

The Mind of Christ

Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem!

INTRODUCTION:

- I. One of the most challenging passages from the gospels is the discourse Jesus had with His disciples regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the great Temple.
 - A. The event is recorded in all three synoptic gospels – Matthew, Mark and Luke – and is commonly called “The Olivet Discourse” since Jesus made these comments to His disciples while meeting with them privately on the nearby Mount of Olives.
 1. It was now in the late afternoon of Tuesday of Passover Week – Just three days before Jesus would be crucified.
 2. More than likely, Jesus and His disciples were resting in His favorite place – the Garden of Gethsemane.
 3. And from their vantage point high up on the Mount of Olives, Jesus and His disciples could look westward over the walls of the city of Jerusalem, and could easily see most of the great Temple, covered with highly polished marble and crowned with solid gold.
 - B. Earlier on this day, Jesus had come face to face with His most bitter enemies.

1. They had come to Him in waves, attacking His authority and trying in vain to trap Him in His own teaching.
2. After Jesus silenced all His enemies, and delivered His most scathing rebuke of the hypocritical Pharisees – recorded in Matthew chapter 23 – Jesus left the Temple with His disciples, and headed toward the Mount of Olives where He would spend the night.
 - a. **Luke 21:37** – *And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet.*
3. However, as Jesus was leaving the Temple courtyards, He made a most shocking statement to His disciples. This statement is recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke.
 - a. **Matthew 24:1-2** – *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*
 - b. **Mark 13:1-2** – *Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones*

and what buildings are here!" And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

- c. **Luke 21:5-6** – *Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, "These things which you see — the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."*

- C. Virtually everyone agrees that Jesus was clearly foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - 1. But, difficulties arise when we try to answer the question: Was Jesus speaking SOLELY of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew chapter 24 and the associated passages in Mark and Luke, or does He also speak about His second coming and the FINAL judgment of ALL mankind.
 - 2. There are basically three views that are commonly held in the religious world, two of which are also held by our own brethren.
 - a. Some maintain that Matthew chapter 24 and related passages in Mark and Luke are speaking EXCLUSIVELY of events that will immediately precede the Lord's second coming.

(1). This view is commonly held by those who believe in a millennial reign of Jesus as an earthly Messiah ruling from Jerusalem for a thousand years over an earthly kingdom.

b. Others say Matthew chapter 24 and the related passages speak PRIMARILY of the destruction of Jerusalem, but ALSO speak of the Lord's second coming and the final judgment.

(1). This belief, which is held by many brethren, is based on the fact that the disciples ALSO asked Jesus about the “*end of the age*” – or, as the KJV says, “*the end of the world.*”

(2). But there is disagreement among these brethren as to WHERE Jesus stops talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and shifts to His second coming and the final judgment.

(3). Some say Matthew 24:29 is where Jesus begins talking about His second coming (J.W. McGarvey), while others say the division occurs beginning with Matthew 24:35. Still others say, Matthew 24:36.

- c. The third most commonly held view is that Matthew 24 and the related passages in Mark and Luke speak SOLELY of the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in 70 A.D.
 - (1). This is ALSO a belief held by many brethren, who believe the confusion over this issue can be cleared up when ALL THREE synoptic gospel accounts are compared.
 - (2). This position holds that Jesus doesn't begin to address His second coming and the final judgment until we come to Matthew chapter 25.
 - d. Of course, there are a few brethren who are now contending that NONE of the Olivet Discourse speaks of the Lord's second coming and the final judgment, but this view is generally rejected because it gives TOO NARROW an interpretation of Matthew chapters 24 and 25 and MISAPPLIES related teachings of Jesus regarding the final judgment.
- II. Although my purpose here is NOT to discuss all the various positions held by brethren, I personally have trouble with the belief that Matthew 24 is

describing BOTH events – BOTH the destruction of Jerusalem AND the Lord's second coming.

A. I don't see that it matters greatly whether you believe the latter portion of Matthew chapter 24 speaks of the second coming or not.

1. But if you will indulge me for a moment, I'll give you a couple of reasons why I think the Lord was speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem throughout the entire 24th chapter of Matthew.

