

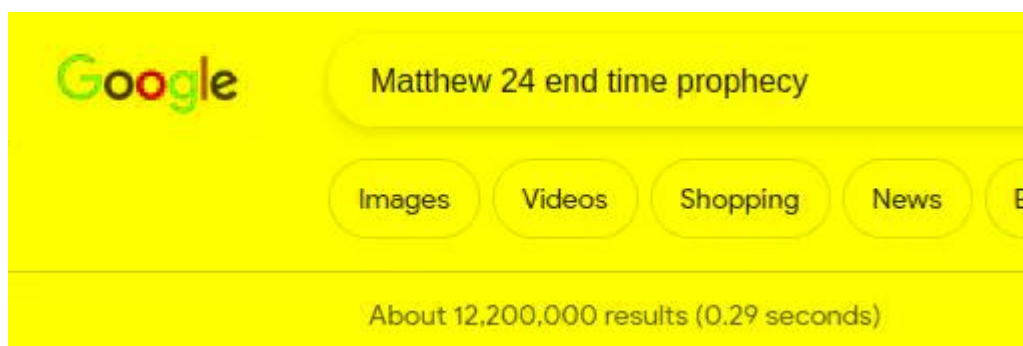
Is the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24 an End-time Event?



I've covered in other articles how the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 has been falsely interpreted to be an End-time event by most evangelicals today. However, because I kept hearing false interpretations about it from people close to me, I felt the need to write something short and thought-provoking to try to lead my fellow brothers and sisters to a deeper and correct understanding of what Jesus was saying to His disciples. I hope to convince you from the Scriptures alone that the Great Tribulation He spoke of in Matthew 24 is *NOT* an End-time event.

The Olivet Discourse is the prophecy Jesus gave His disciples about the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Evangelicals today interpret Matthew 24 to be an End-time event. And why? Because the Scofield Reference Bible says so! They don't compare Matthew 24 with Mark 13 or Luke 21, for if they did, they might understand that *most* of Matthew 24 is talking about the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Roman army in 70 AD.

In case you are a new babe in Christ and are unfamiliar with what evangelicals teach about Matthew 24, just do a Google search with the words *Matthew 24 End time prophecy* and see the number of hits.



I would say 12,200,000 hits indicate that most Christians today believe the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 is an End-time event.

I want to make it clear I didn't come to a good understanding of the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24 on my own. Commentaries by other men of God,

especially by Bible scholars who lived in the 18th century and earlier helped me greatly. They were men who lived before John Nelson Darby taught Jesuit futurist eschatology in the 19th century which was promoted by the Scofield Reference Bible and the Dallas Theological Seminary in the 20th century.

Let's start this condensed study of Matthew chapter 24 with verse 15:

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

What Scripture spoken of by Daniel was Jesus referring to? The second half of Daniel 9:27 says:

... and for the **overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate**, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

What is this talking about? Who uses abominations to make what desolate? Luke who wrote his Gospel to the Greek Gentiles who had not read the prophecy in the book of Daniel defines the abomination of desolation in Luke 21:20 as:

And when ye shall see *Jerusalem compassed with armies*, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

The Roman army was an abomination to the Jews! What do armies do to their enemies' territory? They desolate it! They destroy as much as they can to defeat their enemy. That's what happened when the Jews rebelled against the Roman government. By 70 AD the Roman army destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem and killed over one million Jews in a relatively short time.

Matthew 24:1-2 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.
And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Do you see how the beginning of Matthew 24 is clearly referring to the destruction of the Temple? History tells us the "he" of the second half of Daniel 9:27 was General Titus who led the Roman army. According to Josephus, he didn't want to destroy the Temple at first, but his soldiers were so angry toward the Jews Titus couldn't control them.

Matthew 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the

mountains:

Just ask yourself, if Matthew 24 is supposed to be an End-time prophecy of great worldwide tribulation of all the peoples of the earth (who according to Scofield missed the rapture) *why* would Jesus specify Judaea? And why would Jesus use the verb “flee”? Flee from what? Flee from the End-time Beast who controls the entire earth? Flee where? If you live in the Great Plains of the USA there are no mountains to flee to. I submit to you therefore this prophecy only makes sense when applied to the followers of Christ who saw the [armies of Rome invade their homeland of Judea in 66 AD when the armies of Rome first approached to stop the Jewish revolt against the empire.](#)

Matthew 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

If this is an End-time prophecy that will affect the entire world, *why* would Jesus tell his disciples that? If it's winter in the Northern Hemisphere, it's summer in the Southern Hemisphere. And why pray their flight from danger is not on the sabbath day? Because the gates of Jerusalem and other cities in Judea are *closed* on the Sabbath day! The believers wouldn't be able to leave the cities they are living in on the Sabbath day! I submit to you therefore the prophecy of not talking about the End-time but was specific to the followers of Jesus living in Jerusalem and Judea just before the invasion of the Roman armies the time of the [first Jewish revolt that started in 66 AD.](#)

Matthew 24:21 For *then* shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Verse 21 is where evangelicals get the words, “great tribulation.” But is that what the other two synoptic Gospels call it?

