Matthew 24 – Olivet Discourse

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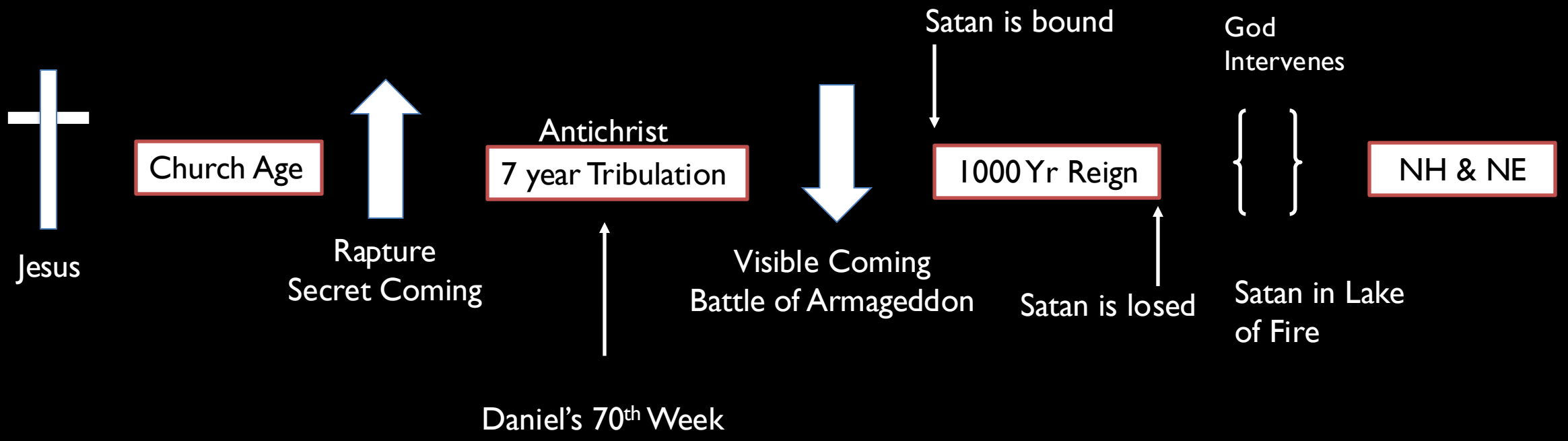
Pre-Trib Pri-Mil Dispensationalism



Problems

Church Age Ends at Rapture

Two comings – Secret and Visible

Self-Introduced GAP in the Daniel's 70 Weeks

Assume a 7 Year tribulation

Literal 1000 Years and All Believers reign in the 1000 years

Completely ignore Time Statements given by Jesus

Ignore historical events, Mis-interpret Apocalyptic and covenantal language

John Nelson Darby developed dispensational eschatology, a theological system that posits a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church, emphasizing a literal interpretation of Scripture and a pre-tribulational rapture of the Church before a future period of intense suffering and tribulation for Israel. His eschatology includes a gap in Daniel's prophecy, where the church is raptured before the Antichrist's reign, allowing God to continue His plan for national Israel.

The vision from Margaret Macdonald became a foundational element in Darby's systematic theology, which differed significantly from traditional Christian eschatology.

John Nelson Darby's eschatology was aided in popularity by a number of factors, including the publication of the widely circulated *Scofield Reference Bible*, the spread of his teachings through influential figures and Bible conferences, and the formation of Bible institutes dedicated to his theological framework.

Church = New Covenant Israel

- The Middle East parcel of land of our time is not the Israel of the Bible
- Remember there is No Jew or Greek ?
- Who is the New Testament Israel ?

Galatians 3: 28-29

28There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29If you belong to Christ, then you are **Abraham's seed,** and heirs according to the promise.

Last Days of the Bible = Last Days of the Old Covenant Israel

- Jacob spoke of the Last Days that were the Last Days of Old Covenant (OC) Israel – Gen 49
- Peter Spoke of the Last Days of OC Israel – Acts 2: 14-36
- Joel Spoke of the Last Days of OC Israel – Joel 2:28
- Jesus told that the pharisees were living in the Last days – Matthew 21: 43-46
- Writer of Heb Spoke of Last Days of OC Israel - Heb 1:1

What New Testament Passage Speaks of

Signs of Jesus's Coming ?

