

9

“No Man Knows The Day Nor the Hour”

The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is the heart of New Testament prophecy. Someone has said that it is The Little Apocalypse. In this one chapter Jesus summed up for His disciples the things leading up to and ending with the *parousia* / coming of the Son of man. He told them that the end of the age would come within that generation, that the gospel would be preached in all the world, that the abomination of desolation would be present in the holy place, that a great tribulation would be upon the people, but that His disciples would be spared, and that the end would come with the destruction of the Temple and the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of Heaven.

In eight sections preceding this one, we have tried to cover these things in detail, considering every verse in Matthew 24 up to this point. We now come to the ninth and last section of the commentary itself upon this chapter. We arrive now at verse 36, which some say is a transition verse where Jesus leaves off speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem and begins talking about a future (to us) second coming of Christ.

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

But is this such a “transition” verse, as some would describe it? Is this a point in the chapter where Jesus no longer is talking about the subject which has been being discussed, but now He is dealing with an entirely new subject—that of another coming of the Son of man than the one He has already told them about? In other words, is He now telling them of something additional that will happen (which would be in our future), and He concludes saying anything else about what would happen during that generation?

The answer to this question determines what kind of eschatology we are going to have. The answer determines much of what we would believe about the second coming of Christ. So what is the answer to this question? Is verse 36 a “transition” verse or not?

The answer is a strong, emphatic NO! This is not a transition verse! Jesus does not conclude talking about anything here. He is still talking about the same event which He has been talking about all along. Most of this section is written to prove just that, and to show that it could not be otherwise.

“All These Things” / “Thy Coming”

In Mark 13:32 is a parallel passage to this verse, and the words are almost identical: “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father,” This passage said that even Jesus Himself did not know the exact day nor the hour of that event.

What was Jesus talking about in this verse? Mark records the question of the disciples this way:

“Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the SIGN when ALL THESE THINGS shall be fulfilled?”

(Mark 13:4).

Whereas Matthew 24:3 asked about the “sign of thy coming,” Mark 13:4 asked about the “sign when all these things shall be fulfilled.” SAME THING! Those things asked about included the coming of Christ in judgment on Jerusalem. And the disciples in their question in Mark 13:4 never mentioned the coming of Christ, but yet Jesus said in verse 32 that no man knew the day nor the hour when those events would take place. These verses are parallel (Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32) and refer to the same identical thing—the events of the destruction of Jerusalem as took place in A.D. 70 when Christ came in judgment there.

Disciples to Flee “In that Day”

Not only so, but notice that Luke 17:31 refers to “that day.” But read the rest of the verse to see what Jesus was referring to. He said, “In THAT DAY, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away”—clearly referring to the haste the disciples would be in to leave Jerusalem in A.D. 67. The time is the same as in Matthew 24:17, much prior to the verse we are discussing at verse 36.

***"That day" of Matthew 24:36
is the same "that day" as in Luke 17:31***

Jesus was not introducing a new subject in Matthew 24:36 when He said, "But of THAT DAY." The word "that" has to refer to something which precedes it, and in this instance it would have to refer to the time mentioned in the previous verses.

One cannot make "that day" of Luke 17:31 refer to a past event (to us), and "that day" of Matthew 24:36 refer to a future event (to us).

No Transition Verse

This is not a transition verse, suddenly shifting without any introduction to some other event which would not take place until 2,000 years or so later! Jesus was telling His disciples that no one knew when Jerusalem would be destroyed—that the matter was in God's knowledge only. They could only know that, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (24:34).

Read all of the parallel passages in Matthew 24:1–42, Mark 13:1–33, Luke 17:20–37, and Luke 21:5–36, and see if by any stretch of the imagination one can see Jesus talking about two different events in His teachings in these passages.

Now some might teach that when the writings of Matthew, Mark and Luke were all put together, it was not understood nor remembered exactly which things Jesus mentioned first, and that maybe the passage got mixed up and we don't actually know what Jesus meant from what we read here, and that it just appears that He was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem when He had actually talked also about a future second coming hundreds and hundreds of years later. Well, if you want to believe that is the way of it, go right ahead; but I personally prefer to just simply accept these passages as we have them in our Bible. I may be ignorant of some things, but I don't want to become more ignorant than I already am (which I would if I were to try messing around with changing these verses so they will say what I THINK Jesus MEANT to say!). Let the textual critics decide how they think it all ought to read, but I am not that smart so will stick with it as it reads in our Bible.

