

Matthew 24:1-3 Commentary

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Apostle Matthew

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)

Click chart to enlarge

INTRODUCTION: 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)

John Hart - Next to the Apocalypse (The Revelation), the Olivet Discourse contains the most extensive eschatological revelation in any one portion of the NT. Ice remarks about the importance of the Olivet Discourse, "This discourse is so significant that the way a person interprets it will impact his understanding of the rest of the prophecy passages in the Bible." Hodges states, "without it [the Olivet Discourse] we could hardly understand the other prophetic passages in the NT, including the book of Revelation" (italics original). Interestingly, out of the four Gospels the technical term for the future coming of Christ, parousia ("arrival, presence"), is found only in Matthew (24:3, 27, 37, 39). Matthew 24-25 has contributed to such watershed doctrines as preterism vis-à-vis futurism, and pretribulationism vis-à-vis posttribulationism. ([Should Pretribulationists Reconsider the Rapture in Matthew 24:36-44? - Part 1](#))

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 Expositional 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

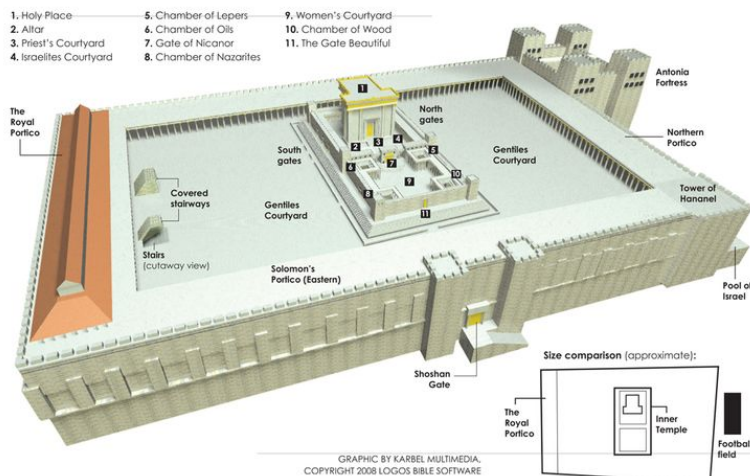
Olivet Discourse of the Messiah occurred between two significant events. Immediately preceding the Olivet Discourse, the Messiah spoke the final words of His public ministry, found in Matthew 23:1-39, which contains the denunciation of the leadership of Israel, especially for their guilt in leading the 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)

Herod's Temple

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple wasn't completed until approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



THE OLIVET DISCOURSE: THE TEMPLE'S BEAUTY ADMIRED

On what day of "Holy Week" did this discourse take place? Tuesday Evening (cp Mk 11:19, [See note on "Holy Tuesday"](#), of [Passion Week or Holy Week](#)) (Note: MacArthur thinks it was Wednesday evening because he dates the Triumphal Entry to Monday, not Sunday).

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 \(Yeshua\)](#) 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 aphethe (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



Rock left after Temple Destroyed

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE: THE TEMPLE'S DESTRUCTION DECREED

Parallel 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." ([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. (Pillar NT Commentary)

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 autou epi tou Horous ton Elaion proselthon (3PAAI) auto oi mathetai kat idian legontes (PAPMPN) Eipe (2SAAM) hemin pote tauta estai (3SFMI) kai ti to semeion tes ses parousias kai sunteleias tou aionos:

- **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)

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?'

THE DISCIPLES' QUESTIONS

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 the prophecy of in Zechariah 14:4-note - "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-note).

Before we go any farther it is important to understand what Jesus' disciples believed about the coming of the Messiah. The following summary is taken from John MacArthur's sermon ([see this sermon for expansion of each of the following points](#)) and much of his information is derived from the work of **Emil Schurer** (See Schurer's discussion of **The Messianic Hope** - Caveat - Note that I do not agree with all of Schurer's conclusions - e.g., he dates the writing of Daniel circa 164 BC four centuries later than it was actually penned by the prophet Daniel!). What this synopsis does help us understand is that the disciples were not looking for a "Second Coming" as we speak of it today. They were firmly convinced that Jesus was the long expected Jewish Messiah and that in their lifetime He would defeat Israel's enemies and set up His glorious kingdom of God in which Israel would once again be the most prominent nation in the world. Even after His death, burial and resurrection, the disciples still did not understand that Jesus had to leave and that there would be a long interval (at least 2000 years now) before He would return and accomplish the objectives outlined below. How do we know the disciples were still confused about the "timing"? Even after Jesus had spent 40 post-resurrection days **speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God** (Acts 1:3-note), they steadfastly continued to believe that Jesus was going to set up the Kingdom at that time. 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?"** (Acts 1:6-note). Notice what Jesus did **NOT SAY** - "Boys, you've got it all wrong. The promises to Israel have been given to the Church. [Israel has been replaced by the Church and God is finished with the literal nation of Israel!](#)"

Here is the summary of what the disciples and most Jews of Jesus' day believed about the coming of the Messiah...

- (i) Before the Messiah came there would be a time of terrible tribulation.
- (ii) Into this chaos there would come Elijah as the forerunner and herald of the Messiah.
- (iii) Then there would enter the Messiah.
- (iv) The nations would ally themselves and gather themselves together against the champion of God.
- (v) The result would be the total destruction of these hostile powers.
- (vi) There would follow the renovation of Jerusalem.
- (vii) The Jews who were dispersed all over the world would be gathered into the city of the new Jerusalem.
- (viii) Palestine would be the centre of the world and the rest of the world subject to it. All the nations would be subdued.

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 (cf Lk 19:11). 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. See 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.

[There Is a Mighty Question](#)

There is a mighty question
We ask when nations rage:
Just when will be Christ's coming,
The ending of the age?
Take care, said Jesus clearly,
For many will appear;
They'll claim to be Messiah,
Yet people should not fear.

For in the days of Noah,
The people went along
In eating and in drinking,
In merriment and song—
Then suddenly the world changed
With great, surprising power;
So too will be Christ's coming,
And no one knows the hour.

So keep awake and watchful;
Salvation is at hand!
Our hope is in Christ Jesus,
And by God's grace we stand.
The night is almost over,
We wait for God's new day,
And through the Holy Spirit,
We follow Jesus' way.

Be ready in your living,
For when you feed the poor,

Or give to thirsty children
The water they long for,
And when you welcome strangers
And help the ones in need,
Christ says: Receive my kingdom,
For you are serving me.

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:

- 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. ([The MacArthur New Testament Commentary- Matthew 24-28](#); 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)

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.

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

** 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." ([The MacArthur New Testament Commentary- Matthew 24-28](#); 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)**."

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). ([New Testament Words in Today's Language](#) - a useful resource for word studies - also in Logos).

Zodhiates on distinction of **sign** and **wonder** (*teras*) - the word *sēmeion*, "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"

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 prophesyings; 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). ([Word Study New Testament - excellent resource](#))

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](#))

Other Dictionary Articles on Signs:

- [Sign - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Signs - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary](#)

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."