

Chapter Eleven

The Synoptic Gospel Prophecies

As members of His Church, we are built on the foundation laid by the Apostles and the Prophets, with Jesus Christ as the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). Accordingly, we ought to build our prophetic understanding of the destinies of Judah, Israel and the Kingdom of God and how they all intertwine **during the latter days on what He said. Whilst there are a few comments elsewhere, the bulk of Jesus' Prophetic Teaching is found in the following chapters: Matthew 13 and 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 and a particularly definitive repeated statement in John 6.**

It is important to take all the gospel accounts into consideration. You probably know of the term 'synoptic' being applied to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Secular critics look at the differences in the Gospel records of certain events or teachings as being contradictions. However, when we look at them carefully, we discover they are actually complimentary and that the differences are simply the individual writers taking note of certain details not mentioned by the others. We can then move from a partial comprehension of the event or teaching to a complete understanding. It is written: **"by two or three witnesses the word shall be established"** (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; 2 Corinthians 13:1).

By the way, for those of you who are finding it hard going with the King James Bible, **here's hoping that you're coping** with its antiquity and that **it's not too** much of a bother for you to read along with your favourite translation. **Like I said, if it wasn't for the publishing and copyright considerations I would have used a reader friendly version.**

Whereas in the previous chapter we saw that Jesus defined and demonstrated the Kingdom of God in His combined roles of Prophet, Priest and King, in this chapter we will see how His prophecies seamlessly dovetail with the utterances of the prophet Daniel concerning the destiny of the Kingdom of Judah, with particular attention being made to the Abomination of Desolation.

After giving a series of woes to the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus began to make some prophetic statements. Soon afterwards, the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him about what He had just been declaring concerning Jerusalem and the Temple. To maintain the context we will pick it up beginning at Matthew 23:31:

Matthew 23:31-24:3

Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Mark 13:1-4

And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! 2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

Luke 21:5-7

And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Take note: there were four questions that were asked.

The disciples asked Him, “When shall these things be?”

The disciples asked Him, “What sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?”

The disciples asked Him, “. . . what shall be the sign of thy coming?”

The disciples asked Him, “of the end of the world?”

Later translations say, “end of the age”. A little note on that variation of rendering: the Greek word translated ‘world’ is *aion* which indeed is ‘age’, as in a period of time. However, the KJV people were fully aware of this and translated it ‘world’ due to the overall context of all that Daniel, Jesus and the Apostles taught that reveals the end of the age Jesus was speaking of is indeed the end of the world.

Let us examine the context wherein the disciples asked these questions. Jesus had just made these statements to the Scribes and the Pharisees:

Matthew 23:35-36,38

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.”

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Matthew 24:2

There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Some people contend that because what is known as The Wailing Wall, also known as The Western Wall in Jerusalem, still has stones one upon another, that this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. However, Jesus was speaking of the things the disciples brought His attention to, the Temple and the surrounding buildings. The Western Wall is not one of the buildings, nor a part of any building, but is the ancient remains of the retaining wall built to contain the extension of the Temple Mount grounds during the renovations of King Herod. (The upper portions of which have been laid in later times.) Every stone of every building that Jesus and the Disciples were looking at was cast down and that was what the Lord was prophesying about. No wonder the disciples asked about the end of the age. They must have figured if all this was going to go down, it must be all over. **But Jesus lets them know that it's not the end.**

Matthew 24:4-6

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Mark 13:5-7

And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: 6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

Luke 21:8-9

And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. 9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

Jesus says to them, “Take heed that ye be not deceived”.

Jesus says to them, “Many shall come in my name . . . and shall deceive many”.

Jesus says to them, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars".

Jesus says to them, "The end is not yet".

Matthew 24:7-14

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Mark 13:8-13

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows. 9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. 10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations. 11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. 12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. 13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Luke 21:10-19

Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. 12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: 15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. 18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish. 19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

Jesus says that it's all going to turn to custard, the pawpaw is going to hit the fan, look forward to trials, tribulations and betrayal, but hang in there 'cause you're gonna be alright and by the way, here's your sign for the end of the age: THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM WILL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD AS A WITNESS TO ALL THE NATIONS.

Matthew 24:15 NKJV “THEREFORE”

When you see a ‘therefore’, you must look for what it’s there for. The disciples had asked, “When will these things be?” That is: when will all the stones of the Temple be cast down? When will the ‘house’ be left desolate? Jesus now answers this question:

Matthew 24:15-16 NKJV

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.

Mark 13:14

But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:

Luke 21:20-21

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Let the reader understand. Let the reader understand.

Hear what Jesus said. The armies are coming, the desolation is near, but the Gospel must be preached; THEREFORE FLEE! Head for the hills! **Don’t hang about expecting Me to turn up. You’ve got work to do, a Gospel to preach; THEREFORE FLEE!** Despite the wars and rumours of wars it is not the end of the age. FLEE. When you see the Abomination of Desolation; when you see the armies; FLEE!

Matthew: When you see . . . flee.

