

Three Significant Signs (Matthew 24:3-8)

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Previous time in Matthew 24

- Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple (vv. 1-2).
- Divine judgment for the Jews having rejected their prophesied king.
- A *bona fide* offer of a king to Israel in fulfillment of the promises of a ruler on the throne of David.
- Rejected and crucified
- Postponement of peace, continuation of the Times of the Gentiles

Mat. 24:3-8

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."¹

- Focusing on verses 3-8, but will assume general familiarity with the entire chapter.
- Almost impossible to isolate one section of the passage without frequently referring to the entire chapter and parallel gospels of Mark and Luke.
- Themes which are touched on today which follow this passage will be dealt with in greater detail as we move through the text in subsequent sessions.

Three expectations

Three expectations expressed by Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark 13:3) comprising either two or three questions.

1. When will these things be?
2. What is the sign of your coming?
3. And of the end of the age?

1. PART ONE: "When will these things be?"

A. What things: the predicted destruction of the Temple which Jesus

had just spoken of.²

2. PART TWO: “What is the sign of your coming?”

A. What coming?

- “Coming” is *παρουσίας* [*parousias*]: appearance, an arrival or presence after having been gone.
- How was it that the disciples were aware of a pending departure? Jesus had not yet presented His most extensive teaching concerning His departure which was yet to occur on the night before His betrayal (John [16:5-7](#))

B. Zechariah 14

- The idea that His arrival would be commensurate with the destruction of Jerusalem
- Zechariah teaches of a future day when Jerusalem will be razed immediately followed by the appearance of the Messiah. But this, is not the destruction which Jesus has predicted in the previous verses.

C. Teaching of delay in kingdom

- “Now as they heard these things, [Jesus] spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.'" (Luke [19:11-12](#)).
- Jesus is represented by the nobleman who goes to a far country (heaven) to receive a kingdom and return.
- The parable discusses the faithfulness of the nobleman's servants during his absence.
- Eventually, the nobleman returns after having received the kingdom (Luke [19:15](#)).

D. Jesus' preceding words over Jerusalem

“You [Jerusalem] will see me no more until...” (Mat. [23:39](#))

3. PART THREE: “And of the end of the age?”

A. What age?

- I. The period during which Jerusalem would fail to recognize its king. A period characterized by:

1. No ruler on the throne of David (our previous presentation).
2. A time of Gentile dominion, the times of the Gentiles, which began earlier with the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C.
3. Jesus' absence.
4. During this period, the Church age, the body of Christ ministers reconciliation in His absence.
5. We have the great honor, which also serves as a great testimony of faith, of proclaiming to the world a King of Kings who is physically absent and cannot be seen!

II. The age ends when Jesus returns to take up the Davidic throne and restore the residency of God's glory in the Temple.³

The insignificant signs - the "non-signs"

1. **First response by Jesus in all three synoptic gospels: "Take heed that no one deceives you"**
2. **Top priority: avoiding deception**
3. **Fueled by curiosity, a desire to know or predict the future.**
4. **When untethered by Biblical truth, the cause of much confusion and deception!**
5. **For example, the oft-heard reversal of what Jesus is actually saying here: that wars and natural disasters can be used to infer his return.**
6. **Sign is σημεῖον [sēmeion]**
 - Can be translated, by "mark," "distinguishing characteristic," and can denote even a miraculous event contrary to the usual course of nature, such as a miracle.
 - Often appears with "wonder" as in "signs and wonders," hence it can be unusual enough that it demands attention.
 - The non-signs which Jesus mentions, as we'll see, are not unusual, but *typical* of this age.
7. **Jesus tells us which things are *not* signs to watch for!**
 - A. **False Messiahs - "many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,'"**
 - I. **Not necessarily claiming to be specifically "Jesus," but "The**

Christ," "The Messiah," "The Anointed One" -- a special one chosen and gifted by God.

