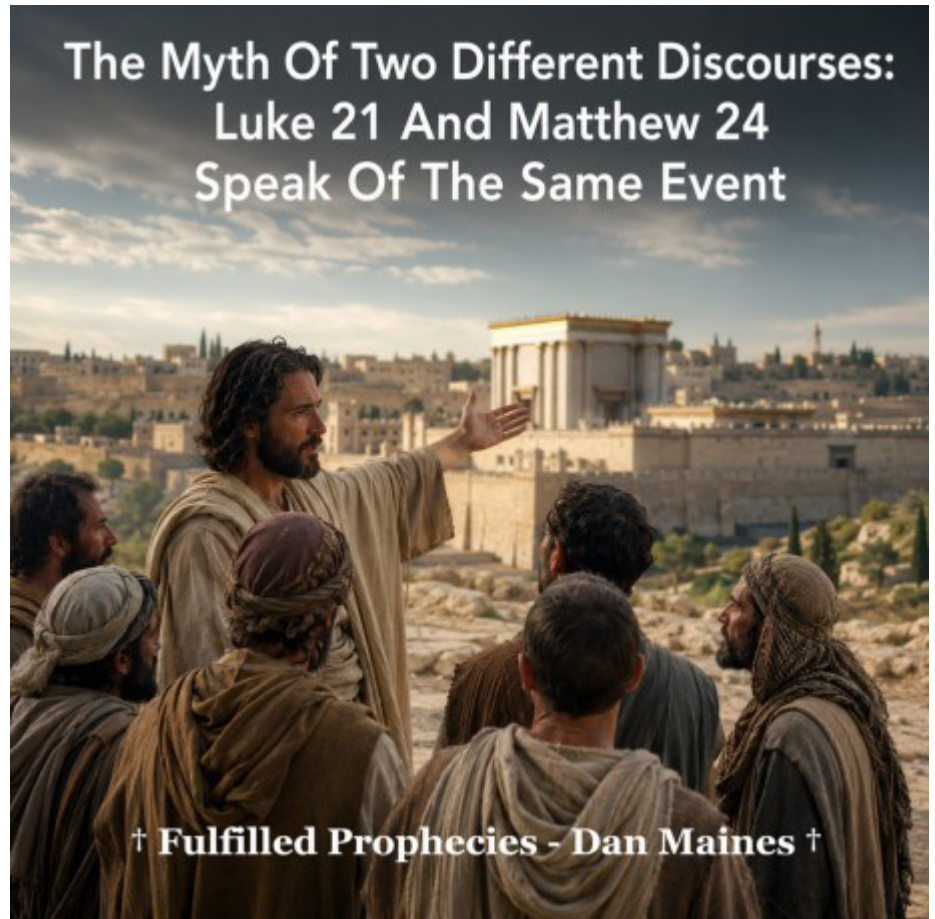


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The Myth Of Two Different Discourses: Luke 21 And Matthew 24 Speak Of The Same Event



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† One of the most common attempts to avoid the fulfilled message of Matthew 24 is the claim that Luke 21 records an entirely different discourse than Matthew 24. According to this view, Luke speaks only about the fall of Jerusalem, while Matthew suddenly shifts to events thousands of years later.

† The problem is that the Gospel writers themselves never make that distinction. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each record the same disciples asking the same Lord about the same temple after Jesus predicted its destruction.

† When all three accounts are read together, they don't contradict each other, they complement each other. Each writer emphasizes different details, but all point to the same first-century fulfillment that Jesus promised would occur within that generation.

Luke 21:5-7

And while some were talking about the temple, that it was decorated with beautiful stones and vowed gifts, He said, "As for these things which you are observing, the days will come when there will not be left one stone upon another, which will not be torn down."