Mark: When you see . . . flee.

Luke: When you see . . . flee.

Matthew 24:17-22

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

Mark 13:15-20

And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: 16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. 20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

Luke 21:21-24

Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Jesus said flee because: "These be the days of vengeance."

Jesus said flee because: "There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people."

Jesus said flee because: "There will be tribulation."

Jesus said flee because: "For then shall be great tribulation."

Have you noticed that there are at least two tribulations, possibly three? The one in the verses following is the time when all will hate Christians for His Names sake. He says that they will deliver you to tribulation, kill you, hate you and betray you.

Matthew 24:9

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Mark 13:13

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Luke 21:16

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

In describing the other tribulation, the Scripture does not use the word 'you' at all. The word is 'they': 'they' will fall by the sword; 'they' will be led away; there will be wrath upon 'this' people. And so that it doesn't proceed and effect the elect, the days are cut short. This great tribulation, which came upon Jerusalem, is referred to in Luke as the "days of vengeance". Jesus said it was on account of all the righteous blood shed on the earth. It was a great tribulation upon the Jews to be followed by the

trampling of Jerusalem until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled. It was not something that the nascent Christian Church was to experience, rather they were to be delivered from it as per Daniel 12:1.

Having answered the disciples question about the destruction of the Temple, adding that it is then the time to flee on account of the great tribulation coming upon the city and nation, He moves on to the signs of the times that pertain **to the end of the age saying, "THEN"**

"Then" means: at that time; or after that time; or the next thing to happen. After the great tribulation upon the unbelieving Jews, Jesus reiterates his warning about the coming of false Christs and false prophets that he made at the beginning of His discourse.

Matthew 24:23-26

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

Mark 13:21-23

And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: 22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

The Jews have had at least fifteen claimants to the title of Messiah over the centuries. The first major figure was Simon Bar Kochba early in the second century, about sixty years after the fall of Jerusalem. Among those who call themselves Christian there have been at least thirty notable characters claiming to be Christ, the vast majority being during the last century till now. In Jerusalem, they have a special team of psychologists who are regularly dealing with people who consider themselves to be the Messiah, or the Christ, or Elijah, or John the Baptist; I think the list goes on. They are labelled as suffering from Messianic Delusional Syndrome, some call it the Jerusalem Syndrome, and others call it the Messianic Complex. I remember once seeing an ad in a magazine saying that the Christ was in London. No doubt we will see more. So when someone tells me He is in a **temple in Jerusalem, I'm not going to believe it.** The Scripture already warns me about a man of sin who is going to tell the world that he is God as he sits in the **Temple of God. But with Jesus, we won't have to go looking for Him for we will be caught up** to meet Him in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Hallelujah! Until He comes to raise us up at the last day, He reigns in our hearts and is seated at the Right Hand of God.

Luke doesn't bother to reiterate about the deceptions but instead gives us an unspecified time period.

Luke 21:24

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Some might say that because the Jews are back in Jerusalem that this period of time is finished; over. I heard the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mention recently (July 2017) that only about a **third of the world's Jews are living in Israel while** others estimate about half the Jews are back. Faced with that fact and the continuing presence of Gentiles still dominating the Temple Mount and much of

Jerusalem, we have ample reason to reject that idea in favour of something more definite happening in the future. While the Dome of the Rock is still standing, Gentiles who are given to the Islamic faith will continue to trample that area as they do to this day. When Jesus made His statements about this, the context He was speaking of was directly concerning the Temple Mount.

Continuing with His prophecy, Jesus gives us a few more details regarding the end of the age; signs in the sky that will appear after we have done our part preaching the Gospel in ALL the world. Have you preached it in all your part of the world? Time to be about His business.

Matthew 24:29-31

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Luke 21:24-26

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Mark 13:24-27

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Matthew 24:27

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Yep, looks like a last-days tribulation to be endured with perseverance by the saints before the sun, moon and stars diminish. Jesus refers to **this period of time** as “**the tribulation of those days**” when He speaks about the end of the age and He had already mentioned it in Matthew 24:9, Mark 13:13 and Luke 21:17 and also prophesied by Daniel:

Daniel 7:21-22

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Jesus explains the resurrection, the Kingdom of Heaven and the end of the age with these parables. We touched on this in the last chapter for the subjects overlap somewhat, however, it's an important matter and worth repeating.

Matthew 13:24-30

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Not leaving us to interpret the parable for ourselves, Jesus gives the explanation:

Matthew 13:36-43

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 13:47-50

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

In the explanation of both these parables we see that the end of the age immediately becomes the Day of Judgment. The wheat and the tares are brought off the field which represents the world and are sorted out; the fish are brought up out of their world and are sorted out. Jesus used another metaphoric expression, that of sheep and goats in Matthew 25, which also has some details of the Day of Judgment.

Matthew 25:31:46 NKJV

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ 37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

41 “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ 44 “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ 45 Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

The Gospel of John has little to say of the last day but what it does say is definitive:

John 6:39

And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

John 6:40

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:44

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:54

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Jesus said, “I will raise him up at the last day.”