We have been accustomed to thinking that this verse relates to our not having knowledge of the time of a future (to us) second coming of Christ. But this relates to the time of the events surrounding the destruction of

Jerusalem and the Temple, plus the coming of Christ, for this is what Jesus had been talking about. The parallel passage in Mark 13:32 adds the words, "neither the Son," indicating that even He Himself, while He was on earth in human form, did not have certain knowledge about some things; and in this case He said that He did not know the exact time of the fulfillment of this matter, except that it would all occur within that generation, during the lifetime of some of those who were still living at that time.

Jesus, as a man, did not possess all the attributes of omniscience. Luke 2:52 says that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." If Jesus had to develop like any other man, then it is understandable that He did not know the day nor the hour when these events would take place. We assume that at age thirty he was still growing, and was therefore limited as to any omniscient knowledge at that time. But He was aware, with things shaping up like they were, that it would all be in that generation.

The reason that some expositors (as, for example, Marcellus Kik in *An Eschatology of Victory*, page 67) say that here the subject changes to that of a second coming of Christ in our future, is because of their interpretation that the second coming of Christ (in our future) is found in this chapter, and they have to find a transition verse somewhere. To them, this is the most logical verse. (As will be pointed out later, still others have used other verses as a transition point, and there has been much disagreement on this.)

It has been said that by the use of that word "But" in verse 36, Jesus changed the subject to something else. But the word "but" is a connecting word, and is just like the word "but" found in verses 43 and 48. The subject is not changed in verses 43 and 48, so why should it be changed in verse 36?

When Jesus said, "But of THAT DAY," to what day did He refer as not being known? To what had He just referred? He had just said, "So likewise YE, when YE shall see all these things, know that IT is near, even at the doors" (Matthew 24:33). To what does "IT" of verse 33 refer? He had just told them in the previous verse that when the branch puts forth the new leaves, SUMMER is nigh. To what does "summer" refer? What was He illustrating here by the approach of summer? He had just concluded His statements regarding the events to IMMEDIATELY follow the tribulation; and so when "ALL these things" (24:33) are accomplished, then "summer is nigh." This was the "end of the age" and the dawning of a new age (the

kingdom of God) for Christians; and that generation would not pass until ALL those things were fulfilled (24:34).

All of this subject matter is connected and cannot be separated into two events a couple of thousand or more years apart, as many people do.

"Those Days" and "That Day"

It has been proposed that prior to verse 36 the plural word "days" is used (24:22, 29), which refers to the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem, and that in verse 36 Jesus shifts gears and starts talking about "that day" (singular) which (they say) refers only to a future second coming of Christ. But does that argument hold up when compared to other passages Jesus gave? No, it does not! Look at Luke 17:31, for example, where Jesus said, "IN THAT DAY, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away..." Here we find Jesus using the singular expression ("that day") which, as anyone can plainly see, is referring to the same situation as in Matthew 24:17 ("Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house"), which indicates to us very clearly that the singular expression "that day" refers to events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem and not to some future event thousands of years later. So when Jesus uses the expression, "But of that day," in verse 36, He is still referring to the same subject He has been talking about all along. It is only logical that the word "that" refers to the "it" or "he" of verse 33, which in turn could apply only to the event of verse 30. It is not logical that the word "that" would refer to something entirely new and different than He had been talking about, as He had not introduced any new subject matter at all. There is no "transition" verse here. Of course, Scofield's notes (see heading over Luke 17:22) say that Jesus was foretelling His future second coming in the balance of that chapter, but this cannot be for the simple reason just given.

"That day" is the culmination of "those days."

"This Generation," but Not the Day Nor the Hour

Then some say with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem that Jesus said, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34), but that concerning a future second coming of Christ He said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). The time of one event could be known ("this generation") but the day or hour of the other event could not be known

("knoweth no man, etc."), they say. But this is a flimsy argument in attempting to separate one situation into two separate events. A thing can be understood to occur within a generation (forty years or so) but still not be understood to occur at some known "day and hour." The disciples could know the generation, but not the day and the hour.

An illustration of this might be the gestation period and birth of a baby. Everybody knows the baby will be born in approximately nine months or so, but nobody knows the day nor the hour. That is exactly the way it was with what Jesus was talking about. In fact, He somewhat used that illustration himself when He said, in verse 8, "All these are the beginning of sorrows (birth pangs)."

