

The Life and Ministry of Christ, Part 47

Passion Week - Tuesday/Wednesday

Jesus had been meeting with the people on the Temple grounds. Daily, Jesus and His disciples came to Jerusalem from Bethany and spoke openly to the leaders. After speaking with the Greeks, Jesus warned the Jewish leaders that their house was left to them desolate because they had despised and rejected God's Messiah and salvation. Matthew 23 closes with the Lord lamenting over Jerusalem. In His prayer Jesus said, "I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:36).

Matthew 24 and 25 are called the Olivet discourse.

In this extended message, Jesus gives a comprehensive examination of the end times and the future events leading up to His reign on earth.

Matthew 24:1 NKJV Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

Matthew 24:2 NKJV 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."

Matthew 24:3 NKJV 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?"

Jesus gave several prophecies about future events in Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21:5-36.

These events refer to things that will happen after His death, burial and resurrection.

- First, He told them the Temple would be destroyed, Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4; Luke 21:5-7.
- Then He spoke about prevailing conditions and the first half of the tribulation, Matthew 24:4-14; Mark 13:5-13; Luke 21:5-24.
- The next major event will be the great tribulation which begins in the middle of the seven years and the abomination of desolation, Matthew 24:15-28; Mark 13:14-23.
- The second coming of Christ will come immediately after the tribulation of those days, Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28.

After giving these major prophetic events, Jesus gave three parables and two warnings.

- Parable of the Fig Tree, Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33.
- Warning to be Watchful, Matthew 24:36-51; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 21:34-36.
- Ten Virgins, Matthew 25:1-13.
- Ten Talents, Matthew 25:14-30.
- Judgment Day, Matthew 25:31-46.

Jesus' prophecy about the coming judgment is revealed in three phases.

1. **The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple**

Solomon's temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. The second temple was built under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, Haggai 1:1, and was completed in 516 B.C. Renovations on the second temple by Herod the Great began in 20 B.C., but were not completed until AD 64. Six years later in fulfillment to the Lord's prophecy, the Temple was completely destroyed by Titus and the Romans in 70 A.D. The destruction left no signs of the location of the Temple. John received a vision about the tribulation in which he measured a third Temple of God in Jerusalem, (Revelation 11:1-2). This presupposes the reconstruction of the Temple in the end times. After that Temple is defiled and the abomination of desolation is set up for 3 ½ years, then it will be cleansed or removed at the end of the tribulation, (Daniel 8:13-14; Revelation 11:1-2).

2. **Prevailing conditions until the end, Matthew 24:4-14.**

The disciples asked three questions about these things.

- When would these things happen and the temple be destroyed?
- What would be the sign of His coming, would there be any supernatural event that would precede His return?
- What would be the sign of the end of the age?

The disciples concepts of these things revolved around the Messiah's glorious reign on earth. The focus of their ancestors had been on the establishment of His earthly throne and the destruction of His enemies and world rule. Jesus did not answer the first question directly. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is only a partial fulfillment of what will occur later. Their second and third questions describe the seven year Tribulation which will precede Christ's Reign on earth for a thousand years. Much of Jesus' prophecy describing events leading up to and during the first half of the tribulation have been evident

throughout human history. These religious, political, and social troubles will continue to intensify and prevail until the end. Clues to this are in verses 6, 8, and 14.

Matthew 24:4–5 NKJV And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

Matthew 24:6–8 NKJV And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Matthew 24:9–11 NKJV Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Matthew 24:12–14 NKJV And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

What does it mean, “he who endures to the end shall be saved?” These signs refer to events that occur during the church age and encourage believers to persevere until the return of the LORD. As the day of the LORD approaches, we will see an increase of these signs and during the first half of the tribulation they will become extreme.

3. ***The tribulation and coming of Jesus at the end of the world,***
Matthew 24:15-51

Many prophecies have dual interpretations or relate to more than one event. The abomination of desolation of Matthew 24:15 most perfectly relates to the conditions during the tribulation and when Jesus Christ returns. Some relate the actions of Antiochus Epiphanies in 168 B.C. to Daniel’s prophecy of the abomination of desolation, (Daniel 9:27). His abominations included setting up a heathen altar and cutting off true worship of God. The abomination of desolation has also been related to events in 70 A.D. when the temple was destroyed by the Romans. There is yet to be a fulfillment of this prophecy during the first half of the tribulation after the Temple is rebuilt and sacrifices are reinstated.

