

## The Signs of Matthew 24 – Part 2

### 1. Review:

- a. In the first part of **Matt. 24** Jesus stressed there would be signs leading up to Jerusalem's destruction (**4ff**).
- b. He then made it clear that there would be no specific signs heralding the end of time (**24:36-25:46**).
- c. The signs discussed in **Matt. 24** are not being fulfilled today. Instead they were fulfilled in the first century (**34**).
- d. Last time we were together we noted that:
  - i. Jesus stated before the destruction of Jerusalem there would be deceivers on the scene (**4, 5, 11, 23-26**). **Fulfilled.**
  - ii. Jesus stated before He came (to destroy Jerusalem) there would be wars and rumors of wars (**6-7a**). **Fulfilled.**
  - iii. Jesus said before His coming (through the Romans) there would be famines, pestilences and earthquakes (**7b**). **Fulfilled.**
  - iv. Jesus said before His coming (through the Romans) disciples (then living) would be persecuted, hated and killed (**9**). **Fulfilled.**
  - v. Jesus said before His coming (through the Romans) that disciples (in that generation) would be offended, that Christians would betray one another, and that some would even hate one another (**10**). **Fulfilled.**
- e. Time after time we noted how the signs of **Matt. 24** fit very, very well into a first century context.
- f. We further noted that since such is indeed the case, why should we seek to look elsewhere?

### 2. New Stuff:

#### a. **Vs. 12:**

- i. First of all, whatever Jesus means, we already know that it must have been a sign to that generation (**vs. 34**).
- ii. Iniquity:
  - #458 ἀνομία {anomia}.
  - In the NT it means not the absence of the Law, but the violation of Law, i.e., transgression or lawlessness.
  - **1 John 3:4.**
- iii. Abound:
  - #4129 πληθύνω {plēthúnō}.
  - To multiply, to increase.
- iv. What is the iniquity {lawlessness} in this context?
  - Deceivers spreading like crazy – many individuals buying into such (**4, 5, 11, 23-26**).
    - (a) **1 John 2:18; 4:1-3; Eph. 4:14-15; Col. 2:6-8; 2 John 7; 2 Tim. 3:13**
    - (b) Add to this all the extra-biblical information we noted last time.
    - (c) Is such lawlessness (**2 Pet. 14-17; Acts 13:6-12**)?
    - (d) If, indeed, such is lawlessness, can we not rightly say that lawlessness {iniquity} was abounding then, in that generation? Yes, we can.
  - Serious persecution from without (**9**).
    - (a) **Acts 5:29-40; 7:51-58; 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 12:1-2; 14:1-6; 14:19-22; 16:14-23; 28:16-22**
    - (b) Add to this all the extra biblical information we noted last time.
    - (c) Is such lawlessness (**Acts 9:1-5; Rev. 17:1-6**)?
    - (d) If, indeed, such is lawlessness, can we not rightly say that lawlessness {iniquity} was abounding then, in that generation? Yes, we can.
  - Serious problems from within (**10**).
    - (a) **2 Tim. 2:15-18; Gal. 1:6-9; Ax. 15:1-2; Gal. 2:1-5; Titus 1:9-11; 2 Pet. 2:1-2, 18**
    - (b) Is such lawlessness (**1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3-5; Col. 3:17; Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:10; Plp. 3:16**)?
    - (c) If, indeed, such is lawlessness, can we not rightly say that lawlessness {iniquity} was abounding then, in that generation? Yes, we can.
- v. The love of many (saints) would wax {grow} cold {on the verge of being extinguished} (**vs.12**).
  - First of all, let's note that brotherly love is not to grow cold (**1 Pet. 1:22; 2:17; 4:8; 5:14**).
  - Love for the truth is not supposed to wax cold (**Matt. 22:37; 5:6; John 8:31-32; 1 Cor. 13:6; Ps. 119:162**).
  - Would buying into the message of deceivers, and the message of false brethren, cause one's love for God, and one's love for the brethren, to grow cold (**John 14:15; Matt. 12:30**)?