They asked Him questions, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"

† Luke begins exactly where Matthew begins, with Jesus predicting the destruction of the temple. The subject is not changed between the Gospels, it is the same prophecy from another eyewitness perspective. (Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4)

† The disciples ask when these things would happen and what sign would announce their arrival. Luke records the same discussion that Matthew and Mark record. There is no indication that Jesus stopped one discourse and later gave another prophecy to answer the same question. (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:3-4)

† If Luke were describing a completely different discourse, we would expect a different setting, different audience, and different

prophecy. Instead, all three begin with the destruction of the same temple that stood before them. (Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 23:37-39)

Matthew 24:1-3

Jesus left the temple area and was going on His way when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. But He responded and said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

† Some claim Luke's discourse occurred inside the temple while Matthew's occurred later on the Mount of Olives. However, Matthew simply records where Jesus continued the same conversation after leaving the temple. Luke never says Jesus delivered an entirely separate prophetic discourse before leaving. (Mark 13:1-4)

† The change of location doesn't create a new prophecy any more than moving from one room to another creates a new conversation. The subject never changes. The disciples are still asking about the destruction Jesus had just predicted. (Luke 21:5-7)

† Matthew adds details of the disciples' question because he records the fuller conversation. Luke summarizes it more briefly, which is common throughout the Gospels. Different levels of detail don't prove different events. (John 20:30-31)

Mark 13:1-4

As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, look! What wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew were questioning Him privately, "Tell us, when will these things come about, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

† Mark confirms the same sequence recorded by Matthew. Jesus first left the temple, predicted its destruction, and then sat on the Mount of Olives where the disciples privately questioned Him. (Matthew 24:1-3)

† Mark doesn't record a separate temple discourse before reaching the Mount of Olives. Instead, he confirms that the prophetic discourse took place after Jesus sat on the mountain overlooking Jerusalem. (Luke 21:5-7)

† Since Matthew, Mark, and Luke all begin with the same prediction concerning the same temple, there is no biblical evidence that Jesus delivered two different prophetic discourses. The Gospel writers simply emphasize different details of the same conversation. (John 20:30-31)

Luke 21:20-22

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, and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Luke doesn't replace Matthew's prophecy of the abomination of desolation. He explains what the disciples would actually see as Jerusalem's desolation approached. Scripture often explains Scripture instead of repeating identical wording. (Matthew 24:15-16; Mark 13:14)

† Jesus calls these the days of vengeance in which all things written would be fulfilled. That language doesn't allow the prophecy to be postponed for thousands of years because He says the written prophecies were reaching their fulfillment in those days. (Deuteronomy 32:35; Hosea 9:7)

† Luke's account is one of the strongest proofs that Jesus was speaking about the Roman siege of Jerusalem, the very event that occurred in AD 70 exactly as He foretold. (Luke 19:43-44; Matthew 24:34)

Luke 21:37-38

Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mountain that is called Olivet. And all the people would get up very early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

† These verses describe Jesus' daily pattern of ministry, not the location where the prophecy of Luke 21 was delivered. Luke simply explains that Jesus taught in the temple by day and spent the nights on the Mount of Olives. (Matthew 24:3)

† Nothing in this passage says that Luke 21 records a separate Temple Discourse. The passage provides background information about Jesus' routine rather than introducing a second prophetic message. (Mark 13:3)

† Building an entirely new doctrine upon these verses ignores their context. Luke never says Jesus gave one prophecy in the temple and another on the Mount of Olives. The text simply

doesn't make that claim. (Luke 21:5-7)

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 - let the reader understand - then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

† Matthew and Luke give the very same command, flee to the mountains. If these were two different future events, it would be remarkable that both warnings use the same escape instructions for the same people living in Judea. (Luke 21:21)

† Matthew identifies the prophetic language from Daniel, while Luke explains how that prophecy would become visible during the Roman invasion. The two accounts fit together naturally rather than competing with each other. (Daniel 9:26-27; Luke 21:20)

† The command was directed to those living in Judea, not to people scattered across the modern world thousands of years later. Jesus was warning His own generation how to survive the coming judgment. (Matthew 24:34; Luke 17:22-25)

Matthew 24:21-22

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. And if those days had not been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

