

End Times Study Week 3
Eschatological Discourses in the Gospels - Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21

The Olivet Discourse: *As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives* Mk. 13:3; Mt. 24:3

Theme: *Watch Out* Mt. 24:4, Lk. 21:8; Mk. 13:5

We find these teachings follow an observation and comment about the temple in which the disciples are challenged not be enamored with the magnificence of the temple but to "see" with perception or understanding what was going to happen to Jesus as the "temple of God" (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19).

Spoken on the eve of Jesus' own suffering, He tells his disciples to watch because evil is about to break out in the form of nationalistic pride and false religion that will affect believers. It led to Jesus' crucifixion and later to persecution of the church. Jesus lets his disciples know that victory will come following tragedy and suffering, and the elect will be gathered by God. Until then they are to serve faithfully.

Jesus' teaching prepares his disciples for events that will occur in their lifetime and beyond. It is a message of encouragement that they can trust his teaching, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (Mt. 24:35, Lk. 21:33, Mk. 13:31). He calls them to believe, watch, be on their guard, and remain faithful to the end (Mt. 24:13), ready for His return.

Jesus' teaching for his disciples continues to inform and encourage generation after generation of believers as they encounter struggles and suffering in serving our Lord, fulfilling the great commission; and waiting and watching patiently for His return. It is a call to watch, perceive/understand, and remain faithful. Jesus tells us ahead of time (Mk. 13:23) so that when it happens we are reminded He is sovereign and the world is not really out of control. You are not alone or abandoned. The Holy Spirit will even give you words of defense when persecuted (Mk 13:11). The mission must go on till the gospel is preached to all nations (Mt. 24:14) and then the end will come. You will not miss it. (Mt. 24:27) as his return will be like lightning and all will see it. He has told us so that we are not surprised, or deceived, but remain faithful. Serve faithfully, the Second Coming is real.

Introduction - prediction of destruction of the temple. Mk. 13:1-4

I. Warnings about the Deception of False Messiahs and Wars

A. Deceivers 13:5-6 Watch! Many deceived. (1 Tim. 4:1)

B. International Wars 13:7-8 When you hear... END IS NOT YET!

C. Persecution of Christians 13:9-13 Watch! Gospel mission finished, then the end! 13:10

D. War in Judea 13:14-20 When you see... Days cut short! Mk. 13:20

E. Deceivers 13:21-23 Watch!

II. Jesus' Return Mk. 13:24-27 You will not miss it! Mt. 24:27

III. Parables of a Budding fig tree and Doorkeepers Mk. 13:28-37

The disciples would be able to see the signs that would lead up the destruction of the temple in AD 70 by the Romans. The generation alive at that time, a reference to those who opposed Jesus (Cf. Mk. 8:12, 38, 9:19), would see this time of distress, but no one knows when the Lord will return (Mk. 13: 32,35).

Could it be that the events that would lead up to AD 70 and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the future Emperor Titus, are a foreshadowing of the end times as made known in the book of Revelation? Does the teaching here prepare us for, or are they parallel with I Thessalonians 4-5 and the seals of Revelation 6? We shall see.

We are not to be more concerned with timelines and feeding our curiosity about what's next, than fulfilling our gospel mission of making disciples. Jesus call to "see" and "perceive" applies to us today also. The scriptures tell us where our focus should be as we hasten his return by continuing holiness and godliness = telling people about Jesus. We do not know when the last believer will put their faith in Jesus, but each one who places their faith in Jesus puts us closer to seeing our Lord return in triumph and glory.

1 Peter 4:7-11 The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. ⁸ Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Be hospitable to one another without complaining. ¹⁰ Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

2 Peter 3:10-14 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness ¹² as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming. Because of that day, the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements will melt with heat. ¹³ But based on his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, dear friends, while you wait for these things, make every effort to be found without spot or blemish in his sight, at peace.

Do we look to the end times anxiously, or with a sense of peace? Jesus told us what to expect, what we can know – He is returning, and what we can't know – when He is returning. We have to trust him, serve faithfully, and the end will come. He is the Alpha – creating all things, and the Omega, bringing it to an end as the Eternal Lord.