

"The law of the Lord is perfect,  
reviving the soul; the testimony of  
the Lord is sure, making wise the  
simple;"

Psalm 19:7 (ESV)



## Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.  
Jacksonville, FL 32220

### Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Classes / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

[www.mariettacoc.com](http://www.mariettacoc.com)

### Explain This Passage, Please

*"And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!  
But pray that your fight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day."*

(Matthew 24.19-20)

Those who believe that the 24th chapter of Matthew has reference to the second coming of Christ face a problem with these verses. They "hear of wars and rumors of wars" on every hand; they observe "famines, and pestilences, earthquakes, in divers places"; they see "iniquity abounding"; and seeing all of these signs, they are sure that the Lord's second coming is near. But why is a woe placed on a mother with a small baby? Why be concerned about the winter or the sabbath day? Will a mother with a small baby be handicapped in some way when Christ comes again? Will we all be handicapped if He comes in the winter or on the sabbath day? What is the meaning of these verses?

These verses do not have reference to the Lord's second coming at all, but to the destruction of Jerusalem. The reader should consider carefully the first three verses of the chapter. The disciples were desirous of showing Jesus the building of the temple. Jesus' reply was: "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The disciples then asked Jesus two questions: (1) "Tell us, when shall these things be?" — That is, when shall the time come when one stone of the temple shall not be left upon another? — and, (2) "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

These two questions are not the same. The destruction of the temple will not take place when Christ returns; it has already taken place. The temple was destroyed (not one stone was left upon another) in A.D. 70 by the Roman armies under the direction of Titus. Jesus prophesied of this destruction in verses 4-35 of Matthew 24. Thus was the answer to the apostles' first question. A recognition of this division in thought is essential to an understanding of Matthew 24.

Jesus' instructions concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were:

1. Certain signs would precede it: False Christs (v. 5); wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes (vs. 6-7); persecution (vs. 9-10); false prophets (v. 11); iniquity and apostasy (v. 12); gospel to be preached in all the world (v. 14). There is historical record that all these did precede Jerusalem's destruction.

2. Armies were to enter Jerusalem. Matthew's account refers to these armies as "*the abomination of desolation*" (v. 15). Luke in his account, however, says, "*When ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies...*" (Luke 21:20)

3. Christians were to flee. If they were on the housetop, they were not to comedown to take anything from their houses; if in the field, they were not to return (vs. 17-18). It was in connection with their fleeing from the Roman armies that Jesus said, "*Woe unto them that are with child.*" A child will be no handicap when Christ comes again, but would have been a terrific handicap in fleeing from war and destruction. Other handicaps would have been winter weather and sabbath day restrictions resulting from the closing of gates on that day. The disciples were to pray that their flight from the Roman armies would not be under these conditions.

4. Great tribulation to result. "*Such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*" (v. 21). Josephus, the Jewish historian, records that eleven hundred thousand (1,100,000) died when Jerusalem was destroyed; that crosses were erected in every place where there was room for a cross in Jerusalem and that as many bodies were place on each cross as was possible;

That mothers were found eating their own children. Blood literally ran through the streets.

5. The days of the siege would be shortened that the elect might be saved (v. 22).

6. All was to take place within that generation (v. 34); that is, within the generation of those whom He was speaking. This rules out any possibility of His referring to the second coming.

#### Time of Second Coming Unknown

Jesus did speak of His second coming beginning with verse 36 of Matthew 24. He had given signs to let them know when the destruction of Jerusalem would take place, but He said of His second coming, "*But of that day and hour no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*" Let us not be deceived by those who misuse Matthew 24. The signs of Matthew 24:4-14 do not refer to Christ's second coming. We have no way of knowing when He shall come, so we are warned: "*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh.*" (Matthew 24:44).

Written by; Bill Hall

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