

OUTLINE OF MATTHEW 24:1-51 (Cf. Mark 13 and Luke 21)

- I. vv. 1-3—THE OCCASION AND THE QUESTIONS. (Mk. 13:1-4; Lk. 21:5-7).
1. Observing the magnificent buildings of Jerusalem. v. 1.
 2. Jesus' dire prediction: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." v. 2.
 3. The disciples' questions:
 - (1) "*When shall these things be?*" (Destruction of Jerusalem).
 - (2) "*What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*" v. 3.
- II. vv. 4-31—ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS.
1. *Answers to first questions*, concerning Jerusalem. (Matthew 24:4-28; Mark 13:5-23; Luke 21:8-24).
 - a. Warning of preliminary troubles—"the beginning of travail." (4-14; 5:13; 8-19).
 - (1) False Christs, wars, rumors of wars, famines and earthquakes do not indicate the end; be not troubled.
 - (2) Persecutions, apostasies, false prophets, shall afflict the church: "take heed to yourselves"; endure to the end; trust God for help; the gospel testimony shall go into all the world. (9:13-14; 12-19) cf. Col. 1:6, 23; Rom. 1:8; 10:18; 16:19.
 - b. The sign of Jerusalem's end, and how to escape the woes of that terrible time. (15-28; 14-23; 20-24).
 - (1) "The abomination of desolation standing in a holy place" is "Jerusalem compassed with armies"; "then know that her desolation is at hand."
 - (2) Let those in Judea flee to the mountains without delay. Pray that the hardships of flight may be lessened; but the unprecedented afflictions of the city must be escaped at all costs. Believe no false prophets, signs or promises; I have forewarned you; the Christ will not return at this time, or at any time without being seen from east to west.
 - (3) The tribulation shall be excessive, shall threaten extinction of the Jewish people, shall take them captive to other nations, shall leave Jerusalem to the Gentiles, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."
 2. Answer to the second question, concerning Christ's coming. (29-31; 24-27; 25-28)
 - a. The time is purposely indefinite; but the event is to be watched for at all times ("immediately"—Matt. 24:29), after a terrible and extended (see Luke 21:24) tribulation.

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- b. The event itself shall be unmistakable; accompanied by tremendous sights and sounds in all earth and heaven, the Lord Himself shall be seen by everyone, coming in the clouds with power and great glory.
 - c. The angels shall gather the elect from everywhere: look up, your redemption draws near. (31; 27; 28)
- III. VV. 32-36—THE ANSWERS REVIEWED IN CONTRASTING SUMMARY.
1. Parable of the fig tree: signs are easily recognized. Watch for *all these things*—wars, persecutions, false Messiahs, the desolation of Jerusalem, and great tribulation, to come to pass in this generation. (32-34; 28:30; 29:32).
 2. Solemn affirmation of unfailling certainty of His words. (35; 31; 33).
 3. But of *that day*, Jesus' coming, no one knows. The time cannot be told, even by the Son of God. (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32).
- IV. VV. 37-51—PARABLES AND EXHORTATIONS TO BE READY AT ALL TIMES.
1. As in the days of Noah the flood came suddenly upon those who had been warned but believed not, so shall the coming of the Son of man be without any immediate forewarning signs. (Matt. 24:37-39).
 2. In the midst of daily work, suddenly one shall be taken and another left; *watch* for you know not the day. (Matt. 24:40-42; cf. v. 31; I Thess. 4:16, 17; I Cor. 15:52.)
 3. Parable of a householder unprepared for a thief who came when he was not expected. Be ready, for when you think not, the Son of man comes. (43, 44)
 4. The servants of the absent Lord have each one his own work (Mark 13:34) to be faithful until He comes. He may not come as soon as they imagine; but if they think that He tarries and they can take advantage of His delay to indulge in sin, He will come when they least expect it and will punish them. (45-51; 33-37; 34-36). "*Watch at every season*"—Luke 21:36.
- (Christ continued the same lessons in the 25th chapter—1. in the parable of the ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom, 2. in the parable of the talents committed to servants until the Lord's return, and 3. in the scene of judgment that shall take place when the Son of man shall come in His glory.
- (In these additional prophetic pictures, He emphasizes that the servants must be prepared to wait patiently and to serve faithfully even though the Master may not come for "a long time" (see v. 19); also that His coming will bring strict judgment and swift vengeance upon all who have not used the intervening time in His service.)