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**Second Coming -
What Year Did
Christ Return? AD
64, AD 66, AD 68,
Or AD 70? - Part 2
of 2**



By Dan Maines

What Year Did Christ Return?

AD 64, AD 66, AD 68, Or AD 70? - Part 2 of 2

Part 1 of 2

Part 2 of 2

Introduction

† In Part 1, we established that Scripture places Christ's coming within the lifetime of His first-century generation. We also examined why AD 64 doesn't satisfy the specific judgment Jesus predicted and why the events beginning around AD 66,

including Jerusalem being threatened by Roman armies, point toward an approaching desolation rather than proving that the entire judgment was already completed (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:2, 30-34; Luke 21:20-28).

† Now we need to examine AD 68 and answer two important objections. If believers had already come to heavenly Jerusalem and were already in Christ's kingdom before AD 70, how could the resurrection and coming still reach their consummation in AD 70? Scripture itself gives us the answer (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:37; Hebrews 12:22-28).

Why Not AD 68?

† AD 68 is historically significant because of Nero's death, but Jesus never identified Nero's death as the determining sign of His coming. He repeatedly identified Jerusalem, the temple, and His generation (Matthew 23:36-38; Matthew 24:1-3, 34).

† The biblical prophecy centers on Jerusalem's judgment rather than on the death of a Roman emperor (Luke 19:41-44; Luke 21:20-24).

† Revelation likewise directs attention toward the holy city, the temple, and the city where the Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:1-2, 8).

† Nero belongs to the historical setting surrounding the persecution and judgment period, but his death doesn't provide the strongest biblical marker for the completion of Jesus' prophecy (Matthew 24:2; Luke 21:20-24).

What About Nero Dying In AD 68 And The Beast Being Cast Into The Lake Of Fire?

† Nero's death in AD 68 doesn't require Christ's coming to have occurred in AD 68. Revelation also presents the Beast as the Roman imperial power represented through its rulers. The Beast has multiple heads identified with kings, showing that the Beast can't be limited to the physical life of one emperor. An individual ruler such as Nero could represent that larger beastly power without exhausting everything represented by the Beast

(Revelation 13:1-8; Revelation 17:9-11).

† Nero fits important features of the Beast, including the numerical identification associated with 666, but Nero's personal death doesn't mean every prophetic judgment associated with the Beast had to be completed at the moment he died (Revelation 13:18; Revelation 17:9-11).

† Revelation says the Beast and false prophet were cast into the lake of fire in connection with Christ's victorious judgment. This is judgment imagery describing the decisive defeat of the powers opposing Christ, not a statement requiring Nero's physical body to remain alive until AD 70 (Revelation 19:11-21).

† Daniel helps establish this principle because prophetic beasts represent kingdoms while also being expressed through individual kings. Daniel specifically says the four beasts are kings and then identifies the fourth beast as a kingdom, showing the close prophetic relationship between a ruler and the kingdom he represents (Daniel 7:17, 23).

† Nero could therefore die physically in AD 68 while the Roman imperial Beast he represented continued beyond his personal death. Rome continued its war against Jerusalem, and the judgment Jesus had predicted hadn't yet reached its climax because Jerusalem and its temple were still standing (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:20-24; Revelation 11:1-2).

† The question isn't simply, "When did Nero die?" The question is, "When did the prophetic judgment reach its covenantal climax?" Nero died in AD 68, but Jerusalem and its temple remained until their destruction in AD 70, exactly where Jesus had focused His prophecy (Matthew 23:36-38; Matthew 24:1-3, 30-34; Luke 21:20-32).

If Believers Had Already Come To New Jerusalem, How Could The Resurrection And Coming Still Be In AD 70?

† Some argue that the resurrection and coming must have occurred before AD 70 because believers had already come to heavenly Jerusalem. But entering New Jerusalem and reaching the completed resurrection weren't identical events. Believers already possessed new covenant realities while other promised

events were still approaching their consummation (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:25, 37; Hebrews 12:22-28).

† Hebrews says believers had already come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem, yet the same chapter describes a shaking that was still ahead and the removal of things that could be shaken. They had already entered the heavenly city covenantally while the old covenant world was still approaching its final removal (Hebrews 12:22-28).

† This already-but-not-yet pattern appears throughout the New Testament. Believers already had redemption, yet Jesus told His disciples that their redemption would draw near as Jerusalem's judgment unfolded. They already possessed salvation, yet Peter spoke of salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (Colossians 1:13-14; Luke 21:28; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Peter 1:5).