II. Fueled by an ongoing, widespread expectation of a coming Messiah⁴

- **Judaism:** similar expectation to Christianity although often denying his supernatural nature.
- **Islam:** Muslims believe Jesus is a prophet, is alive in Heaven, and will return to Earth to defeat the Antichrist.
- **Hinduism:** *Kalki* is the tenth and final Maha Avatar (Messiah or Incarnation) of Lord Vishnu who will come to end the present age of darkness and destruction known as Kali Yuga.
- **Taoism:** *Li Hong* is a messianic figure in Taoist eschatology prophesied to appear at the end of the world cycle.
- **Buddhism:** in Buddhist eschatology *Maitrey* is prophesied to appear at a time when the Dharma [one's personal obligations and duties] will have been forgotten.
- **Zoroastrianism:** *Saoshyant* is a figure in Zoroastrian eschatology who it is said will initiate the final renovation of the world.
- **Theosophy:** Another incarnation of the Supreme World Teacher, also known as "the Christ", will soon take place when he enters the body of a disciple to assist and guide the spiritual evolution of man to the next level. Theosophy teaches that Buddha, Hermes, Zoroaster, Orpheus, and Jesus all preceded the coming one in this role.⁵

III. Historic examples of false Messiahs

a. Non-Jewish claimants (in complete contradiction to Scripture)

Wikipedia lists 27 people who have claimed to stand in the role of Jesus within the 19th and 20th centuries alone.⁶ Some are names we recognize from the news headlines:

- **Sun Myung Moon:** considered within the Unification Church as the Messiah and the second coming of Christ.
- **Jim Jones:** claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus, Buddha, Vladimir Lenin, and Father Divine prior to leading a mass suicide of his followers.
- **Marshall Applewhite:** claimed to be Jesus and the Son of God prior to leading his Heaven's Gate cult mass suicide to

rendezvous with a space ship hiding behind the comet Hale-Bopp.

- **David Koresh:** leader of the Branch Davidian religious sect in Waco, Texas. Claimed to be “the Son of God, the Lamb.”

b. Jewish claimants

Wikipedia lists no less than 27 significant Jewish claimants to date.⁷

- **Simon Bar Kokhba**⁹ was acclaimed Messiah by Rabbi Akiva following the Jewish revolt against Rome of A.D. 115-117.⁸
- In the 5th century, a pseudo-messiah called Moses appeared in Crete.¹⁰
- In the 8th century, three pseudo-messiah’s appeared¹¹
 - A. **Abu Issa Al-Isfahani** in Persia
 - B. **Severus or Serene** in Syria
 - C. **Yudghan in Hamadan** in Persia
- “In 1096, it was believed in Salonica that the deliverance had already begun; and in 1121, a Karaite claimant was reported in Palestine. In 1147, the spectacular **David Alroy** appeared in Mesopotamia and similar figures are recorded in Yemen, Fez, Persia, Spain, and France in the 11th and 12th centuries. **Abraham Abulafia** was active in Sicily in the 13th century and was followed in Spain by his disciples, Samuel and Abraham. . . . The Spanish persecution of 1391 produced **Moses Botarel**; the expulsion (1492) was followed by a number of such figures -- **Asher Lamlein** (1503), **Solomon Molcho** (c. 1500 - 1532), and others.”¹²
- **Shabbetai Tzevi** (1621 - 1676) of Smyrna
 - “The masses were won over by his emotional sermons and fresh doctrines. . . . In [1662 after marrying a young Jewess in Egypt] he returned to Palestine and in 1665, was hailed as king-messiah by Nathan of Gaza but excommunicated by the rabbis of Jerusalem. Returning to Turkey, Shabbetai was joyfully received by the masses and heaped with honors. The fervor spread throughout the Jewish world and rumors were current of a Jewish army which would advance from the Arabian desert to conquer Palestine. In 1666, he went to Constantinople to 'depose the Sultan' but was arrested and confined in the fortress of Gallipoli. Here he held court and received

thousands of followers. . . . Messianic expectations ran high throughout Europe and the rabbinate was sharply divided on the issue. However, Shabbetai's behavior evoked the wrath of the Turkish authorities and to save himself from death, he accepted the Islamic faith. Jewry was shaken by his conversion. . . . Nevertheless, he kept in touch with his admirers until his death, which they held would precede his return as Messiah and Redeemer."¹³

- **Jacob Frank** (1726 - 1791)
 - “Declared himself the Messiah and the successor of Shabbetai Tzevi. . . . His mystical activities were alleged to be accompanied by sexual orgies, the function of which was to bring redemption through impurity.”¹⁴
- **Menachem Mendel Schneerson** (1902 - 1994)
 - A prominent Hasidic rabbi who was the seventh and last Hasidic leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. Although he himself did not explicitly proclaim to be the Messiah--but only working to bring the Messiah through good works--some of his later statements implied that he thought that he was.¹⁵ During his lifetime many of his followers had considered him to be the Jewish Messiah, and even after his death, some continue to await his return as the Messiah.

IV. The antidote: a visible, global sign

B. Wars and rumors of wars - history is full of these!

- “See that you are not troubled; *for [because]* all these things *must come to pass* but the end is not yet” (Mat. [24:6](#)).
- “*For [because]* nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Mat. [24:7](#))
- These things *will happen*, but “the end is not yet.”
- These are the typical events which characterize our fallen world throughout the age. As such they do not constitute a sign of the end.¹⁶
- How did things look to those in the midst of WW1 (brutal, bloody losses)? WW2 (holocaust, atomic bomb)?

C. Natural disasters and their consequences

- “There will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes” (Mat. [24:7](#)).

8. If these are not signs, what are they?

A. “the beginning of sorrows”

- “sorrows” is ὠδίνων [ōdinōn], a term which is used of the literal birth pangs or labor pains which accompany childbirth.

B. Childbirth metaphor is commonly used to refer to the Day of the Lord.¹⁷

- A time at the end of the age when God directly intervenes in history in a dramatic way bringing judgment.
- For example, Isaiah 13:6-11: “Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt, 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. 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. 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. '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.’”¹⁸
- Jesus says that these non-signs are the *beginning* of sorrows. They precede the true birth pains which mark the time of Tribulation at the end of the age.
- The analogy is one of labor during childbirth: intensity and frequency of birth pangs grow as birth approaches.

C. The things Jesus mentions--wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes--are merely a small-scale preview of a time characterized by much more severe and frequent disruption which Jesus referred to as a time of great tribulation.

- It is *this coming tribulation period* which is unique in history, unlike the rest of the age.
- “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Mat. 24:21)
- “And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a [Jewish] nation, Even to that time.” (Dan. 12:1)

D. Christians should not use these events as evidence that the end of the age is near because:

1. Jesus said they will necessarily happen and do not indicate the end.

Rather, they are merely precursors to the main event.¹⁹

2. Although we expect their frequency and severity to increase like birth pangs, we cannot say with certainty how long the labor will be!
3. Although the events Jesus mentions closely parallel the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse which ride forth in the book of Revelation, the result of their ride is far greater in severity than the birth pangs mentioned here which Jesus explicitly warns us are not the sign of the end.²⁰

9. Peaceful when all heaven breaks loose ushering in the Day of the Lord judgments²¹

- Jesus tells us that God’s intervention in history will be much as before the flood. People will be living their lives oblivious to the impending intervention of God. They will be “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Mat. [24:28](#))
- Paul tells the Thessalonian Church, “For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.” (1Th. [5:2-3](#))
 - When they say “peace and safety”: God’s intervention begins when it is not expected, during a period of stability and peace.
 - The thief metaphor: people will not be expecting what unfolds since conditions are seemingly peaceful.
 - Another reference to birth pangs, but here referring to how suddenly and severely they can start.

10. Christian-Littles

- Remember the story of “Chicken Little” where an acorn falls on Henny Penny’s head who thereafter concludes “the sky is falling!”?
- Sometimes we who follow Christ are like “Christian Littles” -- jumping the gun to conclude the tribulation is here at any historic disruption.
- The sky *will* fall, but according to Jesus, not until specific things have come to pass.
- “see that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass” (Mat. [24:6](#))

The Sign

All Scripture is written *for* us, but it is not all written *to* us -- there are passages, such as this, where fulfillment is anchored in a specific historical context *which we may not occupy in our lifetime*.

1. Singular sign, from which we can infer that the apostles probably

expected the destruction of the Temple, his return, and the end of the age to be simultaneous or closely related in time.

2. **Jesus responds and gives *three specific, unambiguous signs* which precede times of elevated significance in God's prophetic time-table.**
 - Remember that a sign which is ambiguous is not a sign!
 - Each of the signs Jesus gives are specific and unable to be misinterpreted: *He intended it to be so!*
 - We should pay special attention to two related words in the parallel passages: *sign* and *see*.

