

The Mind of Christ

Not one stone shall be left upon another

Part Two

INTRODUCTION:

- I. In our last lesson we began a close examination of statements Jesus made to His disciples while He was with them on the Mount of Olives, just outside the city of Jerusalem.
 - A. From what we have seen so far, the Lord was discussing events that would take place prior to the impending destruction of Jerusalem.
 1. More specifically, Jesus warned His disciples about the SIGNS that would mark the BEGINNING of sorrows, as well as the SIGN from God that the city of Jerusalem was about to be destroyed by the Roman army, and THEN gave His disciples instructions on what they needed to DO when they see this sign.
 - B. What PROMPTED this discourse was the statement Jesus made earlier that not one stone of the Temple and its surrounding buildings would be left standing upon another.
 1. The disciples of the Lord were NOT ONLY SHOCKED when they hear this, they were also TERRIBLY CONFUSED over WHY God would destroy the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

2. They STILL didn't understand that Jesus had NO INTENTIONS of setting up an earthly kingdom and reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords from the city of Jerusalem.
 3. The LORD'S KINGDOM would be a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM in which Jesus Christ would reign as King of kings and Lord of lords within the HEARTS of His disciples. And He would reign while enthroned in HEAVEN at the right hand of GOD!
- C. However, there are differing views as to what Jesus actually meant by all the things He told His disciples on this occasion.
1. Many in the denominational world see the comments of Jesus in **Matthew 24, Mark 13** and **Luke 21** as referring to a great tribulation that will ALLEGEDLY precede the SECOND COMING of Christ.
 - a. This is a view widely held by most religious denominations known as "Premillennialism" – the belief that Jesus will return to establish an earthly kingdom and reign on the earth for a thousand years.
 2. Others see these passages referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, BUT believe that in the SECOND HALF of **Matthew chapter 24** Jesus is speaking of His SECOND COMING.
 3. Still others see **Matthew 24, Mark 13** and **Luke 21** referring EXCLUSIVELY to the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the Lord

doesn't talk about His SECOND COMING until we get to **Matthew chapter 25**.

BODY:

I. So let's take a closer look at the SECOND HALF of Matthew chapter 24 and see what the Lord was actually saying about SIGNS that would precede the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the great Temple.

A. In **Matthew 24:29** the Lord begins by discussing the events that will occur *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days. . ."*

1. What tribulation is this? It's the tribulation that will come when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies. MATTHEW described that tribulation EARLIER in **verses 21-22**.

a. **Matthew 24:21-22** – *"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. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."*

b. Luke's account is more graphic: **Luke 21:23-24** – *"For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."*

II. Therefore, beginning with **Matthew 24:29**, the Lord describes the events that will FOLLOW the great tribulation – the time when Jerusalem is trampled by Gentiles.

A. **Matthew 24:29** – "*. . . 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.*"

1. What did the Lord mean by these things? The Jewish DISCIPLES of the Lord, and the Jewish READERS of MATTHEW'S account would remember SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS throughout OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES that described the destruction of OTHER great empires and cities.

2. Since these verses are PROPHECIES, and are written in the LANGUAGE of prophecies, they're SYMBOLIC and NOT to be understood in a LITERAL way.

a. Destruction of Babylon: **Isaiah 13:9-10, 13** – *Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. 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. . . 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.

- c. The destruction of the Egyptian empire: **Ezekiel 32:7-8** –
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. All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, and bring darkness upon your land,
Says the Lord GOD.
- d. The destruction of the Edomites: **Isaiah 34:4** – *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.*
- e. The destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in Old Testament times: **Amos 8:9** – *"And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight. . ."*
- f. The destruction of the city of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire: **Nahum 1:3-5** – *The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of*

Lebanon wilts. The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it.

