Matthew 24 – Olivet Discourse

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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
- Our Hermeneutic determines Our understanding of Scriptures, It determines Our Eschatelogy, and therefore it determines How we live in this world and How we fulfill Our Vocation
- Hermeneutic is not a periphery issue - It's at the core of our Faith. Wrong hermeneutic leads to wrong interpretation – leads to wrong teaching – leads to wrong understanding – leads to wrong application.

“It cannot mean what it never meant”, I’ve etched that on my brain
And when I study scripture, I echo that refrain.

I’ve studied hermeneutics and exegesis too,
So, as a consequence of this, I’ve somewhat changed my view

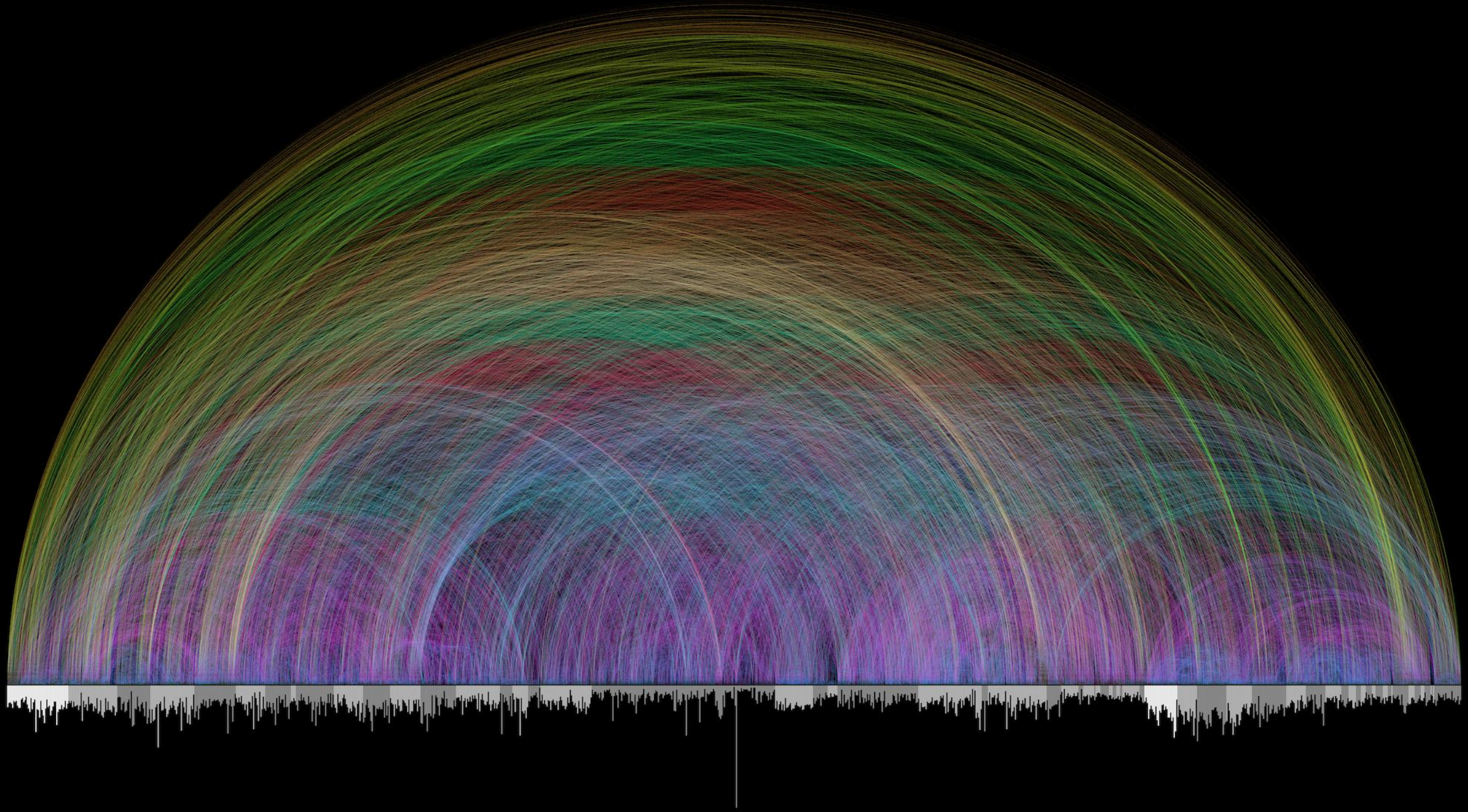
I’ve learned some nomenclature too lengthy to define
like cultural relativity and textual design

There is so much I want to know, How to ferret out the truth
I hope someday that I’ll become a Bible reading sleuth

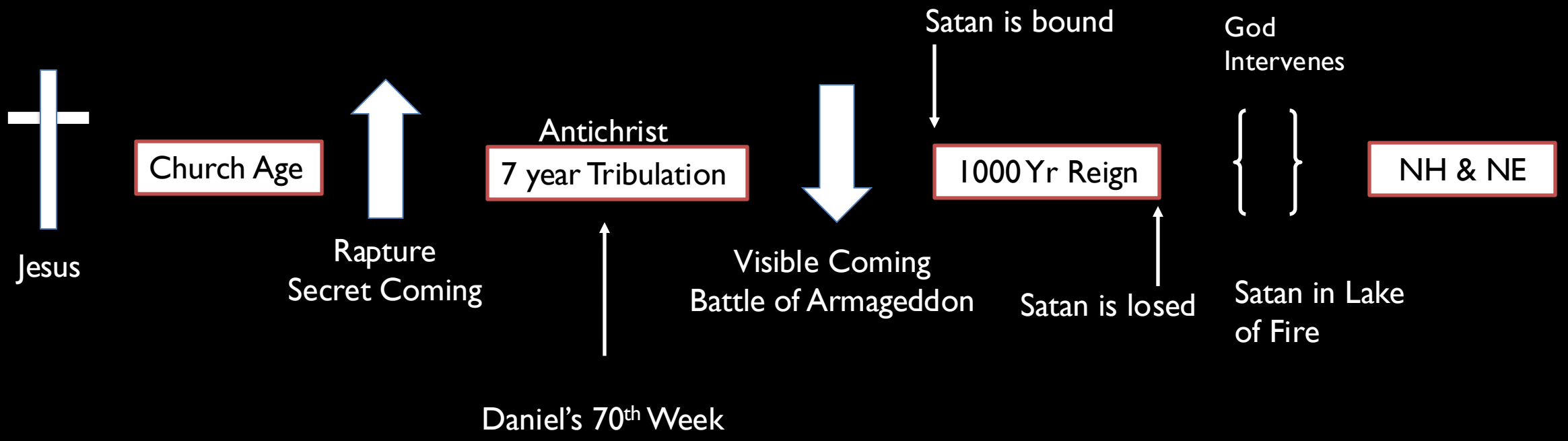
A new respect has taken me, for God’s own holy word
inspiring me to know the truth, to hear as it was heard

But I know I must remember, I stepped through an open door
and never can return again to where I was before

Pat Bergeron



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

Recap

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

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

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

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

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

Isaiah 13

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

6 Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

9 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.

10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

11 "I will punish the world for *its* evil, And the wicked for their iniquity;

13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place,

In the wrath of the Lord of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.

Isaiah 13

- Isaiah 13 is talking about God's judgement over Babylon
- The judgement came to pass – The prophecy did come to fulfill in 539 BC
- the Medes conquered Babylon in **539 BC**
- **God used Medes to bring about his Judgement over Babylon**
- **It wasn't a Cosmic event that wiped out Babylon, It was a local war by the Medes and Persia that decimated Babylon.**

How do we know the Medes was to fulfil this prophecy ? Ref. Isaiah 13:17

17 "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, Who will not regard silver;

Isaiah 13

10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

Did the Actual Stars of heaven stopped giving its light ?

Did the Actual Sun was darkened ?

Did the Actual Moon was caused to not Shine ?

Of course, No.

Babylon was destroyed, yet we still have the Sun, the Moon, and we still have Stars.

This is Jewish Apocalyptic Language– It uses Hyperbole to emphasize its intensity. Every judgement described in this fashion always points to God's wrath on a nations brought about by another nation

Ezekiel 32

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

7 When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud, And the moon shall not give her light.

8 All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, And bring darkness upon your land,” Says the Lord God.

Ezekiel 32

- Ezekiel 32 is talking about God's judgement over Eygpt
- The judgement came to pass – The prophecy did come to fulfill in 587-86 BC
- Babylon triumphs over Eygpt in **587-86 BC**
- **God used Babylon to bring about his Judgement over Eypgt**
- **It wasn't a Cosmic event that wiped out Eygpt, It was a local event by the Babylonians that defeated Eygpt.**

How do we know the Babylonians were to fulfil this prophecy ? Ref. Jeremiah 46

13 The word that the Lord spoke to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would come and strike the land of Egypt.

25 The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, says: "Behold, I will bring punishment on Amon of No, and Pharaoh and Egypt, with their gods and their kings—Pharaoh and those who trust in him.

26 And I will deliver them into the hand of those who seek their lives, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of his servants. Afterward it shall be inhabited as in the days of old," says the LORD.

Ezekiel 32

7 When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud, And the moon shall not give her light.
8 All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, And bring darkness upon your land," Says the Lord God.

Were the Actual Stars Darkened ?

Was the Sun covered, and Moon stoped giving her light ?

Of course, No.

Eygpt was indeed overpowered and defeated by the Babylonians in 587-86 BC, yet we still have the Sun, the Moon, and we still have Stars.

