

What Did the Lord Say About His Second Coming?

Matthew 24:1-21

1 One of the most controversial theological doctrines is the biblical teachings concerning the Second Coming of our Lord. What the Bible says has been interpreted so many different ways.

My plan is not to give you an official church position but to help you through some basic Bible passages. Our scripture today is the most detailed explanation of the Lord's Second Coming that we have from what the Lord, Himself, said. The passage today is from Matthew, chapter 24, verses 1 through 31. 2

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down."

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of

your coming and of the end of the age?”¹₃

Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.”²₄

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to

¹ Matthew 24:1-3.

² Matthew 24:4-8.

all nations, and then the end will come. ³ ₅

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. ⁴ ₆

For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now —and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and

³ Matthew 24:9-14.

⁴ Matthew 24:15-20.

miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. ⁵ ₇

“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. “Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.” ⁶ ₈

“At that time, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of

⁵ Matthew 24:21-25.

⁶ Matthew 24:26-29.

the heavens to the other.⁷ 9

The key to understanding this scripture is to understand that two questions were asked and both questions were answered: “When will this happen?” and “What will be the sign of your coming?”¹⁰

I. First Question:

“When Will This Happen?” - v4-22

The first question is When will this happen?¹¹

I believe the first question was “What would happen in their lifetime?”¹² The question was spurred by what the Lord said in verses 1 and 2; **Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.”** What do you mean **Not one stone in the temple would be left standing?**¹³ The answer is **the destruction of Jerusalem** which happened in 70

⁷ Matthew 24:30-31.

AD! ¹⁴

Here were the general signs leading up to this event. ¹⁵

First we had the **false teachers the Lord mentioned in verses 4 and 5. **Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.** ¹⁶**

One was Simon Magus, the sorcerer. ⁸ ¹⁷ Another was Bar-Jesus of Cyprus. ⁹ ¹⁸

Second, we had the times of **worldwide trials the Lord talked about in verses 6 through 8. **You will hear of wars and rumors of wars but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and****

⁸ Acts 8:9-10 - Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is the divine power known as the Great Power.”

⁹ Acts 13:6-8 - There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. ¹⁹

The Romans threatened to invade Palestine three times! ²⁰

Major earthquakes happened in Crete (46 AD), Phrygia (60 AD) and Pompeii (63 AD). In 79 AD Pompeii was completely destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. ²¹

Thousands starved in and around Rome in the early 60s AD from famine. ²²

The third thing the Lord talked about here were the times of specific trials for the church; verses 9 through 12. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold . . . ²³

There was the death of Stephen in Acts, chapter 7 ¹⁰ ₂₄ and the death of James in Acts, chapter 12. ¹¹ ₂₅ In verse 9 Lord Jesus said the church would be hated by all nations (the civilized world) which came about through the persecutions of Nero (64-67 AD) and Vespasian (68-75 AD). ¹² ₂₆

Now notice verses 13 and 14; . . . But he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. How about the gospel being “preached in the whole world”? ₂₇

By 63 AD the Apostle Paul claimed that the gospel had been preached to the whole civilized world of his day!

¹⁰ Acts 7:57-60 - At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

¹¹ Acts 12:1-2 - It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. ² He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

¹² v9 - Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

Colossians, chapter 1, verse 23, **This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven** . . . 28

There were also **specific signs** leading up to this event. 29

Notice verses 15 and 16; **So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. What is the “Abomination that causes desolation”?** 30

In 170 BC Syria invaded Egypt. Palestine was the territory between the two empires and a puppet state of Syria. During the war Jewish religious factions took advantage of the Syrian king’s distraction to fight one another in Jerusalem. The anti-Syrian faction won. When the Syrian king, Antiochus IV, returned from his victory in Egypt he was enraged with the rebellion in Jerusalem. He slaughtered every Jew he came in contact with, lining the roads with crucifixions. He,

then, marched into the Jewish Temple and offered pigs on the sacred altar. ³¹ Daniel prophesied this would happen, calling the event “the abomination that causes desolation”. ¹³ ³²

When the Roman General Titus invaded Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Zealots used the temple as a fortress. Eighty-five thousand people were massacred in the temple courts! ³³ When Christians saw what was happening in the temple, they remembered the Lord’s words here and fled to Pella in the Perean mountains.

³⁴

In verses 21 and 22 we find the great destruction of Israel. ³⁵ The Jews were completely wiped out as a nation. ³⁶ If God had not shortened the length of time of the invasion, everyone in the country would have been killed! ³⁷

¹³ Daniel 11:31 - His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.

II. Second Question: “What Will Be the Sign of Your Coming”? - v23-31

The second question is “What will be the sign of Your coming”? That’s the question that has the most theological controversy. ³⁸ So **what are the only things Lord Jesus wants you to know about when He comes again?** ³⁹

The Lord Himself, at that time, **didn’t know** the time He would return. ¹⁴ ⁴⁰

Before that time comes, **some will claim to be the Christ or to be prophets.** ¹⁵ ⁴¹

The Second Coming will be obvious. The sky will light up like lightning and His coming will be immediate and sudden! Verses 27 through 29 say, **For as**

¹⁴ v36 - No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

¹⁵ v23-26 - . . . That time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.”

lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. “Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.” ⁴²

The disobedient and the unfaithful will mourn. ¹⁶ ⁴³ The obedient will be gathered together to be with Him! ¹⁷ ⁴⁴

So, what is the only essential thing you need to know? It's verse 13, . . . but he who stands firm to the end will be saved!

So, will you be ready?

He could come today!

<http://www.biblelifemessages.org>

¹⁶ v30 - At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn.

¹⁷ v31 - And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.