Matthew 24:15–17 NKJV Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”

(whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

Matthew 24:18–20 NKJV And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Those Jews who listened to Jesus' warning fled to Pella near the Sea of Galilee and Decapolis, while others dispersed to the Roman Empire, Egypt, North Africa, Syria, Mesopotamia and Europe. Josephus who witnessed Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 said over one million Jews died in one day. The greater fulfillment of Christ's prophecy relates to the time of tribulation of the end time. For this to be fulfilled in the end, the temple will have to be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and Jews will once again enter into temple worship.

Matthew 24:21–22 NKJV For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Matthew 24:23–24 NKJV Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Matthew 24:25–26 NKJV See, I have told you beforehand. "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it."

Second Advent of Christ, Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28

At the closing of the Great Tribulation there will be terrifying activities in the heavens and on earth. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back to earth to rule and to reign for a thousand years.

Matthew 24:27 NKJV For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matthew 24:29 NKJV Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Matthew 24:30 NKJV Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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.
Matthew 24:31 NKJV And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Jesus Christ is coming again as a crowned King who will rule with a rod of iron. Much is said about His being wounded and bruised for our iniquities and having stripes for our healing. There are at least twenty more references to Him coming with a crown, great power and glory. One out of thirty verses in the New Testament refer to the second coming of Christ. This is why it is so important for believers to have a good understanding of the second coming of Christ.

Hebrews 9:28 NKJV So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Acts 1:11 NKJV This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.

After Jesus prophesied His second coming, He gave warnings and signs of the times.

Parable of the Fig Tree, Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33.

Jesus said you know when the fig tree puts on leaves that summer is near.

Matthew 24:32-34 NKJV Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

Matthew 24:35 NKJV Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

There are several interpretations of what Jesus meant when He said the “generation” that sees the fig tree’s budding will not pass away until all these things happen. Some believe this refers to the rebirth of Israel in 1947 and the imminent fulfillment of these things. Others believe the word “generation” refers to the Nation Israel not being destroyed until these things are fulfilled. Others think it refers to the church not being destroyed until these things are fulfilled.

Regardless of the full meaning of His prophecy, Jesus is saying that one generation would not have passed until all of these signs take

place.

Warning to be Watchful, Matthew 24:36-51; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 21:34-36

Matthew 24:36-37 NKJV But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matthew 24:38-39 NKJV For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Within this warning, Jesus gave the illustration of two servants, Matthew 24:45-51; Luke 12:41-48. He said the master will come on a day when the servant is not looking for him and in an hour he is unaware.

Ten Virgins, Matthew 25:1-13

In the parable of ten virgins, Jesus taught about the need to be prepared for the catching away of the bride of Christ. This parable is about the rapture or 'parousia' (catching away) of the church. The wedding procession is to be a joyful event. In the parable, five virgins are prepared for an unexpected delay and five were foolish and unprepared.

What does Jesus mean, "but while the bridegroom was delayed?"

The time for the coming of the Lord is indefinite and could happen in any watch of the night.

Matthew 25:6-8 NKJV And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

The oil for their lamps represents sustained spiritual life and not just initial faith. The oil represents an inner spiritual condition and evidence of a living relationship with Christ. The oil is the active presence of the Holy Spirit within the believer.

Ten Talents, Matthew 25:14-30

There is a similar parable in Luke 19:11-27.

Matthew 25:14-15 NKJV For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

It is noteworthy that the master did not give more than they were willing

or able to handle. However, he expected the same kind of response from all of them. The Lord does not expect the person with one talent to yield the same result as the person with five. He does expect faithfulness to do what we can. Is God unjust to require faithfulness and obedience?

Judgment Day, Matthew 25:31-46

Matthew 25:31 NKJV When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

On the day of judgment, the Lord will separate those who are prepared for His kingdom from those who are not prepared.

Matthew 25:34 NKJV Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...

Matthew 25:41 NKJV Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...

The last judgment will end with the Son of Man enthroned in glory judging all the nations.