Mark 13:19 For in **those days shall be affliction**, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

Luke 21:22 For these be **the days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Days of affliction on whom? Days of vengeance on whom? On the Jesus Christ-rejecting Jews who did *NOT* flee Jerusalem and Judea! The followers of Christ who believed the prophecy Jesus gave on the Mount of Olives obeyed Him and were not in Jerusalem or Judea at the time the Roman armies were crucifying the Jews. They left and camped out somewhere in the mountains where they were safe from attack.

Matthew 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

What can this mean if the followers of Jesus were safe from attack by the Romans? I think it's logical to say they were fighting for survival in the mountains with limited resources. The Lord therefore shortened the days of the Roman attack so they could go back home. What do you think? It sure makes sense to me.

This is not to say Bible believing followers of Jesus Christ will not face tribulation and persecution in the End-time. No matter who wins the US presidential elections this coming November, half of the country is going to be mad! The US may erupt in a civil war. Insiders like [Bill Gates even predicted one!](#)

Jesus did promise His followers tribulation.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. *In the world ye shall have tribulation:* but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

I was taught we can KNOW EXACTLY how long that End-time tribulation will last, and I don't believe that anymore. My Bible teachers were influenced by the doctrines of dispensationalism that Darby and Scofield taught, doctrines that put Israel, not Jesus Christ, at the center of End-time prophecy. Dispensationalism AKA Futurism says that a future Antichrist will tribulate the world for 7 years just before the return of Christ. Some say only 3 and a half years. But both these doctrines are based on a false interpretation of the [70th Week of Daniel, something I wrote extensively about](#) on this website.

Christians from the very beginning have suffered persecution and tribulation by the Roman Beast (government) and yet many American Christians think they will be raptured out to Heaven just before the Antichrist rises! The Antichrist has been around for a long time now! How long? I would say from the time Constantine made Christianity the State Church. That was the Devil's change of plans. He saw persecution by pagan Rome only made the Church grow. By making Rome officially Christian, when the government persecutes believers, it's no longer called persecution of Christians, it's called persecution of *heretics!*

So what will happen? One researcher I know of says Donald Trump will win in November, defeat the evil Left, and bring to America a new era of peace and prosperity based on Christian principles, what some people call "Christian Nationalism." It will seem very good at first, but the Jesuits will be controlling it at the top and lead the government to persecute anybody they don't like, especially the Bible believers. This can't happen under the present US Constitution. Will there be a civil war that leads to the Constitution being revoked or amended? We shall see.

[The Most Misunderstood Parts of the Olivet Discourse Explained!](#)



The Olivet Discourse in Matthew is so misunderstood because it transitions from the fall of Jerusalem up to verse 34 to the end of the world from verse 35!

[The Popular but False Doctrine of the Rapture](#)



I believe this picture may depict an accurate description of 1 Thessalonians 4. But will it happen before a great tribulation? That's the subject of this article.

This post is about comparing popular doctrines about what Christians and evangelicals call "the rapture" to what the Bible actually says. The rapture is also called, "The blessed hope." What do teachers of the rapture mean by that? They mean that Jesus is going to take to Heaven His followers just before the Antichrist starts to persecute them in the Great Tribulation at the end of time! But does the Bible actually teach that?

My Bible says,

Revelation 7:14 And he said to me, These are they which came **out of** great tribulation,

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall suffer persecution.**

The Bible is its own best commentator. It's a mistake to read things into Scripture based on our cognitive bias or based only on what some preacher says the Bible passage says. That's the mistake I made for 30 plus years. I trusted what my pastor taught me only to find later he himself admitted his interpretation of Endtime Scripture was only a theory which he got from C.I. Scofield!

What is the Rapture?

The word "rapture" is not found in the Bible. It apparently was coined by John Nelson Darby in the 19th century. The Bible calls the second coming of Christ, "the day of the Lord."

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:10 But **the day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Wikipedia says,

The rapture is an eschatological concept held by some Christians, particularly within branches of American evangelicalism, consisting of an end-time event when all Christian believers who are alive, along with resurrected believers, will rise "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

The Bible does talk about Jesus coming for His own at the end of time.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. – 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

But when does this happen? The most popular doctrine among American evangelical Christians is that it will happen just before a 7 year tribulation period. Where do they get this idea? From John Nelson Darby of the 19th century. He taught that Christ would return before a final great 7-year tribulation to save His elect from persecution by the Antichrist. C.I. Scofield picked up Darby's teaching and put it in the footnotes of the Scofield Reference Bible.

My Bible tells me just the opposite!

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together **first the tares**, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.
Matthew 13:30

When does this happen? On "the day of the Lord"! The day of the second coming of Christ! The Bible says the rejectors of Christ will be taken away *first*! And after that resurrection will happen and the believers in Christ will be taken up to be with the Lord in the clouds!

On what Scriptures do John Nelson Darby and C.I. Scofield base their pretribulation rapture doctrine on? If *you* believe in a pretribulation rapture of the Church, that is also my question to you. You can write the Bible verses you believe teach a pretribulation rapture in the comments section. When you do that, please remember that the cardinal rule of Bible interpretation is always to interpret the verse in the context of the other verses before and after it.

Even if you believe the latter part of Matthew 24 is talking about end-time events, verses 29 to 31 make it clear Christians will go through a period of tribulation.

29 **Immediately after the tribulation of those days** shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And **then** shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and **then** shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

For more about the Olivet Discourse of Matthew chapter 24, please see [Futurist Interpretation of Matthew 24 Exposed as Folly by John Gill](#)

Just imagine visiting a country where believers in Christ are undergoing

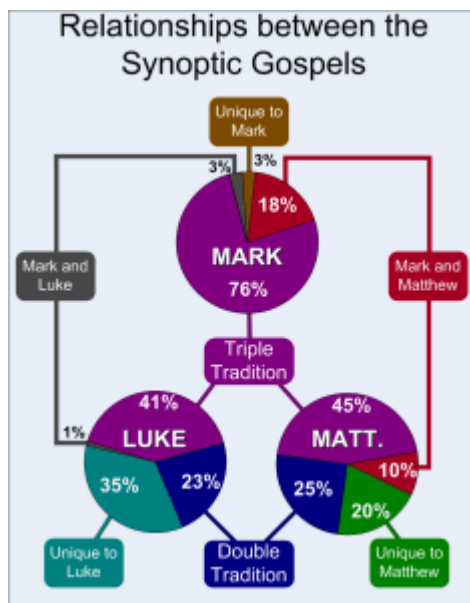
severe persecution and telling them, “Don’t worry! Jesus will come soon and save you from the Great Tribulation!” You might hear the following, “What can be greater tribulation than seeing my friends, members of my family, and fellow believers in Christ killed right before my eyes?”

If you cannot use the Bible to explain your doctrines, you either don’t know those doctrines well enough, or you picked them up from some preacher you like and never took the time to search the Scriptures for yourself to see if the doctrines are biblically sound.

Further reading on this subject:

<https://www.ucg.org/world-news-and-prophecy/the-rapture-a-popular-but-false-doctrine>

[The Olivet Discourse in All Three Synoptic Gospels Compared Verse by Verse](#)



The Olivet Discourse is the message Jesus gave to His disciples on the Mount of Olives. This message is written in slightly three different ways in the three synoptic Gospels in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. The Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke are called **synoptic Gospels** because they include many of the same stories. And they stand in contrast to the Gospel of John, whose content is largely distinct.

In my opinion, Just as the Daniel 9:27 is one of the most misinterpreted prophecies in the Bible, Matthew 24 is one of the most misinterpreted chapters in the Bible. False doctrines of Dispensationalism and Futurism have tainted the thinking of the vast majority of evangelicals today. Most Bible

believing Christians today interpret Matthew 24 as the Lord's description of events just before the end of the world. Is that what Mark 13 and Luke 21, the parallel passages of the other two synoptic Gospels teach? Let's find out by comparing them!

I believe it's very important to compare the three passages because through it's the same account of Jesus on the Mount of Olives, the wording is not always identical! And because they're not always identical, Mark 13 and Luke 21 sheds light on the words recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Scripture interprets Scripture.

Prophecy of the destruction of the Temple

Matthew 24:1-2 "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. {2} And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Mark 13:1-2 "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! {2} And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Luke 21:5-6 "And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, {6} As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Not much difference in the first three verses of the Olivet Discourse.

The disciples ask Jesus when it will happen and what the signs will be before it happens.

