

The Coming of the End of the Age (What Age – this Age)

Matthew 24 is the beginning of what men refer to as: “The Olivet Discourse.”, Jesus has made sweeping condemnation to the religious leaders of Israel (Matthew 23) and then gives his prediction of the destruction of the temple buildings (1-3). It involves the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 C.E., though many also see intertwining references to “The Coming of Christ”

Now as Jesus was going out of the temple courts and walking away, his disciples came to show him the temple buildings. Then he said to them, "Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, not one stone will be left on another. All will be torn down!" As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus answered them, "Watch out that no one misleads you. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will mislead many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Make sure that you are not alarmed, for this must happen, but the end is still to come. (Matthew 24:1-5 NET)

- Jesus predicts that the temple will be destroyed and tells his disciples how to keep an eye out for signs of The End (also known as the second coming or the end of the age).
- Be on the lookout for prosecution, famines, wars, earthquakes, false prophets, an increase of evil, and a decrease of love (24:4-7).
- The disciples are given instruction to flee from any place that announces false prophets.
- And when the time is right, a sign will appear the sky and the Son of Man will come, riding the clouds. Then—the big finish—angels will gather up the chosen people
- The disciples aren't satisfied. They want more details on how they'll know it's time. Jesus responds with the parable of the fig tree.
- No one knows the time or day when the Son of Man will come. You know what that means: they must *always* be prepared.
- To emphasize the importance of watchfulness, Jesus tells the parable of the unfaithful servant.

1) What are the main points of this chapter?

- The destruction of the temple foretold - Mt 24:1-3
- The sign when things would soon occur - Mt 24:4-28
- The tribulation and events immediately after - Mt 24:29-35
- The need to be prepared and productive - Mt 24:36-51

2) What questions were prompted by Jesus' prediction? (3)

- "When will these things be? What will be the sign...?"

3) What did Jesus say would not be the sign? (4-13)

- False messiahs, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution, lawlessness

4) What would happen before the "end" would come? (14)

- The gospel preached in all the world (cf. Mk 16:15; Ro 10:16-18; Colossians 1:18-23)



From Wikipedia: Despite early successes in repelling the Roman sieges, the Zealots fought amongst themselves, and they lacked proper leadership, resulting in poor discipline, training, and preparation for the battles that were to follow. At one point they destroyed the food stocks in the city, a drastic measure in order to enlist a merciful God's intervention on behalf of the Jews.

Destroying the Temple was not among Titus' goals, possibly due in large part to the massive expansions done by Herod the Great mere decades earlier. Titus had wanted to seize it and transform it into a temple dedicated to the Roman Emperor and the Roman pantheon. The fire spread quickly and was soon out of control. The Temple was captured and destroyed on 9/10 Tisha B'Av, at the end of August.

As the legions charged in, neither persuasion nor threat could check their impetuosity; passion alone was in command. Crowded together around the entrances many were trampled by their friends, many fell among the still hot and smoking ruins of the colonnades and died as miserably as the defeated. As they neared the Sanctuary they pretended not even to hear Caesar's commands and urged the men in front to throw in more firebrands. The partisans were no longer in a position to help; everywhere was slaughter and flight. Most of the victims were peaceful citizens, weak and unarmed, butchered wherever they were caught. Round the Altar the heaps of corpses grew higher and higher, while down the Sanctuary steps poured a river of blood and the bodies of those killed at the top slithered to the bottom.

As soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder, Titus gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as they were of the greatest prominence; that is, Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamme; which enclosed the city on the west side; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of fame among all mankind. Now any foreigner that had formerly seen Judaea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, would now view it as a desert. The war ended all signs of beauty. Josephus claims that 1.1 million people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish, and that 97,000 were captured and enslaved.

The Jewish Amoraim attributed the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem as punishment from God for the "baseless hatred" that pervaded Jewish society at the time. Many Jews in despair are thought to have abandoned Judaism for some version of paganism, many others sided with the growing Christian sect within Judaism. The destruction was an important point in the separation of Christianity from its Jewish roots: many Christians responded by distancing themselves from the rest of Judaism, as reflected in the Gospels which some believe portray Jesus as anti-Temple and view the destruction of the temple as punishment for rejection of Jesus.