

Matthew 24- A Study on 70 AD

- The fall of Jerusalem, having been influenced by Satan who was most willingly employed by God for this very purpose, was a part of God's plan to bring all of mankind into one body of believers, "the Israel of God" (*Gal 6:16*), so that "all Israel will be saved" (*Rom 11:26*). Jerusalem was also from whence the Gospel was first preached. (*Isa 2:2-3*)

Isa 2:2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the LORD **from Jerusalem.** (*Emp. added*)

Conditions Leading Up to the Fall of Jerusalem

- "[The Jews] were permitted by the Romans to worship their different God in their different way, observing their different ways and days." "This special treatment, afforded to no other nation under heaven, caused the Jews and their **holy city**, Jerusalem, to be hated by the whole world." Conclusion: "...as long as Jerusalem stood, Israel as a nation stood. If, however, Jerusalem was subdued, the will of the people of Israel was also subdued." Arthur Ogden- Pgs. 46-48
- "Rome sought to exercise supreme civil authority over the whole world, including the Jews, but the Jewish Religion exercising absolute authority over the Jews of the world demanded allegiance to Jerusalem, the center of Jewish worship."- Arthur Ogden- pg. 84
- As one of the world's leading commercial powers Jerusalem had control, not only over the puppet kings of the nations where Jews lived but, also over the commerce they produced. The puppet kings under Roman authority (*Rev 17:12*) focused on Jerusalem since she was given special privileges where worship was concerned (*Rev 17:16*). Jerusalem being the center of Jewish worship received tithes from Jews living throughout the Roman dominated Empire which made her one of the richest cities in the world at the time with only Rome giving her any competition. Rome eventually turned on Jerusalem since it could no longer control her because of the rebellious factions from within.
- Within the city of Jerusalem there was "unemployment, unrest (*particularly by the Zealots*), hatred of the rich, hatred of Christians, strikes by Temple workers" and a "deep social rift between the rich and the poor." *The Destruction of Jerusalem by Ray Murray, Jr.*
- "In July 67 Vespasian attacked Joppa. The people of Joppa took to the sea, but a pre-dawn storm wrecked the ships. Many drowned, others killed themselves. Those who survived the wreck, numbering about 4,200, were killed by Romans. Joppa was destroyed once again." *Wikipedia/Josephus*
- Because Joppa was a sea port that supplied Jerusalem with food and other necessities

before being cut off by the Roman army...

“Soon the supplies in the city began to run out. A famine arose that was unbelievable. Women were eating their own children. At other times zealots, who were breaking into people’s homes, were fed human meat. With the civil war and famine as well as disease, 116,000 bodies were thrown over the walls of Jerusalem BEFORE the battle even began.”- Ray Murray, Jr. This weakened the city from within and made the siege more effective for the Roman army that surrounded her.

Mat 24:28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles (*Thayer*; “*an eagle: since eagles do not usually go in quest of carrion, this may [refer] to a vulture that resembles an eagle*”) be gathered together.

- Rebel armies of Jews had incited the wrath of the Roman Empire against Jerusalem. “Three strong factions, controlled by three generals (**Rev 16:19*), never were able to unite even when the city itself was later on the verge of destruction”. Ray Murray, Jr. - Pg. 14. (*Mat 24:10-14*) The noise of battle within the city was ongoing as the lust for control by the competing Jewish factions continued; the Zealots having expelled the Romans from the city not only employed their abandoned weaponry but donned their protective gear as well (***Rev 9:7, 9*).

**Rev 16:19* And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

***Rev 9:7* And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle (*military might of the Zealots*); and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold (*Gk.4375- stephanos-crown of victory: here over the Roman army in 66 AD- “The Roman garrison at the Fortress of Antonia was captured and the Roman soldiers were executed. As soon as the Romans were expelled, the entire city broke out in civil war.” [Murray- pg. 14]*), and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

Rev 9:9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; (**the Zealots having expelled the Romans from the city, not only employed their abandoned weaponry but donned their protective gear as well*) and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. (**Rev 9:17- same breastplates worn by the Roman soldiers.*)

- The Jews came into possession of several hundred of [Roman army war] machines in 66 AD when Cestius retreated from Jerusalem... The seditious Jews, who were at war against each other, used these weapons (**casting stones as “hail out of heaven”- [Rev 16:21] and spears “as the torment of a scorpion”- [**Rev 9:5]*) on each other and then upon the Romans when Jerusalem was besieged.” Ogden- pg. 236

**Rev 16:21* And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great. (*These were the barrage of stones cast from the machines that the Roman military used to subdue this insurrection.*)

Rev 9:5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented **five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. (*Emp. added. Even during the siege, the infighting continued.*)

- With Nero's death (*committed suicide on June 9, 68 AD*), Vespasian, who was general at the time, returned to Rome at the bequest of the army to become Emperor (*after the short reign of Galba, Otho and Vitellius within one year, a.k.a., "the year of the Caesars"*), placing his son Titus over the campaign to resurrect and finally finish the siege against Jerusalem.

Rev 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

- "Titus returned to Caesarea. Having gathered an army of more than 80,000 men, he began to attack Jerusalem about the first of April, 70 AD, during the feast of unleavened bread. The siege continued approximately **five months** and the city was completely destroyed by the middle of August, 70 AD."- Arthur Ogden- Pg. 90 (*Emp. added*)

Matthew 24

Mat 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and His disciples came to *Him* for to shew Him the buildings of the temple. (*Mk 13:1 adds: "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!"*.) 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.

