

The Kingdom—Why We Get It Wrong

Matthew 24.1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down. ... 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. 32 Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! 34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.”

* The short answer is ...

* Our understanding of the Bible falls short in three areas:

(1)

(2)

(3)

* What is an example of apocalyptic language in our text?

* What do you think when you hear the word “apocalypse” or “apocalyptic”? How do we use those words in English?

* What does the Greek word *apokalypsis* really mean?

* What is God showing us when he uses apocalyptic language in the Bible?

* Let's take a couple of examples:

(1) The rise of Israel as a nation:

Isaiah 51.15 But I am the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared— The LORD of hosts is His name. 16 And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth, And say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’ ”

(2) The fall of Babylon as an empire.

Isaiah 13.1 The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw. 2 “Lift up a banner on the high mountain, Raise your voice to them; Wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles. 3 I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger— Those who rejoice in My exaltation.” 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, Like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters The army for battle. 5 They come from a far country, From the end of heaven— The LORD and His weapons of indignation, To destroy the whole land. 6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man’s heart will melt, 8 And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames. 9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. 11 I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. 12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger. 14 It shall be as the hunted gazelle, And as a sheep that no man takes up; Every man will turn to his own people, And everyone will flee to his own land. 15 Everyone who is found will be thrust through, And everyone who is captured will fall by the sword. 16 Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; Their houses will be plundered And their wives ravished. 17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, Who will not regard silver; And as for gold, they will not delight in it. 18 Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces, And they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; Their eye will not spare children. 19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

* What about our text in Mat 24? Does it follow the same pattern? What is Jesus talking about?

* What is another thing that stumbles us?

* What is the modern relevance of OT apocalyptic passages dealing with the demise of ancient nations?

* What is the modern relevance of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD?