

The Pharisees and Herodians having failed, the Sadducees attempted to discredit Jesus. Citing Moses' instruction in Deuteronomy 25:5 involving **levirate** marriages, they said that when a man's brother dies childless, the surviving brother was to marry the deceased brother's widow and raise up a posterity for the deceased to perpetuate his name and inheritance (v. 28). They then presented Jesus a scenario involving a family of seven brothers, each one successively dying after marrying the previous brother's widow.

Jesus responded to their question with its implied mockery of the resurrection by reprimanding the Sadducees for not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God and thus being in error (cf. Mk 12:24). When the dead are raised, Jesus declared, they are similar to the angels in heaven in that they do not marry (Lk 20:35-36). Implied in Jesus statement is that the dead are raised immortal and thus there will be no death and hence no need to procreate to replace the dead.

Jesus' directly addressed the Sadducees' faulty view of the **resurrection** by pointing them to the Lord's words to Moses from the burning bush (Exod 3:6). Contrary to the Sadducees' mistaken understanding, death does not end it all (v. 38). God did not say to Moses that He *was* the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but that He *is* the God of these men. The implication demanded by this description is that, although these patriarchs have died, they are yet living.

d. Jesus' Warning against Hypocrisy and His Commendation of the Widow's Offering, 20:41-21:4

Following his questioning by the Jewish leaders, Jesus asked a question (20:41). David did not view the Messiah as merely his son, but also as "my Lord" (*adonai*). The clear implication from what Jesus was saying was that this psalm taught the **deity** of the Messiah.

By drawing the disciples' attention to the widow's gift (21:2), Jesus showed her as an extraordinary example of dedication to God and confidence in God's ability to provide for those who trust Him, in stark contrast to the testimony of the scribes.

2) Jesus' Prediction of the Judgments Preceding His Return, 21:5-38

This discourse was triggered by questions from the disciples in response to Jesus' statement about the destruction of the temple. It is one of Christ's longest discourses, and one of the most challenging to interpret.

This account, known as *the Olivet discourse*, is most fully given by Matthew. Mark's account parallels much of what Matthew records, but Luke provides very important material not found in the other two synoptics. Luke's account of Jesus' discourse

answering the disciples' question of v. 7 is essential for distinguishing what is now **history** and what is still **future**.

Considering the Olivet discourse as revealed in the three Synoptic Gospels, the events addressed by the disciples' inquiry are two: (1) *the judgment upon Jerusalem*, involving the destruction of the temple, and (2) *the return of Christ*, ending this age (cp. Matt 24:3; Mark 13:4 with Luke 21:7).

Difficulty surrounds *identifying what parts of Jesus' discourse deals with these two particular events*. Some make no attempt; some apply it all to Christians in this age; others understand the entire passage as fulfilled in A.D. 70. While this passage is a challenge to interpret, Luke provides the solution in **21:12-24**, which must be understood in its own context and in comparison with the other synoptics.

Each of the synoptics begin the discourse similarly:

- Warning of false Christ's; wars, and rumors of wars; nation rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom; famines and earthquakes (Matt 24:4-8; Mark 13:5-8; Luke 21:8-11)
- All three warn that these things do not mean the *end* of the age but are only the beginning (Matt 24:8; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:9)

It is precisely at this point in Jesus' discourse that Luke records a section that Matthew and Mark did not, namely 21:12-24. This section is a **parenthesis** that begins in v. 12, "but *before* all these things," in other words, the things already referred to which will mark the beginning of the "end." Luke's parenthetical section ends with the words "and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (v. 24).

This section that only Luke records provides the **answer** to the disciples' question about the judgment of Jerusalem and the temple. Here Jesus identifies the events that will occur from the time of his ascension to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The only hint of what will occur between A.D. 70 and the arrival of the "end" is that Jerusalem will be under the Gentile heel until the end of Gentile world supremacy (v. 24).

It is important to note that while Luke describes desolations and tribulations (vv.12-24), he does not put those in connection with either "the **abomination** of desolation" (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14) or the incomparable "great **tribulation**" (Matt 24:21; Mark 13:19). Instead, Luke connects these desolations and tribulations with Jerusalem's destruction (v. 20), Israel's dispersion (v. 24) and the rule of the Gentiles (v. 24).

This *parenthesis* Luke records in chapter 21 is clearly seen to be such by joining v. 11 with v. 25—"...there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations..." Without vv. 12-

24 the account flows smoothly, and this demonstrates this pericope's parenthetical quality.

