

Matthew 24:1–35

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Date: 18 February 2024

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[0 : 0 0] in Matthew 24, 1 through 35. That is Matthew 24, verses 1 through 35.

Jesus left the temple and was going away when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 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. As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age? And Jesus answered them, See that no one leads you astray, for many will come in my name, saying, I am with the Christ, and they will lead many astray. 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. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. 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. And then many will fall away and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as the testimony to all nations. And then the end will come. So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place, let the reader understand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is in the housetop not go down to take what is in his house. And let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas, for women who are pregnant, and for those who are nursing infants in those days, pray that your flight may not be in the winter or on a Sabbath. 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. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ, or there he is, do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

See, I have told you beforehand. So if they say to you, look, he is in the wilderness, do not go out. If they say, look, he is in the inner rooms, do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. 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 heaven will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 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. From the fig tree, learn its lesson. As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its sleeves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you will know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated.

Amen. Good morning. Allow me to add my welcome to those of you who are visiting for the first time.

[4 : 45] God bless you. We're grateful that you have chosen to worship here with us today. If this is your second time or third time, you know me. My question is, why haven't you become one with us? Also, let me express my gratitude to my pastors, Pastor Helm, Bing, Joe, who cannot be with us, for the continued opportunity to share God's word with you all, especially seeing that this is such an easy text.

Seriously, though, I've been waiting for someone to preach on the end times at this church. I just didn't know that it would be me. So with that said, we better pray. Father, we thank you for your word, which is our desire to hide in our hearts that we may not sin against you. We know that you are omniscient. And so we come to you with questions. But Lord, help us when you don't answer those questions to remain faithful to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Help me to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Duck hunters use decoys. The decoys have gotten pretty fancy, too. The decoys quack like a duck.

They move like a duck. They look like ducks and act like ducks. In fact, the ducks think that they are ducks. The real ducks end up being dead ducks because they can't tell what's real. For the Christian, there are many roving decoys out there, and their job is to extricate us from an intimate experience of our faith. We must look beyond what a person says or how a person performs to determine their authenticity. We must evaluate and test the spirit. We must be on guard for the decoys moving around us, acting like the real thing in order to deceive.

Allow me to give you my argument for this text. We will see that what Jesus told his disciples then, he's also telling us today, here it is, do not be led astray. It won't be easy, and it won't be quick.

[7 : 31] Do not be led astray. I'm going to tag this text with my argument. Do not be led astray.

Subtitle, it will not be easy. It won't be quick. Do not be led astray. Let me show you in the text. Look at verse 4. And Jesus answers them and said, see that no one leads you astray. Verse 5, Jesus, many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ, and they will lead many astray. Verse 11, and many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. Verse 24, false Christ and prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Do not be led astray. It won't be easy, and it won't be quick. Chapter 24 in the book of Matthew occurs during the last week of Jesus's life leading up to his crucifixion. The scene of chapter 24 is Jerusalem.

He's gone to Jerusalem with his disciples to celebrate the feast of Passover, which is immediately following the feast of unleavened bread. And what we see throughout the gospel, which is standard for Jesus, is he, during the feast, he would go out into the courtyard area in the daytime, and he would teach. And in the nighttime, he and his disciples will retreat to the Mount of Olives for lounging.

And here in chapter 24, what we read is he just finished teaching in the courtyard area. In fact, we saw last week that he wasn't only teaching in the courtyard area, but he was rebuking religious leaders for their stubborn refusal to accept him. So he just finished all that, and here we are at chapter 24. We see in the first movement of our text, Jesus answers the what and not the when.

And as they are leaving, the disciples bring the attention to Jesus, like, look over your shoulder, look at this temple, how beautiful it is, look how massive it is. And Jesus is like, it's going to be destroyed.

[10 : 04] And they're like, what? Wait, what? What are you saying? What do you mean? And Jesus begins to prophesy. Look at verse 2. And he answered them, you see all these things, do you not? Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down. And immediately the Bible says that Jesus sat down and his disciples came. Well, tell us, when will this be? When will this happen? What will be the signs of your coming and the end of age? I mean, Jesus couldn't even get comfortable.

If that was me, I would have been like, yo, wait, wait, wait, wait, hold up, fam. Like, I just got through preaching in the courtyard, standing, might I add, and as soon as I find a seat, you begin to come and bombard me with questions. But to their benefit, Jesus is not like me. Look at their question. Tell us.

Tell us when. Wouldn't you like to know? I know I would like to know. It's clear that the disciples would like to know. And you're probably thinking in your mind, should I expect this text to answer their question? Well, Jesus didn't answer their question. So I hope you're not expecting me to answer their question. I'm going to do what Jesus did. And I'm going to answer the what.

But what I will say is this, for the questions that are on our hearts or maybe on your heart, is it for the future? You may be asking. Is it now? Was it then?

The Greek king? Concerning the destruction and the regaining of the temple is multiple fulfillments of this. The Greek king by the name of Antiochus raided the temple in Jerusalem. He stole treasures. He even set up an altar and on that altar sacrificed swine.

[12 : 16] He slaughtered a great number of Jews and he sold others into slavery. The Jewish respond was to take up arms and fight. Now I'm with that. My mama has always told me, you better not let nobody come in your crib and do to you what you're not doing to yourself. Or in other words, you better not start the fight, but you better finish it. This is my mother right there. A priest by the name of Judas Maccabius led the Jews to victory over the Greek and the Jews cleaned and restored the temple in 165 BC.

Concerning the tribulations, you may have the same question. Is it in the future? Is it now? Was it then? Listen, the church has always been in tribulation. Look at the text, verse 9.

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. Who is he talking to? His disciples. How do we know this? Look up at verse 3.

Tell us when will these things be and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of age. The disciples went through tribulation. So we can't say for those of us who think like the tribulation is held just for the final, right before Jesus returned. We can't say that because Jesus didn't return at that time. The church has always been in tribulation. But back to Jesus' response to that question.

There will be or there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down. In Jesus' words will come to pass over 40 years later in 70 AD. Under the Roman general Titus, they overrun Jerusalem and they decimate the temple. But that was just one of two questions. And the second question was a two-part question. What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of age?

[14 : 39] Now at first glance, it looks like the disciples are asking some pretty intellectual theological questions. Like they really know what they're talking about. They measure in eschatology. But if we take a closer look, in reality, they're actually showing their ignorance about the end times.

Because when the disciples hear about the destruction of the temple, they think it's tied to the end of age. So they want to know what will be the destruction of the temple? When would it take place? Because it must mean that it's the end of the age and in there somewhere. They're like, also, what will be the sign of your coming? Now it's unlikely that they knew or understood that he was coming again. So what they probably was asking, what will be the coming of your power? You're ruling here. They knew that he was the Messiah, but what they understood about the Messiah was that you're coming to put down the oppression of the Roman, right?

Like you're going to establish your kingdom, right? Because it's the end of time. Jesus is going to help them understand that the destruction of the temple is not directly tied to the end of age. How do we know that? Again, he didn't come back at that time. We're still awaiting his second coming.

But the destruction of the temple, watch this. The destruction of the temple has a major purpose. I love this. The Lord is so good. Look at what God did by allowing the temple to be destroyed. By allowing the temple to be destroyed, I know the temple that was built to him to honor him in Jerusalem he allowed the temple to be destroyed. Well, maybe some of you all have to know what actually took place in the temple, right? What took place in the temple was people would make animal sacrifices to atone for their sin. Now, once Christ came, he did away with the sacrificial system because he came as the lamb that would take away the sins of the world would take away the sins of the world to die for the sins of the world once and for all. Atonement is now through faith in Jesus, not through slaughtering of animals.

Hallelujah. What a wonderful thing God did. By eliminating the temple, he eliminated the sacrificial system. So now the focus can only be on his son, Jesus, the lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world.

[17 : 24] Jesus uses imagery of the beginning of labor pains to describe the events of this time. And the beginning of labor pains is ways away from the actual birth of the child.

Yes. The end has yet to come. It won't be easy. It won't be quick. You tell me someone who has conceived a child the next day gave birth. You won't see that person. You couldn't find it or find them.

Jesus, he wants his disciples and us to know the what will take place leading up to a second coming. And everyone needs to know that Jesus is coming again.

He is coming again. The Old Testament gave over 300 prophecies relating to his first coming and Jesus fulfilled them all. And related to his second coming, the Bible gives three times as many prophecies.

And you better believe that Jesus is going to fulfill those as well. So Jesus likens these events to a woman who is pregnant and going into labor because the phases we see in chapter 24 get more and more intense the closer we get to a second coming.

[18 : 48] And then, you know how it starts. A little contractions.

I'm not speaking from experience. But you know how it goes. I feel him. That was a little kick right there.

That's just mild contractions. And then you go to the hospital and they hook you up to the monitor and it intensifies. And you're like, I think.

Like, you don't hate your husband, but you don't quite like him so much. You're like, you did this to me. And then the phase, the next phase or the last phase, you're like, give me the epidural.

And this is the way we see it here in chapter 24. Look at verses 4 through 8. And Jesus answers them, See that no one leads you astray, for many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ.

[19 : 54] And they will lead many astray, 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. For nations will rise against nations, the kingdom against kingdoms, and there will be famines and earthquake in various places.

All these things are but the beginning of birth pains. Paul uses this same analogy. In 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 1 through 3, it reads like this.

Now concerning the times of the seasons, and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you, for you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, while people are saying there is peace, there is security.

Then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. Look at what he mentions to them first.

See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and they will lead many astray. This is the deception of false Christ.

[21 : 10] There's a Wikipedia page. Not saying that, you know, Wikipedia is reliable in any way. But the title of it is, List of People Claiming to be Jesus.