- g. Finally, the destruction of the Southern Kingdom of Judah at the hands of the Babylonians: **Jeremiah 4:23-28** – *I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; and the heavens, they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, and all the hills moved back and forth. I beheld, and indeed there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled. I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the LORD, by His fierce anger. For thus says the LORD: "The whole land shall be desolate; yet I will not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black, because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, nor will I turn back from it."*
3. In **Matthew 24** when the Lord said, ". . . *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,*" He was describing the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and ultimately the nation of Israel, as a HEAVEN-SHAKING, EARTH-SHAKING event and

a period of GREAT DARKNESS and SADNESS – it would be an event that would have WORLDWIDE consequences.

B. The Lord THEN describes “the SIGN of the SON OF MAN.”

1. **Matthew 24:30-31** – *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. 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.*

a. Many see these verses as describing the SECOND COMING of CHRIST – i.e. “*coming on the clouds of heaven,*” angels being sent “*with a great sound of a trumpet,*” and the gathering of the elect (Christians) from “*one end of heaven to the other.*”

2. However, SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS are found throughout the Old Testament, where they refer to the destruction of GREAT EMPIRES or CITIES.

a. The destruction of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in Old Testament times:
Jeremiah 4:13 – *“Behold, he shall come up like clouds, and his chariots like a whirlwind. His horses are swifter than eagles. Woe to us, for we are plundered!”*

- b. The judgment of God against the Roman Empire when the Kingdom of God – the Lord's church – is persecuted by Rome and eventually overcome: **Daniel 7:13-14** – *"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. 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."*
- c. The destruction of the Moabite nation: **Amos 2:2-3** – *"But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting and trumpet sound. And I will cut off the judge from its midst, and slay all its princes with him. . ."*
- d. And finally, words used to describe the Lord gathering the remnant of Judah, following the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians, and following the Babylonian captivity, during Old Testament times: **Isaiah 11:12** – *He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and*

gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

2. Once again, when the Lord spoke in **Matthew 24** about “*coming on the clouds of heaven,*” angels being sent “*with a great sound of a trumpet,*” and the gathering of the elect (Christians) from “*one end of heaven to the other,*” He was describing the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and ultimately the nation of Israel – NOT His second coming.
- C. In **Matthew 24:32-36**, the Lord gives further evidence that He is STILL warning His disciples about the destruction of Jerusalem.
1. First is the parable of the fig tree – **Matthew 24:32-33**
 - a. Jesus said when they see new branches and leaves sprouting on a fig tree, they know that Summer is near.
 - b. In like manner, when they see all the things the Lord has just spoken about (especially Jerusalem surrounded by armies), they need to know that the time is near – in fact, it is “*at the doors!*”
 2. Second, Jesus said these things will happen BEFORE “*THIS GENERATION*” passes away – **Matthew 24:34**
 - a. Some see the word “generation” here referring to a specific RACE or NATIONALITY of people (i.e., the Jews - cf. McGarvey) – meaning the JEWISH PEOPLE would not

cease to exist before the Lord returns in the SECOND COMING.

- b. But the word "generation" is ALSO used to refer to the LIFETIME of people living at a particular point in history. This is how God used the word when speaking about the people living in the days of Noah.

(1). **Genesis 7:1** – *Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in THIS GENERATION."*

- c. The destruction of Jerusalem Jesus prophesied came to pass approximately 40 YEARS after Lord made this statement – all within the lifetime of THAT generation.

- 3. Third, Jesus said His WORDS – His pronouncement of judgment against the city of Jerusalem – would DEFINITELY be fulfilled and come to pass.

- a. **Matthew 24:35** – *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

- b. Some believe that the words here indicate Jesus is NOW shifting to speak about the second coming and the final judgment.

- c. However, all Jesus was saying is that while *“heaven and earth WILL pass away”* someday – at the end of time – HIS WORDS are ETERNAL and SURE – you can COUNT ON THEM! Jesus was speaking about the SURETY of His words concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.
- D. Then Jesus said, *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”* **(Matthew 24:36)**
 1. What was He referring to here?
 - a. Could it be the *“day and hour”* when the *“heaven and earth will pass away”* at the end of time, or could it be the *“day and hour”* when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies.
 2. If you remember from a PREVIOUS LESSON, we looked at statements of the Lord from **Luke chapter 17**, where the Lord was ALSO speaking about the impending destruction of Jerusalem, and we compared the statements of the Lord THERE to the statements of the Lord in **Matthew 24**.
 3. What we found are a number of PARALLELS between these two passages.
 - a. **Matthew 24:36-39** – *“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."

