

Matthew 24 and Luke 21 Compared Verse by Verse: The Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.



The Seige of Jerusalem in 70 AD

The best commentator of Scripture is *other* Scripture! It's been my observation that the reason much of Matthew 24, also known as the *Olivet Discourse*, is thought of as an Endtime event is that it's not compared with the other two accounts of it in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, the two other synoptic Gospels. The Gospel of Luke especially uses different words to describe the events, and when compared verse by verse to Matthew 24, add light and a better understanding of the prophecy.

On one website I found:

Matthew 24 and Luke 21 aren't really talking about the same event. It starts off the same, but then the passages take a turn in the other direction. Matthew's account is speaking of the abomination of desolation that's yet future, while Luke's account is describing the destruction of the temple in 70AD. It's clearer when we use Matthew 24:5-8 and Luke 21:8-11 as an event marker.

Both passages start off pretty much with "For many shall come in my name..." and ends with "earthquakes in divers places..." in once you get to Matthew 24:9 and Luke 21:12 it takes a turn in the other direction.

You will see from this study that the statement above is *false*! When Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are compared verse by verse, you will see they are indeed the **same event**! Both Gospels add detail to each other.

In the right column, I am mainly quoting from a famous Bible commentator, John Gill, a Baptist pastor who lived from November 23, 1697, to October 14, 1771.

When I didn't find a verse in either Matthew or Luke that corresponds to the other Gospel, I left it blank. I hope you will see that the two synoptic Gospels are still close enough to be talking about the same event. Mark 13 is

also the same event. Maybe later I will add Mark 13 to this article.

Matthew 24	Luke 21	Comments
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. 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?	5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?	John Gill: The Jews give very great encomiums of the second temple, as repaired by Herod; and it was undoubtedly a very fine structure. They say that he built the house of the sanctuary, "an exceeding beautiful building"; and that he repaired the temple, in beauty "greatly exceeding" that of Solomon's.
4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.	8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.	John Gill: Take heed that no man deceive you: by pretending to come from God with a new revelation, setting himself up for the Messiah, after my departure; suggesting himself to be the person designed by God to be the deliverer of Israel, and to be sent by him, to set up a temporal kingdom, in great worldly splendour and glory; promising great names, and high places of honour and trust in it; things which Christ knew his disciples were fond of, and were in danger of being ensnared by; and therefore gives them this suitable and seasonable advice, and caution.
6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.	9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. 10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. 12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: 15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.	This is the point that the two narratives are supposed to go in different directions. But do they really? As you can see, Luke adds more details to Matthew 24 8-9. Luke says "delivering you up to the synagogues" which shows Jesus was talking to His Jewish disciples, not to us today!
11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.	18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish. 19 In your patience possess ye your souls.	John Gill: And many false prophets shall rise Out of, from among the churches of Christ; at least under the name of Christians; for false teachers are here meant, men of heretical principles, pretending to a spirit of prophecy, and to new revelations, and a better understanding of the Scriptures; such as Simon Magus, Ebion, and Cerinthus, who denied the proper deity, and real humanity of Christ; Carpocrates, and the Gnostics his followers, the Nicolaitans, Hymeneus, Philetus, and others: and shall deceive many: as they all of them had their followers, and large numbers of them, whose faith was subverted by them; and who followed their pernicious ways, being imposed upon and seduced by their fair words, specious pretences, and licentious practices. Jesus was referring to His believing disciples who heeded His warning to flee Jerusalem and Judea when they saw the Roman army advancing. Every Jewish Christian was saved from death by the hands of the Romans!

Luke explains Daniel 9:27, "the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate" **John Gill:**

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,

"From signs, Christ proceeds to the immediate cause of the destruction of Jerusalem; which was, "the abomination of desolation", or the desolating abomination; or that abominable thing, which threatened and brought desolation upon the city, temple, and nation: by which is meant, not any statue placed in the temple by the Romans, or their order; not the golden eagle which Herod set upon the temple gate, for that was before Christ said these words; nor the image of Tiberius Caesar, which Pilate is said to bring into the temple; for this, if true, must be about this time; whereas Christ cannot be thought to refer to anything so near at hand; much less the statue of Adrian, set in the most holy place, which was an hundred and thirty years and upwards, after the destruction of the city and temple; nor the statue of Titus, who destroyed both, which does not appear: ever to be set up, or attempted; nor of Caligula, which, though ordered, was prevented being placed there: but the Roman army is designed; see (Luke 21:20) which was the (Mmvm Myuwqv Pnk) , "the wing", or "army of abominations making desolate", (Daniel 9:27) . Armies are called wings, (Isaiah 8:8) and the Roman armies were desolating ones to the Jews, and to whom they were an abomination; not only because they consisted of Heathen men, and uncircumcised persons, but chiefly because of the images of their gods, which were upon their ensigns: for images and idols were always an abomination to them; so the "filthiness" which Hezekiah ordered to be carried out of the holy place, (2 Chronicles 29:5) is by the Targum called, ((aqwxyr) , "an abomination"; and this, by the Jewish writers F23, is said to be an idol, which Ahaz had placed upon the altar; and such was the abomination of desolation, which Antiochus caused to be set upon the altar:

"Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side;" (1 Maccabees 1:54)

And so the Talmudic writers, by the abomination that makes desolate, in (Daniel 12:11) (9:27) to which Christ here refers, understand an image, which they say F24 one Apostomus, a Grecian general, who burnt their law, set up in the temple. Now our Lord observes, that when they should see the Roman armies encompassing Jerusalem, with their ensigns flying, and these abominations on them, they might conclude its desolation was near at hand; and he does not so much mean his apostles, who would be most of them dead, or in other countries, when this would come to pass; but any of his disciples and followers, or any persons whatever, by whom should be seen this desolating abomination, **spoken of by Daniel the prophet:**

not in (Daniel 11:31) which is spoken of the abomination in the times of Antiochus; but either in (Daniel 12:11) or rather in (Daniel 9:27) since this desolating abomination is that, which should follow the cutting off of the Messiah, and the ceasing of the daily sacrifice. It is to be observed, that Daniel is here called a prophet, contrary to what the Jewish writers say F25, who deny him to be one; though one of F26 no inconsiderable note among them affirms, that he attained to the end, (yyawbnh lwbgh) , "of the prophetic border", or the ultimate degree of prophecy: when therefore this that Daniel, under a spirit of prophecy, spoke of should be seen,

standing in the holy place;

near the walls, and round about the holy city Jerusalem, so called from the sanctuary and worship of God in it; and which, in process of time, stood in the midst of it, and in the holy temple, and destroyed both; then

whoso readeth, let him understand:

that is, whoever then reads the prophecy of Daniel; will easily understand the meaning of it, and will see and know for certain, that now it is accomplished; and will consider how to escape the desolating judgment, unless he is given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; which was the case of the greater part of the nation.

15 When ye therefore shall see the
abomination of desolation, spoken of by
Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy
place, (whoso readeth, let him
understand:)

20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem
compassed with armies, then know that
the desolation thereof is nigh.

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 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.

21 Then let them which are in Judæa 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.

Luke clearly defines the “great tribulation” of Matthew 24 as “days of vengeance” and “great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people – the Jews who rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

John Gill: Then let them which be in Judea

When this signal is given, let it be taken notice of and observed; let them that are in the city of Jerusalem, depart out of it; or who are in any other parts of Judea, in any of the towns, or cities thereof; let them not betake themselves to Jerusalem, imagining they may be safe there, in so strong and fortified a place, but let them flee elsewhere; see (Luke 21:21) and accordingly it is observed, that many did flee about this time; and it is remarked by several interpreters, and which Josephus F1 takes notice of with surprise, that Cestius Gallus having advanced with his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it, on a sudden, without any cause, raised the siege, and withdrew his army, when the city might have been easily taken; by which means a signal was made; and an opportunity given to the Christians, to make their escape: which they accordingly did, and went over Jordan, as Eusebius says F2, to a place called Pella; so that when Titus came a few mouths after, there was not a Christian in the city, but they had fled as they are here bidden to

flee into the mountains; or any places of shelter and refuge: these are mentioned particularly, because they are usually such; and design either the mountains in Judea, or in the adjacent countries. The Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular number, “into the mountain”; and it is reported that many of them did fly, particularly to Mount Libanus

John Gill: And except those days should be shortened

That is, those days of tribulation which commenced at the siege of Jerusalem; and therefore cannot refer to the times before it, and the shortening of them by it, which were very dreadful and deplorable through the murders and robberies of the cut-throats and zealots; but to those after the siege began, which were very distressing to those that were within; and which, if they had not been shortened, or if the siege had been lengthened out further,

there should no flesh be saved;

not one Jew in the city of Jerusalem would have been saved; they must everyone have perished by famine, or pestilence, or sword, or by the intestine wars and murders among themselves: nor indeed, if the siege had continued, would it have fared better with the inhabitants of the other parts of the country, among whom also many of the same calamities prevailed and spread themselves; so that, in all likelihood, if these days had been continued a little longer, there had not been a Jew left in all the land.

But for the elect's sake;

those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to believe in him, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; both those that were in the city, or, at least, who were to spring from some that were there, as their immediate offspring, or in future ages, and therefore they, and their posterity, must not be cut off; and also those chosen ones, and real believers, who were at Pella, and in the mountains, and other places, for the sake of these, and that they might be delivered from these pressing calamities,

those days shall be shortened:

for otherwise, if God had not preserved a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace, that should be saved, they had been as Sodom and as Gomorrah, not one would have escaped. The shortening of those days is not to be understood literally, as if the natural days, in which this tribulation was, were to be shorter than usual. The Jews indeed often speak of the shortening of days in this sense, as miraculously done by God: so they say, that

“five miracles were wrought for our father Jacob, when he went from Beersheba to go to Haran. The first miracle was, that, “the hours of the day were shortened for him”, and the sun set before its time, because his word desired to speak with him.”

They also say,

“that the day in which Ahaz died, was shortened ten hours, that they might not mourn for him; and which afterwards rose up, and in the day that Hezekiah was healed, ten hours were added to it.”

But the meaning here is, that the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it, should be sooner ended: not than God had determined, but than the sin of the Jews deserved, and the justice of God might have required in strict severity, and might be reasonably expected, considering the aggravated circumstances of their iniquities. A like manner of speech is used by the Karaite Jews, who say,

“if we walk in our law, why is our captivity prolonged, and there is not found balm for our wounds? and why are not, “the days” of the golden and silver kingdom “lessened”, for the righteousness of the righteous, which were in their days?”

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 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.

25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And **then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.** 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

John Gill: Immediately after the tribulation of those days

That is, immediately after the distress the Jews would be in through the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it; just upon the destruction of that city, and the temple in it, with the whole nation of the Jews, shall the following things come to pass; and therefore cannot be referred to the last judgment, or what should befall the church, or world, a little before that time, or should be accomplished in the whole intermediate time, between the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last judgment: for all that is said to account for such a sense, as that it was usual with the prophets to speak of judgments afar off as near; and that the apostles often speak of the coming of Christ, the last judgment, and the end of the world, as just at hand; and that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, will not answer to the word "immediately", or show that that should be understood of two thousand years after: besides, all the following things were to be fulfilled before that present generation, in which Christ lived, passed away, (Matthew 24:34) and therefore must be understood of things that should directly, and immediately take place upon, or at the destruction of the city and temple. **Shall the sun be darkened:** not in a literal but in a figurative sense; and is to be understood not of the religion of the Jewish church; nor of the knowledge of the law among them, and the decrease of it; nor of the Gospel being obscured by heretics and false teachers; nor of the temple of Jerusalem, senses which are given into by one or another; but of the Shekinah, or the divine presence in the temple. The glory of God, who is a sun and a shield, filled the tabernacle, when it was reared up; and so it did the temple, when it was built and dedicated; in the most holy place, Jehovah took up his residence; here was the symbol of his presence, the mercy seat, and the two cherubim over it: and though God had for some time departed from this people, and a voice was heard in the temple before its destruction, saying, "let us go hence"; yet the token of the divine presence remained till the utter destruction of it; and then this sun was wholly darkened, and there was not so much as the outward symbol of it: **and the moon shall not give her light;**

which also is to be explained in a figurative and metaphorical sense; and refers not to the Roman empire, which quickly began to diminish; nor to the city of Jerusalem; nor to the civil polity of the nation; but to the ceremonial law, the moon, the church is said to have under her feet, (Revelation 12:1) so called because the observance of new moons was one part of it, and the Jewish festivals were regulated by the moon; and especially, because like the moon, it was variable and changeable. Now, though this, in right, was abolished at the death of Christ, and ceased to give any true light, when he, the substance, was come; yet was kept up by the Jews, as long as their temple was standing; but when that was destroyed, the daily sacrifice, in fact, ceased, and so it has ever since; the Jews esteeming it unlawful to offer sacrifice in a strange land, or upon any other altar than that of Jerusalem; and are to this day without a sacrifice, and without an ephod: **and the stars shall fall from heaven;**

which phrase, as it elsewhere intends the doctors of the church, and preachers falling off from purity of doctrine and conversation; so here it designs the Jewish Rabbins and doctors, who departed from the word of God, and set up their traditions above it, fell into vain and senseless interpretations of it, and into debates about things contained in their Talmud; the foundation of which began to be laid immediately upon their dispersion into other countries: and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken;

meaning all the ordinances of the legal dispensation; which shaking, and even removing of them, were foretold by (Haggai 2:6) and explained by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (Hebrews 12:26 Hebrews 12:27) whereby room and way were made for Gospel ordinances to take place, and be established; which shall not be shaken, so as to be removed, but remain till the second coming of Christ. The Jews themselves are sensible, and make heavy complaints of the great declensions and alterations among them, since the destruction of the temple; for after having taken notice of the death of several of their doctors, who died a little before, or after that; and that upon their death ceased the honour of the law, the splendour of wisdom, and the glory of the priesthood, they add;

"from the time that the temple was destroyed, the wise men, and sons of nobles, were put to shame, and they covered their heads; liberal men were reduced to poverty; and men of violence and calumny prevailed; and there were none that expounded, or inquired, or asked. R. Elezer the great, said, from the time the sanctuary were destroyed, the wise men began to be like Scribes, and the Scribes like to the Chazans, (or sextons that looked after the synagogues,) and the Chazans like to the common people, and the common people grew worse and worse, and there were none that inquired and asked;" that is, of the wise men there were no scholars, or very few that studied in the law.

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 it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

“This generation” is what generation? The generation of Baby Boomers of the 20th century who were born just before or just after Israel was established as a State by the United Nations in 1948? No! Not at all! Jesus was talking to the generation of His disciples who lived 40 more years and witnessed the fulfillment of His prophecy first hand!

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

John Gill: Heaven and earth shall pass away

This is either an assertion, which will be true at the end of time; not as to the substance of the heavens and earth, which will always remain, but as to the qualities of them, which will be altered: they will be renewed and refined, but not destroyed; the bad qualities, or evil circumstances, which attend them through the sin of man, will be removed and pass away, but they themselves will continue in being: or is a comparative expression, and the sense is, that the heavens and the earth, and the ordinances thereof, than which nothing can be more firm and strong, being fixed and supported by God himself, shall sooner pass away, than anything asserted and predicted by Christ shall: but my words shall not pass away; be vain and empty, and unaccomplished; which is true of anything, and everything spoken by Christ; and especially here regards all that he had said concerning the calamities that should befall the Jews, before, at, or upon the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; and the design of the expression, is to show the certainty, unalterableness, and sure accomplishment of these things.

John Gill: But of that day and hour knoweth no man

Which is to be understood, not of the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the last judgment; but of the coming of the son of man, to take vengeance on the Jews, and of their destruction; for the words manifestly regard the date of the several things going before, which only can be applied to that catastrophe, and dreadful desolation: now, though the destruction itself was spoken of by Moses and the prophets, was foretold by Christ, and the believing Jews had some discerning of its near approach; see (Hebrews 10:25) yet the exact and precise time was not known:

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

John Gill: Then shall two be in the field

About their proper business, of husbandry, ploughing, or sowing, or any other rural employment:

the one shall be taken;

not by the preaching of the Gospel, into the kingdom of God, or Gospel dispensation; though such a distinction God makes, by the ministry of the word, accompanied by his Spirit and power; nor by angels, to meet Christ in the air, and to be introduced into his kingdom and glory; **but by the eagles, the Roman army, and either killed or carried captive by them:** and the other left; not in a state of nature and unregeneracy, as many are, to whom the Gospel is preached; nor with devils at the last day, to be thrust down by them into the infernal regions; but by the Romans, being by some remarkable providence, or another, delivered out of their hands; which was the case of some few, and these of the meaner sort; and therefore persons of a rural life and occupation are instanced in.

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.