Matthew 24:3 "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?**"

Mark 13:3-4 "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, {4} Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the **sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?**"

Luke 21:7 "And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and **what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?**"

As you can see, only Matthew says "the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world", and not Mark or Luke. According to Strong's concordance, the Greek word for world is *aion* and from which we get our English world *eon*, meaning an age. With that in mind, a better translation for Matthew 23:3 would be, "the end of the Jewish age." Do you think I'm stretching it to say that? The Olivet discourse is all about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Roman army in 70 AD. No Temple = no more animal sacrifices, the very heart and practice of the Jewish relation. Jesus was telling His disciples He is giving the Jews 40 more years to repent before He returns to destroy them!

This is connected to what "the sign of thy coming" means. It doesn't mean the second coming of Christ at the very end of the world, it means Christ's coming to destroy the people who rejected Him as their Messiah! How do I know Jesus returned in 70 AD? Jesus told the high priest Caiaphas He would return!

Matthew 26:63-65 "But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. {64} Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. {65} Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy."

God has given us an intellect to help us interpret Scripture. Some things are symbolic and others literal. Jesus told the high priest that he would see Him sitting at the right hand of power coming in the clouds of Heaven. It seems logical to me that the high priest would live 40 more years to the destruction of Jerusalem, and literally see Jesus in the clouds, and therefore know that he and the Jews are being judged by God through the Roman army for their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, their Christ. It therefore can't possibly mean 2000 years later as some may interpret it.

Jesus tells them signs before the destruction of the Temple.

Matthew 24:4-14 "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. {5} For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (6) "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. {7} For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. {8} All these are the beginning of sorrows. {9} Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. {10} And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. {11} And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. {12} And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. {13} But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. {14} And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Mark 13:5-13 “And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: {6} For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (7) And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. {8} For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows. {9} But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. {10} And the gospel must first be published among all nations. {11} But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. {12} Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. {13} And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Luke 21:8-19 “And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: **go ye not therefore after them.** {9} But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. {10} Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: {11} And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. {12} But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake. {13} And it shall turn to you for a testimony. {14} Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: {15} For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. {16} And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. {17} And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. {18} But there shall not an hair of your head perish. {19} In your patience possess ye your souls.”

Luke adds more information with “fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.” Flavius Josephus wrote about [seven signs](#) before the destruction of Jerusalem.

1. A star stood over the city like a sword, and a comet – remaining for a whole year. **Matthew, we know, also likes the idea of a star hanging over a particular spot on earth.**
2. At a Feast of Unleavened Bread, at 3 am, a bright light, as bright as midday, appeared around the altar and sanctuary, lasting for an hour.
3. During the same feast a cow brought for sacrifice gave birth to a lamb in the middle of the Temple courts.
4. At midnight the East Gate of the Inner Sanctuary opened of its own accord. This solid bronze gate normally required 20 men to shut it, and it was fastened with iron bars secured by bolts.
5. Shortly after the feast, before sunset, there appeared in the sky over the entire country chariots and regiments of soldiers racing through the clouds and surrounding the towns.
6. At Pentecost the priests **who were performing the normal Inner Temple**

ritual at night heard a violent movement and loud crash, then a loud cry of many voices: "Let us go hence!"

7. Four years before Jerusalem's war with Rome, Jesus the son of Ananias proclaimed doom for the city – especially at the feasts, and from the Temple. He spoke as one possessed for 7 and a half years, "Woe to Jerusalem", was beaten by the authorities, and was killed during the siege.

Jesus tells His followers when to flee Jerusalem and Judea.

Matthew 24:15 "When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Mark 13:14 "But when ye shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains:

Luke 21:20-21 "And when ye shall see **Jerusalem compassed with armies**, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Matthew and Mark say to flee when they see "abomination of desolation" and Luke says to flee when they see, "Jerusalem compassed with armies." I submit to you that the abomination of desolation, therefore, is the armies of Rome about to attack Jerusalem and not some idol the Antichrist puts in the Temple as many have interpreted it.

Jesus tells His followers where to go, what to do, and why.

Matthew 24:16-21 "Then let them which be in **Judæa flee into the mountains**: {17} Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: {18} Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. {19} And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! {20} But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: {21} For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. "

Mark 13:15-19 "And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: {16} And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. {17} But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! {18} And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. {19} For **in those days shall be affliction**, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be."

Luke 21:21-24 "Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. {22} "For these be the **days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. {23} But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and **wrath upon this people**. {24} And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

As you can see, Mark and Luke add more detail and clarify exactly what the "great tribulation" is! Mark calls it days of affliction and Luke calls it days of vengeance! Affliction upon whom? Vengeance upon whom? Upon the Christ rejecting unbelieving Jews! And where were they? In Jerusalem. Many of them fled to the Temple and were killed there. None of the Christians were there. They in obedience to Jesus' command fled Jerusalem and Judea and went to the mountains where they were safe. The Lord must have fed and took care of them there.