B. The reason for this is because of similar statements the Lord made about a coming judgment that are found in Luke chapter seventeen.

1. This passage is not part of the Olivet Discourse – it deals with events that occurred earlier than the events of Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke chapter 21.

a. However, on this occasion Jesus used some of the SAME expressions He would later use in the Olivet Discourse.

b. **Luke 17:20-37** – *Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." 22 Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will*

not see it. 23 And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them. 24 For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. 25 But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. 31 "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. 32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34 I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will

be left. 35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left." 37 And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

2. On this occasion the Pharisees had just asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. **(v. 20)**
 - a. His reply was that the kingdom of God would NOT be observable, as would normally be the case in a military conquest.
 - b. The reason for this is simply because the kingdom of God is NOT an earthly kingdom but rather a spiritual kingdom – within the hearts of men and women.
3. After Jesus answered the Pharisees, He THEN turned to His disciples and proceeded to give them ADDITIONAL information about the coming of the kingdom of God – the spiritual kingdom, which we understand to be the Lord's church. **(vs. 22-37)**
 - a. In describing this event, the Lord used the phrases, *"the days of the Son of Man,"* and *"when the Son of Man is revealed."*

- (1). These are expressions used throughout the Bible to describe judgment of one kind or another.
 - (a). In other words, expressions concerning the coming of the Son of Man refer to the coming of the Lord in SOME KIND of judgment – but the expression BY ITSELF does not tell us what that judgment IS.
 - (2). However in THIS passage, these expressions are made in ASSOCIATION WITH the coming of the kingdom of God – the establishment of the Lord’s church.
 - (3). So, when the kingdom of God comes, the establishment of the Lord’s church will herald or announce the coming of SOME KIND OF JUDGMENT.
4. What is so important about this passage in Luke chapter 17 is that the language the Lord uses HERE is REMARKABLY SIMILAR to the language the Lord uses in the LATTER HALF of Matthew chapter 24.
 5. But, in Luke chapter 17 the language is CLEARLY referring to the DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM – NOT the second coming of Christ or the final judgment. The Lord wanted His disciples to know that the coming of the kingdom of God would eventually bring an end to the nation of Israel.

C. Let's take a closer look at the SIMILARITIES between Luke chapter 17 and Matthew chapter 24.

1. For example, in Luke's account, the Lord said when the kingdom of God comes there will be some who, *"will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them."* **(Luke 17:23)**

a. In Matthew 24 the Lord also said, *"if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*

(Matthew 24:23-24)

2. In Luke chapter 17, the Lord says the judgment against Israel will be swift, *"as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day."* **(Luke 17:24)**

a. In a similar statement in Matthew chapter 24, the Lord said, *"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."*

(Matthew 24:27)

3. Since the judgment against Israel and Jerusalem will be swift, the Lord in LUKE'S ACCOUNT said that no one should rush back to his house to gather up his goods. **(Luke 17:31-33)**
 - a. In a similar statement in Matthew 24 Jesus said, *“Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.”* **(Matthew 24:17-18)**
 4. Finally, the Lord concluded His remarks in Luke chapter 17 by giving a dreadful prediction of vultures (Rome and her armies) feeding off a dead body (Israel and Jerusalem): *“Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”* **(Luke 17:37)**
 - a. In Matthew 24 the Lord made a similar statement: *“For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”* **(Matthew 24:28)**
- D. But when we CONTINUE examining parallels between Luke chapter 17 and Matthew chapter 24, problems arise in concluding that the latter part of Matthew 24 is speaking SOLELY of the second coming of Christ and the final judgment of all mankind.
1. For example, in Luke chapter 17 the Lord proceeded to show that when judgment is finally brought against Israel, the people would be eating and drinking, planting and building – just as the people

had done in the days before God destroyed the world in the days of Noah, or as the people had done in the days of Lot when God brought judgment against Sodom. *“Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”* **(Luke 17:26-30)**

- a. But in Matthew 24 THESE verses parallel a statement made by the Lord FOLLOWING Matthew 34:36 – the point where many believe the Lord shifts to speak of His second coming and the final judgment.
 - b. In Matthews account the Lord said, *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”* **(Matthew 24:36-39)**
2. Here’s another example. In Luke chapter 17, Jesus told His disciples that when judgment comes against the nation of Israel, *“... in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be*

in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.” (Luke 17:34-36)

