



Thank you for downloading the
CQ Rewind - Summary Only Version!

Each week, the **Summary Only** version provides you with approximately 4 pages of brief excerpts from the program, along with Scripture citations.

If you would like to receive the **CQ Rewind FULL EDITION** at no charge, simply sign up at www.ChristianQuestions.com.

The **FULL EDITION** of approximately 10-12 pages includes comprehensive excerpts from the program, fully quoted Scriptures, graphics, illustrations, and even extra study points that time prevented us from covering during the live program.



Is Jesus Really Returning? (Part II)

Matthew 24:3: (NASB) *As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?*



A few weeks ago (*"Is Jesus Really Returning? Part I" - January 19, 2014*) we began to unfold one of the greatest Bible prophecies ever spoken, the prophecy that Jesus himself spoke relating to his return. We talked about how returning was a process and how his eventual revealing would be similar to a sunrise. We talked about how it was built upon the sacrificial work of his first advent to pay the price for sin and how the second advent is to reclaim the world from Satan. Today we continue that conversation and focus on just how he answered the three questions in our theme text.

Let's start by looking at the three questions: Matthew 24:3: (NASB) *As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, 1. **when will these things happen**, 2. **and what will be the sign of your coming**, 3. **and of the end of the age?***

Let's review the context...in Matthew 23, the disciples heard Jesus scold the Pharisees and their hypocrisy while at the temple. The chapter ends with the proclamation of the desolation of Jerusalem. Matthew 23:37-39: The expectation was that the Messiah would come to set up a kingdom with the centerpiece in Jerusalem. This proclamation of the desolation of Jerusalem would have been contrary to such an expectation. **After this stark proclamation, Matthew 24 begins:** Matthew 24:1-2: (NASB) *¹Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when his disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to him. ²And he said to them, do you not see all these **things**? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down. So, the things the disciples asked about were: 1. The desolation of Jerusalem, **AND** 2. the Temple's destruction. They then added two other questions that, from their perspective, would seem logical - **and what will be the sign of your coming (presence*)**, **and of the end of the age?** *Please refer to CQ Program, "Is Jesus Really Returning? Part I" - January 19, 2014*

Sitting where we sit in 2014, it is easy to see how the destruction of Jerusalem was an entirely different event than Jesus' return. Jesus was referring to the literal destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. We would like to suggest that Jesus answered all three questions, but in a somewhat veiled way: What if Jesus answered the first question (which pertained to their lifetime) first and then went on to the others? Consider this suggestion: Matthew 24:4-13 applies to the time of the Apostles up to A.D. 70. We will see this approach not only tells them what will happen to *them* in their lifetimes, it will also create a template of what would be happening throughout the bulk of the Gospel Age (the time period that the Gospel is spread - we are living in this time period now) leading to the "Time of the End."

Jesus would tell them what is coming sooner (in their lifetimes) AND what would be coming later (long after they all died). There are two layers of application - the actual fulfillment in the day of the disciples AND after their day, the fulfillment for us over a bigger period of time.

Matthew 24:4-5: The first warning for the disciples was: Be careful no one misleads you; stay true to the Gospel message and watch out for false teachers. Obviously this has been a chronic problem for 2,000 years!

Even in those early times there were false leaders: Acts 5:36-37: False leadership arises. It never takes long for something good and pure, like Christianity, to be corrupted by greed and pride. People are drawn to that which is good and people like to take advantage of that. Jesus was concerned about his disciples and wanted to convey as much as possible regarding what would happen in their own lifetime. In this one chapter of Matthew 24, he laid out a comprehensive history of the Gospel from that time to our present day.

Matthew 24:6-8: Jesus was speaking to them in their own personal context. History shows us what happened next...(Source: Commentary from "The Peoples' Bible") The Jewish war began in A.D. 66 and ended five years after. During this period all the Roman Empire was filled with commotion. Galba overthrew Nero, the emperor six months after, Otho overthrew Galba; a few months after, Otho was overthrown by Vitellius; a little later, Vespasian overthrew him. All of these but the last who ascended the throne shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed, died violent deaths.



Matthew 24:9-10: (Source: Bible Commentator Alfred Barnes) *And shall kill you* - That is, shall kill some of you. Stephen was stoned Acts 7:59; James was killed by Herod Acts 12:2; and, in addition to all that the sacred writers have told us, the persecution under Nero took place before the destruction of Jerusalem, in which were put to death, with many others, Peter and Paul. Most of the apostles, it is believed, died by persecution. **Matthew 24:11-13:** (Source: Bible commentary by Adam Clarke) *False prophets* - Also were to be raised up; such as Simon Magus and his followers; and the false apostles complained of by St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:13, who were deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. Such also were Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Timothy 2:17, 2 Timothy 2:18.

For Jesus' followers at that time, this was a detailed answer and warning of what was to come. This horrible time of trouble Israel would endure would come soon but it would also serve as a picture of greater trouble to come much later. So there were two layers to this prophecy - an immediate fulfillment and then a picture of what would happen later on a grander scale.

