

Apocalyptic Parallels

The purpose of this document is to compare three the accounts of the destruction of the Temple in the synoptic gospels with the details of the Book of Revelation. The Mount Olivet discourse of Jesus (also called the “mini-apocalypse”) described in rather vivid detail the events which would precede the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. The three accounts (Matt 24:1-36, Mark 13:1-37, Luke 21:5-36) are remarkably similar. The details must have fixed themselves quite vividly in the minds of the early disciples.

John’s Gospel does not contain an apocalyptic discourse. This may very likely be due to the fact that it is developed at great length in the Book of the Apocalypse (Revelation). In fact most of the details from the Mount Olivet discourse in the Synoptics are also present in the Book the Revelation. Clearly these details are developed at greater length, their order is reworked, and the vision is far more cosmic. Nevertheless the similarities are too extensive to be dismissed. This does not imply that John had no vision on the Isle of Patmos and this is simply a fanciful reworking of the Mount Olivet discourse. Rather, such a vision could well have been given John by the Spirit in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.* (John 14:26)

If it is true, that the words of Jesus in the Mount Olivet discourse serve as the backdrop for the Book of Revelation then we are also supplied with a context for the Book of Revelation. Although the context of the Book of Revelation is, of itself, not exactly clear, and even then debated, in the Mount Olivet discourse the context is quite clear: *And as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, "As for these things which you see, the days will come when there shall not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." And they asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign when this is about to take place?" And he said...* (Luke 21:5-7) Given the great similarities with the Book of Revelation, we may conclude that it is prophesying and/or describing the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in 70 AD. This theory is at odds with the present-day consensus of the majority of scholars who consider the harlot city (also called the “great city in Revelation) to be Rome and the context of Revelation to be the future destruction of that city. Nevertheless, there are substantial reasons for questioning the present-day majority opinion. The link to the Mount Olivet discourse is only one reason and cannot, by itself, prove the case that the Book of Revelation concerns the destruction of the Jerusalem and that this is the identity of the “Great City.” Nevertheless it is one piece in the overall case which is quite strong. The fuller description of the evidence for this viewpoint is set forth in the class notes for “Revelation” under separate cover.

*...and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city
which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.*

Rev 11:8

(Mat 24:1-36)

Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.

{2} But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down."

{3} As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?"

{4} And Jesus answered them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray. {5} For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.

{6} And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. {7} For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,

(Mark 13:1-37)

And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"

{2} And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down."

{3} And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, {4} "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign when these things are all to be accomplished?"

{5} And Jesus began to say to them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray. {6} Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray.

{7} And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is not yet. {8} For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;

(Luke 21:5-36)

And as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said,

{6} "As for these things which you see, the days will come when there shall not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

{7} And they asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign when this is about to take place?"

{8} And he said, "Take heed that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them.

{9} And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified; for this must first take place, but the end will not be at once."

{10} Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;

(Revelation)

Rev 11:1-2 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told: "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months.

Rev 1:1,3 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place...Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time is near.

Rev19:20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast...

Rev19:19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army.

Rev 6:4 ..another horse..its rider permitted to take peace from the earth, so that men should slay one another. ...and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: {8} all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs.

{9} "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. {10} And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. {11} And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. {12} And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. {13} But he who endures to the end will be saved. {14} And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.

{9} "But take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them. {10} And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. {11} And when they bring you to trial and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. {12} And brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; {13} and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

there will be earthquakes in various places, there will be famines; this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs.

{11} there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences;

{12} But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. {13} This will be a time for you to bear testimony. {14} Settle it therefore in your minds, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; {15} for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. {16} You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends, and some of you they will put to death; {17} you will be hated by all for my name's sake. {18} But not a hair of your head will perish. {19} By your endurance you will gain your lives.

{5} and behold, a black horse... {6} and I heard, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, but do harm oil and wine... {12} There was an earthquake... {8} And behold a pale horse...it's rider given power. to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

Rev 1:9 I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Rev 2:10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Rev 6:9 I saw, under the altar, those who had been slain for the word of God and the witness they had borne

Rev 13:10 If any one is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes...Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

{16} then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; {17} let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; {18} and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. {19} And alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! {20} Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

{21} For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. {22} And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

{19} For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be. {20} And if the Lord had not shortened the days, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

{23} For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people; {24} they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Rev 18:2-4 "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird; for all nations have drunk the wine of her impure passion, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness." Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;

{14} "But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; {15} let him who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything away; {16} and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. {17} And alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! {18} Pray that it may not happen in winter.

{20} "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. {21} Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; {22} for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written. {23} Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days!

Rv 11:1-2 I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there but do not measure court outside the Temple; leave that out for it is given to the nations that they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months

{23} Then if any one says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. {24} For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. {25} Lo, I have told you beforehand. {26} So, if they say to you, 'Lo, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out; if they say, 'Lo, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. {27} For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man. {28} Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

{29} "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken;

{21} And then if any one says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. {22} False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. {23} But take heed; I have told you all things beforehand.

{24} "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, {25} and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

{25} "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, {26} men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Rev19:20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast...

Rev 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place;

Rev 6:12-14 - ...and the sun became black, the full moon became like blood and the stars of the sky fell to the earth...the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up.. Then the kings of the earth, and the great men and the generals and the rich and the strong, and everyone, slave and free hid in the caves...calling to the mountains and rocks, "fall on us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

{30} then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; {31} and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

{32} "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. {33} So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

{34} Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place. {35} Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. {36} "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

{26} And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. {27} And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

{28} "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. {29} So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

{30} Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place. {31} Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. {32} "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

{27} And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. {28} Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

{29} And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees; {30} as soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. {31} So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

{32} Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away till all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Rev 14:14-16 Then I looked, and lo, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." So he who sat upon the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Rev 6:13 And the stars of the sky fell to earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Rev 22:7 And behold, I am coming soon." Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."