
BIBLE TALK

Welcome to "Bible Talk." This week we are discussing this question: **Does Matthew chapter 24 describe the end of the world?**

If you will take the time to read Mt 24 you can understand why people draw the conclusion that the end of the world is under consideration. This chapter speaks about:

- Wars and rumors of wars
- Famine and pestilences
- Earthquakes
- False prophets and false Christs
- The stars falling from heaven
- The sun and moon being darkened

But as much as all of these things sound like the end of the world, Mt 24 is actually a description of the destruction of Jerusalem which actually occurred in the year 70 AD. Actually, every one of the signs mentioned in Mt 24 has already come to pass and has already been fulfilled. Notice for a moment why I say this.

FIRST: Jesus Himself tells us that all of the signs which we just spoke of would be fulfilled during the lifetime of those people in the first century. Listen carefully:

Matthew 24:34

34 "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

When Jesus said, "This generation will not pass away till all these things take place," what generation was He speaking of? If we allow the Bible to speak for itself, it naturally refers to the generation that was listening to Him speak these words. In other words, those people listening to Jesus would see all these "signs" occur during their lifetime.

SECOND: The beginning of the chapter tells us what Jesus was speaking about. Notice again:

Matthew 24:1-3

- 1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.
- 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
- 3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Jesus was speaking about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the destruction of the entire city. When the disciples heard this startling prediction, they asked three questions:

- 1) When will these things be? That is, when will the temple and city of Jerusalem be destroyed?
- 2) What will be the sign of Your second coming?
- 3) What will be the sign of the end of the age?

Mt 24 addresses these three questions. The first question, "When will the temple and city of Jerusalem be destroyed?" was answered in verses 4-35. There Jesus gives signs to look for. The earthquakes, famines, and wars referred to things that were happening during those days of the disciples. These were general signs to watch for indicating that the fall of Jerusalem was approaching. The second and third questions, "What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" were answered in verses 36-51. There Jesus explains that no one knows when the world is going to end – only the Father knows this. Furthermore, Jesus said there would be no signs that the end of the world was approaching. He said:

Matthew 24:36-39

- 36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.
- 37 "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

38 "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,
39 "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so
also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

In other words, there was no sign that the world was about to end during the days of Noah. It caught people off guard. Everything was going along normal. People were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage and everything seemed normal. This is exactly what the end of the world will be like. There will be no signs given. Everything will be going along normally. People will think nothing unusual is about to occur.

Matthew 24:42-44

42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

43 "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

44 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Mt 24 is a warning to us today. First, we can look at history and see that Jerusalem fell exactly as Jesus predicted it would. All the signs occurred exactly as Jesus foretold. Since He was right about that, He must be right about the world ending one day. We need to learn a lesson and always be ready. Second, there will be no sign that the world is about to end. The Lord comes like a "thief in the night" and we must live each day as if it were our last day. One day, even if the Lord doesn't come during our lifetime, we will all die. "It is appointed for all men to die" (Heb. 9:27). When we die, that is like the "end of the world" for us. So we need to live and be always prepared. If the Lord comes again today, or if we die today, let us always be watching and praying and living as the Lord commanded us.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our web site www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.