

Lesson 21: Chapter 24 “When is the 2nd coming?”

Servant’s preparation:

http://www.suscpts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew_24.pdf

Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson in the bible study of St. Matthew, please mention this book overview.

- ✓ Who is St. Matthew? He was one of the twelve disciples; he was a tax-collector before Jesus called him to follow Him.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Jews, it is designed to prove that Jesus is the Messianic king of Old Testament (OT) prophecy.
- ✓ What is its theme? Jesus is the King of the Heavenly kingdom, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.

Remember:

Last lesson in Matthew 23, it centers on Jesus condemning the religious hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. He delivers a series of "woes," criticizing their actions, teachings, and motivations, which are driven by a desire for public recognition rather than genuine faith.

Memory Verse:

24:42 “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming”.

Lesson Opener:

When I was a young child, I remember our family trips to Disneyland. One of the things I remember most was how long the drive in the car was. The drive from our house to Disneyland was about 6 hours. That was kind of like waiting an eternity for a kid. I can remember looking out of the car window at the road and thinking it would never end. I tried to stop thinking about Disneyland but couldn’t. I just couldn’t wait to get there. So, from time to time I would ask my mom, the famous long car ride question, “When are we going to be there?” And Mom would say, “In a little while.” In a little while? What does that mean?

Kids do not know what a little while means. What I wanted to know was when exactly this car ride would finally be over. I want to get to Disneyland!

That car ride was kind of like how it was for Jesus’ disciples. They were asking Jesus the same kind of questions a kid would ask his mom. They asked, “Tell us when these things will be?” They wanted to know exactly when Jesus would establish His kingdom. They wanted an exact date and time, but Jesus instead answered like my mom did and said, “in a little while”. He did not actually say it like that, but He definitely did not give them an exact date.

Jesus gave them enough information to keep them looking and expecting.

The Bible does not give us an exact time when we can expect the second coming. In Matthew 25:13 Jesus says, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the son of Man is coming." Jesus gives us an idea about the time, and He tells us what things will be like just before His return, but the important thing is to keep watching and expecting.

My mom did give me something to look for on our trip. She said when we got close, we would start looking for the Matterhorn Mountain. Believe me, I kept looking and looking and looking. Then finally it happened, I saw the top of the mountain. This is like what the Bible calls a sign.

We will see things happen around us that will help us to know that Jesus' return is very close. Are you looking for the return of Jesus? I know I am.

Lesson Goal:

Be ready, because you do not know the time Jesus is coming.

Lesson Body:

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple (24:1-2)

The Jews were preoccupied with the greatness of the outer temple skeleton, rather than the sanctity of the inward heart temple.

What the Lord said was fulfilled in the year 70 AD. This was when the Roman soldiers, under the leadership of Titus, insisted on destroying the entire temple. This was a declaration of establishing the new temple of the New Covenant Church, in new concepts.

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)

Overlooking the temple area and Jerusalem, the disciples asked this three-part question.

1. When will these things be?
2. What will be the sign of Your coming?
3. What will be the sign of the end of the age?

Our Lord mentions the signs which should precede His coming:

1. **False Messiahs** [v4-5] Evidently there will be deceivers who will try to give them false answers to their questions, deceptions intending to confuse and frighten them. There will be false Messiahs, wars and rumors of wars. But these are not to be taken as signs of the end.
2. **Wars and Rumors of Wars- Famines and Earthquakes** [v6-8]
It is not surprising that the signs for the Lord's coming in its totality represent various aspects of sorrows, sufferings and disasters. For, this is the way, prepared for His coming. How so? Whenever the adversary, that is, Satan, realizes the kingdom of Christ is coming at the door, his wars are increased against the believers, to win over as many as he can as members in his kingdom, resisting Christ's kingdom. All of this increases the watchful believers in their strength and stability and are thus exalted.
3. **Times of persecution** [v9-10]

After trying the general hardships, Satan will take it to a personal level with the believers. They will be persecuted for the name of Christ.