These scriptures are clearly about the attack by the Roman army by the Jews for their rebellion. The Lord was going to punish the Christ rejecting Jews but did not want His people to be caught up in that judgement. He therefore told His followers to flee Jerusalem and Judea when they saw the Roman army coming. He warned the Christians who were not in Judea not to return to it. He told them to make haste to flee for their lives. He told them to pray it won't happen in winter when it's much more difficult to travel, and to pray it won't be on the Sabbath day when the gates are closed.

The war against the Jews shortened for the Christians sake.

Matthew 24:22 "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Mark 13:20 "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days."

Missing in Luke.

If the Romans had gone on destroying in this manner, the whole nation of the Jews would have been destroyed. For the Christians particularly those days were shortened.

Warning about false teachers

Matthew 24:23-26 "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. {24} For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. {25} Behold, I have told you before. {26} Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not."

Mark 13:21-23 "And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: {22} For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. {23} But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things."

Already told in **Luke 21:8** "And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them."

Christians today need to be very careful who they listen to! There are many false teachers, dispensationalists, futurists, doctrines tainted by Jesuits. And there are prosperity Gospel preachers who rip off the poor while they live in luxury. And some churches are even infiltrated with witches! We need to make sure we are following what the Bible actually teaches and not just what some preacher says it teaches. Let's be like the Bereans and search the Scriptures for ourselves to see if what the preacher or teacher is saying is what the Bible actually says!

Acts 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto **Berea**: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 **These were more noble than those in Thessalonica**, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **sought the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

Jesus uses a parable of lightning, a carcass, and eagles

Matthew 24:27-28 "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. {28} For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

Not in Mark.

Not in Luke

Adam Clarke's interpretation: "The Lord, points out the very march of the Roman army: they entered into Judea on the East, and carried on their conquest Westward, as if not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very route which the army would take, were intended in the comparison of the lightning issuing from the east, and shining to the west. Clarke also interprets the "carcass" as the Jewish nation which was morally and judicially dead and the "eagles" as the armies of Rome gathered around the dead nation. It's makes sense to me!

The Historicist interpretation of Scriptures futurists consider to be about the end of the world.

Matthew 24:29-31 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: {30} And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. {31} And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Mark 13:24-27 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, {25} And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. {26} And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. {27} And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

Luke 21:25-28 "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; {26} Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. {27} And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. {28} And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

From Adam Clarke's commentary: "Commentators generally understand this, and what follows, of the end of the world and Christ's coming to judgment: but the word immediately shows that our Lord is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately consequent on calamities already predicted: and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem. "The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the sun and moon of its glory and happiness shall be darkened – brought to nothing. The sun is the religion of the Church; the moon is the government of the state; and the stars are the judges and doctors of both. Compare Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7, Ezekiel 32:8, etc."

In the prophetic language, great commotions upon earth are often represented under the notion of commotions and changes in the heavens: –

The fall of Babylon is represented by the stars and constellations of heaven withdrawing their light, and the sun and moon being darkened. See Isaiah 13:9, Isaiah 13:10.

The destruction of Egypt, by the heaven being covered, the sun enveloped with a cloud, and the moon withholding her light. Ezekiel 32:7, Ezekiel 32:8.

The destruction of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes is represented by casting down some of the host of heaven, and the stars to the ground. See Daniel 8:10.

And this very destruction of Jerusalem is represented by the Prophet Joel, Joel 2:30, Joel 2:31, by showing wonders in heaven and in earth – darkening the sun, and turning the moon into blood. This general mode of describing these judgments leaves no room to doubt the propriety of its application in the present case.

The falling of stars, i.e. those meteors which are called falling stars by the common people, was deemed an omen of evil times.

Verse 30 Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man – The plain meaning of this is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of Divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ's power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will, in consequence of this manifestation of God, be led to acknowledge Christ and his religion. By της γης, of the land, in the text, is evidently meant here, as in several other places, the land of Judea and its tribes, either its then inhabitants, or the Jewish people wherever found.

Verse 31 He shall send his angels – Τους αγγελους, his messengers, the apostles, and their successors in the Christian ministry.

With a great sound of a trumpet – Or, a loud-sounding trumpet – the earnest affectionate call of the Gospel of peace, life, and salvation.

