The Olivet Discourse and The Destruction of Jerusalem in Prophecy



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August 3

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You who keep on killing the Prophets and keep on stoning them who are sent to you! How often I wanted to gather your children together -- even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings! But you [Pharisees] did not want that!"

"Behold, your House is being abandoned to you -- desolate! For I say to you, that you shall not see Me from now on -- until you shall say: 'Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!'" 3039

As the last week of Jesus' earthly life further unfolded, He denounced the Scribes and the Pharisees most severely. He did so precisely because He loved His Own Covenant People and the inhabitants of Jerusalem -- whom the Scribes and the Pharisees had misled.

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: "The **Scribes** and the **Pharisees** do sit in the seat of Moses. Therefore, observe whatever they **command** you! **Observe**, and **do** it! "But, **you must not** do -- according to **their** works!" Don't **you** go and do, what **they** do!"

To the extent that the Scribes and the Pharisees then still sat in the judgment seat of Moses -- to the extent to which the Scribes and the Pharisees still correctly enjoined the Law of God -- to that extent, Christians were to obey their **injunctions**. However, the Christians were not to imitate the **deeds** of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

Even in Christ's stark denunciation of the Pharisees which followed, His love for a lost humanity still shone through -- irrepressibly. "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you keep on shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against men. For you do not go in yourselves, neither do you permit those who are [desirous of] entering, to go in." ³⁰⁴¹

It grieved the Saviour that the Scribes and Pharisees were not entering into His Kingdom. But it grieved Him probably still more that they were also hindering others too from entering.

"Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" -- said Jesus. "For you encompass sea and land to make one convert; and, when he has been made, you make him twofold more the child of Hell than yourselves!" ³⁰⁴²

It grieved the Saviour that those Judaistic Scribes and Pharisees were children of the Devil, ³⁰⁴³ on the road to Hell. But it grieved Him still more that the Gentile ³⁰⁴⁴ converts whom those Scribes and Pharisees had seduced unto Judaism, were twice as bad as they themselves and --through their own heathen depravity **plus** the influence of the Scribes and Pharisees upon them -- thus **doubly** damned. ³⁰⁴⁵

It was grievous to the Saviour that the Scribes and Pharisees as well as their forefathers -- the hard-hearted and unregenerate people of Jerusalem -- had persecuted the true Prophets of God. For such conduct must necessarily be avenged.

"You are the children of those who killed the Prophets," said Jesus to the Scribes and Pharisees. "Therefore, look, I am sending you -- Prophets and Wise men and Scribes" (namely godly Christian Leaders). "But some of them, you shall kill and crucify [such as Stephen and Peter]. And some of them, you shall scourge in your synagogues -- and persecute them from city to city," such as would be done to Paul and Barnabas.

As a result, Jesus assured the Scribes and Pharisees that upon them would "come all the righteous blood shed upon the Earth -- from the blood of righteous Abel, 3048 unto the blood of Zachariah 3049 son of Barachiah whom **you** slew between the temple and the altar. Truly, I tell you, all these things [namely God's vengeance for those horrible deeds of the Pharisees] shall come upon **this generation**!" 3050

Whoever the above righteous Zachariah was, it is clear he had been slain by those Scribes and Pharisees who were Christ's contemporaries. This is why God would avenge them in **that** very "**generation**" (30 to 70 A.D.).

Indeed, the wrath of God **did** come -- **to the uttermost** -- upon that hell-bound and snake-like generation of vipers. For they were the pharisaical sons of the persecutors of the Prophets. And they would themselves kill and scourge also Christ's Apostles and Prophets and Wise men and Scribes. Indeed, they even dared to demand the crucifixion also of the very Lord of Glory Himself. 3050

For "all" those "things" of God's uttermost wrath and vengeance finally fell on **that** very generation of unsaved Israelites and their Christ-rejecting Leaders. That occured when God destroyed the Judaists' temple in 70 A.D.

Yet even **that** necessary action, clearly foreseen by the omniscient Son of God, gave Him no pleasure. To the contrary, because **He continued to love Jerusalem to her very end**, He grievously **lamented**.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" -- exclaimed Jesus Christ. Then, probably having particularly **Jerusalem's apostate Leaders** in mind, He continued: "**You** who keep on killing the Prophets and keep on stoning them who are sent to you" to try to heal you! How often I **wanted** to gather [My elect alias] **your children** together -- even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings [in parental care]! But **you** [apostate Pharisees] **did not want that!**" You did not want to encourage Jerusalem's children to be gathered unto **Me**!

Calvin takes pains to point out that Christ still had an enduring love for His Ancient People Israel. For he here comments that not just "once and again did God 'wish to gather them together.' But by constant and uninterrupted advances, He sent to them 'the Prophets' -- one after another....

"Christ, speaking in the Person of God, compares Himself to 'a hen'.... It is an amazing and unparalleled instance of love.... In more than one way, God 'spread out His wings' to cherish that People.... 'Prophets' were sent to 'gather together' the wandering and dispersed into the bosom of God....

"Whenever the Word of God is exhibited to us, He opens His bosom to us with maternal kindness -- and, not satisfied with this, condescends to the humble affection of 'a hen' watching over her 'chickens'.... Now, with far greater familiarity and kindness, He invites us to Himself by His Son....

"All enjoy safety and rest who, by the obedience of faith, are 'gathered together' to God.... 'Under His wings' they have an impregnable refuge....

