Dispensationalists like to “pick & choose” pieces of Mt 24 to try and support their position. As a close study will reveal, it teaches nothing similar to dispensationalism. A key to understanding this text is to pay particular attention to the phrases “those days” (which is plural) and “that day” (which is singular).

To understand the context you must begin by reading chapter 23, giving particular attention to vv. 29ff.

1  Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.
2  And He 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."

In 23:38 Jesus had told them that their house would be left to them desolate. He is continuing with that thought as chapter 24 begins.

3  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?"

The 12 (or at least some of them) came to Jesus to get Him to expound further. They could not imagine a world without the Temple, especially since they knew Jesus was about to establish His kingdom. They thought they were only asking one question but they were actually asking Him two: 1) When will these things happen (referring to the destruction of the Temple) and 2) What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age? Jesus, in the remainder of 24 answers both questions.

4  And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.
5  "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.
6  "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.
7  "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

Kik, p. 93.
It was not long after the Olivet Discourse that strife, insurrections, and wars were filling both Palestine and other parts of the Roman Empire … To the Jews it was a highly turbulent time. There was an uprising against them in Alexandria. In Seleucia 50,000 were slain. In Caesaria a battle between Syrians and Jews divided many villages and towns into armed camps … Acts 11:28 makes mention of a famine which occurred in the days of Claudius Caesar. It was a famine that spread not only in Judea but other parts of the world, and like all famines, it was followed by pestilences that caused the death of thousands. And as to earthquakes, many are mentioned by writers during a period just previous to 70 AD. There were earthquakes in Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodocea, Hierapolis, Colosse, Campania, Rome, and Judah. … The city of Pompeii was damaged by an earthquake occurring Feb. 5th, 63 AD.

8  "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.
9  "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

Acts 12:2; all Apostles were put to death except for John.

10  "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

Tacitus [15.44] Such indeed were the precautions of human wisdom. The next thing was to seek means of propitiating the gods, and recourse was had to the Sibyline books, by the direction of which prayers were offered to Vulcanus, Ceres, and Proserpina. Juno, too, was entreated by the matrons, first, in the Capitol, then on the nearest part of the coast, whence water was procured to sprinkle the fane and image of the goddess. And there were sacred banquets and nightly vigils celebrated by married women. But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the great fire was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous
"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many."

"Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold."

"But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."

The “end” of Jerusalem. Luke 21:16-19 “But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name. Yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.”

"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.

The Gospel was preached to all the world before 70 AD. Acts 2:5, “Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.” Romans 1:8, “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.” Colossians 1:6 & 23, “the gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth;” “if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from 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.”

"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),

Luke 21:20-24: “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 in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains;

Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house.

Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.

Eusebius (260-340 AD), Book 3, Ch. 5.

After Nero had held the power thirteen years, and Galba and Otho had ruled a year and six months, Vespasian, who had become distinguished in the campaigns against the Jews, was proclaimed sovereign in Judea and received the title of Emperor from the armies there. Setting out immediately, therefore, for Rome, he entrusted the conduct of the war against the Jews to his son Titus. For the Jews after the ascension of our Saviour, in addition to their crime against him, had been devising as many plots as they could against his apostles. First Stephen was stoned to death by them, and after him James, the son of Zebedee and the brother of John, was beheaded, and finally James, the first that had obtained the episcopal seat in Jerusalem after the ascension of our Saviour, died in the manner already described. But the rest of the apostles, who had been incessantly plotted against with a view to their destruction, and had been driven out of the land of Judea, went unto all nations to preach the Gospel, relying upon the power of Christ, who had said to them, "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations in my name."

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come thither from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men. But the number of calamities which every where fell upon the nation at that time; the extreme misfortunes to which the inhabitants of Judea were especially subjected, the thousands of men, as well as women and children, that perished by the sword, by famine, and by other forms of death innumerable -- all these things, as well as the many great sieges
which were carried on against the cities of Judea, and the excessive sufferings endured by those that fled to Jerusalem itself, as to a city of perfect safety, and finally the general course of the whole war, as well as its particular occurrences in detail, and how at last the abomination of desolation, proclaimed by the prophets, stood in the very temple of God, so celebrated of old, the temple which was now awaiting its total and final destruction by fire -- all these things any one that wishes may find accurately described in the history written by Josephus.

