

I. JESUS' PRIMARY TEACHING ON THE END TIMES (MT. 24-25)

A. The best teaching on the end-times in the Bible was given by Jesus in “one teaching” that is recorded in four chapters—Matthew 24-25, Mk. 13, Lk. 21—which are to be studied together. These four chapters plus Jesus’ teaching in Luke 17 give us a foundation for His end-time teaching. The most complete record is in Matthew 24-25— while Mk. 13 and Lk. 21 give a shorter version of it.

B. By reviewing the signs that Jesus identified as signals of his approaching return, we can have confidence regarding the timing of his return, and dial down fear that would assume that he has “left us in the dark” regarding this important subject.

C. Outline of Matthew 24

24:1-3	The disciples’ questions about the temple and Jesus’ return
24:4-14	Signs of the times indicating Jesus’ return
24:15-20	The saints will see the abomination of desolation
24:21-22	The Great Tribulation
24:23-28	Do not be deceived about Jesus’ return
24:29-31	The second coming of Christ
24:32-36	The parable of the fig tree
24:37-42	The command to watch: Most will not recognize the signs
24:43-44	The parable of the thief
24:45-51	The parable of the faithful and wise servants

D. Matthew 24-25 is called the ***Olivet Discourse*** (because Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives when giving this prophecy). Matthew 24-25 highlights various signs of the times (24:5-14), important warnings (24:15-28), the responses He wants from His people as seen in five parables (24:32-25:30), His response to them (25:21), and then He concludes by describing Himself as a King sitting on His earthly throne, judging the responses of each person and nation (25:31-46).

E. The interpretation of Matthew 24 and Luke 21 focuses on two events: the destruction of the temple in AD 70 and Jesus’ return. The Holy Spirit has intentionally connected these together in the narrative set forth by Matthew, Mark, and Luke—instead of clearly distinguishing between these two events.

F. Matthew 24 and Luke 21 were partially fulfilled in context to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and will be completely fulfilled in context to Jesus’ second coming and the great troubles that Jerusalem will experience during the Great Tribulation (Joel 3:2, 12; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 12:3; 14:2).

G. Jesus gave 14 exhortations in Matthew 24—8 exhortations are related to “knowing” the biblical narrative for the end times (24:15, 32 [2x], 33) or to not being deceived (24:4, 6, 23, 26).

H. Jesus revealed Himself as **Bridegroom** (Mt. 25:1), **King** (Mt. 25:31), and **Judge** (Mt. 25:32-46).

He is a King with power, a Bridegroom with desire for deep relationship, and a Judge with zeal to remove everything that hinders love. In the end times, the Spirit will emphasize these three aspects of Jesus' personality and ministry (Mt. 25; cf. Ps. 45; Isa. 61-63; Rev. 19). The Church is best prepared to thrive spiritually in pressure by encountering Jesus as Bridegroom, King, and Judge.

II. SIGNS OF THE TIMES INDICATING JESUS' RETURN (MT. 24:4-14)

A. In Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, Jesus identified **22 signs of the times**—20 are negative. Jesus taught on 22 important themes that He wants His people to understand and proclaim.

He highlighted **12 negative trends** as the “beginning of birth pains” that will increase throughout the generation that He returns (24:4-8; Lk. 21:8-11) and highlighted an additional **5 negative trends** that will escalate during the final 7 years of this age (24:9-12). After that, Jesus identified another **5 signs** that will occur in the 3½ years of the Great Tribulation (24:14-28).

B. To be able to “see” (Mt. 24:33) global events implies technology not available before AD 70.

³³So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! (Mt. 24:33)

C. Jesus gave **12 negative sign trends** as “the beginning” of sorrows or birth pains that will bring distress to the nations and indicate the generation of His return (Mt. 24:4-8; Lk. 21:11, 25).

