

1. Setting the Stage: The Beautiful and Glorious Herodian Temple
 - a. Basic Thrust: Type and Antitype - Jerusalem/Temple and the Coming of the Son of Man
 - i. The destruction of Jerusalem, and all the signs leading up to it are precursors, smaller scale reflections of the greater Day of Judgment/Destruction coming upon the world at the return of Jesus
 - ii. We must see this telescoping effect in the answer of Jesus, or else it gets quite confusing (not as confusing as Mark or Mathew, however, who both intertwine Jesus' answers while Luke seems to separate them out a bit for our help).
 1. Some of Jesus' answers here relate only to the destruction of the Temple in 70AD and some only relate to His glorious return at the end of this age, and some could refer to either one or even both (in small scale and ultimate senses). Hence, the difficult of this passage needs to be acknowledged.
 - b. Atmosphere: the adoration of the beauty of the Temple (v5)
 - i. The Herodian Temple was gloriously beautiful
 1. Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 BC and its contents plundered
 2. There was an altar and small temple rebuilt by Ezra and Zerubbabel after the exile, but was so much less glorious that those who saw both the original and its reconstruction wept at its loss of glory (Ezra 3:12-13, although note the promise given in Haggai 2:1-9 that God would "shake the heavens and the earth" and that the future glory would outshine its past glory)
 3. This temple was plundered and desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168BC and was cleansed and rededicated by Judah Maccabaeus three years later.
 4. It was later captured and entered by Pompey, but he did not destroy it, and it was finally looted by Crassus in 53BC.
 5. Herod then enlarged the Temple complex to such an extent that could be called an entirely new Temple, beginning in 19BC. It was not fully completed until a few years before its destruction in 70AD.
 - ii. Josephus mentions that some of the stone were 67 feet long, 7.5 feet high, and 9 feet deep.
 1. Current excavations have yielded a foundation stone that weighs 400 tons.
 2. It was no less than 60 feet high, 15 feet higher than Solomon's Temple, to the courtyard, and another 60 feet to the height of the upper chamber of the sanctuary.
 3. It was roughly a square with 1,000 foot sides surrounded by a huge buttress of a wall. Each wall had gates, two gates had bridges leading to them.
 4. Pillars lined the outer wall, each of a single block of white polished marble.
 - iii. Noble stones and "votive offerings"
 1. The votive offerings were gifts that were given by various wealthy people to beautify the Temple
 - a. Herod gave large golden vines that hung off the edges of the Temple, with grape clusters as large as a man
 2. The stones were said to be gleaming white so that when visitors appeared to be approaching a snow-capped mountain as they approached the city
 - c. The Temple was not merely the center point of Jewish religion, but also the central pillar of the nation's very existence and purpose. Thus, to say that the Temple would be torn down would be similar to saying that the Capitol Building would be torn down in defeat and destruction.

- i. There is a reason that the evil terrorists of 9/11 aimed for the buildings that they did. It was symbolic, to strike at the very heart of what they perceived the US to be. Thus, the WTC buildings were the heart of its economy, the Pentagon its military, the White House its leadership, and presumably the Capitol its rule of law. To destroy the Temple was to destroy the nation itself.

