

The Destruction of Jerusalem & the Coming of Christ Matthew 24:1-51
(Note: this lesson is the same written lesson for many audio sermons)

Matthew 23:31-39 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 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. 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.

Jesus plainly says that this coming prophecy of Matthew 24 would be applicable to that generation, meaning in the next 40 years and race of men meaning the Jews.

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

But Jesus also begins to blend in the end of time and His second coming to this prophecy.

God has often used heathen nations to punish His people when they backslide. In scripture this is often called “the day of the Lord” or “the Lord Coming” (in judgment).

During the period of the Judges God raised up the Philistines, and others to punish His people.

God came in judgment against Israel in 722 BC and again in 701 BC using the Assyrians to destroy and punish the nation of Israel and its capital of Samaria with a captivity in which they became forever lost and are known today as the 10 lost tribes of Israel.

God again came in Judgment against Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC Using Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon and the city was taken and the temple was destroyed on the 9th of Av according to the Jewish calendar.

It was 40 years between Jesus' crucifixion in 30 AD and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus of Rome in 70AD. The siege of Jerusalem began on Passover in April 70 AD and on the 10th of August which was the 9th of Av by the Jewish calendar the city was taken and the temple was destroyed. This is the very same day the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon.

Luke 19:41-44 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things [*which belong*] unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Matthew 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to [*him*] for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

The temple had been rebuilt in great splendor by Herod, and was not fully completed until about thirty years after the Savior's crucifixion.

Matthew 24:2 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.

Only the "wailing wall" which are the foundation stones of the retaining wall remains. The Temple has entirely disappeared from the

face of the earth, and a Islam mosque stands known as the dome of the rock stands on the spot where the Jewish temple stood.

Matthew 24:3 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?

They supposed these events would be simultaneous which was a mistake. To understand what follows we must keep in mind that Jesus has three questions to answer.

Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

We learn from Josephus that spellbinders did come about the time of the end of Jerusalem, claiming to be sent of God. Later Bar-cocheba, "the son of the star," appeared in 130 AD and the Jews rushed to accept this false prophet as their messiah. Rome again destroyed them and this time deported all Jews out of the land.

Matthew 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

They have reckoned there has been as many as 15 false Christs among the Jews from the first to the 17 century and 150 from among the Gentiles ... from Jim Jones to David Koresh they have abounded.

Matthew 24:6 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.

**Small revolts and wars affecting the Jews between 30 AD and 70 AD:
Caesarea 20,000 Jews killed
Alexandera 50,000 Jews killed
Damascus 10,000 Jews killed**

Then the Jewish war and rebellion against Rome began in 66 AD. During this period all the Roman empire was filled with commotion.

Nero, the emperor, was overthrown by Galba; six months after, Galba was overthrown by Otho; a few months after, Otho was overthrown by Vitellius; a little later, he was overthrown by Vespasian. All of these but the last, who ascended the throne shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed, died violent deaths.

The Jewish historian Josephus wrote "The Wars of the Jews" in 75 AD. He had been captured by Titus and befriended by him and was therefore an eye witness of the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus records:

A star shaped as a sword appeared in the sky.

A comet (Hailey's comet had it's greatest display at that time.)

A bright light shining around the altar in the temple.

A vision of chariots and soldiers running around among the clouds was seen in all cities of Palestine.

A Quaking.

A great noise.

The sound of a great multitude saying "Let us remove hence" .

Matthew 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Famines

Four famines are mentioned in history during the reign of Claudius and Nero. Famines are also the natural result of civil wars. Tacitus, the Roman historian, says of this period: "It was full of calamities, horrible with battles, rent with seditions, savage in peace itself."

Pestilences

Greek loimos a plague or disease.

Matthew 24:8 All these [are] the beginning of sorrows.

Matthew 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

“ ... deliver you up to be afflicted ... better translation would be “deliver you up to affliction” in which affliction is personified like an evil demonic jailer. Soon literally fulfilled in the Jewish persecutions.

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem

The awful persecution of Nero also soon followed. Jesus said: “Ye shall be hated.” Tacitus, describing Nero’s persecution begun in 64 AD says "the Christians were haters and hated of mankind."

"Therefore, to stop the rumor [that he had set Rome on fire], he [Emperor Nero] falsely charged with guilt, and punished with the most fearful tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were [generally] hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius, but the pernicious superstition - repressed for a time, broke out yet again, not only through Judea, - where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also, whither all things horrible and disgraceful flow from all quarters, as to a common receptacle, and where they are encouraged. Accordingly first those were arrested who confessed they were Christians; next on their information, a vast multitude were convicted, not so much on the charge of burning the city, as of "hating the human race."

Matthew 24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Shall stumble and fall, rather than suffer for Christ. The half-hearted always throw in the towel and give up.

Matthew 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

II Corinthians 11:13-15 For such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Matthew 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Sin and immorality eats out the heart of religion and all faith in Christ.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

The Christian Jews who endured to the end were saved by fleeing to Pella, beyond the Jordan, at these signs pointed out by the Lord. The principle is applicable to us enduring faithfully to the end of our life.

Matthew 24:14 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.

The gospel was preached throughout the Roman empire, "the world" of the New Testament, before 70 AD.

"... and then shall the end come ..." the end of the Jewish state or age.

Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with [them], and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Romans 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

Romans 10:13-18 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith [*cometh*] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Colossians 1:5-6 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 6 Which is come unto you, as [*it is*] in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as [*it doth*] also in you, since the day ye heard [*of it*], and knew the grace of God in truth:

Colossians 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [*be*] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [*and*] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

I Thessolians 1:6-8 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

Matthew 24:15 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:)

Daniel 9:1-2 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to

Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, [*and*] an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

Daniel 9:24-27 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, [*that*] from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [*shall be*] seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof [*shall be*] with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make [*it*] desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined.

The abomination of desolation was when the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem and showed their idolatrous standards (like a flag) with an eagle upon a pole. This is the sign when Christians should flee from Jerusalem. Luke says, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies" 21:20. This was, therefore, Christ's explanation of the abomination of desolation. The Roman army, heathen, with heathen images and standards, ready to sacrifice to idols on the temple altar, working the desolation of Jerusalem and the temple, is what is meant.

Matthew 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

“Flee into the mountains” For refuge.

Matthew 24:17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

The flat roofs were sleeping places just proceed along the “road of roof tops” of the houses to the gate of the city and get out of town.

Matthew 24:18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

To escape this must be done without a moment's delay.

Matthew 24:19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

Because families with pregnant women would not be physically fit for flight and the hardships that must be endured.

Matthew 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Because the streams would then be impassable torrents from the heavy rains and the weather and cold rain, work great hardships on the homeless refugees.

“... neither on the Sabbath day”. Because then the gates of the city would be closed.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The account given by Josephus, the Jewish historian who witnessed and recorded the war, is almost an echo of the predictions of Christ. Women ate their own children from starvation; the Jews within the city fought each other as well as the Roman army. On August 10, 70 AD,

the 9th of AV the city was stormed and there was a universal slaughter, the Jews were massacred, 1,100,00 Jews perished, and the 100,000 survivors were sold into slavery.

Matthew 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

If such awful work should be allowed to universally continue, and spread abroad it would exterminate the whole human race.

“... for the elect's sake.” because of Christians only there is salt to save the earth, and a end shall be put to the awful work of death in the destruction of Jerusalem. The elect are the true believers in Christ

Matthew 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here [*is*] Christ, or there; believe [*it*] not.

Matthew 24:24 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.

Matthew 24:25 Behold, I have told you before.

Matthew 24:26 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.

During this period of these tribulations, or any other persecution give no heed to false prophets, false Christs, or to those who say Christ is here or there.

Matthew 24:27 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.

It has been pointed out that Vespasian and Titus were returning from a campaign in the east against Rome's perennial foes, the Parthians, when they decided, on the way back to Rome, to make an end of

rebellious Jerusalem. Thus, the destroying power literally came from the east to the west.

Matthew 24:28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Regarding the carcass and the gathering of the eagles, it seems clear that the Jewish state was the carcass. Having rejected Christ and planning His murder, and standing ready to persecute to death His disciples, Israel no longer possessed any right to exist as a separate and chosen people. It had been forfeited. Judaism was morally dead, corrupted and reprobate. She was not only morally dead but judicially dead also, Christ having pronounced her doom and sentenced her to destruction. A carcass was an appropriate symbol.

“... there will the eagles be gathered together.” Strangely enough, eagles were the decorations of the Roman standards, under which the veteran legions of Titus gathered to press the siege of the city.

Matthew 24:29 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:

These are the most difficult words in the whole discourse because they appear to link the second coming with the destruction of the Jewish state, yet we know that this was not the meaning.

Matthew 24:29 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:

Reference to the sun, moon, and stars presents a problem. Language such as this is hyperbole, and is not literal. Such terms was sometimes

used in the Old Testament concerning the removal of illustrious princes and rulers from their estates.

What we have is the use of Old Testament figurative language where God describes the destruction of nations using the same figurative language. This is just a metaphor for I'll knock your lights out. Jesus uses this metaphor to describe the coming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD which is a type or shadow of the end of the world.

Isaiah uses this same language to describe the destruction of Babylon.

Isaiah 13:10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

Ezekiel uses the same language about the destruction of Egypt cf:

Ezekiel 32:7-9 And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. 8 All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD. 9 I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known.

Joel 2:28 ff & Acts 2:22 ff uses the same language to prophecy the the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD Note after Spirit poured out in AD 30.

Joel 2:28-32 And it shall come to pass afterward, [*that*] I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. 30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the

great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass, [*that*] whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

Matthew 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.

The Day of the Lord or the Lord coming in Judgment in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus of Rome.

Matthew 24:31 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.

Angels Greek angelos to bring tidings, a messenger especially an angel. The Apostles were definitely messengers.

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer [*is*] nigh:

Every Jew knew leaves on the fig trees means spring.

Matthew 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, [*even*] at the doors.

The signs Jesus has discussed.

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

Thus the Primary thrust of this prophecy is the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus of Rome ... of this there can be no doubt.

But

Other highly learned brethren such as J.W. McGarvey, B.W. Johnson's Peoples New Testament Commentary, and James Burton Coffman's Commentary have a slightly different understanding of the 2nd Coming of Christ regarding:

Matthew 24:27-31 when compared to Luke 21:20-24

These brilliant brethren believe these verses have 2 meanings.

Matthew 24:34-35. This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Some hold that "the parable of the fig tree" and "all these things," in Matthew 24:32-33, refer only to what was said of the fall of Jerusalem, ending with verse 28 . Others have contended that the phrase includes the second coming, but refers directly to the end of Jerusalem, which was a type of the end of the world.

Let' examine Luke's account which gives us more information.

Luke 21:20-24 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. 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.

"... they shall fall by the edge of the sword ..." Josephus gives the names of the tribes and villages with the numbers put to death, arriving at the fantastic total of 1,100,000; and as Josephus was a Jewish historian, his record must be received as the most reliable that has reached us concerning this disaster.

“... led away captive into all nations ...” Titus alone deported some 97,000 at one time; and the scattering of Israel, as often promised by Jesus, was most thoroughly accomplished.

“... Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles ...” means occupied by the Gentiles. They did not tread down the city during the siege, nor as they devastated it, but as they occupied it for 1,897 years from 70AD to 1967.

“ ... until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ... is here named as the period of time during which the Holy City would be subject to Gentile domination, and it is far easier for Christians now to know what this meant than it was for the apostles who first heard it. The historical record of that period is spread upon the chronicles of nearly two millennia.

The proper understanding of "the times of the Gentiles" must take into account the following things:

(1) The fact that nineteen hundred and eighty five years is clearly a part of the period indicated, that much time has already elapsed in the year 2015.

(2) The fact that these words "are to be understood as the antithesis of the season of Jerusalem coming to an end when Christ wept over Jerusalem and her terrible coming end (Luke 19:41-44).

The Times of the Gentiles will be comparable to the times during which Jerusalem and the Jews held the favored position with God. In the end the Gentiles will fully rebel against God just as the Jews fully rebelled when they will-filly murdered the Christ, knowing He was a prophet, killed the apostles and persecuted the Church unto death.

In the light of the above considerations, the true meaning of "the times of the Gentiles" would appear to be:

The interval between the fall of Jerusalem and the End of the Age is called "the times of the Gentiles," during which the gospel is announced to the Gentiles and the vineyard is given to other people ie: the Gentiles rather than the Jews Luke 20:16 & 13:29-30.

To the Jews God granted a time of privilege and gracious opportunity. Near the close of that time the Son of man wept over Jerusalem, saying, "If thou hadst known the time of thy visitation" In like manner, the Gentile nations have now had their times, which in due course are now being fulfilled, as was the case with Jerusalem.

The times of the Gentiles is also known as the church age.

"The times of the Gentiles" signify the whole period of time which must elapse between the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the beginning of the times of the end when the Lord will return

There is not much disagreement among commentators that the "times of the Gentiles" represents a very long period of time; but there are many radically different views on when and how those times will be terminated.

Furthermore, the times of the Jews did not mean their "full conversion," but just the opposite it means their total fall into willful apostasy to the known will of God. The times of the Gentiles means the period when Gentiles are being saved. Then there is a powerful inference in this text that, just as Israel finally rebelled completely against the Lord, so will the Gentiles completely rebel and bringing on the time of the End by their turning from God's way. Coffman

A VERY STARTLING FACT

Today, after over nineteen hundred years of Gentile dominion over Jerusalem, during which the Romans, the Saracens, the Franks, the Mamelukes, the Turks, and the British have, in turn, held authority over

Jerusalem. The city is today controlled by secular non believing Zionist Israel. See Coffman

If the interpretations which we have advocated above, the same interpretations that have been in vogue among Christian commentators for centuries - if those interpretations are true, then there is a powerful indication in the current status of Jerusalem that suggests the awesome possibility, if not the certainty, that "the times of the Gentiles" have about expired. The current status of true faith in Christ in our troubled world is weak and precarious. Multiplied billions of the Gentile nations have either not heard the gospel at all, or have totally repudiated Christianity. Coffman

If the six-day war that lifted the Gentile yoke from Jerusalem in 1967 is in some manner related to this prophecy. The practical applications of the words which Jesus spoke should now concern people more than ever, lest "that day" come upon them unawares. Coffman

The term: "times of the Gentiles" is also used by the Apostle Paul cf:

Romans 11:25-26 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

"... this mystery ..." is that the Jews are judicially condemned and blinded or hardened by God Himself, in consequence of their own self-hardening, and formally and officially sentenced by Christ himself to condemnation and destruction

Matthew 23:37 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.

The Jews shall nevertheless continue to exist in that condition until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, which may very well mean the end of time, and certainly does mean that, if the fullness of the Gentiles and the end of the world occur simultaneously, as many believe. See Coffman

After discussing Israel's blindness or hardening Paul points out the saving of the Gentiles was not to be thought of as something eternally continuing. The Gentiles under God's favor would run their course, just like the Jews ran their course as God's people.

We must understand there will come the time, if it is not already coming, when the Gentile position of center stage in God's favor will be no more. This will happen for the very same reasons that removed The Jews from God's favor. See Coffman

"... that blindness in part is happened to Israel ..." Paul's phrasing of this announcement was equivalent to saying, "The Jews will be here as long as any Gentiles are being saved."

"... And so all Israel shall be saved ... Could this possibly have any reference to the blind, hardened Israel? The very fact of their being "saved" identifies Israel here as the spiritual Israel which is the Church made up of Jews and Gentiles saved by Christ.

What Paul is saying is that when the Gentile harvest had been reaped, that reaping, or fullness, is the means by which the determination of the whole body of the redeemed from earth shall at last be concluded. Or, as Paul stated that very truth,

"...And so all Israel (the entire spiritual Israel of Jews and Gentiles and whomsoever) shall be saved See coffman

Matthew 24:27 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.

Of course, the primary meaning of the prophecy would apply to the sensational, worldwide, glorious revelation of Christ at his second coming. B.W. Johnson

There will be no doubt about Christ's coming when He does come, there will be no discussion, no need that any one shall tell others of it. It will be manifest as the flash of lightning across the sky. There can be no mistake. Such language shows how much those are in error who claim that Jesus coming was only at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matthew 24:28 For where so ever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Extending the figure to its ultimate fulfillment at the end of the age, when the world itself will have become corrupt, morally dead and when her day of grace has ended, God will also overwhelm it with destruction. BW Johnson

Matthew 24:29 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:

Reference to the sun, moon, and stars presents a problem. Language such as this is hyperbole, and is not literal. Such terms was sometimes used in the Old Testament concerning the removal of illustrious princes and rulers from their estates. BW Johnson

Christ's reference to the prophecy by Daniel, a little earlier, indicates a long separation between the two events. Therefore, the words of this verse should be understood as a reference to the end of time and the final judgment, of which things the destruction of Jerusalem was only a type. BW Johnson

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days...” Since the coming of Christ did not follow close upon the destruction of Jerusalem, the word "immediately" used by Matthew is somewhat puzzling. There are, however, three ways in which it may be explained: (1) That Jesus reckons the time after his own divine, and not after our human, fashion. Viewing the word in this light, the passage at 2 Peter 3:4-9 may almost be regarded as an inspired comment with reference to this passage. (2) The terrible judgment upon Jerusalem and the corresponding terror of the judgment day have between them no intervening season of judgment in any way worthy to be compared to either of them. The two periods, therefore, stand with regard to each other in immediate connection. (3) The tribulation which came upon the Jewish people merely began with the destruction of Jerusalem, other woes followed, and, coming down through all the centuries of wandering and dispersion, they were yet unfulfilled and incomplete (and have continued on for the past 2,000 years). JW McGarvey

Matthew 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.

The sign of Jesus' coming is thus His actual appearance on the clouds of heaven in great glory.

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they [*also*] which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

The second coming will be a personal and glorious return of Christ in the skies. Our modern materialistic, secular, and wicked age will not accept such a view, a fact prophesied by Christ in the revelation that all the tribes of the earth would "mourn" when they see it. This is a mourning that would not occur if His coming was expected or on the other hand if it were some invisible, psychological, or spiritual return

occurred. Christ plainly taught that His second coming would be bad news indeed for the great majority of mankind.

- 1. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. The coming and the sign are the same thing. The word "sign" is used in connection with the coming of Christ to indicate that the nature of the coming (that is, the manner of its manifestations) will be fully commensurate with the importance of the event.**
- 2. Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. The coming will occasion universal mourning in the unprepared, and apparently the majority of people will be in that condition. The term "all" is not, however, to be construed as including all individuals (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). JW McGarvey**

Matthew 24:31 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.

These words show the strong grounds for referring this portion of the discourse to the final judgment. The parables of the tares and of the fishnet mention the angels that shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just. The sound of the trumpet is also invariably associated with the judgment and the resurrection I Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Also, II Thessalonians 1:6-9 stresses the appearance of angels with Christ in his coming for judgment.

BW Johnson

II Thessalonians 1:4-9 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: 5 [*Which is*] a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6 Seeing [*it is*] a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 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;

And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, etc. See . To the Jews the trumpet would naturally be associated with the assembling of the people, for silver trumpets were used to call Israel together (Exodus 19:13,16,19; Numbers 10:1-4; Psalms 81:3-5) J.W. McGarvey

Luke 21:24 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. 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.

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer [*is*] nigh:

The putting forth of the leaves is the sign that summer is near. It puts forth leaves usually in April. So "all these things" show when the Lord is at hand.

Matthew 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, [*even*] at the doors.

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

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

B. W. Johnson said in 1880 : "I believe, rather, that "all these things" embraces all thus far predicted, and that "this generation" means the Jewish race, instead of only those then living. The Greek word so rendered is used in the sense of race in the Greek classics, and as examples of such use in the New Testament, Alford points to Matt. 12:45 and Luke 16:8 , as examples of such use in the New Testament. Christ has described the awful end of the Jewish state; after such a destruction and scattering of the remnant to the ends of the earth, all the examples of history would declare that the Jewish race would become extinct. Christ, however, declares that, contrary to all probability, it shall not pass away until he comes. They still exist, 1850 years after the prediction, distinct, but without a country."

Matthew 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no [*man*], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

How foolish then to be figuring out the time of the Lord's coming. There are 242 false dates listed on www.bible.ca/pre-date-setters.

An untold number of people have tried to predict the Lord's return by using elaborate time tables. Most date setters do not realize mankind has not kept an unwavering record of time. Anyone wanting to chart for example 100 BC to 2000 AD would have contend with the fact 46 BC was 445 days long, there was no year 0 BC, and in 1582 we switched from Julian Years (360 days) to Gregorian (365 days). Because most prognosticators are not aware of all these errors, from the get go their math is already off by several years.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noe (Noah) [*were*], so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:38 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,

Matthew 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

As the deluge surprised the world, so will the Lord's coming.

Matthew 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matthew 24:41 Two [*women shall be*] grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

The hand-mills still used in the East. The grinding is done by women, usually two, as the work is hard for one. It will be the time of separation of the evil from the good.

Now both Mark & Luke give us information Matthew does not record.

Mark 13:33-34 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 [*For the Son of man is*] as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Luke 21:34-35 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. 35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Then Both Mark and Luke add more information to the Matthew 24:42 watch verse.

Mark 13:35-37 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Luke 21:36 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.

Why would Jesus tell us to watch if we could not know the season of His return?

Matthew 24:43 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.

Matthew 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

The lesson of the illustration is a constant state of preparation.

Elsewhere in the New Testament Christ's coming is compared to that of a thief in the night

Matthew 24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

In Luke 12:42-46 , is given a similar parable in answer to a question of Peter. There the Lord speaks of "the faithful and wise steward;" here he describes a steward, but speaks of him as a servant. Preachers, elders, deacons, Sunday-school teachers.

Matthew 24:46 Blessed [*is*] that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Matthew 24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

This blessedness applies equally to those who are faithful unto death and those who are so found at the Lord's coming. This blessedness is in the reward the Lord will give. `He shall make him ruler over all his goods. The coming parables of the talents and the pounds show that those who have been faithful to the trusts given them here shall receive additional trusts in the Savior's eternal kingdom.

Matthew 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

The worst enemy of Christ is the professed servant of the Lord who practices are evil, and who supposes he can evade punishment for his crimes.

Matthew 24:49 And shall begin to smite [*his*] fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

There is no sin more common among those who are clothed with authority than oppression. There have been no worse oppressors than priests. "... And to eat and drink with the drunken." What first disgusted Luther with the faith in which he had been reared was the drunkenness of the priests and monks. It has often been the case that the Vatican was the very hot-bed of scandal.

Matthew 24:50 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,

He will certainly come, and come when the servant is unprepared for him. The majority of the wicked who die in their sins have expected to be better prepared for the end of life.

Matthew 24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint [*him*] his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The cutting asunder was an ancient method of punishment which was practiced among the Jews. Cf: 1 Samuel 15:33, 1 Samuel 15:2 and 2

Sam. 12:31. The idea here is that very severe punishment shall be inflicted upon him, while weeping and gnashing of teeth would indicate a life of intense suffering. Indeed both these expressions must be regarded as metaphors, indicating nothing more clearly than a terrible and certain punishment.

Sources: KJV Bible, theWord.com, Clarkes Commentary, Coffman's Commentary, B.W. Johnson's Commentary J.W. Mc Garvey and the 20th Century Christian.