"God, notwithstanding the obstinate rebellion of His Ancient People, was not all at once so much offended by it as to lay aside a father's love and a mother's anxiety.... He did not cease to send 'Prophets' after 'Prophets' in uninterrupted succession....

"In our own day, though He has experienced a marvellous depravity in the World, He still continues to dispense His grace.... God 'wills' to 'gather' all -- so that all who do **not** come, may be **inexcusable**." Thus Calvin.

It was therefore not the true 'children of Jerusalem' themselves who did not want Jesus to gather them unto Himself like a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. It was the ungodly Scribes and Pharisees that did not want that to happen. Thus John Calvin, John Gill, Matthew Henry, and Adam Clarke.

The Lord Jesus then predicted His wrathful vengeance against those wretched Scribes and Pharisees. "Behold," Jesus told those wicked men, "your House is being abandoned to you -- desolate!"

Here, Christ calls what was <u>God's</u> Temple <u>till</u> Calvary -- the 'House of the Pharisees' <u>thereafter</u>. Till Calvary, like a signpost, it had pointed people to the Messiah Whom it had foreshadowed.

But, with the Pharisees' rejection of the Messiah, the temple 'signpost' would be **abandoned** by Him at the time of His death. Thereafter -- Christ told the wretched Pharisees -- it would be **changed** into "**your** House"; and thus be **destroyed** by the Messiah within that same generation, during the year 70 A.D. Thus: John Calvin; the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Henry, Albert Barnes, and Rudolph Stier.

Jesus then assured those <u>Pharisees</u>: "I say to **you**, that **you** shall <u>not</u> see Me **from now on** -- <u>until</u> you shall say 'Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!" Those who would then say 'Blessed is He' *etc.*, would be "you" -- that is to say, the **Pharisees** to whom Jesus was then speaking. Thus John Calvin; Matthew Henry; and Adam Clarke.

Calvin comments that these words <u>not</u> at all <u>necessarily</u> imply a future **conversion** of the Jerusalem Scribes and Pharisees. These words may very well imply merely the **recognition** (by **unconverted** Scribes and Pharisees before and on the final Judgment Day at the end of World History), that Jesus Who comes in the Name of the Lord was -- and is -- indeed "**blessed**."

This is quite possible. Yet it would seem from **other** Scriptures that the words apparently also imply, or at least permit, a **future** conversion or series of conversions of at least part of the Jerusalem Scribes and Pharisees and/or their descendants -- to **Christianity**. 3052

It must also be asked <u>when</u> the Pharisees contemporary to Jesus would say: "Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!" They would say it, when they themselves would be condemned. Thus John Calvin and the *Geneva Bible*.

For some of them, that would be in 70 A.D. For all of them -- either from Heaven or from Hell -- that would also be after the calling of 'the fullness of the Gentiles' (Romans 11:13-25). Thus Adam Clarke.

Indeed, both they and everyone else will again say so -- on the Last Day. Thus the *Dordt Dutch Bible* and Matthew Henry.

Two further questions remain. First, <u>which</u> coming of the "Blessed" One is here being referred to? Second, would those who then call Him "Blessed" -- **then** also <u>themselves</u> be 'blessed'?

Some opine Christ would thus be called "Blessed" -- on Palm Sunday. But others suggest the Pharisees would say this -- at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. For at that time, Christ came invisibly -- with the visible Roman armies -- in order to destroy the **Pharisees' House** in A.D. 70.

Yet others believe it refers to the yet-future eschatological entry of the Jews as a Nation into the Christian Church (Romans 11:26-32). Dr. B.H. Carroll thinks it refers to the invisible coming of the "Blessed" One at the dawn of a Postmillennial Millennium.

Still others think this refers to the events at Christ's Final Coming. Thus Matthew Henry and William Hendriksen. Indeed, we ourselves believe it refers probably to **all** of these comings.

But would those who then call Him "Blessed" -- also themselves be 'blessed'? No -- say John Calvin, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, and Matthew Henry -- here thinking only of the Pharisees contemporary with Jesus.

However, Adam Clarke and Rudolf Stier and Albert Barnes and Marcellus Kik and B.H. Carroll all point out that the **descendants** of those faithless Scribes and Pharisees contemporary with Jesus -- **will** be "blessed." For that will occur at the entry of the Nation of ethnic Israel into the Christian Church -- after

the "fullness of the Gentiles" themselves has become "blessed" -- during the course of Church History. Romans 11:25-32.

O Christian! It seems there is a day still coming, when the presently-antichristian Leaders of the Israelitic Nation shall yet call Jesus 'blessed.' This they will yet do -- even as Christ's Own Disciples did, centuries ago -- when He entered into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, riding upon an ass right before Calvary. 3053

For Jesus' undying love for Jerusalem and her People -- to be expressed through the Historic Christian Church -- shall yet win the Jews. Indeed, the christianization of the Jewish People will yet come about -- as a result of the patient testimony of loving Christian Missionaries who compass land and sea to turn the Israelites away from being children of Hell, and into becoming children of God alias Christians.

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, toward the christianization of all Peoples -- and therefore also of the Jewish People. Onward, toward the conversion of the whole World! Onward, to victory!

