commentary)

**Trench** on **semeion** - "It is involved and declared in the very word that the prime object and end of the miracle is to lead us to something out of and beyond itself: that, so to speak, it is a kind of finger-post of God, pointing for us to this: valuable, not so much for what it is, as for what it indicates of the grace and power of the doer, or of his immediate connection with a higher spiritual world" (Synonyms)

**See Trench's Analysis of the following synonyms. Note also:** If you click on Strong's # you will retrieve the Abbreviated Thayer's Definition as well as the Expanded Thayer's [scroll down], the expanded Liddell-Scott-Jones definition, and Moulton-Milligan's (Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament) discussion.

**teras** ([Strong's #5059](#)) Wonder, Miracle

**semeion** ([Strong's #4592](#)) Sign, Miracle

**dynamis** ([Strong's #1411](#)) Power, Mighty Work

**megaleion** ([Strong's #3167](#)) Mighty deeds (NAS)

**endoxon** ([Strong's #1741](#)) Glorious Thing

**paradoxon** ([Strong's #3861](#)) [Strange](#) Thing

**thaumasion** ([Strong's #2297](#))

As an aside **Polhill** remarks that "It should be noted that "throughout Acts the term **wonders**' only occurs in conjunction with **'signs,'** a testimony to the fact that mere marvels have no value in themselves except as they point beyond themselves to the divine power behind them and so lead to faith."

**Blomberg** - Each evangelist has his own thematic emphases concerning Jesus' **miracles**. Mark sharply contrasts the glory of Jesus' public ministry and its preponderance of wonders with the road to the cross and his teaching on suffering (Mk 1:1-8:30; 8:31-16:8). Mark, too, introduces the so-called messianic secret motif following several miracles (e.g., Mk 1:34; 3:12; 5:43). Matthew's miracle-stories fit his overall narrative progression from Jesus' particularism to universalism (with Mark 13:1-37 as the hinge) and his stress on the fulfillment of Scripture (Mk 8:17; 11:4-5). Luke highlights Jesus' compassion for the outcasts of society (Lk 4:18; 17:11-19) and his role as a new Moses (Lk 9:28-36) and Elijah/Elisha (Lk 7:1-28). **John's views prove the most distinctive**. Whereas the Synoptics use "**signs**" in a negative sense as that which unbelieving skeptics demand but do not receive save for the resurrection as the "**sign of Jonah**" (Mt 12:38-42), John consistently speaks of Jesus' miracles as "**signs**" meant to lead people to faith in Christ (Jn 2:11; 4:54; cf. Jn 20:31). But he encourages a maturity that does not require dependence on miraculous proofs (Jn 4:48; 20:29). John also pairs seven signs with seven discourses to form the first major half of his Gospel (Jn 1:19-11:57). The signs require interpretive teaching even as they legitimate Jesus' claims. ([Miracles, Signs - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

