

7-9-2016, COTR Texarkana

Title: Jesus and the Last Days

Purpose: Teach people what Jesus said about the last days and provoke them to live like He told us.

Spiritual Truth: Jesus predicted what will happen in the last days and told us how to live.

Text: Matthew 24

Topic: Last Days, Persecution, Antichrist, Great Tribulation, Discipleship

Series: The Final Chapter

Series Purpose: Teach people about the last days and show them how to live accordingly.

Jesus and the Last Days, pt-1

I. Introduction

A. **Review series, “The Final Chapter”**...living in the last days.

A.1. Listen to messages @ChurchOnTheRock.org or on the COTR iPhone/ Android app

A.2. We began the series last week looking at the historical account of Jesus ascension and His promised 2nd coming, an overview of end time events and a verse by verse study of 2 Peter 3. Our focus in the series is not on the sequence of end time events or predictions but on how we should live in light of His 2nd coming.

A.3. Today and next week we’ll look at what Jesus said about the last days in Matthew 24 and 25. These 2 chapters are called the “Olivet Discourse” because He spoke His disciples on the Mt. of Olives. It’s the 5th and last of Jesus major teachings in Matthew in which he discussed the destruction of the temple, world events before His return, the 2nd coming, a call to be prepared and final judgment and reward.

B. **Title: Jesus and the Last Days, pt-1**

C. **Purpose:** Teach people what Jesus said about the last days and provoke them to live like He told us.

D. **Sp. Truth:** Jesus predicted what will happen in the last days and told us how to live.

II. Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple (// passages in Mark 13 and Luke 21)

A. **Matthew 24:1 (ESV)** Jesus left the temple...when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2 But he answered them...Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.

A.1. This prophecy by Jesus was fulfilled in 70 AD by the Roman army when General Titus crushed the Jewish Revolt and destroyed the temple. This marked the end of the Jewish state until it was reborn in 1948.

A.2. Luke adds to the prophecy, Luke 21:20 (NCV) When you see armies all around Jerusalem, you will know it will soon be destroyed.

III. Signs of the end of the age and the 2nd coming of Christ

A. **Verse 3** 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?” 4 And Jesus answered them, “See that no one **leads you astray**. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.

A.1. There are different interpretations about the sequence of end time events and whether Chr. will be on earth. The SFLB has an intro to Rev that lists 9 possibilities, e.g. pre-trib. rapture, mid-trib., post-trib. etc.’ I’ve chosen to present the text as if we are experiencing the events Jesus described and see how we should respond.

A.2. The 1st thing He said was a warning against deception, i.e. false Christ, Messiah, God’s anointed one. False messiahs could be religious leaders or political leaders we worship as God. Presidents and world leaders are increasingly looked at as saviors to make us happy and take care of us just as the antichrist will one day.

A.3. I asked the god of google about modern day messiahs and they led me to Wikipedia who listed 16 false Jewish messiahs and false 32 Christian messiahs, e.g. Alan John Miller born 1962, former JW elder and founder of Divine Truth, a religious movement in Australia. He claims to be Jesus of Nazareth through reincarnation.

B. **Verse 6** 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. 7 For **nation will rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be **famines and earthquakes** in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the **birth pains**.

B.1. T: “There will be wars and civil strife everywhere.” Conflicts in society, conflict within nations and catastrophes mean the end of this Age is near.

B.2. These spiritual birth pains are like a woman in labor and imply people will be suffering prior to the glory of the 2nd coming. Sounds like the world we live in.

C. **Verse 9** “Then they will deliver you up to **tribulation** (*NIV persecution*) and **put you to death**, and you will be **hated** by all nations for my name’s sake. 10 And then **many will fall away** and **betray one another** and **hate one another**. 11 And **many false prophets will arise and lead many astray**. 12 And because **lawlessness** will be increased, the **love of many will grow cold**. 13 But the one who **endures to the end** will be saved.

C.1. T: “the entire world will hate you” “because you are my followers” and (1) “will stop believing in me” or “give up being my followers.” (2) betray other believers

just as Judas betrayed Jesus. (3) hate their brothers and sisters in Christ. All because they didn't endure hatred, persecution and suffering.

C.2. 2nd warning against deception. This time it's from false prophets arising from within the church. False prophets say they speak God's Word but don't. Acts 20:29–30 (NLT) I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. 30 Even some men from your own group will rise up and **distort the truth in order to draw a following**. How do I know the difference? False leaders draw people to themselves instead of Jesus and they distort the Bible.

C.3. Lawlessness Def. to live without a moral code; To behave with complete disregard for the laws of society. E.g. on the streets of America or at the highest level of politics. T: “more and more people will be doing wicked things everywhere.”

C.3.a Why will our love for the Lord or people grow cold? Perhaps because we love sin, are selfish or get discouraged because God doesn't stop lawless people.

C.4. Def. endure: to remain faithful to God when persecution or suffering comes, to stand firm against false prophets and show love in a world where evil is constantly spreading. Jesus promises that those who endure to the end of their life or until Christ returns will be saved from God's wrath at judgment.

D. **Verse 14** And this **gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world** as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

D.1. Our main priority in the end times is to preach the gospel to as many as possible. Great Commission, Mt 28:19 (NIV) ...**go and make disciples of all nations...**

D.2. 1 Corinthians 9:19–22 (NLT) Even though I am a free man with no master, **I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ...22 I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.**

D.2.a How important is winning souls to us? Get involved in “Bless our City”.

IV. **The Great Tribulation and the abomination of desolation**

A. **Verse 15** So when you see **the abomination of desolation** spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (NLT the sacrilegious (NCV blasphemous) object that causes desecration standing in the Holy Place) ...16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains... (Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11)

A.1. T: TEV “The awful horror will come in the holy place”, the Jewish Temple. The abomination may mean an idol that defiles the Temple and makes God's altar impure. When this happens people in Judea should get out of town.

- A.2. Scholars differ. ESV notes say this was fulfilled in 70 AD, others believe the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem in the last days and the antichrist, world dictator, will stop Jewish worship and set up an image to himself to be worshipped.
- A.3. 2 Thes. 2:1–4 (NIV) Concerning the coming of our Lord...Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and **the man of lawlessness** is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, **proclaiming himself to be God**.
- B. **Verse 21** For then there will be **great tribulation**, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now... 22 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.
 - B.1. I.e. people will suffer more than at any other time since the beginning of the world.
 - B.2. Elect are God's chosen people who follow Jesus. For the sake of his chosen people, he will cut this period short lest they too die.
- C. **Verse 23** Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ...do not believe it. 24 For **false christs and false prophets** will arise and **perform great signs and wonders**, so as to **lead astray**, if possible, even the elect... 26...if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness...he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
 - C.1. The 3rd warning bout deception. This time because of supernatural acts. Not all supernatural acts are from God but can be the work of satan. How can we know the true from the false? Biblical truth, the witness of the Holy Spirit, who gets the glory
 - C.2. The 2nd Coming won't be to a select few or hidden like His birth. Like lightening, the 2nd coming of the Son of Man will be a sudden, universal event seen by all.

v. **The 2nd coming of Christ**

- A. **Verse 29**...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...30 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 on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and **they will gather his elect**...
 - A.1. The events in the heavens will transform creation when Christ returns. Some will be excited and ready; the unbeliever will mourn when they see the glory of God.

A.2. 2 Thes. 1:7–10 (NIV) and give relief to you who are troubled (*NLT being persecuted*)...This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who...do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus... with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord...10 on the day he comes to be...marveled at among all those who have believed.

VI. **No one knows the day or hour**

- A. **Verse 36** But concerning that day and hour **no one knows**, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, **so will be the coming of the Son of Man.** 40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.
- A.1. Taken or left implies final judgment and salvation. When judgment comes most people will be living a normal life unconcerned about the approaching judgment.
- A.2. The rest of the chapter and ch. 25 tells us to be ready and prepared for the 2nd coming. Verse 42 “So **always be ready, because you don’t know the day your Lord will come.**
- A.3. Summarize how to be ready: Don’t be deceived, endure persecution, keep on loving people and God even though the world is getting worse and worse, no matter what happens don’t stop believing and following Jesus, don’t let a lawlessness world effect your walk with God and preach the gospel to everyone.

VII. **Response**

- A. **Prayer**
- B. **Souls: If Jesus came back today would you be ready?**
- C. *** *Logos Bible Software and library, ESV Study Bible, Noah Webster’s first edition of An American dictionary of the English language, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature, A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew were used to prepare this message.*