

Matthew 24 – Part 2

Our first lesson on Matthew 24 established how the overall topic being addressed is the destruction of Jerusalem. Several warning signs would precede Jerusalem's destruction in 70 A.D (Matthew 24:1-14). All of these things came to pass, just as the Lord predicted!

In this lesson, we want to consider some of the more challenging verses in the chapter and understand how they relate to Jerusalem's demise.

Two key texts in Matthew 24

- The time text (Matthew 24:34). This verse states that every prediction made prior is to be applied to the people living at that time. That generation of Jews would receive God's judgment!
- The transition text (Matthew 24:36). A change in subject is introduced to answer the second question in Matthew 24:36. Unlike the event being described in verses 1-34, the event described beginning in verse 36, is one where there will be warning signs that precede it. It won't be a judgment that is limited to Jerusalem. Instead, it will impact the whole world (Matthew 25:31-32).

The destruction of Jerusalem

- The "abomination of desolation" was the critical event for the disciples to watch for (Matthew 24:15). Luke also elaborates on this event in Luke 21:20-22). When the disciples saw the Roman entering the city and going to defile the temple, they needed to get out of town.
- In verses 16-20, Jesus tells His people how to flee Jerusalem. He tells them to pray that they don't have to travel in the winter or on the Sabbath.
- In verses 21-22, Jesus describes these days as a period of "great tribulation." If God had not intervened and cut the days short, even disciples would have perished.
- In verses 23-28, Jesus says that He would not personally return before the destruction of Jerusalem. He warns His people not to be deceived by false Christs and prophets. The Roman army would feed on the dead spiritual carcass of Israel. Instead of looking for the Messiah, the Jews needed to be looking for God's judgment!
- In verses 29-31, we find dramatic figurative language that is used frequently throughout the Bible. It is a language that describes God bringing judgment on a nation (Isaiah 13:1, 6, 9-10; Ezekiel 31:1-8; Revelation 8:12). These verses are not to be applied to the Lord's second coming. Instead, they are to be applied to the judgment God would bring upon the Jewish people.
- In verses 32-33, Jesus gives a parable about a fig tree. Just like a fig tree sprouting leaves is a sign that summer is near, in the same way, the fulfillment of the Lord's predictions would be a sign that Jerusalem was about to be destroyed.
- The judgment of God on the Jewish nation was evitable (Matthew 24:34-35)!

Conclusion:

In Matthew 24:36, the Lord will transition and begin talking about His second coming. He will deal with that topic through chapter 25.