3039. Mt. 23:13. 3040. Mt. 23:1-3. 3041. Mt. 23:13. 3042. Mt. 23:15,30,43. 3043. Jn. 8:44.

3044. I Jn. 3:8-10. 3045. Mt. 23:31-36.

3046. Acts 7:57f & Jn. 21:18f cf. II Pet. 1:13-15. 3047. Acts 13:50 to 14:19.

3048. Gen. ch. 4 cf. Heb. 12:24. 3049. Cf. II Chr. 24:20-22.

3050. Mt. 12:33; I Th. 2:14-16 cf. I Cor. 2:8.

3051. Ezek. 16:20*f*; Mt. 23:2,13-27 *cf*. 24:1-3,15,28 and Dan. 9:27 & 11:31 & 12:11. *Cf*. too our studies for July 22 & Aug. 4 and nn. 3840*f* & 3055.

3052. Mt. 23:37-39 to 24:1-3 *cf.* 21:9 & 27:62-66 & 28:11-14 & Acts 4:8-12 & Ps. 118:5-26 & Rom. 11:12-15,26-32 & II Cor. 3:13-18 and nn. 2925-42

& 3051. Perhaps Mt. 23:39b was <u>also</u> at least partly fulfilled in Acts 6:7b! 3053. *Cf.* our study for July 28.

JERUSALEM TRODDEN DOWN TILL TIME OF GENTILES FULFILLED

<u>Luke 21</u> August 4

"When you shall see Jerusalem surrounded with armies -- then know that its desolation is nigh.... For these be days of vengeance! Then they [the Israelites] shall be led away captive, unto all Nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." ³⁰⁵⁴

In the Gospel according to Luke, ³⁰⁵⁴ the Saviour gives us more details about the desolation of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. We have already seen that this event was prophesied in the Gospel according to Matthew. ³⁰⁵⁵ But now we need to see it also from Luke's perspective.

First. Luke tells us Jesus specified the **time** of Jerusalem's destruction. It would coincide with that of the desolation of her temple. 3054

Explained Jesus to His **first-century** Disciples: "When **you** shall **see** Jerusalem surrounded with [the Roman General Titus's] armies -- **then** know that its desolation is nigh! **Then** let those who are in **Judaea**, flee to the mountains; and let those who are in her midst, depart from her! And do not let them who are in the country-places (*choorais*), enter into her!" ³⁰⁵⁴

Very clearly, the above-mentioned desolation of the temple³⁰⁵⁵ -- refers to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., at the hands of the Romans less than four decades or **within one generation** after Jesus' death. Even the great Judaistic Historian Flavius Josephus corroborated this, around 75 A.D.³⁰⁵⁶

Second. The time of Jerusalem's pending destruction -- was to be a time of prophesied **vengeance**. "For those are the days of vengeance -- so that all things which have been written, may be fulfilled." 3057

God would visit vengeance on the city and its evil anti-christian inhabitants -- so that upon Jerusalem "may come all the righteous blood shed upon the Earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom **you** [anti-christian Scribes and Pharisees]³⁰⁵⁸ slew between the temple and the altar. Truly I tell you, all these things shall come upon **this generation**!

"O Jerusalem, **Jerusalem**; you who keep on killing the Prophets!" -- sighed Jesus. "Behold, **your** House [of prayer]³⁰⁵⁵ is being left desolate to you!"³⁰⁵⁵ -- He added.

"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple. So His Disciples came to Him, in order to show Him the **buildings of the temple**.

"But Jesus said to them: 'Do you not see all these things? Truly, I tell you -- not one stone shall here be left standing upon another, which shall not be thrown down....

"'Therefore when **you** shall see the abomination of **desolation** spoken about by Daniel the Prophet³⁰⁵⁶ standing in the holy place -- whoever reads, let him understand! -- then let those **who are in Judaea**, flee to the mountains!"³⁰⁵⁴ For indeed, "'wherever the carcase is -- there will the eagles be gathered together."³⁰⁵⁵

That is to say, the **apostate** Israelites would be destroyed -- when in A.D. 70 the "eagles" alias the military *insignia* of the pagan Roman Armies would be erected in the outskirts of Jerusalem. For then, like a swarm of ritually-unclean vultures, the Roman legions would swoop down -- to rip up the carrion of the decomposing carcase of Jerusalem's dying Judaism.

Third. The **time** of Jerusalem's pending destruction, would be one of almost complete genocide for the Nation of Israel. Warned Jesus: "Woe to those who are pregnant, and to those who suckle babies, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this People!" 3057

Jesus could truly say to the wailing women, while on His Own way to the cross: "**Daughters of Jerusalem**, do not weep for Me! But weep for **yourselves**, and for **your children**! For behold, the days are coming [in a few decades], in which they [your children] shall say: 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs which never bore babies -- and the breasts which never gave suck!'

"Then they shall begin to say to the mountains 'Fall on us!' and to the hills 'Cover us!' For if they do these things to a green tree -- what shall be done to the dry?" That is to say, if Jerusalem's inhabitants crucify the "green tree" alias the spiritually-alive Jesus Christ -- what shall be done to the spiritually-dead "dry" wood of the Christ-rejecting Jerusalem Judaists in 70 A.D.? Is "dry" wood not deadwood, and fit only for the fire?

Christ Himself then answered His Own question as to <u>what</u> shall be done to the dry deadwood. By that, He meant the Judaists. He said that, in 70 A.D., "they shall fall by the edge of the sword -- and shall be led away captive unto all Nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles -- until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.... And there shall be signs.... For the powers of Heaven shall be shaken. And **then**, they shall see the Son of man coming on a cloud -- with power and great glory."

The **order** of these prophesied events, is clear. That, in turn, helps us better to understand their **character**. After first understanding **when**, we can better understand **what**.

