

## MATTHEW, CHAPTER 24, ANALYZED

-A. Ralph Johnson

Matthew 24 has long been a focal point of dispute concerning the interpretation of scripture.

The Preterist view, which maintains that most or all prophecy was completed at the destruction of Jerusalem, has found its support in verse 34 “*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*”

Futurists, who see most prophecy as still future, counter that it is obvious that the stars have not fallen from heaven and Christ has not come (24:29-30). They focus on the “Great Tribulation” in verse 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.*”

Historicists, who believe the fulfillment is generally spread throughout the centuries, fall into a hodge-podge of varying views in between.

### I. GENERAL OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS 21-25

I would like to begin by examining the chapter to determine the natural organization of the text. To get the proper perspective it is often helpful to view things in the overall context of events. The relevant period is from the time Jesus entered Jerusalem in chapter 21 to the conclusion of his Olivetti message in chapter 25.

Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph (21:1-11)

Cleansing of the temple (21:12-16)

He goes to Bethany (21:17)

He returns to Jerusalem (21:18)

On the way he curses the fig tree or its lack of fruit, a suggestion of what is in store for Jerusalem.

In the temple (21:23)

Chief Priests and Elders Confrontation

They demand that he show his authority (21:23)

He responds with illustrations that pointed to their behavior:

How did they view the authority of John the Baptist? (21:24-27)

Illustration of two sons: Who did the will of the Father? (21:28-32)

One who said he would obey but did not

One who said he would not obey but did

Wicked husbandman who killed the owner's son (21:33-42)

The stone rejected that becomes head of the corner (21:43-44)

They see that his message refers to them (21:45-46)

Parable of the ignored marriage feast. They were to be cast out and others invited (22:1-14)

Pharisees and Herodians confrontation

Give tribute to Caesar? (22:15-22 ) They try to snare him in his talk.

Sadducees confrontation

Resurrection? (22:23-33) – one woman marries seven brothers. Who's wife in the resurrection?

Pharisees – Lawyer confrontation

They ask: Which is the Great Commandment? (22:34-40)

Jesus asks them: Whose son is Christ?

Jesus charges his disciples not to be like scribes and Pharisees, seeking glory of men (23:1-12)

Woes against the scribes and Pharisees (23:13-36)

*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.*

Lamentation over the coming destruction of Jerusalem (23:37-39)

*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.*

Discussion upon leaving the temple (24:1-2)

*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.*

Mount of Olives Discourse

Questions by the disciples (Matt 24:3)

*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?*

Jesus answers:

Beware of being deceived (Matt 24:4-14)

Tribulation coming on Jerusalem (Matt 24:14-28)

Abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel (24:15)

Warning to flee (24:16-20)

Great tribulation to take place (24:21-22)

Do not be believe claims that Christ has come (24:23-28)

Signs of his coming

Manifestations in the heavens following the tribulation (Matt 24:29)

The Son of man to come with his angels, with power and glory (Matt 24:30-31)

Learn from a fig tree (24:32-35)

Like branches putting forth leaves indicates summer is near.

When you see “these things” know that he is at the doors.

This generation will not pass away until all “these things” are accomplished.

No one except the Father knows the day or hour. Be ready (24:36)

As in the days of Noah, He comes without warning (24:37-39)

One will be taken and the other left (24:40-42)

Like a thief, he will come without warning (24:43-44)

Like servants when their master returns

Faithful servants will be prepared and rewarded (24:45-47)

Unfaithful servants will be unprepared, and will weep and wail (24:51)

Their Lord comes in a day when he is not expected (24:50)

Like ten virgins awaiting the return of the bridegroom (25:1-13)

Five wise are prepared and enter the feast  
Five foolish are unprepared and shut out  
“You know not the day nor the hour” (25:13)

Like stewards when the owner calls for accounting (25:14-30)  
Faithful stewards rewarded  
Unprofitable stewards cast out (25:30)

When Christ comes in his glory, he will judge the nations (25:31-46)  
Righteous enter eternal life and inherit the kingdom (25:34-40)  
Unrighteous will be told to depart into eternal fire (25:41-46)

## II. ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES CONCERNING THE TEXT

### A. THE QUESTIONS OF THE DISCIPLES

Matt. 24:3. *when shall these things be?  
and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*  
Mark 13:3, 4. *when shall these things be?  
and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?*  
Luke 21:7. *when shall these things be?  
and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?*

These passages seem to indicate there are two basic questions. The first has to do with **when** these things would come to pass. The second has to do with **what** would be the sign of his coming and the end of the world. Jesus' discourse responds to these questions.

### B. THE MEANING OF “THIS GENERATION.”

#### 1. Comparison of the three accounts.

Matthew 24:34 *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished.*

Mark 13:30 *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished.*

Luke 21:32 *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished.*

#### 2. There are three basic views as to what is meant by “this generation.”

##### a. “This generation” means, this people, or race – the Jews.

This views it as saying that the Jewish people will not pass away until all of these things are accomplished. There seems to be nothing that clearly makes the case.

##### b. “This generation” means, the generation in which the signs of his coming begin.

This is a futurist concept. The idea is that when the great tribulation begins, Christ will come within that generation. This is very speculative and seems contrary to the usage in the context.

##### c. “This generation” means, within the lifetimes of those living when Jesus spoke.

#### 3. THAYER'S DEFINITION OF “GENERATION”

**1074 genea, genea** {ghen-eh-ah'}  $\square$  from (a presumed derivative of) 1085; TDNT - 1:662,114; n f  $\square$  AV - generation 37, time 2, age 2, nation 1; 42  $\square$  1) fathered, birth, nativity 2) that which has been

*begotten, men of the same stock, a family 2a) the several ranks of natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy 2b) metaph. a race of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character 2b1) esp. in a bad sense, a perverse race 3) the whole multitude of men living at the same time 4) an age (i.e. the time ordinarily occupied by each successive generation), a space of 30 - 33 years*

#### 4. THE MEANING OF “GENERATION” INDICATED BY JESUS’ OWN WORDS

Matthew 23:36 *Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.*

This passage was a part of the conclusion to the last message in the temple before Jesus departed to Gethsemane. It serves to help understand how Jesus was using the phrase.

“These things” refers to his previous statement: *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.”*

He is speaking of the “vengeance” (Luke 21:22) that was to come upon the Jews, suggested in his previous statements (cf. Matt 21:41, 43-44 ; 22:7).

It was time for judgment to come upon “ this generation” (Mat. 12:45 ; 24:34). This indicates he was speaking of those then living. Luke 17:25 *But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation.*

Compare this with Luke 11:50-51:

*50 that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51 from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary: yea, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.*

Conclusion: “This generation” should be viewed as speaking of those who were then living.

#### C. “THESE THINGS” THAT WERE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED DID NOT INCLUDE THE COMING OF CHRIST MENTIONED IN MATT. 24:30-31

Mat. 24:33 *So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that he is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*

1. Jesus makes a distinction between “these things” and his coming.

When they see “**these things**” he is “**near**”

What is “near” is not HERE.

2. It is clear that the things he said concerning the trodding down of Jerusalem were not completed in that generation.

Luke 21: 24 *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

This was said before his statement in Matt. 24:33. The “times of the Gentiles” trodding down Jerusalem was not completed in that generation. Jerusalem was trodden down by the Gentiles until the Six-day war of 1967. The “things” that were fulfilled in that generation had to do with destruction of Jerusalem, not the coming of Christ.

3. In passages leading up to Matt. 24:33, “these things” had reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matt 23:36 *Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.*  
 This relates to the vengeance of God against them for persecuting His servants.

Matt 24:2 *But he answered and 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?*  
 “These things” is here in reference to the destruction of the temple.

### CHART OF MATTHEW 24

<b>“This generation”</b> Mt. 24:34  <b>“These things”</b> Mt. 23:36; 24:3, 33-34		<b>“He is near”</b> Mt. 24:33  cf. Jas. 5:7-9 2Pe. 3:4, 8-10		He is here! The second coming.
<b>Warnings</b> “beginning of sorrows” (“the end not yet”) Mt. 24:5-12	<b>Jerusalem destroyed</b>  Mt. 24:15-28 Lk. 21:20-24	<b>Times of Gentile</b>  Lk. 21:24 Mt. 24:23-26	<b>Signs</b>  Mt. 24:29 Lk. 21:25-26	<b>Lord’s coming</b>  Mt. 24:30-31 Mk. 13:26 Lk. 21:27
<b>External Events</b> Wars Rumors of wars Famines Pestilence Earthquakes  <b>Internal Events</b> Affliction Killed Betrayed False prophets Iniquity abounds Love of many cold	<b>Tribulation begins</b> “wrath upon this people”	Jerusalem trodden down Lk. 21:24  Deceptions Mt. 24:23-26	Sun darkened Moon not give light Stars fall Nations distressed Sea and waves roaring Men in fear Powers of heaven shaken	Mt. 23:39 Mt. 25:31-32 Mt. 26:64 Acts 1:9-11 1Cor. 15:23, 52 1Thes. 1:10 1Thes. 4:15-17 2Thes. 1:7-10 2Thes. 2:1, 8 Tit. 2:13 2Pe. 3:4, 12 Jude 1:14-15 Rev. 1:7

### III. THE “COMING OF THE SON OF MAN” WAS NOT TO DESTROY JERUSALEM

It is common to make a distinction between what Jesus said before, and what he said after Matt. 24:33. The “coming of the son of man” in 24:30-31 is claimed to be his coming to bring judgment upon Jerusalem. The events after verse 33 are attributed to his Second Coming at the end of the world. However, Jesus makes no such distinction.

- A. The claim that the “coming of the son of man” was to destroy Jerusalem, will not fit. It clearly says that his coming would not be until “*after the tribulation of those days*” (Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24).
- B. Comparison between the words in Matthew 24:30, 31 and other passages concerning Christ’s return show identical concepts.

It seems evident that the statements about him coming again are all speaking of the same thing. This is so clear that some who hold the preterit view claim that ALL of the second coming passages must refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. Others who take the view that the “coming” (24:30-31) refers to the destruction

of Jerusalem often include scriptures such as what he said about the son of man coming in his kingdom (Matt. 16:28), his statements before the high priest (Mt. 26:64), and James 5:7-9.

## COMPARISON OF MATTHEW 24 WITH PASSAGES ABOUT THE SECOND COMING

“**Coming**,” in our text, is a translation of three different words.

#3952 “parousia” –feminine noun

#2064 “erchomai” –verb

#1831 “exerchomai” –verb

Some claim there is some significance in the Greek words translated “coming.” There is no material difference. One is a noun and the other a verb. As you will see below, they are used of the same events, sometimes in the same verse.

MATTHEW 24	SECOND COMING
<p>“<b>see</b>” the son of man Mt. 24:30 Mk. 13:26 Lk. 21:27</p>	<p>We will “<b>see</b>” him when he comes. Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62. High priest to <i>see the Son of man... coming with the clouds</i> Lk. 17:30. <i>In the day when the son of man is revealed</i> Ac. 1:11. Ascension: He will come as they <i>saw</i> him going Rev. 1:7. <i>Every eye shall see him and those who pierced him</i></p>
<p>“<b>coming</b>” Mt. 24:3 (#3952 parousia –noun)  Mt. 24:27 (#1831 exerchomai –v.)  Mt. 24:27 (#3952 parousia –noun)  Mt. 24:30; Lk.21 :27; Mark 13:26. (# 2064 erchomai – verb)</p>	<p>Christ is “<b>coming</b>” Mt. 23:39. “<i>You shall not see me until you say, blessed is he that comes [erchomai] in the name of the Lord</i>” Mt. 24:37. As Noah, “<i>so shall also the coming [parousia] of the son of man be</i>” Mt. 24:39. “<i>As flood came [erchomai], and took them all away; So shall also the coming [parousia] of the son of man be</i>” Mt. 24:42. “<i>you know not on what day the lord comes [erchomai]</i>” Mt. 24:43. “<i>what watch the thief would come [erchomai]</i>” Mt. 24:44. “<i>in an hour you think not the son of man comes [erchomai]</i>” Mt. 24:46. <i>Blessed is the servant who is faithful when his Lord comes [erchomai]</i> Mk. 13:35. <i>Watch for you know not when the master of the house comes [erchomai]</i> Mk. 13:36. <i>Lest coming [erchomai] suddenly he find you sleeping.</i> Mt. 24:48. “<i>my lord delays his coming [erchomai]</i>” Mt. 24:50. Woe to the unfaithful servant when his Lord <i>comes [eekoo]</i> Mt. 25:6. “<i>Behold, the bridegroom comes [erchomai]</i>” Mt. 25:10. The bridegroom <i>came [erchomai]</i>. Mt. 25:13. <i>You know not the day or hour when the son of man comes [erchomai]</i> Mt. 25:19. The Lord <i>comes [erchomai]</i> to reckon the use of the talents Mt. 25:27. “<i>at my coming [erchomai]</i>” Mt. 25:31. <i>The son of man shall come [erchomai] in glory</i> Mt. 26:64. <i>You shall see the Son of man coming [erchomai] on the clouds of heaven</i> Ac. 1:11. Jesus will <i>come [erchomai] in like manner as he went into heaven.</i> 1Cor. 15:23. <i>Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming [parousia].</i> 1Thes. 1:19. <i>before our Lord Jesus at his coming [parousia]</i> 1Thes. 3:13. <i>coming [parousia] of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.</i> 1Thes. 4:15. <i>we that are alive, that are left unto the coming [parousia] of the Lord</i> 1Thes. 5:2. <i>the day of the Lord comes [erchomai] as a thief in the night.</i> 1Thes. 5:23. <i>without blame at the coming [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ.</i> 2Thes. 1:10. <i>when he comes [erchomai] to be glorified in his saints</i> 2Thes. 2:1. <i>touching the coming [erchomai] of our Lord Jesus Christ</i> 2Thes. 2:8. <i>bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming [parousia]</i> Heb. 10:37. <i>He that comes [erchomai] shall come [eekoo], and shall not tarry.</i> James 5:7. <i>be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming [parousia] of the Lord.</i></p>

	<p>James 5:8. <i>the <u>coming</u> [parousia] of the Lord is at hand.</i>  2Pet. 1:16. <i>the power and <u>coming</u> [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ</i>  2Pet. 3:4. <i>Where is the promise of his <u>coming</u> [parousia]</i>  1John 2:28. <i>not be ashamed before him at his <u>coming</u> [parousia].</i>  Jude 1:14. <i>Behold, the Lord <u>comes</u> [erchomai] with ten thousands of his holy ones,</i>  Rev. 1:7. <i>he <u>comes</u> [erchomai] with the clouds; and every eye shall see him,</i></p>
<p>“on <u>clouds</u>”  Mt. 24:30  Mk. 13:26  Lk. 21:27</p>	<p>“coming in the <u>clouds</u>”  Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62. High priest to see him coming in the <u>clouds</u>  Ac. 1:9-11. Ascension: As he was received by a <u>cloud</u>, he will come again  1Th. 4:15-17. When Resurrected we shall be caught up in the <u>clouds</u>  Rev. 1:7. He comes with the <u>clouds</u></p>
<p>“of <u>heaven</u>”  Mt. 24:30</p>	<p>Coming in the “<u>heavens</u>”  Lk. 17:24 as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one <i>part</i> under <u>heaven</u>,  Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62. High priest see him coming in clouds of <u>heaven</u>  Ac. 1:9-11. Ascension: As he was taken into <u>heaven</u>, so he will come  1Thes. 1:10. Wait for his Son from <u>heaven</u>  2Thes. 1:7-8. He will be revealed from <u>heaven</u>, taking vengeance</p>
<p>“with <u>power</u>”  Mt. 24:30  Mk. 13:26  Lk. 21:27</p>	<p>Coming with “<u>power</u>”  Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62. High Priest will see him sitting on the right hand of <u>power</u>  2Thes. 1:7-9. Destruction from his presence from the glory of his <u>power</u>  2Pe. 1:16. Apostles on the mount made known his <u>power</u> and coming  2Thes. 2:1, 8. The man of sin to be <u>consumed</u> with brightness of his coming.  2Pe. 3:4, 12. “All to be <u>dissolved</u>”</p>
<p>“and <u>glory</u>”  Mt. 24:30  Mk. 13:26  Lk. 21:27</p>	<p>Coming with “<u>glory</u>”  Mt. 16:27. He comes in the <u>glory</u> of his Father to reward every man  Mt. 25:31. He comes in his <u>glory</u> and judges nations  Mk. 8:38; Lk 9:26. “comes in the <u>glory</u> of his Father with the holy angels.”  Lk. 17:24-30; Mt. 24:27 <u>Lightening lights</u> heaven  Mk. 8:38, Lk. 9:26. He comes in the <u>glory</u> of his Father with the holy angels  2Thes. 1:9-10. “<u>glory</u> of his power”  2Thes. 2:8. The man of sin will be destroyed by the “<u>brightness</u> of his coming”  Tit. 2:13. “<u>glorious</u> appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;</p>
<p>“send his <u>angels</u>”  Mt. 24:31  Mk. 13:27</p>	<p>Coming with “<u>angels</u>”  Mt. 25:31. come in his glory, and all the holy <u>angels</u> with him  Mt. 13:39-42. (Parable) <u>angels</u> in the harvest at end of the world.  Mt. 13: 49-50. (Parable) <u>angels</u> sort righteous from the wicked at the end  Mt. 16:27. He comes in the glory of his Father with his <u>angels</u>  Mk. 8:38; Lk 9:26. “comes in the glory of his Father with the holy <u>angels</u>.”  1Thes. 4:15-16. descends from heaven with a shout, with voice of the <u>archangel</u>  2Thes. 1:7-10. “revealed from heaven with his mighty <u>angels</u>”  Jude 1:14-15 “comes with 10,000 of his <u>holy ones</u>”</p>
<p>“sound of a <u>trumpet</u>”  Mt. 24:31</p>	<p>Coming with a “<u>trumpet</u>”  1Thes. 4:15-16. “descends with a shout, with voice of archangel and <u>trump</u> of God”  1Cor. 15:23, 52. the last <u>trumpet</u> shall sound</p>
<p>“<u>gather</u> the elect”  Mt. 24:31  Mk. 13:27</p>	<p>Coming to “<u>gather</u>” the good  Mt. 3:12; Lk. 3:17. “<u>gather</u> the wheat” and burn up the chaff  Mt. 24:39-42; Lk. 17:34-37. “one taken”  Mt. 13:28-30, 38-42. “<u>gather</u> the wheat” and burn the tares with fire</p>

	<p>Mt. 13:47-50. “gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away”  Mt. 25:32. “gather all nations” and divide the righteous from the wicked  2Thes. 2:1 “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together</p>
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PASSAGES BEFORE AND AFTER MATT. 24:33 COMPARED

<p>Matt. 24:  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.</p>	<p>Mat. 25:  31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:  32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:</p>
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This clearly shows that there is no distinction between passages in his discourse before and after Matt. 24:33.

MATT. 24:30-33 COMPAISON WITH OTHER PASSAGES CONCERNING THE LORD’S RETURN

<p>Matt. 24:  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.  32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:  33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that he is near, even at the doors.</p>	<p>James 5:  7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.   8 Be ye also patient ; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.  9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.</p>
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<p>Matt. 24:  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.</p>	<p>2Thes 1:  7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,  8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:  9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;  10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed ) in that day.</p>
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<p>Matt. 24:  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</p>	<p>1Thes 4:  15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep.  16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:</p>
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four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.	17 Then we which are alive <i>and</i> remain shall be caught up together with them in the <b>clouds</b> , to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
<p>Matt. 24: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in <b>heaven</b>: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall <b>see</b> the Son of man <b>coming</b> in the <b>clouds</b> of <b>heaven</b> with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his <b>angels</b> with a great sound of a <b>trumpet</b>, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.</p>	<p>Acts 1: 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a <b>cloud</b> received him out of their <b>sight</b>. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward <b>heaven</b> as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into <b>heaven</b>? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into <b>heaven</b>, shall so <b>come</b> in like manner as ye have <b>seen</b> him go into <b>heaven</b>.</p>
<p>Matt. 24: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the <b>tribes</b> of the <b>earth</b> <b>mourn</b>, and they shall <b>see</b> the Son of man <b>coming</b> in the <b>clouds</b> of heaven with power and great glory.</p>	<p>Rev. 1: 7 Behold, he <b>comes</b> with <b>clouds</b>; and every eye shall <b>see</b> him, and they <i>also</i> which pierced him: and all <b>kindreds</b> of the <b>earth</b> shall <b>wail</b> because of him. Even so, Amen.</p>

Thus, we conclude that the “things” which came to pass in that generation referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, not to the coming of Christ mentioned in Matt. 24:30, 31. “After the tribulation of those days,” the coming of Christ would be “near.”

#### IV. THE GREAT TRIBULATION

One thing that really fires up people’s imagination is “The Great Tribulation.” On this the religious faddists and opportunistic booksellers have had a heyday.

*Matt. 24:21 for then shall be **great tribulation**, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

The text does not say it is “**THE** Great Tribulation.” It simply says that there shall be “great tribulation” (Greek: thlipsis megalee). As far as the Greek text is concerned, it may refer just to the terrible conditions in the destruction of Jerusalem.

However, this scripture is commonly tied with the tribulation in Revelation 7:14, which is the only place where the statement, “*the great tribulation*” is found.

*“14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come **out of great tribulation [ek tees thlipseoos tees megalees]** and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

There is no evidence that this passage has reference to the events of Matthew 24. Nothing in Revelation prior to this speaks of any “great tribulation” to which it would be referring. In Greek, “the” may not be speaking of some preceding event. It may be simply emphasizing that the tribulation they went through was great.

In contrast to Matt. 24, this says nothing about it being tribulation upon Jerusalem. They are identified as “ *a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues*” [Rev. 7:9]. They are distinguished from a “ *hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel*” [7:4].

In fact, since it is spoken only of Christians who “ have come out of the great tribulation” it cannot be picturing the classic pre-millennial view of the tribulation at all. According to the theory, the Christians do not go through the tribulation. They are “ raptured” before it begins.

Based on the events pictured in the empire from the time John wrote (Rev. 1:19 ; 4:1), the passage here seems to have reference to the persecutions during the reign of Diocletian, just prior to Constantine. However, upon this verse the whole fabulous modern concept of the “Great Tribulation” in the Book of Revelation depends.

Premillennialists claim that in chapter 4 of Revelation, the faithful are raptured to heaven to remain at the “Marriage Supper of the Lamb” for seven years (?). During this period, from chapter 4 to chapter 19, everyone else remains on earth to go through “The Great Tribulation.”

The fact is that there are many “tribulations” (Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3 ; Eph. 3:13). “Tribulation” just means “trouble” and is sometimes translated “affliction.” People were said to have experienced “the tribulation” clear back in the first century.

John, about 74 A.D., writing to the seven churches in Asia , said he was a partaker with them in *the tribulation [tee thlipsi] and kingdom and patience in Jesus* [Rev. 1:9].

Jesus said that the church at Smyrna was experiencing it.

*Rev. 2:8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived again: 9 I know of the tribulation [teen thlipsin] of you , and the poverty of you (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they art not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation [thlipsin] ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*

To futurists, the description of the tribulation in Matt. 24:21, 22 seems too terrible for the record of what took place even in Jerusalem. They deny it was speaking of 70 A.D., or at least claim the real intent was a “second fulfillment” which will take place yet in the future.

The Preterists, on the other hand, in order to show that it was speaking only of the 70 A.D. event, make every effort possible to show it was worse than anything that ever has taken place, either before or since. Both make some good points.

There have been occasions of starvation and slaughters that seem to have been just as great or greater than what took place in Jerusalem. On the other hand, nothing before or after that seems to have been worse than happened TO JERUSALEM. For that matter, it may have been the most terrible of all such events that ever took place on earth. It is God’s judgment, not ours, that counts.

## ANOTHER VIEW OF THE “GREAT TRIBULATION”

I am here going to propose a possibility that was suggested to me years ago by Brother Larry Smith, which seems to provide a much clearer and more comprehensive fulfillment of the passage, without some of the problems. He proposed that the “Tribulation” was not confined to the 70 A.D. destruction. This concept is that the destruction of the city was only the beginning (cf. Luke 21:28). The calamity upon the Jews continued for 2,000 years until 1967 when they freed Jerusalem from Gentile control.

Certainly the tribulation of the Jews did not end with the destruction of the city in 70 A.D. .. The Romans continued their campaign of subjugation of the territory. The fall of Masada marked the final gasp of their struggle at the time. However, under the leadership of Bar-Cochba (“son of the star”) they later rebelled again (132-135 A.D.). This was put down with horrendous loss of life and they were driven into all nations. From then on, through the centuries, they were persecuted and driven out of every place they tried to settle.

## BACKGROUND

Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are based on the warnings of Moses.

Deut. 18:18 *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.*

At the healing of the lame man by the Beautiful Gate of the temple, Peter cited this to the people in reference to Jesus (Acts 3:22). Likewise, Stephen referred to it in his defense before the Jews (Acts 7:37).

To really grasp the awesome nature of these prophecies one must go back and read the warnings of Moses in Deuteronomy. At the end of their Journey Moses instructed that when they passed over Jordan the tribes should be divided, with some standing on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, and the others on Mount Ebal for the curse (Deut. 27:11-14).

They were to begin with the curse, with the people responding.

### Deut. 27:

15 Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, an abomination unto Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and setteth it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.

19 Cursed be he that wresteth the justice due to the sojourner, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife, because he hath uncovered his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen.

22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law. And all the people shall say, Amen.

24 Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbor in secret. And all the people shall say, Amen.

25 Cursed be he that taketh a bribe to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.

26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

### Chapter 28 then they were to take up the blessing:

Deut. 28:1 *And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth: 2 and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy beasts, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. 6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*

*7 Jehovah will cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee: they shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. 8 Jehovah will command the blessing upon thee in thy barns, and in all that thou putteth thy hand unto; and he will bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 9 Jehovah will establish thee for a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee; if thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, and walk in his ways. 10 And all the peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of thee. 11 And Jehovah will make thee plenteous for good, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 12 Jehovah will open unto thee his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. 13 And Jehovah will*

*make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if thou shalt hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them, 14 and shalt not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.*

The rest of the chapter warns of the consequence of disobedience.

*Deut 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. 16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. 17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*

*20 Jehovah will send upon thee cursing, discomfiture, and rebuke, in all that thou puttest thy hand unto to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the evil of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. 21 Jehovah will make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest in to possess it. 22 Jehovah will smite thee with consumption, and with fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. 23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. 24 Jehovah will make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.*

*25 Jehovah will cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and shalt flee seven ways before them: and thou shalt be tossed to and from among all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 And thy dead body shall be food unto all birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten them away. 27 Jehovah will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. 28 Jehovah will smite thee with madness, and with blindness, and with astonishment of heart; 29 and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and robbed alway, and there shall be none to save thee. 30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not use the fruit thereof. 31 Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to save thee. 32 Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people; and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day: and there shall be nought in the power of thy hand. 33 The fruit of thy ground, and all thy labors, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: 34 so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 35 Jehovah will smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, whereof thou canst not be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the crown of thy head.*

*36 Jehovah will bring thee, and thy king whom thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation that thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. 37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away. 38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. 39 Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them, but thou shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worm shall eat them. 40 Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy borders, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast its fruit. 41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be thine; for they shall go into captivity. 42 All thy trees and the fruit of thy ground shall the locust possess. 43 The sojourner that is in the midst of thee shall mount up above thee higher and higher; and thou shalt come down lower and lower. 44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. 45 And all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: 46 and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.*

*47 Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things; 48 therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies that Jehovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron*

upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. 49 Jehovah will bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; 50 a nation of fierce countenance, that shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young, 51 and shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy ground, until thou be destroyed; that also shall not leave thee grain, new wine, or oil, the increase of thy cattle, or the young of thy flock, until they have caused thee to perish. 52 And they shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fortified walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; and they shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. 53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, whom Jehovah thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. 54 The man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children whom he hath remaining; 55 so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, because he hath nothing left him, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in all thy gates. 56 The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, 57 and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children whom she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, JEHOVAH THY GOD; 59 then Jehovah will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60 And he will bring upon thee again all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. 61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will Jehovah bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. 62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 63 And it shall come to pass, that, as Jehovah rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so Jehovah will rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest in to possess it. 64 And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but Jehovah will give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul; 66 and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life. 67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would it were morning! for the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 68 And Jehovah will bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I said unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall sell yourselves unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

These curses came upon them in the destruction of Jerusalem under the Babylonians (2Kings chapter 6). However, the consequences of this conduct was not limited to that event.

When Jesus came, they renounced the prophet like unto Moses. (Deut. 18:18; cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37).

*John 19:12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.*

In so doing they pronounced their own judgment. They were turned over to Caesar.

**Matt. 23:32** 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.***

*Luke 21:20 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. 22 For **these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.***

The priest-historian, Josephus gives a detailed description of the siege by the Romans that followed in 70 A.D. (Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 3). The city and the temple were destroyed.

However, in 132 A.D., under the leadership of Bar-Cochba, they again rebelled. The insurrection was viciously stamped out, and the dispersion became complete. Jews were forbidden on pain of death even from re-entering the city. As Moses predicted, through the centuries they were driven from place to place across the earth, never finding true rest (cf. Heb. 4:1-11 ; 11:16).

*Deut. 28:65 **And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but Jehovah will give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul; 66 and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life.***

Meanwhile, Jerusalem, under Gentile domination, repeatedly changed from the hands of one power to another. When Constantine became Emperor, it passed from the control of Pagan Rome into “Christian” control. In 614 A.D. the Persian, Chosroes II captured the city. Heraclius, took control for the “Christians,” in 629. In 637 the Muslim Arabs, under the khalif Omar conquered Jerusalem. It passed through some other hands and then in 1077 A.D. the Seljuk Turks subjugated the city. In 1099 it was captured in the first crusade. In 1187 it was conquered by Saladan. In 1229 emperor Frederick II of Germany obtained it by treaty on condition the walls would not be rebuilt. This was violated and in 1239 the emir of Kerak re-conquered it. In 1243 it was unconditionally restored to Christian control. In 1244 the Kharizimian Tartars conquered it. In 1247 the Egyptians drove them out. They, in turn, held it until 1517 when the Ottoman Turks defeated them. In 1832 Mohammed Ali of Egypt took the city. In 1840 the Great Powers restored it to the Ottoman Turks.

In the First World War, the Turks sided with the Germans. With their defeat, Palestine came under the protection of England. With the Balfour Declaration of 1917, token support began for a national homeland for the Jews. In 1922 the League of Nations approved British mandate over Palestine. The Arabs mounted opposition and the English backed off, but it did provide an opening legal basis for a Jewish homeland and encouraged Zionist objectives.

The extermination of countless Jews, in the Holocaust, before and during the Second World War, under the German dictator, Adolf Hitler, brought a great deal of sympathy (guilt feelings?) for the plight of the Jews—or perhaps just a desire to get rid of a hot potato. More importantly, it instilled in the Jews a furious determination to establish a refuge in Palestine at all costs.

At first the concept of a Jewish State received a lot of support by the West. However, as refugees began to pour in the Arabs raised strong opposition, and England began to back down on her commitment. The English tried to restrict the influx but the Jews smuggled in people and weapons and waged an increasingly determined defense. At first it was little more than a guerrilla war but soon they became well organized and began to gain ground. In 1947, it was becoming too hot to handle and the British turned it over to the United Nations.

Recognition of Israel was responded to by the Arabs launching the 1948-49 war in which Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Transjordan attempted to destroy the newly established State. The Soviet Union, seeking to exploit the situation, became an increasingly strong supporter of the Arab position. Finally the struggle reached a stalemate, with the big powers calling a halt to the conflict, lest it boil over into a nuclear war.

In 1949 while attending San Jose Bible College in California I recall two of the teachers, T. R. Applebury and G. K. Allison, discussing the situation. I intruded and asked if the newly established Jewish State in Palestine did not fulfill what Jesus said in Luke 21, that Jerusalem was to be trodden under foot "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." They responded that Jerusalem was only PARTIALLY under Jewish control. (At that time it was administered under the U.N., partitioned with the Jews controlling one Quarter, the Arabs a second, and the Christians, a third). That was true but I wondered about the direction things were moving.

In 1956 Egypt seized the Suez Canal, denying its use to Israel. England, France and Israel attacked Egypt, but a cease-fire was forced by the United Nations with the support of the United States and the Soviet Union.

In 1967 things were heating up again and an attack by the Arabs was imminent. The Israelis preempted the attack with decisive force. They drove across Sinai and took the Suez Canal, moving up it towards Alexandria, the capitol of Egypt. Syria, Jordan and Lebanon joined in the attack. Israel drove the Jordanians east across the river and the Lebanese north into their own territory. They launched an attack up the Golan Heights into Syria, and only the demands of the Russians and the insistence of the United Nations halted their capture of Damascus.

Below is part of an article printed in the June 16, 1967 issue of Life Magazine .

#### ***ATTACK ON FOUR FRONTS AT ONCE***

*Astounding was the only word for it. In 60 hours the war that exploded upon the Middle East became a fact of history. Tiny Israel stood in the role of victor over the surrounding Arab nations that had vowed to exterminate her. Middle Eastern alliances, balances of power, even political boundaries, were of a new shape, as though mutated by a Biblical cataclysm.*

*Seldom, in military history has victory been so efficient or so visibly decisive in so short a span of time. As to the murky question of who or precisely what turned the latest Arab-Israeli confrontation into a shooting war, there were impassioned accusations on both sides—and the precise facts might never be distilled. But this much was obvious: so swiftly did Israel mount her assault that her adversaries...*

*...Israeli forces took the city and expanded Israel's eastern frontier to the banks of the Jordan River.*

*The one-way tide of the war was a disastrous setback for the Soviet Union. Having poured more than a billion dollars worth of arms into Egypt and Syria, and goaded them into hard-line attitudes against Israel and the West, the Russians now had to face up to the fact that they backed a loser. Though Russian warships prowled the Mediterranean virtually alongside units of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, no direct intervention was forthcoming. When the conflict came before the United Nations Security Council, the Russians contented themselves with a denunciation of Israeli "aggression" and went along with the call for a cease-fire...*

What a stunning victory! After 1900 years, Gentile domination ended and Jerusalem was under full Jewish control.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The concept of the "great tribulation" as BEGINNING (Luke 21:28) with the destruction of Jerusalem, and extending down through the whole period of its being "trodden down by the Gentiles" fulfills the prophecy in a vivid way, even to the final horrible Holocaust under Hitler. Indeed, "Holocaust" is an apt description of the terrible bloodletting that returned Jerusalem to the Jews. That is what the many sacrifices of animals on the altar of the temple were called.

*Luke 21: 20 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. 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*

This should be a warning to us as to take heed to what Jesus said in Matt. 24:33:

*“Even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors.”*

Matt. 24:44 *Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man comes.*

Rev. 22:20. *“Amen: **come, Lord Jesus.**”*