Shall gather together his elect – The Gentiles, who were now chosen or elected, in place of the rebellious, obstinate Jews, according to Our Lord's prediction, Matthew 8:11, Matthew 8:12, and Luke 13:28, Luke 13:29. For the children of the kingdom, (the Jews who were born with a legal right to it, but had now finally forfeited that right by their iniquities) should be thrust out. It is worth serious observation, that the Christian religion spread and prevailed mightily after this period: and nothing contributed more to the success of the Gospel than the destruction of Jerusalem happening in the very time and manner, and with the very circumstances, so particularly foretold by our Lord. It was after this period that the kingdom of Christ began, and his reign was established in almost every part of the world. To St. Matthew's account, St. Luke adds, Luke 21:24, They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shalt be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The number of those who fell by the sword was very great. Eleven Hundred Thousand perished during the siege. Many were slain at other places, and at other times. By the commandment of Florus, the first author of the war, there were slain at Jerusalem 3,600, Josephus. War, b. ii. c. 14. By the inhabitants of Caesarea, above 20,000. At Scythopolis, above 13,000. At Ascalon, 2,500. At Ptolemais, 2,000. At Alexandria, 50,000. At Joppa, when taken by Cestius Gallus, 8,400. In a mountain called Asamon, near Sepporis, above 2,000. At Damascus, 10,000. In a battle with the Romans at Ascalon, 10,000. In an ambuscade near the same place, 8,000. At Japha, 15,000. Of the Samaritans, on Mount Gerizim, 11,600. At Jotapa, 40,000. At Joppa, when taken by Vespasian, 4,200. At Tarichea, 6,500. And after the city was taken, 1,200. At Gamala, 4,000, besides 5,000 who threw themselves down a precipice. Of those who fled with John, of Gischala, 6,000. Of the Gadarenes, 15,000 slain, besides countless multitudes drowned. In the village of Idumea, above 10,000 slain. At Gerasa, 1,000. At Machaerus, 1,700. In the wood of Jardes, 3,000. In the castle of Masada, 960. In Cyrene, by Catullus the governor, 3,000. Besides these, many of every age, sex, and condition, were slain in the war, who are not reckoned; but, of those who are reckoned, the number amounts to upwards of 1,357,660, which would have appeared incredible, if their own historian had not so particularly enumerated them. See Josephus, War, book ii. c. 18, 20; book iii. c. 2, 7, 8, 9; book iv. c. 1, 2, 7, 8, 9; book vii. c. 6, 9, 11; and Bp. Newton, vol. ii. p. 288-290.

Many also were led away captives into all nations. There were taken at Japha, 2,130. At Jotapa, 1,200. At Tarichea, 6,000 chosen young men, who were sent to Nero; others sold to the number of 30,400, besides those who were given to Agrippa. Of the Gadarenes were taken 2,200. In Idumea above 1,000. Many besides these were taken in Jerusalem; so that, as Josephus says, the number of the captives taken in the whole war amounted to 97,000. Those above seventeen years of age were sent to the works in Egypt; but most were distributed through the Roman provinces, to be destroyed in their theatres by the sword, and by the wild beasts; and those under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves. Eleven thousand in one place perished for want. At Caesarea, Titus, like a thorough-paced infernal savage, murdered 2,500 Jews, in honor of his brother's birthday; and a greater number at Berytus in honor of his father's. See Josephus, War, b. vii. c. 3. s. 1. Some he caused to kill each other; some were thrown to the wild beasts; and others burnt alive. And all this was done by a man who was styled, The darling of mankind! Thus were the Jews miserably tormented, and distributed over the Roman provinces; and continue to be distressed and dispersed over all the nations of the world to the present day. Jerusalem also was, according to the prediction of our Lord, to be trodden down by the Gentiles. Accordingly it has never since been in the possession of the Jews. It was first in subjection to the Romans, afterwards to the Saracens, then to the Franks, after to the Mamalukes, and now to the Turks. Thus has the prophecy of Christ been most literally and terribly fulfilled, on a people who are still preserved as continued monuments of the truth of our Lord's prediction, and of the truth of the Christian religion. See more in Bp. Newton's Dissert. vol. ii. p. 291, etc.

The meaning of the parable of the fig tree

Matthew 24:32-35 "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: {33} So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. {34} Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. {35} Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Mark 13:28-31 "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: {29} So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. {30} Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. {31} Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."

Luke 21:29-33 "And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; {30} When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. {31} So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. {32} Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. {33} Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."

Adam Clarke commentary: **Learn a parable of the fig-tree** – That is, These signs which I have given you will be as infallible a proof of the approaching ruin of the Jewish state as the budding of the trees is a proof of the coming summer.

My commentary of **This generation shall not pass away**: Jesus was talking to his disciples who were mostly young. They would live 40 more years to see all these things, namely the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Roman army.

