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Everything That Was to Happen Before the Temple Fell



By Dan Maines

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Introduction:

† Jesus and the apostles were clear about what must take place before the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 AD. These were not distant future events. They were signs and fulfillments for that generation. Let's examine them step by step.

1. The Gospel Preached to the Whole World

Matthew 24:14

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Colossians 1:23

...the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Romans 10:18

But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? On the contrary:

Their voice has gone out into all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world.

Colossians 1:6

...which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing...

Romans 16:26

...the commandment of the eternal God has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.

† Multiple witnesses confirm the gospel had already gone into all the world before 70 AD. Even opponents in Acts 17:6 accused Christians of having "upset the world," showing the rapid spread of the message.

2. The Abomination of Desolation

Matthew 24:15-16

Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

Luke 21:20-21

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains...

† Luke interprets Matthew for us. The abomination was not a future Antichrist but the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem in the first century.

Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5.3:

"The whole body of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation... removed from the city and dwelt at Pella."

† Early church history confirms Christians obeyed Jesus' warning and escaped before the final siege.

3. The Great Tribulation

Matthew 24:21

For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will again.

† Fulfilled in the horrors of the Jewish-Roman War, as recorded by historian Josephus.

Josephus, Wars of the Jews 6.9.3:

It is impossible to recount all the outrages committed in detail, for no other city ever endured such miseries, nor has any generation from the beginning of the world suffered so great a calamity as this.

† Josephus records famine so severe that mothers ate their own children (Wars 6.3.4), bodies piled in the streets, and over a million people perished in the siege.

Tacitus, Histories 5.13:

"Both sexes, every age, the noble and the common were slain in vast numbers... Jerusalem, once so famous, was totally destroyed."

† Even Roman historians admitted the devastation was unparalleled. Together, Josephus and Tacitus give united testimony that this was indeed the greatest tribulation ever seen.

4. The Coming of the Son of Man

Matthew 24:30

...they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

Isaiah 19:1

The oracle concerning Egypt:

Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt...

† This is judgment language from the Old Testament. It does not describe a physical descent to Earth but God's coming in judgment through historical events.

5. The Gathering of the Elect

Matthew 24:31

And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet blast, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Ephesians 3:6

...that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body...

† This was the covenantal gathering of Jew and Gentile into one New Covenant body, the church.

6. All Prophecy Fulfilled

Luke 21:22

These are the days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Jesus said all prophecy would be fulfilled in the judgment on Jerusalem, not thousands of years later.

7. The End of the Age

Matthew 24:3

...what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

† It was the end of the Old Covenant age with the fall of the temple, not the end of the physical world. Hebrews confirms the old system was already "ready to disappear."

8. The Passing of Heaven and Earth

Matthew 5:18

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass

away.

Isaiah 51:15-16

I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar... I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, "You are My people."

2 Peter 3:7

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Josephus, Wars of the Jews 3.5.4:

"The Temple was constructed to be an imitation and representation of the universe."

Philo, On the Special Laws 1.66:

"The temple was a copy and representation of the whole heaven."

Rabbinic Midrash (Numbers Rabbah 12:13):

"As long as the Temple stood, the world stood; when the Temple fell, the world fell."

† Heaven and Earth is covenantal language describing Israel's world under the Law. Jesus said it would pass when all was fulfilled. Isaiah shows heaven and earth as symbolic of God's covenant with His people. Josephus and Philo both describe the temple itself as a microcosm of the universe, and later rabbis confirmed that the fall of the temple meant the fall of their "world." When Jerusalem and the temple fell, the Old Covenant heaven and earth passed away, and the New Covenant world was established.

9. The Resurrection and Judgment

Daniel 12:1-2

...there will be a time of distress... and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake...

Revelation 11:18

And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged...

John 5:28-29

Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come out; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the bad deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

Acts 24:15

...having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

† Paul used the word *mello*, meaning about to be, showing this resurrection and judgment were imminent in his day. These events occurred within the context of the temple's destruction, not in our future.

10. The Kingdom Delivered to the Father

1 Corinthians 15:24

then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to our God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

Hebrews 12:28

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.

† Christ reigned until His enemies were made His footstool. When Jerusalem fell, He delivered the kingdom to the Father, which we now possess and receive.

11. All Within One Generation

Matthew 24:34

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† Jesus spoke plainly. Everything He listed was fulfilled before His generation passed away.

Conclusion:

† The destruction of the temple was not just a historical event. It was the climactic fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy. Every sign He gave was visible in the first century. The time statements are clear. The gospel was preached, Jerusalem was surrounded, tribulation came, judgment fell, resurrection was accomplished, and the New Covenant kingdom was established.

† Let's honor Christ not by waiting for what has already come, but by proclaiming what He accomplished in full.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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† Josephus, Wars of the Jews 6.9.3 – unparalleled calamity of Jerusalem

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews 6.3.4 – famine so severe mothers ate their children

† Tacitus, Histories 5.13 – slaughter and destruction of Jerusalem

† Suetonius, Lives of the Caesars, Vespasian 4 – omens of Jerusalem's fall

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5.3 – Christians fled to

Pella

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews 3.5.4 – temple as representation of the universe

† Philo, On the Special Laws 1.66 – temple as a copy of heaven

† Midrash Rabbah (Numbers 12:13) – when the temple fell, the world fell

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