This is another example of Jewish Apocalyptic Language that described God's judgement over a Nation using another Nation. The description is cosmic in nature but in reality, it's a war, a battle in which God uses one nation to destroy the other.

Other Such Examples in Bible

- Edom – Isa. 34:4
- Jerusalem – Jer. 4:23–28
- Matthew 24 :29

In Matthew 24 like other examples we saw, Jesus used the same Jewish apocalyptic language that the contemporaries were familiar with. They did not expect it to be a Cosmic signs in the Sky. The disciples understood it as a judgement that was about to come over Jerusalem – Locally – Not in the whole World – Globally

Question

Are we still Under the Law ?

NO

Question

Did Jesus Come to Abolish the Law ?

He Came to Fulfill it

Matthew 5

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**

18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Till – heaven and earth pass away

Law cannot Pass Away

Question – Did heaven and earth pass away ?

Did heaven and earth pass away ?

Because according to Lord Jesus Christ, Law or even a jot or tittle of the Law cannot pass away until :

1) Its fulfilled
2) Heaven and Earth passes away

If the heaven and earth hasn't passed away, the law hasn't passed away, therefore we are still under the law.

Do you see the implication of heaven and earth not passing away ?

Heaven and Earth Indeed Passed away

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 system 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 other non historical accounts
- Persecution, Tribulation, and Killing the saints – Acts (Stephen, Peter, Paul, James, etc.)
- Gospel preached to all the world – Col. 1:23, Romans 1,
- Destruction of the Temple – AD.70 (Historical fact)

Questions We Asked

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

Asked and Answered

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

No. Disciples were asking about the End of the Age(that was). The destruction of the temple was their world, in a sense it was the end of their traditional world, but the question was about the end of the Old Covenant Age (this age – Olam Ha-Zeh), which would usher the New Covenant Age(The Age to Come – Olam Ha-ba)

Asked and Answered

2. Is the judgement predicted in the Matthew 24 Local or Global

It was Local, the contextual reading of the passage indicates that events were local. The cosmic language is Jewish apocalyptic language that always points to God’s Judgement over a nation using another nation.

Asked and Answered

3. Are the events predicted in the Matthew 24 in our future or in our Past

The events predicted in Matthew 24 by Jesus are in our Past. The signs, the destruction of the temple, the earthquakes, the famine, the persecution, the war, all of it came to pass within the generation of Our Lord’s contemporaries as He Prophesied.

So Far we saw

- Jesus predicted the End of Old covenant Age not the World
- Great Tribulation is past (AD 70)
- Heaven & earth passing away is covenantal language, not cosmic
- Since heaven and earth has passed away – we are no longer under the law
- Cosmic signs in the Bible are symbols pointing to God's earthly judgment over a nation by using another nation
- Judgement of Matt 24 is Local not Global
- Jesus's words proven true – All is fulfilled

Implications for the Church

- Matthew 24 – Jesus's prophecy was about the Destruction of the Herodian 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's prophecy was 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 mission: Proclaim boldly the Gospel – for there is no failing of our Lord's word

Re-think how you saw Matthew 24 till now, were you being honest with the word, did we do exegesis, or just went with the tide with everyone even though there are glaring facts in front of us that we overlooked

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
- Think of how we take God's words 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 – He said he won't tarry and he did not tarry.
    - (Hebrews 10:37 says, "For, 'Yet a little while, and the Coming One will come and will not delay')
  - We pray – Help us to work for the extension of your Kingdom – But we do not even acknowledge that we are in God's Kingdom – Because most of us are looking for a Kingdom to Come that we can see through our eyes – Even though Jesus said –
    - But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.(Matt 12:28)
    - "The kingdom of God will not come with observable signs. 21Nor will people say, 'Look, here it is,' or 'There it is.' For you see, the kingdom of God is in your midst. (Luke 17:20)

We only scratched the surface of Matthew 24. This was to sensitize you of the dis-connect that exists between the most prevalent teaching in the church and what the word of God actually says.

Unfortunately, Exegesis of the word of God, Reading the word of God in context, Interpreting Scriptures with Scriptures have taken a back seat.

Instead, exhortations based on personal anecdotal experiences, Sermons with emotions, and encouragement of performance-based salvation has plagued our modern-day Church.

Examine

- How about we take the words of the Lord seriously – and ask ourselves, shouldn't we 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, the authority, find the other pieces to fit the puzzle.

- **A question to those of us who teach** – Can we honestly turn a Blind Eye to the Lord's word, the time texts and continue to teach that which we received through tradition – from our parents, pastors, teachers even if it is contradicting the word of God ?

- **A question to those of us who do not teach** – When is the last time we took out the Bible and tested what was taught as a Berean ? Do we want remain like a babe or grow into a mature Christian.

Matthew 24:35

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