



## Chapter 24: Signs of the End of the Age

### The Magnificent Temple (24:1, 2)

The disciples drew Jesus' attention to the magnificent Temple buildings that King Herod had built for the Jews. They were certainly a wonderful sight. However, Jesus told them that every stone would be thrown down and Jerusalem would be completely destroyed.

### Signs about the Destruction of the Temple and the End of the Age (24:3-28)

The disciples were shocked to learn that the Temple was to be destroyed so they asked Jesus when it would happen and what would be the sign of his coming. Jesus told them what signs to look for in the days leading up to the destruction of the city and also in the times shortly before his own return from heaven.

Parts of chapter 24 seem to refer especially to the time when the Romans would attack Jerusalem and destroy it. Other parts are about the time just before Christ Jesus will return to the earth.

The Roman attack came about 40 years after Jesus spoke these words. Luke 21:20-21 tell us more about what Jesus said. It says there would be a time when Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies. During a short break in the Roman attack, Christians in Jerusalem who had remembered Jesus' words fled the city and saved their lives. The Romans returned and completely destroyed the city and the Temple in AD 70.

To this day, all that remains is the huge platform on which the Temple was built. The famous Western or 'Wailing' wall in modern Jerusalem is part of one wall of this platform.

The signs of the return of Jesus from heaven described later in the chapter are, of course, still to be completely fulfilled. Even Jesus did not know how much time would pass between the fall of Jerusalem and his second coming. In verse 36 he tells us that only God knew when he would return.



The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem

### The Return of the Lord Jesus (24:29-31)

"They (the Jews) will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:24-28)

These words of Jesus in Luke chapter 21 give us more information about what Jesus said in Matthew 24:29-31. As you will see from the quotation there will be a time just before the return of the Lord Jesus when Jerusalem will no longer be in the hands of Gentiles. Until the middle of the last century there were very few Jews in Israel – they were scattered throughout the world, and Jerusalem was not under Jewish control. So we see that "*the times of the Gentiles*" are nearly ended because the Jews have returned to their homeland and Jerusalem is now mostly in the hands of the people of Israel. The prophecy Jesus made



almost 2,000 years ago is being fulfilled right now! It is a sure sign that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be far away!

We need to make sure that we are preparing ourselves to meet the Lord Jesus for he will return with great power and those who have believed his words and tried to serve him faithfully will be rewarded.

We also note that Luke's record includes *"distress of nations in perplexity"* and *"people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world"*. We live in a time when world leaders struggle with huge problems and people can see no solutions of them. Issues like pollution, diminishing resources, global warming, disease, terrorism, wars and famine, as well as changing weather patterns, all threaten life as we know it. How much we need the return of the Lord Jesus!

Zechariah 12 is a prophecy about the time just before the Lord Jesus returns and verses 2, 3 show us that all nations will gather against Jerusalem. God says:

"Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it."

Israel and Jerusalem are constantly in the news. In spite of the efforts of many world leaders, it seems impossible to bring peace to that land and its people. Zechariah tells us that this problem will persist. All of the surrounding nations that hate Israel will seek to destroy it. This will draw the whole world into a great conflict that will bring about the return of Jesus.

### **Warnings (24:36-51)**

If Jesus did not know the date of his own return, then we cannot expect to work it out. But we can look out for the signs Jesus mentioned. We can take careful note of what Jesus says in verses 36-51 about his coming again:

- It will be sudden.
- Most people will be going about their everyday business.
- Jesus will come at a time when even his followers will not expect him.
- His servants must therefore be constantly on the watch.
- True Christians, like wise servants, must be careful to do what their Master wants while he is away.

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| Name             |  |
| Address          |  |
| Reference Number |  |
| Tutor            |  |

Answers to most questions can be found in the lessons or Bible passages given. Please write your answers on this question paper and return them in the envelope provided:

- 1 The parable of the wedding feast represents the time when Jesus will return to this earth and be joined to his 'bride', the true church (Revelation 19:7-9).

Complete the table below:

| Symbol in the parable                      | What it represents |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| The King                                   |                    |
| The King's son                             |                    |
| The people first invited                   |                    |
| The people who eventually attend the feast |                    |
| The person without wedding clothes         |                    |

- 2 How does Jesus sum up the teaching of the 10 Commandments?

### **Questions on Chapter 23**

- 1 What does verse 3 mean?
- 2 How many times in this chapter does Jesus call the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites?

- 3 In what ways can we be hypocrites today?
- 4 Look at verse 11. What did Jesus do in John 13 to show this?
- 5 In your own words explain verse 12.

**Questions on Chapter 24**

- 1 What did Jesus say would happen to the Temple?
- 2 What warning is in verses 23-26?
- 3 What does verse 27 teach us about the coming of Jesus?
- 4 The time just before the return of Jesus is compared to the days of Noah. Why did God destroy the earth then?
- 5 How is our time similar to the time of Noah?
- 6 In what ways can we prepare ourselves for the return of the Lord Jesus to this earth?