First, Jerusalem would fall to the (Roman) Gentiles in 70 A.D. At that time, the Judaists would largely be annihilated.

Second, that would be followed by the "time of the Gentiles." During this time -- as we are informed elsewhere in Scripture³⁰⁶⁰ -- the "fullness of the Gentiles" comes into Membership of the Christian Church, while part of the Judaists alias ethnic Israel remains spiritually blinded.

Third, this treading down of Jerusalem by Gentiles would terminate when "the times of the Gentiles" would be fulfilled. This fulfilment will take place, when the Deliverer Jesus Christ will be **preached** with great success by the largely-Gentile Christians alias the true Zion. Thus the **Church** preaches Christ also to ethnic Israel alias the unconverted Jews -- and increasingly so. In **this** way, Christ "shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" alias ethnic Israel of the Israel also the **Jewish Nation**.

Fourth, this conversion of the Jews as a People will then be followed by a time of universal blessing-in-Christ for both Gentiles and Jews. During that time, "all Israel shall be saved" -- that is, both Jews and Gentiles. "For God has concluded them all in unbelief, so that He might [in the future] have mercy upon all [Jews and Gentiles]." 3062

Fifth, this will then ultimately be followed by the end of World History. For "**then** shall they see the Son of man coming on a cloud -- with power and great glory."

O Christian, the Kingdom of God shall yet be extended to both Gentiles and Jews! Even hardened ethnic Israel shall yet be saved! For God shall "have mercy upon **all!**" Luke 21:24 cf. Romans 11:23-32.

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

^{3054.} Lk. 21:20-22,24. First **Jewish** "armies" (v. 20) and later **Romans** surrounded Jerusalem (v. 24). **Between** those two events, the **Hebrew Christians** escaped (v. 21). See C. Vanderwaal's *And It Shall Come To Pass In the Latter Days...* (Industrie, Oudkarspel, Netherlands, 1977 p. 48). See n. 3055. 3055. Mt. 23:37 to 24:3,15-20,28; *cf.* Josephus's *Wars* VI:4 to VII:1. See too our studies for July 22 & Aug. 3 and nn. 3051-3058.

3056. Mk. 11:17 & Mt. 23:35-38 & 24:1-3,15-16,21,28 $\it cf$. Dan. 9:25-27, 11:30 $\it f$, 12:1,11 & n. 3055. 3057. Lk. 21:23. 3058. Lk. 23:28-31 $\it cf$. n. 3055. 3059. Lk. 21:24-27. 3060. Rom.11:25. 3061. Rom. 11:25 $\it f$. 3062. Rom. 11:30-32. 3063. Lk. 21:27.

GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD TO ALL NATIONS

Matthew 24:1f August 5

"This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the World for a witness to all Nations. And then shall the end come." 3064

We have already seen that the Gospel according to Luke has given us a considerable amount of information regarding events which would occur before and after the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Matthew's further account, gives us even more details. To this we now turn.

First, Jesus expressed His Own longing to save the children of the very unwilling and godless Jerusalem. Next, He indicated their probable conversion to Him -- at some time in the future. Then, Jesus gave a detailed account of many of the events which would precede and of some of the events that would succeed the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Thus Matthew.

Jesus here told the Pharisees they themselves would kill and crucify the Christian Prophets God would still send to warn them -- even during that very generation. As a result, the blood of all the righteous Prophets (whom either the Pharisees or their forefathers had murdered) would come upon them -- when their temple in Jerusalem would soon be abandoned and desolated. 3065

His Disciples then pointed Jesus to the temple. **When**, they asked, would that temple be demolished? When would its stones be dilapidated -- marking the end of **that particular age**? For unlike the Scribes and Pharisees -- Christ's well-taught Hebrew Christian Disciples even then knew that the temple would **not keep on standing there till the end of World History**. Thus Calvin, the *Geneva Bible*, Adam Clarke, Hoeksema and Kik *etc*.

Jesus then replied that **before** Jerusalem would be destroyed (in 70 A.D.), a number of events would first take place. There would be a succession: of false-christs; of wars and rumours of war; of earthquakes, famines and pestilences; of persecutions and betrayals; of iniquity; of great tribulation; and of the preaching of the Gospel as a testimony throughout the Roman World.

First. Jesus said <u>false-christs</u> would come -- allegedly even in His Own Name, ³⁰⁶⁹ and also during the lifetime of His then-contemporary Disciples. For, answering the question of "the **Disciples**" -- Jesus told **them**: "Take heed that nobody deceives <u>you</u>! For many shall come in My Name -- saying, 'I am Christ!' And they shall deceive many."

Theudas and Judas of Galilee had already made similar deceitful claims. Simon the magician would later become a false-christ. Indeed, there would also be various docetic antichrists during that first century A.D., who would deny even the incarnation of the Son of God.³⁰⁷¹

Second. Jesus said there would also be <u>wars and rumours of wars</u>. Indeed, there was already an increasing number of wars between the Romans and their vassals throughout the Mediterranean. And the skirmishes between the Romans and the Jews, would result in full-scale wars between them -- almost throughout the decade 60 to 70 A.D.

As Jesus warned His Disciples before His death: "**You** shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. See to it that **you** not be troubled!" Matthew 24:6f.

Third. There would, **in that generation**, also be famines and pestilences and earthquakes. Such would include the <u>earthquakes</u> when Jesus died, and those which erupted from time to time in the life of the Church during the era of Christ's Apostles.