† Daniel connects the resurrection with the time of unparalleled trouble and then asks when these wonders would reach their completion. The answer points to the breaking of the power of the holy people, showing that Daniel's resurrection prophecy belongs to the same covenantal crisis Jesus later placed within His generation (Daniel 12:1-2, 6-7; Matthew 24:21, 34).

† Daniel himself was told that he would rest and then stand in his allotted place at the end of the days. This shows that Daniel's resurrection hope still awaited its appointed consummation even though living New Testament believers had already entered the blessings of heavenly Jerusalem (Daniel 12:13; Hebrews 12:22-23).

† Paul likewise spoke of a resurrection that was still ahead of him. He said there would be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, and he continued pressing toward the resurrection rather than teaching that it had already been completed (Acts 24:15; Philippians 3:10-14).

† This is why being in New Jerusalem before AD 70 doesn't move the completed resurrection to an earlier date. The new covenant had already been established through Christ, believers had already entered its heavenly realities, and yet the old covenant age was still approaching its final removal and the

promised coming was still near (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:37; Hebrews 12:22-28).

† AD 70 was therefore not the beginning of New Jerusalem or the beginning of salvation. It was the consummation of the first-century covenant transition, when the old temple order was finally removed and the resurrection and coming promises connected with the end of that age reached their fulfillment (Daniel 12:1-7, 13; Matthew 24:2-3, 21, 30-34).

If They Were Already In The Kingdom, How Could Christ's Coming Still Be In AD 70?

† Another objection is that believers were already in Christ's kingdom long before AD 70. That's absolutely true. Paul said God had already rescued believers from the authority of darkness and transferred them into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13).

† Jesus also taught that the kingdom was already present through His ministry. He said that if He cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God had come upon them. The kingdom therefore didn't suddenly begin in AD 70 (Matthew 12:28; Luke 17:20-21).

† Matthew 16:27-28 doesn't contradict this. Jesus didn't say, "Some standing here won't die until the kingdom begins." He said some standing there wouldn't taste death until they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. The emphasis is upon His coming in kingdom authority, glory, and judgment, not upon the first existence of the kingdom (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:30).

† This distinction is critical. The kingdom could already be present while Christ's promised coming in kingdom judgment was still future. Paul could therefore say believers were already in the kingdom while Jesus' promised first-century coming was still approaching (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 10:37).

† Jesus Himself shows this progression. He proclaimed the kingdom during His ministry, established His covenant through His death and resurrection, and then promised a coming in judgment that some standing before Him would live to see

(Matthew 4:17; Matthew 12:28; Matthew 16:27-28).

† AD 70 therefore wasn't the birthday of the kingdom. It was the climactic public vindication of the King's authority against the old covenant order that had rejected Him. Jesus had already received all authority before AD 70, yet His enemies were still being brought under His rule (Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:34-36; 1 Corinthians 15:25).

† This is the same pattern we see with New Jerusalem. Believers had already come to heavenly Jerusalem and were already citizens of the kingdom, while the old covenant order was still approaching its final removal (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:22-28).

† Being in the kingdom before AD 70 therefore doesn't prove that the Second Coming had already occurred. It proves that the kingdom was already present before its first-century judgment and covenantal consummation. The kingdom came through Christ, while AD 70 demonstrated His reigning authority in the judgment He had promised His generation (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 23:36-38; Matthew 24:30-34).

Why AD 70?

† AD 70 brings the prophetic evidence together because it marks Jerusalem's catastrophic desolation and the destruction of the temple Jesus specifically said would be demolished (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:5-6).

† Jesus said Jerusalem would be surrounded and desolated, identified those events as days of vengeance, described the Son of Man coming in a cloud, and placed the entire prophecy within His generation (Luke 21:20-32).

† Jesus had already pronounced that generation guilty and declared their house desolate before giving the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 23:35-38).

† AD 66 can properly be understood as a major beginning of the war and warning period, while AD 70 provides the clearest historical climax corresponding to Jerusalem's predicted destruction (Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24).

† This doesn't require every prophetic event to happen during

one twenty-four-hour period. Biblical days of divine judgment could describe historical judgments unfolding through military events (Isaiah 13:6-13; Isaiah 19:1-4).

