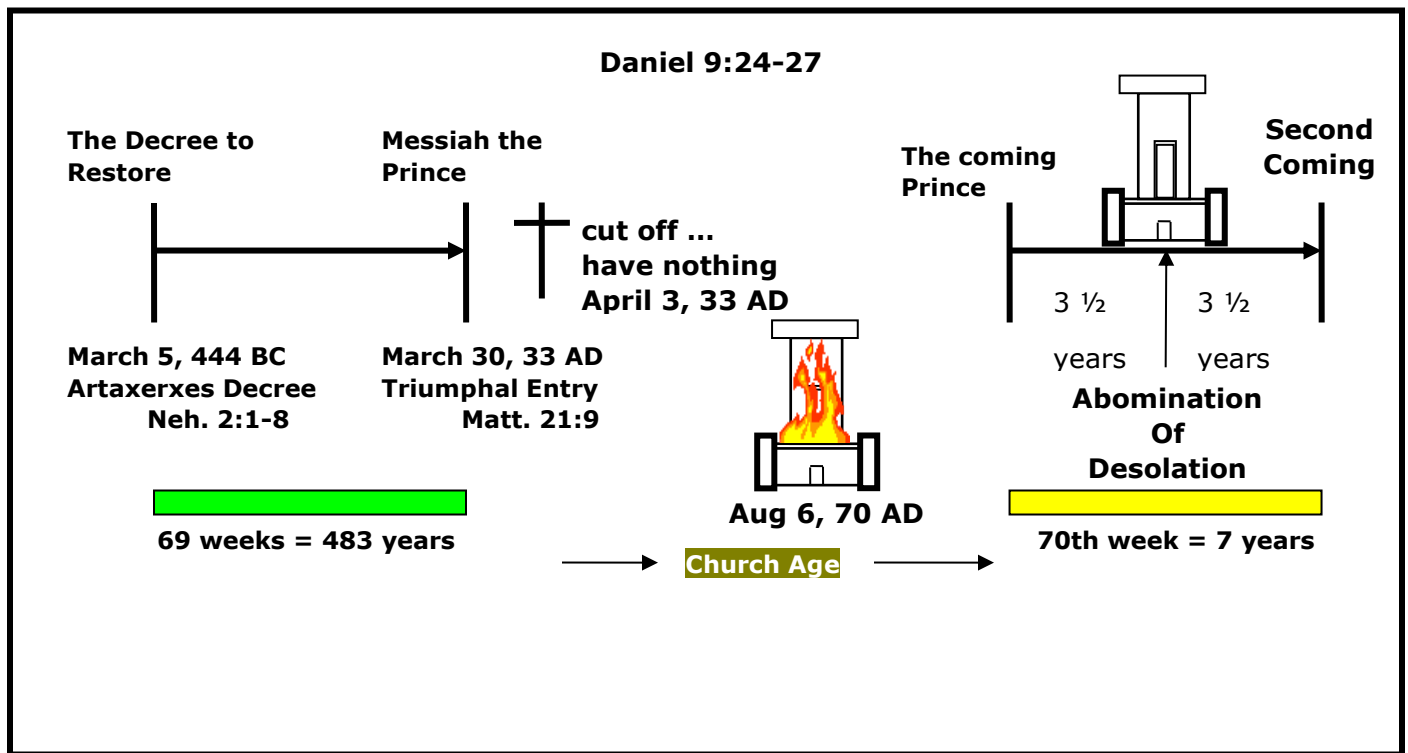


Last time we met, I promised a quick diversion into the allegorical interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan by the early church father Augustine. This is example of Augustine’s spiritual interpretation of the Good Samaritan parable is found in his *Questions on the Gospels*. He begins by arguing that

