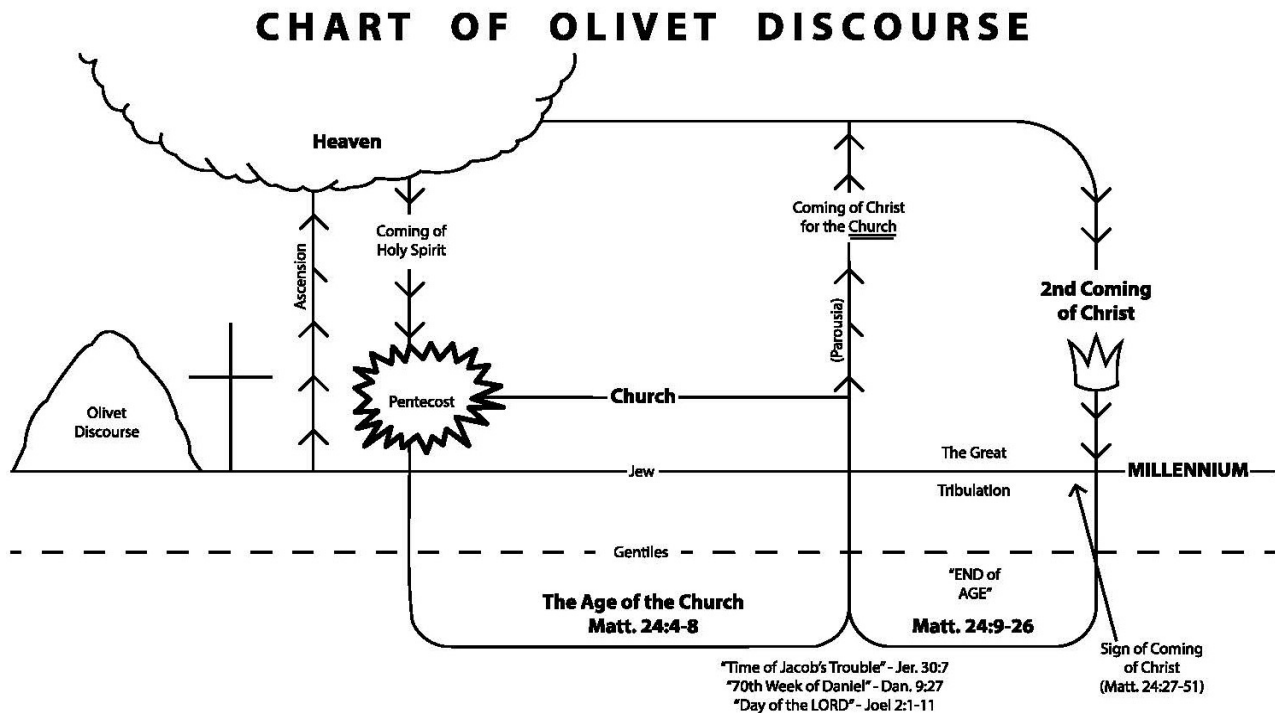


Jesus & The End Times

Lesson 3 – What did Jesus, the Apostle Paul and Peter say about the End Times

1. Jesus' Teaching on End Times



A. Matthew 24

Outside of the book of Revelation, what Jesus said about the end times in Matthew 24 is the largest portion of prophetic scripture in the New Testament.

Matthew 24:1-2 – “As Jesus was leaving the Temple grounds, his disciples pointed out to him the various Temple buildings. ² But he responded, “Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!” (NLT)

B. Understanding Herod’s Temple Complex

Began in 19BC and was completed in 63AD. Herod leveled an entire mountain top and developed a grand temple complex that could hold over 200,000 people at one time. It took up over 37 acres of land. The pinnacle of the temple was 207 feet tall. It was made of limestone. Brilliant white. It was beautiful.

C. Fulfillment of verse 2

Roman General Titus conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in 70AD. He killed over 1 million Jews and took over 100,000 captives back to Rome. These captives were used to build the Colosseum in Rome.

D. Signs of the End of the Age

Matthew 24:3-8 – “Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, “Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?”⁴ Jesus told them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you,⁵ for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many.⁶ And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately.⁷ Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world.⁸ But **all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.**” (NLT)

E. Understanding Birth pains

- a. Jesus is describing what the precursors of the end times will look like. Many believe the 20th century ushered in the beginning of what Jesus called “birth pains”.
- b. Some scholars believe verse 7 uses a Jewish idiom for “world wars”. “nation against nation...kingdom against kingdom” The 20th century saw 2 world wars with incredible loss of life. WWI saw 18 million dead followed by a global flu epidemic killing another 50-100 million. WWII saw another 50-80 million killed.
- c. Mark 13:8 and Luke 21:10-11 also include earthquakes, famine and disease as indicators of the beginning of birth pains. Dr. Tim LaHaye has shared his research on the increase of earthquake activity and severity since 2000. This increase is so dramatic, the USGS has stopped keeping track of earthquakes smaller than 4.5 unless there is loss of life.
- d. This perspective would see the arrival of the 20th century as the beginning of the end time clock.
- e. Other perspectives simply see this as a common description of mankind’s brokenness until Jesus comes.

