

**Lecture 26 – Final Teachings: Matthew 24-25 (with John 13-17)**

“Therefore keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.” Matthew 24:42

**Key Terms**

Prophecy, Olivet discourse

**Objectives**

\*To outline and briefly explain Jesus’ teachings regarding the last days.

**Lead Questions**

How have Jesus’ prophecies in the Olivette discourse been fulfilled? How are they yet to be fulfilled? Does the fact that some of his prophecies remain unfulfilled present a challenge to the Gospel? If so, in what ways? If so, how do you respond?

**Final Teachings: Matthew 24-25**

Theme: Jesus’ last teaching, for disciples only, concerns the fall of Jerusalem and final things. Jesus’ prophecies prompt questions. Are they authentic? When were they fulfilled? How do they apply today?

**I. Authenticity of the Prophecy**

- A. Not prophecy after event, since details of prediction are from OT, not from events of 70 AD.
  1. Murderous Jewish infighting
  2. Jews take refuge in temple - showing more regard for war than holiness.
  3. Burning of temple gates, later burning and murder in whole city.
- B. Details of Olivet discourse resemble OT prophecy more than they do Josephus
  1. Camps built, city encircled, siege ramps erected. Isa. 29:3,37:33, Ez. 4:2-3, 26:8, Wars, 6.
  2. Crushing the city, destroying walls. Amos 9:1, Isa. 5:5, 64:10. Wars.
  3. City a heap of stones, deserted, like a field. Isa. 25:2, Jer. 26:18, 3:12, Ps. 79:1.
  4. Leveling the city with its children. Isa. 26:5-6
- C. Some illustrative texts (Reicke)
  1. Language of Luke 19:43-44 based on lamentations in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Micah. “Enemies” will come, not “Rome.” Rome treated positively through Luke-Acts (Luke 23:4, 14; Acts 10:2, 13:7, 19:14, 27:3, 28:18). This would be very surprising after 70 AD.
  2. Matt. 24:2, Not one stone (Isa. 25:2, Jer. 26:18, Micah 3:12, Ps. 79:1). True, temple was destroyed, but emphasis in war was on fire, not smashing buildings.
  3. Matt. 24:15-6, Flight of Christians was to Pella (Eusebius 3.5.5), not mountains of Judah.
  4. Luke 21:20-24, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded...” True, but main focus of siege was temple, which Jews transformed into an armed citadel. (cf. Deut. 32:35).
- D. Some details of Roman conquest do fit prophecies very closely
  1. Terrible distress; if not shortened none would survive. Matt. 24:21-2; Wars 6.8.5, 6.9.3-4.
  2. Temple defiled by Romans, burned by Jews, Matt. 24:15; Wars 5:13.1-2, 6; 6.6.1; Soldiers set up images, worshipped by eastern gate. They offered sacrifices and acclaimed Titus.
- E. Conclusions:
 

The prophecies of Olivet discourse are fulfilled, but the language is prophetic, not historical detail of Roman conquest. Therefore Gospels written before events of 70 AD.

*How would you respond to a critic who said that the Olivette discourse was written after Jerusalem's fall in 70 A.D.? Does it matter when it was written? If so, why? If not, why not? Can you support your position from Scripture?*

## II. Interpretation of Matthew 24

A. "Popular" approaches - how far off?

B. Questions and answers, 24:1-3

1. Disciples ask, "When will these things be? Jesus' answer touches who will be ready and how the disciples should prepare.
2. Disciples probably meant to ask one complex question, "When and with what sign?" Jesus answered it as two: 1) When will these things be? 2) What is the sign of the end of the age?
3. Two answers: Regarding the temple, 24:4-35, fulfilled in Jesus' generation (24:34-35).
4. Regarding the end, 24:36-44. See phrase "that day" in Scripture.

C. The main idea: No one knows when, therefore always be ready.

## III. The Fulfillment of Matthew 24

A. Fall of Jerusalem as a "type" of the last day. Partial fulfillment of Matt 24:4-14 by 70 AD.

1. False Christ
2. Wars
3. Famine and earthquake
4. Persecution
5. Love growing cold
6. Gospel preached in all the world

B. Matthew 24:15-28, 24:15-21 necessarily refers to fall of city; 24:22-28 is almost certain.

C. Proposed: double referent for 24:29-33

1. Fall of Jerusalem (and other great cities in Bible) as a type of last day
2. Final fulfillment at end of history

D. *That day* is unknown, therefore always be ready.

## IV. Three Parables about the Last Day and Living in Its Light (Matt. 24:42-25:46)

A. Thief in the night (24:43-44). Therefore be ready.

B. The faithful servant (24:45-51). Be ready, and reap a reward.

C. The ten virgins (25:1-13). Be ready, even though the master delays.

D. The talents (25: 14-30). While you wait, work to improve your master's kingdom.

1. The value of a talent, then and now
2. Varying gifts and fruit
3. Identical four-fold praise (automotive analogy)
4. The failure and the four-fold condemnation
5. Review: one theme with three variations

*How should these three parables impact your walk with Christ? How should they impact your relationships with your brothers and sisters in Christ?*