

## Thursday Bible Class. The Hour that you think not...

Additional contributions to supplement Brother Ken's Introduction

11<sup>th</sup> January 2024

### - taken from Matthew 24:44

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

Jesus is recorded by Matthew as relating various parables and signs as to teach his followers what to expect at the *Coming of the Son of Man*

The essence of the verse we are looking at is saying that the coming of the son of man will be at a time when it is least expected. Rather than making his followers feel assured however, it instead causes many other questions to be asked. Is this what the Lord Jesus intended? Rather than making his disciples complacent and comfortable, would it not be better for them to remain curious, ever alert, and removing anything that could impede the growth of faith.

So what questions does this cause to be asked? Well, for me, it begs the question – What Coming of the Son of Man is Jesus referring to? Also when he says he will come at an hour when ye think not... who is the “ye”? Is it the disciples? The nations at large? Unbelievers, and those who are not watching? If Jesus is saying he will come when we least expect him, then what is the point of the signs of the times, as the build-up the signs of the times, is exactly the clues as to when we should expect him...

So, these are the questions that might be caused to be raised in our minds. To answer the first question – What coming of the son of man is Jesus referring to? Please see [Appendix Note 1](#)

This has a bearing on the subject, as the coming of Jesus described in this 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.* When lightning flashes over in the east, it can be seen in the west, it is therefore obvious and can be seen. This verse is saying then that it will be seen very

well. So in what way is it unexpected? As Appendix 1 shows, the coming of the son of man in this chapter refers to the arrival of the Roman legions and their presence on the surrounding hills around Jerusalem was very obvious. The calamity of Jerusalem was therefore not unexpected or a surprise in any way, as the Lord Jesus gave precise and exact predictions which enabled the disciples to flee to Pella.

It cannot therefore be referring to that, unless Jesus is referring to unbelievers, - the vast majority of the Jewish nation – but he was not speaking to them, he was speaking to his disciples.

It follows then that Jesus was speaking to his disciples, and that he was not referring to the end of the Jewish country, city and way of life.

Jesus speaks of his coming in other verses as well in this chapter:

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

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

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

From these it can be summarised that the day of the coming of the Lord will be preceded by signs, that Believers should Watch, and that the time will be very close. However, the exact time and day no one knows, not even the angels in heaven know – nor does even Jesus know – as a parallel gospel reveals: Mark 13:32– thus this definitely rules out the Coming of Jesus in AD70, as Jesus was the one executing judgement, and it can be argued that the time of AD70 could be deduced by the time periods in Daniel 9.

Some might suggest that Jesus is speaking of the day or hour of judgement not the year. But still, it would be pretty obvious when the time of the end was coming when the Roman legions dug trenches around, and laid siege to the city, so in whatever way it can be looked at, the judgement and impending doom of the calamity of AD70 was in no way surprising or unexpected.

It is therefore suggested that as the tone of the chapter changes, - Jesus moves on from precise signs to more general statements, and then parables in chapter 25 of wise and foolish virgins, giving of talents, sheep and goats, and visiting brothers in prison, that he has moved on in his teaching and warnings from just looking at the impending doom of Jerusalem, and is looking ahead at the time of judgement for all peoples, Jew and Gentile.

He is speaking only to the Believers - *for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*. Jesus describes himself coming quietly and unexpectedly as a thief does in verse 43. He confirms this likeness in Revelation 16:15

To the unbelievers and people who dismissed Jesus as just another weird preacher the events of AD70 were unexpected – see 2 Peter 3:10-11 and 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6. But to believers it would not be a thief like advent, they were expected to anticipate everything - *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day* (see last reference).

However, at Jesus second appearing, he will return as a thief – unexpectedly, to everyone, the ignorant as well as the responsible alike. The ignorant because they are well, ignorant, and unbelieving. The responsible also will not know when the appearing of Jesus will be – that is why Jesus warns in Revelation 16:15 to keep the garments of covering, remain in the cloaked in the righteousness of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, lest their shame be exposed. He uses words similar in Matthew 25 – warning to keep spare oil handy (readiness to provide light of gospel) and multiply talents given (build and develop the Truth in action).