Jesus exhorts us not to fall spiritually asleep.

Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Mark 13:32-33 "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. {33} Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

Not in Luke.

How many times in history were people caught off guard and unprepared for a disaster? The destruction of Lahaina in Maui is a recent example.

Who was left behind? The fortunate ones!

Matthew 24:40-41 "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. {41} Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

Not in Mark.

Not in Luke.

Adam Clarke's commentary: **Then shall two men – two women – one shall be taken, and the other left** – The meaning seems to be, that so general should these calamities be, that no two persons, wheresoever found, or about whatsoever employed, should be both able to effect their escape; and that captivity and the sword should have a complete triumph over this unhappy people.

I hope you see these verses are not talking about the Rapture as the popular "Left Behind" series by Tim LaHaye indicates. It's talking about the killing of Jews by the Romans.

Warnings to watch and stay spiritually awake!

Matthew 24:37-51 "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. {38} For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, {39} And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. {43} But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. {44} Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. {45} Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? {46} Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. {47} Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. {48} But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; {49} And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; {50} The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, {51} And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Mark 13:34-37 "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: {36} Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. {37} And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

Luke 21:34-36 "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. {35} For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. {36} Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Self-explanatory.

For more commentary of the Olivet Discourse, please see [Adam Clarke's Commentary on Matthew 24](#)

[The Prophecy Jesus Told His Disciples on the Mount of Olives was ALL Fulfilled in 70AD](#)



This article is from communication with a friend who wrote:

I'm very interested in your comments about Jesus's Olivet prophecy saying it does not refer to our future but to AD70 when the Romans sacked Jerusalem. (I hope I'm not misrepresenting your position but please correct me if I am.) I know you've mentioned it before to me. Can you explain to me in layman's terms, how we know this refers to AD70 and not to our current future? I believe it relates to the years in Daniel? Thanks, and sorry I'm very muddled on this.

My reply:

You are presenting my position correctly when you said I believe it was all fulfilled in 70 AD.

If we agree that Matthew 24 Mark 13 and Luke 21 are all talking about the same thing, meaning the Olivet Discourse, it behooves us to compare these passages with each other to see if the account of one Gospel writer may shed more light on the account of another Gospel writer. It seems to me most contemporary teachers of the Olivet discourse have not done that!! And this has resulted in two very serious misinterpretations. One of them has resulted from a mistranslation of Matthew 24:3. Let's compare that verse with what Mark and Luke have to say.

Matthew 24:3 (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?

Mark 13:4 (KJV) Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

Luke 21:7 (KJV) And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Notice that Mark and Luke does not say "the end of the world." A better translation would be, the end of the age, meaning the Jewish age.

Other translations confirm this:

<https://biblehub.com/matthew/24-3.htm>

I don't recommend modern English translations but I think some of the translations are better than the KJV in some verses. Most King James only people would not want to accept that. But I do see some errors in the King James version. For example, In the book of Acts, it uses the word Easter but it should say Passover. The Passover is not determined by the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox as Easter is.

In 70 AD the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and all the records of Jewish lineage. And that means there is no person who claims to be Jewish today who can tell you what tribe of Israel he is from. Dr Chuck Baldwin does the most thorough job of any preacher I have ever heard in [explaining the Olivet discourse and the meaning of it.](#)

It's long but worth reading if you can take the time. It answers very clearly the second serious major misinterpretation of the Olivet discourse: The meaning of the Abomination of Desolation.

I will sum it up for you as succinctly as I can.

Most evangelicals today believe the Abomination of Desolation is the End time Antichrist erecting an idol in a rebuilt Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. And this is connected to false doctrines of so-called Christian Zionism. This was a popular doctrine in the Scofield Reference Bible and has misled millions of English-speaking Christians. And again to find the truth all we have to do is compare what Matthew has to say with one other Gospel writer, Luke and what he has to say:

Matthew 24:15-16 (KJV)

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Luke 21:20-21 (KJV)

20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Luke clearly identifies the Abomination of Desolation as Jerusalem compassed with armies – Roman armies. And both Matthew and Luke tell the followers of Jesus who witness that event what to do: Flee into the mountains. From where? From Judaea. Why? To avoid the slaughter of the Jews by the Romans. To me, that's as clear as crystal. The followers of Jesus who believed in the

prophecy left Jerusalem and Judea and survived the Roman attack. The unbelieving Jews who remained were killed.

In this prophecy, Jesus was referring to the final words of Daniel 9:27.

Daniel 9:27 (KJV) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The "overspreading of abominations" is talking about the attacking armies of Rome, and "make it desolate" is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The problem evangelicals make is that they also include the prophecies of Daniel 11, and they are completely different prophecies and were already fulfilled before Jesus was born on Earth. I also talk about this on my website but I don't want to give you too much to read right now.