Such included also the great <u>famines</u> and accompanying <u>pestilences</u> which occurred throughout the first-century Roman World -- and especially those at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.³⁰⁷⁷ Indeed, there were <u>then</u> also signs in the sky -- such as <u>eclipses</u> and <u>comets</u> etc.³⁰⁷⁸

Fourth. There would be many **persecutions** and **betrayals** -- especially of Christians. As Jesus warned His **first-century Disciples**: "They shall deliver **you** up to be afflicted, and shall kill **you**. And **you** shall be hated by all Nations, for the sake of My Name." This was indeed the case, for many decades, even from Pentecost Sunday onward.

Fifth. There would be an abundance of <u>iniquity</u>. That such was then the case, is certainly evidenced by the *Epistles* of the Newer Testament. That such was then the case, is certainly

Sixth. There would be **great tribulation**. Indeed, those first-century Christians in Jerusalem would have to **flee** to save their very lives.

Jesus warned them: "When **you** shall see the abomination of desolation..., **flee** to the mountains! ... Pray that **your** flight be not in the winter, nor on the sabbath day! For **then** shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the World to **this** time; no, nor ever shall be....

"**Then**, if anybody shall say to **you**, 'Look, here or there is Christ!' -- don't **you** believe it! ... I have told **you** before. Therefore, if they shall say to **you**: 'Behold, He is in the desert!' -- you **mustn't** go forth!" ³⁰⁸³

Seventh. The Gospel would first be **<u>published and preached</u>** as a **<u>testimony</u>** -- among all of the Nations in that *Oikomeenee* or inhabited Roman World. That had already been done by the mid-sixties of the first century A.D., according to the various Books of the Newer Testament itself. 3085

Then the <u>end</u> would come.³⁰⁸⁶ That would <u>not</u> be the <u>end</u> of <u>World History</u>. But it would indeed be the <u>end</u> of <u>that age</u> -- and also the end of <u>that city</u> of Ancient Jerusalem (in 70 A.D.).³⁰⁸⁷

For the simple fact is, that <u>all</u> of the above-mentioned events -- the coming of false-christs, wars, rumours of wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, eclipses, comets, persecutions, betrayals, iniquity, great tribulation, the flight of Hebrew Christians from Jerusalem, and their preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles -- <u>all</u> occurred **during the lifespan of that very generation** of Disciples whom Jesus was then warning. Thus: John Calvin; the *Geneva Bible*, the *Dordt Dutch Bible*; Matthew Henry; Adam Clarke; Rudolf Stier; Albert Barnes; Loraine Boettner; Marcellus Kik; Rushdoony; and many others.

Calvin's comments on Matthew 24:3-8, are of great importance. There, he condemns the errors of first-century Judaists who wrongly "believed from their infancy that the temple would keep on standing till the end of time.... Having this opinion deeply rooted in their minds, they did not suppose that -- as long as the building of **the World** kept on standing -- **the temple** would be destroyed....

"One **error** leads to another.... **Erroneous views**...confound the [still-future] <u>perfection</u> of Christ's reign, with the <u>commencement</u> of it....

"Shortly after Christ's Resurrection, there arose impostors -- every one of whom professed to be 'the Christ'.... Those mad attempts **speedily** disappeared. Yet God determined that disturbances of this kind should arise among the **Jews**...so that they might altogether abandon the hope of salvation....

"This circumstance too was expressly stated by Christ, that...'you will hear of wars and rumours of wars.' He describes **here** those commotions which arose **only** in **Judea**....

"Luke adds likewise, 'earthquakes and signs from Heaven'.... They were predicted by Christ. The reader will find the rest in **Josephus** (*Wars of the Jews*, VI:5:3)."

Now **not long before 70 A.D.**, "the abomination of desolation" would be set up in the holy place where it ought not to be. Then too also the temple would be desolated and destroyed, as foretold by the Prophet Daniel. 3088

The beginning of that "abomination" refers to the desecration of the city by the ensigns of the Roman eagles³⁰⁸⁹ (or unclean vultures)³⁰⁹⁰ which surrounded Jerusalem in 66.5 A.D. So the *Dordt Dutch Bible*, Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, and Marcellus Kik. The "desolation" itself would be engineered three and a half years later at the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 A.D.

Calvin says the uncleanness kept on profaning till the desolation. The *Geneva Bible* adds that it destroyed the corrupted religion in the temple of the Pharisees. *Cf.* Deuteronomy 28:49-52; Hosea 8:1; Matthew 4:5*f*; Luke 17:22-37; 19:41-45*f*; 21:20*f*; Acts 10:28*f*; Revelation 11:2 & 18:2 & 19:17*f*.

On seeing this sign of "abomination" at the arrival of Rome's armies and their vulture-like eagle-ensigns, the Hebrew Christians still in Jerusalem were to escape across the housetops and "to flee into the mountains." For soon after that, the wrath of the Lord Jesus would descend upon those left behind in that accursed city -- during the greatest tribulation that the World had ever seen or ever would see. 3092

Here it needs to be said that the possibility of any pretribulationistic 'rapture-at-any-second' -- is quite precluded. For Matthew 24:21 disqualifies the notions that the **last** tribulation in the History of the World, will be its **greatest** -- and that its **greatest** tribulation, is **yet future**.

Indeed, the signs mentioned in Matthew 24:29*f* & Mark 13:24*f* (as distinct from the signs formerly mentioned in Matthew 23:3*f* & Mark 13:4-14) -- take place "**after** that tribulation" (mentioned in Matthew 24:21-28 & Mark 13:2-23). Consequently "**that** tribulation" when the temple would be destroyed in 70 A.D. (Mark 13:2-4*f*), would **not** be a **final** tribulation at the end of World History.