That is Jesus teaches there to be a general readiness and alertness, and that this should characterise the attitude of the disciples at all times, not just at the last minute. Those who quickly adjust and get up to speed at the last minute are not the real deal, as they have had their attention elsewhere the rest of the time, and have not been devoted disciples.

Jesus expects his disciples to expect the unexpected. Being always ready to adapt, react to changing circumstances, be alert to the dangers of sin, and

give an answer when questioned of the hope that lies within, is exactly the type of person Jesus wants his followers to be all of the time. Therefore, there is no need at all, to pre-warn disciples of the exact time of his coming. Unlike the siege of Jerusalem, they won't have to flee to any mountains and escape for their lives. Instead, they will be taken by agents of Jesus to the judgement, and that could take place unexpectedly. In fact, that time could be hastened through sudden death. Death, will lay the disciple to sleep in the dust of the ground, to awake to resurrection and then judgement, and no man knows when death will come.

To summarise.

It is suggested that this verse 44 is referring to the second appearing of Jesus, despite the fact it is in close context with Jesus talking about his Coming in AD70.

### Appendix Note 1

#### What coming of the son of man is Jesus referring to?



The context and Jesus own words give the first obvious answer: Verse 1,2: *And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, Do you not see all these things? I tell you the truth, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* The temple was a massive edifice, with many of the stones weighing over a ton, so

whatever would cause these stones to all topple down would have to be a huge catastrophe. The disciples asked when would this

event happen. *what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?*

The Greek word for world is *aion*, which means age epoch or time period. They recognised that if the temple was destroyed and came tumbling down, then it would be impossible to keep the law of Moses, and it would be the end of the institution of the Mosaic era. However, the disciples didn't just ask when Jesus was saying that the stones of the temple would be thrown down, and the end of the age, but also they asked "what shall be the sign of your coming?"

They were confused. Jesus said he was going to go away, and come again. He said he was going to go somewhere they could not go. They did not yet fully understand that he was going to be crucified and rise again, and ascend to heaven, even though Jesus had plainly told them. They were convinced that he would in fact receive power from God, and restore again the Kingdom to Israel – this gave rise to their question, linking in their minds the destruction of the temple with Jesus Coming again.



Jesus had made it clear to them he would come again. See Matthew 16:27-28, 25:31. He also had told them that Jerusalem would suffer terrible consequences. Luke 19:42-44, Matthew 23:34-37, Luke 23:28 -30

Although this devastation would be carried out by the Roman armies, it would be a judgement exacted by God upon the nation. As all power would be given to Jesus, see 1 Peter 3:22, it would be one of his first tasks to oversee its destruction, he would in that sense visit Jerusalem in vengeance, and can be understood as a Coming of the Son of Man, although not his Appearing. He describes the destruction of Jerusalem as their *visitation* – see Luke 19:44.

Right the way through Chapter 24, Jesus is talking to his disciples and he is careful how he answers them, so as not to add to their confusion but gives answers which applied to them, but also to a later generation who would live in the days of his second Appearing, which would be so far in the future, that those standing in front of him, would be perplexed.

So Jesus presented his answer to the disciples in a way that it would have two forms of fulfilment. One in their day – and one in the latter day.

We will call these Primary and Secondary Fulfilments.

### Primary Fulfilment

5,11,23,24: - *False deceivers* – began to be fulfilled in that day – see Acts 5:36,37 8:9,10, 13:5-12, and many more. John of Gischala, Simon Bar Giora, Yohanan ben Zakkai and Eleazar ben Simon were all self-appointed leaders in the days leading up to the fall of Jerusalem all of who were deceivers and false messiahs, none of whom called for repentance or reformation as Jesua and John the Baptist did.

6 & 7: - *wars and rumours of wars, nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...* in this period AD 30 -70, seven Roman emperors came and went, most were assassinated – there were four emperors in one year, causing huge instability in the empire. Caligula begins campaign against Germany. Claudius begins the conquest of Britian, but Queen Boudicca revolts, and then the Parthians revolt against Rome. So also revolts blazed in Gaul, Spain, and Africa as well as among the Praetorian Guard in Rome.

