

Eschatology Lesson 5

Jesus Timeline of Future Things to Come

Matthew 24-Signs of the End of the Age:

1. (1-2) JESUS PREDICTS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.
 - a. This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D when Rome invaded Jerusalem.
2. (3) DISCIPLES ASK 3 QUESTIONS.
 - a. First question: “Tell us when these things will happen”
 - i. “These things” us referring to the things that Jesus was just speaking of, the destruction of the temple.
 - ii. Matthew does not record Jesus’ answer to the first question but it recorded in Luke Ch 21: 8-23.
 - b. 2nd and 3rd question: “What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”
 - i. The rest of the chapter deals with Jesus answering this question. In doing so he makes several references to the end of the age which has become a subject of great disagreement among Christians. Why wasn’t Jesus more clear concerning future prophecies?
 - One thing that is clear through out scripture is that God wants every generation to be expectant and ready for Jesus return.
 - Proverbs 25:2 “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.”
 - ii. Its possible that the disciples thought the 3questions was one and the same!
 - a. The disciples understood truths of the events to come but also didn’t have a full grasp on the sequence of events.
3. (4-8) BEGINNING OF BIRTH PANGS: Jesus mentions specific things in this passage that are not signs of the end. False messiahs, wars famines, pestilence, earthquakes and nation rising against nation all are things that will happen through out the history of mankind.
 - a. It indicates a decline in mankind.
 - b. “*for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end*”
 - c. “beginning of birth pangs”
 - “In the days or weeks before labor, Braxton Hicks contractions may intermittently become rhythmic, relatively close together, and even painful, possibly fooling you into thinking you're in labor. But unlike true labor, during this so-called false labor the contractions don't grow consistently longer, stronger, and closer together.”
4. (9-14) WHAT JESUS FOLLOWERS CAN EXPECT FROM THE TIME OF HIS ASCENSION TO HIS SECOND COMING.
 - a. *They will deliver you to tribulation and kill you:* Persecution should be expected from His disciples in the period between the ascension and His second coming.

- b. *False prophets will arise and deceive many*
 - c. *Lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold:* Jesus followers should expect to see society become worse and worse.
 - d. This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come: The persecution, false prophets, lawlessness and general downgrade in society will not prevent the spread of the gospel.
- * Verses 4-14 basically describes the flow of history from his ascension to His second coming

5. (15) THE SIGN: THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

- a. The “Abomination of Desolation” speaks of the desecration of the Jewish temple. It’s meaning is the establishment of an idolatrous image in the holy place.
 - b. “as spoken of by Daniel the prophet”. Daniel chapter 9 first speaks of this abomination of desolation in the prophecy concerning the 490 year time period God will deal with Israel.
 - i. During the seven weeks (49 years) the city of Jerusalem would be rebuilt and the worship reestablished.
 - ii. After 63 weeks (434 years) Messiah would come to Jerusalem and then be cut off.
 - iii. The prince (antichrist) will make an agreement with the Jews for one week (7 years) to protect them from their enemies and permit them to rebuild their temple. (*Dan 9:27*)
 - Paul elaborates on the future fulfillment of this in *2 Thess. 2:3-4*: “*That day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*”
 - *Daniel 12:11* gives additional insight: “*And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be 1290 days (until the end.)* When this sign is set up, the end may be determined – there will be three and a half years to go.
 - c. “Whoever reads let him understand”: This leads him into the next 5 verses.
 - i. “The readers” could be an indication of the people who live in the time period that it is talking about who would actually be reading from scripture.
- #### 6. (16-20) JESUS GIVES DIRECTION ON WHAT TO DO WHEN THE ABOMINATION APPEARS.
- a. “Then let those who are in Judea flee”: These are warning specifically addressed to Israelites. Judea, housetops, and Sabbath all speak to a Jewish environment.
 - i. This entire paragraph (v.16-20) relates only to the Jews. Example
 - Daniels prophecy was specifically about the Jews.
 - No Gentile would worry about breaking the Sabbath law.

7. (21-28) GREAT TRIBULATION: “such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time”

- a. Jesus describes this as the most awful time that human history has ever seen.
 - b. This verse shows clear distinction that this is a different period in time as Luke 20:21, although Luke’s passage gives similar instructions for that event. It also gives us confidence that it has not yet happened.
 - c. “look here is the Christ”: No one should deceive about the nature of Jesus’ coming. It will not be kept secret or private but as plain as lightning flashing across the sky. No one will miss it.
 - d. “Where ever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.” This verse has brought much confusion and disagreement among Christians as to what the meaning is. My beliefs are that this verse is still linked to the previous verses about his coming not being in secret. It’s no secret where the corpse is because you will see vultures gather.
8. (29-31) THE GLORIOUS RETURN OF CHRIST
- a. The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light: Several prophetic passages describe the cosmic disturbances that will precede and surround the return of Jesus (Joel 2:10; Revelation 6:12-14; Isaiah 34:4).
 - b. Jesus says that the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven. It is difficult to say exactly what this sign is, Perhaps this sign is somehow related to the incredible cosmic disturbances that will precede this.
 - c. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory: This is the fulfillment of the end, indicated by the sign of *the abomination of desolation*. Since this has not happened yet, neither has the abomination of desolation.
 - i. This is another reason why the “abomination of desolation” cannot refer to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70
 - d. This event will have great significance for Israel. Jesus will return at a time when Israel is about to be defeated by the Gentile armies (*Zech 12-14*) and He will rescue His people, They will see Him and recognize that He is their messiah (*Zech 12:9-14*). At this point there will be a National repentance, national cleansing, and national restoration under the gracious leadership of the Messiah.
 - e. “He will send forth his angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect...”
 - i. We must not confuse the trumpet of Matthew 24:31 with the “trump of God” mentioned in 1 Thess. 4:16.
 - ii. The “elect” refers to His people on earth, specifically focused on Jews (see references) although just as today, if a Jewish person individually places his faith in Jesus he will be saved, when this “last seven” (seven years) comes the Gentiles (church) will no longer be the focus but an individual Gentile could still place their faith in Jesus and be saved.
Isaiah 11:12, Deut. 30: 1-4, Isaiah 27:12-13