Now the "affliction" of "that tribulation" of A.D. 70 -- would be greater than that of every tribulation therebefore or thereafter. "For in those days there shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time -- neither shall be" thereafter. Mark 13:19.

There would, then, also be **other** tribulations "**after** that tribulation" of 70 A.D. But none of those other and later tribulations would qualitatively be as great as was **the great tribulation** and the "**great distress**" of 70 A.D. Daniel 12:1<u>f</u>24 *cf.* Matthew 24:21 & Mark 13:19 & Luke 21:23.

Furthermore. Even the **new** signs "**after** that tribulation" -- would **not** be signs of **the very end of World History**. Wars and rumours of wars would constantly recur -- even though their frequency might, and in the long run will, ever decrease. "But the **end** shall **not** be **yet**." Mark 13:7 & Luke 21:9 *cf*. Psalm 46:1-9.

In Luke 21:25 the "distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring" -- is descriptive of the "many waters" of the "Peoples and Multitudes and Nations and Tongues" in the tumultuous world-sea of Heathenism, **prior** to its christianization. *Cf.* Daniel 7:2*f* & 7:14 & 7:27 with Revelation 13:1*f* & 15:4 & 17:1-15*f* & 19:6,15,19,21 & 20:3-6.

"The Stars of Heaven [which] shall fall" in Mark 13:24 -- are the World Leaders, who shall also politically yet come to worship the Lord Jesus as a result of the success of the universal Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-20 *cf.* Genesis 17:6; 37:9*f*; Isaiah 13:9*f*; 34:2-5; Ezekiel 32:2-9; Hebrews 10:13; Revelation 6:12-17; 21:24*f.* Thus Lightfoot.

So, any-second-rapture Pretribulationism is precluded by the **Great Commission**. Matthew 28:19 *cf.* Acts 1:8. It is precluded also by many of the **parables of Christ**. Matthew 13 & 20 & 21 & 25. It is precluded further by **Jesus' infallible prediction that Peter would attain old-age**. John 21:18*f*.

It is precluded in addition by **Paul's inspired expectation of his own death**. Second Timothy 4:6-8. And it is lastly precluded **even** by the **pre-tribulationistic view of the seven phases of Church History** -- based as it is on its erroneous consecutive understanding of Revelation chapters two and three.

Moreover. The **Early-Patristic Church** was antipretribulationistic. For it anticipated the **later rise** and ultimately the final destruction of a Roman Antichrist <u>before</u> Christ's Second Coming. Thus Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus.

Very significantly -- many in the Late-Mediaeval Church, all of the Pre-Reformation's Scholars, and all of the Protestant Reformers saw the **Romish Papacy's** desecration of the Christian Church as the further **continuation** of **Pagan Rome's** desecration of the Ancient Temple. Thus: Joachim of Floris, John Milicx, John Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, Richard Wimbledon, Walter Brute, John Huss, Martin Luther, Andreas Osiander, John Calvin, Nicholas Ridley, John Bale, John Jewel, and many more.

Pretribulationism arose only in A.D. 1830. Then, breaking with the Protestant Reformation's doctrine of the Papacy as the Antichrist -- the unbalanced Margaret McDonald called the utopian socialist Robert Owen, in person, the Antichrist.

Actually, even the modern Pretribulationists John Walvoord and Herman Hoyt admit that theirs is but a minority view. Also their more-extremist colleagues Dwight Pentecost and Hal Lindsay, admit that specifically the Primitive Church was not clearly pretribulationistic.

Consequently, we concur with the great Premillennialist Nathaniel West's characterization of Pretribulationism. He described it as "the utterly unscriptural any-moment theory of our Lord's Second Coming; a theory which makes of Christ and His Apostles self-contradictory Teachers, and of the Scriptures wholly unreliable Oracles."

Nor did West stop there. Though himself a Premillennialist, he went on to say of Pretribulationism: "No delusion more pleasing and sweet on the one hand; or more wild, groundless and injurious to truth and faith on the other -- has ever captivated the minds of men than this one of an any-moment unseen Secret Advent, Resurrection and Rapture -- a delusion condemned and exposed on almost every page of the Word of God."

Even among Premillennialists, many are Midtribulationists -- such as J. Oliver Buswell. Even more of the Premillennialists are Posttribulationists. Such include: Godet; George Mueller; Biederwolf; Frost, Charles Erdman; Campbell Morgan; Bishop Houghton; A.B. Simpson; R.A. Torrey; Moorehead; Charles T. Cook; Thirtle, Reese, Bonar, Saphir, Varley, Baron, Soltau, Ockenga, Ladd; Barton Payne; and many others.

Even among Pretribulationists themselves, the "tribulation" is variously located. C.I. Scofield sees it in Matthew 24:15-28. L.S. Chafer chases it down in Matthew 24:9-26. Schuyler English extracts it from Matthew 24:4-28. Epp extrapolates it from Matthew 24:9-22. And the Gaebeleins glean it from Matthew 24:4-26.

The Bible itself, then, is not pretribulationistic. Nor is the verdict of Church History. Nor are even most Premillennialists -- themselves constututing but a tiny minority among the generality of Biblebelieving Christians.