On Mark 13:32 John Lightfoot (1859) said:

Of what day and hour? That the discourse is of the day of the destruction of Jerusalem is so evident, both by the disciples' question, and by the whole thread of Christ's discourse, that it is a wonder any should understand these words of the day and hour of the last judgment (John Lightfoot, vol. 2, 442).

Dr. John Gill said:

Ver. 36. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, etc. Which is to be understood, not of the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the last judgment; but of the coming of the Son of man, to take vengeance on the Jews, and of their destruction; for the words manifestly regard the date of the several things going before, which can only be applied to that catastrophe and dreadful desolation: now, though the destruction itself was spoken of by Moses and the prophets, was foretold by Christ, and the believing Jews had some discerning of its near approach; see Heb. x.25, yet the exact and precise time was not known... (John Gill, on Matthew 24:36, 1809 ed., vol. 2, 241).

N. Nisbett said:

But though the time was hastening on for the completion of our Lord's prophecy of the ruin of the Jews; yet the exact time of this judgment, laid hid in the bosom of the Father.

Verse 36. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." St. Mark has it: "Neither the Son, but the Father," but the sense is the same. Some men of great learning and eminence have thought that our Lord is here speaking, not of the destruction of Jerusalem, but of that more solemn and awful one of the day of judgment. But I can by no means think that the Evangelists are such loose, inaccurate writers, as to make so sudden and abrupt a transition, as they are here supposed to do; much less to break through the fundamental rules of good writing, by apparently referring to something which they had said before; when in reality they were beginning a new subject, and the absurdity of the supposition will appear more strongly, if it is recollected that the question of the disciples was, "When shall these things be?" "Why," says our Saviour, "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (N. Nisbett, 38-39).

His mind and spirit, so acutely sensitive to spiritual things and the way of God's dealings with man, Jesus could sense, He could feel, He could understand, that the things He was talking about would surely come to pass as an inevitable consequence of Israel's unbelief and rejection of spiritual values. He read the signs of the time accurately and perfectly. But He had no way of knowing the exact time of many things, such as the resurrection of the dead (both saved and lost), the final judgment of the world, the ultimate destruction of Satan, etc. Those things are left for the future to unfold in God's own due time. In like manner, He did not know the exact timing of the destruction of Jerusalem, though He could and did predict all the things which He mentioned in Matthew 24 as to occur within that generation. He emphasized this again in verse 44, and then again in verse 13 of the next chapter.

But of great importance in proving that there is no "transition" verse at verse 36, simply notice that the expression "the coming of the Son of man" in verses 37 and 39 (AFTER the so-called "transition" verse) is the same as the expression "the coming of the Son of man" in verse 27 and in verse 30 (BEFORE the "transition" verse). So there can be no transition at verse 36. The same subject is discussed on both sides of that verse.

More on "That Day"

Let me go over this matter again, as a clear understanding of this is absolutely necessary if Matthew 24 is to be fully understood. Some put the stress on the words, "that day," as though "that day" is something different than what has gone before. More precisely, they believe that "that day" refers to a future final return of Christ (future to us) rather than to the time of and the events of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70. But let us look further to see if this is so.

In Luke 17, verses 26–29, Jesus mentioned the days of Noah and the days of Lot, and likened the coming of Christ to the destruction that took place in those days. He said, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (24:30). Now the same reference to Noah is found in Matthew 24:37–39, which (note carefully) is AFTER the supposed transition verse 36, and so, according to that view, would apply to a future final return of Christ. But go back to Luke 17 now, and see that AFTER mention of Noah and Lot, it says "IN THAT DAY, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away" (24:31). These are the SAME instructions given by Jesus in Matthew 24:17–21 BEFORE THE SUPPOSED TRANSITION VERSE which related to the disciples fleeing from Judea in A.D. 67—not at a coming of Christ in our future.

Those who believe in a transition verse at verse 36 are up against a hard place on this, because the references to Noah and Lot are incorporated into the teachings of Jesus both before and after the supposed transition verse. The plain matter of fact is that if this teaching of Jesus regarding Noah and Lot referred to what happened at Jerusalem in the first century in what He had to say in the book of Luke, then it is only evident that it would refer to the same thing in verse 36 of Matthew 24, and this follows the supposed "transition" verse. So there is no transition verse. Only by manipulating Scriptures, or else by giving two utterly different meanings to the same illustrations of Jesus, can the "transition" verse theory hold up.

