

# MATTHEW 24: 15 – 35

## FROM THE ABOMINATION TO THE ASCENSION LANGUAGE

There was a great deal to take in last week. I know some of you felt like you were drinking out of a fire hose. That is fine. Don't worry. It takes time to process this sort of thing. You will probably feel the same way again today. We will be referencing more OT scriptures in an attempt to remain consistent with our interpretation. We will have more Greek definitions also, but this is what must be done if we want to glean all we can from the passage.

Last week we ended by looking at several phrases that are commonly misunderstood and placed in an end-times scenario. We looked at, "all the world" and saw how that referred to basically the Roman Empire, the near Middle East and the Mediterranean basin. It doesn't refer to the entire globe. We looked at the word, "nations" which in its typical OT usage refers to Gentiles. And then we looked at the phrase, "the end" which by its Greek definition does not refer to the end of the world, but to the end of a time or near age. In the context of this passage, the destruction of the temple will end the "Jewish age," meaning the end of the temple system and OT worship practices. Jesus has come and initiated the kingdom. The temple and the religious hierarchy as well as the Law have now been rendered obsolete with the Gospel. So, now we are reading about the window of time between Jesus' resurrection and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. So in essence we are looking at Jesus' predictions of a 40-year window, which ends with the cataclysmic event of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.

Thus far Jesus has told the disciples not to despair about wars, pestilence, famine and false messiahs. Those have always occurred and they will continue to occur. He told them to hold the line and not faint at the things which will occur, including their betrayal and even, in some cases, their martyrdom. But now in verse 15, Jesus' chronology amps up from the things which will occur in the next 30 – 35 years to those that will happen right at the end of that age, the destruction of Jerusalem.

***Mt. 24:15 – 22***

***15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in***

***the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.***

Therefore – or when you’ve seen all these things, you shouldn’t be surprised. But the end of the “Temple Age” is not yet. But the abomination of desolation is a clear cue to get out of Jerusalem.

***Luke’s parallel account says:***

***Luke 21:20***

***20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.***

Luke links the abomination with the siege of Jerusalem.

When you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, (who reads, let him understand.)

Jesus now takes them back to an OT passage in order to give them a more complete picture of what will happen. We are doing this consistently in order to grasp the context of what is being taught.

**Daniel 9:27**

**27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;  
But in the middle of the week  
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.  
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,  
Even until the consummation, which is determined,  
Is poured out on the desolate.”**

Most scholars believe this refers to the time, still yet future in Daniel’s day, when Antiochus Epiphanes, conquered Jerusalem, cleared out the temple, stopped the daily sacrifices and then slaughtered a pig on the altar (167 BC). I also believe this to be a reference to that event. But what we need to apply to Matthew 24 is what is said in Daniel. By that I mean that there is a tendency to think more about Antiochus than what is written in Daniel. The abomination Jesus is speaking of has to follow what is written, not exactly what Antiochus did. So the abomination in Matthew 24 should closely resemble bringing an end to the sacrifices and making desolate until the consummation is poured out on the desolate. We don’t necessarily have to have another pig slaughtered or a pagan altar set up in the temple. We only have to have

an end to the sacrifices and a destruction of the temple and Jerusalem and something the Jews would consider an abomination. And that is what we had in 70 AD.

The very presence of any Gentile(s) in the temple area was enough to start a riot.

66AD

According to Josephus, the violence which began at [Caesarea](#) in 66 was provoked by Greeks of a certain merchant house sacrificing birds in front of a local synagogue.<sup>[24]</sup> In reaction, one of the Jewish Temple clerks [Eleazar ben Hanania](#) ceased prayers and sacrifices for the [Roman Emperor](#) at the Temple. Protests over taxation joined the list of grievances and random attacks on Roman citizens and perceived 'traitors' occurred in Jerusalem.<sup>[25]</sup> The Jewish Temple was then breached by Roman troops at the order of the procurator [Gessius Florus](#), who had seventeen [talents](#) removed from the treasury of the [Temple](#), claiming the money was for the Emperor.

So even before the destruction of the temple, it had already been ransacked and robbed. This was an abomination in and of itself. There were actually a few other times between 30 and 70 AD where the Romans attempted to place Greek statues of various rulers in the Jewish Temple. The point, this was not something unknown to the Jews and the events of 70 AD were not so isolated. The main difference was that the temple and the city were destroyed.

Let's' continue with Matthew 24. Please see how the language refers to life in first century Palestine and is Jerusalem-centric.

***16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.***

- Immediate and local context: Judea, flee to the mountains, those on the housetop, your flight in winter and the Sabbath.
- Great tribulation: no definite article (not The Great Tribulation) **tribulation: a pressing/ pressure**
- As has not been since the beginning of the world until this time... hyperbolic language such as is used in Daniel chapter 12:1 and Joel 2:2. (Shows that this

was an historic event and not one that would take place at the end of the world.

- Shortened for the elect's sake... The siege wound up lasting only 5 months and therefore was cut short so that some would survive. This brought relief to those who remained in the city due to the famine in Jerusalem, which was brought on by the fighting of the different Jewish factions within the city, when they burnt their own food supply to encourage those within the city to fight and not negotiate with the Romans.
- (slide of Romans taking away the Menorah)

***23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand.***

***26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.***

- Is the Christ here (in Jerusalem then) because of this tribulation? No.
- Why not believe it? He has to come now! But He doesn't. And the next verses give us the contrast between the parousia (second coming) and the "coming" of the events in 70 AD.

***27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.***

- The parentheses and dichotomy. No need to look for the Messiah in some obscure place because His parousia will be like a lightning flash. Everyone will see it. Jesus will go on to explain this in verses 36 – 44.
- At the parousia, there won't be a prolonged build-up such as a siege. Those things are drawn out over months and years. In fact all that Jesus has spoken thus far had been dragged out over the course of some 40 years. But the parousia won't be that way.
- It will be like lightning when it strikes. It will be instantaneous and without a precursor so that no one knows precisely when it is coming.
- So the mention of the parousia in this context is intended precisely to distinguish it from the events currently being considered; it will only be after a marked change of subject in verse 36 that the parousia itself will be the focus of the conversation.

Then things go back to the events surrounding 70 AD, because the phrase, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days" links back to verses 26 and those prior, which are the antecedent to that phrase.

***29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.***

- The language, the language! This section is cloaked in OT hyperbolic, prophetic language. "Cosmic language."
- "The Sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from Heaven..." Look at the passage Jesus is quoting.