**Vine** - **semeion** = "a sign, mark, indication, token," is used **(a)** of that which distinguished a person or thing from others, e.g., Matt. 26:48; Luke 2:12; Ro. 4:11; 2 Cor. 12:12 (1st part); 2Th 3:17, "token," i.e., his autograph attesting the authenticity of his letters; **(b)** of a "sign" as a warning or admonition, e.g., Matt. 12:39, "the sign of (i.e., consisting of) the prophet Jonas"; 16:4; Luke 2:34; 11:29, 30; **(c)** of miraculous acts **(1)** as tokens of divine authority and power, e.g., Matt. 12:38, 39 (1st part); John 2:11, RV, "signs"; Jn 3:2 (ditto); Jn 4:54, "(the second) sign," RV; Jn 10:41 (ditto); Jn 20:30; in 1Co 1:22, "the Jews ask for signs," indicates that the Apostles were met with the same demand from Jews as Christ had been: "*signs were vouchsafed in plenty, signs of God's power and love, but these were not the signs which they sought.... They wanted signs of an outward Messianic Kingdom, of temporal triumph, of material greatness for the chosen people.... With such cravings the Gospel of a 'crucified Messiah' was to them a stumblingblock indeed*" (Lightfoot); 1Cor 14:22; **(2)** by demons, Rev. 16:14; **(3)** by false teachers or prophets, indications of assumed authority, e.g., Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; **(4)** by Satan through his special agents, 2Th 2:9; Rev. 13:13, 14; 19:20; (d) of tokens portending future events, e. g., Matt. 24:3, where "the sign of the Son of Man" signifies, subjectively, that the Son of Man is Himself the "sign" of what He is about to do; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7, 11, 25; Acts 2:19; Rev 12:1, Rev 12:3, Rev; 15:1. "**Signs**" confirmatory of what God had accomplished in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, His resurrection and ascension, and of the sending of the Holy Spirit, were given to the Jews for their recognition, as at Pentecost, and supernatural acts by apostolic ministry, as well as by the supernatural operations in the churches, such as the gift of tongues and prophesying; there is no record of the continuance of these latter after the circumstances recorded in Acts 19:1-20. ([Sign - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#))

**Zodhiates** - In the plural, miracles which lead to something out of and beyond themselves; finger-marks of God, valuable not so much for what they are as for what they indicate of the grace and power of the Doer (Mk 16:20).

**(I) Particularly a sign by which something is designated, distinguished, known** (Mt. 26:48; Ro. 4:11, circumcision as a sign [cf. Ge. 9:12, 13; 17:11]). Specifically a sign by which the character and truth of any person or thing is known, a token, proof (Lk 2:12; 2Cor. 12:12; 2Th 3:17; Sept.: 1Sa 14:10; 2Ki. 19:29; 20:8).

**(II) A sign by which the divine power in majesty is made known, a supernatural event or act, a token, wonder, or miracle by which the power and presence of God is manifested, either directly or through the agency of those whom He sends** (Sept.: Ex. 4:8, 17, 28, 30).

**(A)** As wrought of God (1Cor. 14:22), a token to the unbelieving of God's presence and power (cf. 1Cor 14:25); or perhaps a sign of divine displeasure (cf. 1Cor 14:21). "The sign of the prophet Jonah" means the miracle which God wrought in the case of Jonah concerning the great fish that swallowed him and the three days therein that followed (Mt. 12:39 [cf. Mt 12:40]; Mt. 16:4; Lk 11:29). Metonymically of persons sent from God, whose character and acts are a manifestation of the divine power (Lk 11:30). In Lk 2:34 for a sign which shall be spoken against. Of signs, wonders, miracles which God did through someone, joined with *térata* ([5059](#)), things out of the ordinary, wonders (Acts 2:22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; 15:12). Specifically as revealing future

events, a sign of future things, a portent, presage (Mt. 16:3), the miraculous events and deeds which reveal the coming of the Messiah in His kingdom (Mt. 24:3, 30; Mk 13:4; Lk 21:7, 11, 25; Acts 2:19; Rev. 12:1, 3; 15:1; Sept.: Deut. 13:1, 2).

**(B)** Of signs, wonders, miracles wrought by Jesus and His Apostles and the prophets in proof and furtherance of their divine mission (Mt. 12:38, 39; 16:1, 4; Mk 8:11, 12; 16:17, 20; Lk 11:16, 29; 23:8; Acts 4:16, 22; 8:6; 1 Cor. 1:22). In John the word is used only in this sense (John 2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30). Joined with *térata*, wonders, and *dunamis* (1411), mighty works (Jn 4:48; Acts 6:8; 7:36; 8:13; 14:3; Ro 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4).