So we cannot have it both ways. The reference to "the days of Noah" in Matthew 24:37 has to refer to the events of A.D. 67–70 and not to any future final coming of Christ, because in Luke the same reference and illustration is given in connection with verse 31 about the disciples not coming down from the housetop (which in Matthew 24 certainly is up in the first section BEFORE the supposed transition verse).

The verdict? There is no transition verse. The whole passage relates to the same thing—not to two different comings of Christ. Read it carefully and make sure! Compare the two passages very closely. Why have interpreters not seen this? Or is there some explanation for this of which I am not aware?

Please note how certain verses compare with other verses in these two gospel accounts—verses from Matthew 24 which are both BEFORE and AFTER the so-called transition point. Rather than quoting, let me just give the references, and please do look them up!

Compare Matthew 24:17–18 with Luke 17:31.

Compare Matthew 24:26–27 with Luke 17:23–24.

Compare Matthew 24:28 with Luke 17:37.

Compare Matthew 24:37–39 with Luke 17:26–27.

Compare Matthew 24:40–41 with Luke 17:35–36.

Luke put all these five events into one time frame, and it is generally acknowledged that this is true. But if Luke did not separate this section in his gospel into two sections, then neither was it to be done with Matthew 24. Please spend a few moments studying these passages together and see if your honest mind will not cause you to agree that Matthew 24 also is all in one time frame as well. This means, of course, that the "that day" of verse 36 is of the same time frame as "in those days" of verses 22 and 29.

As for those who break Matthew 24 into two sections of different time frames, let them try dividing up Luke 17 and Luke 24 the same way! It just doesn't work! We cannot wiggle out of the obvious truth of this matter simply because we might want to find a future (to us) second coming of Christ in this passage. The "THAT DAY" of Matthew 24:36 is the same time frame as the "THAT DAY" of Luke 17:31.

There is no transition verse in Matthew 24. The whole passage refers to the same events in the same time frame—"This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (24:34).

Anyway, why would Jesus be telling His disciples about TWO comings of Christ in the same discourse, when they had only asked him about ONE? That would have been rather confusing to them, to say the least! (Just as a number of interpreters are confused about it all when they try to insert two comings of Christ into the passage instead of just the one which Jesus is describing.)

So, then, this expression about no man knowing the day nor the hour is not an expression that was meant for us to use today to signify that nobody

can know when Jesus is going to return in our future. This expression definitely was in connection with no one knowing the day nor the hour when the Son of man would come and judgment would fall upon Israel back in the first century. It sounds good for people to use it, for that signifies that no one can accurately be a date setter for some future coming of Christ. But this is not what was meant. It meant that the time of the destruction of Jerusalem was not known—the time of the *parousia*/coming of Jesus.

Rather than face this obvious fact, so many Bible teachers attempt to divide Matthew 24 into two different sections—the first dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem, and the second dealing with a final coming of Christ in our future. They indicate that there is a transition point in the chapter where it no longer discusses the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather it begins discussing a future (to us) second coming of Christ. They have to find a “stopping point” for the first section in order to do this, and a point where the discussion changes from one subject to another. While we have discussed mainly verse 36 being this focal point used by so many, this is not the only point that is used by some.

As Dr. Milton Terry said:

When, however, the one school of interpreters attempt to point out the dividing line, there are as many differences of opinion as there are interpreters. In Matt. xxiv and xxv, for example, the transition from the one subject to the other is placed by Bengel and others at xxiv, 29; by E. J. Meyer at verse 35; by Doddridge at verse 36; by Kuinoel at verse 33; by Eichorn at xxv, 14, and by Wetstein at xxv, 31 (Terry, *Biblical Apocalypitics*, 217).

Dr. B. H. Carroll used verse 29 as the starting point of a new subject. He said, “...for everything in the prophecy from the previous line drawn just under Matthew 24:28 relates to the final event. The destruction stops squarely with Matthew 24:28 and Luke 21:24” (B. H. Carroll, vol. 2, 262).

There were those a hundred years ago who made the transition verse much earlier in the chapter than these others to whom we have referred. Ezra Gould said, “Those who divide the prophecy into two parts, one referring to the destruction of Jerusaïem, and the other to the end of the world, make the division at v. 20” (Gould, 249).

The necessity for these men to find a transition verse in this chapter, of course, is because each one of them is assuming that a future (to us) second

coming of Christ is also taught in that chapter, rather than the entire chapter's dealing with only the time frame of the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem.

