



48: *The Judgment of Jerusalem - Part 1* (Mt 24:1-14)

Today we attempt to attempt begin the process of rightly interpreting one of the most intriguing, misunderstood, and misinterpreted passages of all time dealing with...the END of time - or so many people think. Discover how followers of Jesus should appreciate the past & anticipate the future

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teachingnotes

Catch the Context

Matthew 23:31-39 (NIV)

So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started! "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore **I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers.** Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Truly I tell you, **all this will come on this generation.** Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, **how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings**, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

Jesus wants to *PROTECT* the people of Jerusalem, **as a hen does her chicks under her wings**. While it's not strange language for a prophet of Yahweh to speak *on behalf of God*, it *IS* strange for a prophet to speak *as though He IS God*. Jesus speaks that way applying a metaphor used of God in **Ps. 91:4** that says:

Psalm 91:4 (CSB) **He will cover you** with His feathers; **you will take refuge under His wings.**

His faithfulness will be a protective shield.

The majority of the religious leaders & their followers **were not willing** to receive Jesus as their Messiah. Instead, they rejected and murdered their Messiah. Because of this, *judgement is coming on the unbelieving Hebrew people, and that judgement will be coming on **this generation** - the same generation of people Jesus is speaking to.*

- **Your house is left to you desolate** is similar language of what God said regarding the destruction of the temple (*Isa. 64:11; Jer. 12:7; 22:5*).
- **"You will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"**? Why would Jesus say that about the **FUTURE** if that had already happened in the **PAST** (*Matthew 21:9*)?
- ✓ Despite the *IMPENDING JUDGMENT* Jesus warns of, there is a *FUTURE HOPE* that is coming too - a time when many people of Israel *WILL welcome, trust, & follow* their Messiah.

Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple

Matthew 24:1-2 (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."

- King Solomon created an enormous campus, built on top of Mt Moriah in **957 BC**. The Temple was built atop flattened ground made from tons of fill dirt & rocks held in place by retaining walls. That temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians in **586 BC**.
- The second temple was rebuilt and completed in **516 BC**, although not nearly as elaborate as Solomon's Temple.¹

¹ Robert H. Stein, Luke, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 510.

- **20 BC** King Herod began a massive renovation & enlargement to the temple mount and its buildings. After his death not long after the birth of Jesus, Herod's construction efforts had continued. When Jesus said, "Destroy the temple and I will raise it up again in 3 days", the people responded, "It has taken 46 years" (Jn 2:18-21) and it was still over 20 years from being **completed in AD 63** - after 83 years of building! King Herod had made the temple grounds much larger than King Solomon did with the 1st temple 1000 years previous. Herod's Temple campus was 36 acres (26 football fields)! The **SPLENDOR** of this place was simply incredible!

☀️ **Josephus** (Jewish historian) described the Temple from a distance:

Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes, for it was covered all over the plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow; for, as to those parts of it that were not gilt [or covered in gold], they were exceeding white.²

NO TEMPLE exists today - that's been the case for almost 2,000 years. **The Temple Mount** - the ground on which the Temple used to stand - **still exists** because of massive stone retaining walls.

The **Western Wall** in Jerusalem is one of the four support walls that holds up the Temple Mount. Much of the stone-cut retaining wall has been replaced over the years, many of the stones from Jesus day are still in place today!

- This wall is NOT part of the temple, it is only a wall that supports the temple mount, up and over the wall. The Muslim shrine called "The Dome of the Rock" now stands where the Temple stood in Jesus' day.
- **The Western Wall is 62 feet high!** Its foundation, goes much lower. In total, above and below ground, the wall is 105 feet high. One foundation stone is 44.5 ft long, 11 ft high, & estimated to be 6-8 ft wide - estimated weight of 250-300 tons.

So, Jesus has clearly claimed that the Temple was going to be totally destroyed. This was unthinkable to the people of Israel. After all, **this is Yahweh's house! How could He allow that to happen?**

History Repeats Itself - Temple Destroyed in 586 BC

Jeremiah 12:7 (NIV)

I will forsake my house, abandon my inheritance; I will give the one I love into the hands of her enemies.

This future prophecy would mean:

- an end to the religious freedom and **no place for the nation of Israel to gather to worship Yahweh**
- an **end to sacrifice for sin**, as animals could only be sacrificed at the temple.
- the slaughter of a tremendous number Hebrew people in & around the city.

The Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:3 (NIV)

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 SEE the Temple, which led to the questions.

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 the total shift that would happen as the Temple is destroyed.
 - His "coming" of Jesus is referring to His bringing judgment & redemption. Remember back when we noted something strange Jesus had said related to His "coming"?

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.

🔍 We must ask: **who is the author & the audience** before we dive into **application** for OUR lives.

- ✓ A simple way to start - answer the question, "**Who is YOU?**" in the text. "**When YOU are persecuted**" - *WHO is that?* That is referring to the 1st century disciples of Jesus. Jesus *told them* they would **not finish going through all the towns of Israel...before the Son of Man comes.**
- This conversation is happening BEFORE the death, burial, & resurrection of Jesus.

² Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).

✗ The disciples didn't understand that Jesus was going to be leaving to ascend to heaven.

✓ The disciples were awaiting the time that Jesus would be *COMING IN GLORY* - to take over - to bring judgment & redemption. The disciples are likely NOT asking about Jesus' 2nd **coming**. *We wrongly read that INTO the text* instead of asking what it meant for Jesus' original audience.