19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!
20 "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.
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.

Josephus, Wars, Book5, ch. 10:
1. AS Josephus was speaking thus with a loud voice, the seditious would neither yield to what he said, nor did they deem it safe for them to alter their conduct; but as for the people, they had a great inclination to desert to the Romans; accordingly, some of them sold what they had, and even the most precious things that had been laid up as treasures by them, for every small matter, and swallowed down pieces of gold, that they might not be found out by the robbers; and when they had escaped to the Romans, went to stool, and had wherewithal to provide plentifully for themselves; for Titus let a great number of them go away into the country, whither they pleased. And the main reasons why they were so ready to desert were these: That now they should be freed from those miseries which they had endured in that city, and yet should not be in slavery to the Romans: however, John and Simon, with their factions, did more carefully watch these men's going out than they did the coming in of the Romans; and if any one did but afford the least shadow of suspicion of such an intention, his throat was cut immediately.

2. But as for the richer sort, it proved all one to them whether they staid in the city, or attempted to get out of it; for they were equally destroyed in both cases; for every such person was put to death under this pretense, that they were going to desert, but in reality that the robbers might get what they had. The madness of the seditious did also increase together with their famine, and both those miseries were every day inflamed more and more; for there was no corn which any where appeared publicly, but the robbers came running into, and searched men's private houses; and then, if they found any, they tormented them, because they had denied they had any; and if they found none, they tormented them worse, because they supposed they had more carefully concealed it. The indication they made use of whether they had any or not was taken from the bodies of these miserable wretches; which, if they were in good case, they supposed they were in no want at all of food; but if they were wasted away, they walked off without searching any further; nor did they think it proper to kill such as these, because they saw they would very soon die of themselves for want of food. Many there were indeed who sold what they had for one measure; it was of wheat, if they were of the richer sort; but of barley, if they were poorer. When these had so done, they shut themselves up in the inmost rooms of their houses, and ate the corn they had gotten; some did it without grinding it, by reason of the extremity of the want they were in, and others baked bread of it, according as necessity and fear dictated to them: a table was no where laid for a distinct meal, but they snatched the bread out of the fire, half-baked, and ate it very hastily.

3. It was now a miserable case, and a sight that would justly bring tears into our eyes, how men stood as to their food, while the more powerful had more than enough, and the weaker were lamenting [for want of it.] But the famine was too hard for all other passions, and it is destructive to nothing so much as to modesty; for what was otherwise worthy of reverence was in this case despised; insomuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants; and when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not concealed in so doing; but the seditious every where came upon them immediately, and snatched away from them what they not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives: and while they ate after this manner, yet were the throats, and this by force: the old men, who held their food fast, were beaten; and if the women hid what they had within their hands, their hair was torn for so doing; nor was there any commiseration shown either to the aged or to the infants, but they lifted up children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and shook them down upon the floor. But still they were more barbarously cruel to those that had prevented their coming in, and had actually swallowed down what they were going to seize upon, as if they had been unjustly defrauded of their right. They also invented terrible methods of torments to discover where any food was, and they were these to stop up the passages of the privy parts of the miserable wretches, and to drive sharp stakes up their fundament; and a man was forced to bear what it is terrible even to hear, in order to make him confess that he had but one loaf of bread, or that he might discover a handful of barley-meal that was concealed; and this was done when these tormentors were not themselves hungry; for the thing had been less barbarous had necessity forced them to it; but this was done to keep their madness in exercise, and as making preparation of provisions for themselves for the following days. These men went also to meet those that had crept out of the city by night, as far as the Roman guards, to gather some plants and herbs that grew wild; and when those people thought they had got clear of the enemy, they snatched from them what they had brought with them, even while they had frequently entertained them, and that by calling upon the tremendous name of God, to give them back some part of what they had brought; though these would not give them the least crumb, and they were to be well contented that they were only spoiled, and not slain at the same time.

4. These were the afflictions which the lower sort of people suffered from these tyrants' guards; but for the men that were in dignity, and whithal were rich, they were carried before the tyrants themselves; some of whom were falsely accused of laying treacherous
plots, and so were destroyed; others of them were charged with designs of betraying the city to the Romans; but the readiest way of all was this, to suborn somebody to affirm that they were resolved to desert to the enemy. And he who was utterly despoiled of what he had by Simon was sent back again to John, as of those who had been already plundered by Jotre, Simon got what remained; insomuch that they drank the blood of the populace to one another, and divided the dead bodies of the poor creatures between them; so that although, on account of their ambition after dominion, they contended with each other, yet did they very well agree in their wicked practices; for he that did not communicate what he got by the miseries of others to the other tyrant seemed to be too little guilty, and in one respect only; and he that did not partake of what was so communicated to him grieved at this, as at the loss of what was a valuable thing, that he had no share in such barbarity.

5. It is therefore impossible to go distinctly over every instance of these men's iniquity. I shall therefore speak my mind here at once briefly: - That neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world. Finally, they brought the Hebrew nation into contempt, that they might themselves appear comparatively less impious with regard to strangers. They confessed what was true, that they were the slaves, the scum, and the spurious and abortive offspring of our nation, while they overthrew the city themselves, and forced the Romans, whether they would or no, to gain a melancholy reputation, by acting gloriously against them, and did almost draw that fire upon the temple, which they seemed to think came too slowly; and indeed when they saw that temple burning from the upper city, they were neither troubled at it, nor did they shed any tears on that account, while yet these passions were discovered among the Romans themselves; which circumstances shall speak of hereafter in their proper place, when we come to treat of such matters.

Josephus Book 6, ch. 3

1. BUT now the seditious that were in the temple did every day openly endeavor to beat off the soldiers that were upon the banks, and on the twenty-seventh day of the forenamed month [Panenus or Tamuz] contrived such a stratagem as this: They filled that part of the western cloister (14) which was between the beams, and the roof under them, with dry materials, as also with bitumen and pitch, and then retired from that place, as though they were tired with the pains they had taken; at which procedure of theirs, many of the most inconsiderate among the Romans, who were carried away with violent passions, followed hard after them as they were retiring, and applied ladders to the cloister, and got up to it suddenly; but the prudent part of them, when they understood this unaccountable retreat of the Jews, stood still where they were before. However, the contents of the temple was all set on fire; and as the flame burst out every where on the sudden, the Romans that were out of retiring, and applied ladders to the cloister, and got up to it suddenly; but the prudent part of them, when they understood this unaccountable retreat of the Jews, stood still where they were before. However, the cloister was full of those that were gone up the ladders; at which time the Jews set it all on fire; and as the flame burst out every where on the sudden, the Romans that were out of the danger were seized with a very great consternation, as were those that were in the midst of the danger in the utmost distress. So when they perceived themselves surrounded with the flames, some of them threw themselves down backwards into the city, and some among their enemies [in the temple]; as did many leap down to their own men, and broke their limbs to pieces; but a great number of those that were going to take these violent methods were prevented by the fire; though some prevented the fire by their own swords. However, the fire was on the sudden carried so far as to surround those who would have otherwise perished. As for Caesar himself, he could not, however, but commiserate those that thus perished, although they got up thither without any order for so doing, since there was no way of giving the many relief. Yet was this some comfort to those that were destroyed, that every body might see that person grieve, for whose sake they came to their end; for he cried out openly to them, and leaped up, and exhorted those that were about him to do their utmost to relieve them; So every one of them died cheerfully, as carrying along with him these words and this intention of Caesar as a sepulchral monument. Some there were indeed who retired into the wall of the cloister, which was broad, and were preserved out of the fire, but were then surrounded by the Jews; and although they made resistance against the Jews for a long time, yet were they wounded by them, and at length they all fell down dead.