Now the three-and-a-half-year-long "great tribulation" of Matthew 24:21 would commence in 66.5 A.D. and terminate at Christ's A.D. 70 lightning-like and sudden yet invisible coming-in-judgment on the clouds of the sky. Indeed, <u>all</u> of this would occur -- <u>before</u> the passing away of <u>that</u> very generation of Israelites to whom He was revealing these predictions right before His death on Calvary. Thus Albert Barnes and J.A. Broadus.

That coming of the Son of man, then, is **not** His Final Coming at the end of World History. **That** coming was His invisible return at the head of the visible Roman armies, to punish the Judaists in A.D. 70 -

- for their rejection of Jesus during **that** generation. On this point, see: Daniel 8:9-14; 9:26*f*; 12:1-7*f*; Matthew 10:23; Mark 13:1-30; Luke 17:22-37 & 21:20-27; John 3:19; Second Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 7:2 & 14:14-20; Josephus's *Antiquities* XVIII:3:3 & 5:2 *cf*. his *Wars* V:2:1 to VI:9:4*f*. Thus too: John Calvin; the *Geneva Bible*; the *Dordt Dutch Bible*; Matthew Henry; Adam Clarke; Rudolf Stier, Albert Barnes; R.C.H. Lenski; Marcellus Kik; B.H. Carroll; and many others.

As the *Geneva Bible* comments at Matthew 24, on Christ's *Prophetic Discourse*: "Within fifty years after, Jerusalem was destroyed. The godly were persecuted; false-teachers seduced the people; religion was polluted -- so that the World seemed to be at an end."

Also Calvin's comments on **that** invisible coming of the Son of man -- like lightning -- are worthy of careful study. "This passage" Matthew 24:26*f* -- explains Calvin -- "has been, through ignorance, tortured in various ways. That the reader may ascertain the true meaning, he must attend to the contrast between a state of **concealment** and that **extension** of the Kingdom of Christ far and wide...which would be sudden and unexpected -- 'as the lightning flashes from the east to the west'....

"The Disciples were thus reminded that they must no longer seek a Redeemer within the small enclosure of Judea -- because He will suddenly extend the limits of His Kingdom to the uttermost ends of the World.... Indeed, this astonishing rapidity with which the Gospel flew through every part of the World, was a manifest testimony of divine power.... By holding out this vast extent of His Kingdom -- He intended to show that the desolation of Judea would not hinder Him from reigning!"

In 70 A.D., then, God's judgment would be poured out on Jerusalem -- His temporal judgment against **those** Israelites who rejected Christ's substitutionary atonement and resurrection from the dead. The Older Testament administration and its temple ordinances, already fulfilled in principle at Jesus Christ's Resurrection, would then be destroyed in practice too -- as foretold by Daniel the Prophet.³⁰⁹⁵

After 70 A.D., the Gospel would **unfold ever more widely and powerfully** -- and ultimately be promulgated to all the Nations in the World. Also before but especially after the destruction of the wicked Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the Son of man sends forth His Angel-Messengers like the sound of a great trumpet to gather His elect from the four corners of the Earth. Thus Adam Clarke. Matthew 24:30-35 & 26:64 *cf*. Psalm 22:27 & Isaiah 45:22*f* & Revelation 14:6*f*.

For the **Gospel gradually subdues the raging seas** of the Heathen Nations, and will finally cause their Leaders to **fall down** from their pagan heights before Jesus -- **like shooting stars**. Gradually, the Gospel thus **makes wars to cease**, and international **peace to increase**.

O Christian! We too, in our own lifetime, may well be threatened. Just like the early Hebrew Christians, we too may be endangered -- by false religions; by wars and their rumours; by famines; by pestilences; by earthquakes; by persecutions; and especially by abounding iniquity.

Nevertheless -- just like those early Hebrew Christians -- we too must and shall spread the Gospel of Christ's Kingdom into all the World. This shall yet be done for a witness unto all Nations throughout the whole World. Until Jesus comes back visibly at His Final Coming, with power and great glory, at the very end of World History -- and to a saved World.

So on, then, Christian soldiers! Onward, to victory!

^{3064.} Mt. 24:14 *cf.* n. 2488. 3065. *Cf.* our studies for Aug. 3 & 4 at nn. 3052 & 3061*f.* 3066. *Cf.* our study for Aug. 3. 3067. Mt. 23:33-38.

^{3068.} Mt. 24:1-3 & cf. esp. Mk. 13:1-4f & Lk. 21:5-7f. Mt. 24:3's aioon means "age" -- not "World." 3069. Mt. 24:5. 3070. Mt. 24:3-5, cf. 24:23-26.

^{3071.} Acts 5:36-39; 8:9-21 (cf. Josephus's Antiquities 20:7:2 and Justin Martyr's 1st Apology 26 & 61 and Irenaeus's Heresies I:23 and Hippolytus's

Refutation of Heresies VI:2-15 & X:8 and Tertullian's On the Soul 67 & Heresies 1 and Origen's Against Celsus VI:11); II Cor. 11:13; II Pet. 2:1f; I Jn.

2:18-23 & 4:1-6; II Jn. 7-11.

3072. Mt. 24:6-7a cf. II Pet. 2:1f & I Jn. 4:1f with Josephus's Wars (esp. II:17 to VI:9).

3073. *Cf.* Jn. 11:48; Lk. 23 (esp. vv. 28-31 *cf.* 21:20-24); Acts 4:6,27; chs. 22 to 28; Rom. ch. 13; Tit. 3:1-3; Jas. 4:1; I Pet. 1:1 & 2:11-17; and perhaps too

Rev. chs. 6 to 12 etc. 3074. Mt. 24:7b. 3075. Mt. 27:50-54.