Now, back to the text - **when will THIS happen** - the destruction of the temple - and how do all these things tie together?

False Messiahs

Matthew 24:4-5 (NIV)

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives **you**. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many.

Who is YOU? Who is Jesus giving warning to at this point? His 1st century disciples.

• **Be careful:** we have a tendency to dismiss the original audience & transplant the text into our world.

Jesus was warning His 1st century disciples that there would come a time during *THEIR* lives that **false messiahs** would appear and claim the end was near. They weren't to follow these men and would certainly warn their disciples of the same thing.

• In **AD 44-46, Theudas** called people to the Jordan River wilderness with the promise that he would divide the Jordan like Joshua and begin a new conquest of the land like Joshua of old did.

• Several others between **AD 52-59** also led crowds into the wilderness with promises of signs & wonders.

• In **AD 60-62** another 'messiah' promised deliverance from Roman rule for those who would follow him into the wilderness.

• In **AD 64-66** another false messiah called **Manahem ben Judah** came to Jerusalem "like a king", besieged the city with his army, and attempted to take it from the Romans.³

🕒 The disciples of Jesus weren't to follow false messiahs. And obviously, today, if anyone claims to be the Messiah, WE shouldn't follow them either.

Signs of What? Wars, Famines, & Earthquakes

Matthew 24:6-8 (NIV)

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you **are not alarmed**. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Many who read these words of Jesus *in our time* point to a **war**, an **earthquake**, a **famine**, a **deadly disease**, or the latest **'blood moon' prophecy** and say, "*Here it comes. The end of the world is near! This is what Jesus said would happen!*"

We must first ask...**who is YOU** in this passage? To whom is Jesus first saying, "**Don't be alarmed**"? He's speaking to the disciples on top of the Mount of Olives who have asked about when the temple would be destroyed. Don't forget that context!

While these signs could happen before the return of Jesus, *Jesus is still telling his 1st century disciples what THEY can expect.*

• ONE PHRASE that Jesus will later use that will make this crystal clear -take a peek...**verse 34.**

The 1st century disciples also heard of **wars, famines, earthquakes.**

FAMINE

Acts 11:28 - a believer named **Agabus** foretold the four year **famine** from A.D. 44-48 during the reign of Emperor Claudius.⁴

WAR

🌟 Ken Gentry

*"During the Roman Civil Wars of AD 68-69 several nations revolted in an attempt to leave the Empire. The Roman historian Tacitus mentions the Gallic provinces, Britain, Germany, and several others. It literally was a time of "nation against nation." While Jesus' day is a time of great peace in the Roman Empire known as **the pax Romana**, He warned that wars and rumors of wars will disrupt it."⁵*

³ Chad Brand et al., eds., "False Christs," Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 554.

⁴ F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 26.

⁵ Gentry, Ken (2011-05-23). The Olivet Discourse Made Easy (Made Easy Series) (Kindle Locations 1467-1470). NiceneCouncil.com. Kindle Edition.

PERSECUTION COMING TO THE 1st FOLLOWERS

Matthew 24:9 (NIV)

Then **you** will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and **you** will be hated by all nations because of Me.

Followers of Jesus from that time on *have* and *will* be **persecuted**. It's not that this is never true of OUR lives, but it was certainly true for the 1st century disciples of Jesus.

The apostles of Jesus EXPERIENCED what Jesus said they would experience. All of them were **flogged** by other Jewish people.

- **James** was beheaded.
- **Peter** was thrown in prison, and ultimately crucified.
- **John** was banished to a prison island.
- Many other disciples were persecuted and even killed. **WHY? Because of Jesus.** They so *trusted & followed* Jesus, that they were willing to be disgraced, persecuted, & even face death.

❓ **Are WE THAT committed to the Lord Jesus?** Willing to *DIE* for Him? Willing to *LIVE* for Him?

Matthew 24:10-14 (NIV)

At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 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.

Here's the **GOOD NEWS!**

1. There **WILL BE** followers of Jesus who **STAND FIRM to the end**. It's not impossible.
2. 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! They would face tough times, but Jesus would not leave them to their own strength; and they would carry HIS message - and now WE have heard it and carry it!

WHAT NOW? STAND FIRM. Follow Jesus. Encourage one another. Let's follow our King's marching orders, to become disciples who develop disciples of other generations & other nations.

heretoseveyou

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. **Read Matthew 24:1-3.** What near future event within the lifetime of the disciples were they asking Jesus about?
How did hearing about the splendor & size of the temple impact your understanding of its significance in Jewish life?
2. How does knowing that the *Mount of Olives* looks over Jerusalem & the *Temple* help you to better appreciate this conversation?
3. So far in the text of Matthew 24:1-14, **Who is "YOU"?** How does interpreting "you" impact your view of this passage?
4. Based on who Jesus was talking to in Matthew 24, how should we respond when someone says something like, "Jesus is coming back soon because of...contemporary false Christs, wars, famines, earthquakes, or 'blood moons'"?
5. **Read Matthew 24:4-12.** What were future events that Jesus warned His 1st century disciples of? How might 21st century followers of Jesus (us) prepare to **STAND FIRM** for persecutions that might await us in the future?
6. **Read Matthew 24:13-14.** Why might these words from Jesus be a HUGE encouragement for His 1st century disciples?
How can 21st century disciples be encouraged and challenged by these words?
7. What does God want YOU to do with what we studied today?
8. How can we pray for/care for one another this week? (Pray for one another.)