2. At the last a young man among them, whose name was Longus, became a decoration to this sad affair, and while every one of them that perished were worthy of a memorial, this man appeared to deserve it beyond all the rest. Now the Jews admired this man for his courage, and were more desirous of having him slain; so they persuaded him to come down to them, upon security given him for his life. But Cornelius his brother persuaded him on the contrary, not to tarnish his own glory, nor that of the Roman army. He complied with this last advice, and lifting up his sword before both armies, he slew himself. Yet there was one Artorius among those surrounded by the fire who escaped by his subtility; for when he had with a loud voice called to him Lucius, one of his fellow soldiers that lay with him in the same tent, and said to him, "I do leave thee heir of all I have, if thou wilt come and receive me." Upon this he came running to receive him readily; Artorius then threw himself down upon him, and saved his own life, while he that received him was dashed so vehemently against the stone pavement by the other's weight, that he died immediately. This melancholy accident made the Romans sad for a while, but still it made them more upon their guard for the future, and was of advantage to them against the delusions of the Jews, by which they were greatly damaged through their unacquaintedness with the places, and with the nature of the inhabitants. Now this cloister was burnt down as far as John's tower, which he built in the war he made against Simon over the gates that led to the Xystus. The Jews also cut off the rest of that cloister from the temple, after they had destroyed those that got up to it. But the next day the Romans burnt down the northern cloister entirely, as far as the east cloister, whose common angle joined to the valley that was called Cedron, and was built over it; on which account the depth was frightful. And this was the state of the temple at that time.

3. Now of those that perished by famine in the city, the number was prodigious, and the miseries they underwent were unspeakable; for if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did any where appear, a war was commenced presently, and the dearest friends fell a fighting one with another about it, snatching from each other the most miserable supports of life. Nor would men believe that those who were dying had no food, but the robbers would search them when they were expiring, lest any one should have concealed food in their bosoms, and counterfeited dying; nay, these robbers gaped for want, and ran about stumbling and staggering along like mad dogs, and reeling against the doors of the houses like drunken men; they would also, in the great distress they were in, rush into the very same houses two or three times in one and the same day. Moreover, their hunger was so
intolerable, that it obliged them to chew every thing, while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, and endured to eat them; nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes; and the very leather which belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed: the very wisps of old hay became food to some; and some gathered up fibres, and sold a very small weight of them for four Attic [drachmæ]. But why do I describe the shameless impudence that the famine brought on men in their eating inanimate things, while I am going to relate a matter of fact, the like to which no history relates, (15) either among the Greeks or Barbarians? It is horrible to speak of it, and incredible when heard. I had indeed willingly omitted this calamity of ours, that I might not seem to deliver what is so portentous to posterity, but that I have innumerable witnesses to it in my own age; and besides, my country would have had little reason to thank me for suppressing the miseries that she underwent at this time.

4. There was a certain woman that dwelt beyond Jordan, her name was Mary; her father was Eleazar, of the village Bethezob, which signifies the house of Hyssop. She was eminent for her family and her wealth, and had fled away to Jerusalem with the rest of the multitude, and was with them besieged therein at this time. The other effects of this woman had been already seized upon, such I

signifies the house of Hyssop. She was eminent for her family and her wealth, and had fled away to Jerusalem with the rest of the multitude, and was with them besieged therein at this time. The other effects of this woman had been already seized upon, such I

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5. This sad instance was quickly told to the Romans, some of whom could not believe it, and others pitied the distress which the Jews

Josephus, Wars, Book 6, ch. 9, par. 1

Now, when Titus was come into this [upper] city, he admired not only some other places of strength in it, but particularly those strong towers which the tyrants, in their mad conduct, had relinquished; for when he saw their solid altitude, and the largeness of their several stones, and the exactness of their joints, as also how great was their breadth, and how extensive their length, he expressed himself in the following manner: -- “We certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God that ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men, or any machines, do towards overthrowing these towers.