2. Introducing the Conflict: The Question of “When”

- a. The disciples are admiring the "stones and votive offerings" while Jesus was admiring the widow's faith. (see the juxtaposition here)
 - i. The disciples are still focusing on the wrong things, the temporal things, their hearts drawn to power and prestige according to this age, while Jesus is focusing on the coming age and the values befitting it.
 - ii. How do we admire the beautiful things of the world and take our eyes off of the beautiful words of Christ, particularly in admiring the simplicity and single-minded devotion of faith in the Lord?
 1. Jesus says that the widow (powerless) gave “greater than” the others, not to condemn the gifts of the wealthy, but to show that the greater honor and admiration belonged to the widow
 2. She gave out of deep faith, entrusting her well-being to the Lord, and this was “greater” – a statement of valuation, more honorable and admirable
- b. Jesus immediately "corrects" their valuation of the Temple by noting that this beautiful Temple would be destroyed in the coming days.
 - i. If the Temple is going to be a stumbling block for you, God will remove it.
- c. The disciples ask Jesus "when" these things (plural again) would occur AND "what will be the sign" that these things (plural) are about to occur.
 - i. There are two questions here: "When" and "What signs"
 - ii. However, the plural usage of "things" and the way that Jesus answers actually indicates 4 questions (Matthew clarifies this by adding to the "signs of the coming of the age":
 1. When will the destruction of the Temple occur?
 2. What sign will indicate the Temple's impending doom?
 3. When will the coming of the end of the age occur?
 4. What sign will indicate the coming of the age's impending arrival?
 - iii. We tend to ask the wrong questions when Jesus gives us insight into what is to come. We ask “When” and “What sign” while Jesus wants to deal with “Why” and “What for”.
 1. Thus, Jesus doesn't deal with the *when* questions nearly as much as he deals with the *why* and the *what for's* in this passage.
 2. He gives commands, things to do, rather than answers; He gives promises that we might endure to the end, rather than details and signs; He gives reasons that we might hope and live, rather than prospects of figuring everything out to master times and epochs.
 - a. Acts 1:6 – “Is this the time, Lord, when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” (WHEN QUESTION)
 - b. Acts 1:7 – “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.” (CORRECTION)
 - c. Acts 1:8 – “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (WHAT FOR ANSWER)

3. In the Midst of the Chaotic Unknown, Keep Your Eyes on the Knowing One
 - a. There are two imperatives in this section: See and Settle
 - i. Thus, we are to see reality for what it is, the surety of the Word of Christ which does not pass away
 - ii. We are to settle our HEARTS, rooting our affections in the promises of God for our salvation
 1. Hope roots itself in what is real and for our salvation, i.e. the promises of His mouth
 - b. "See!"
 - i. "so you are not led astray"
 1. There is a constant and fervent siren call to leave the ancient paths, to turn away from the gospel of the King, and to take some other path to deliver life
 2. This straying may be to alleviate an emotional turmoil, to salve a wounded conscience, to silence a guilty spirit, to receive a physical high or pleasure, but only leads to destruction
 - ii. "so you do not follow false saviors"
 1. There are many who reimage the Christ, claiming that the **"real Jesus" was not the divine King** who died, was raised, and who rules sovereign over all things
 - a. There are literary anti-Christ~~s~~ of the **John Dominic Crossans and Bart Ehrman's** of the world, of Brian MacLaren, and most recently of Jacobovic and Wilson
 - b. There are historical anit-christs, those who take the place of Christ in honor and power, such as the pope, the Alter Christus (Vicar of Christ) and the Pontifex Maximus (Greatest Way-Maker or Bridge Builder)
 - c. There are philosophical anti-Christ~~s~~, **the Jesus' with no judgment to come, who don't care that much about holiness, or who have no grace to give**
 2. There are impersonal saviors, those things which promise life and deliverance, and deceive us to entrusting our souls (our affections and our emotional wellness) upon them for immediate deliverance
 - a. Reputation, Comfort, Beauty, Success
 - b. These things promise that if we gain them, we have life, and if we lose them we will die
 - i. Thus we pursue them passionately because we believe that in them is true life
 - ii. When we lose them, we are devastated and plunged into the despairing of life
 - iii. "so you are not terrified"
 1. **Jesus' point in telling the disciples about the coming destruction is so that they will not be afraid when trial and suffering and loss comes near**
 2. How compassionate to warn us that suffering will come and that it is not an alteration of **God's will or God's sovereign plan, but that He is still sovereign and working behind the curtain of what we can see**
 - a. Apocalypse and the Curtain of Reality
 - c. Each of these elements to see is related
 - i. Fear leads us to leave what the Lord has said and to try and find a more immediate alleviation of suffering, discomfort, etc.
 1. Thus, when Jerusalem starts to fall, it would be terrible and horrific, and many leaders would claim to be able to save the city, but they were to follow none of them
 2. **In the same way, when trials strike us, whether from Creation's futility or from the evil hearts of men, we are not to turn to other saviors to alleviate the suffering, but**

rather we are to run to the Lord, even if fleeing the city, and fix our eyes on His ultimate triumph and our ultimate hope.

- ii. They were not to fear, for the Lord is still in control, and even this horrific destruction is His doing
 - 1. This is spoken by the man who sees the Cross before Him, the wrath of His Father poured out not merely upon a city, but all the terrors of wrath poured out upon the very core of sin for all times in all places in all ways
 - 2. **Jesus doesn't speak from a "far-off" position, but from the position that would warrant the greatest fear and the greatest desire to alleviate his suffering**
 - 3. **Yet, He is concerned for these disciples and their "lesser" suffering (in comparison)!**
- d. Jesus then warns his disciples of coming persecutions and sufferings so that they would not lose faith when they come **or be afraid at suffering's arrival** ("you will be saved by your endurance")
 - i. There will be war (nation vs. nation, etc.)
 - ii. There will be natural disasters (earthquakes, famine, plagues)
 - iii. There will be weather related terrors (terrors and great signs out of the skies)
 - iv. These are not signs of the destruction of Jerusalem, nor of the end of the age, but rather of the time in between the destructions, between the Type and the Anti-Type, **for the "end is not immediate"**
 - 1. Any preacher who tries to indicate some earthquake or particular war or weather-event is a **"sign of the return of Christ" is missing the point entirely**
 - 2. **The purpose of Jesus' words here are for our comfort, that these things are not indicators of our destruction, but of our salvation** (*not a hair of your head will perish, by your endurance you will be saved, your day of redemption is near*)
- e. **Jesus' concern is not with timing, but with tactic**
 - i. That is, He wants us to endure, to persevere, to testify to the gospel in between the times of His first advent and His second advent – to see its surety and settle our hearts
 - 1. Not matter what happens, do not be afraid and do not flee to other so-called saviors, but endure to the end, for God will prevail through the return of the Son of Man
 - 2. **Bank on it in spite of what is seen before you, for what is seen will pass away, believe in His Word, in what is still unseen, for it will not pass away**
 - ii. See and Settle on what is eternal, lasting, enduring
 - 1. We do not have a God, or doctrine of Him, or theology which describes His ways, that is merely theoretically and remote
 - 2. The destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple involved dust and fire and blood, **REAL and EXPERIENCED destruction that was to place our understanding of God's ultimate judgment upon sin and salvation from it firmly in the same categories**
 - a. Thus, the sounds and sights and smells of that city burning and those stone crumbling and those screams wailing were to fix their eyes on the eternal things, the final things, the enduring things
 - b. So they shall for us wherever we see destruction, suffering, horrors, and death
 - i. Fix your eyes on the eternal realities and hold fast to One on the Throne who is coming in Triumph (the point of the Revelation to John)
 - ii. Just as the one who endured through the fall of Jerusalem by fleeing to safety, so the one who endures in faith by fleeing to safety in Jesus will be saved (type/antitype)