Look it up. Have fun with that. But the 18th century, two people were claiming to be Jesus. In the 19th century, that number bumped up to nine people claiming to be Jesus.

And in the 20th and 21st century, in our lifetime, over 39 people claim to be the Christ. And that's not including the people that I know personally who think they're gods.

Some of you may know some of those people. Do not be deceived. Do not be duped. Do not be whooped.

Do not be swindled. Do not be led astray. I know some of you are like, whooped? That's some African-American vernacular we use on the south side to describe when someone is trying to deceive you or trying to dupe you.

[22 : 21] Do not be whooped. Stones, I know a whooper when I see one boy. Wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes.

These are just the beginning of birth pains. Let's look at the next move of our text. Verses 15 through 28.

I call this the do nots. Let me point them out to you real quick. Verse 17. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down.

Verse 18. And let the one who is in the field not turn back. Verse 23. If anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ.

Or there he is. Do not believe it. Verse 26. If they say to you, look, he is in the wilderness.

[23 : 19] Do not go out. Family, don't be deceived. Jesus calls this portion of scripture the abomination of desolation.

Spoken of by the prophet Daniel. Daniel mentions the abomination of desolation three times in his book. Chapter 9. Read it for yourself.

Chapter 11. And Daniel 12. According to Daniel, the Antichrist will make a firm covenant with many for one week.

This week is representative of a seven-year tribulation period. During this time, the Jews will be permitted to rebuild their temple and to once again offer sacrifices.

I don't know why they want to bring that back. But in the middle of the week, like in the midst, at midpoint, he will put a stop to all sacrifices and offerings.

[24 : 20] And he will profane the temple, setting himself up as God and demanding worship. Like you will have no choice. He's not saying, will you worship me?

He's going to demand it. He's going to demand it. My brothers and my sisters, hear me. Hear me well.

Do not be deceived. Do not be led astray. If anyone says to you, look, look, here is the Christ.

Don't believe it. There he is. My question is, how they know when you don't know? If they say, look, he's in the wilderness.

Do not go. I know we're so desirable to see Jesus, right? I mean, it's happening now. People remember in our times, over 39 people expressed to be the Christ.

[25 : 26] Don't go out. Don't look. Don't believe. Don't believe. Know this. As you stand not believing, as you restrain from not going out to look, know that it won't be easy and it won't be quick.

In fact, those who will not bow down will have to flee, verse 16. That means leaving your property, leaving your possessions behind if you want to escape death.

It will be a time of great distress, the Bible says, unlike anything the world has ever seen. So much so that God will limit those days for the sake of the elect, because if he doesn't, no one will be saved.

Praise God for the salt of the earth. In the third movement of our text, we have here is the reveal.

After the distress, spectacular signs will appear in heavens and as predicted in the Old Testament.

[26 : 43] I'll just go to one verse for you. Isaiah 13, 10 says it like this. For the stars of the heaven of their constellations will not give their light.

The sun will be dark as it rises. And the moon will not shed its light. Somebody ask me why. Because Jesus will be the light.

The glory of Christ's return will be revealed to all. It's a celebration. But it's also a sad day.

Because those of you who have not turned to Christ in repentance and in faith, the Bible says that you will mourn. You will mourn when he is revealed.

When you see the Son of Man coming in his power and in his glory, you will mourn. And the Bible says that God will send his angels to collect his elect, to gather his people throughout the earth.

[27 : 59] And when it's all said and done, your question may still be when. And Jesus says from the fig tree, learn its lesson.

Lord, what are you saying? When you see the fig tree put out its leaves, you know that summer is coming. He's basically saying that, in other words, this is pretty obvious.

It won't be difficult to interpret. So it will be, when you see all these signs, you would know that the Messiah is coming quickly.

And if you choose not to be deceived, not to be led astray, if you sit and you watch, you read, you pray, you live your life, and then you find yourself in these times, you would know.

Keep that in mind. Do not be deceived. When you see these signs, you will know that he's coming quickly. How do we know this? Well, because he said it.

[29 : 10] And we know, verse 35, that heavens and the earth will pass away, but his word will never pass away.

We know it because he said it. We can trust it because he said it. We believe it because he said it. As I close, what do we take from this?

What do we walk away with from this text? Saints, I'll say to you, be careful who you listen to.

Please, be careful who you allow access to your ear gate. Especially those who point to a way out and a quick way home.

There's Jesus. That there's Jesus.! What an opportunity it is for you to change the narrative that when he is revealed, you can rejoice and not mourn.

[30 : 47] You can make that decision today. My prayer for you is that you don't just curiously wait.

But you anticipate his coming because you're awaiting to spend the rest of your eternity with him. Let me pray.

Lord, I pray for us all that we heard your heart today. I pray for you concerning your desire that we not be led astray.

Lord, help us to that end. In Jesus' name.