3076. Acts 4:31; 5:19; 12:7-11,18; 16:26; Heb. 12:26-29; Rev. 6:12. Other recorded earthquakes, include those: at Rome in 51 A.D.; at Phlegon in Asia

Minor in 60 A.D.; in Campania and in Crete in 63 A.D.; and also in Phrygia, Apanea, Laodicea and again in Campania (according to Tacitus and

Suetonius). Indeed, in the decade 60-70 A.D. alone, earthquakes were re corded as having occurred in: Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea,

Hierapolis, Colosse, Campania, Rome, and Judaea. Also, those of Herculaneum and Pompeii would soon follow.

3077. Acts 11:28f; II Cor. 8 to 9; Rev. 6:5f; Josephus's Ant. XX:2:5 and Wars V:10:3 & V:12:3 & VI:3:3f; Tacitus's Annals 16:13.

3078. Mt. 24:29*f* & Lk. 21:25*f* & Acts 2:19*f cf*. Josephus's *Wars* VI:5:3 and Tacitus's *History* V. 3079. Mt. 24:9*f cf*. 10:21-23.

3080. Mk. 13:9; Lk. 21:12-16; 22:28*f*; Jn. 15:18 to 16:3,32*f*; Acts 4:3-7,18-21; 5:1-10,28-33,40; 7:57 to 8:4; 9:1*f*; 12:1-5; 13:50 to 21:13 (esp. 16:23*f* & 18:12*f*

& 20:29); Rom. 16:17f; I Cor. 4:9-11; II Cor. 11:23-25; Gal. 3:1-4; Col. 1:24; II Tim. 1:15;

4:5,10,16; I Pet. 2:20*f*; 4:12-16; Heb. 10:25,32-37; 11:24 to

12:7,12; 13:12f; I Jn. 4:1f; Rev. 2:2f & 2:9 & 2:13f & 6:4f.

3081. Mt. 24:12. 3082. Cf. esp. I Cor.; Eph. ch. 4; Jas. 2:4; I Pet. ch. 4; I Jn. chs. 3 & 5; Jude.

3083. Mt. 24:15-26.

3084. Mt. 24:14 & Mk. 13:10 cf. Lk. 2:1 & 21:10-24 & Acts 8:4 & Rom. 1:8 & 10:18.

3085. Col. 1:5f cf. Rom. 15:16-28. 3086. Mt. 24:14 cf. n. 2488.

3087. *Cf.* n. 3064 and Dan. chs. 2 & 7 & 12 with Mt. 24:1-3. See too esp. Mt. 24:16's "Judaea." Also contrast Mt. 24:21's "then" or "*tote*" (meaning 70

A.D.), with its very different expression "this time" or "tou nun" (meaning the time forty years earlier in that same generation when Christ was uttering

those words in 30 A.D.). Compare Mt. 24:28's "eagles" alias the Roman armies' eagle-vulture ensigns, with Mt. 24:34's expression "this generation"

alias that forty years between 30 A.D. and 70 A.D. See too Ps. 90:10, and esp. Heb. 3:9-12 & 8:13 & 12:22-29 & 13:10-14. Also *cf.* our study for

July 24 with Lk. 23:28-31.

3088. Mk. 13:14 & Mt. 24:15 cf. Dan. 9:27 & 11:31 & 12:11.

3089. Mt. 24:15 & 24:28 cf. Mk. 13:14 indicate that the "abomination" was apparently the ensigns of the Roman "eagles" erected to remain "standing where

they ought not," namely in the Jewish temple at the time of its "desolation." Josephus declares in his 75 A.D. Wars of the Jews VI:6:1 that in A.D. 70

"the Romans...brought their ensigns to the temple...and there offered sacrifices to them."

3090. Rev. 19:17-21 cf. Lev. 11:11-14. 3091. Cf. our study for July 24.

3092. *Cf.* Mt. 24:16,21,28,40*f* & perhaps too Rev. 11:8. See: O.J. Smith's *Tribulation or Rapture --Which?*, Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, London,

n.d., p. 13; D. MacPherson's *The Late Great Pretrib Rapture*, Heart of America, Kansas City, 1974, pp. 19,24,27,38*f*,59-65,67,70*f*, 76*f*,103,105-8,113*f*;

ed. R.G. Clouse's *The Meaning of the Millennium*, IVF, Downers Grove Ill., 1977, pp. 85f & 210f; and M. Erickson's *Contemporary Options in*

Eschatology, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1977, p. 111.

3093. Mt. 24:14,26*f*,37,42,44,48 & 26:64 & esp. Lk. 17:22-25 *cf*. Zech. 12:10-12 & Jn. 19:37 & Rev. 1:5-7 & n. 2488. See too Mk. 14:61*f cf*. 9:1 & Isa.

13:9f & 19:1 & Ps. 97 & Dan. 7:13 and our study for May 26.

3094. In Mt. 24:34's expression "this generation," the word "this" (or "*hautee*") is a demonstrative pronoun referring to <u>that</u> very same generation of Christ

and His first Disciples -- and **not** to a subsequent generation. See esp. Mt. 3:10 & <u>23:36</u>. 3095. Dan. chs. 2 & 9 & 11 & 12 *cf.* our studies for May 23-30. 3096. Mk. 13:24*f, per contra* 14:4-14. *Cf.* too our study for Aug. 6.