*A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; Adam himself is meant; Jerusalem is the heavenly city of peace, from whose blessedness Adam fell; Jericho means the moon, and signifies our mortality, because it is born, waxes, wanes, and dies. Thieves are the devil and his angels. Who stripped him, namely; of his immortality; and beat him, by persuading him to sin; and left him half-dead, because in so far as man can understand and know God, he lives, but in so far as he is wasted and oppressed by sin, he is dead; he is therefore called half-dead. The priest and the Levite who saw him and passed by, signify the priesthood and ministry of the Old Testament which could profit nothing for salvation. Samaritan means Guardian, and therefore the Lord Himself is signified by this name. The binding of the wounds is the restraint of sin. Oil is the comfort of good hope; wine the exhortation to work with fervent spirit. The beast is the flesh in which He deigned to come to us. The being set upon the beast is belief in the incarnation of Christ. The inn is the Church, where travelers returning to their heavenly country are refreshed after pilgrimage. The morrow is after the resurrection of the Lord. The two pence are either the two precepts of love, or the promise of this life and of that which is to come. The innkeeper is the Apostle. The supererogatory payment is either his counsel of celibacy, or the fact that he worked with his own hands lest he should be a burden to any of the weaker brethren when the Gospel was new, though it was lawful for him “to live by the gospel.”*

**Framework from Daniel**



**The Questions**

In reviewing last weeks discussion, we understand that the disciples asked two questions:

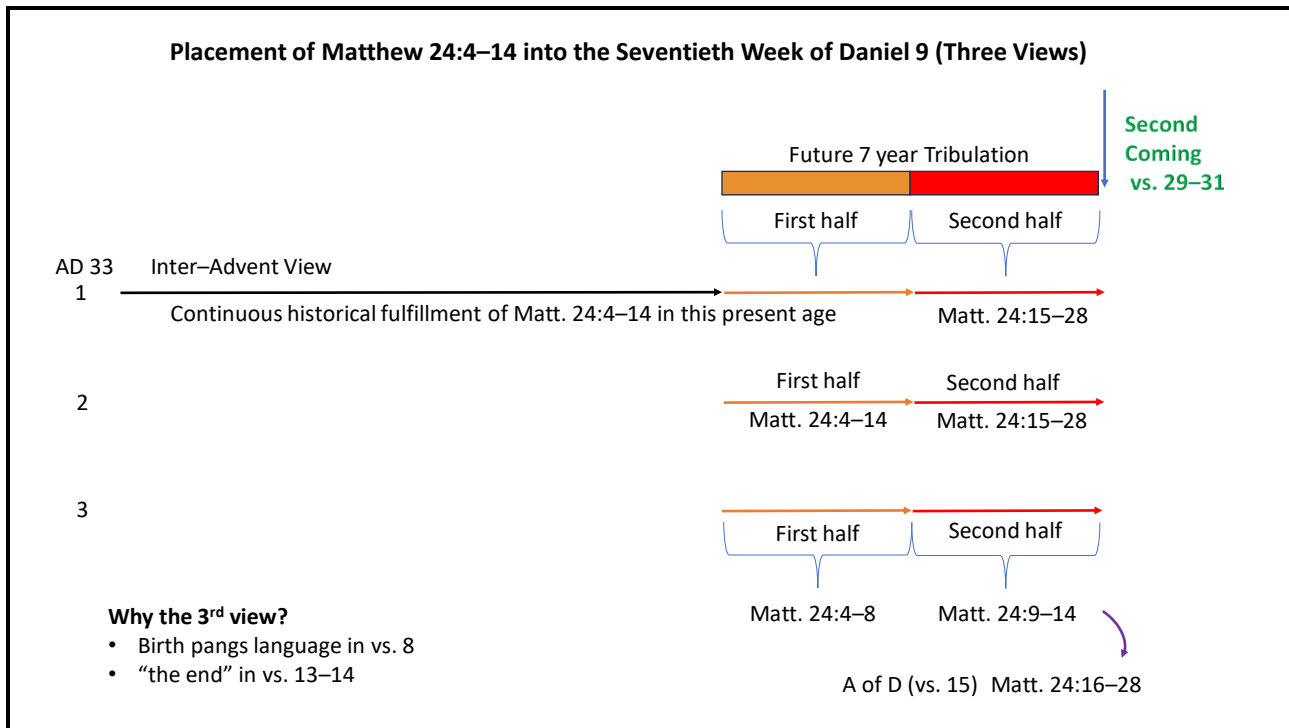
1. When will these things happen?
2. What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?

Since their questions were in response to Jesus’ statement, namely, “not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down,” and Jesus was referring to the temple buildings, it is evident that the demonstrative pronoun “these things” in the first questions must refer to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.

