

AD 70

Thirteen (13) reasons the
tribulation has already happened
P.S With a bonus reason!



Presented by Samuel Thompson
Seed of Abraham Apostolic Fellowship

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INTRODUCTION:

BIGGEST LOSER NO MORE

If failed end-time predictions were a category in the winter Olympics the competition for the biggest loser would be the most competitive event (By a long shot)! From Simon Bar Giora declaring the end of the world as Rome invaded Judea in AD 67 to Edgar Whisenaut's "88 Reasons Why The Rapture Could Be In 1988" it seems that the Christian church has become an ever-growing trash heap of failed predictions that never ended up materializing. I might be inclined to call it a dumpster fire, but that might be giving it too much credit.

Some of the ones among us who always say, "**if at first, you don't succeed, then try again**", continue right along in the ministry of failed predictions unabated, believing that the right combination of news articles, numerology, and blood moons is just around the corner. Yet, amid the echo chamber of eschatological fanaticism, so few stop and examine the real reason these predictions don't come true.

That is because it has already happened!

In what follows I will share thirteen reasons, from the text, why the great tribulation has already occurred. I will not appeal to nanobots, the next appearance of Halley's comet, pandemics, or of Klaus Schwab and his World Economic Forum. I will cite Scripture alone and prove once and for all why every end-time prediction about a coming tribulation is doomed to fail.

My hope is that Christianity would recover from the gangrenous rot of dispensational madness and march onward in our mission to disciple the nations for Jesus. To that end, let us begin.

THE OLIVET SCENE

In case you are just joining us, this article is a part of a much bigger subject that gives a tremendous amount of context for these events. If you would like to catch up before reading further, check out the other articles in this series by visiting our [teachings page](#).

But, if that seems like too much effort to satiate your current curiosity, here is a three-sentence summary of how we got here.

1. Jesus predicted in a variety of ways that the temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed for rejecting Him (Matthew Chapter 22-24:2).
2. This news so deeply unsettled the disciples they wanted Jesus to give more details on how all of this would play out (Matthew 24:3).
3. Then, in passages normally perverted by futurists, Jesus answered their specific questions with specific evidence that would happen in **their lifetime** (Matthew 24:34).

This will become our first evidence that these events have already occurred.

REASON 1: THIS GENERATION & ALL THESE THINGS

When Jesus said: “*Truly I say to you, **THIS GENERATION** will not pass away until **ALL THESE THINGS** take place*” (Matthew 24:34), He is giving us two very powerful criteria for understanding the Olivet Discourse.

First, He is limiting the scope of fulfillment to about forty years, which is a Biblical generation. See our article [The Generations of Jesus and the Number Forty](#)

Second, He is affirming that everything He said prior to **verse 34** (and the explanatory verses that follow) would happen within that same forty-year window. This means the rise of false messiahs, wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, and famines, persecutions and tribulations, increased lawlessness and apostasy, worldwide Gospel proclamation, the abomination of desolation, the great tribulation, signs and wonders, the sun darkened, stars falling from the sky, the heavens shook, the tribes of the land in mourning, the Son of Man returning on the clouds, and the so-called “rapture”, have all already occurred.

When Jesus said, “**all these things**” He really meant every single one of the things He shared would occur in the life of His disciples! Further, when our God in the flesh, with all intelligence and all wisdom limited the fulfillment of this prophecy to a single generation, He meant for us to lay down our opinions and simply believe Him.

And while there is a phenomenal amount of evidence that supports this view, we do not need to understand any of it to adopt a humble, submissive, and faithful posture. If He said everything will happen in one generation, that really ought to settle it.

To go on insisting these events, listed in the Olivet Discourse, necessarily occur in the distant future, just because we cannot imagine a scenario where they have already been fulfilled, is to not only challenge the infinite wisdom, intelligence, and integrity of Jesus Christ, but it is to set our teaching over and above His, which seems like a foolish, unsafe, and unholy thing to do.

