

Different Dispensational Interpretations of Matthew 24

IA. Futurist views with historicist inconsistencies.

1B. Matt. 24:4–14 describes trends of the Church Age;

Matt. 24:19 Second half of the Tribulation; specific signs

Proponents: Chafer, Walvoord, Thieme, Lindsey, et al. Walvoord, et al, put all seal, trumpet, bowl judgments in the second half of the Tribulation.

Taken as a whole, the opening section, ending with Matthew 24:14, itemizes general signs, events, and situations which mark the progress of the age, and, with growing intensity, indicating that the end of the age is approaching. These signs, however, by their very characteristics are because they have occurred throughout the present age, do not constitute a direct answer to the question of “the sign” of the coming of the Lord.
(Walvoord, *Matthew*)

Basis: Assumed the peace treaty with the Antichrist meant worldwide peace and no judgments during the first half.

Weaknesses:

The peace treaty only provided peace and security for Israel, not worldwide military peace or the absence of disease, famine, earthquakes, or wars. Fails to recognize that none of the discourse applies to the church, but the period prior to coming of the King and the Kingdom at the Second Coming, i.e., Israel is the focus and Jewish believers.

Completely fails to be consistent with the argument of the book, the context related to Israel, and the focus of Day of the Lord in relation to Israel.

Walvoord’s quote above is consistent only with historicism, not futurism.

2B. Matt. 14:4–8 represent general signs which will occur in the Church Age

Matt. 14:9–14 are specific signs

Proponent: Ironside

Strengths: Attempts to see more of the passage related to the Tribulation only

Weakness: Fails to be consistent with the argument of Matthew; or Israel/Jewish focus of the discourse.

3B. Matt. 24:4–6 describe trends of the Church Age.

Matt. 24:7–8 describes signs that mark the end of the age.

Matt. 24:9–14 describes the first half of the Tribulation,

Matt. 24:15–20 describes the second half of the Tribulation.

Proponent: Fruchtenbaum

Strengths: Treats more as future, and more consistent with Israel.

Weaknesses: Attempts to identify these signs with historical events, i.e., WWI and WWII fulfill the signs of Matt. 24:7–8.

Grammatically wrong to separate vs. 7 from vs. 6 which it explains.

Puts Jewish persecution in the first half of the Tribulation.

4B. Matt. 24:4–6 describes events the disciples will experience.

Matt. 24:7–14 describes general signs before Jesus' return.

Matt. 24:15–22 describes specific signs related to the second half of the Tribulation.

Proponent: Toussaint

Strengths: More consistent with the Kingdom argument of Matthew and focus on Israel

Weaknesses: Artificial split between Matt. 24:6 and 24:7. No substantive basis for applying Matt. 24:4–6 to the disciples personally.

IIA Pure futurist interpretations.

1B. All of Matt. 24:4–28 is future, but Matt. 24:15 divides between the first half of the Tribulation and the second half.

Matt. 24:4–14 describes the first half of the Tribulation.

Matt. 24:15–28 describes the second half of the Tribulation.

Proponents: Ryrie, Ice*, William Kelly (*Ice took this view in his 38-article series in the *Pre-Trib Perspectives*. He has since taken the next view as more

consistent.)

Strength: Consistent with Kingdom argument of Matthew; focus on Israel, not the church; maintains a general chronology of the Tribulation. Equates Matt. 24:4–8 with the seal judgments.

Weakness: Inconsistent with typical Jewish narrative style; Matt. 24:9–14 describe Jewish persecution which doesn't fit the first half.

- 2B. Matt. 24:4–28 is all future, but Matt 24:9–14 describes the second half, and Matt. 24:15 reviews the second half with more details.

Matt. 24:4–8 describes the first half of the Tribulation.

Matt. 24:9–14 describes the general trends and persecution of Israeli Christians

Proponents: Pentecost, Barbieri, Showers, Hart, Ice, others.

Strengths:

Consistent with the Kingdom argument of Matthew and preserves an all-Jewish focus on Matt. 24–25.

Most consistent with the grammar.

Fits the Jewish narrative style

Consistent with the framework from Dan. 9:24–27 keeping Jewish persecution in the second half.