**(C)** Spoken analogically of signs, wonders, wrought by false prophets claiming to act by divine authority (Rev. 13:13, 14; 16:14; 19:20); with *térata* (Mt. 24:24; Mk 13:22; 2Th 2:9). (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#) )

**Liddell-Scott-Jones** (primarily secular uses) - **(A1)** Mark by which a thing is known - sign of the future; trace, track; of a cork on a buoy, **(2)** Sign from the gods, omen, ; wonder, portent, LXX Ex 4:8; Especially of the constellations, regarded as signs **(3)** sign or signal to do a thing, made by flags ( he made signal for the rest to put to sea); to take it down, strike the flag, as a sign of dissolving an assembly; generally, signal; signal to commence work; with unremoved signal (s), of gymnasia, i.e. never closed, **(4)** standard or flag, on the admiral's ship; on the general's tent, body of troops under one standard or flag, **(5)** land mark, boundary, limit, out of the limits of your commercial port, **(6)** device upon a shield; upon ships, figure-head, **(7)** signet on ring, etc; figure, image; badge; plural, written characters, plural - stripes, **(8)** watchword, war-cry, **(9)** birthmark or distinguishing feature,

**(B1)** Sign, token, indication of anything that is or is to be, **(2)** in reasoning, a sign or proof, is no proof to the contrary; also, instance, example, - to introduce an argument **(3)** in the Logic of Aristotle, a sign used as a probable argument in proof of a conclusion, opp. = a demonstrative or certain proof),. in Stoic and Epicurean philos., sign as observable basis of inference to the unobserved or unobservable, **(4)** Medicine - symptom, **(5)**. pl., shorthand symbols, **(6)** critical mark,

**Hastings Dictionary** - SIGN . Any outward fact which serves as a pledge of a Divine word or a proof of a Divine deed is a sign , whether it be natural or supernatural in its character. The rainbow served as the sign of the Noahic, as the rite of circumcision of the Abrahamic, covenant ( Genesis 9:12; Genesis 17:11 'token,' Romans 4:11). That God was with, and worked for, the Israelites was shown in the plagues of Egypt ( Exodus 10:2). Gideon asks for and receives a sign that it is Jehovah who speaks with him ( Judges 6:17), and Saul also receives signs to confirm the words of Samuel (1Sa 10:7 ). The prophetic word is thus proved from God ( Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 38:7, Jeremiah 44:29, Ezekiel 14:8 ). The sign need not be supernatural ( 1 Samuel 2:34, Isaiah 8:18; Isaiah 20:3 ); but the Jews in the time of Christ desired miracles as proofs of Divine power ( Matthew 12:38; Matthew 16:1 , John 4:48 , 1 Corinthians 1:22), a request which Jesus refused and condemned. The message of the Baptist, though not confirmed by any sign, was seen to be true ( John 10:41 ). It is Jonah's preaching that is probably referred to when Jesus speaks of him as a sign to his generation ( Matthew 12:39 ). The 'babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger,' is the simple and humble sign to the shepherds of the birth of a Saviour, Christ the Lord ( Luke 2:12 ); and He is welcomed by Simeon as 'a sign which is spoken against' ( Luke 2:34). The Fourth Gospel frequently describes the miracles of Jesus as signs ( Luke 3:2 , Luke 4:44), and attributes to them an evidential value which is not prominent in Jesus' own intention. This confirmation of the gospel was found in the Apostolic Church ( Mark 16:20 , Acts 4:16; Acts 6:3; Acts 8:6; Acts 8:13; Acts 15:12 , 2 Corinthians 12:12 ). The last things will be ushered in by extraordinary signs ( Matthew 24:30 , Luke 21:25 , 2 Thessalonians 2:9 the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, Revelation 12:1; Revelation 13:13 etc.). The faith that depends on signs, if not altogether condemned ( John 6:26 ), is by Jesus deprecated ( John 4:48 , cf. 1 Corinthians 1:22 ).