Another point: Matthew refers to it as great tribulation, but Luke refers to it as *days of vengeance*.

Luke 21:22 (KJV) For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Days of vengeance on whom? On the Jesus of Nazareth rejecting Jews who crucified their Christ, their Messiah. This is brought out very clearly in Dr. Baldwin's talk and it makes a whole lot of sense to me.

Evangelicals today are always talking about a future coming great tribulation of people. Some say this includes believers as well if you believe in a post-tribulation rapture. I cannot see how you can come up with this doctrine when you read Luke chapter 21, because it's clearly referring to God's judgment on the unbelieving Christ-rejecting Jews!

Anyway, there's a lot more to talk about on this subject, and you're only going to learn it if you take the time to read what Pastor Chuck Baldwin has to say and or read other articles about it on my website. I have written extensively about it:

<https://www.jamesjpn.net/?s=Matthew+24>

And of course, you can say all of the above are *also* really interpretations but please know that this was the standard Protestant interpretation up to the end of the 18th century. Bible commentators up to that time have all said Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are fulfilled prophecies. This is not the same thing as Preterism! The preterists say that ALL of the Bible prophecies have been fulfilled, including all of the Book of Revelation, and I certainly don't believe that.

What is the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24?



The words “great tribulation” appear three times in the King James Version of the Bible. But are they all referring to the same event?

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Revelation 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**, except they repent of their deeds.

Revelation 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of **great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

I don't think these three Scriptures are all talking about the same event. You may dispute that. But this article is specifically about the tribulation Jesus was talking about in Matthew 24:21.

What do most evangelicals today teach about the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24? Some teach it's a *future* event of God's judgement on the wicked, and God's people will escape it in the Rapture. Correct me if I'm wrong but I think this is what John MacArthur teaches.

Others say the Great Tribulation is about the *wicked persecuting the saints!* They say this because they do not believe the Bible teaches a pre-tribulation rapture. I think so too. But is this really what the great tribulation of Matthew 24 is all about?

I hope you agree with me that the Bible is its own best interpreter. If that is true, shall we not look at what the two parallel passages of the other two synoptic Gospels in Mark and Luke have to say?

Mark 13:19 For in those days shall be **affliction**, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

Mark 13:19 is similar to Matthew 24:21 but rather than say "great tribulation" it says "affliction". Affliction on whom? Let's see what the Gospel of Luke has to say.

Luke 21:22-24 For these be the **days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be **great distress** in the land, and **wrath upon this people**. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

I hope you can see from the verses in Luke 21:22-24 that this is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD. It's talking about the wrath of God through the Roman army on the unbelieving Christ-rejecting Jews. How do I know that only Christ-rejecting Jews are the ones who are afflicted and slaughtered by the Romans? Because Jesus told His followers to flee Jerusalem and Judea when they see the Romans coming!

Luke 21:20-21 And **when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies**, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. {21} **Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains**; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

And by the way, "Jerusalem compassed with armies" is the same thing as the abomination of desolation of Matthew 24:15!

Matthew 24:15-16 **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) {16} Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains:

I hope you can see clearly that the parallel passage of Matthew 24:15-16 is Luke 21:20-21, It clearly defines the abomination of desolation as the armies of Rome. Rome was an abomination to the Jews and its armies made their capital city of Jerusalem desolate. It clearly tells Jesus' disciples what to

do when they see the armies coming: To flee Jerusalem and Judea and run to the mountains. All the Christians who knew believed and obeyed Jesus' commandment were saved from slaughter by the Romans. The Christ-rejecting Jews believed the false prophets that they would be saved by running into the temple. They were all killed by the Romans! And this is all confirmed by secular history and the writings of Josephus.

To sum up: The great tribulation of Matthew 24 occurred in 70 ad. It was God's judgment through the Romans for rejection of their Messiah, Jesus Christ. It was a past event that will never happen again! Why do I think so? Because Jesus said so!

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, **nor ever shall be.**

Mark 13:18-19 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. {19} For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, **neither shall be.**

Jesus told the high priest that he will see the Son of Man at the right hand of power.

Matthew 26:64-65 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, **Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.** {65} Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

When do you think the high priest saw Jesus sitting at the right hand of power? It must have been when the high priest was still alive! I believe it was most likely during the attack on Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. It was 40 years later and the high priest was most likely still alive. When he saw Jesus up in the clouds, how could he not help but think God was punishing him and his people for rejecting Jesus of Nazareth as the very Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah!