

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Class: *“What Will the End of the World Be Like?”*

II. New Testament Passages

A. Matthew 24 and 25 (*continued*)

Verses 15-20: **What is the “holy place” that Jesus speaks of?** _____

“the abomination that causes desolation”- Throughout the Old Testament the word “abomination refers to an idol or idolatrous object. In 168 BC the Seleucid emperor, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), trying to impose Greek customs upon his territory, erected an altar to Zeus in the temple of Jerusalem with pigs sacrificed upon it. He also turned the temple courtyards into a *gymnasium*, an (nude) exercise area. The Jewish populace soon revolted under the leadership of the Maccabee family and won their independence. Here Jesus reinforces the authorship of Daniel by referring to 9:27; 11:31 and 12:11.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

When the Romans threatened Jerusalem in AD 70, Jews entered the city, resulting later in a horrible bloodbath. Christians escaped the siege of the city by fleeing to the mountains across the Jordan River. Jesus tells His followers that during this time they would feel the brunt of human hatred. His words here prophesy both the destruction of Jerusalem and His own second coming, compressing them into one event.

What do the instructions of verses 17-18 indicate? _____

Why will this be an especially bad time for pregnant women and nursing mothers?

Jesus shows here His concern for women which was unique among Jewish rabbis.

Why would you not want to travel during the winter? _____

Why would you not want to travel on the Sabbath? _____

This part is not in Mark's description of what Jesus says because he is writing for a Gentile audience.

Verses 21-25: “great tribulation”- Jesus does not say exactly what this great distress will be. It is a disaster that will fall upon all people. It is a brief period of dire distress that will happen immediately before His return. Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century AD describes the destruction of Jerusalem in almost identical language.

Revelation 20:7-8a When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth...to gather them for battle.

Who are the “elect”? _____

Ephesians 1:4 For He (Father) chose us in Him (Son) before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.

God's love for His people moves Him to lessen the severity of what befalls the land in AD 66-70. Jesus repeats His description of what will happen before He, the real Christ, returns. When times get tough for people, either individually or as a group, they look for spiritual answers, often in the wrong places. This gives false teachers an opportunity to take advantage of these vulnerable people. Jesus lets us know that He is speaking prophetically. “The loving Master provides for His disciples...Having been forewarned, the disciples will not be unduly disturbed when the prediction is fulfilled. In fact, their faith in Jesus will even be confirmed” (Hendricksen, Matthew, page 861).

Joel 2:1b-2a Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand--a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10a *The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing.*

Verses 26-28: **Why would vultures gather around a carcass?** _____

Luke 17:37 "Where, Lord?" they asked. Jesus replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather." In these two passages it appears that Jesus is making use of a proverbial saying that was well known to His listeners.

"It is better to think here of the fullness of sin that will, as it were, bring down on itself that judgment and the Son of Man's return. The conjunction of these two things also will be inevitable." (H.N. Ridderbos, Matthew, Zondervan, 1987, pages 446-447)

"The final 'tribulation' to which the wicked will subject God's children is that which will ripen the world for judgment. So it is immediately after that severest of all trials that the Son of Man arrives." (Hendricksen, page 862)

Verses 29-31: This is language that is commonly used in both the Old and New Testaments to describe God's awful judgment on this fallen world.

Isaiah 13:9-11 Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

Matthew frequently portrays angels as assisting the Lord on Judgment Day. Jesus will send His angels to gather all believers, regardless of where they are. "These words are not entirely figurative. The events of nature that Jesus spoke of, however freely He described them, will indeed mean that end of the world and universe as it now exists." (Ridderbos, page 447)

What is the "sign of the Son of Man"? _____

Daniel 7:13-14 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

Why will the nations of the earth mourn? _____

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

It is clear that the Lord's return will be heard as well as seen. If this is not a literal trumpet, what forces of nature the Lord will use to produce this sound has not been revealed. We have to wait until Matthew 25:31-46 to find out why Jesus has His angels gather the elect.

Hendricksen's Description of the End-Time Great Change:

- A) Conflagration: a complete purge of the universe
- B) Rejuvenation: the renewal of the universe into perfection
- C) Realization: restraints due to sin are removed; creation is liberated
- D) Harmonization: there is peace and concord everywhere