**Chris Church** describes 8 functions of NT Signs:

**1. Signs function simply to identify.** Judas' kiss clearly designated Jesus as the One the mob was seeking (Matthew 26:48 ). The sign of Jesus' coming and the end of the age which the disciples requested is, likewise, an identifying mark (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7 ); it is not a matter of evoking faith in Christ's coming but of identifying that event when it occurs. The difficult "sign of the Son of Man" is probably an identifying sign as well (Matthew 24:30 ). The above uses approximate the nontheological use of sign by the Old Testament. Other uses of sign are distinctly theological.

**2. John's signs generally impart knowledge about Jesus and His relation to the Father.** Jesus' first sign, the changing of water into wine at Cana, points to Jesus as the source of the abundant, joyful life which characterizes the anticipated Messianic Age (John 2:1-11 ). The three-fold repetition of the phrase "your son lives" in the healing of the official's son (John 4:46-54 ) points to Jesus as the life-giver. The healing of the sick man at the Sheep Gate Pool (John 5:2-9 ) points to Jesus as the One through whom God is still working (John 5:17 ). Though the just-fed crowd saw Jesus' feeding of the five thousand (John 6:2-13 ) as a sign that Jesus

was a prophet (John 6:14 ), the sign points to Jesus as the life-giving bread which alone can satisfy (John 6:35 ). The sign of the healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-7 ) illustrates the ambiguity of signs: some took the sign to mean that Jesus was not from God; others, that God was with Him (John 9:16 ). John's conclusion (John 9:35-41 ) points to Jesus as both giver of spiritual insight and judge of spiritual blindness. Finally, the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1 ) points to Jesus as the resurrection and the life (John 11:25 ).

**3 . Though the term sign is not used, the seal of God upon the foreheads of the redeemed** (Revelation 9:4 ) is a sign of protection.

**4. Some signs serve to motivate faith.** The signs in the Fourth Gospel were recounted so "tha you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31 ). John previously noted signs leading to faith (John 2:11; John 4:53; John 9:38 ). The sign of the healing of a lame man led to the praise of God in Acts 4:16 ,Acts 4:16,4:21 . Philip's signs, likewise, evoked the Samaritans' faith (Acts 8:6 ).

**5 . Other signs serve to recall God's past saving acts.** The paired expression "signs and wonders" (Acts 2:19 ,Acts 2:19,2:22; Acts 4:30; Acts 7:36-37; Acts 14:3 ) recalls the foundational saving events of the Exodus. The "signs and wonders" which Jesus and the apostles performed designate the inauguration of God's new saving event.

**6. Paul spoke of circumcision as a witness to the covenant**(Romans 4:11 ).

**7 . Signs often serve as confirmation or authentication.** The humble circumstances of the Christ-child in the manger confirmed the angel's announcement of a Savior to outcast shepherds (Luke 2:12 ). Jesus offered the difficult "sign of Jonah" as His authentication (Matthew 12:39-43; Luke 11:29-32 ). God was at work in Jesus' preaching of repentance as God had worked in Jonah. The New Testament often rebukes the demand for a sign to confirm God's work (Matthew 16:1; John 2:18; John 4:48; 1 Corinthians 1:22 ). A sign may evoke faith in a receptive heart, but no sign will convince the hard-hearted.

**8. Though the term sign is not used, Agabus' action in binding Paul with his belt**(Acts 21:11 ) parallels the acts of the Old Testament prophets. ([Sign - Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Sign - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [What signs indicate that the end times are approaching? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why do so many people seek after signs and wonders? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Robert Neighbour - The Eight Signs in John** (All uses of **semeion** in John's Gospel = John 2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:48, 54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30)

- The Sign of the Water Turned to Wine (John 2:1-11).
- The Sign of the Healing of the Nobleman's Son (John 4:46-54).
- The Sign of Bethesda's Pool (John 5:1-13). (**Ed**: But semeion not used in this section)
- The Sign of the Loaves and the Fishes (John 6:1-15).
- The Sign of the Walking on the Sea (John 6:16-24).
- The Sign of the Man Born Blind (John 9:1-17).
- The Sign of the Resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:33-47).
- The Sign of the Draught of Fishes (John 21:1-14).

