

Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 24:1-8 | Signs That Are Not Signs
Sunday November 9, 2025

WELCOME:

- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- My sermon notes are in the foyer—please take them home with you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, we saw the heart of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus preached His last sermon to Israel.

It was a sermon that revealed how they were lied to and taken advantage of by the scribes and Pharisees—the pastors, priests and ministers of the day.

Jesus called these men false teachers/fake shepherds.

There are serious consequences to lying and abusing God's chosen people.

Jesus curses and then fires them.

After His blistering sermon, we saw Jesus' tone change.

Jesus knew that because they rejected Him as their Prophet, High Priest, and King, dire consequences followed and He wept.

We saw the heart of our Savior. He doesn't want anyone to perish but for all to repent. (2 Peter 3:9)

Then we applied His sermon to our lives.

KEYPOINT 1:

People may know of Jesus, but does Jesus know them?

Tragically, many people will cry out to Jesus on judgment day, “Lord, Lord.”

But Jesus won’t recognize them—He will reject them and judge them.

KEYPOINT 2:

By rejecting Jesus, Jerusalem rejected God’s protection.

The same thing applies to us today—life is hard—how much harder and hopeless without the Lord’s covering.

I hope these keypoints were helpful to you last week.

I pray that you were able to spend some time with the Lord, confessing and weeping over your sins as you listened to His voice through reading His Word.

↳ As Jesus wept over Jerusalem for theirs.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we move into a new chapter—Matthew 24.

We started Matt’s Gospel nearly four years ago, and over the years, I’ve had people say, “I can’t wait to you get to Matthew 24.”

Why? Because Matthew 24 and 25 are prophecy/End Times/Future/Armageddon.

Many of us are pray/curious about the future.

What does tomorrow hold? How do I plan for it successfully?

How do we avoid unnecessary difficulties or tragedies?

In the secular world, people use horoscopes, fortune-tellers, séances, and tarot cards,

For Christians, we don’t do any of that.

We live by faith through the Word of God, obeying the Spirit of God.

Now, we must also confess that there are parts of Scripture that are challenging—prophecy is one of those areas.

Many prophecies in Scripture are vague and have yet to be fulfilled.

Today, many people claim to be prophets—the problem is that their prophecies do not come to pass.

We don't need to look any further than COVID-19 and the last several presidential elections.

Please know that these folks who claim the prophetic office today are false prophets—run!

True prophets are right 100% of the time, every time.

Many pastors, priests, and ministers are overly zealous for prophecy—especially for the End Times and the Rapture.

Some of these well-intentioned men feed the frenzy.

Consider all the millions of books that have been sold and continue to be sold.

- “88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988” (4 million copies)
- The Late Great Planet Earth—Hal Lindsey (28 million copies in 50 languages)
- The Left Behind Series—Tim LaHaye (Tens of millions of copies)

Please know that as Christians, we don't get our eschatology from these sources.

End times
We get our theology from the Holy Scriptures.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus delivers three lengthy sermons, known as discourses.

1. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), where Jesus teaches Christian ethics and righteous living. *the sinfulness of sin ? More.*

2. The Parabolic Discourse (Matthew 13, where Jesus teaches in parables, revealing God's mysteries).

3. The Olivet Discourse is where we are today—it took place on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24-25 where Jesus speaks of prophecy, judgment and End Times.

It's within all three discourses that Jesus reveals Himself as prophet, priest, and king.

As we begin, we'll see the Disciples ask Jesus a question.

Jesus' answer is the longest answer given in the NT.

We must keep in mind that His answer is purely Jewish—not American!

Jesus speaks of Judea (Matt. 24:16), the Sabbath (Matt. 24:20), and the prophecies of Daniel concerning the Jewish people (Matt. 24:15).

The Olivet Discourse is one of, if not the most difficult, passages in Matthew's Gospel to understand.

First, it's difficult because Jesus mixes prophetic and apocalyptic language. *End times (uh)*

How many movies have you seen on the Apocalypse—the End of the world as we know it.

Second, it is difficult because Jesus doesn't seem to be speaking in a linear/chronological fashion.

Apocalyptic literature is a biblical genre that does not share our Western concern for order.

Third, this passage is difficult because there is no consensus, unity, or majority as to its interpretation.

In fact, the more you study this passage, the more overwhelmed you can become.

Usually, we'll have more questions than answers—and there is nothing wrong with that.

What is wrong is when we start demanding answers instead of praising God for what He has already revealed.