REASON 2: JERUSALEM SURROUNDED

In Luke's account of the great tribulation, Jesus says:

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. - Luke 21:20

In an age of such rampant confusion, it is vital to remember how pronouns work. In fact, I would even argue that the pronouns in the Olivet Discourse alone sufficiently prove that the great tribulation has already occurred. For instance, when Jesus says "**you**" in this passage He is not unclear on what that means. He doesn't flip-flop His pronouns like a Disney star before a new album release. He knows what these words mean and He is using "**you**", a second person plural pronoun, to refer to the men standing right in front of Him in 30AD.

This is critical to understand, because when we know Jesus is applying the meaning of this passage directly to His disciples, and not vicariously to us, then any thought that a great tribulation must occur, many thousands of years into the future, long after the death of Jesus' disciples, becomes all the more untenable. The case becomes more certain when you notice that Jesus is telling those men to pay attention to the comings and goings related to the first-century city of Jerusalem.

In summary, Jesus believed some of His disciples would live to see armies approaching Jerusalem to destroy it. He believed that when this happened, it would signal the end for that city, the end of the Old Covenant era, and the beginning of a great tribulation that would be unparalleled in the history of the world. And since no other city on earth had the religious standing of Jerusalem, possessing the very house of God, where the creator of time and space literally promised to live and dwell among His people, then surely the destruction of this city and this temple would be unrivaled in the history of men and would have monumental implications.

All these things happened when Rome surrounded the city, reduced the buildings to rubble, and burned **the temple to the ground**.

REASON 3: FLEEING JUDEANS!

“then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.” - Matthew 24:16

“and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city” - Luke 21:21

Before the great tribulation occurs (Matthew 24:21), Jesus tells His disciples to be on the lookout. When **they (not us)** see the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem, and when **they (not us)** see the defiling of the temple, then **they (again not us)** must flee to the mountains for safety!

In our day, this makes very little sense. If a world leader (aka an “Antichrist”) surrounded Jerusalem with his armies to kill the Jews who were worshiping at their newly rebuilt temple, then it would make very little difference whatsoever if they fled the city to go to the mountains. Helicopters would mow them down, tanks would saw them in half, mortar rounds would rain on top of their heads, and drones would cut them down before they reached the foothills. There would be no escape for them in the modern world, yet, this is the way Dispensational thinkers imagine Matthew 24:16 will play out.

Instead of comic book eschatology, let us think about what the passage is saying. Jesus is telling His disciples to be on the lookout for a Roman invasion that began in 66 AD. At first, the Romans concentrated their power in Galilee and Judea, conquering one town after another, which motivated the population to abandon their smaller towns and flee to Jerusalem. By the time the Romans arrived at Judah’s largest city, the population of Jews had swollen to unsustainable proportions from taking in refugees and country folk who were seeking the city as a place of refuge.

At that time, that is simply what you did. When an army attacked your nation, you went to the highest, most fortified citadel, where the largest amount of resources could be amassed, which in the case of Judah would have been Jerusalem. Jerusalem also boasted an underground water supply, which meant it would have, under normal circumstances, been an ideal place to wait out an enemy siege. Yet, because Jesus knew this was not a normal event, He warned His disciples to abandon their conventional wisdom and flee to the countryside instead. Going to Jerusalem would signal certain death for anyone within their walls, so instead, He told the earliest Christians to leave Jerusalem and seek shelter elsewhere.

Could this be why the earliest Christians sold their property in Jerusalem (Acts 4:34), knowing that they would need to live a highly mobile life that was ready to leave at a moment's notice?

Is this also why history does not record a single Christian dying in Jerusalem during the Roman siege?

In fact, we do have a record that when the Roman armies began coming, the Christians left, just as Jesus told them to, knowing their ministry to apostate Judah was complete.

They preached the Gospel faithfully, like Noah, in the city that hated them, they endured innumerable persecutions in the service of Christ in that wicked generation, and then they got out before the wrath of God fell on those people.

REASON 4: ROOFTOPS AND BAG PACKING

“Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house.” - Matthew 24:17

In the same breath, Jesus used to tell His followers to flee the city before the great tribulation, He also warned them with a very peculiar example that does not apply very well in the modern world. He told them not to go down from their flat rooftop patios in order to collect their belongings within the house.

Today, this would be almost meaningless, since almost no one on earth lounges, congregates, or spends any meaningful time on their rooftops.