† Some argue that Matthew describes worldwide tribulation while Luke describes only Jerusalem. Yet Matthew repeatedly limits the audience to Judea, those on the housetop, those in the field, and those who must flee immediately. The context

remains local even while the significance of the judgment was covenantal. (Matthew 24:16-20)

† Luke calls it great distress upon the land, while Matthew calls it great tribulation. Different descriptions don't create different events. The same historical catastrophe can accurately be described from more than one perspective. (Luke 21:23)

† Both Gospels point to the same Roman destruction of Jerusalem. One emphasizes the military siege, the other emphasizes the unparalleled covenant judgment that fell upon apostate Israel for rejecting her Messiah. (Luke 21:22; Matthew 23:35-38)

Luke 21:32

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

† Luke ends the discourse with exactly the same time statement found in Matthew and Mark. All three Gospels place the fulfillment within the generation that heard Jesus speak these words. (Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30)

† If Matthew and Luke were describing different events separated by thousands of years, it would be impossible to explain why both conclude with the identical time limitation given by the same Lord. (Matthew 16:27-28)

† The simplest explanation is the biblical one. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the same discourse, the same prophecy, the same audience, and the same first-century fulfillment. (Luke 21:22; Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30)

Historical References

† Josephus records that the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem, trapped the inhabitants within the city, and destroyed both the temple and the city exactly as Jesus foretold. (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapters 12-13; Book 6, Chapters 4-8)

† Josephus describes the unprecedented famine, internal civil war, and massive loss of life during the siege, confirming the terrible distress Jesus warned would come upon Jerusalem. (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapters 10-12; Book 6, Chapters 3-9)

† Eusebius records that the Christians remembered the Lord's warning and fled to Pella before Jerusalem fell, demonstrating that the early church understood Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 as describing the same approaching judgment. (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5)

How It Applies To Us Today

† We can trust every prophecy Jesus spoke because every prediction concerning Jerusalem was fulfilled exactly as He declared.

† We should allow Scripture to interpret Scripture instead of forcing differences between parallel Gospel accounts that the writers themselves never make.

† The faithfulness of Christ in fulfilling His promises gives us confidence that we now live under the fully established New Covenant and His present kingdom. (Hebrews 12:22-24; Ephesians 2:19-22)

Q & A Appendix

Q: Did Jesus give two different prophetic discourses?

A: No. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the same prophecy from different perspectives. Each writer includes different details while describing the same conversation concerning the destruction of the temple. (Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4; Luke 21:5-7)

Q: Does Luke replace the Abomination of Desolation?

A: No. Luke explains what the disciples would see when Jerusalem's desolation arrived. Matthew identifies the prophecy from Daniel, while Luke identifies its historical fulfillment as Jerusalem being surrounded by armies. (Matthew 24:15-16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20-21)

Q: Were Matthew 24 and Luke 21 fulfilled in different time periods?

A: No. Both conclude with Jesus declaring that "this generation" would witness the fulfillment of all these things. (Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32)

Q: Why do the Gospel accounts contain different details?

A: Because each inspired writer emphasizes different aspects of the same event. This is common throughout the Gospels and strengthens their testimony rather than weakening it. (John 20:30-31)

Q: If Luke 21 and Matthew 24 are different prophecies, why do they both begin with the prediction of the same temple's destruction?

A: Because they aren't different prophecies. All three Gospel writers begin with Jesus predicting the destruction of the same temple, followed by the disciples asking when these things would happen. Each writer records the same discourse while emphasizing different details. (Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4;

Luke 21:5-7)

Q: Doesn't Luke 21 leave out the Abomination of Desolation?

A: No. Luke explains what the disciples would see when the Abomination brought Jerusalem's desolation. Matthew gives Daniel's prophetic title, while Luke describes its historical appearance as Jerusalem surrounded by armies. These are complementary accounts of the same event, not competing prophecies. (Matthew 24:15-16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20-21)

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

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Source Index

† Luke 21:5-7; Matthew 24:1-3; Luke 21:20-22; Matthew 24:15-16; Matthew 24:21-22; Mark 13:1-4; Luke 21:32

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapters 10-13; Book 6, Chapters 3-9; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5

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