3. **FIRST SIGN: "When will these things [the destruction of the temple] be?"**
 - A. **Explain synoptics, use of a harmony of the gospels: Mat 24, Mark 13, Luke 21**

 - B. **"when you see . . . "**
 - I. **Matthew and Mark: ". . . the Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place" (Mat. 24:15) . . . "where it should not be" (Mark 13:14)**

 - II. **Luke: ". . . Jerusalem surrounded by armies . . . " (Luke 21:20)**

 - III. **Difference in synoptic emphasis: Luke vs. Matthew and Mark**

 - IV. **Luke alone mentions**
 - armies surrounding Jerusalem
 - days of vengeance
 - wrath to this people [the Jews]
 - led captive into all nations
 - times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:20-24)

 - V. **Jesus in Luke "when you see . . . Jerusalem surrounded by armies"**

 - VI. **Luke's account provides additional details specific to the question concerning the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem**
 - As Pastor Greg mentioned in his recent sermon, beginning as early as A.D. 66 Jewish Christians fled the city to Pella, some four years in advance of the A.D. 70 destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem

by Titus of Rome.²²

- The Church Father Eusebius makes reference to this event, “But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come thither from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men.”²³
- Later, in A.D. 68, as Vespasian and his Roman armies were moving toward Jerusalem, the approach was interrupted by news of the death of Nero--which initiated a period of instability in Roman rule resulting in the return of Vespasian himself to become emperor. This respite was also an opportunity to flee Jerusalem before the final advance by Vespasian’s son Titus and the final siege.²⁴

VII. The mixing of near-view and far-view, typical of prophetic passages.²⁵

C. This sign has already transpired.

4. SECOND SIGN: “What will be the sign . . . of the end of the age?”

- A. Matthew and Mark: “Therefore when you see . . . the abomination of desolation standing in the Holy Place” (Mat. [24:15](#); Mark [13:14](#))
- B. The trigger of the yet-future period of great tribulation, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer. [30:7](#)) when Christian Jews of that day, who are familiar with Matthew [24:15](#), will flee to the mountains and subsequently to the wilderness for protection as described in Revelation [12](#) and elsewhere.
- C. This appears to take place at the mid-point of the final 7 year period which precedes Christ’s return in judgment on a rejecting world (Dan. [7:25](#); [9:27](#); 2Th. [2:4](#); Rev. [12:4](#); [13:5,15](#)).
- D. If, as I believe, this correlates with Paul’s teaching concerning the coming man of sin who will sit as God in the temple of God (2Th. [2:4](#)), then it also likely involves the subsequent setting up of an image, as described in Revelation [13](#).

Scripture makes clear this is no ordinary image: “He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed” (Rev. 13:15).

E. If so, then this *sign* is not only specific, but also *miraculous in nature* as will be the sign we come to next. Therefore, it will be unmistakable.

F. It would appear that this event will be known by the entire world since the required global response to the image will be to worship it or die.

G. Only born-again believers who know this sign will understand its immense significance and those who are in Judea, to whom Jesus words are specifically written, will flee!

H. Once this specific, unambiguous sign occurs Christians of that time can be certain that the end of the age has arrived.

- This must not be interpreted in a vague ambiguous fulfillment like some do, such as those who find “fulfillment”
 - In the first century by the plan by Roman emperor Caligula to erect a statue of himself in the Temple (ca. A.D. 40) which never came to pass.
 - The insignia on Roman standards erected in the Temple area by order of Titus.
 - Such vague 'fulfillment' serves only to damage the clarity and purpose for which this very specific sign was given by our Lord!

I. This is the first of a number of unambiguous and miraculous signs which *follow*:

1. Sun darkened, moon will not give its light (Mat. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25)
2. Stars (ἀστέρες [asteres], asteroids), will fall (Mat. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25-26)

J. It is my belief that Scripture teaches that we will not be among those who watch for this sign because Jesus will have returned for the Church prior to this point. If it were not so, then the Rapture of the Church could not be imminent as this sign would have to occur first.