In most of the world, pointed and pitched roofs would be dangerous to climb on, much less do life on. Yet at that time, houses became insufferably hot during the daytime, so congregating on a flattened roof would have been most comfortable until the home cooled off in the evening. This means meals would occur on the roof, as well as parties, family gatherings, and many more significant occasions of life that would all take place on top of the house instead of inside of it. Inside, you would sleep, store your supplies and possessions, and spend the cooler moments, but that is about it.

Since many of the houses in Jerusalem were built into the wall that surrounded the city, homeowners who were escaping the swelling heat inside the home would have a perfect view of an advancing army. Jesus warns these homeowners not to go down into their houses and waste time packing their bags. They must flee immediately or it would be too late.

This warning makes perfect sense in **their world** and at **that time** and is just another proof that these events have already taken place.

REASON 5: HEY FARMER, LEAVE YOUR COAT!

“Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.” - Matthew 24:18

In a similar warning, Jesus tells the farmer not to go back home and get his cloak. This made great sense in an agrarian society where the majority of the Judean landscape was filled with farmers who all cared very deeply about their cloaks.

At that time, a good coat said a lot about you (remember Joseph). And, we have Biblical examples of bloodthirsty men gambling to have a desirable coat after its owner was crucified (remember Jesus).

Today, a coat is not ordinarily one of the most prized possessions that you own and few people would run into a situation of imminent danger to save their pullover or cardigan.

At that time, people thought about that particular clothing item a bit differently.

The same is true of farming. When Jesus gave this warning, it would have applied to the majority of the population who extracted resources by the land and sea through tremendous labor and energy. Judah was dominated by farmers, shepherds, and fishermen, so this warning would have been highly relevant. Not so in modern Israel today.

The geographical region Jesus was referring to, once home to blue-collar tradesmen, has now become a sprawling metropolis filled with high-tech industry. Instead of farms filled with plants, the landscape is dominated by server farms, cybersecurity operations, information, and communications technology firms, and various research and development enterprises, which comprise the majority of modern Israel's economy. Sadly, farming does not even contribute meaningfully at all in modern-day Israel, making this warning totally irrelevant to any modern-day "Judean".

The plain and simple fact is that this was a specific warning to people living in the first century on how to avoid the great tribulation. Forcing this into the modern world is to accept the ridiculous.

REASON 6: WINTER, PREGNANCY, & ZEALOUS SABBATARIANS

"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath." - Matthew 24:19-20

If you were planning to flee your ancestral homelands when Vespasian brought his Roman legions to your doorstep, you would appreciate Jesus' warnings here. Beyond not going home to get your cloak, or coming down from the roof to get your rolling pin, it would be a good idea to know what other travel hindrances might afflict you. For instance, if speed was the critical component of your flight, then being pregnant would certainly slow you down. Stopping to nurse infants while you were frantically running for your life would not only be difficult, but any crying babe would risk revealing your position. Winter travel would make your flight miserable and would expose you to the elements. And, with all the hard-line zealots running around Judah at that time, trying to do any moving on the Sabbath would get you killed. All of this applies brilliantly to a group of ancient refugees leaving Jerusalem.

Yet, with temperature-controlled automobiles, heated runways, hospitals everywhere you could possibly flee to and have a baby, and scant few hard-liners paying attention to where you are going on the Sabbath, these words lose their meaning. If the "dispys" are right, and a future Antichrist wages all-out war on Israel, being pregnant, nursing, traveling in winter, or on the sabbath, really won't impede you in the slightest.

This is yet another proof of how these words find their perfect fulfillment in that very generation that fled the great tribulation of AD 70.

REASON 7: THESE BE DAYS OF VENGEANCE

*"because **these are days** of vengeance so that all things which are written will be fulfilled."* - Luke 21:22

At some point in my lackluster elementary school career, I was introduced to the concept of near and far demonstrative pronouns. A near demonstrative pronoun describes things that are close in relationship to you, whereas a far demonstrative pronoun identifies things that are at a distance from you. For example, "I can eat **THIS** apple because it is right in front of me. But, if I were to eat **THAT** one, pointing to the television commercial, I would need to travel through airwaves." This silly example proves my point. We use "**This & These**" to describe things that are near to us and we use "**That & Those**" to point to objects further from our purview.

Knowing this, Jesus says that "**these days**" are the ones where God's vengeance would be poured out. He is not speaking of the far-off years that could be rightly **labeled "those years"**, He is talking about the years immediately in the purview of Him and His disciples. By using the word "**these**" it seems clear that Jesus is limiting the fulfillment of this prophecy to a time frame that would be near to the disciple's experience. If multiple thousands of years into the future was Jesus' aim, His sentence would again be rendered meaningless.

In addition to basic elementary grammar, Jesus cites the fulfillment of Old Testament passages, such as **Isaiah 63**, **Daniel 9**, and **Hosea 9** as the reason the great tribulation would occur in that very generation. Case in point, notice how Hosea speaks about the punishment that is coming and why God is going to bring it in Hosea 9:7, 19.

He says:

"7 The days of punishment have come, The days of retribution have come; Let Israel know this! The prophet is a fool, The inspired man is demented, Because of the grossness of your iniquity, And because your hostility is so great. 17 My God will cast them away Because they have not listened to Him; And they will be wanderers among the nations." - Hosea 9:7, 19

Not to keep beating the same old drum, but that already happened!

REASON 8: LAND DISTRESS AND PEOPLE WRATH

... "for there will be great distress upon **the land** and wrath to **this people**" - Luke 21:23

After our little lesson on near demonstrative pronouns, you are well qualified to see the point Jesus is making.

Great distress would fall upon "**the land**" (a common reference to the geographical territory of Israel) and great wrath would fall upon "**this people**". Not those people over there... Not that people in the future. But the people who are alive right now and rejecting their messiah. This is the generation that great distresses and great tribulations will inevitably fall upon.

REASON 9: AN UNPRECEDENTED EVENT

"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will." - Matthew 24:21

Apparently, Jesus believed immediately after the Roman armies showed up and surrounded the city, that a great tribulation would occur and that this would bring about their complete ruin. He says **THEN**, meaning after the armies show up, a great tribulation with manifold calamities will befall the people, which is exactly what happened.

After Rome showed up, set up camp, and began chopping down trees on the Mount of Olives (to build their catapults and siege ramps), the Jews inside the city were driven to a kind of insanity that fueled needless turf wars, factional infighting, that left thousands butchered, innocents robbed and pillaged, the temple defiled, the food supply compromised, and all of this brought such intense pain, starvation, and misery that mothers resulted to eating their own babies and dignified men eagerly feasted on animal excrement and items found in the cities sewers (**Jewish Wars, 5.13.7 & 6.3.4**). Josephus, our eyewitness historian to these events, barely had words to describe the calamities and miseries brought upon the Jews.

He tells us in the preface to his history:

"But if any one makes an unjust accusation against us, when we speak so passionately about the tyrants, or the robbers, or sorely bewail the misfortunes of our country, let him indulge my affections herein... [for] it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews are not so considerable as they were" - Jewish Wars, Preface.4)

While Josephus was not a believer and there is no evidence that he heard or read Jesus' words in Matthew 24:21, he is a corroborating witness to the tremendous devastations and tragedies that befell the Jewish people.

He even goes as far as to say that no people group or nation has ever suffered the way the Jews did in that war, which is an astounding thing to say. Sounds like a great tribulation to me.

REASON 10: DAYS CUT SHORT

“Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.” - Mark 13:20

From the beginning of the Roman invasion into Galilee and Judea, which occurred in AD 66, to the final stand of the Zealots at Masada in AD 73, 7 years were appointed by God for the total destruction of Judah. Three and a half of those years were appointed for the siege upon Jerusalem, which was by far where the most awful and horrifying atrocities occurred. Jesus is telling His disciples that as bad as those three and a half years will be, they were shortened as an act of grace in case any elect Christians remained in the city.