#### **Isaiah 13:1**

**1 The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.**

**10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations**

**Will not give their light;**

**The sun will be darkened in its going forth,**

**And the moon will not cause its light to shine.**

**11 "I will punish the world for its evil,**

**And the wicked for their iniquity;**

**I will halt the arrogance of the proud,**

**And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.**

**12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold,**

**A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.**

**13 Therefore I will shake the heavens,**

**And the earth will move out of her place,**

**In the wrath of the Lord of hosts**

**And in the day of His fierce anger.**

**Isa. 34: 2 - 5 The judgment of Edom**

**2 For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations,**

**And His fury against all their armies;**

**He has utterly destroyed them,**

**He has given them over to the slaughter.**

**3 Also their slain shall be thrown out;**

**Their stench shall rise from their corpses,**

**And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.**

**4 All the host of heaven shall be dissolved,  
And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;**

**All their host shall fall down**

**As the leaf falls from the vine,**

**And as fruit falling from a fig tree.**

**5 “For My sword shall be bathed in heaven;**

**Indeed it shall come down on Edom,**

**And on the people of My curse, for judgment.**

**Ezekiel 32: 1 – 8**

**1 And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him:**

**‘You are like a young lion among the nations,**

**And you are like a monster in the seas,**

**Bursting forth in your rivers,**

**Troubling the waters with your feet,**

**And fouling their rivers.’**

**3 “Thus says the Lord God:**

**‘I will therefore spread My net over you with a company of many people,**

**And they will draw you up in My net.**

**4 Then I will leave you on the land;**

**I will cast you out on the open fields,**

**And cause to settle on you all the birds of the heavens.**

**And with you I will fill the beasts of the whole earth.**

**5 I will lay your flesh on the mountains,**

**And fill the valleys with your carcass.**

**6 ‘I will also water the land with the flow of your blood,**

**Even to the mountains;**

**And the riverbeds will be full of you.**

**7 When I put out your light,**

**I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark;**

**I will cover the sun with a cloud,**

**And the moon shall not give her light.**

**8 All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you,**

**And bring darkness upon your land,’**

**Says the Lord God.**

**Joel 2:10, 30,31; 3:15; Amos 8:9; These passages refer to the judgment on the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel, respectively.**

Look at the hyperbolic (over the top language) used concerning the judgments on Babylon, Edom and Egypt, that have already taken place. These are historic events.

These judgments have already taken place, yet we don't have any record of the heavens rolling up like a scroll or stars falling from Heaven, etc. This is just the way the prophets wrote of the judgment of God when it fell on nations and peoples. And we have the same thing in Matthew 24. Therefore we can't say, "These things have to be in the future because we haven't literally seen stars falling and the heavens rolling up like a scroll. **Note that all these verses speak of catastrophic political reversals. And that is what is happening in 70 AD.**

- **"All the tribes of the earth will mourn..." Refers to Zech. 12: 10 - 14.**
- **"The Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."**
- This phrase refers to Daniel 7:13 - 14.

**Dan. 7:13,14**

**13 "I was watching in the night visions,  
And behold, One like the Son of Man,  
Coming with the clouds of heaven!  
He came to the Ancient of Days,  
And they brought Him near before Him.  
14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,  
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
Which shall not pass away,  
And His kingdom the one  
Which shall not be destroyed.**

- This passage is what is known as "enthronement language." In this passage Jesus, (Son of Man) is "coming" (erchomai) not parousia TO the throne in Heaven in order to be given an everlasting kingship over all peoples. Think about it. The OT system is going away, the kingdom of which Jesus so often spoke has now been inaugurated on earth, though its consummation is still in the future. So since the old system is going away it is necessary that the new system be put in place. But, how will the tribes "see it?" OR how shall they know this to be true? Is it by seeing some celestial phenomenon or is it because of what they see happening on earth by the destruction of the temple, knowing that it means the reign of the Son of Man in Heaven begins to take effect in the gathering of His chosen people from all peoples and nations?
- 

Jesus speaking to the high priest at His trial said:

## **Matthew 26:64**

**64** Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

## **Mt. 28:18 – 20**

**18** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

**See also: 1 Corinthians 15: 23 – 28.**

When Jesus meets His disciples in Galilee, He has already had all the authority bestowed upon Him. Can you see how what Jesus says is linked? These aren't isolated passages.

***31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.***

Note what Jesus said earlier in Matthew.

## **Mt. 8: 10 – 12**

**10** When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! **11** And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. **12** But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Once the Old system is gone and Jesus “officially” takes the throne, (the new system is officially inaugurated) The Great Commission “officially” kicks off and anyone who believes, Jew and Gentile alike are brought into the kingdom. There is no longer just a national designation but a new nation is being born – a spiritual nation composed of all who believe. This was signified at Pentecost.

***32 “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! 34***



***Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.***

- The fig tree, its just a tree as is evidenced by the parable. When the fig tree blooms you know summer is near. When you see all these things, (blooms) know that it is near.
- THIS generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Not a generation 2,000 years from that time. Remember, Jesus is answering the first part of the question, which concerns the destruction of the Temple, NOT the parousia, as is evidenced by the language.
- THAT generation will not pass away before those things were to take place, though the heavens and earth will one day pass away, but my words will not pass away. You can take them to the bank.

And amidst our attempts to grasp Bible prophesy and that it entails, the ultimate hope we have is that His Word will never pass away. No matter what happens here, no bad things seem to get on the international, national, or even our personal scene, His Word will never pass away. The Bible is full of promises to the children of God. Those won't pass away. And one of those promises is that He is coming back for us in order that we can spend eternity with Him as well as those believers who have gone on before us. Those things will never pass away.