Please note that Eschatology (End Times) is not a salvific issue. —Salvation

It's not a primary issue—this is not a hill to die on.

It is important—everything in Scripture is important, but some things are more important than others.

The hill that we choose to die on around here is the specifics of the Gospel.

I have zero desire to lure you into a complex End Times maze of human interpretations.

Instead, I want to walk with you and teach this passage, just as I've been teaching all of Matthew—through a historical, grammatical, and literal lens—and to follow each sermon with application.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 24:1—As Jesus left and was going out of the temple, his disciples came up and called his attention to its buildings.

Matthew 24:2—He replied to them, "Do you see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down."

Matthew 24:3—While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Matthew 24:4—Jesus replied to them, "Watch out that no one deceives you."

Matthew 24:5—For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will deceive many.

Matthew 24:6—You are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, because these things must take place, but the end is not yet.

Matthew 24:7—For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

Matthew 24:8—All these events are the beginning of labor pains.

These are the holy words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, infallible, sufficient, and efficacious Word of Almighty God.

PRAY:

Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me; (Psalm 23:4)

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 23:37—"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

Matthew 23:38—See, your house is left to you desolate.

Here we are to see geographical theology at play—Jesus has left the building.

This is a problem.

Historically, once a year, the High Priest was to enter the part of the Temple called the "Holy of the Holies" because that's where God's presence dwelt.

He could only enter once a year and had to make atonement (temporary sacrifice) for the nation's sins by performing very specific acts.

Once again, we don't come to God on our own terms; we come before Him humbly, repentant, reverent, and in obedience.

This moment was so terrifying for the High Priest, the other priests would tie a rope to his ankle just in case he died in the room, so they could pull him out without dying themselves.

And at this moment, Israel has God incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ in person, and since they don't want Him, He leaves and then walks out of the Temple.

Matthew 23:39—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 tells the crowd that they will not see him again until something dramatic happens—the Jews must lead the nation to accept Him.

+ **Matthew 24:1**—As Jesus left and was going out of the temple,

Jerusalem sits on a cluster of mountains—Mount Zion, Mount Moriah, and the Mount of Olives.

So as Jesus and the Disciples are leaving the Temple, they are walking down.

+ **Matthew 24:1**—his disciples came up and called his attention to its buildings.

It's challenging to know the thoughts and feelings of the Disciples at this point.

Jesus is leaving the Temple.

The Temple has meant everything to the nation of Israel for thousands of years.

It's been ^{destroyed} built and rebuilt three times.

There is so much historical, theological, and national significance wrapped up in the Temple.

The Temple represented not only the glory of God's presence but also the permanence of Israel's religion.

It's almost like the Disciples don't want to leave.

They call attention to the architecture because the Temple is so beautiful.

As they walk back to Bethany (Lazarus, Mary, and Martha's home), the road runs alongside the Mount of Olives, offering a spectacular view of the Temple in the distance.

+ **Mark 13:1**—As he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher, look! What massive stones! What impressive buildings!"

Luke 21:5—As some were talking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God,

The Temple was simply breathtaking.

King Herod the Great had begun restoring the Temple twenty years earlier—and they were still working on it.

It was completed only a few years before it was destroyed in AD 70.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, penned how the Temple was ^{built w/} constructed of blocks of white limestone.

So this is not the earthtone stucco that we're all so used to—it's big, bright, and white.

These blocks were forty feet long (stage), twelve feet high, and eighteen feet wide.

The foundation blocks weighed nearly four hundred tons.

The Statue of Liberty only weighs 225 tons, so think of a Boeing 747 fully loaded.

These blocks were designed as a single piece and transported many miles.

is Moved Many Miles uphill onto Mount Zion.

In addition to the bright white limestone, the Temple was covered with so much gold that it gleamed with God's Shekinah glory.

As the Disciples are walking and marveling, not only at the beauty of the Temple, but also at its historical, theological, and national significance.

Matthew 24:2—He replied to them, "Do you see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down."

In other words, this big beautiful Temple that represents God's glory will soon be demolished, devastated, and flattened.

That statement had to knock the wind out of them.

Many Jews believed that the Temple was indestructible.

Jesus predicts what seems inconceivable.

The Temple is the greatest architectural wonder in the Middle East!

How is this possible? Why would God allow it to happen?

Let's answer the "why?" first.

King Solomon...

2 Chronicles 6:18—But will God indeed live on earth with humans?
Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain you,
much less this temple I have built.