4. Christians Will Suffer Before the World is Judged and They are Saved
 - a. "Before these things", however, would be antagonism and adversarial pursuit of Christians because of their union with Jesus
 - i. "Before these things" - indicates the priority of persecution before the wars and destruction mentioned above
 - b. This persecution has a flow:
 - i. They will lay their hands on you and persecute you
 1. having brought you before kings and governors (civic authorities and powers)
 2. delivering you over to synagogues and prisons (social/religious judgment and execution of)
 - ii. "They" will include our most intimate relationships
 1. Parents
 2. Siblings
 3. Friends
 4. The gospel identification with Jesus brings not merely discomfort, but hatred, disposal, and contempt by those who should love us the most
 - a. Luke 14:26 – Christ Jesus must take priority over family, pleasing Him more than pleasing our most personal relationships
 - iii. for the sake of My name (the reason for persecution)
 1. hatred because of His name
 - c. This hatred, because of identification with Jesus, will result in the execution of some Christians
 - i. Yet not even a hair of their head would perish
 - ii. How can this be?
 1. There are two types of death – temporal (first death) and eternal (second death) (see Revelation 20)
 2. So, though some believers would be executed here for their identification with Jesus, they **would not "perish" in the second death**
 - a. The **"hair of your head"** is a **phrase of personal care** from God. He is intimately near at the death of His beloved children, so that when one closes his eyes in death, he opens them to the face of Jesus.
5. Jesus instructs them that these persecutions would "get them out" for witnessing.
 - a. "opportunity" (ESV) is the word "get out of"
 - i. Luke 5:2 and John 21:9 indicating getting out of a boat
 - ii. Exodus 2:4 speaks of how Miriam watched baby Moses in the basket to see how he would "get out" of it.
 - iii. Phil 1:19 Paul speaks of his certainty that through their prayers he would "get out" of his chains
 - b. Thus, Jesus is strongly alluding to the reality that the witness and testimony of the Church would be spread through suffering and persecution, and that this was the means of "getting them out".
 - i. Persecution spreads the gospel. Period.
 1. Thus, Jesus commands them to flee the city when they see it surrounded! Get out!
 2. Yet, He says it with compassion for the pregnant mothers, thinking of the struggle and the loss of life, even in the moment of the prophesy Jesus sees the weak
 - ii. In the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple ceased to be a stumbling block to Jewish Christians (Acts 21), and the meaning of the spiritual temple of the Holy Spirit being the Church took center stage.

1. The New Jerusalem is a people, not a structure, just like the Temple is a people, not a structure.
 2. The Church is being built up, but in order for the full measure of God's elect to be brought in, the Church needed to be "released" from the Temple and synagogues through persecution.
- iii. Thus, God used the destruction of the "boat", Jerusalem and its Temple, to get Christians out to cover some land
1. It is a similar usage of the "destruction" of Eden and the Tower of Babel, so that humanity would "fill the earth" with the glory of the Lord when they would have rather simply stayed put?
- c. This testimony is not to be worrisome, but is to be in reliance upon Jesus for its power and rhetorical force
- i. The two commands in this section are "See" in verse 8 and "Settle" here in verse 14
 - ii. "Settle it in your *heart* not to prepare an answer"
 1. Interestingly, Jesus stresses the heart and not the mind here
 - a. Thus, he is not saying to be careless in our preparing of facts or evidence or data regarding the gospel (the gospel is content!)
 - b. Rather, he is saying not *to worry* about it
 - i. This is rather different
 2. We don't have to worry our hearts about answering because He gives us a promise
 - a. "I will give you a mouth and wisdom"
 - b. "They will not be able to answer you"
- d. We gain our lives by enduring in our witness
- i. This is a promise meant to encourage perseverance and endurance, both in the immediate sense of escaping Jerusalem's fate, but also in the ultimate sense of escaping the judgment of this world by clinging to the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ
 - ii. "If we hold fast our confidence to the end" (Heb 3:6,14)
 1. These are those in the rocky soil, those who spring up in the appearance of love for Christ and faith in Him, but when the heat of affliction comes, they wither away and die
 2. They are not planted in the water of the Word, nor full of the Spirit
 3. **Let us persevere, then, for God is faithful to His promise. Don't give up in the face of persecution, for He will win and not a hair of your head will perish, even if you perish.** (Heb 10:23)

The destruction of the Temple, of Jerusalem, of the nation of Israel, was a tremendous day of loss and suffering. Its precipitous fall was conditioned on the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah (Luke 19:41ff), thus His visitation was a stumbling block that led to destruction. At the same time, this fall of Jerusalem and its horrific aspects of suffering and death, were mere harbingers of the coming day of Judgment when the Son of Man returns in the clouds in glory and great power to redeem His people from His enemies and to rescue them with a sword against all who reject Him. In the meantime, Christians are to keep our eyes on that hope of His salvation, to bear witness to His glory, and to endure this world's suffering and hatred in the knowledge of His great and glorious return. Keep your eyes on the eternal things, the things that will not pass away, His Word, for He who promised is faithful and will surely bring it to pass.