Matthew 24:9-14 - “Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers.¹⁰ And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other.¹¹ And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people.¹² Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.

13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come. (NLT)

- f. After the birth pains, “THEN” the time of tribulation will come. Many see this as the literal 7-year tribulation period described in the book of Revelation. The ones who endure to the end of this time of tribulation will be saved.
- g. Jesus also describes a condition that must be met before the end can come. The Gospel must be shared with the entire world.
- h. Has this condition already been met? Where has the Gospel traveled in the past 2000 years? Some believe it has already been met. Will it be fulfilled during the tribulation period?
- i. What is “the end” Jesus is referring to? His second coming. When Jesus comes a second time, it is game over. The end has come.

F. The Abomination of Desolation

Matthew 24:15 - “The day is coming when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about—the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the Holy Place.” (Reader, pay attention!)” (NLT)

- a. Sometimes prophecies have a current historical fulfillment as well as a future. Prophets at times describe mountain top events but not the valleys in the middle.
- b. Imagine a set of mountain peaks. Not able to see the valleys below but only the peaks. Often prophecy is describing a single event or multiple events in the future. The prophet is not describing the time and events in the middle.
- c. The importance of the book of Daniel (Next week) Daniel’s prophecy may have had two mountain peaks he was describing. Daniel 9:27

Daniel 9:27 – “The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him.” (NLT)

- d. Historical: Antiochus Epiphanes was a Greek King of the Seleucid Empire who reigned from 175-164BC. He raided the temple in Jerusalem, set up an altar to Zeus and sacrificed a pig on it. He murdered many Jews and forced them to eat pig meat.

- e. This launched the Maccabean revolt and is where the Jews get the feast of Hanukah.
- f. Futuristic perspective: This is the mid-way point of the Tribulation where the beast demands worship in the remade Jewish Temple. Those alive to witness this event are to recognize the timing and understand the severity of what is coming.

Matthew 24:16-22 – “Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. ¹⁷ A person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack. ¹⁸ A person out in the field must not return even to get a coat. ¹⁹ How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. ²⁰ And pray that your flight will not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For there will be greater anguish than at any time since the world began. And it will never be so great again. ²² In fact, unless that time of calamity is shortened, not a single person will survive. But it will be shortened for the sake of God’s chosen ones.” (NLT)

- g. The abomination of desolation will signify the mid-point of the tribulation. There is 3 and a half years of judgment left before Jesus’ Second Coming. The time will be so terrible, God has to keep it short or all life would be lost.

Matthew 24:23-28 – “Then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘There he is,’ don’t believe it. ²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God’s chosen ones. ²⁵ See, I have warned you about this ahead of time. ²⁶ “So if someone tells you, ‘Look, the Messiah is out in the desert,’ don’t bother to go and look. Or, ‘Look, he is hiding here,’ don’t believe it! ²⁷ **For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes.** ²⁸ Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near.” (NLT)

- h. Every eye will see Jesus’ return. It will be impossible for anyone to miss the return of Jesus. He will not need smart phones, YouTube or the internet for people to see Him. Every eye will see.

G. The Coming of the Son of Man Matthew 24:29-31

Matthew 24:29-31 - “Immediately after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ **And he will send out his angels with the mighty blast of a trumpet, and they will gather his chosen ones from all over the world—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.**” (NLT)

- a. Cataclysmic environmental events happen in nature before Jesus' return. The book of Revelation describes these events.
- b. Notice that after the tribulation, the elect (those saved) will be gathered. This is why historically the early church saw the "rapture" and the second coming as simultaneous events...or closely related.
- c. Some see the elect gathered to reign with Christ on earth for a thousand years. Amillennialists do not see this as an earthly reign but rather in eternity.

H. The Lesson of the Fig Tree vv.32-35

Matthew 24:32-35 - "Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. ³³ In the same way, when you see all these things, you can know his return is very near, right at the door. ³⁴ **I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things take place.** ³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

- a. Jesus told His followers they can recognize the seasonal changes taking place just like observing the seasonal changes of a fig tree. No one still knows the exact day and hour, but we can observe prophetic seasons.
- b. What did Jesus mean by saying "this generation"? Some translation say the word "race" could also be used.
- c. Was Jesus also speaking about two fulfillments? There will be a great tribulation for the Jews in this generation. (Referring to Titus and 70AD) as well as a great tribulation for the world at a future time. Was He describing two mountain peaks?

I. No One Knows That Day and Hour vv.36-51

Matthew 24:36-44 - ³⁶ "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. ³⁷ "When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. ³⁸ In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. ³⁹ People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. ⁴⁰ "Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left. ⁴² "So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected." (NLT)

- a. Who are the ones taken and where are they taken? Is this the Rapture? Is it the unrighteous being removed from the earth at Jesus' second coming?
- b. If we are going to believe in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church, we also have to believe in the post-tribulation rapture of the unrighteous. These passages of people being "taken" refer to the unrighteous. (Luke 17 & Matthew 13)

Matthew 24:45-51 - "A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. ⁴⁶ If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁸ But what if the servant is evil and thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' ⁴⁹ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? ⁵⁰ The master will return unannounced and unexpected, ⁵¹ and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

(NLT)

- c. The motivation for studying Jesus' words is to be the faithful wise servant. Studying prophecy motivates us to remain faithful.
- d. Jesus promises rewards for faithfulness. If we are to reign with Christ in the future, there are parables Jesus taught that imply future responsibility will be determined by our faithfulness in this life. How you live now may be your resume for reigning with Christ later.