† When we're asking which year best identifies the completed coming of Christ in judgment upon Jerusalem, AD 70 has the strongest combined biblical case because the identifying city and temple finally experienced the judgment Jesus predicted (Matthew 23:36-38; Matthew 24:2, 30-34; Luke 21:20-32).

† We can identify AD 70 as the climactic year of Christ's coming in judgment, but Scripture doesn't identify an exact calendar day. The judgment unfolded through events surrounding Jerusalem's siege and destruction, so we shouldn't claim greater precision than Scripture gives us (Matthew 24:15-34; Luke 21:20-32).

† Although Scripture doesn't give us the exact calendar day of Christ's coming, Josephus gives us specific dates for the historical events surrounding Jerusalem's destruction. He records that the temple was burned on the tenth day of the month Lous, or Ab, in AD 70. He also notes that this was the same month and day on which the earlier temple had been burned by the Babylonians. Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 4, Section 5.

† Josephus separately records that Jerusalem was taken in the second year of Vespasian on the eighth day of the month Gorpheus, or Elul, in AD 70. This gives us documented historical dates for the destruction of the temple and the fall of Jerusalem, the very city and temple Jesus identified in His prophecy (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:5-6, 20-24). Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 10, Section 1.

† These historical dates strengthen the identification of AD 70 as the climactic year, but we shouldn't turn either date into the exact day of Christ's coming because Scripture doesn't make that identification. What we can say with confidence is that the temple Jesus said would be destroyed and the Jerusalem He said would be desolated experienced those events in AD 70 (Matthew 24:1-2, 30-34; Luke 21:20-32).

Historical References

† Josephus was an eyewitness to the Jewish War and described the Roman siege, terrible famine, slaughter, burning of the temple, and destruction of Jerusalem. His account provides important historical confirmation of the first-century setting in which Jesus' warnings concerning Jerusalem were fulfilled (Matthew 24:2; Luke 19:41-44; Luke 21:20-24).

Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 5, Chapters 10-13; Book 6, Chapters 4-9; Book 7, Chapter 1.

† Josephus also recorded extraordinary signs before Jerusalem's destruction, including a star resembling a sword, a comet, a strange light around the altar and temple, the eastern temple gate opening by itself, heavenly armies and chariots reportedly seen in the clouds, and a voice from the temple saying they were departing. These accounts are historically interesting alongside Jesus' warning concerning fearful sights and great signs (Luke 21:11, 25-26). Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 5, Section 3.

† Tacitus recorded the Roman campaign against Jerusalem under Titus and described prodigies associated with the period, including armies appearing in the sky, weapons seeming to flash, the temple illuminated by sudden fire, doors opening, and a supernatural voice announcing departure. His Roman account independently places these extraordinary reports within the period of Jerusalem's destruction (Matthew 24:29-30; Luke 21:25-27). Tacitus, *Histories*, Book 5, Chapters 10-13.

† Eusebius recorded the early Christian tradition that the believers in Jerusalem were instructed to leave the city before the war and moved to Pella. This is consistent with Jesus' command that His disciples flee when they recognized Jerusalem's approaching judgment (Matthew 24:15-20; Luke 21:20-21). Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3, Chapter 5, Sections 2-3.

† Eusebius also connected the disasters that came upon the Jewish nation with the crimes committed against Christ and His apostles and then described the calamities surrounding Jerusalem's destruction. This provides an important early

Christian historical witness to how Jerusalem's catastrophe was understood (Matthew 23:34-38; Luke 19:41-44). Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapters 5-7.

† These historical writers don't establish our doctrine, Scripture does. Their testimony provides historical confirmation that Jerusalem, the temple, the Roman armies, the flight from the city, and the catastrophic destruction occurred within the first-century setting Jesus identified (Matthew 24:2, 15-21, 34; Luke 21:20-24, 32).

How It Applies To Us Today

† We're not waiting for Jerusalem to be surrounded again. Jesus gave that sign to His first-century disciples concerning the Jerusalem they knew and told them personally to flee when they saw it happening (Matthew 24:15-20; Luke 21:20-21).

† We're not waiting for another destruction of the temple in Matthew 24. Jesus and His disciples were discussing the physical temple standing before them when He said its stones would be thrown down (Matthew 24:1-3; Luke 21:5-7).

† We're not living in the last days of the old covenant age. The New Testament writers said they themselves were living in the last days and at the end of the ages (Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; Hebrews 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20).