Mat 24:3 And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, (*a*) when shall these things be? and (*b*) what *shall be* the sign of Thy coming, and of (*c*) the end of the world (*Gk.165- age*)?

Three Questions

(a)- "**when**"- Mat 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet (*Dan 12:11*), stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:...

- "Titus now began to attack the city from the North. Three walls were used here to defend the city, but the first was breached within 15 days. Some soldiers during this early breakthrough were able to go all the way to the Temple and put up the Roman Eagle and their battle standards in the Temple (*"the abomination of desolation"*). The Romans were repulsed. At about this time, Titus sent *Josephus as an emissary to try to get the Jews to peacefully surrender the city and save further loss of life. **He also withdrew the siege. It was at this point that all the Christians in the city fled to Pella (****Rev 12:6*). They did this because of the warning given by Jesus to flee when they saw the city surrounded by the armies (***** Mat 24:33-34*). (pg. 19)

*Josephus: He was born into one of the elite families in Jerusalem but after being "trapped in a cave with 40 of his companions in July 67 [AD]" "he suggested a method of collective suicide" where "they drew lots and killed each other." But after he and another of his

companions were left they “surrendered to the Roman forces and became prisoners”. He was released in 69 AD after “predicting Vespasian would become emperor” and “acted as a negotiator with the defenders during the siege of Jerusalem.” “His critics were never satisfied as to why he failed to commit suicide” but “after his capture, accepted the patronage of Romans.” *Wikipedia on Josephus (“and there fell a great star:- Rev 8:10)*

****Mat 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.** (*Emp. added*)

*****Rev 12:6** And the woman (*spiritual Israel*) fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and threescore* days.

******Mat 24:33** 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.

(b)- “**sign of Thy coming**”- Mat 24:6-8 And ye shall hear of **wars and rumors of wars**: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but **the end is not yet.** 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. (*Emp. added*)

- The mixing of kingdoms (*Dan 2:43- “iron mixed with miry clay”*) due to Rome’s constant expansion through war and the effect that alien cultures would have on her government, had an effect on the Christians who lived among them (*17:12*). This is also describing what was occurring within the walls of Jerusalem.

(c)- “**end of the age**”- Mat 24:14 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.** (*Emp. added*)

Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which **was preached to every creature which is under heaven**; whereof I Paul am made a minister; (*Emp. added*)

- Paul noted (*pre-70 AD*) to the Colossians that the Gospel had been preached to the whole, then known world. Rome’s infrastructure made that possible. Jerusalem fell shortly afterward. The heathen nations were in affiliation with the rulers and other authorities of Judea and Palestine. These made much gain in commerce through the pagan/Gentile merchants (*ex. Neh 13:20-21*) because of their allegiance with Jerusalem, and their participation with her in the persecution. Because of that, they too would fall.

Neh 13:20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. 21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no *more* on the Sabbath.

- “The Roman destruction was to last 42 months, the actual length of the war from the time Vespasian and his army entered Palestine in the spring of 67 A.D. until Jerusalem was completely destroyed in late summer of 70 A.D.”- Arthur Ogden- pg. 251 (*Rev 12:14; 13:5*) (*Lk 19:41-44*)

Rev 11:13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven.

- The judgment here was partial (*1/10*) concerning the remainder of the city. If *1/10* of a building's foundation is destroyed, the stability of the whole structure would be affected. Without the temple, Jerusalem lost her identity since that was her cornerstone.

Heb 12:27 And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the **removing of those things that are shaken** (*the O.T. Mosaic*), as of things **that are made**, that those things which cannot be shaken (*the N.T. spiritual kingdom/church*) may remain. (*Emp. added*) (*Dan 2:44*)

- Interlinear: “seven thousand names of men”. The number is symbolic since the exact amount slain due to Israel’s rebellion against the Law and Prophets cannot be known. “Josephus tells us that 1,197,000 Jews died in the destruction of Jerusalem [Suetonius says 600,000]”- Ray Murray Jr., pg. 16. There were actual people who existed and who went through such “great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be” (*Mat 24:21*). Obviously, 7,000 would evidence the enormity of the loss of life, seven being a number of completion (*Gen 2:2-3*) and multiplying that times 1,000 (*7:4*) “denoted that the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth was complete in the judgment that was passed on Jerusalem”. Wallace, pg. 227
- The siege ended with many being taken into captivity and of which many were sold into slavery or prostitution. Those who didn’t die of starvation or famine were killed with the sword, either during the civil war that took place within the city or by the army of the Roman Empire that surrounded it (*Mat 24:33-34*).

Mat 24:33 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.

- This was what constituted the battle of Armageddon- Zec 12:11 “In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.” “This figure in the text of the apocalypse was employed not for the physical location but for the battle imagery”. Wallace
- “The severance of all commercial affiliations by the siege of Jerusalem and the devastation of Judea had reduced the city to a haunt.”- Wallace (*Rev 18:2*)
- “the end of Jerusalem and the Jewish state, and the removal of Judaism [was] the greatest obstacle to the expansion of Christianity from the path of the church”- Wallace