

Difficult Texts In The Bible

Three Questions

(Mt 24:1-4)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on "Difficult Texts In The Bible."
 - a. We looked at **Jn 8** titled "The Adulterous Woman."
 - b. We looked at **Lk 23:34** titled "Forgiving Others"
 - c. Tonight we will look at **Mt 24**.
3. This section of scripture has been misunderstood for years by many.
 - a. It is often heralded as one of the proof texts for Premillennialism.
 - b. It is often the key text for those that would like to think they can predict when Jesus will come back.
 - c. It is however answers to three questions.
4. Key verse to keep in mind.
 - a. **Mt 24:34** "Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation** will by no means pass away till all these things take place."¹
 - i. Dispensational Premillennialist coin this word generation to mean Jewish race and hence since the Jewish race is around even today they can say it is yet fulfilled.
 - ii. However it doesn't take long to see that the Greek word "genea" does not mean Jewish race.
 1. This word is found 43 times in the New Testament.
 2. The expression "this generation" is found 17 times in the N.T.
 3. Nowhere in the book of Matthew does it mean Jewish race unless this is the one exception.
 - a. **Mt 11:16; 12:41-42, 45; 23:36; 24:34**
 - b. This generation
 - i. Notice that in **Mt 23:36** no one argues that it is dealing with the current generation of people.
 1. **Mt 23:36** "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation."
 2. Jesus is talking & condemning the actions of the Scribes & Pharisees.
 - ii. In the same context of **Mt 23:36** we find **Mt 24:34**.
 1. This is simply another ploy to try and dupe people into thinking that a word means something it doesn't. Even denominations say it is a rare and uncommon thing.
 - a. How convenient!!!!
5. Keep in mind that Jesus has said that these things which will be discussed up to **Mt 24:34** will happen in the current generations lifetime.

¹ All scriptures are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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I. Investigating The Context

- A. Jesus had just got done teaching the multitude of people in the temple
 - 1. In **Mt 23:1-36** Jesus is teaching the people that the Sadducees and Pharisees did not practice what they preached (vs 2-4).
- B. Jesus then makes a bold proclamation to the Israelites
 - 1. He says that Israel was one whom He loves very much but that she had rejected His teachings (37-38).
 - 2. He then makes it clear that Israel would not see Him again, in the visual capacity they now were, until His return.
- C. Remember the disciples misconceptions of the scriptures
 - 1. They believed that Jesus was going to set up an earthly kingdom.
 - 2. So when He says He will not see Jerusalem for a time this would have peaked their interests.
- D. That brings us to Mt 24 where Jesus has left the temple (1)
 - 1. They are walking away from it when the disciples start talking about the temples physical beauty.
 - i. Remember this is the same race of people that had wept at the look of the previous temple.
 - ii. Harod's renovations were much more beautiful. It was grand again.
- E. Jesus responds to the disciples acknowledgement of the temples beauty
 - 1. **Mt 24:2** "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.""
 - i. You can imagine the bewilderment of this.
 - ii. Here you have the Son of God (**Mt 16:16**) saying the temple will be destroyed and He is here.
 - a. You can almost hear the questions in their head, "why would He allow that to happen with Him here?"
- F. Thus the disciples ask three questions...
 - 1. **Mt 24:3** "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?"
 - i. When will the temple be destroyed?
 - ii. What will be the signs of your coming?
 - iii. What will be the sign of the end of the age?

II. When Will The Temple Be Destroyed?

- A. This question is answered in three of the gospel accounts
 - 1. **Mt 24:4-35; Mk 13:5-31; Lk 21:8-36**
- B. Jesus gives a number of clues as to when the temple would be destroyed
 - 1. There would be false "messiahs" rise.
 - 2. There would be numerous military encounters.
 - 3. There would be famines and earthquakes.
 - 4. Followers of Christ would be persecuted.
 - 5. Some would stumble or fall from the faith.
 - 6. False prophets would be numerous.

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7. There would be a noticeable decrease in the spirituality of the saints.
 8. Those that pressed on would be delivered.
 9. The gospel would be proclaimed far and wide.
 - i. Every single one of these were accomplished.
- C. Jesus continues to teach that this destruction was foretold in Daniel
1. **Mt 24:15** "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand)"
 - i. **Da 9:27** "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. **And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate**, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate." (emphasis mine)
 - ii. This is the "70 Weeks" prophecy.
 - a. Notice that the abomination of desolation couldn't be anything other than the destruction of Jerusalem.
 1. **Lk 21:20-22** "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."
 2. The Roman army would make desolate Jerusalem and destroy the temple.
 - i. Josephus describes the streets of blood after the attack.
 - ii. It was a massacre.
 3. Jesus shows this destruction being done by Him.
 - i. **Mt 24:29-35 READ**
 - a. How do we know this isn't the "Second Coming" because it would happen within "this generation" (34).
 - ii. The blackening of the sun and the falling stars is simple judgment language used even in the O.T.
 - a. **Jl 2:10-11; 31**

III. What Will Be The Sign Of Your Coming?

- A. We must remember the mindset of the disciples at this point
1. They just heard the temple was to be destroyed.
 2. They assumed, it would seem, that the destruction of the temple and the end of the age would be at the same time.
 - i. You can hear it in their questions...
 - a. When will the temple be destroyed Christ...and what will be the signs of your coming (as an earthly king) and thus what will be the signs of the end?
 3. They also assumed Jesus was setting up an earthly kingdom.
 - i. **Jn 6:15** "Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to

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the mountain by Himself alone."

- a. They did this because they wanted an earthly king and knew He had fed them.
 1. **Jn 6:26-27**
 - ii. **Mt 21:6-11** "So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. 8 And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" 10 And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" 11 So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.""
 - a. They thought Jesus was coming to overthrow Rome.
 - iii. **Ac 1:6** "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
 - a. Even after the resurrection they still didn't understand.
- B. Jesus doesn't teach the sign of His coming
1. In fact He teaches there will be no sign.
 2. This is implied by the fact that there will be no sign of His coming back as foretold by the angels, ie the second coming.
 - i. **Ac 1:11**

IV. What Will Be The Sign Of The End Of The Age?

- A. There will be no sign
1. **Mt 24:36** "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."
 2. **I Th 5:2** "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night."

CONCLUSION

1. There is of course not enough time in a sermon to do a complete study of this chapter however there is ample here to see what is under consideration.
 - a. Here is the reality we must be ready always as there is no sign of His coming to prepare us in advance.
 - b. Thus let us always be ready.
2. Invitation.²

² I got this title and the rest in this miniseries from a Dezmond Stevens, who did a sermon with this title and the other ones as points.