† We're living in the kingdom that can't be shaken, the heavenly Jerusalem to which believers have already come through Christ (Hebrews 12:22-28).

† Understanding AD 70 removes the fear created when first-century judgment passages are pushed into our future. Jesus said His disciples would recognize these events and that their generation wouldn't pass away until everything He described was fulfilled (Matthew 24:33-34; Luke 21:28-32).

† Christ kept His word. He promised to come within the lifetime of His contemporaries, He pronounced judgment upon Jerusalem, and He said His generation would see the fulfillment (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 23:36-38; Matthew 24:30-34).

† The debate over AD 64, AD 66, AD 68, and AD 70 shouldn't distract us from the larger truth. Christ's coming wasn't

postponed for thousands of years. The biblical time statements place it in the first century, and the biblical event markers point most clearly to AD 70 as its climactic fulfillment (Matthew 10:23; Matthew 16:27-28; Hebrews 10:37; Revelation 1:1-3).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Could AD 68 be the year because Nero died?

A: Nero's death was historically significant, but Jesus didn't make Nero's death the identifying marker. His prophecy centered on Jerusalem, its temple, its desolation, and His own generation (Matthew 23:36-38; Matthew 24:1-3, 34; Luke 21:20-24).

Q: If believers had already come to New Jerusalem before AD 70, doesn't that prove the resurrection had already happened?

A: No. Believers had already entered the blessings of heavenly Jerusalem while Scripture still described the old covenant order as approaching its removal, Christ's coming as near, and the resurrection as still ahead. Possessing New Jerusalem covenantally didn't mean every aspect of the first-century consummation had already been completed (Acts 24:15; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:37; Hebrews 12:22-28).

Q: How does Daniel 12 fit an AD 70 resurrection if Christians were already in New Jerusalem?

A: Daniel connects the resurrection with the time of unparalleled trouble and the breaking of the power of the holy people. Jesus used Daniel's tribulation language and placed its fulfillment within His generation. Daniel was also told that he would rest and stand in his allotted place at the end of the days (Daniel 12:1-2, 6-7, 13; Matthew 24:21, 34).

Q: If believers were already in Christ's kingdom, doesn't Matthew 16:27-28 have to occur before AD 70?

A: No. Jesus didn't say some standing there would live until the kingdom began. He said they would live to see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Believers could already be citizens of

Christ's kingdom while His promised coming in kingdom judgment was still approaching (Matthew 16:27-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 10:37).

Q: Did the kingdom begin in AD 70?

A: No. Jesus said the kingdom had already come upon them during His ministry, and Paul said believers had already been transferred into Christ's kingdom. AD 70 wasn't the beginning of the kingdom, it was the climactic vindication of Christ's reigning authority in judgment against the old covenant order that rejected Him (Matthew 12:28; Colossians 1:13; Matthew 23:36-38).

Q: Why identify AD 70 as the year of Christ's return?

A: Because AD 70 is the year that best matches the specific events Jesus identified. Jerusalem was desolated and the temple He said would be demolished was destroyed. Jesus connected that judgment with the coming of the Son of Man and placed it within His generation (Matthew 24:2, 30-34; Luke 21:20-32).

Q: Was Christ's AD 70 coming a physical return to stand bodily on the earth?

A: No. Scripture had already used cloud-coming language for divine judgment upon nations. Jesus used that established prophetic language when describing His judgment upon Jerusalem (Isaiah 19:1; Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27).

Q: Does saying AD 70 mean nothing happened prophetically between AD 30 and AD 70?

A: No. The New Testament shows an unfolding covenant transition. Christ established the new covenant through His sacrifice, while the old order was aging and approaching its disappearance (Hebrews 8:6-13; Hebrews 9:8-15; Hebrews 10:9-18, 37).

Q: Are Christians today still waiting for the Second Coming described in Matthew 24 and Luke 21?

A: No. Jesus placed those events within His generation and directly connected them with Jerusalem's destruction. He said all these things would be fulfilled before that generation passed away (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-32).

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

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Source Index

† No full Scripture passages are separately quoted as Scripture titles in Part 2.

† Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapters 10-13; Book 6, Chapters 4-9; Book 6, Chapter 5, Section 3; Book 7, Chapter 1

† Tacitus, Histories, Book 5, Chapters 10-13

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5, Sections 2-3; Book 3, Chapters 5-7

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