The Tribulation

The Persecution

The Cosmic Upheavels

Matthew 24: The Olivet Discount

Mark 13 ; Luke 21: 5-36; John : Revelation

Key Elements of Matthew 24

- Destruction of Temple
- Signs of His Coming
  - Wars, Eathquakes
  - Persecution
  - Preaching of the Gospel
  - Abomination of Desolation
  - The Great Tribulation
  - False Prophets and False Christ
  - Cosmic Events
- Time Statement

Biblical Hermeneutics

- Scripture must Interpret Scripture
- We use the clear passages to bring clarity to obscure passage – not the other way around
- Bible is written for us but Not to Us
  - Think of it like a Mail written to our Grandfather by his friend, the contents of the mail was primarily for him
  - Application can be manifold, but the original context, original intent takes precedence, something specific to that time doesn't apply to us
  - We must be sensitive to the language, culture of the time, and reconcile translation issues by examining the Greek and Hebrew words and idioms used

What we will Try to Examine

1. Were the disciples asking Jesus about the End of the World ?
2. Is the judgement predicted in the Matthew 24 Local or Global,
3. Are the events predicted in the Matthew 24 in our future or in our Past
4. What are its Implications on us as the Church

Were the disciples asking Jesus about the End of the World ?

- Matthew 24 : 1 - 3
- Context – Matthew 23 – Judgement on Religious Leaders of the OC Israel
- “Tell us,” they said,
  - **When will these things happen?** (destruction of the temple)
  - What will be the sign of Your coming
  - [What will be the sign] of the end of the age

COMING : Parousia

The Greek word is parousia, which means arrival, presence, visitation.

In Matthew, Jesus Himself had already warned that **He would come** **in judgment against that generation**:

- Matthew 10:23 – *“You will not have gone through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”*
- Matthew 16:28 – *“There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”*
- Matthew 21:40–41 – Parable of the wicked tenants: the owner “comes” and destroys them.

Why They Linked “Coming” and “End of the Age”

1. In Jewish thought, the temple = covenant = world-order
2. If the temple was destroyed, then the old covenant age (Mosaic order) would cease
3. That’s why they equated the destruction of the temple with the “end of the age.”
4. They always expected the age to come

Ephesians 1: 20-21

which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, 21far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in the present age but also **in the one to come.** **[**Greek word “mello” - **About To]**

"this age" is olam ha-zeh and "the age to come" is olam ha-ba

End of the Age – Not End of the World

- Age – Greek work AEON (aiōnos)
- It always refers to a period of time - order– not land or world
- KJV renders it as WORLD however NKJV corrected it
- Luke and Mark Omit this question about the age as the change of age was a Jewish expectation

Disciples of Jesus were not asking about the end of the world, they understood that the destruction of the Temple meant the end of the old covenant age, and it was going to take place through a coming (in judgement) and they wanted to know when that will take place

Is the judgement predicted in the Matthew 24 Local or Global

- Matthew 24:15–22
- Every time something happens in our world, we are quick to do Newspaper Exegesis and Biblical Eisegesis
- A prophecy should be understood in its context, who is it given to, when is it expected – A reluctance in binding to this principle leads to wrong interpretations

Remember What Peter Said:

2 Peter 1:19-21

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

Judgement of Matt 24 Local or Global ?

Contrary to popular belief, a simple and honest exegesis tells us that the judgement predicted by our Lord is not a Global but a Local event in Jerusalem.

<u>Audience Relevance:</u> Local Audience Not Global

- Jesus is speaking to the disciples, answering their question about the destruction of the temple.
- Jesus did not deviate from that context.
- Jesus kept addressing them as YOU (v.4, v.9, v.15, v.23, v.26, v.34) – His disciples who asked him the question
- Persecutions in temple and synagogue (first century believers)

Judgement of Matt 24 Local or Global ?

Local Reference:

- Flee Judea → Local, not worldwide v.16
- People on the Housetops – Local cultural context v.17
- People in the fields – Local agrarian context v.18
- Reference to Sabbath – Local to Israelites of the time who observed sabbath in those days. On sabbath you cannot travel past a certain distance

Local Fulfillment

- Siege of Jerusalem AD 70
- Josephus writes in Jewish Wars – Over 1.1M died

Why do we assume a Global Judgement

- Due to the cosmic upheaval language
- If we pay any attention to the Old Testament's Language whenever God visited (came) in judgement – Its depicted in vivid Jewish Apocalyptic Language. Its is not to be taken literally.
- Matt. 24:29 – 'Sun darkened…'
- Babylon – Isa. 13:10
- Egypt – Ezek. 32:7–8
- Edom – Isa. 34:4
- Jerusalem – Jer. 4:23–28

Heaven & Earth Passing Away

- Matt. 24:35 – Not physical creation
- Heaven and Earth is a Covenantal Term representing Relation between God and Man.