- b. **Luke 17:26-30** – *"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 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. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."*
- c. In BOTH passages Jesus said the destruction of Jerusalem would come as SUDDENLY, like the flood in the days of Noah, and like the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot.
- d. People THEN were going about their normal business when the judgment of the Lord suddenly came – they were caught COMPLETELY UNPREPARED. It will be the SAME for those IN JERUSALEM who ignore the warnings of impending judgment.

4. There are OTHER PARALLELS between **Matthew 24** and **Luke 17** as well.
 - a. **Matthew 24:40-44** – *"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."*
 - b. **Luke 17:34-36** – *"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. 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."*
 - c. Once again, the two statements are STRIKINGLY SIMILAR.
 - d. In **Luke 17** Jesus told His disciples that not everyone will escape the coming destruction of Jerusalem. One will be "taken" while another is "left" – which can mean either one of two things.

- (1). ONE VIEW is that one person will be TAKEN AWAY and ESCAPE, while another will be LEFT BEHIND and SLAIN.
 - (2). OR one person will be TAKEN CAPTIVE and SLAIN, while another is left to ESCAPE.
 - (3). Either way, ONE WILL ESCAPE while ANOTHER WILL BE SLAIN.
- e. In **Matthew 24** the Lord told His disciples the SAME THING. The destruction of Jerusalem will come suddenly, and only those who knew what sign to LOOK for, and who were PREPARED to flee the city, would be spared. Everyone else will eventually die when Titus and his army of 80,000 plus troops come to destroy the city.
5. So, what's the significance of comparing these two accounts?
- a. If the statements in **Luke chapter 17** are referring to the Lord's judgment against the nation of Israel, then it seems only reasonable that the SAME statements in **Matthew chapter 24 ALSO** refer to the Lord's judgment against Israel.
 - b. Jesus said concerning THAT DAY and hour NO MAN knows, ONLY the Father.
- E. Finally, Jesus warns His disciples to WATCH! - **Matthew 24:42-44**

1. Jesus said since they don't know the hour when the Son of Man is coming, they needed to avoid being caught off guard – like the master of the house who was caught off guard when the thief broke into his house.

III. This brings us to the last six verses of **Matthew chapter 24 – verses 45-51**.

A. These verses are sometimes called the "Parable of the Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant."

1. If you read these verses with the understanding that, up to THIS POINT, **Matthew chapter 24** speaks of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, and **Matthew 25** speaks of the second coming of Christ and the final judgment, then these verses could very possibly form a transition from one subject to the other.
2. **Matthew 24:45-51** – *"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in*

two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

- B. The message is simple.
 - 1. Jesus said it's only the FAITHFUL SERVANT who will be blessed as long as THAT servant is DOING the master's will when He comes.
 - 2. The disciples were admonished to continue faithfully serving the Lord – to continue being productive in the Lord's service – knowing the Lord WILL BE coming in judgment against Jerusalem soon.
- C. In **Matthew chapter 25**, the Lord will CONTINUE this admonition about preparation and productivity.
 - 1. But in **Matthew chapter 25** the disciples will be admonished to be prepared and productive until the Lord comes again in the FINAL JUDGMENT to separate the sheep from the goats – one group will inherit eternal life, the other will face eternal destruction.

CONCLUSION:

- I. In the early Spring of AD 70, during the Jewish Passover, the Roman legions under the command of Titus approached the city of Jerusalem.
 - A. Thousands of people from the nearby towns and villages fled into the city of Jerusalem to find safety behind the cities massive stone walls.