- a. Once again, these verses parallel a statement made by the Lord in Matthew 24 FOLLOWING Matthew 34:36 – the point where many believe the Lord shifts to speak of His second coming and the final judgment.
- b. Matthew records the Lord saying, *“Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Matthew 24:40-44)*

- E. So, what’s the significance of comparing these two accounts?
 1. If the statements in Luke chapter 17 are referring to the Lord’s judgment against the nation of Israel after the coming of the kingdom of God (which I think is a given), why wouldn’t the SAME statements in Matthew chapter 24 ALSO refer to the Lord’s

judgment against Israel – even IF these statements come AFTER Matthew 24:36.

2. Furthermore, the Lord's statements in Luke chapter 17 are describing only ONE event – God's judgment against Israel. Why wouldn't the SAME statements in Matthew chapter 24 ALSO be describing only ONE event – God's judgment against Israel?

F. I think there OTHER evidences suggesting that the Lord in Matthew chapter 24 was ONLY discussing the destruction of Jerusalem, but for now. . .

1. Let's take a closer look at Matthew 24 and the related passages in Mark and Luke in an attempt to fully understand the significance of this terrifying prophecy of the Lord.

BODY:

- I. To begin, it's important for us to understand what actually PROMPTED this statement of Jesus regarding the destruction of the Temple – the statement that not one stone here will be left upon another.
 - A. If you remember, as Jesus was answering His attackers – especially the chief priests and the elders of the people – the Lord made REPEATED references to a coming judgment.

1. On that particular Tuesday of Passover week, the first three parables Jesus taught clearly depicted Israel's rejection of Him, and the terrible consequences that would follow.

a. The Parable of the Two Sons - **Matthew 21:31-32:**

"Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him."

b. The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers - **Matthew 21:43:**

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."

c. The Parable of the Wedding Feast - **Matthew 22:7:** *"But*

when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up

their city." Matthew 22:13: "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

2. After Jesus silenced His accusers, He proceeded to charge the scribes and Pharisees of the worst kind of religious hypocrisy.

- a. Jesus said the Pharisees would fill up the measure of their fathers' guilt - **Matthew 23:29-32**
 - b. The Pharisees are the ones who kill, crucify, scourge, and persecute the prophets the Lord sent them - **Matthew 23:33-34**
 - c. And the Pharisees were those upon whom the blood of all the righteous would come, and that the wrath of God would be poured out upon that very generation - **Matthew 23:35-36**
- B. No one knows for sure WHY the disciples pointed out the beautiful stones that made up the grandeur of the glorious Temple, but most believe the disciples were deeply troubled over the LAST thing Jesus said.
1. **Matthew 23:37-39** – *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"*
 - a. Jerusalem was the city that had killed the prophets and stoned those sent to her - **Matthew 23:37a**

- b. Jerusalem was also a city unwilling to accept the love God had shown her - **Matthew 23:37b**
 - c. And finally, Jerusalem was a city whose HOUSE would be left desolate - **Matthew 23:38-39**
2. EVERY DEVOTED JEW, who knew ANYTHING about the teachings of the great prophet Jeremiah, would remember a SIMILAR time hundreds of years earlier when Jeremiah ALSO spoke of Jerusalem being left desolate – being utterly destroyed and abandoned. **(Jeremiah 26:1-10)**
- a. Those who heard JEREMIAH'S prophecy more than 600 years earlier had the SAME REACTION as the wicked and corrupt men who opposed Jesus.
 - b. **Jeremiah 26:7-9** – *So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You will surely die! Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city*

shall be desolate, without an inhabitant'?" And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

3. And NOW, on this Tuesday during the final week in the life of Jesus, the Lord was prophesying the SAME THING! Jerusalem was only ONE STEP AWAY from total and complete destruction. Why? Because she had rebelled against God in the days of Jesus JUST AS she had rebelled against God in the days of Jeremiah.
 4. Jerusalem was destroyed and left desolate THEN, and she would be destroyed and left desolate NOW.
- C. You can almost imagine the disciples of the Lord looking around them at the beautiful marble covered, gold-crowned Temple, and trying to picture in their minds why God would destroy all this.
1. And there are several reasons why they had a problem accepting this terrible revelation that Jerusalem and it's HOUSE would be left desolate!
 - a. The disciples were still laboring under the misconception that Jesus had come to be the kind of Messiah all the people were expecting.
 - b. As you know, the popular belief of the day said the Messiah would purge Jerusalem of it's religious and political

corruption, He would drive the Roman oppressors from the land, and He would reestablish a glorious kingdom as it had been in the days of David and Solomon.

