



49: *The Judgment of Jerusalem* - Part 2 (Mt 24:15-16)

So you say you want to dive deep into Daniel's prophecies about 'end times'? Then today's teaching is for you, as Jesus points to Daniel's prophecy fulfilled regarding the Destruction of Jerusalem.

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GOSPEL OF MATTHEW



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teachingnotes

☛ **Kent Hughes** speaking of the Olivet Discourse, writes: "Study of it [the Olivet Discourse] requires a proper humility and a willingness to admit that we do not have all the answers."¹

Catch the Context

Matthew 24:1-3 (NIV)

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its **buildings**. "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "**when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?**"

This is commonly known as "**The Olivet Discourse**" - a conversation between Jesus and His disciples *on the Mount of Olives*. From this mountain they could likely SEE the Temple, which led to the questions. They actually ask a couple of questions that they expect to occur at the same time.

1. **When will THIS happen?** "**This**" is referring to what Jesus had previously told them - the destruction of the temple - not 1 stone left on another (Mt 24:2).
2. **What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?**
 - "The end of the age" is likely referring to the total shift that would happen as the Temple is destroyed.
 - Jesus had referred to His "coming" before the apostles had finished taking the gospel to all the towns of Israel.

Matthew 10:23 (NIV)

When **you** are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell **you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

✓ To rightly interpret Scripture, ask, "**who is the author & the audience?**", before we dive into **application** for OUR lives. "**Who is YOU?**" in the text. "**When YOU are persecuted**" - *WHO is that?* That is referring to the 1st century disciples of Jesus.

This CANNOT be the 2nd Coming of Jesus, for 2 reasons.

1. **They did not understand that Jesus was leaving.** They still didn't understand this, even after His resurrection. They were hoping Jesus was going to establish His earthly kingdom right then. Just before Jesus ascended to heaven they asked, "Lord, are you at this time going to **restore the kingdom to Israel?**" (Acts 1:6)
2. Jesus' prophecy was **encouraging His 1st century disciples about His coming during their lifetime & persecution** - a time when He would "come" to bring judgment against His enemies who mistreated His people.

As they sit on the Mount Olives, Jesus tells them about false messiahs, wars, famine, & earthquakes, & persecution they would face (Mt 24:1-12) - *all which DID occur in their lifetime.*

¹ R. Kent Hughes, Luke: That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 295.

GOOD NEWS & BAD NEWS...

Matthew 24:13-14 (NIV)

but **the one who stands firm to the end will be saved**. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

After hearing the BAD NEWS, their ears must have been longing for the **GOOD NEWS!** First, there **WILL BE** followers of Jesus who **STAND FIRM to the end**. It's not impossible. Secondly, their small movement only known within the small country of Israel would spread all over the known **world** and impact **all nations!** What a GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT this must have been to the 1st century disciples! The **KINGdom** would spread to all kinds of people in all kinds of places! Despite the tough times they would face, Jesus would not leave them to their own strength and they would not carry their own message, but HIS.

Here's what we do in the middle of tough times: STAND FIRM. Follow Jesus, encourage one another, & follow our King's marching orders, to become disciples who develop disciples of other generations & other nations.

Daniel's Prophecy Fulfilled in Their Lifetime

Matthew 24:15-16 (NIV)

So when **you see** standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let **those who are in Judea** flee to the mountains.

WHO is YOU? Jesus tells His 1st century followers that THEY will **see** these future events unfolding, something similar to **the abomination that causes desolation spoken through the prophet Daniel** (about this 550 years earlier). Matthew adds that **the reader** should go back and see what Daniel had to say.

The Jewish disciples of Jesus were very familiar with **the abomination that causes desolation**, a reference to the temple being taken over and being violated by enemies.

- In 168 BC **Antiochus Epiphanes IV** tried to turn Israel into a fully Greek society.² He took over the temple, slaughtered a pig on the altar, brought prostitutes in the temple, stopped the Sabbath worship, did away with baby circumcision, destroyed the Hebrew scriptures, & set up an image of Zeus at the Temple.

Manifest God Antiochus



- The term "**Epiphanes**" means "the manifest god" put on coins - "**Antiochus, the manifest God**".

- Multiple prophecies from Daniel regarding **the abomination of desolation** were fulfilled through Antiochus (Dan 8:9-14, 11:21-45, 12:11).

Daniel Foretold Antiochus

Daniel 8:8-12 (ESV)

Then the goat [Alexander the Great] became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns [4 generals of Alexander the great] toward the four winds of heaven. Out of one of them came **a little horn** [Antiochus], **which grew exceedingly great** toward the south, toward the east, and toward **the glorious land**. It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary [Temple] was overthrown. And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper.

1 Maccabees 1:54-57 (NRSV) - written between the Old Testament & New Testament times (not recognized as Scriptures)
Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev [December], in the one hundred forty-fifth year, they **erected a desolating sacrilege on the altar of burnt offering**. They also built altars in the surrounding towns of Judah, and offered incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets. The **books of the law** that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. Anyone found possessing **the book of the covenant**, or anyone who adhered to the law, was **condemned to death** by decree of the king.

1 Maccabees 1:59-64 (NRSV)

On the twenty-fifth day of the month [Dec 25] they **offered sacrifice on the altar that was on top of the altar of burnt offering**. According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised, and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers' necks. But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. Very great wrath came upon Israel.

² Ronald L. Eisenberg, The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 244.

Restoration of the Temple

Daniel 8:13-14 (ESV)

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" And he said to me, "For **2,300 evenings and mornings**. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

Scholars debate whether **2,300 evenings and mornings** is referring to 2,300 days OR if it combines the sacrifices in the evening and mornings - in other words - 1,150 days x 2 sacrifices - evening & morning. If so, that's over 3 years.

Josephus, Jewish historian, referring to Antiochus writes: "our sanctuary [was] made desolate for three years and six months."³

☆ **Judas Maccabeus** and his army ran Antiochus out of Jerusalem, then **restored** the Temple **to its rightful state** on December 25, 165 B.C. He tore down the statue of Zeus & cleansed the temple from all of the pagan wickedness that had occurred there, forging a new sacrificial altar and new holy vessels. They once again burned incense on the incense altar, lit the lampstands to give light to the temple, placed bread on the table, and hung new curtains. He dedicated the new altar with sacrifices, music, and joyous worship for eight days.⁴

🕒 This is the celebration we know as **Hanukkah** - meaning "**dedication**" or "consecration". Jesus and His disciples celebrated this annually, just as all Jews did (Jn 10:22).

- To **Daniel's audience** (in 500 B.C.) 'the abomination of desolation' was **a FUTURE prophecy**, but **to the apostles** (in AD 30s) - 'the abomination of desolation' **was a FULFILLED prophecy**.
- Jesus points to this PAST EVENT (Antiochus & Judas Maccabees) to explain what it will be like later in the apostles' lifetime. The apostles on top of the Mount of Olives **are expecting one LIKE Antiochus Epiphanes to take over the temple...**except this time the temple & city will be completely destroyed - not one stone on another (Mt 24:2).

Daniel Foretells Destruction of Jerusalem & the Death of the Messiah

Daniel 9:24-27 (NIV)

Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, **to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness**, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.

Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem [referring to the destroyed Temple rebuilt in 516 BC] until **the Anointed One**, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

After the sixty-two 'sevens,' **the Anointed One will be put to death** and will have nothing.

The people of the ruler who will come will **destroy** the **city** and the **sanctuary**. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And **at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation**, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

The **transgressions - sins** - are piling up and God's judgment is about to overflow. Yet, there is something amazing here - there will ultimately be a way to **atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness**. How could THAT happen? Daniel prophesied that **the Anointed One** - the Messiah - would be "cut off" (ESV) - **put to death**. THAT is how the **sins** of many will be **atoned for**. THAT is how **everlasting righteousness** would be available for all who trust in HIM - JESUS! That's GOOD NEWS!

❓ **Did YOU know that payment for sins was prophesied & NOW...has been PAYED...for US!?!?**

✓ That's only GOOD NEWS for those who turn from their sin and turn to Him.

✗ For those who reject Him, for those who refuse His gracious offer, **JUDGMENT IS COMING**.

Less than 40 years after Jesus tells his disciples about what was coming, it happened. **Roman General Titus besieged Jerusalem for 5 1/2 months** and finally conquered it.

🔥 **Josephus** writes: *And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus imperator, with the greatest acclamations of joy.*⁵

• **Ensigns** were objects of worship - images of Roman gods & emperors carried at the heads of the legions.

• When the 1st century disciples see this occurring, they are to **flee to the mountains**.

Jesus warns His 1st century disciples to protect them from the judgment that is coming - a **GREAT TRIBULATION**.

³ Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 717.

⁴ Gary Hardin, "Hanukkah," ed. Chad Brand et al., Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 713-714.

⁵ Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 743.



1. **Know what Jesus says & Trust what Jesus says.** Get your face in the BOOK. Read what Jesus says & then *BEHAVE* like you *BELIEVE* what He says.
2. **Pray for & take opportunities to share the GOOD NEWS** [with others]. This is GOOD NEWS.
We should tell others - "*He payed for your sin so you don't have to!*"

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156), **Rob & Rebecca Leatherberry** (229-232-1087), or **Mark & Dot Mancil** (850-253-5405).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. We talked about some HEAVY material today. What left you scratching your head or challenged you to reconsider how you have interpreted the Scriptures we studied today?
2. Why is it so difficult to consider changing long-held interpretations? What is the benefit of carefully examining other views?
3. Have you ever heard about the significance of *Antiochus Epiphanes IV & Judas Maccabees*? Explain your answer. After reading **Matthew 24:15-16, Daniel 8:8-14, & 1 Maccabees 1:54-64**, how does this help you better understand how the Hebrew disciples of Jesus would have viewed the future prophecies about "the abomination that causes desolation" based on the fulfilled prophecies of the past?
4. Many people read Matthew 24:15-16 and believe it is a FUTURE event for us. Who is "you" in this passage? If you were sitting with Jesus and heard Him say, "So when **you** see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel...then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" - would you think this has nothing to do with **you** (a 1st century Hebrew disciple)? Explain your answer.
5. What is the problem with US (21st century readers) taking the warning Jesus gives his original audience and transplanting it into our time?
6. How does **Daniel 9:24-27** apply to the death of the Messiah ("Anointed One") & destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 under General Titus? Have you ever considered that text to be FUTURE for the 1st century disciples but PAST for us? If not, why not? If so, how were you challenged/trained to do so?
7. Share how the prophecies of Jesus regarding the destruction of Jerusalem helps you want to KNOW & TRUST what Jesus says.
8. What does God want YOU to do with what we studied today?
9. How can we pray for/care for one another this week? (Pray for one another.)