Old Heaven and Earth

- The Jewish temple itself was viewed as a microcosm of heaven and earth
- The **Holy of Holies** = heaven (God's dwelling).
- The **Outer Court** = earth (Israel's dwelling).
- Together, the temple symbolized the covenantal "heaven and earth."

New Heaven and Earth

- New covenant relationship between God and Man mediated through the Lord Jesus Christ
- Fulfilled in Christ: the new covenant people = the "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15)
- **Hebrews 12:26–28** interprets it: the old heaven and earth (old covenant) is shaken, so that the new kingdom (new covenant) remains unshakable
- Will cover in detail in the future.

Are the events predicted in the Matthew 24 in our future or in our Past ?

Majority of the current Church looks at Matthew 24 as a Prophecy of the future, however keeping things in context reveals to us that it CANNOT be in our future.

- If the events of Matthew 24 did not take place, it is a major blow to the Christian faith and the credibility of our Lord
- Our Lord made time statements, and as honest Christians, we cannot ignore the time statement. As those who profess Christ's Deity – it is necessary for us to take the time statements given by our Lord seriously.
- Lord Jesus made a BOLD STATEMENT

Matthew 24:34-35

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

This Generation

- This Generation(Genea) – The Generation contemporary to Lord Jesus
- In every other place in Matthew – Genea is referred to the then generation.
- Jesus told the disciples – All the things – The signs, the events, the destruction of the temple, the abomination of the desolation, ALL will come to pass before the end of that generation.
- There is no going around this fact. With this TIME statement Jesus confined the validity and fulfillment of the prophecy within a Generation of Jesus's time. We cannot take it to a future fulfilment – that would make Jesus a false prophet.

The Signs Already Fulfilled

Every little detail that was spelled out by our Lord was fulfilled in the time frame set by our Lord

- False Messiahs – Acts 5 : 29-40
- Wars & rumors – Jewish-Roman conflicts that started AD 65 onwards in a quiet period of Pax Romana (Peace of Rome)
- Famines – Acts 11:28
- Earthquakes – Acts 16:26
- Persecution, Tribulation, and Killing the saints – Acts (Stephen, Peter, Paul, James, etc.)
- Gospel preached to all the world – Col. 1:23
- Destruction of the Temple – AD.70 (Historical fact)

The Great Tribulation - 7-Year Tribulation ?

- Is the Great Tribulation – For 7 years ?
- Misreading of Daniel 9
- Christ fulfilled Daniel 70 weeks prophecy
- Romans Siege (tribulations) lasted ~3.5 years (AD 66–70) Not 7 Years

We will cover the rest of the issues in Matthew 24 in subsequent sessions

Implications for the Church

- Matthew 24 – Jesus's prophecy was about the Destruction of the Herodean Temple, not a future temple (there is no biblical basis for a 3rd temple at all)
- Jesus's Signs of his coming – were local, and his coming was in Judgement not a literal – same as how it was mentioned in the OT times.
- Jesus' prophecy fulfilled to the dot within the generation, the Temple, and the old covenant order was destroyed during the destruction of temple in Jerusalem in AD.70
- Matthew 24 The Great tribulation is in our Past – not in our Future
- Our Lord's words are true
- Our mission: Proclaim boldly the Gospel – for there is no failing of our Lord's word
- Re-think how you saw Matthew 24 till now, are you being honest with the word, are we doing exegesis, or just going with the tide with everyone even though there are glaring facts in front of us but we want to overlook.

Implications for the Church

- As Christians we are called to grow – in faith, in knowledge and in understanding
- As an honest student of the word, we are to seek the truth – Let only God be true, everyone a liar.
- Think of how we do exactly opposite of what God tells us
  - He says things are going happen soon, in that generation, but we want to look for distant fulfillment in our future thousands of years later.
  - God says he wouldn't tarry – but we pray if the Lord tarries (Hebrews 10:37 says, "For, 'Yet a little while, and the Coming One will come and will not delay')
  - How about we take the words of the Lord seriously – and ask ourselves, shouldn't I dig deeper and understand to make sense of things in the Bible.
  - The guiding premise should be the Lord's words – Lord's words are the frame, find the other pieces to fit the puzzle.

Conclusion

- Great Tribulation = past (AD 70)
- Heaven & earth = covenant, not cosmic
- Cosmic signs = symbolic judgment
- Judgement of Matt 24 – Local not Global
- 7-year tribulation = no biblical proof
- Jesus' words proven true

Let's re-think our eschatology. Lets ask questions, Seek answers, Study, and grow.

Matthew 24:35

'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.'