All three synoptics record Christ's teaching about his Second Coming and the end of the age, but only Luke clearly identifies and records what Christ specifically said about the judgment that would fall on Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Those who have tried to harmonize Luke 21:12-24 with Matthew and Mark's accounts do so because of similar wording, not the overall subject matter (cf. v. 21—fleeing to the mountains would be good advice anytime Jerusalem is threatened with destruction).

Regarding the section that Luke does not record but Matthew (24:9-26) and Mark (9-23) do, here Jesus answers the second event the disciples' inquired about, those signs marking the return of Christ, ending this age. Though some attempt to apply this to the church age or see it applicable to both the church age and the future, the **context** of Jesus' discourse is specifically addressing the future of **Israel** (cf. Matt 24:1-2; Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:1-6).

Jesus' answer of this second event corresponds to the **last** week of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, the period of time in which God will fulfill His promises to the nation of Israel, culminating with the ushering in of the millennial kingdom (cf. Dan 9:24-27). Much prophecy deals with Daniel's 70th week, which refers to the **tribulation**, the judgment portion of the "Day of the Lord." These tribulation judgments are vividly described by John in Revelation 6:1-19:21.

The portion of the Olivet Discourse describing the Tribulation period can be outlined thus:

- 1) Matt 24:5-14 and Mark 13:5-13 correspond closely with the seals in Revelation 6, which describe events during the first half of the Tribulation.
- 2) Matt 24:15-28 and Mark 13:14-23 describe conditions during the second half of the Tribulation. This period will begin with the antichrist breaking his covenant with Israel, halting the daily sacrifices in Jerusalem, and setting up an image of himself in the temple to be worshipped as God (cf. Dan 9:27; 12:11; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:14-15).
- 3) Matt 24:29-31 and Mark 13:24-27 set forth the coming of Christ following these judgments, gathering Israel from around the world, raising the Tribulation martyrs and OT saints (Dan 12:1-3), and establishing his kingdom.
- 4) Matt 24:32-25:13 and Mark 13:28-37 are illustrations of watchfulness.

All three synoptics describe conditions "immediately after the tribulation" (Matt 24:29 Mark 13:24) before the Son of Man appears in the sky and descends with power and glory (Matt 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27). Luke again provides **unique** material, specifically noting that when these events occur, those alive at that time

(“this generation,” Matt 24:34; Mark 13:30) should “recognize that the kingdom of God is near” (Luke 21:31). The kingdom of God is clearly identified with the future and **contemporaneous** with Christ’s Second Advent.

Thus, while Luke says little about the details of the end of the age, under the direction of the Spirit he gives the fullest account of the **fall** of Jerusalem.

3) The Last Supper and Jesus’ His Farewell Discourse, 22:1–38

During the observance of the Passover meal, Jesus tells the disciples that this is the last Passover he will observe with them until he establishes the kingdom. During the meal Jesus takes the bread and cup and initiates the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, the elements **symbolizing** his sacrificial death as a substitutionary atonement for sin. He tells the disciples that his death, represented by the elements, ratifies the promised **new** covenant, its fulfillment taking place when he sets up his kingdom.

The new covenant is an **unconditional** covenant God promised to **Israel**, guaranteeing spiritual life and the forgiveness of sins so they would dwell obediently in the land (cf. Jer 31:31-34). It is “new” in relation to the Mosaic (or, “old”) covenant. It is not set against the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. The main contrasts between the OC and the NC are forgiveness of sin, priesthood, and ability to obey God.

Christ’s death on the cross provided the means for sin to be **forgiven** (Luke 22:20). He established the Lord’s Supper as both a memorial and prophecy (Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26). As the high priest Christ is the mediator of the NC. His death provides the foundation for the NC and guarantees the fulfillment of its promises (Heb 9:15-20).

Today, believers in Christ experience regeneration and forgiveness of sins. Believers do not **fulfill** the NC, but they **participate** in the blessings of the NC because of their faith in the crucified and risen Jewish Messiah, specifically through forgiveness of their sins.

The reason the Lord’s Supper has a forward look to Christ’s return is because of the anticipated fulfillment of the NC—“I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Luke 22:16). When Christ returns the blessings of the NC made possible through Christ’s death will be poured out upon Israel. Their sins will be forgiven and a new heart imparted. They will dwell in the land obediently. Thus, when the NT Jews observed the Lord’s Table, it was a time when they remembered the Lord’s death on their behalf (the basis of their sins forgiven) and looked forward to Christ’s return for His people (the anticipation of the fulfillment of this covenant).

4) Jesus’ Betrayal, Trials, and Crucifixion, 22:39–23:56