The next verse helps us to see how the focus of the prophecy changes dramatically:

Matthew 24:14: (Source: Biblical commentary by C.T. Russell) *Matthew 24:14 - But witnessing to the world does not imply the conversion of the world.* The text says nothing about *how* the testimony will be received. This witness has already been given. In 1861, the reports of the Bible Societies showed that the Gospel had been published in every language of earth, though not all of earth's millions had received it. No, not one half of the sixteen hundred millions living have ever heard the name of Jesus. Yet the condition of the text is fulfilled: the gospel has been preached in the entire world for a witness—to every nation.

Back in the 1800's, there was a dramatic awakening of the preaching of the Gospel due to the invention of the printing press and thus the ability to distribute copies of the Bible. The message went out around the world in every language. This was a literal fulfillment of this prophecy.

Matthew 24:15-19: There are some critical timing features as seen by the elect (those who see - those who are faithful followers):

- Daniel prophesied about this in the context of the beginning of the "1260 days." (See *Daniel 12* and *CQ Rewind Full Edition "Why Do Historians Dislike Daniel So Much?" - November 3, 2013*)
- Daniel also spoke of the *abomination of desolation* in the context of this particular time prophecy.
- To "see it" must mean it is already there and functional. When, where and how was this established?
- "It" is *standing in the holy place* - where or what and when is that?

Remember the abomination is brought up long before Jesus tied it into the end time. That means Jesus had not yet returned at the time of the abomination.

A New Testament look: 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4: Somebody or something is self-exalted, sitting in the temple of God. What temple could that possibly be since the literal Temple in Jerusalem was already destroyed? 1 Corinthians 3:16 2 Corinthians 6:16: So, it is in the context of the development of true church that this lawless one calls himself God. The true church - the faithful individuals following after Christ - is described as the temple of God. This temple is not a physical place.

1 Timothy 4:1-3: The New Testament provides specific descriptive clues: Forbidding some to marry, demanding abstinence from foods, calling oneself God and a tool of destruction.

(Please refer to CQ Rewind Full Edition "Why Do Historians Dislike Daniel So Much?" November 3, 2013 for more on the time prophecies of Daniel.)

From the Old Testament, this self-exalted entity is developed in the context of the Roman Empire and becomes a ruthless ruler. A church-state system developed as the Holy Roman Empire ruled through the papal system as if they were God in A.D.539. This took Christianity way out of the context of what it was supposed to be. Christianity's directive was never to take over ruling the current governments.

When you (spiritual Israelites) see this corrupting of spiritual Israel during the Papal reign then what are you supposed to do? Matthew 24:16: (NASB) *then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.* (Time context - during the abomination - verified in Luke 21:20-24 - see page 8 for more) *Mountains* in Scripture symbolize governments.



Judea is a picture of Christendom and not the literal countryside. Those there are to flee to the pure source of truth: Isaiah 2:2

Matthew 24:17-18: (NASB) ¹⁷*Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house.*

Those truly most spiritual are the closest to God, metaphorically *on the housetop*. But they are not separated from the corruption. For example, Peter prayed on the housetop when given the vision to convert Cornelius. The admonition here is to leave all behind. Don't waste any time staying where it has been corrupted.

¹⁸**Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.**

In the field = One coming from the world and seeing these corruptions of Christianity.

Matthew 13:37-38: History shows just how dark and ominous the Dark Ages were.

Matthew 24:19: It is a sad circumstance to bring new babies to a form of Christianity in such a corrupted atmosphere.

Matthew 24:20: *You* - back to the *personal* direction to those separated and striving. The previous verses discussed *those*. This personal approach sets the scene for the verses to come.

Matthew 24:21-22: This begins a new time frame from A.D. 1799, when the papal reign ended, to present day. When is the *then* mentioned in Matthew 24:21? After all of the darkness of the Dark Ages. In A.D. 539, the Pope was unambiguously in control of Rome as a political appointee. Rome was no longer just a religious power but also now a political power. Skip ahead 1,260 years to A.D. 1799 when the Pope died as a prisoner of Napoleon, and Napoleon would not allow the election of a successor. Napoleon crowned himself king showing that the Pope had no authority over him. Prior to this time, the Pope and the Roman Pontiff would always have been the ones to govern the affairs of Europe. After the Napoleonic wars, the Pope was not even invited to the conclave that resolved things and as such, papal political power ended. This was a new chapter in the history of Rome. The Catholic Encyclopedia recognizes 1799 as the very lowest point of Papal fortunes in modern times.

"Time of Trouble" Scriptures: Daniel 12:1-4: The increase of transportation and of knowledge has spiked sharply since the 1800's, and even more so in the last decade! James 5:1-5: This is where we are headed right now. We are absolutely in a world where this type of trouble has never before been seen. Diseases, moral decay, terrorism, environmental destruction...the list goes on.

Still describing the post-papal era - our time now: Matthew 24:23-27: **Remember - lightning here actually means as a sunrise! False Christs and prophets are different than the Anti-Christ. False = pseudo Anti = in place of, like a counterfeit 2 Peter 2:1-3: This reminds us of how so often Christianity has been maligned, turned into a money-making machine and "ME ME ME!" instead of sacrificing our wills to Christ. It becomes idolatrous because it is about *us* instead of Jesus. It should not surprise us since this was prophesied specifically about the time in which we are living. This is how Jesus described the *end of the age* and of his presence.**

Perhaps these next verses are a recap? Matthew 24:29: What days? The days of tribulation under the iron rule of Christendom. **We need the Luke account to help make sense of this! Luke 21:20-24: This proves the necessity to watch Israel to give us clues as to the return of Jesus, the end of Israel's period of disfavor and the end of the age. Israel would be scattered as a nation until a certain period of time, called *the Times of the Gentiles*. What was proclaimed by Jesus in A.D. 33 just weeks before his crucifixion finds its end at the very time of Jesus' return! When looking for the return of Jesus, one of the things to look at is Israel, because it was said that he would be present during that time. **Here is what this period of spiritual darkness produces, even after its iron rule is diminished:** Matthew 24:29-31: This is a different kind of darkness than we experienced before these end times. The light of truth now begins to be obscured by the new "science" of evolution, which inherently removes the need for the ransom price of Jesus. (Evolution says man is continually evolving on an upward path, contrary to what the Scriptures teach.) Also, the light of the Mosaic Law now begins to be obscured by the idolatry of our modern day that essentially says, "I am my own god..." *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me!* With the increase of knowledge comes great strides forward and unfortunately backwards as well. We use knowledge to both heal and kill. The**



internet is the greatest tool mankind has ever been given, but it is one of the greatest evils. The stars are the spiritual leaders falling to their own hypocrisy and the ecclesiastical powers (organized churches) are being shaken.

Other prophecies talk about metaphorical shaking of the heavens and earth: Hebrews 12:26: Jesus returns to take back what is rightfully his from Satan. Satan was allowed to rule but time is up. There has to be a shaking when that happens. Jesus is performing a marvelous spiritual work with his return. As the Messiah at his first advent, it was a human work to be the counterpart for Adam and physically show a kingdom on earth. Because the ransom price was paid, now his work is a spiritual work where he fights against spiritual battles as he reclaims God's kingdom. **Luke's account fits in here to help verify that now is considered the great time of trouble:** Luke 21:25-26: This is not a literal storm at sea. Prophetically *restless seas* = masses of humankind. We see the world very restless right now in a way we have never seen before. Matthew 24:30-31: Remember the return of Jesus did not begin with an appearing as in the beginning of his return, he was invisible. This set of Scriptures drops in on the process, but will there be a literal trumpet in the sky? No, because all of the other descriptions were symbolic. But we know the signs of his return are being shown to us through the tribulation around us. And there is at least one other clue - the re-establishment of Israel! Luke 21:28 Matthew 24:32-35: When someone is right at your door, you are expecting company. When Jesus is *right at the door*, he has arrived! We know he is here when we see Israel being established as a nation. Luke 21:29-30: How do we know Israel is this fig tree? Hosea 9:10 Luke 13:6-9: (Source: Biblical commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) Luke 13:6-9. fig tree— Israel, as the visible witness of God in the world. Matthew 21:1-17 describes Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem where the people were crying "Hosanna!" ("Save us now!") But soon after came the cursing of the fig tree...Matthew 21:18-21: This was the actual withering of a fig tree that Jesus used as a picture of Israel rejecting him. Two chapters later, he casts off Jerusalem: Matthew 23:37-38

Let's go back to our original three questions:

1. When will these things (the desolation of Jerusalem and the Temple being destroyed) happen? He answered them in Matthew 24:4-14, but he also laid out a template for what would happen during the Dark Ages, a time when one couldn't recognize Jesus in how "Christians" behaved.
2. What will be the signs of your presence? 3. And of the end of the age? Jesus gave the history of what would happen in their lifetimes, then the history of how Christianity would be corrupted, then the end of the age and his return. He gave them more than what they asked for. The signal for the End Times began in A.D. 1799 with Napoleon taking the Pope prisoner. This is a period of time - a process. The Gospel was preached throughout all the lands. In 1861, the Bible had been translated into every known language in all corners of the earth. This is the context of Jesus returning and being here. Then the parable of the fig tree...when it begins to sprout leaves, you know that I am right at the door. In 1878, the first settlement of Jews in Israel was called Petah Tikvah, translated "the Door of Hope." That is a literal fulfillment of a prophecy in Isaiah. Jesus was pulling back favor to Israel, the favor they had lost when they rejected him at his first advent.

If Jesus has returned, why aren't we in a better place? Because the end times are a time of trouble and the wrestling back of the world from the grip of Satan. His purpose for being here is on a spiritual level, not on a physical level.

So, in the midst of all of this difficulty and unrest, let us always remember what else the prophet Daniel said: Daniel 2:44

*So, is Jesus really returning?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*