Haggai 2:9—"The final glory of this house will be greater than the first,"

Jesus said,

Matthew 12:6—I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.

John 2:19—Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days."

Peter said,

1 Peter 2:4—As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—

1 Peter 2:5—you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Peter is saying that there is no need for a physical Temple, because the Church Body is now the Temple.

First, because God wants a personal relationship with His people.

The Temple was only a temporary symbol and sign of that relationship.

The second reason why God allowed the Temple to be destroyed is because of Israel's sin and rebellion.

The apostle Paul says that the wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23)

Because Israel didn't repent, God not only allowed the Temple to be destroyed, but He also ordained it.

Matthew 24:2—*not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down.*"

In other words, this building will be leveled.

How? The quick answer comes less than forty years later.

The Romans conquered Jerusalem in a.d. 70 and massacred the Jews.

As the Romans seized the Temple, they set it on fire.

This was a common practice in the first century.

What was uncommon was that the fire grew so hot that it melted the gold within the Temple.

When the fire was over and the gold cooled and solidified, the soldiers literally tore the Temple upside down to grab the gold.

They didn't quit until they turned over every stone.

Josephus wrote that a person visiting the Temple site after the destruction could not believe that anyone had ever lived there.

Exactly as Jesus had prophesied, not one stone remained upon another.

That is why if you go to Jerusalem today, all you will see is the Wailing Wall.

And in this way, the prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled down to the finest detail.

However, the Disciples don't know any of that.

How do they respond to Jesus' statement?

+ **Matthew 24:3**—*While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives,*

In doing so, Jesus fulfills prophecy.

+ **Ezekiel 11:23**—*The glory of the Lord rose up from within the city and stopped on the mountain east of the city. (The Mount of Olives.)*

+ **Matthew 24:3**—"Tell us, when will these things happen? And what is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Please keep in mind that the Disciples see Jesus ushering in the Kingdom of God as one event.

They are not thinking about the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, the rapture, or the "Second Coming."

The Disciples only know about the first coming, so they ask about signs—thinking that all of this is going to happen during Passover, which is three days away.

They were sure that Jesus' next move was to conquer the nations and to rule as the King of kings.

They see the dominoes start to fall.

- Israel had experienced so much tribulation in their past,
- John the Baptizer pointed to Jesus as the Messiah
- Jesus declared Himself to be the Messiah — *He proves it through His preaching, teaching, & miracles.*
- The nation worshipped Jesus as their king just two days prior.

As a sidenote, this thought of Jesus being crowned king is what kept Judas around.

Judas expected to be in the inner circle—because every king has some type of parliament.

Judas expected to be given power, wealth, and prestige, and everything that goes with a political position.

You can't help but think that the other Disciples were thinking the same thing.

+ **Matthew 24:3**—*when will these things happen? And what is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*"

The Jews spoke of two ages:

1. The present age,
2. The age to come, which is the Messianic age.

So, what the Disciples are specifically asking is this:

1. What is the sign that this age is about to end?
2. When does it begin?

Although the disciples ask several questions, they are one and the same—it's hand in glove.

They associate Jerusalem's destruction with the immediate implementation of Christ's Kingdom.

The messianic kingdom is the future time when Jesus will rule and reign physically on the earth

In answering this question, Jesus is going to stretch them.

He's teaching that the end of the Temple is not necessarily the end of all things.

They also didn't realize that since Israel had rejected Jesus as their Messiah, there had to be a Second Coming.

In their question, they are hoping and praying that Jesus will answer with one word: 'Passover.'

✚ **Matthew 24:3**—And what is the sign of your coming...

They were not thinking of Jesus' return, because they had no idea that He was leaving.

The Greek noun for “coming” is parousia (par-you-c-uh), which means “arrival, presence, or appearance by royalty.”

✚ **Matthew 24:3**— And what is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

The picture here is completeness. *When is all this coming to an end?*

Jesus has used this “end of the age” phrase before.

Remember the Parable of the Wheat and Tares?

As Jesus explains the parable to the Disciples...

+ **Matthew 13:37**—He replied, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;

+ **Matthew 13:38**—the field is the world; and the good seed—these are the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one,

+ **Matthew 13:39**—and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age,

+ **Matthew 13:40**—Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

Jesus did the same thing with the Parable of the Net...

+ **Matthew 13:47**—“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. It collected every kind of fish,

+ **Matthew 13:48**—and when it was full, they dragged it ashore, sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw out the worthless ones.