J. Does Jesus refer to the rapture? Luke 17 & Matthew 13

Luke 17:34-37 - "That night two people will be asleep in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. ³⁵ Two women will be grinding flour together at the mill; one will be taken, the other left. Where will this happen, Lord?" the disciples asked. Jesus replied, "Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near." (NLT)

- a. If this is a rapture description, why does Jesus refer to corpses and vultures? Is it more reasonable to see this as the rapture (removal) of the unrighteous at Jesus' second coming?

Matthew 13:24-30 - "Here is another story Jesus told: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. ²⁵ But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. ²⁶ When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. ²⁷ "The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?' ²⁸ "An enemy has done this!" the farmer exclaimed. "Should we pull out the weeds?" they asked. ²⁹ "No," he replied, 'you'll uproot the wheat if you do. ³⁰ Let both

grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.’” (NLT)

- b. Notice the weeds are gathered first not the grain.

Matthew 13:36-43 – “Then, leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, “Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field.” ³⁷ Jesus replied, “The Son of Man is the farmer who plants the good seed. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. ³⁹ The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels. ⁴⁰ “Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!” (NLT)

- c. How can this refer to the rapture of the church? Notice who gets taken out of the world first. Only the righteous rule with Christ for 1000 years, therefore the unrighteous must be removed before the millennium begins.

2. Paul Teaching on the End Times

2 Timothy 3:1-5 - “You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. ⁵ They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!” (NLT)

- A. Paul is describing the general depravity of the human race in the end times. He’s not describing the “birth pains” like Jesus did. He’s simply describing the last age in which we have been in since the cross.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - “And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. ¹⁵ We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the



trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ So encourage each other with these words.” (NLT)

- B. This is the classic rapture passage. Is this referring to the rapture before the tribulation or is this referring the second coming? How would a 1st century believer understand this?
- C. The encouragement in these words do not come from an understanding of the rapture. They come from the assurance death is simply a doorway to Jesus. Relationships in Jesus are eternal. We will be together with those we love forever with Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 - “Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don’t really need to write you. ² For you know quite well that the day of the Lord’s return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. ³ When people are saying, “Everything is peaceful and secure,” then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman’s labor pains begin. And there will be no escape.

⁴ But you aren’t in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won’t be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don’t belong to darkness and night. ⁶ So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. ⁷ Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. ⁸ But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.

⁹ For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. ¹⁰ Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. ¹¹ So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. (NLT)

- D. Those that hold to the pre-tribulation rapture view see verse 9 as evidence the church will not go through the tribulation. How can the church go through the tribulation if we are not destined for God’s wrath? (The tribulation period is a time of God’s wrath)
- E. Could this simply be a statement about the wrath of God in eternity? Because of our relationship with Jesus, we are no longer destined for God’s eternal wrath.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 – “Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him. ² Don’t be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don’t believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. ³ Don’t be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. ⁴ He will exalt himself and

defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.” (NLT)

- F. Does the phrase; “coming of the lord Jesus and our gathering” refer to the rapture or second coming?
- G. Pre-tribulation adherents see the word “apostasy” describing a “departure”. The word apostasy can be translated a departure from truth and also a physical departure. Some believe this word refers to the rapture.
- H. The man of lawlessness is referring to the future anti-Christ and the abomination of desolation.
- I. Others see this referring to Jesus’ second coming. There must be a departure from truth and the anti-Christ must be revealed before Jesus’ second coming.

3. Peter Teaching on the End Times

2 Peter 3:1-13 – “This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory. ² I want you to remember what the holy prophets said long ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles. ³ Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. ⁴ They will say, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created.” ⁵ They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. ⁶ Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. ⁷ **And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed.** ⁸ But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. ⁹ The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. ¹⁰ **But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.** ¹¹ Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, ¹² looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. ¹³ But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s righteousness. (NLT)

- A. Peter refers to the destruction of the old heaven and earth.
 - B. These events happen after the second coming and Jesus' 1000 year reign on earth. There will be a new heaven and a new earth.
 - C. These events are described in Revelation 21.
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Review the class topics

Week #1 – Why Study the End Times

Week #2 – Four Different Perspectives of the End Times

Week #3 – What did Jesus and the Apostle Paul say about the End Times

Week #4 – The Book of Daniel as it Relates to the End Times

Week #5 - The Book of Revelation as it Relates to the End Times

Week #6 – What are the Sign of our Times

Acts 2:17-18 – “In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike— and they will prophesy.” (NLT)

Luke 11:11-13 - “You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? ¹² Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! ¹³ So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” (NLT)