Jesus said, “I will raise him up at the last day.”

Jesus said, “I will raise him up at the last day.”

Jesus said, “I will raise him up at the last day.”

Jesus said, “. . . the harvest is **the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.**” By way of reminder, here are the passages from Matthew again with Jesus describing the end of the age, or as the King James has it: “**the end of this world.**”

Matthew 13:40-43

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 13:49-50

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

In summary, Jesus answered these four questions given Him by the Apostles:

1. When will these things be?
2. What will be the sign that these things will come to be?
3. What is the sign of the end of the age?
4. What is the sign of your coming?

He began by answering concerning the end of the age as the proclamations concerning Jerusalem and the Temple had clearly provoked the disciples concerning this particular event. He assures them that despite tribulation, betrayal and wars, the end is not yet and that it will not come immediately. He then tells them that the Gospel will be preached in all the world first, and then the end shall come. Question 3 answered first. (Matthew 24:4-14; Mark 13:5-13)

Because they had the great commission to fulfil, He then warned them not to stay in Jerusalem to be destroyed with the wicked, but when they see the Abomination of Desolation, the armies surrounding the city, they were to flee to the mountains. Question 1 and Question 2 answered. (Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20; Luke 21:8-19)

He told them that a great tribulation was coming upon the nation and that these would be the days of vengeance for all the righteous blood that had been shed since Abel. He told them that the surviving Jews would be led away captive into the nations and that Jerusalem and the Temple Mount would be trampled by Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles was fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)

During that period of time before His return, which includes the time of the Gentiles, there would be many false Christs and false prophets with lying signs and wonders. He told them His coming would be “after the tribulation of those **days**”, a time when the final earthly kingdom will make war against the saints (Daniel 7:21; Matthew 24:23-28; Mark 13:21-23; Luke 21:20-24).

Then the sun loses its light and the moon becomes blood red and the stars of the heavens fall. Luke includes “distress of nations”, “**men’s hearts failing them for fear**” and the “powers of the heavens” being shaken. Question 4 partially answered. (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25-26)

Then the sign of the Son of Man would appear (Question 4: answer completed) and His angels would be sent to gather His elect from Heaven and Earth. The gathering of all the saints from Heaven would of course be the dead in Christ who rise first and then those who remain are caught up to meet them in the air in what is commonly referred to as the Rapture. (Matthew 24:30-31; Mark 13:26-27; Luke 21:27)

Contrary to a popular contemporary teaching, the Rapture, or to use the biblical expression, the Resurrection, happens on the last day. Jesus said that the harvest is the end of the age and as noted in the above Scriptures, it is when the wicked are cast into the fire and the righteous go on to shine forth in the Kingdom of their Father. He said again and again that He will raise up those who believe on the last day (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54).

With this understanding given to us from the Lord Himself, we have every reason to believe that the Abomination of Desolation is not a future event for us in this present age. It was the harbinger of destruction and an early warning to the disciples that they were to flee from Judea and Jerusalem before the Jews experienced the great tribulation that was to come upon the city. The wrath of God was abiding upon the unbelieving nation that had filled its cup of sin to the brim and the vengeance of God for all the righteous blood was about to be poured out upon the nation.

The prophetic teaching of Jesus accurately describes the events that unfolded upon the unbelieving Jews. A graphic description of the details of the fall of Jerusalem accomplished by the Romans is to be found in the writings of the first century Jewish historian **Josephus whom I’ve mentioned a few times now. I encourage you to read the Josephus account. It’s a real eye opener to the extent of the calamity that came upon the unbelieving Jews.**

There are secular confirmations of the occurrence of this event which include written records of the **Roman’s celebration of their victory and evidence of large memorials built and minted commemorative** coins which remain to this day. As already mentioned, early Christian writers speak of the escape of the Church who had heeded the warnings in the Gospels and went into the mountainous area of the Decapolis, east and south east of Lake Galilee where most of them from Jerusalem found safety in a city called Pella. Apparently this area was Roman friendly and did not suffer the destruction of the Jewish villages as the Legions made their way down through Samaria and Judea to Jerusalem.

The Jews to this day remember the event of the destruction of their Second Temple. The amazing **‘coincidence’ is that it occurred on the exact same day on their calendar as the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians. They call their day of remembrance ‘Tisha B’Av.’**

The Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel are now both in exile. And a new Kingdom has arisen. A Kingdom not of this world that exists and grows whilst the kingdoms of this world continue to come and go until the end of the age. But what of the promises regarding the restoration of Israel? The disciples asked the same question.

Acts 1:6-8

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be

witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Jesus did not tell them it wasn't going to be or that they had misinterpreted the prophecies of old. He simply told them the time and the season for the restoration **of Israel's kingdom** to come to pass was none of their business and directed them to the work of preaching the Gospel as His witnesses. And the promised restoration? Probably not accomplished until after the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled. We will look at the Scriptures on that subject in a following chapter and see what we shall see.