⁵“For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars...⁷For nation will rise against nation [ethnic conflict], and kingdom against kingdom [economic warfare]. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes...⁸These are the beginning of sorrows [birth pains; ESV].” (Mt. 24:4-8)

⁹“But when you hear of wars and commotions...¹¹And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines, and pestilences; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven ... ²⁵And...on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. ³⁵It will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.” (Lk. 21:11, 25, 35)

D. Jesus gave 12 negative sign trends as “the beginning” of sorrows or birth pains.

1. *Deception and false christs*: Many will come in Jesus’ name and deceive many (24:5).
2. *Wars*: There will be military and political conflict (24:6; Mk. 13:7; Lk. 21:9).
3. *Rumors of war*: Rumors will stir fear that has many implications—financial, social, political.
4. *Ethnic conflict*: Civil disorder and racism will occur, nation (*ethnos*) against nation (24:7).
5. *Economic warfare*: Economic-related hostility, aggression, and conflict (24:7)
6. *Famines*: Massive food shortages will occur (24:7) that will distress the nations (Lk. 21:25).
7. *Pestilences (disease)*: Biological warfare will bring disease to a new intensity (24:7).
8. *Great earthquakes*: Lk. adds *great*—in destruction and loss of life (24:7; Lk. 21:11)
9. *Commotions*: There will be chaotic events in society and creation (Lk. 21:9).
10. *Fearful sights*: Terrorizing happenings, or that which causes one to be struck with fear
11. *Great signs from heaven*: Signs in the sky and related to the weather (Lk. 21:11)
12. *Perplexity at the roaring of the sea* (Lk. 21:25)

E. Matthew described 8 trends (24:4-5) and Luke 21 identified 9 trends (21:9-11, 25)—5 trends mentioned in Matthew 24 plus an additional 4 not seen in Matthew 24—*commotions* (21:9), *fearful sights* (21:11), *great signs from heaven* (21:11), and *perplexity at the sea* (21:25).

F. In Matthew 24, Jesus identified 5 *negative trends* that will increase “after” the beginning of birth pains. They include the *martyrdom of believers* (24:9), *social anarchy* as hatred, betrayal, and offense dominate society (24:10), *false prophets* or social commentators who undermine God’s Word (24:11), *abounding lawlessness* (24:12) and *love growing cold* due to many having a seared conscience (24:12; 1 Tim. 4:2). There will be intense resistance against God’s people (24:9-10).

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹²And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

(Mt. 24:9-13)

G. Lawlessness and lovelessness (perversion, betrayal, and cruelty) will abound in society (24:12).

Lawlessness with its moral decay will create the context for hatred as love grows cold in society as we get closer to the end. Sin will reach its fullest expression (24:12; Rev. 14:18; cf. Dan. 8:23).

H. The most-repeated warning in Scripture about the end times is *not to be deceived*—deception will cause many to fall away from Jesus (Mt. 24:11; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5).

The warning not to be deceived is an exhortation to be prepared spiritually and in understanding of the biblical narrative for what is occurring. There will be so much deception and false narratives about what is happening. We must be grounded in the Scripture first and foremost, but we must also diligently study the 150 chapters in which the primary theme is what will happen in the end-times.

III. THE SAINTS WILL SEE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION (MT. 24:15-20)

A. The abomination of desolation is the primary sign that the Great Tribulation has begun (24:15).

*¹⁵“...when you see the ‘**abomination of desolation,**’ spoken of by **Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place**” (...**let him understand**), ¹⁶then let those who are in Judea **flee to the mountains**. ¹⁷Let him who is on the **housetop** not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸And let him who is in the **field** not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹But woe to those...who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰And pray that your flight may not be in **winter** or on the **Sabbath**.” (Mt. 24:15-20)*

B. **Abomination of desolation:** When you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place.

Two components of “the abomination” are the *image* and the *mark* of the Beast (Rev. 13:15-18).

Many see the desolation of the temple in AD 70 as anticipating its ultimate end-time fulfillment.

IV. POSITIVE SIGNS AND TRENDS – TAKEN FROM VARIOUS END-TIMES CHAPTERS

A. The End-Time Victorious Church

1. Scripture prophesies of the Church being made ready and full of glory before the Lord returns (Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:13, 5:27; Rev. 12:11; 15:2; 19:7). Jesus prophesied of and prayed for the Church being victorious in context to unbelievers seeing it (Mt. 16:18-19; 22:37; Jn. 17:21-26).