To illustrate, here is an example of J. Marcellus Kik, who along with Doddridge, as mentioned above, chose verse 36 as the transition verse. He said:

Now with verse 36 Christ commences a new subject, namely, his second coming and the events preceding it. This verse may be termed the "transition" text of the chapter (Kik, 67).

On page 69 of the same book Kik said:

It is thus obvious that in Matthew 24:36 Christ passes from the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem to the subject of His Second Coming. It is a transition verse. It is a transition from the judgment against the Jewish nation to the subject of His coming to judge the world. He could give a definite indication of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, "but of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." As Spurgeon states in his commentary on this verse: "There is a manifest change in our Lord's words here, which clearly indicates that they refer to His last great coming to judgment."

R. T. France, whom I quoted under verse 29, also says that at verse 36 the emphasis changes.

If these passages (from verse 36 on) had been given on some other occasion, or even if Jesus had indicated that He was NOW referring to a different event, we could feel that He was talking about two different things. But He did not do this. And the way Matthew places the verses does not indicate two different things, which indicates that Matthew himself understood Jesus to be referring to the same time frame.

There being no consensus of opinion on this, it might be proper to analyze why it is thought so necessary to have a transition verse anywhere at all. It is only because it is felt that the last of the chapter simply cannot refer to the same event as the events in the first part of the chapter. There would not be all this difference of opinion if all would agree that Jesus was

speaking of the same event in both parts of the chapter. Why would He not be, except for our own preconceived notions about the matter?

But how can what these authors say be true, when the same expressions are found in both sections of Matthew 24? If the same expressions are found in both sections of the chapter, so close together like this, they evidently speak of the same thing. For example, verse 27 mentions “the coming of the Son of man.” Verse 30 mentions “the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.” Then in verse 37, after the so-called transition point it mentions “the coming of the Son of man.” Likewise, in verse 39 it mentions “the coming of the Son of man.” Then in verse 44, “the Son of man cometh.”

Are there two *parousia* comings—one before verse 36; and another after verse 36 (or whatever transition verse is used)? Doesn’t it stand to reason that if these same phrases, mentioning the same identical thing, are found in both sections, where it is said that the destruction of Jerusalem is referred to in one, and the coming of Christ in the other, then they are all referring to the same identical time frame? Would Jesus have used the same identical expression IN SO MANY PLACES in this same chapter to refer to two different things? Don’t we suppose that He would have known this would get us all confused if He had done that?

With so many variations as to the interpretation of where one subject ends and the other begins, it is no wonder that Dr. John A. Broadus said, “Every attempt to assign a definite point between the two topics has proved a failure” (Broadus, 480). No Bible scholar has yet been able to reconcile the passages which they felt told of two different events, at least not to any satisfactory degree. The statement of J. Stuart Russell is worthy of note when he said, “There is not a scintilla of evidence that the apostles and primitive Christians had any suspicion of a twofold reference in the predictions of Jesus concerning the end” (J. Stuart Russell, 545).

William Barclay also believed that verses 36—41 referred to a future (to us) second coming of Christ, but he had other thoughts about verses 30–35. After discussing the other possibilities as to an understanding of Matthew 24:32–35, he said:

But there is a third possibility. What if their reference is, in fact, to the prophecy with which the chapter began, the siege and fall of Jerusalem? If we accept that, there is no difficulty. What Jesus is saying is that these grim warnings of his regarding the doom of Jerusalem will be fulfilled within that very generation—and they were, in fact, fulfilled

forty years later. It seems by the best course to take 32–35 as referring, not to the Second Coming, but to the doom of Jerusalem, for then all the difficulties in them are removed (William Barclay, 315).

So what William Barclay is saying is that if these verses are accepted as applying to past events—that is, to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the difficulties of interpretation vanish. This is true. But then, why did Barclay not just go on and include verses 36–41 in that same kind of interpretation, and help to eliminate the difficulty folks have with the rest of that passage? You cannot separate these passages from each other. If one event happened in that generation, so did any others. Jesus said “all these things” would happen in that generation, and I believe He meant exactly that.

Some say that “signs” were given which point to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, but that no sign was given concerning the coming of Christ. That is simply not true, for everything and very sign pointing forward to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple ALSO pointed forward to the coming of the Son of man. It was all to be in that generation, though no one could know the day nor the hour. He did not give a day nor an hour concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple either.

