

Message #82**Matthew 24:1-3**

As we come to Matthew 24-25, we come to one of the most famous and the final discourse of our Lord—the Olivet Discourse. Jesus had finished His teaching in the temple and was on His way back to Bethany (Matt. 26:6) and He paused to sit down on the Mount of Olives. It is here where the majority of this famous discussion takes place.

Now this discourse needs to be seen as a unit. Chapters 24-25 go together in the context of Israel. These chapters have nothing to do with the Church and nothing to do with the Rapture. Jesus Christ had come to offer Himself as King to Israel. He had offered the kingdom to Israel and she had rejected Him. All discussion in this discourse must be considered in view of this important reality.

These chapters may be broken down in the following outline:

- 1) The disciples wonder about the temple buildings. **24:1-2**
- 2) The disciples ask specific questions to Jesus about the future. **24:3**
- 3) Jesus specifically answers the disciple's questions. 24:4-25:46
 - A. Christ's specific and direct prophetic predictions. 24:4-44
 - B. Christ's parabolic prophetic instructions. 24:45-25:30
 1. The parable of the faithful and evil servant. 24:45-51
 2. The parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins. 25:1-13
 3. The parable of the master who entrusted talents to his servants. 25:14-30
 - C. Christ's revelation concerning His glorious appearance and His judgment. 25:31-46

CHRIST'S JEWISH DISCIPLES WANT TO KNOW ABOUT FUTURE EVENTS PERTAINING TO THE TEMPLE, ISRAEL, CHRIST'S COMING AND JUDGMENT, SO JESUS VERY SPECIFICALLY INSTRUCTS THEM.

Here is one of the greatest courses on Jewish eschatology ever taught.

SECTION #1 – The disciples wonder about the temple buildings. **24:1-2**

When Jesus came out of the temple, the disciples came up to Jesus to point out how impressive the temple buildings were. Mark tells us these disciples were admiring the structure (Mark 13:1). This may have been due to the fact that Jesus said, "Your house is left desolate" (23:38).

There is no question that the temple buildings were impressive. Herod the Great had started rebuilding the temple in 20 B.C., a building project that was finished in A.D. 64. Some of the stones used at the temple were 10-12 feet long and very impressive. Barclay says at the corners of the temple, angle stones were found which measured from 20 to 40 feet in length and weighed more than 100 tons. He says how they were cut and placed there is still "one of the mysteries of ancient engineering" (Vol. 2, p. 305). Josephus says that the temple was the most admirable of all building works ever seen or heard of (Josephus, p. 581).

Jesus was not impressed with the grandeur. After all, He is God who created the heavens and the earth and all things in it. In **verse 2**, Jesus begins by asking the disciples don't you see it? Don't you get it? This religious place is a sham. The people are a sham. Then He makes a remarkable prediction—not one stone here would be left standing. All the temple buildings would be torn down, which would mean not only would the temple itself be destroyed, but so would much of Jerusalem be destroyed. Literally Roman soldiers pried off the stones one by one and cast them down off the temple mount into the valley. Dr. Walvoord said many recent excavations have uncovered many of those stones (p. 180). Josephus said that many people who visited the site after its destruction could not believe any person even lived there.

There are some important points we want to observe here:

- 1) Just because a religious building is seemingly expensive and impressive does not mean God's blessings are there; in fact, it may be a place of His cursing.
- 2) Just because most people view some place as a sacred place of worship does not mean in the mind of God that is what it really is. The temple was a spiritually desolate place. It was a place that was doomed. Many go to doomed places they view as sacred today.
- 3) God's judgments are literal judgments for exactly what Jesus predicted would happen to this temple did happen to the temple and city in A.D. 70.
- 4) We need to see things as God sees things, not as all others see things.

SECTION #2 – The disciples ask Jesus specific questions about the future. **24:3**

(Question #1) - When will these things happen? **24:3a**

(Question #2) - What will be the sign of your coming? **24:3b**

(Question #3) - What will be the sign of the end of the age? **24:3c**

Matthew's gospel does not answer the first question, but it does answer questions two and three.

The temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, but the last two questions are specifically answered and will happen at a different time. **The reason why so much emphasis is put on questions 2-3 is because Matthew's gospel is one that has been focused on the King coming to give Israel her Kingdom.** A discussion of signs of that and of the end of the age is certainly consistent with the purpose of the book of Matthew. For since Christ has been rejected the first time He came to Israel, He is specific to point out precise events when He will be accepted the second time He will come to Israel.

It is also equally important to see that none of these questions are asked in the context of the Church or the Church Age. The disciples are looking at the temple and at Jerusalem and are specifically asking questions pertaining to Israel. In fact, when Jesus Christ ascends after His resurrection, they are still focused on Israel's kingdom (Acts 1:6). To read the Church Age into these verses is to make a terrible mistake.

There will be specific, concrete signs that will lead to the second coming of Jesus Christ and that is precisely what this context in Matthew is designed to teach.