B. The Great Harvest: The Gospel Preached to All Nations

1. **Gospel preached to all nations:** Jesus connected the timing of His return to the preaching of the gospel to all nations. Mission leaders identify 4,000 geo-political zones using 6,000 languages (20 primary languages used by 90% of the earth) and 12,000 cultures or ethnic groups (ethnos).

¹⁴*This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations [ethnos or ethnic groups] and then the end will come. (Mt 24:14)*

C. The Salvation of Israel

1. The revival in the nations will also occur in Israel. The glory of God being expressed in the lives of Gentile believers will provoke Israel to jealousy (Rom. 10:19; 11:11, 14). There are more Jewish people coming to Jesus than any time since the first century. There are over 120 messianic congregations (Jewish believers) in Israel, totaling over 15,000 believers. This is an increase of over 500% in the last 10 years. Messianic congregations in Israel are experiencing more growth through conversions than any time since the first century. Today there is a vibrant Messianic remnant in Israel. Jesus prophesied that the Jewish leadership would openly celebrate Him as the Messiah!

D. Global Prayer and Worship Movement

1. **Global prayer movement:** Jesus connected the timing of His return in Luke 17 to night and day prayer in Luke 18.

7

Shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night...? 8 When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith (agreement in prayer) on the earth? (Lk. 18:7-8; NAS)

2. Jesus prophesied of a time when the Church would pray (bind negative and loose positive things) until the powers of hell were openly defeated. This occurs mostly in the generation He returns.

18

I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.(Mt. 16:18-19)

3. The Holy Spirit will raise up an end-time prayer movement (Rev. 22:17; 5:8; 8:4; Lk. 18:7-8; Mt. 25:1-13; Isa. 62:6-7; 24:14-16; 25:9; 26:8-9; 27:2-5, 13; 30:18-19; 42:10-13; 43:26; 51:11; 52:8; Joel 2:12-17, 32; Jer. 31:7; Mic. 5:3-4; Zeph. 2:1-3; Ps. 102:17-20; 122:6; Zech. 12:10).

4. **Global worship movement:** Jesus is coming back in context to the greatest worship movement in history (Isa. 42:10-13). The current explosion of worship music combined with prayer is a sign of the times. Isaiah prophesied of the prominence of singing in the end times (over 100 verses). See Isa. 5:1-7; 6:3; 9:3; 12:1-6; 14:3-27; 24:14-16; 25:1; 26:1-6; 27:2-5, 13; 29:19; 30:29-30; 35:1-10; 38:19-20; 42:10-17; 43:21; 44:23; 48:20-21; 49:13; 51:3, 11; 52:8-10; 54:1; 55:12; 56:7-8; 60:18; 61:3, 7-11; 62:6-7, 9; 63:7; 65:13-14; 66:10-14, 21.

E. End-Time Unity in the Church

1. Unity and maturity will occur in the Church in the generation in which the Lord returns.

11

He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints...13 till we all come to the unity of the faith ...to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (Eph. 4:11-13)

F. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Focus on Next Generation.

1. **End-time outpouring of the Spirit:** The greatest prophetic moment is yet to come (Isa. 26:9; 29:24; Jer. 31:9; 23:20; Dan. 11:33-35; 12:3, 10; Joel 2:28-32; Mal. 4:5-6; Mt. 17:11; Jn. 14:12; Acts 2:17; Rev. 11:3-6; 18:20). It will be accompanied by prophecies, healings, and miracles. All believers can and will receive prophetic dreams and visions. The Spirit is doing this now.

¹⁷

In the last days...I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions...18 On My menservants and My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy ...20 Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. (Acts 2:17-20)

2. ***Unparalleled understanding of end-time prophecy:*** Jeremiah prophesied that the saints in the end times would have perfect or complete understanding (Jer. 23:20; 30:24; Dan. 11:33; 12:10). An angel told Daniel that some end-time information would be sealed until then (Dan. 12:4, 9).

²⁰

The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly. (Jer. 23:20)

3. ***Global youth focus in the kingdom:*** Malachi predicted a unique time in which the fathers of the faith would turn their heart to love and serve the younger generation. This includes a turning of the heart of the Church to the fatherless (abortion, adoption, orphans, human trafficking victims). This great change is connected to the power of Elijah being released before Jesus returns. Mal. 4:5-6