As we surveil Matthew 24, we notice that Matthew does not record the details of this destruction. In fact, neither Jerusalem nor the temple are mentioned at all in Matthew 24, though the holy of holies is envisioned in verse 15. If there are no details concerning this destruction, the conclusion is that **Matthew does not record Jesus' answer to the first question**. Since it is apparent from verse 29–31 (coming in the clouds), the Second Coming is in view ... and since Matthew does not record the answer to the first question; the conclusion is that **Matthew only records the answer to the disciples second question**.

### Three Futurist Views

Recall last week we discussed three main views of Matthew 24:4–14 with respect to where they fall in our Daniel framework. The illustration below highlights the differences between the views:



### False Christs (vs. 4–5)

The first item that Jesus discusses with respect to His coming is a warning. “See to it that no one misleads you?” What is He warning them about? What could they be misled about? I believe the next comment Jesus makes concerns the nature of this misleading. “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ’ and will mislead many. There it is. Jesus is not warning the disciples against some sort of generic spiritual deception, He is warning them not to be deceived by someone coming and claiming “I am the Christ you are expecting.” ... There will be many false Christs during the tribulation period and those false Christs will be believed by “many.” What will be particularly disturbing is that later, in verse 24, Jesus mentions that in the second half of the tribulation, false Christs and false prophets will show great signs and wonders. The point is, the coming of the Son of Man, the Messiah the nation of Israel is waiting for, will come on the clouds of heaven ... not randomly show up during the tribulation displaying signs and wonders.

The fact that Jesus is mentioning multiple false Christs (vs. 5, 24) and prophets (vs. 24) is one of the many reasons why Matthew 24 is not referring to events leading up to the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem; i.e., the aberrant view of Preterism. History does not record multiple false Christs and prophets in the time up to the 70 AD events, though they try to shoehorn Simon in Acts 8 as claiming to be the Messiah. Indeed, you would be hard pressed to find anyone in history that made a claim to the office of the Messiah; but they will be commonplace in the tribulation. This is also a strong case against the Inter-Advent view of Matthew 24:4–14.

## **Wars ... (vs. 6–7a)**

There have always been wars on the earth and this is perhaps why many find the Inter-Advent view attractive. We can see war all around the world. Today, April 7, 2024 ... the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law is monitoring 110 armed conflicts in the world. Now, it is not totally clear what the difference is between a war and an armed conflict, but the number of them seems a lot. But if these “wars and rumors of wars” are somehow supposed to be characteristic of the coming tribulation period, and not merely commonplace, there must be some aspect to these future conflicts that will distinguish them from today’s commonplace conflicts. What would that be? I believe Jesus goes on to distinguish those future conflicts.

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ...” is the phrase that Jesus uses here. We certainly understand ‘nation against nation’ ... that would be equivalent to a war between say, Russia and Ukraine. But what about kingdom against kingdom? That would seem to indicate a multi-nation war involving larger geographical areas. For example, this ‘kingdom against kingdom’ designation would look like NATO countries warring against the Arab Nations ... or the old Soviet block nations. More along a World War III mentality. But also recall that in the context of Daniel’s framework, there will be ten kings, and presumably ten kingdoms, in existence in the timeframe of the last Gentile kingdom.

Notice again that this is not what took place in 70 AD. Rome was a Gentile kingdom that fought against a single nation; Israel. The 70 AD events in no way resemble kingdom against kingdom warfare. The context and use of the particular words here indicate a world-wide aspect to these wars. It should be noted that many see the first half of the tribulation period as a time of relative peace in the world. It will not be!

Since these false Messiahs and the wars will take place, there will be a tendency to conclude that the end is coming soon. Jesus tells them a few things ... do not be frightened, those things (again, what is the demonstrative pronoun here referring to?) must take place, and the end is not yet. In the midst of these early characteristics, Jesus assures them that there is much more to come.

## **Famines and Earthquakes ... (vs. 7b)**

When we approach verse 7b here, we have another reason why the Inter-Advent view is popular ... as there have always been famines and earthquakes. But again, if this is to be a characteristic of the tribulation period, somehow *these* famines and earthquakes must distinguish themselves from the commonplace markers that have always been part of human history ... and it is our conjecture these are widespread famines that occur all over the world ... perhaps as a result of the wars of the previous verses. The section concludes with the important verse 8 ... “But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs,” implying that the hard-labor birth pangs are still yet to come.