And while we have no record that any Christians made it to the end of the siege, without losing their lives, we do know that the Romans grew weary of killing people and did take several survivors as slaves back to Rome. Josephus tells us

“And now, since his soldiers were already quite tired with killing men, and yet there appeared to be a vast multitude still remaining alive, Caesar gave orders that they should kill none but those that were in arms, and opposed them, but should take the rest alive. But, together with those whom they had orders to slay, they slew the aged and the infirm; but for those that were in their flourishing age, and who might be useful to them, they drove them together into the temple... but of the young men he chose out the tallest and most beautiful, and reserved them for the triumph; and as for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines. Titus also sent a great number into the provinces, as a present to them, that they might be destroyed upon their theatres, by the sword and by the wild beasts; but those that were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves.” - Wars, 6.9.2

This was not only a dramatic fulfillment of Hosea 9:6 & 17, but it demonstrates that God did shorten the days of calamity upon the Jews. There were survivors, those who endured to the end were spared, albeit that meant being cast into a life of perpetual slavery, reserved for a fight with a hungry lion in the colosseum, or as a picture of Roman dominance to be paraded through the city of Rome.

Jesus warned them to flee that city doomed unto destruction for a reason.

REASON 11: FALSE MESSIAHS AND FALSE SIGNS

We have already covered the marked rise and proliferation of false messianic figures that dominated Judea in the years before AD 70.

During the build-up to the Roman war, charismatic rebels would gain ascendancy in Judah, drawing a large crowd, and promising freedom and emancipation from Rome, which ended in the deception and demise of many people. But what we have not covered is the false signs that occurred in the final months of the great Jewish tribulation, which have been recorded for us to consider.

For instance, Josephus describes a few very strange phenomena that he was an eyewitness to. In fact, he risks his own credibility as a historian to tell us about them.

SIGN 1: THE SWORD AND COMET THAT APPEARED IN THE SKY

“Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers (false messiahs), and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year.” - Jewish Wars, 5.5.3

In those days, signs in the sky served as a powerful omen of national triumph or coming destruction. We are told by one Roman historian that the emperor Nero, a beast of a man, killed himself on the night of Halley's comet, believing that to be a sign of his imminent downfall. In the same way, Josephus tells us terrifying signs flashed in the sky over Jerusalem, signaling to any discerning person that Judah was doomed. And while it is hard to imagine a sword-shaped visage hanging over the city of Jerusalem in the months leading up to the war, or a comet that hung in the sky for a year, the Jewish historian was an eye-witness that it did occur and that it was a sign of coming judgment that the people ignored.

SIGN 2: THE BRIGHT LIGHT DURING THE FESTIVAL

“Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month [Nisan,] and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it.” - Jewish Wars, 5.5.3

Another sign haunted the skies in Jerusalem in the months leading up to their downfall. Apparently, while the sky should have been filled with nighttime darkness, a very strange and unnatural light came out of nowhere and shone upon the temple and the altar with noonday intensity. While many in the city of Jerusalem took this spectacle to be a positive sign from God that the Jews would be victorious in overthrowing Rome, Josephus reminds us that judgment was coming.

Like a spotlight shining down from a helicopter on a fleeing criminal, this light was no good news to the people who had become God's enemies.

SIGN 3: THE HEIFER THAT BIRTHED A LAMB

“At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple.” - Jewish Wars, 5.5.3

While the historian does not pause to give commentary or opinion on this account the fantastical nature of it should not be overlooked.

He is reporting that a female cow gave birth to an actual lamb as it was being led to the slaughter. Strange signs and mysterious events like these ought to have been viewed with terror by the Jewish people. It seems, however, that they simply pressed on and ignored them or interpreted them as signs of God's favor.

SIGN 4: THE DAY GOD OPENED THEIR GATES

Josephus tells us:

“Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men... was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the temple came here upon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared that the signal foreshadowed the desolation that was coming upon them.” - Jewish Wars, 5.5.3

Josephus and the men of learning in the city understood the point of these signs. These were clear pieces of evidence that God had turned against them and was leaving them vulnerable to their enemies. And while this seemed clear to the discerning, the powerful faction of messianic firebrands, who were in control of the city, were leading the people to believe that God was on their side and that He would fight for them in their upcoming war. This group deceived almost the entire population into following them over the edge of the cliff and no doubt is why Jesus warned His followers not to listen to them (Matthew 24:23-24)!

SIGN 5: CHARIOTS RUNNING ACROSS THE SKY?

After the first four signs, things become even stranger in the writings of Josephus.

“Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the twentieth day of the month, [Jyar,] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities.” - Jewish Wars, 5.5.3

While we dare not speculate what Josephus and his contemporaries saw, it was clear that they saw something. In fact, Josephus felt encouraged to write about it, only because a sizable group of people had also seen the same parade of soldiers marking and riding in the sky, eliminating the possibility of it being a vision. Again, those who were discerning understood Jerusalem to be totally surrounded. The city was encamped by three legions of Romans on all sides, and it appeared like the armies of heaven were ready to invade them from above.

SIGN 6: “LET US REMOVE HENCE”

“Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the temple,] as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, “Let us remove hence.” - Jewish Wars, 5.5.3

Earthquakes generally signaled divine punishment was coming upon a people. If that was not clear enough, when the temple priests felt the earth shaking beneath their feet they also heard a multitude of heavenly beings shouting “let us remove hence”, which could mean nothing less than their removal from office, the end of the temple era, and the decimation of their holiest building. The writing on the wall was just about fully dried, the signs of their demise were occurring before their very eyes, and yet they ignored them to the bitter end!

SIGN 7: “WOE, WOE, TO JERUSALEM”

The final sign Josephus records in his account appears to be the most important one to him. He not only describes it as being the most terrible, and perhaps even the strangest of them all, but he spends the most time and the most words describing it. Here is the long-form quote from Josephus, describing what he had seen.

“But, what is still more terrible, there was one named Jesus, the son of the high priest at that time Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for everyone to make tabernacles to God in the temple, began on a sudden to cry aloud, “A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!” This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet he did not say anything for himself, or anything peculiar to those that chastised him, but simply went on with the same words which he cried before. At this point, our rulers, supposing that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, “Woe, woe to Jerusalem!” And when Albinus [for he was then our procurator] asked him, Who he was? and whence he came? and why he uttered such words? he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him. Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, “Woe, woe to Jerusalem!”

Nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last, "Woe, woe to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the catapults, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost." - Jewish Wars, 5.3

Imagine the haunting howl of this man pronouncing the woe upon the city that would not listen. Imagine watching the leaders beating this man as if he were crazy, a scoundrel, or a liar. And yet, in the end, his proclamations upon that city were confirmed as true. Woe did come upon that city, signs had been given to them so that they would repent and turn from their wicked ways, but in their blindness, and the blindness of their false messiahs who were leading them, they did not turn!

Seeing all that Josephus has written, all the astounding signs of warning, all the denunciations of the false prophets and zealots, I can scarcely imagine how "end-times experts" can avoid the magnitude of evidence. The event that Jesus called the great tribulation (Matthew 24:21), which was filled with false christ's and false signs and wonders has demonstrably already occurred. This is not a future event, it was a period of awful suffering poured out upon the Jews for killing their Messiah and for abandoning the covenant they had with their God. For all those reasons, the curses of Deuteronomy 28 were being brought upon them.

Also, isn't it ironic that a man named Jesus warned them this would happen in AD 30, and a man named Jesus howled throughout the streets of the city that those days of judgment had come?

REASON 12: I TOLD YOU SO

"But take heed; behold, I have told YOU everything in advance." - Mark 13:23

This needs very little explanation. After giving them explicit details on the Great Tribulation that was coming in their lifetime, Jesus reassures them not to worry, because He told them about it in advance. This reassurance would not mean much to His disciples if the event were still two thousand years into their future. That would be like warning me of a worldwide financial collapse that would happen in the year 4250 and then encouraging me not to spend my life worrying about it because you told me before it happened. Could one really assume I would spend my days worrying about an event that would have no relevance to me? Would such an encouragement feel odd or misplaced? Of course, it would!

Not so if the events were going to happen within their lifetime.

Since Jerusalem was going to be totally ruined within a forty-year period, and because some of the disciples would live to see it, Jesus lovingly tells them all the details and comforts them not to worry about it because it is all a part of God's plan to bring Jesus' Kingdom to the nations.

REASON 13: COMING LIKE LIGHTNING

"For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be." - Matthew 24:27

The point Jesus is making is unavoidable. His coming will happen quickly. It would not take several millennia to materialize; it would come about quickly like a flash of lightning.

