

A Surprise in the Olivet Discourse: Matthew 24

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INTRODUCTION

The word *parousia* (*para + ousia*, literally, *presence*) appears four times in this context, but nowhere else in Matthew. 2 Corinthians 10:10 demonstrates this meaning. The NKJV translates both *parousia* and *erchomai* as coming in this passage. This is unfortunate. I would recommend that you write *parousia* or *presence* in place of the word *coming* in the four asterisked verses.

3* *parousia*

27* *parousia*

30 *erchomai*

37* *parousia*

39* *parousia*

42 *erchomai*

44 *erchomai*

48 *erchomai*

Coming is a very bad translation for *parousia*, because the disciples were not expecting Him to leave (as we have seen in John). They did not even catch on in Acts 1 that He was going.

EXPOSITION

(24:1–2) When Jesus' disciples pointed out the Temple, Jesus said that not one stone shall be left upon another

(24:3) The disciples asked:

1. When will these things be?
2. What will be the sign of Your *parousia*?
3. What will be the sign of the end of the age?

Matthew does not record Him saying anything about the Temple (which was part of their first question), but Luke 21:12–24 does speak about the Temple

Note that Luke 21:12 says that the Temple will be destroyed an unspecified length of time before the prophetic events of 21:10–11

Luke 21:12–24 happened in AD 66–70; 21:10–11 will be in the Tribulation

(RECAP: 24:3) The disciples asked:

- 1. When will these things be?**
- 2. What will be the sign of Your *parousia*?**
- 3. What will be the sign of the end of the age?**

The point when Jesus starts to answer the *When?* Question (question 1) is in 24:36:

(24:36) No one (apart from the Father) knows when the *parousia* will be

As of the time that Jesus said this, no human knew when the *parousia* will be

As of the time that Jesus said this, no angel knew when the *parousia* will be

Mark 13:32 tells us

As of the time that Jesus said this, not even Jesus knew when the *parousia* will be

(24:37–39) When the *parousia* starts (in the Rapture), all unbelievers will be caught off-guard and will be unprepared for the following calamity, just as they were in Noah's day

24:4–14 describes the calamities that will follow a seeming time of peace

(24:40–41) When the *parousia* starts (in the Rapture), neither the man taken nor the man left nor the woman taken nor the woman left will know beforehand that it would happen

This is a Rapture passage, but I rejected the idea of the Rapture in Matthew 24 until 2006

My biggest **former** objection was that Ephesians 3 says that the Church Age was a complete mystery until God revealed to the apostles that Gentiles would have an equal status with Jews in a new entity, the universal Church

However, Jesus did not reveal the mystery

How many people does He say were taken? Does He say that **ALL** bels will be raptured

To what entity do they belong? (Does He say that they are part of the Church?)

What Jesus did is like how parents speak about delicate subjects, when their young children are present. They say enough to communicate to each other, but not enough that their children will figure out what is being said

The word for *taken* is *paralambanō*, which has positive connotations: cf. Matt 1:20, 24; 2:13–14, 20–21. It is not taken for judgment.

(24:43–51) Jesus warns His disciples that they will not know when He will come to rapture them, so they need to be rewardable at all times (because the Rapture will be at an unexpected time)

(24:4–14) Then (after the Rapture and a gap) the world enters the beginning of labor pains (the first half of the Tribulation)

(24:15–31) Then the world will enter the Great Tribulation (the second half of the Trib) and Christ will return (Second Advent)

(24:15–28) The world will enter the Great Tribulation

In verse 22, the days will be shortened to seven years, not shortened from seven years.

(24:29) As the time of Tribulation draws to a close, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give light, stars will fall, and the heavens will be shaken

Do the events of verse 29 happen in secret? No!

(24:30–31) The Son of Man will appear in the heavens (in the clouds, per 1 Thess 4:17) as a sign to all people and earth will mourn and will see Him come on the clouds of heaven He will gather together His elect from the ends of the heavens (e.g., the clouds, as 1 Thess 4:17 says)

Cf. 2 Thess 2:8

OBSERVATION AND CONCLUSIONS

The starting point of the *parousia* is unknown to anyone other than the Father. It will be unknown to both believers and to unbelievers when it starts (in the Rapture). Believers need to be rewardable at all times, because we do not know when the Rapture will be.

Since unbelievers will not know about the Rapture or the Tribulation, they will have no escape from the Tribulation

Christ's Second advent will happen at a very predictable time:

The seven year Tribulation will precede it

Darkening of the sun and moon will precede it

Stars falling will precede it

Then Christ (in the heavens) will become visible to earth as a sign and then He will come to earth accompanied by raptured Church Age believers

Note: No one can predict when the Rapture will happen, but people will be able to predict when the Second Advent will happen. This proves that they are two different events. The Rapture precedes the seven-year Tribulation, the Second Advent happens at the end of the seven-year Tribulation.