## **Tribulation (vs. 9–10)**

As we continue in the text of Matthew 24, we come to one of those key grammatical points at the beginning of verse 9. Every translation renders the opening τότε as “Then,” and is described in Friberg as an adverb of subsequent time. Matthew is saying the events of verses 4 through 8 constitute the “beginning of birth pangs” and what follows is highlighted in verses 9 through 14. Notice that if this “deliver you to tribulation” is indeed in the second half of the tribulation, it fits the framework from Daniel 7:

“I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them ... wear down the saints of the Highest One ... they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.” Dan. 7:21, 25.

What is Matthew 24:9 depicting? It seems clear from the statement “and will kill you,” that martyrdom is in view here. Those Jews whom receive and recognize Christ as their Messiah during the tribulation period are likely to be killed for their faith (not all of them, but many of them.) Since we understand that the nation as a whole will not repent until the Second Coming, many non-believing Jews will also be killed, and on a fairly large scale. Recall from a passage in Zechariah 10 that two-third of Jews will be killed during this time.

Jesus goes on to say that worldwide hatred of Jews (and those who come to believe in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile) will be part of the second half of the tribulation period. Verse 10 tells us at that time, many will fall away. What is this talking about? It seems to indicate that many will profess Christ during the tribulation, but when the real trials come for genuine believers, those who are not genuine believers will step up and join the persecution of true believers. How will they do this? They will betray one another and hate one another. The sequence of events seems to be ... persecution of true and professing believers by the world who hates Christ, the falling away of the professing believers, the martyrdom of true believers by professing believers and unbelievers.

Jesus then mentions the rise and presence of false prophets to go along with the false Christs. Though he is not mentioned by name here, we understand the ultimate false prophet is the False Prophet of Revelation 13 (depicted as the beast from the Earth) who is expected during the second half of the tribulation period.

### **Lawlessness (vs. 12–13)**

Lawlessness is a spiritual condition of an unregenerate heart. It is the condition where the law of God is purposefully being rejected. That the entire world will be in this condition is evident by the future leader of the world being called “the man of lawlessness” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. We also recognize the attractiveness of the Inter-Advent view in that lawlessness has certainly been historically increasing. However, during the tribulation the extent and scope of lawlessness will be unparalleled; due to the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit being removed. The general condition of the world will be lawlessness; and this condition causes “most people’s love to grow cold.” Can you imagine the entire world living for themselves, not a thought about another person. We can see how the passage is leading to the ultimate lawlessness in the Abomination of Desolation.

But Jesus gives an encouragement ... the one who endures to the end will be saved. What does Jesus mean? It seems unlikely that salvation from sin is in view here. It seems more likely the enduring meant here is the endurance from the physical harm of the false Christs, the earthquakes, famines, wars, martyrdom, betrayal, etc. I believe Jesus is talking about physical deliverance or rescue from physical death because of all these things. Enduring to the end seems to refer to the end of all of these things that are coming upon the world in the tribulation period ... which things conclude at the end of the age with the Second Coming. Recall part of the description in Daniel 12:1 ... namely,

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at the time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, **will be rescued.**”

This is why the framework from Daniel is critical for understanding Matthew 24. There cannot be redefinition of Daniel’s truth to shoehorn into any contrived NT framework. *Anything we find in NT eschatology must refine, enhance, or add detail to Daniel’s OT eschatological framework. It can never **overwrite** this framework.*

### **The Gospel (vs. 14)**

This verse is a favorite of the post-millennial view; for at first glance, it implies the gospel must be preached to the entire world before the Second Coming can happen ... i.e., the church will usher in the kingdom through the conversion of the entire world. But we want to be careful in assuming that this gospel of the kingdom is the NT gospel message concerning the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ alone. Put yourself in a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jew’s shoes. What would be your immediate reaction to “the kingdom of God is at hand? (Mark 1:15)” “Repent, because the king and His kingdom are coming ...”

Years ago, David Platt preached a sermon at Together for the Gospel, which we played as a Sunday School class. In his sermon he said the Lord’s return is conditioned on the church preaching the gospel to all the nations on earth. Since we haven’t done that yet ... he effectively implied that Jesus cannot return until this job is finished. This was such a glaring error to the doctrine of imminency that I felt the need to do a 10-minute post-sermon correction the following week. The main part of my argument was that the church contributes to this worldwide evangelistic effort, yes; but it will not fulfill it entirely. The completion of this preaching will be accomplished by the angelic proclamation of Revelation 14 during the second half of the tribulation period.