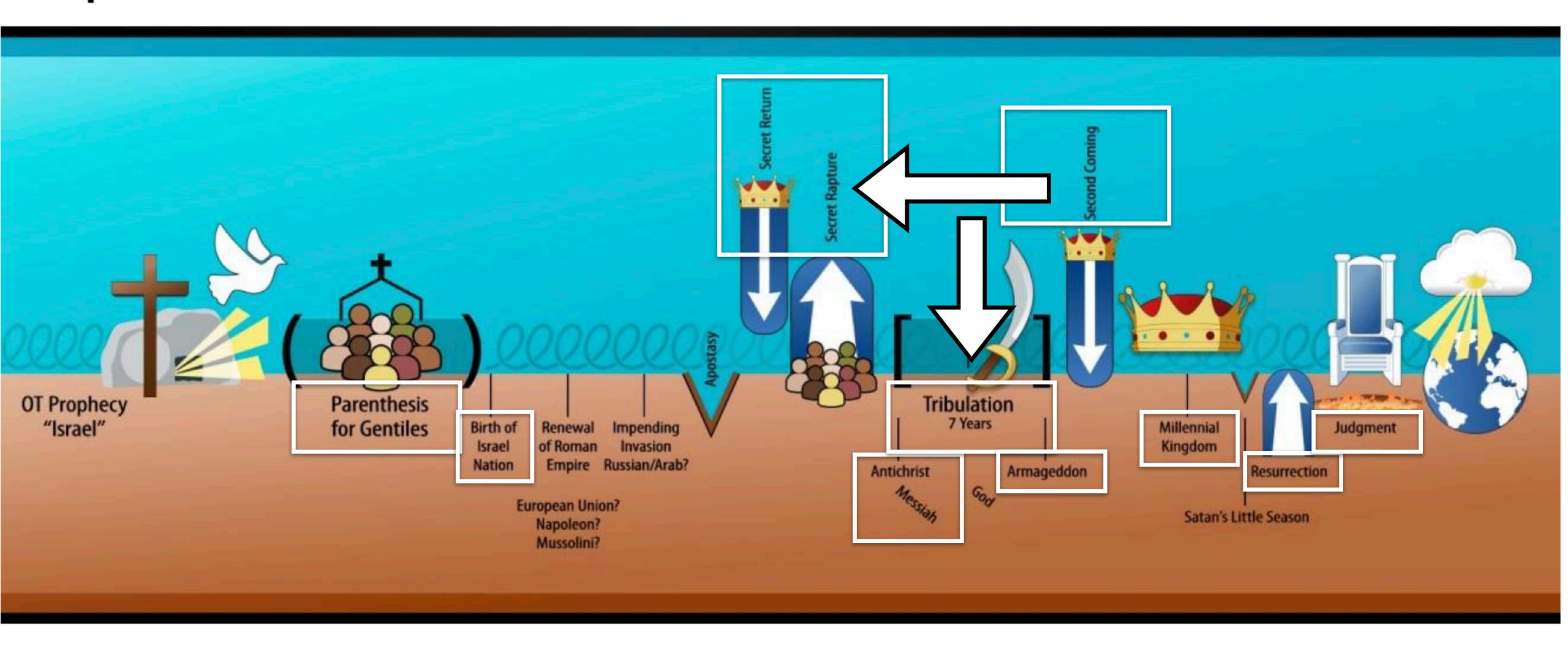
# REVEALING Matthew 24

### Dispensational Premillennial View



- This sermon is likely given on the Tuesday before the crucifixion.
- Matthew 24 has been one of the most debated chapters in the whole Bible.
- Herod the Great began renovating the temple in 20 or 19 B. C. The temple was still under construction / renovation at that time (John 2:20) and would be finished about four years before the Romans will destroy it.

- One aspect that makes the study most challenging is that Jesus incorporates language similar to that language used in the book of Revelation, from which the language gets its name: apocalyptic.
- "Apocalyptic" derives from the word for "Revelation." Clearly the word conveys the idea of a revealing, but Revelation was written utilizing symbols to convey ideas. Symbols are used to convey certain ideas but, by their nature, they are also flexible so that they might convey more than one idea.
- Therefore, the "coming of the Son of Man" (24:3) might refer to a physical coming in person or a coming in judgment through some other means. The Bible student has to make a determination, based on the context. That is the challenge before us as we seek to interpret this text properly.