4. The false prophets: [V11]

The third arrow from Satan, and the most dangerous one is the arrow against the faith, so people would be far diverted from the kingdom path. From the historical aspect, there have been many false prophets deceiving many. This also takes various shapes, as the appearance of new philosophers may be hidden behind the religious faith.

5. Lawlessness [v12]

Human society was created to live within the boundaries of God's law, His moral principles. When evil grows, it opposes those boundaries. Some periods of history have been more lawless than others. In the time of the New Testament, lawlessness had become a serious problem. Prostitution, homosexuality and infanticide were promoted and protected by countries' law as were many other offenses against God's revealed moral order.

When love in a society dies, it grows cold like a corpse.

As lawlessness rises in the world as it has in many periods of our history, it should not discourage believers to give up. The cycle of sin keeps on. These things should stir us to renewed effort to promote evangelism and to influence society toward godliness in every way we know how.

Verse13 "But he who endures to the end shall be saved":

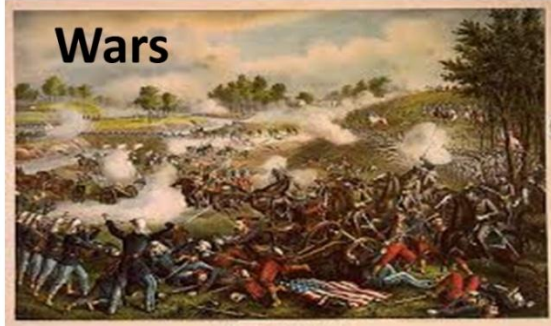
The Lord gives us a promise to arouse hope in us. It is a struggle between light and darkness that ends in the victory of light.

It is interesting to note that while over a million rebellious Jews were brutally slaughtered in the attack on Jerusalem in 70 AD which also brought the destruction of the Temple, there is no record of any Christians being killed in the conflict. Those who were faithful to Christ and heeded His warnings were spared when the great judgment Jesus spoke of finally came because Jesus had warned them.

6. The Gospel of the Kingdom .. to the Whole World [v14]

The good news about the Kingdom of God would be declared in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations. During the time of the Apostles, the good news to the Gentile nations had been essentially extended to all the earth, that is to all the nations known at that time.

This could be another sign before His second coming. If it refers to the end of the world, there is the greatest probability that true faith will have been announced to every part of the globe, before that period.



The Great Tribulation (24:15-22)

What is this 'abomination of desolation'? It is the Hebrew expression found in Daniel 9:27; 11:31 and 12:11.

St. John Chrysostom says, "It means the army by which Jerusalem became desolate and destroyed" [in the year 70 AD]. Also, according to Daniel 12:11, it seems to refer to the defilement of the sanctuary by the mad attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to stop the "daily sacrifice," and to substitute it by an idolatrous worship.

From the historical aspect, when the Christians in Jerusalem saw the Romans besieging it, they realized the disaster that would befall it, as the Lord had said, and so they fled away.

This is what will happen in the coming of the anti-Christ, for the church will see he has set himself up as a god in the Lord's temple (2nd Thes. 1-4). They flee to the wilderness (Rev. 12:6).

In verse 17, he who should be on the house -top when this tribulation comes upon the city "should flee without delay;" not to take his possession from the house as this would delay him.

In verse 19, the Lord declares misfortunes befalling those expecting children in their pregnancy, and those who are nursing. Who are these pregnant other than those souls who, though they know the Lord Jesus, yet the fruit of the Spirit has not yet been manifested in them. Those nursing ones are those who have fruits as little as nursing babes.

Those who are practically fruitless or who have little fruit are unable to face the hard times, particularly the time of the anti-Christ, before the coming of Christ.

In verse 20, The Lord asks us to pray so our flight would not be in the winter or on a Sabbath day. This means our life would not be stricken with the fatal cold of the spirit, just as happens in wintertime, and neither would it be on an idle restful day as the Sabbath. The soul that is cold and idle falls under the deception of the anti-Christ and is unable to encounter the Lord of glory Jesus.

The great tribulation in v 21 will befall the church in the days of the deceiver or the anti-Christ.