For those who are uncomfortable with this language, I would recommend evaluating what you believe the "coming of the Lord" means. If "coming" can only mean the end time, physical, and bodily coming of Jesus where He calls the living and the dead in Christ to rise and meet Him in the air, then you will struggle with this passage where "coming" is being used in a different way. In this passage, Jesus is appealing to a common and very Old Testament way of describing God's judgment upon a nation through the language of coming. If you do not believe me yet, please read our articles [Cloud Comings](#) and [Apocalyptic Language](#) where I prove this from several Old Testament passages.

Regardless, it seems that this passage is referencing an event that would happen quickly, even surprisingly, and with devastating energy and precision to the people told to be on the lookout for it. This simply cannot apply to some vague future event happening sometime long after His disciples are dead.

BONUS REASON: CIRLING VULTURES?

"Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather." - Matthew 24:28

It certainly could be the case, that Jesus is predicting, that after all of the devastation and after all the dead bodies have been heaped up in piles by the Romans, then the skies over Jerusalem would be filled with circling vultures that are ready to feast upon the carcasses. That would be a logical conclusion to such harrowing events, although Josephus makes no mention that anything like this occurred. More likely, Bible translators have unfortunately mistranslated a common Greek word "ἀετός" (aetos) in this passage, calling them "vultures", when the word actually means "eagles".

But why is that important?

In ancient Rome, the eagle was a prominent symbol of imperial power that was carried and displayed by every Roman legion (a cohort of about 6000 soldiers). The eagle would have been prominently displayed near the front of the marching armies and would be as recognizable to the ancients as the golden arches are to us today.

More than a mascot, men, and women of that time would have associated that fabled bird with the dominion and power of Rome and would have had good reason to fear it whenever they saw it. In the same way, seventeenth-century pirates foisted the black flag just before an all-out naval attack, the Romans would proudly display the eagle ensign just moments before they advanced upon your city and killed you. By the time you saw that symbol all hope of survival would have been dashed to bits.



To make matters a bit more complicated, the Jews considered this pagan symbol to be grossly idolatrous and forbade any of the Roman soldiers from bringing it into the temple or its courtyards.

For instance, about eighty years before the destruction of the temple, Herod the Great installed a golden eagle on the outside of the temple, in order to appease Rome and remind the Jews that they were a subjugated people. When the Jews violently protested and ripped the graven image right off the temple, Herod set the offenders on fire and installed a new high priest who would be loyal to him and do Rome's bidding.

Ironically, he did not install another eagle on the temple, and Rome understanding that it was not worth it, generally abided by this request from the Jews. That is until the Jewish war began.

Josephus tells us that when three legions of Roman soldiers came to Jerusalem, they brought their three eagles with them. He tells us:

"Then came the ensigns encompassing the eagle, which is at the head of every Roman legion, the king bird, and the strongest of all, which seems to them to be a signal of their dominion, and an omen that they shall conquer all against whom they march" - Wars, 3.6.2

And conquer they did. After three years of devastating battles, Jewish starvation, death, and destruction, the Romans finally conquered the city and set fire to its temple. Josephus tells us while the city was burning, the Romans brought their three eagles (one for each legion) right into the temple complex and offered idolatrous sacrifices to them.

"And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus imperator with the greatest acclamations of joy." - Wars, 6.6.1

Perhaps the bloodiest battle in the entire campaign was finally over. The epicenter of Jewish resistance had failed, the temple was lost, and the majority of fighting men were now dead with their bodies heaped up in piles right there in the temple courtyard. When Jesus told His disciples: **"Wherever the corpse is, there the eagles will gather."** (Matthew 24:28) He could have been referring to real eagles that were flying overhead and looking for an easy lunch. But, it is far more likely, that Jesus was alluding to the idolatrous ensigns that entered the city and were placed right beside the mound of bodies. He did say, **"Wherever the corpse is, there the eagles will gather."**

CONCLUSION

While it may be fashionable and popular to concoct endless end times scenarios that inevitably won't come true, we have real historical events that perfectly align with the prophecy Jesus gave.

Yet, honesty and intellectual integrity require that we view every passage according to its context.

And what we have seen is that Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 far from being a prophecy of end-times disaster, was the blisteringly accurate prediction by Christ that great tribulations were coming to apostate Judah.

Fear not dear Christian! These events have already occurred!