Had the siege continued for long the war would have spread throughout Palestine and then even Christians would have suffered.
2. And now the Romans, judging that it was in vain to spare what was round about the holy house, burnt all those places, as also the remains of the cloisters and the gates, two excepted; the one on the east side, and the other on the south; both which, however, they burnt afterward. They also burnt down the treasury chambers, in which was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments, and other precious goods there reposited; and, to speak all in a few words, there it was that the entire riches of the Jews were heaped up together, while the rich people had there built themselves chambers [to contain such furniture]. The soldiers also came to the rest of the cloisters that were in the outer [court of the] temple, whither the women and children, and a great mixed multitude of the people, fled, in number about six thousand. But before Caesar had determined any thing about these people, or given the commanders any orders relating to them, the soldiers were in such a rage, that they set that cloister on fire; by which means it came to pass that some of these were destroyed by throwing themselves down headlong, and some were burnt in the cloisters themselves. Nor did any one of them escape with his life. A false prophet (19) was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes. Now a man that is in adversity does easily comply with such promises; for when such a sederim makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such his deliverance.

Josephus, Wars, Book 6, ch. 5, par. 2

2. Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. Thus there was a star (20) resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year. Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus, (21) [Nisan,] and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskilful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it. At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple. Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner (22) [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the temple came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared that the signal foreshowed the desolation that was coming upon them. Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the one and twentieth day of the month Artemisius, [Jyar,] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the temple,] as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "Let us remove hence." But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the temple, (23) began on a sudden to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did he not either say any thing for himself, or any thing peculiar to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon our rulers, supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him, Who he was? and whence he came? and why he uttered such words? he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him. Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" Nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come.
This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last, "Woe, woe to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost.

25 "Behold, I have told you in advance.
26 "So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or,' Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them.
27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Jesus contrasts the suddenness of the coming judgment with the suddenness of the Second Coming.

28 "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

Jerusalem was the corpse. Rome would gather and devour the corpse.

29 "But 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 the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

The events concerning the Sun, Moon, and Stars are apocalyptic language signifying the fall/destruction of a great nation. This kind of language was used in Isaiah 13:10 concerning Babylon; Isaiah 34:4, 5 concerning Idumea; Ezekiel 32:7, 8 concerning Egypt; and Acts 2:19, 20 concerning the judgment upon Jerusalem (it is a quote of Joel 2:30, 31).

30 And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

This is a quote from Daniel 7:13 in which the Son of Man (Jesus) came in the clouds before God the Father. This is NOT referring to Jesus’ Second Coming. The sign in the sky (literally “heaven” Gr. Ouranos) was the Ascension of Christ to the Father. The tribes are the 12 tribes which with the New Covenant are no longer God’s chosen. The sign put an end to the old covenant with an exclamation mark.

31 "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

His angels are messengers who have a great trumpet which is the Gospel. They will convert people from all over the world.

32 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;

Just as you can tell when summer is near, you need to be watchful of when this destruction will occur.

33 So, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.
34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Verse 34 is key to understanding this passage. Everything He has discussed so far will occur to the generation that was then living. But do not despair for …

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 alone.

Notice the shift from “those days” (vv. 19, 22, 29) to “that day and hour.” Jesus now begins to answer the second question that the apostles asked Him (see comments on v. 3).
37 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.
38 "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,
39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

There were no special signs before the destruction of water except for the preaching of Noah. As it was in Noah’s day, so it will be when Jesus returns.

40 "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.
41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

These verses are often used to try and teach a “rapture” in which Christians will secretly be removed from earth. Jesus is instead teaching that there will be no signs of His coming. People are working in the field and at the mill. Those taken are the same ones that were “taken” in verse 39, i.e., those to be judged.

42 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

Instead of looking for signs that Jesus will not give us, the Christian is to always be prepared for the Coming of our Lord.

43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.
44 "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

Again Jesus emphasizes to be ready. There are three parables that follow: 24:45-51; 25:1-13; and 25:14-30. All three of these parables teach to be ready for His coming. Each one of these parables emphasize that no one knew when He would return for no signs were given.

45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?
46 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.
47 "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.
48 "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,'
49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards;
50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know,
51 and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.