- Would being worried about persecution cause one's love for God, and one's love for the brethren, to grow cold (**Heb. 10:23-39**)?
  - We can also think about this logically:
    - (a) When the hypocrisy of some insincere Christians was discovered (**iniquity abounds**), the sincerity of real Christians would certainly become suspect (**iniquity abounds – casting unfair judgments**).
    - (b) Disciples would become mutually suspicious and dare no longer to trust each other (**love grows cold**).
    - (c) Do we see love growing cold in the first century?
- vi. If such fits so well in a first century context, why must we look beyond?
- b. Gospel preached to all nations (**vs. 14**).
- i. Jesus stated the gospel would be preached in all the world/nations before the end would come.
  - ii. What does “the end” have reference to?
  - iii. *“We cannot lift the word end from this context and make it the end of the world. The end, in this context, occurred in that generation (Mt. 24:34). It was the end of the temple and Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D.”*
  - iv. Let's think about some things:
    - **Acts 1:8; Col. 1:5-6, 23; Rom. 10:18; 1:8; Acts 17:6**
    - Mark's account clearly places the gospel going into all the world in a first century context (**13:9-11**).
    - What Jesus is referring to HAD TO occur in the lifetime of the apostles!
    - “The end” connected to the gospel being preached was something Jesus said people could escape from (**vs. 17ff**).
      - (a) Does this make sense with regard to the end of time and the judgment? (**Heb. 2:1-3**)
      - (b) Does it make sense with regard to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70?
    - Also, the grammar of **Col. 1:23** is significant:
      - (a) Paul announced that the Gospel had already been preached to every creature under heaven.
      - (b) Paul does not say “It is **BEING** preached,” but rather that “it **HAD BEEN** preached.”
      - (c) The wording is too clear for misconception.
      - (d) Jesus' goal (**Mark 16:15**) had been reached in Paul's day.
  - v. Was the gospel taken into all the world in the first century?
  - vi. Seeing that **vs. 14** fits so perfectly in a first century context, why would we need to try to force it into a modern context?
  - vii. A lesson for us all here:
    - The early church was faced with:
      - (a) Deceivers on all sides... The horrors of war... The often threat of war...
      - (b) Famines... Pestilences... Earthquakes... Serious, serious persecution (torture and death)...
      - (c) Brethren selling out brethren... False brethren within... Love waxing cold on behalf of some...
    - Yet, they still managed to get the Word out effectively and speedily.
      - (a) In the midst of a world coming apart the mission was not surrendered or put on the back-burner.
      - (b) I wonder what excuses we think we have for inactivity in light of this lesson?
- c. The Abomination of Desolation (**vs. 15**).
- i. Luke says that Jesus connected this desolation to armies surrounding Jerusalem in that generation (1<sup>st</sup> century).
  - ii. The only army capable of doing this in the first century would have been the Roman army.
  - iii. Gabriel's announcement to Daniel included the destruction of the city and the sanctuary {temple}. This is referred to as “desolations” (**Dan. 9:26**). No doubt this is included.
  - iv. Also included is **Daniel 11** (a simply amazing history of what would transpire during and after the fall of the Medeo-Persian Empire). In that prophecy we learn of a vile person (**21**). History refers to this man as Antiochus Epiphanies.
    - Antiochus in the time between the testaments turned his rage on the Jews.
    - *“<sup>16</sup> Now when the kingdom was established before Antiochus, he thought to reign over Egypt that he might have the dominion of two realms. <sup>17</sup> Wherefore he entered into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, and a great navy, <sup>18</sup> And made war against Ptolemee king of Egypt: but Ptolemee was afraid of him, and fled; and many were wounded to death. <sup>19</sup> Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt and he took the spoils thereof. <sup>20</sup> And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, <sup>21</sup> And entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and*

the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof,<sup>22</sup> And the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crown, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off.<sup>23</sup> He took also the silver and the gold, and the precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures which he found.<sup>24</sup> And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly.<sup>25</sup> Therefore there was a great mourning in Israel, in every place where they were; <sup>26</sup> So that the princes and elders mourned, the virgins and young men were made feeble, and the beauty of women was changed. <sup>27</sup> Every bridegroom took up lamentation, and she that sat in the marriage chamber was in heaviness, <sup>28</sup> The land also was moved for the inhabitants thereof, and all the house of Jacob was covered with confusion. <sup>29</sup> And after two years fully expired the king sent his chief collector of tribute unto the cities of Juda, who came unto Jerusalem with a great multitude, <sup>30</sup> And spake peaceable words unto them, but all was deceit: for when they had given him credence, he fell suddenly upon the city, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people of Israel. <sup>31</sup> And when he had taken the spoils of the city, he set it on fire, and pulled down the houses and walls thereof on every side. <sup>32</sup> But the women and children took they captive, and possessed the cattle. <sup>33</sup> Then builded they the city of David with a great and strong wall, and with mighty towers, and made it a strong hold for them. <sup>34</sup> And they put therein a sinful nation, wicked men, and fortified themselves therein. <sup>35</sup> They stored it also with armour and victuals, and when they had gathered together the spoils of Jerusalem, they laid them up there, and so they became a sore snare: <sup>36</sup> For it was a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and an evil adversary to Israel. <sup>37</sup> Thus they shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it: <sup>38</sup> Insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them: whereupon the city was made an habitation of strangers, and became strange to those that were born in her; and her own children left her. <sup>39</sup> Her sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness, her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach her honour into contempt. <sup>40</sup> As had been her glory, so was her dishonour increased, and her excellency was turned into mourning. <sup>41</sup> Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, <sup>42</sup> And every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king. <sup>43</sup> Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the sabbath. <sup>44</sup> For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda that they should follow the strange laws of the land, <sup>45</sup> And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the sabbaths and festival days: <sup>46</sup> And pollute the sanctuary and holy people: <sup>47</sup> Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts: <sup>48</sup> That they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation: <sup>49</sup> To the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. <sup>50</sup> And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he said, he should die." (**1 Macc. 1:16-48**).

- It seems that what Jesus was doing was using an historical event, well known to the Jews, to convey the thought that they would be destroyed if they did not heed the warning signs and get out before the heathens (Romans) entered the city.
- It would be like someone today saying: Buckle up, another 9-11 is on the horizon. When you hear on the news that a fleet of planes have been high-jacked by Muslims, flee NYC while escape is still possible, or you will be toast.

### 3. Conclusion:

- a. We have seen that all of the signs noted by Jesus were going to be fulfilled in that generation (1<sup>st</sup> century) (**Matt. 24:34**).
- b. We have seen that all of the signs Jesus mentioned were fulfilled in that generation (1<sup>st</sup> century).
- c. Modern day sign pointers have abused this section of text.