7: ... *famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes*, the first major famine was in Rome in the years 41 and 42 A.D. The second famine 45 A.D. in 4<sup>th</sup> year of Claudius was focused in Judea and referred to by Luke in Acts 11:27-28. The third famine was centred in Greece in about A.D. 50. The fourth was in 52 A.D. and plagued the city of Rome. There were many diseases – Suetonius records 30,000 dying in Rome alone from the plague.

Earthquakes – when Jesus was crucified, and also at his resurrection. Acts 16:26 records another, a massive earthquake hit Pompeii in AD62. Tacitus

said there were repeated earthquakes in AD51. Josephus said that earthquakes were a common calamity.

9:- disciples.. *afflicted, and shall kill you...* Stephen was martyred Acts 7:59, Apostle James killed by Herod Acts 12, Saul later named Paul was responsible for the persecution of many -see Galatians 1:20. See also Revelation 2:10,13. In AD 64, there was the great fire of Rome, which caused Nero to persecute Christians

10:- *many be offended, and shall betray one another, ...* receiving a terrible fulfilment in the faction-fights of the Zealots and Sicarii at Jerusalem (Jos. Wars, iv. 3)

14: gospel be preached in all the world -*oikoumene* – the Roman Empire (Strong's) fulfilled as per Colossians 1:23, Romans 16:25-26.

*The end shall come...* fulfilled by the four Roman legions completely destroying Judea and Jerusalem.

15:- *the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet*, he Emperor Nero planned to put his statue in the Holy of Holies of the Temple but died before the plan could be initiated. Roman General Titus set up Roman standards, which depicted Roman deities, in the Temple in AD 70.

16-20:- warnings to those who trust and believe the words of Jesus to make sure they leave well before all this happens, and flee to the Judean mountains. Fulfilled: *The people of the Church in Jerusalem were commanded by an oracle given by revelation before the war to those in the city who were worthy of it to depart and dwell in one of the cities of Perea which they called Pella. To it those who believed on Christ travelled from Jerusalem, ...*(— Eusebius, approx. 400AD)

21:- *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world -kosmos* arrangement of things – that is the Mosaic order of things *to this time, no, nor ever shall be*. No because that *kosmos* would not be restored.

27 *For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even to the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* It would not be hidden but an obvious display of power...

28 *For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.* An obvious allusion to the eagle standards of the Roman legions circling around the corpse of the Judean province.

29 ...sun darkened, moon not give her light, and the stars fall from heaven, powers of heavens shaken: *all positions of authority within every level of Jewish society, dismantled.*



30:- *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: that is the destruction of Jerusalem* – which Jesus told the rulers of Jerusalem about in Mark 14:62 *and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn* referring to the scattered Jews who too late would realise they have been deceived by their leaders, and refused to listen the Son of God and so would be distressed because of the judgments upon them... *and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* The clouds refer to the Roman armies (see for comparison Jeremiah 4:13) directed and brought by God, revealing the resurrected glory of Christ Jesus, as all power being given to him.

31:- *And he shall send his angels* – human messengers, - the Apostles, and subsequent teachers such as Timothy, Titus etc *with a great sound of a trumpet*, - the certain sound of the gospel *and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other*, the turning to , and calling of the Gentiles, this the beginning of the age of the Gentiles.

Secondary Fulfilment. This is but a shadow of the primary, and merely shows a pattern of what will take place before the Lord Jesus' Appearing. Without going back through verse by verse, many of the signs preceding the end of the Mosaic age, will also broadly precede the end of the Gentile

age, as we have recently identified by our studies of Ezekiel 36 – 38. Reading through to Matthew 25, the parables there clearly relate to the second advent of Jesus, his return, and the judgement, so we can see that that the Lord had this in mind as he spoke to his disciples.

Brother Terry

to be saved.

The ways of the Lord are equal.

The mercy of God endureth for ever.

Mercy rejoices over judgement.

Brother Terry