

# LESSON 13

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## THE END OF THE AGE: MATTHEW 24 AND RELATED PASSAGES

Some commentators place Matthew 24 alongside Revelation and note that, like Revelation, Matthew 24 refers to wars, famines, earthquakes, and the persecution of Christians. This exercise is innocent enough unless we begin with the false premise that one purpose of Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation is to reveal “signs of the times” that tell us when Christ’s second coming is near.

The aim of this supplement is to look at Matthew 24, along with parallel passages in Mark 13 and Luke 21, to try to determine what they do and do not teach. Most writers acknowledge that Matthew 24 is a difficult chapter; perhaps it is one of the most difficult chapters in the Bible. Nevertheless, God would not have preserved this passage for us if it did not contain basic truths we can grasp.

### DEPARTURE FROM THE TEMPLE (MT. 24:1–14; MK. 13:1–15; LK. 21:5–19)

Christ’s departure from the temple was significant. God’s glory, that is, Jesus (see Jn. 2:11; 8:54), had departed from the temple, never to return. (Concerning the departure of God’s glory, compare to 1 Sam. 4:21, 22.) Though it would be several decades until the temple was destroyed, its fate was sealed (see Mt. 23:37, 38).

1. What did the temple look like in Jesus’ day?
2. What were the disciples thinking of when they asked Jesus about His Second Coming and the end of the age?
3. Why does Jesus’ answer to their question seem so cryptic to modern readers?
4. What contrasts can be drawn between Mt. 24:4–35 and Mt. 24:36–41?

5. What difficulties arise when one arbitrarily divides the verses between those that discuss the fall of Jerusalem and those that discuss the Second Coming?

**THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM**  
**(MT. 24:4–35; MK. 13:5–31; LK. 21:8–36)**

Christ began His discourse with several “non-signs.” The destruction of Jerusalem would be such a traumatic event for Jews that those looking for the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy might think anything and everything was a sign that it was about to happen. He then gave the sign for which His followers *should* be looking.

6. What events did Jesus warn the disciples were possibly misleading signs?
7. What was “the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be” (Mk. 13:14)?
8. How did Daniel use similar terms to those in Mk. 13:14?
9. What did Jesus instruct His disciples to do when they saw the real sign of the city’s destruction?
10. Why was Jesus concerned for those who were pregnant and nursing and that the destruction not come in winter or on the Sabbath?
11. Did Christians understand Jesus’ message about the destruction of Jerusalem, according to history?
12. Does history tell us that Jesus’ predictions were accurate regarding the fall of Jerusalem? Explain.
13. What seems to be a reasonable interpretation of Christ’s words in Mt. 24:29–31?
14. Where else in the Bible is the symbolism of the sun, moon, and stars used to refer to the fall of kings and kingdoms?
15. What three facts should we bear in mind as we interpret Mt. 24:29–31?
16. How should we interpret the word “kingdom” in Lk. 21:31?

**THE SECOND COMING**  
**(MT. 24:36–41; MK. 13:32–37)**

Beginning in Matthew 24:36, Jesus approached a different subject.

17. What indications does Mt. 24:36 give that it begins a different subject than that previously discussed?
18. Why did Jesus give no signs to prepare His disciples for His Second Coming?
19. How do premillennialists use Mt. 24:40, 41 to support their teaching?
20. What lessons can we learn from Mt. 24 about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Coming?