I strongly insist that if you really want to see the truth of the matter, that you read the several parallel passages relating to this—in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17 and Luke 21—all at the same reading. You cannot escape seeing that the events relating to the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming (*parousia*) of Christ, were all involved in the same time frame. Language does not allow for the separation of these events into two periods separated by a couple of thousands off years or so. What applies to one, applies to the other, as is seen when analyzing all four of these passages.

It seems to me that those of us who believe the Bible had better get back to accepting what it says, instead of rationalizing about the matter and trying to make it mean what it does not say. Only with previously held concepts on this matter could it ever be thought that Jesus was talking about two different things at least 2,000 years apart! The passage itself would not lead anyone to believe that two comings of Christ are taught in this chapter.

Perhaps it is because of this obvious problem of trying to divide this chapter UP into two time frames, that the dispensationalist futurists have

simply said the WHOLE of this chapter 24 of Matthew deals with our future and not to anything in the first century. Therefore, they say, there will have to be a future preaching of the gospel to all the world, a future abomination of desolation, a future Temple, a future great tribulation period, etc., so that there can be a future *parousia*/coming of the Son of man. All because they do not want to acknowledge that there was a *parousia*/coming of Christ in A.D. 70.

I know that for many years I did not see this. Back as far as forty years ago I saw that Matthew 24 told about an awful time that would come to Israel in that first century generation. I had the commentaries of Albert Barnes in my library which helped me to see that. But I made the "great tribulation" of verse 21 extend through many centuries so that AFTER the great tribulation Christ could come. Honest study finally caused me to understand that verse 29 would not allow that, for it said, "IMMEDIATELY" after that tribulation Christ would come. The writer was talking about something that would happen immediately after the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 67-70. This convinced me that Jesus was saying that His "*parousia*"/coming would be in connection with the events of those days in the first century. From there, it did not take much more study of this chapter for me to finally realize that the entire chapter (24) of Matthew dealt with the great tribulation and coming of Christ, which all took place in the first century. So the point we are brought to is a firm belief that the commentaries and authors are wrong if they try to split this chapter up and make one part tell about the events of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the other part to tell about a second coming of Christ in our future. Some of them, to get around this problem (as they see it), simply say that Jesus was talking about two different "comings" in that chapter. This is rationalization as well as bad hermeneutics and bad exegesis of the Bible. The *parousia*/coming of Christ as mentioned in verses 3, 27, 30, 37, 39, etc., is the ONLY coming of Christ in that entire chapter.

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

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,

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

*Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the
other left.*

*Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be
taken, and the other left.*

*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth
come (Matthew 24:37–42).*

In these six verses Jesus is still talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and his *parousia*/coming as the Son of man. Twice here He uses the expression "the coming of the Son of man," and then the expression, "your Lord doth come."

In these verses Jesus is saying that the coming events in Israel, including His coming as the Son of man, would be like the time when I the flood came and TOOK THEM ALL AWAY. As the flood came and took them all away, so the judgments on Israel will take them all away. The unbelieving and Christ-rejecting Jews in the land of Israel would be taken away in judgment.

Jesus emphasized that just like in the days of Noah when they were eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage, with no sense of apprehension of the coming flood, so also would it be in those days prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Paul reminded his readers in 1 Corinthians 7:29:

*But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that
both they that have wives be as though they had none.*

Paul knew that in the face of approaching disaster and all the things related to it, marriage should be a matter of secondary importance. Paul spoke of "the present distress" (1 Cor. 7:26). But Jesus said that even with the approaching events of His generation, people would still be marrying and carrying on as though nothing would ever happen. Some think that they can find a future (to us) Rapture in this passage of Scripture, where two shall be in the field and one shall be taken and the other left," and two shall be grinding at the mill, and one shall be taken and the other left. They think that being "taken" means that they will be "caught up" in a Rapture at a

future second coming of Christ. But this is not talking about that. It is talking about people being "taken" in judgment—not to Heaven.

Jesus' words in Luke 17 likewise liken the destruction of Jerusalem and Judea in A.D. 67–70 to Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus said:

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

But the same day that lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:28–30).

Just like Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven, so Jerusalem would be destroyed by the fires of God's vengeance acting through the Roman armies which would come into that land.

Just as Lot was saved from the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah by escaping outside the cities, so the early Christians escaped the tribulation that fell upon Jerusalem and Judea by escaping outside the city and land over to Pella, where they were preserved from the wrath of God that soon fell upon the land.