In the Book of Hebrews, we read the following: "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will" (Heb. 2:4).

Three things stand before us — miracles, wonders, and signs.

These, in the Greek, are designated by three different words: "dunamis," power, significant of mighty works; "teras," wonder, significant of causing the people to marvel; "semeion," a sign, significant of a foreshadowing of Christ...."**Semeion**" is translated in John 13x by the word "miracle," and four times by the word "signs." (**Ed Note**: Neighbour is referring to the uses in the King James Version). The above notations show that there are **three purposes in a miracle**: first, it portrays the power of a Living Christ; second, it causes the people to wonder, and thirdly, it produces a sign, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel of John was distinctively written that "ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31). With one single exception, the Holy Spirit, in the Gospel of John, refers to the miracles of Christ under the word

"semeion," a "sign." (Ed note: This statement is based on the KJV) The purpose of the Holy Spirit was to set forth distinctive marks of the Deity of Christ, that men might believe in Him and have life.

**Hampton Keathley** - A **miracle** is an unusual and significant event (**terasa**) which requires the working of a supernatural agent (**dunamis**) and is performed for the purpose of authenticating the message or the messenger (**semeion**).

**Herbert Lockyer** on "**signs**" (semeion) - Here we have a word carrying with it a particular reference to the significance of miracles as being seals by which God authenticated the miracle-worker himself. In semeion, the ethical purpose of the miracle is most prominent. A miracle was to be looked upon as a token and indication of the near presence and working of God and a proof of the genuineness of revelation. The miracles of Christ were signs and pledges of something more than beyond themselves (Isaiah 7:11; 38:7). As we have indicated, they were seals of power set to the person performing the miracle (Mark 6:30; Acts 14:3; Hebrews 2:4). They were legitimate acts whereby the miracle-worker could claim to be accepted as God's representative (I John 2:18; II Corinthians 12:12). The "signs" given to Saul, Eli, Gideon, and others are not to be thought of as miracles (I Samuel 10:1-19; Judges 7:9-15; Luke 2:12). Sign designates a proof or evidence furnished by one set of facts to the reality and genuineness of another" (II Corinthians 12:12). **POWERS—Dunamis** - Miracles are also "powers" in that they manifest the mighty power of God which was inherent in Christ Himself, "the great power of God" (Acts 8:10), and who was made unto us—power. This word points to new and higher forces working in this lower world of ours (Hebrews 6:5). Semeion refers to the final cause of miracles; dunamis, to their efficient cause.

**Semeion** - 77x in 69v - NAS Usage: distinguishing mark (1), miracle (2), sign (35), signs (39).

Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see **asign** from You."

39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for **asign**; and yet no **sign** will be given to it but the **sign** of Jonah the prophet;

Matthew 16:1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a **sign** from heaven.

3 "And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the **signs** of the times?"

4 "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a **sign**; and a **sign** will not be given it, except the **sign** of Jonah." And He left them and went away.

Matthew 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?"

24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great **signs** and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

30 "And then the **sign** of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

Matthew 26:48 Now he who was betraying Him gave them a **sign**, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him."

Mark 8:11 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a **sign** from heaven, to test Him.

12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a **sign**? Truly I say to you, no **sign** will be given to this generation."

Mark 13:4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the **sign** when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show **signs** and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Mark 16:17 "These **signs** will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;

20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the **signs** that followed. [And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of



eternal salvation.

Luke 2:12 "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed--

Luke 11:16 Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a **sign** from heaven.

29 As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a **sign**, and yet no **sign** will be given to it but the **sign** of Jonah.

30 "For just as Jonah became a **sign** to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.

Luke 21:7 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the **sign** when these things are about to take place?"

11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great **signs** from heaven.

25 "There will be **signs** in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,

Luke 23:8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some **sign** performed by Him.

John 2:11 This beginning of His **signs** Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His **signs** which He was doing.

John 3:2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these **signs** that You do unless God is with him."

John 4:48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see **signs** and wonders, you simply will not believe."

54 This is again a second **sign** that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

John 6:2 A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the **signs** which He was performing on those who were sick.

14 Therefore when the people saw the **sign** which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

26 Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw **signs**, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

30 So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a **sign**, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?"

John 7:31 But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more **signs** than those which this man has, will He?"

John 9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such **signs**?" And there was a division among them.

John 10:41 Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no **sign**, yet everything John said about this man was true."

John 11:47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many **signs**."

John 12:18 For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this **sign**.

37 But though He had performed so many **signs** before them, yet they were not believing in Him.

John 20:30 Therefore many other **signs** Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

Acts 2:19 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND **SIGNS** ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and **signs** which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know--

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and **signs** were taking place through the apostles.

Acts 4:16 saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.

22 for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

30 while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."

Acts 5:12 At the hands of the apostles many **signs** and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and **signs** among the people.

Acts 7:36 "This man led them out, performing wonders and **signs** in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

Acts 8:6 The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the **signs** which he was performing.

13 Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed **signs** and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

Acts 14:3 Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.

Acts 15:12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

Romans 4:11 and he received the **sign** of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

Romans 15:19 in the power of **signs** and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:22 For indeed Jews ask for **signs** and Greeks search for wisdom;

1 Corinthians 14:22 So then tongues are for a **sign**, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a **sign**, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.

2 Corinthians 12:12 The **signs** of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and **signs** and false wonders,

2 Thessalonians 3:17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing **mark** in every letter; this is the way I write.

Hebrews 2:4 God also testifying with them, both by **signs** and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Revelation 12:1 A great **sign** appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

3 Then another **sign** appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.

Revelation 13:13 He performs great **signs**, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the **signs** which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

Revelation 15:1 Then I saw another **sign** in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

Revelation 16:14 for they are spirits of demons, performing **signs**, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

Revelation 19:20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the **signs** in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

**Semeion** - 99v in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** - Ge 1:14; 4:15; Ge 9:12-13, 17; Ge 17:11; Ex 3:12; 4:8-9, 17, 28, 30; 7:3, 9; 8:23; 10:1f; 11:9f; 12:13; 13:9, 16; 31:13, 17; Num 14:11, 22; 16:38; 17:10; 21:8f; 26:10; Deut 4:34; 6:8, 22; 7:19; 11:3, 18; 13:1f; 26:8; 28:46; 29:3; 34:11; Josh 2:18; 4:6; Judg 20:38; 1 Sam 2:34; 10:1, 7, 9; 14:10; 2 Kgs 19:29; 20:8f; 2 Chr 32:24; Neh 9:10; Esth 4:17; 10:3; Job 21:29; Ps 65:8; 74:4, 9; 78:43; 86:17; 105:27; 135:9; Isa 7:11, 14; 8:18; 11:12; 13:2; 18:3; 19:20; 20:3; 33:23; 37:30; 38:7, 22; 44:25; 55:13; 66:19; Jer 6:1; 10:2; 32:20f; 44:29; 48:9; 51:12, 27; Ezek 4:3; 9:4, 6; 20:12, 20; 39:15; Dan 4:1f; 5:9; 6:27

Below are some representative uses of **semeion** in the Septuagint:

Genesis 1:14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for **signs**, and for seasons, and for days and years;

Genesis 4:15 So the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD appointed a **sign** for Cain, lest anyone finding him should slay him.

Genesis 9:12-13) And God said, "This is the **sign** of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; 13 I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a **sign** of a covenant between Me and the earth.

Genesis 9:17 And God said to Noah, "This is the **sign** of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Genesis 17:11 "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the **sign** of the covenant between Me and you.

Exodus 3:12 And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the **sign** to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

Exodus 4:8-9" And it shall come about that if they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first **sign**, they may believe the witness of the last **sign**. 9 "But it shall be that if they will not believe even these two **signs** or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."