

Signs Of The Lord's Return

Part 1

Matthew 24:1-3

Plans for this study:

- Signs of the Lord's Return Part 1 (Matthew 24:1-3)
- Signs of the Lord's Return Part 2 (Matthew 24:4-14)
- Signs of the Lord's Return Part 3 (Matthew 24:4-14)
- Abomination of Desolation (Great Tribulation) (Matthew 24:15-22)
- The Second Coming (Matthew 24:27-31)

In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul is talking about the return of the Lord Jesus and some things that it will involve. Based upon 1 Thessalonians 4:18, what should our study of the Lord's return give us?

1 Thessalonians 4:18 – Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Matthew 24 & 25 together is known as “The Olivet Discourse” – teaching from the Mount of Olives (see pictures below of the Mount of Olives – the first looking up to it and the second looking down from it) concerning the Lord’s return and all events associated with it and around it. This sermon occurred on Tuesday of the week of Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion.

What are some things from Scripture that you remember took place, or will take place, on the Mount of Olives?

Two (2) reasons why these two (2) chapters are important and should be studied together - First, this sermon is the broadest and most comprehensive description, from the Lord Himself, regarding His return and all that it will encompass. Second, this sermon systematically lays out how His return will transpire.



Matthew 24:1-3 - *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' Now 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 end of the age?"*

Matthew 23:38-39 – *Behold your house is left unto you desolate* (abandoned to ruin). *For I say to you, You shall not see me again until you shall say, 'Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.'*

Whose house does Jesus say in Matthew 23:38-39 the Temple is at this point? Whose house is the Temple according to Matthew 21:13 - "My house will be called a house of prayer," and in John 2:16 - "Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise. Why the change now in Matthew 23:38-39?

Mark 13:3 - Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite (adjacent to) the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately.

Who goes to Jesus with the questions about His return? Does that strike you as odd that these four (4) would go privately to Jesus?

Matthew 24:3 - ...Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?

Their three (3) questions are:

- *Tell us, when shall these things be?*
- *And what shall be the sign of Your coming?*
- *And of the end of the age?*

Now, in Matthew 24:1-14, the Lord Jesus prophetically describes signs that would occur between His first coming and His second coming. These signs would point to His second coming and indicate that His coming is near. The first sign is,

1. _____

Jerusalem and the Temple were completely destroyed first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C (there were three separate deportations of Jews in Jerusalem to Babylon, which began in 605 B.C.).

The Persian king, Cyrus, after defeating the Babylonians, released the Jews (as promised by God after 70 years) and commissioned the Jerusalem rebuilding process, including the Temple, which began in 536 B.C. God even had Cyrus furnish the materials for the rebuilding. The rebuilding of the Temple was completed in 516 B.C. under the leadership of Zerubbabel, and the prophets Haggai, and Zechariah.

In 20 B.C., Herod the Great (a descendant of Esau) commissioned the renovation of that Temple. This renovation went on until 10 B.C.

10,000 stone cutters and metal workers and 1,000 priests who were trained as stone cutters and carpenters worked on this renovation project. Why would priests be needed?

The construction of the other buildings and courts went on from 10 B.C. to 64 A.D. So, you're looking at an 84-year (20 B.C. to 64 A.D.) building project before it finally reached completion in 64 A.D.

Some of the stones were 40 feet by 12 feet by 12 feet and weighing upward of 100 tons. It was a massive undertaking.



Luke 21:5 - *As some of the disciples were remarking how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and consecrated gifts.*



So, the question is, "Did the prophecy Jesus made that all the stones of the Temple would be thrown down, come to pass?" Short answer, yes. In 70 A.D. by the Romans. Josephus, the Jewish historian of Jesus' day, says the Temple was leveled to the degree where you would never know if you visited there that anybody ever inhabited the place.

What is the significance of this being the first sign of the Lord's return according to Deuteronomy 18:21-22?

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 - *And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD and the message does not come to pass or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.*

How would this first sign affect the other signs that the Lord gives in Matthew 24?

Luke 21:20-24 - *But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that her desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country stay out of the city. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. How miserable those days will be for pregnant and nursing mothers! For there will be great distress upon the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations. And Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

The Roman officers knew that their Jewish enemy would fight for every inch of their city, and understood that the siege of Jerusalem would take a long time. Therefore, Titus changed his plans. There were signs that the supplies of Jerusalem were giving out: some Jews had left the city, hoping to find food in the valleys in front of the walls. Many of them had been caught and crucified - some 500 every day. (The soldiers had amused themselves by nailing their victims in different postures.) The Romans decided to starve the enemies into surrender. In three (3) days, Jerusalem was surrounded. All trees within a half mile of the city were cut down.

The death rate among the besieged Jews increased. Soon, the Kidron valley and the Valley of Hinnom were filled with corpses. It's recorded that a Jew who had been captured told Titus that their number in the city was estimated at 115,880.

Desperate people tried to leave Jerusalem. When they had succeeded in passing their own lines and had not been killed by Roman patrols, they surrendered. As prisoners, they were at last entitled to some bread. Some of them ate so much, that they could not stomach it and died. In that case, their bodies were cut open, thinking that some Jews had swallowed gold coins before they left Jerusalem.

The gold, silver and bronze riches from the Temple were used to strike coins with the words JUDAEA CAPTA ("Judaea defeated"). The coins would be a reminder to the Romans of their complete victory over the Jews.

During the time of war between the Jews and Romans, the Romans had taken many prisoners. Hundreds, if not thousands, of them were forced to become gladiators and were killed in the arena, fighting wild animals or each other. Some, who were considered "criminals," were burned alive. Others were forced labor in building aqueducts and the Colosseum.