- c. Therefore, how could all this take place if the city and its HOUSE would be left DESOLATE?
 - d. The disciples would have thought that SURELY Jesus didn't mean Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed as it had been in the days of Jeremiah.
2. And so, the disciples pointed to the Temple and all its surrounding buildings and porticos, and began speaking about how the Temple was adorned beautiful stones and gifts that only added to the Temple's grandeur and beauty. **(Luke 21:5)**
- a. But, so that there would be absolutely NO misunderstanding, Jesus pointedly said, *"Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."* **(Matthew 24:2)**
3. We can only imagine how STUNNED the disciples were over those words, because Matthew's account tells us that NONE of the disciples asked Jesus about this until they reached the privacy of the Mount of Olives – perhaps as much as a 20 to 30-minute walk.

- a. Very possibly a walk that was made in total silence and deep confusion.

CONCLUSION:

- I. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37)*
 - A. Josephus, the Jewish historian who had been permitted to accompany the Roman legions as they waged the final war against the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, tells us that the carnage was almost incalculable.
 1. The best estimates are that in the siege of Jerusalem, that nearly ONE-AND-A-QUARTER MILLION Jewish men, women and children perished. The siege of Jerusalem began during Passover, when more than 3 million people were crowded into the city.
 2. Conservative estimates are that in surrounding provinces more than QUARTER-MILLION MORE were slain – bringing the total to around ONE-AND-A-HALF MILLION Jewish men, women and children that were either slain by Roman swords, or starved to death during the great siege.

3. And add to that number nearly 100,000 more who were taken captive – some killed for sport in Roman theaters by wild beasts or in gladiatorial fights, some sent to Egypt as Roman slaves, others simply sold on the open slave market.
 4. To put this in perspective, the total number of slain and captives is just a little less than HALF the current population of Oregon, or more than FIVE TIMES the current population of Marion County.
- B. But the disciples of Christ – “the elect,” the Christians in Jerusalem and the surrounding territories – escaped this terrible judgment.
1. Why? Because they heeded the warnings Jesus had given His disciples, and were ready to flee to safety when the time of God’s wrath came.
- II. What saddens me most is that men and women today are facing a far worse judgment.
- A. The Lord came to this earth to offer Himself as a sacrifice to pay the debt for ALL OUR sins. He would WILLINGLY gather us to Him as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing, to offer US the safety and protection we need to be able to go to heaven someday.
1. But like many of the people of Jerusalem in the days of Jesus, many today are “not willing.”

2. The Lord freely offers salvation and eternal life to ANYONE who is WILLING to accept it, but sadly, many are NOT willing.
- B. Could I be speaking about YOU?
1. Has the Lord extended to YOU the free gift of salvation and eternal life, but you are NOT WILLING to come to Him in obedience to the gospel of Christ.
 - a. Are you UN-willing to surrender your life to Christ, and be buried with Him in baptism for the remission of sins?
 2. And for others, did you at one time in your life come to the Lord WILLINGLY, but since that time you have chosen to do YOUR will rather than His?
 - a. Are you now UN-willing to come BACK to the Lord, repenting of your sins, and asking out of a humble heart for the Lord to forgive you and blot out all your past sins?
- C. What did the people of Jerusalem GAIN by being UN-willing to come to Christ?
1. They gained NOTHING! In fact, they LOST EVERYTHING – including their VERY SOULS.
- D. Don't make the same mistake.
1. The Lord stands ready at this VERY MOMENT to gather YOU under His wings and provide YOU with the protection and

blessings you need to guarantee YOU a home in heaven for all
 eternity.