

**THE GOSPEL OF
MATTHEW**

Chapter 24

Thursday Morning Bible Study
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Wauwatosa, WI

1

“What are the signs?” – 24:1-35

- 1 – Jesus leaves the temple and is going back to Bethany. He goes over the Mt. of Olives, and from that vantage point, one can look down on the whole temple area.
- 2 – Jesus tells them that the temple they see will be totally destroyed!
- 3 – That statement produces questions in the minds of the disciples. The destruction of the temple meant the end of the world.
- Two questions: When will this be, and what will be the sign of His coming. (*Parousia*)

2

“What are the signs?” – 24:1-35

- 4 – In response, Jesus begins his 5th major discourse in Matthew – the “Eschatological Discourse”.
- 5 – The sermon has two sections, based on the two questions of the Disciples.
- Jesus’ answers can be summarized:
 - As to “signs”, there will be indications, but no real signs.
 - As to “when” – No one can know. Be ready is the order of the day.

3

“What are the signs?” – 24:1-35

- As to “signs”, they need to understand that troubles and tumults will be a part of this world. But these are not “signs”, they are just things that will happen, and they have the danger of leading them astray.
- 5 – False Christs – people pretending to speak in Jesus’ name.
- 6 – “Wars and rumors of wars.” They will happen.
- 7 – Nation rise against nation, famines and earthquakes. An evidence of the reality of sin in the world.

4

“What are the signs?” – 24:1-35

- 8 – Twice (v. 6) Jesus tells them these troubles have no chronological significance that will enable us to time the End. These events are “a beginning of birth pangs.”
- 9-13 – Persecutions will happen because they follow Jesus. Lawlessness will increase, the love of many will grow cold.
- 14 – Not really a sign, but a call that the church must always be a missionary church.

5

“What are the signs?” – 24:1-35

- 15 – The “therefore” returns his message to the present time.
- The “abomination of desolation” refers to the temple in Jerusalem. It refers to the time in 163 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig on the altar. Jesus is telling them this will happen again, and soon.
- 16- When this happens, they are to flee to the mountains.
- 17 – There is an urgency for the people to flee. If Jesus was referring to the End Times, then fleeing would be useless.

6

“What are the signs?” – 24:1-35

- 18-19 – The flight will be urgent. Pregnant and nursing mothers will be slowed by their children
- 20-22 – What Jesus is saying is: “Pray that you do not have to flee during difficult conditions, because a horrific catastrophe is going to come upon the people of Judea.
- Jesus promises that God will shorten the days of trouble for the sake of the believers in Judea. This is directed at the specific coming events of destruction of Jerusalem.

7

“What are the signs?” – 24:1-35

- 23 – Jesus has already told his disciples not to be deceived by the normal tumults of a broken world. Here he repeats that message: “Don’t believe it when false teachers announce my second coming (*Parousia*)! You will know it when it happens!
- Jesus makes two comparisons: When lightning flashes, you don’t need someone to tell you. You know. Don’t believe it if anyone says they have secret knowledge. They are dangerous. When the end comes, everyone will know.

8

“What are the signs?” – 24:1-35

- The 2nd comparison is more grim. When vultures detect a corpse, they will circle before they land. When you see this from a distance, you do not need to guess what is below the birds. When you see the birds, you know a corpse is there. No one has to tell you.

9

The Distress of the Coming Destruction – 24:29-31

- The interpretation question: Does this passage refer to the end of the world, or should it be seen in the immediate context of 1st century Jerusalem and the impending destruction by the Romans?
- The disciples have asked about the coming destruction of the temple, and Jesus says all these things will take place within that generation. Thus, it can be argued that Jesus is referring to what will be happening then.

10

The Distress of the Coming Destruction – 24:29-31

- 29 - - “The sun will be darkened” – The OT often puts specific events in cosmic terms, as if the whole creation was participating in whatever God was doing at the time. (Ps. 18; Amos 8:9). The words, then, are figurative.
- 30 – The “sign of the Son of Man” will appear – The resurrection!
- “The tribes will mourn” – Desolation will come upon the lost sheep of Israel.

11

The Distress of the Coming Destruction – 24:29-31

- “The Son of Man coming” is an allusion to Daniel 7. The destruction of the temple will show that Dan. 7:13-14 has come true.
- 31 – Jesus will continue to send his missionaries (*angelos* means “messenger”), and testimony will be given to all nations before the end will come. This is the same imagery of the Wedding Feast. The great “trumpet blast” refers to the missionaries going out to all the nations with the Good News.

12

The Lesson of the Fig Tree – 24:32-35

- 32 - The overall message of this little comparison was for the sake of the followers of Jesus in Judea who would find themselves in or near Jerusalem when the predicted desolation drew near. For them the message has been, "Watch carefully! Read the signs.!" The promised judgement would come before this generation passed away.
- 35 – From Ps. 102:27-28: A word of assurance. No matter what, Jesus' words will always be true.
- This is the end of Jesus' answer to their question: "What will be sign of your coming?" Now he moves on to answer their other question: "When will these things be."

13

"When will this be?" – 24:36-51

- 36 – When? The day and hour of Christ's return cannot be known.
- But, just because it cannot be known, that doesn't mean we should not be ready. We live in the constant state of readiness for His return.
- 37-42 – Jesus illustrates this with the story of Noah. The people were not ready.
- 39 – The people did not know until the flood came and took them all away.

14

"When will this be?" – 24:36-51

- 40-41 – To further emphasize his point, Jesus talks about people going about their daily activities when one is taken and one is left.
- Where are they taken? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?
- In the context of the flood story, it would seem that the ones remaining are the ones who are saved.
- In the context of the OT, those who are left behind are the blest ones. Those who are judged are "cast out."

15

“When will this be?” – 24:36-51

- 42 – The main point of Jesus’ teaching is the suddenness and unknowability of that day. So “stay awake!”
- 43-44 – The message is the same: You cannot know when Jesus will return, so keep on being ready.
- 45-51 – The faithful or wicked servant. The faithful servant is the one who cares for his fellow servants. Such a slave is “wise”.
- The reward for faithful service is greater and expanded service. There is apparently no retirement in His kingdom!

16

“When will this be?” – 24:36-51

- The wicked servant does not deny that he has a Master. His error is that his Master’s delay is an excuse to disobey and take the role of the master.
- When the Lord returns, the consequences will be severe.
- The key to this: “Do not lose sight of who you are or what the Master has given you to do. Keep on being ready.”

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