

signposts at the end

THE BEGINNING OF THE END :THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, PART 10 · MATTHEW 24:1-35 · APRIL 24, 2022 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. 'Tell us...when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?'" (Matthew 24:3)

Two Questions from Jesus' Disciples (24:1-3)

The situation

Two questions:

- When will this [the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple] happen?
- What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?

The Beginning of Birth Pains...But Not the End (24:4-8)

Human conflicts

Natural world difficulties

False claims of the Messiah

Pay attention but don't be alarmed

Standing Firm Amid Persecution (24:9-14)

Persecution

False prophets lead people away from the faith

Some disciples' love will grow cold and they will not stand firm

The message preached to the whole world

The Historical Destruction of the Temple (24:15-28)

'The abomination that causes desolation'

Great distress unlike any other time

Be warned of false Messiahs that appear

The Arrival of the Son of Man (24:29-31)

Immediately after the distress of those days

The sign of the Son of Man

The Summary of Prediction (24:32-35)

The fig tree

Jesus' trustworthy words

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When have you most been nervous or concerned about the future, and why?
2. This weekend we continue our new series called "The Beginning of the End." This week's study focuses on Matthew 24:1-35, the first half of Jesus' extended teaching on the fall of Jerusalem and the end of human history. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to

speak to you through His Word, and then read that passage aloud.

3. What prompted Jesus' teaching about all this in verses 1-3?
4. Verses 4-8 speak of "the beginning of birth pains" that precede the destruction of the Temple. What are the birth pains that Jesus describes?
5. In verses 9-14, Jesus describes what will happen within and through the Christian community before the fall of Jerusalem. What stands out to you from this passage?
6. Why do you think "the love of most will grow cold" (24:12)? What do you think it looks like to stand firm to the end (24:13)?
7. Background: This section of Matthew's Gospel can be very confusing because of the variety of prophetic, apocalyptic, and historical references. It may help to consult other sources for background: Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Isaiah 13:10; 34:4. Some apocryphal books also provide historical background: 1 Maccabees 1:41-64; 2 Maccabees 6:1-11.
8. Verses 15-28 begin with reference to words from Daniel about the destruction of Jerusalem and "the abomination that causes desolation." Daniel's words pointed forward to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who desecrated the Temple in 167 BC. Jesus' uses these words as a picture of what will come in future days. How does Jesus' describe this coming reality?
9. Verses 29-31 can be confusing and are often debated in their meaning. With strong Old Testament allusions, Jesus appears to speak about both the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple as God's judgment and the vindication of Jesus' authority as Lord when His prediction of that destruction comes true. There is something new that God is doing through Jesus. What stands out to you about these verses?
10. What is one thing God is revealing to you through this study? If you're on your own, write that down, pray over it, and share it with someone this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

DIG DEEPER

- Set aside space and time this week to meditate on Matthew 24:12-13. Let the Lord search through your heart and mind about your love for Him. Ask the Lord to strengthen you in your steadfastness and faith.
- For more background on the destruction of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem, consider reading one of the following:
 - "A.D. 70 Titus Destroys Jerusalem" in Christian History: christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/ad-70-titus-destroys-jerusalem.html
 - "Siege of Jerusalem": in Britannica: britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Jerusalem-70