1. Within days, the army of Titus, which numbered 70,000 infantrymen and 10,000 cavalry surrounded the city.
 - a. Their arsenal included hundreds of siege towers taller than the walls of Jerusalem, battering rams that could eventually break through the strongest of walls, and massive catapults that could hurl 100-pound stones, and others that could hurl stones the size of Volkswagons.
 2. Although the city was protected by massive walls and towers, and also surrounded by deep valleys on three sides, there was at least one advantage for the Romans.
 - a. There was relatively level ground to the north of the city. And it would be here that the Romans would launch their attack.
- B. As the siege continued, various factions within the city of Jerusalem began fighting among themselves for control.
1. The Jewish historian Josephus estimated that there was enough grain in the city of Jerusalem to withstand a siege of 5 years.
 - a. But since each faction had their own storehouses of grain, each group coveted the stores of the other groups.
 - b. During the internal fighting, fires broke out within the city, and most of the grain supplies were completely destroyed leaving the people with little or no food.

- C. Soon the Romans launched their attack by their catapults flinging a barrage of heavy stones into the city.
 - 1. As the stones sailed over the northern walls of the city, the Roman soldiers moved their battering rams into place and began demolishing the city's northern defenses.
 - 2. After fifteen days, the outer wall collapsed, and the Jews withdrew further inside the city to a second wall.
 - 3. Although the Jewish defenders held the second wall for a few days, it eventually collapsed to the violence of the battering rams.
- D. As the Roman soldiers poured through the demolished walls, fierce hand-to-hand fighting began in the streets.
 - 1. The Jewish defenders inflicted heavy losses on the Romans, who were forced to retreat back through the breach in the second wall.
- E. Although the forces of Titus recaptured the second wall and forced the Jewish defenders to retreat further into the city, Titus ALSO realized these Jewish defenders would fight for every square inch of the city.
 - 1. Therefore, to convince the Jewish defenders that it was useless to fight against Rome, Titus decided to make a show of strength and staged a parade of his forces.
 - a. For four days, the army of Titus marched around the city.

- b. The Jewish soldiers took up positions on the walls to watch the parade, and when the parade ended, the Jewish soldiers cheered and applauded the show.
 2. Titus and his legions of soldiers were thoroughly humiliated, and would not forget this insult once they stormed the final strongholds of the city.
- F. Since it would be too costly to take the city by force, Titus decided to starve the enemy into surrender.
 1. There were already signs that food supplies in Jerusalem were giving out.
 - a. Some Jews had left the city, hoping to find food in the valleys in front of the walls.
 - b. Many of them had been caught and crucified.
 2. As food supplies ran out and sanitary conditions in the city began to deteriorate, the death rate among the besieged citizens of Jerusalem quickly increased.
 3. Soon, the Kidron valley and the Valley of Hinnon were filled with bodies of the dead that had been thrown over the walls of the city.
 - a. One defector told Titus that the number of those who had already died was estimated to be at 115,880.

3. In the end, approximately 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, and nearly 100,000 more were taken captive – some killed for sport, others to simply be sold as slaves.
- II. God has always brought nations of men that have turned against Him in rebellion and disobedience.
 - A. Sadly, our own nation will someday meet the same fate, unless the Lord returns first to bring about the final judgment for ALL mankind.
 1. Moral decay, rebellion against God, and a complete disregard for anything that is holy is being seen all around us.
 2. At times I wonder just how much longer God will permit all this to continue.
 - III. But if we don't live to see the fall of our own nation, or the second coming of Christ in the final judgment, we can be assured that we will still face a judgment.
 - A. The apostle Paul simply put it this way.
 1. **Romans 14:10-12** – *For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

2. What does this mean for us?
 - a. It simply means that if you've refused all your life to bow your knee to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and refused to confess Him as the Christ, the Son of God, there will come a day when you WILL bow before Him AND confess to God – but THEN it will be too late.
 - (1). You will bow your knees in fear and terror, and will call out to Jesus Christ to have mercy.
 - b. But others who have faithfully served the Lord till death, will bow before the Lord in great reverence, and will call out in praise to the Christ who died for them.
3. How will you bow before the Lord?
 - a. Will you bow before the Lord on that day in reverence and praise or out of terror and fear?
4. There's no need for anyone here to be afraid of that day. We can all start preparing for that day right now.