+ **Matthew 13:48**—So it will be at the end of the age.

The Great Commission might be a little more familiar...

+ **Matthew 28:18**—Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

✝ **Matthew 28:19**—Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

✝ **Matthew 28:20**—teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

As Jesus continues, notice how vital His presence is as He answers the Disciples' questions.

Notice how Jesus answers their questions separately.

✝ **Matthew 24:4**—Jesus replied to them, "Watch out...

Blepō is the Greek verb for “watch out” and means “to beware, be vigilant, be on the lookout, be careful.”

✝ **Matthew 24:4**— “Watch out that no one deceives you.

The Greek verb for deceive is *planāō*—to go astray, lead astray.

In other words, don't be misled by anyone.

When difficulties, trials, and tragedies arise, people become desperate for answers.

As people look for answers, others will take advantage.

Religious deception will increase substantially.

✝ **2 Timothy 3:13**—Evil people and impostors will become worse, deceiving and being deceived.

So, first things first—don't be deceived.

The first part of Jesus' answer has to do with bad things that will happen, but are not in themselves signs of the End Times.

Matthew 24:5—For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will deceive many.

The first sign that is not a sign of the End Times— is people claiming to be Jesus.

When are there not people claiming to be Jesus?

When is the world not fascinated by the next false charismatic teacher?

Evidently, these people will increase substantially.

Matthew 24:6—You are going to hear of wars ...

The second sign that is not a sign of the End Times— is war.

“Going to hear” is the Greek verb *mellō*— that carries the idea of continual hearing, imminent, inevitable.

Matthew 24:6—... and rumors of wars.

“Rumors” are unconfirmed reports, which may or may not be true.

Tragically, there have always been wars and there will always be, until Jesus returns.

War is a terrible evil, but it is a common evil.

Wars of themselves do not announce the end of the age.

Matthew 24:6— See that you are not alarmed,

God's people are to be the calmest people on the planet.

We are to fear God, not the future, the world, or death. Why? ^{—nightly news}

+ **Matthew 24:6**— *because these things must take place,*

The Lord tells us that awful things will happen.

We are to be wise and be ready.

We are not to be caught off guard.

We are not to be rattled by news reports. ^{Why?}

God has allowed or ordained these things to happen for His glory and our good.

+ **Matthew 24:6**— *but the end is not yet.*

In other words, just because the world sounds like it's fallen apart, it's actually falling into place.

We should not be surprised when Jerusalem is the focus of world attention—and at war with another nation.

+ **Matthew 24:7**—*For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.*

Tragically, war and famine often go hand in hand.

Earthquakes will coincide.

All of these point to death and destruction.

Yet, Jesus says...

+ **Matthew 24:8**—All these events

Deception, False Messiahs, wars, rumors of more wars, famines, and earthquakes.

+ **Matthew 24:8**—are the beginning of labor pains.

In other words, there is much more to come.

And the things to come are more awful and tragic than we could ever imagine.

labor

Birth pangs are a common Jewish metaphor referring to a time of distress, pain, anxiety and sorrow.

This passage reveals why we are not to follow or watch the false teachers/fake prophets of our day—specifically the prosperity preachers.

Apostles

This is not our best life now. When have you ever heard these guys preach Matthew 24?

What's going to happen to people's faith when these things start to happen?

What's going to happen when they realize that false teachers have duped them?

We really need to rid ourselves of the idea that we, as the Church, are exempt from suffering.

It's cross now—the crown is yet to come.

↳ We are to pick up our cross : follow Jesus — no matter the cost.

APPLICATION:

As we close, I WANT us to think about the signs today that ARE NOT signs of the End times.

Deception - How are we being deceived?

- In what ways are we being lied to?
- Who are the MAIN culprits?
- Who is CAUSING you UNNECESSARY Anxiety?
- What is CAUSING UNNECESSARY irritation/anger?

Psalm 1:1 - How happy is the one who does NOT walk in the advice of the wicked, OR STAND in the way of sinners or sit in the company of mockers.

Psalm 1:2 - Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction: he meditates on it day & night.

→ Encourage you to pray through & meditate on these two verses this week.

→ Dare you to fast from the news & social media for forty days, & instead take delight in the Lord's instruction.

→ Watch what happens to your anxiety & joy.

PRAY

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/messianic-age.html>

Benediction

May the Lord bless you & protect you.

May the Lord make His face shine on you, & be
gracious to you.

May the Lord look in favor on you & give you peace.

(Numbers 6:24)