5. THIRD SIGN: “What will be the sign of Your coming?”

- A. **“How will we know when You yourself return, Jesus?”**
- B. **Again, Jesus responds by providing an unmistakable, unambiguous indicator.**

“For as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. . . . The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven and then all the tribes of the earth will see the Son of Man coming . . .” (Mat. 24:27).

- C. **Here again, the sign is *miraculous* and impossible to miss. All the tribes of the earth will see!**
- D. **Various people may claim to be The Christ, The Anointed One, but there is only One Who will arrive like this!**

In closing, what have we learned from this passage?

1. The disciples were naturally curious about what Jesus had revealed about the destruction of the Temple. Therefore they asked for *a sign*.
2. Jesus indicated that those watching for His return and the end of the age must take care not to be deceived.
3. Jesus gave two antidotes to guard believers from deception:
 - A. He listed events which would typify the entire age and explained, like labor pains, believers should expect their frequency and intensity increase, the events they themselves were not reliable signs. These events included rumors of wars, wars, famines, earthquakes, and a parade of false messiahs.
 - B. He then described specific signs corresponding to the destruction of the Temple (in A.D. 70), the end of the age, and His return. These signs are specific, unambiguous, and in the case of the last two, miraculous in extent.
4. A desire to know the timing of God’s work must not develop into speculation. An overactive curiosity is likely to fuel deception as we press beyond what God has revealed.
5. As those who know God’s Word, Christians of any age should be the least panic-prone and subject to end-of-the-world theories because Jesus told us the specific signs which will signal the end of the age and His return.
6. As individuals, we need to be aware that there is coming a time of great deception!
 - Later in this passage, Jesus reveals that “. . . false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24)
 - Paul’s also described this future time of deception, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all *unrighteous deception* among those who perish,

because they did not receive the *love of the truth, that they might be saved*. And for this reason God will send them *strong delusion*, that they should believe the lie” (2Th. 2:9-11)

- This time of spiritual deception will put the unprepared between a rock and a hard place.
 - I. Deception from Satan upon an unsuspecting world.
 - II. Deception from God upon those who have hardened their hearts.
- Spiritual deception can only be overcome by a spiritual antidote: being among the elect, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
- Unless you have been born again as Jesus describes in the third chapter of John’s gospel, you are without the protection of God’s Holy Spirit and are among those which the Bible says will be subject to the coming time of great spiritual deception!

Endnotes:

1. NKJV, Mat. 24:3-8
2. There is an intentional parallel with Jesus, the Glory of the Lord, departing the Temple to the Mount of Olives and the Shekinah Glory which departed in the same manner in Ezekiel’s day (Eze. 11:22-23 cf. Mat. 23:38). In both cases, some time thereafter the Temple was destroyed.
3. Upon his return, the location of the Davidic throne will be *within the Temple* (Ezekiel 43:6-7). Thus will be fulfilled the predicted unification of priestly and kingly role (the two crowns of Zec. 6:11).
4. Some concepts of 'The Christ' are non-personal, such as the pantheistic “Cosmic Christ” promulgated by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) and others, who teach that the world itself is being transubstantiated into Christ--“The Cosmic Christ is that incarnation of God in the universe and especially in Mother Earth . . . imaging Mother Earth as Christ crucified, resurrected, and come again.” See also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah> (accessed 20110709).
5. <http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/ChristNAM.html> (accessed 20110709).
6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_people_who_have_claimed_to_be_Jesus (accessed 20110709).
7. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Messiah_claimants (accessed 20110709).
8. Ref-1267, p. 1328
9. Bar Kokhba’s name, *son of a star*, is a reference to the Messianic prophecy of Num. 24:17.
10. Ref-1267, p. 1328
11. Ref-1267, p. 1328
12. Ref-1267, p. 1329
13. Ref-1267, p. 1724
14. Ref-1267, p. 698
15. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Messiah_claimants (accessed 20110709).
16. “Wars and reports of war are simply normative in human history. No matter how personally threatening such conditions may appear and no matter how great the threat to one’s life or nation, this is not proof of the end of the age.” Ref-1264, p. 464
17. Isa. 13:8; 26:13-21; Jer. 30:6; 1Th. 5:3.
18. NKJV, Isa. 13:6-11

19. "Taken as a whole, the opening section, ending with Matthew 24:14, itemizes general signs, events, and situations which mark the progress of the age, and, with growing intensity, indicate that the end of the age is approaching. These signs, however, by their very characteristics and because they have occurred throughout the present age, do not constitute a direct answer to the question of 'the sign' of the coming of the Lord." Ref-1268, p. 184
20. "The parallels include: 1. False Messiahs (Mtt. 24:5, 11; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8; Rev. 6:2). 2. Wars (Mtt. 24:6-7; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9; Rev. 6:4). 3. Famines (Mtt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10; Rev. 6:5-6,8). 4. Pestilences (Luke 21:11; Rev. 6:8). 5. Persecution (Mtt. 24:9; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12-17; Rev. 6:9-11). 6. Earthquakes (Mtt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11; Rev. 6:12). 7. Cosmic Phenomena (Mtt. 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:11; Rev. 6:12-14)." Ref-1265, Rev. 6:1
21. The first Horseman of the Apocalypse rides forth with a bow, but no mention of arrows. Some see this as an indication of his ability initially to conquer through peaceful means (Dan. 8:23-26; 9:27; Rev. 6:2).
22. "Early Christian sources speak of a group of Jewish Christians fleeing from Jerusalem prior to or during the Jewish war of A.D. 67–70 and settling in the Perea city of Pella. One of the cities of the Decapolis, Pella was located at the base of the foothills in the northern Jordan Valley, about two miles east of the Jordan River and eighteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee. Despite critical issues that have been raised, the historical probability of this event seems well grounded. . . . Epiphanius . . . in 392, writing in his Treatise on Weights and Measures . . . describes the small 'church of God' existing in Jerusalem when Hadrian and his Jewish interpreter, Aquila, visited the ruined city in 129. He speaks of how the 'disciples of the disciples of the apostles' had returned to Jerusalem from Pella and briefly recounts their original flight to Pella. When Jerusalem was 'about to be seized by the Romans,' the disciples were 'forewarned by an angel to depart from the city.' They settled in Pella 'of the Decapolis,' 'across the Jordan.' 'But after Jerusalem was destroyed, they returned.' . . . Josephus also recounts how many Jews fled the city immediately after the Jewish victory over the Twelfth Legion in November of 66 (Josephus J.W. 2.20.1 §556). Jewish Christians might well have been among these refugees (for objections, see Brandon, 168–78)." Ref-1172, Pella, Flight to
23. Ref-0565, 138
24. "At this point the death of Nero and civil unrest in Rome caused Vespasian to temporarily halt military operations in Judaea to await the outcome of developments in Rome -- he was eventually elected Emperor. This provided the Jews with an unexpected respite which many interpreted as divine intervention on their behalf."
http://www.preteristarchive.com/JewishWars/articles/1998_scott_flee-pella.html (accessed 20110709).
25. e.g., Isa. 9:6-7; 61:1-2; Zec. 9:9-10; Mal. 3:1-2; Mat. 3:11-12; John 5:28-29.

Sources:

- NKJV** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Ref-0565** Schaff, P. (1997). *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Vol. I.* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997).
- Ref-1172** Ralph P. Martin, ed., Peter H. Davids, ed., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997). ISBN:0-8308-1779-4^b.
- Ref-1264** Ed Glasscock, *Matthew: A Gospel Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997). ISBN:1-59752-044-6^c.
- Ref-1265** Anthony C. Garland, *A Testimony of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation - Volume 1*, (Camano Island, WA: SpiritAndTruth.org, 2004) [<http://www.SpiritAndTruth.org/id/revci.htm>]. ISBN:0-9788864-1-0^d.
- Ref-1267** Geoffrey Wigoder, ed. *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, 5th edition (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1977). ISBN:0385125194^e.
- Ref-1268** John Walvoord, *Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1974). ISBN:08024-5189-6^f.

Links Mentioned Above

- a** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
- b** - See <http://www.bestbookdeal.com/book/compare/0-8308-1779-4>.
- c** - See <http://www.bestbookdeal.com/book/compare/1-59752-044-6>.

d - See <http://www.bestbookdeal.com/book/compare/0-9788864-1-0>.

e - See <http://www.bestbookdeal.com/book/compare/0385125194>.

f - See <http://www.bestbookdeal.com/book/compare/08024-5189-6>.