### 24.1-2:

- Jeremiah (7:12-14; 9:11; 22:1-5; 26:6, 18) and Micah (3:12) predicted the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, which happened around 586 B. C.
- The Jewish historian, Josephus, gives an early description of the destruction of his capital city in his book Wars, books 4, 5, and 6. When the temple was set on fire, stones from the temple were pried apart to collect the gold that had flowed there from the temple being set on fire.

- Jesus has just alluded to the destruction of the Jews' "house" (23:38). While the "house" might have referred to the nation of Israel or its capital, Jerusalem, here it clearly refers to the temple.
- The apostles were likely wondering why God would destroy the temple again, how He would destroy it, and when. But, it will be destroyed; Jesus left no doubt about that.
- The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem will reappear in the trial of Jesus (26:61) and be referenced at His crucifixion (27:40). It will also be referenced in the accusation against Stephen in Acts 6:14.

### 24:3-14:

- "Coming" is an important word in the NT since it often refers to Jesus' coming at the end of time. However, we caution against assuming every occurrence of its use relative to Jesus refers to His second coming. It referred in secular Greek to the arrival of a king. The word is used 24 times in the NT; in Matthew, at 24:3, 27, 37, 39. It will not be used again until 1 Corinthians.
- "Tribulation" is used first at 13:21; found 45 times in the NT; see John 16:21, 33.

 One note we should make on the word "parousia..." The word is translated "coming" and is used 24 times in the NT. It can be translated "presence." It should not always be understood to refer to the second coming of Christ. For its use, see Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 15:23; 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6-7; 10:10; Phil. 1:26; 2:12; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8-9; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 1:16; 3:4, 12; 1 John 2:28. The word is not found in the Greek translation of the OT, but it is found in books in the Septuagint which are not found in the OT. It is so used four times: Judith 10:18; 2 Maccabees 8:12; 15:21; 3 Maccabees 3:17.

- Isaiah 19:1 "The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt; The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them."
- Isaiah 3:14 "The Lord enters [comes] into judgment with the elders and princes of His people, "It is you who have devoured the vineyard; The plunder of the poor is in your houses."
- Isaiah 10:26-28 "The Lord of hosts will arouse a scourge against him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; and His staff will be over the sea and He will lift it up the way He did in Egypt. So it will be in that day, that his burden will be removed from your shoulders and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be broken because of fatness. He has come against Aiath, He has passed through Migron; At Michmash he deposited his baggage."
- Isaiah 13:9 "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it."
- For other passages, see: 31:1-2; 35:4; 40:10; 59:19-20.

- Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70), there were notable earthquakes in: Antioch (A. D. 37), Phrygia (A. D. 53), Asia (A. D. 61), the Lycus Valley (A. D. 61), as well as in Jerusalem (A. D. 67). There were also many famines, one notably predicted by the Christian prophet Agabus in Acts 11:28.
- While the apostles seem to be asking three questions, we don't believe the apostles intended to distinguish the three events mentioned. The questions are: 1) When will these things happen? 2) What will be the sign of Your coming? 3) What will be the sign of the end of the age?

- Clearly question #1 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem.
  Would the apostles have in mind Jesus' second coming
  at questions #2 and #3? They did not grasp Jesus'
  prophecy about His resurrection (16:21-23); it is likely they
  have in mind a coming in judgment which we see
  extensively in Isaiah.
- In verse 4, Jesus begins answering their question. He warns that His disciples can be misled and should not be.
- Those events will only be the "beginning of birth pains" (ver. 8).
- In verse 11, Jesus promises that false teachers / false prophets will make themselves known and they will mislead many.

### 24.15-28:

- "Abomination" (ver. 15) is found 6 times in the NT: Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 16:15; Rev. 17:4-5; 21:27. "Desolation" is used three times in the NT: Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20. "Daniel" is only found here in the gospel of Matthew.
- The phrase "abomination of desolation" comes from the prophecies of Daniel (9:24-27; 11:31; 12:11). In that context, particularly chapter 11, it seems to refer to Antiochus Epiphanes which happened in 168 B. C. when he set up an altar to Zeus in the temple and then sacrificed a pig (an unclean animal by the Law of Moses) on the altar. When the Roman legions trampled the temple, the "holy place," they committed their own abominable act which desolated the temple.

- In this paragraph, Jesus clearly refers to the destruction of Jerusalem.
- If God had not shortened the days of the siege of Jerusalem, no one would have been saved.
- The coming of the Son of Man, we believe here referring to judgment against Jerusalem, will be as visible as the lightning flashes. Christians, and Jews who would listen, would know that God's judgment was now brought against Jerusalem, as Jesus had just prophesied in 23:34-39.

### 24.29-31:

- Jewish writings which anticipated the fall or destruction of pagan nations would portray
  that destruction in terms of a universal, cosmic catastrophe. See Isaiah 13:10, 19 for the
  fall of Babylon; Isaiah 34:4 for the fall of Edom; Ezekiel 32:7-8 for the fall of Egypt; Haggai
  2:6, 21. See also Joel 2:10; Amos 8:9. David uses similar language in 2 Samuel 22:8-14.
- The "trumpet" imagery comes from passages such as Isaiah 27:13. The nations mourning refers to Zechariah 12:10. Relative to Zechariah, 11:4-14 pictures the rejected shepherd (Matt. 27:9-10) while 13:7-9 pictures the shepherd killed by the sword (Matt. 26:31). Zechariah 9:9 has already been fulfilled in Matt (21:5). What all this strongly implies is that Zechariah 9-14 relates to the (first) coming of Christ, His death, burial, resurrection, and judgment against Jerusalem which is fulfilled in A. D. 70. By the time Jerusalem mourns over what they have done to the Son of God (Zech. 12:10), it will be too late.

- Isaiah 13:10, 19 "For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light...[19] And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."
- Isaiah 34:4 [Edom] "And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as *one* withers from the fig tree.."
- Ezekiel 32:7-8 [Egypt] "And when I extinguish you, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud And the moon will not give its light. "All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you And will set darkness on your land," Declares the Lord God.."
- Haggai 2:6 [the kingdom of God] "For thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land." *Fulfilled in the church;* see *Hebrews 12:25-29.*

- Joel 2:10 [Jerusalem] "Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness."
- Amos 8:9 [Jerusalem] ""It will come about in that day," declares the Lord God, "That I will make the sun go down at noon And make the earth dark in broad daylight."
- 2 Samuel 22:8-14 [deliverance from the hand of King Saul] "Then the earth shook and quaked, the foundations of heaven were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry. "Smoke went up out of His nostrils, fire from His mouth devoured; Coals were kindled by it. "He bowed the heavens also, and came down with thick darkness under His feet. "And He rode on a cherub and flew; And He appeared on the wings of the wind. "And He made darkness canopies around Him, A mass of waters, thick clouds of the sky. "From the brightness before Him coals of fire were kindled. "The Lord thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice."

• Jeremiah 4:23-26 [destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians] - "I looked on the earth, and behold, it was formless and void; And to the heavens, and they had no light. I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. I looked, and behold, there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were pulled down Before the Lord, before His fierce anger."

- We do not believe that his paragraph refers to the second coming of Christ. Jesus tells His apostles that His words will be fulfilled during the lifetime of their generation (ver. 34). Secondly, Jesus uses the word "immediately." Third, He refers to the "tribulation of those days," which He has been discussing. The word "tribulation" has already been used at verse 9 and verse 21, both of which refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. There is no reason to believe Jesus is changing topics, yet.
- We further do not believe that the changes in the sun and moon refer to the second coming of Christ because at that point, the sun and moon will be destroyed. Peter makes this clear (2 Peter 3:10) and other passages do as well (Matt. 5:18; Heb. 1:12). In this very text (24:35), Jesus states the heavens and earth will "pass away." The sun and moon darkening is apocalyptic language to refer to the catastrophic end coming to the city of Jerusalem and her temple and the change these will effect on the nation of Israel as a whole. The language does not refer to the final destruction of the world.

- When Jerusalem, Israel, and others who are interested in listening, see the destruction of Jerusalem, they will know that the kingdom of the Messiah has been established and that the Son of Man is now sitting at the right hand of God (see 26:64).
- Those who are Christ's, His followers, will be protected spiritually, if not physically, in the ensuing destruction of Jerusalem.
- Jesus is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem (verses 1-4) and He says that His generation will not pass away until "all these things are fulfilled" (ver. 34). Those two statements are "bookends" that block off this whole discussion to refer to that one event. Also, as we have shown, the language of verses 29-31 was used in the OT in a way similar to how Jesus is using it here as a figurative description of the destruction of a nation or city we find our interpretation to be most consistent with its context and this specific literary genre.

# Application:

- The apostle Peter likewise uses language of universal catastrophe in Acts 2:16-20, quoting Joel 2:28-32, as he pictures the destruction of the Jewish nation (as Jesus does in this context) as it is replaced by the Christian nation.
- Paul uses the trumpet imagery as he pictures the second coming of Christ in 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16.

## 24:32-35:

"Generation" is used 43 times in the NT, first at 1:17. In Matthew, the word always refers to the people alive at that time: 1:17; 11:16; 12:39, 41, 45; 23:36. See also Mark 8:38; Luke 11:50-51; 17:25.

- Several problems contributed to the revolt of the Jews which led to their destruction in A. D. 70 under the Roman general (later an emperor) Titus.
- The Jews had led revolts before but the revolt they led in A. D. 66 finally led the Roman leaders to heavily suppress the revolt.
- Under Emperor Hadrian, Jerusalem's name would be changed to Aelia Capitolina and the site of the former temple of Jehovah God was used to build a temple to Zeus.

- This paragraph summarizes what Jesus has said to this point.
- Jesus emphasizes ("Truly...") that His generation will not at all (the language is emphatic) pass away until "these things" (up to verse 31) have taken place.
- His generation, one day, will "pass away" (ver. 34) but heaven and earth will not "pass away" (ver. 35; using the same verb) before His words "pass away."
- In this student's view, verse 35 ends the discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem. At the trial of Jesus, in Matthew 27:25, the Jews cried out to the governor, "Let His blood be on us and on our children!" That cry received its awful and dreadful fulfillment in the destruction of their capital and their house of worship.

### 24:36-44:

- The "hand mill" at verse 41 refers to a small mill found in the home used to grind wheat or barley into meal for baking bread.
- Now that Jesus has brought up the actual destruction of the world (at His second coming; ver. 35), He begins talking about the second coming which covers the rest of chapter 24 and all of chapter 25.
- The phrases "and concerning" and "that day and hour" show that Jesus is moving from a discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem to a discussion when the "heavens and earth will pass away." The word "day" in the singular particularly marks a contrast with the word in the plural used above (ver. 19, 22, 29). The singular "day" or "hour" will be used at 24:42, 44, 50; 25:13.

 The fact that Jesus did not know the time of His return should not lead anyone to doubt His full divinity, even on earth. Jesus limited Himself when He poured Himself out to become flesh (Phil. 2:6-8). This inevitably led to some limitations in His physical presence. Thus He became tired, was hungry, and thirsty: Matt. 4:2; 21:18; John 4:6; 19:28. That is why the Holy Spirit had to empower Him to perform His miracles (Luke 4:14).

### 24:45-51:

- While the return of the lord is unknown (verse 50), his servants seem to give no concern to their behavior in his absence. A "faithful and prudent" slave will treat his fellow slaves respectably because he does not know when his master will come.
- The idea is that pain (cf. 18:34) will be experienced and one will be spending eternity with people (hypocrites) whom one avoided in his lifetime.

- God has designed this universe so that death is both sure and unsure.
- In contrast to the destruction of Jerusalem, which had signs which would warn the Christians to flee Jerusalem, the second coming of Christ will have no signs. He will come physically as a thief in the night: 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 5:2, 4; 2 Peter 3:10. See also 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; 1 Thess. 5:8-11; 2 Thess. 2:13-15. However, there is no verse which teaches Jesus will return to earth.
- Christians need to be prepared every moment of every day in order to be alert when Jesus returns: 1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Peter 5:8. Some Christians in Paul's day were disappointed that Jesus had not yet come (2 Thess. 2:1-3).