In this passage, it mentions the Son of man being "revealed." In Matthew 24 it mentions "the coming of the Son of man." Both of these expressions refer to the same thing. His *parousia*/coming was His *apokalupto*/revelation.

In Luke 17:32 we also find the expression, "Remember Lot's wife," I dare say you do not hear many sermons on this verse as a text, because most preachers do not get the picture that Jesus is presenting here. Jesus is reminding his hearers of how Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she hesitated and looked back upon the city. He was suggesting to them that this could be the fate of any who did not hurry and get out of Judea and Jerusalem when the Roman armies showed up—how theirs could be a similar fate by being caught in the situation at Jerusalem, etc., if they did not heed His words and get out of the city immediately when they saw the Roman armies surrounding the city. While not experiencing fire and brimstone, they could be slaughtered during those horrible days of tribulation there.

We need to be reminded again here, that in Luke 17:31 Jesus said, "In THAT DAY, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back," Those who seek to find a transition verse in Matthew 24:36 because Jesus used the expression "that day" rather than "those days" (to signify a change in what was being discussed), need to be reminded that here Jesus is using that same expression "THAT DAY" which relates to the time of danger from which the disciples were to flee, and which time in Matthew 24 is described in verses 17–18 in a passage far before a so-called transition "THAT DAY" is found in verse 36.

Then Jesus tells them to watch for they do not know the hour their Lord will come. They cannot know the day nor the hour, but they knew it would be in that generation.

Would it have made sense for Jesus to urge His disciples to "watch" for something that was not to take place for another 2,000 years or so?

But know this, that if the good man 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.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such as an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matthew 24:43–44).

Here Jesus repeats His same admonition for His disciples to be on the watch and be ready for His coming in judgment upon that wicked city of Jerusalem. Israel's house was ready to be broken up. Christians who escaped from the city and land would not be affected by the awful things that would happen there.

Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians 5:2–3:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

But Christians were to be watching and ready. They were not to be caught up in that judgment that was to come. Paul said further in the passage just mentioned:

And 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: we are not of the night, nor of darkness (1 Thessalonians 5:4–5).

Then in the next few and last verses of Matthew chapter 24, Jesus describes the contrast between His waiting people who would be ready for Him, and the wicked ones who would not be prepared for that day. He said:

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

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. "But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

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,

And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:45–51).

The lord would come in a day and an hour of which the evil servant would not be aware. The wicked servant would not be prepared nor watching for that time. Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

No one would know the day nor the hour, but they could be ready and watching. These words were given by Jesus to His disciples to encourage them to do just that. These last few verses especially stress the kind of lifestyle that could develop on the part of those who were not looking for the lord to come. The statement of the wicked servant that "My lord delayeth his coming" (24:48) reminds us of what Peter said would be said in those

last days by the scoffers: "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Peter 3:4). But the promise was sure, and that day would come. It did come, in awful judgment upon a wicked and perverse generation.

Commenting on 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Adam Clarke (1831) in his commentary, said:

For God hath not appointed us to wrath. So then it appears that some were appointed to wrath... to punishment; on this subject there can be no dispute. But who are they? When did this appointment take place? And for what cause? ...If we look carefully at the apostles' words, we shall find all these difficulties vanish. It is very obvious that, in the preceding verses, the apostle refers simply to the destruction of the Jewish polity, and to the terrible judgments which were about to fall on the Jews as a nation; therefore, they are the people who were appointed to wrath; and they were thus appointed, not from eternity, nor from any indefinite or remote time, but from that time in which they utterly rejected the offers of salvation made to them by Jesus Christ and his apostles... (Adam Clarke's Commentary).

Many have left dispensationalism and have accepted the fact that Jesus was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70 in Matthew 24. But some of those who have progressed that far in their understanding of that passage, have not yet seen that ALL of Matthew 24, and not just part of it, was fulfilled in the generation of Christ and His hearers. I can easily understand how this is with them, having gone through this same process of thinking. I know why there is a reluctance to see the whole picture as being in the past. So, of course, this is what we have tried to do in this book—to make clearer and plainer the whole picture by throwing as much light on it as we can. That "light" consists of the product of our own research and study and thinking, triggered by the things said in many books we have read, both old and contemporary. I think the arguments being presented in this series are irrefutable and unanswerable as to the validity of these views. Many are seeing the picture better, for which we are grateful.