The Appearance of False-Christ: (24:23-28)

The secret behind this great tribulation is the appearance of the anti-Christ and his followers. The deceiving Christ and his followers will use all means by which they would deceive us. They will make miracles and wonders that are of the deeds of the adversary. He has deceiving thoughts as well.

The last coming of the Son of Man will not be followed by wonders or miracles, and He will not be manifested in the wilderness, or in a hidden place. He will come from on high, all of a sudden, on the clouds, just as lightning, brightening the entire earth. He will carry us from the four corners and raise us to His heavens.

The disciples were asking for signs of the end of days and Jesus mentioned that verse. What does He mean by the words, "For whenever the carcass is there, the eagles will be gathered together"?

This verse is symbolizing the second coming of Christ at judgment day, the Judge will come when the cup of the world's judgment is full. Just as the eagles gather when there is a carcass, also Jesus will come when the judgment of the world is due. When He comes, all His followers will gather around Him announcing the end of the world.

The Coming of the Son of Man (24:29-31)

This indeed is a must, for the eternal kingdom of Christ to come in perfect glory, the present world collapses. The Lord will reign on us and in us forever.

After the anti-Christ kingdom is being stubborn in resisting the kingdom of Christ, that is, His church, and after the sun and the moon do not give their light and the stars fall, and the heavenly hosts are shaken -----after all this, the Lord Himself comes in His angelic procession, with the sign of the cross ahead, declared in the skies. This makes the church rejoice, the church that embodies the heavenly nature. It rejoices for the coming of the Groom, whereas all the tribes of the earth grieve, for they have embraced the deceiver, and they could no longer bear the Truth.

The stars falling is a metaphor for the collapse of earthly powers or spiritual entities, similar to [Revelation 6:13]

The Parable of the Fig Tree (24:32-35)

It is as if He is saying if you know how to discern the times and can realize summer is near by means of the fig-tree when its branch is tender, and its leaves turn green, it is therefore of more importance to look for those signs I have given you.

Jesus uses the Fig tree example to emphasize the importance of discernment and understanding the signs of times; the fig tree here serves as a metaphor for recognizing the prophetic signs that indicate the nearness of these events. And therefore, the believers should be watchful and ready.

His words in verse 34 refer to the final destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD, and the beginning of the expansion of the Apostolic church. It was all fulfilled within one generation, less than 40 years, just as this passage indicates.

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)

It is certain that Jesus Christ knew the day of judgment and all things to come, by a knowledge which He could not but have, because of the union by which His human nature was united to the Divine person and nature. He speaks to His disciples telling them only what He intends to make known to them, so they don't ask for more. He gave them signs but not the time.

The Lord Jesus tells us of the flood that saved Noah and his family, and devastated the evil humanity, as an example of His coming, where the children of God will be blessed with the eternal crown. They will enter glory, just as into the ark, whereas the evil ones will perish as happened in the flood. The evil ones were unprepared, and their hearts were preoccupied with eating and drinking and marrying, and they were never exalted to God.

Indeed, eating, drinking and marrying, all of which are not evil. The world gets lulled into apathy and complacency by the usual. Even in its disobedience and rejection of God, it plans to go on with its daily routine forever. It becomes immersed in its business and simply ignores God's prophetic warnings.

While two men are working in the same field, and two women are working on one grinder, yet one of them has an uplifted heart to heaven, and the other is disturbed about what is earthly. One works and thanks God and praises Him, whereas the other works to serve his belly and satisfy his passions, and is disturbed about the earthly matters. The Lord asks us to be watchful so as to meet Him, even though He did not specify the time of His coming.

Jesus use those 2 examples to show the suddenness of those events and of his coming back while life seems normal and people go about their daily normal activity; this is used to urge us to always be ready and not to be deceived by the normalcy and routine of life

PS: Jesus used example of their everyday life to make them understand.



The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)

The Master's stewards will either receive blessings for faithful service in governing God's household/the Church and feeding the members of His household at the proper time, or they will be judged and condemned for their mistreatment of the servants.