

A Glimpse of the Future, Part 1 Matthew 24 & Luke 21

The Question

- Mt 24:1-3
 - ¹ “Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² ‘Do you see all these things?’ he asked. ‘I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.’
 - ³ “As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. ‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?’”

The Answer

- **Phase One**
 - Mt 24:4-5, ⁴ “Jesus answered: ‘Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many.’”
 - Mt 24:23-24, ²³ “At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible.”
 - Mt 24:6-7, ⁶ “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”
 - “nation” (Gk, *ethnos*): a people, a large group based on various cultural, physical or geographic ties
 - “kingdom” (Gk, *basileia*): literally, area ruled by a king; applies to any government
 - Mt 24:7, “There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.”
 - Lk 21:11, “There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.”
 - “pestilence” (Gk, *loimos*): any epidemic disease with a high death rate
 - Mt 24:8, “All these are the beginning of birth pains.”
 - Mt 24:9, “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.”
 - “be persecuted” (Gk, *thlipsis*): trouble, distress, oppression, tribulation
 - “nation” (Gk, *ethnos*): examined earlier; includes ethnic conflict as well as national
 - Mt 24:10, “At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other.”
 - Mt 24:12-14, ¹² “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

- **Phase Two**

- Mt 24:15-18, ¹⁵ “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.”
- Mt 24:21, “For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again.”
 - “great distress” (Gk, *megas thlipsis*)
 - *megas*: great in quantity, degree, or size
 - *thlipsis*: trouble, distress, oppression, tribulation
- Lk 21:20-24, ²⁰ “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. ²² For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. ²³ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. ²⁴ They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”
 - “trample” (Gk, *pateo*): (1) press grapes by squishing with feet; (2) harm by subjugation; (3) conquer, subdue by force
 - Mt 27:25, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”
 - Rev 11:2, “. . . the Gentiles . . . will trample on the holy city for 42 months.”
- Mt 24:22, “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.”
- Jn 16:33, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
 - “trouble” (Gk, *thlipsis*): trouble, distress, oppression, tribulation

- **Phase Three**

- Mt 24:29, “Immediately after the distress of those days, ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’”
 - “immediately” (Gk *eutheos*): without delay, with no time intervening
 - “distress” (Gk, *thlipsis*)
 - “star” (Gk, *asteres*): any celestial body (other than the sun and moon) visible from earth at night
- Lk 21:25, “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.”
- Lk 21:26, “Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”
- Isa 24:20, “The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind.”

- **Phase Four**

- Mt 24:30, “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.”
- Mt 24:31, “And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”
- Lk 21:28, “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”
- Acts 2:20, “The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.”
- 2 Th 2:1-4, ¹ “Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

- **Summary: four phases of the end times**

- Phase 1: Beginning of Birth Pains
 - deception, great signs & miracles, false Christs
 - famines, earthquakes
 - fearful events & great signs from heaven
 - wars, violence; ethnic & national
 - pestilences in various places
 - persecution, martyrs
 - many turn from the faith
- Phase 2: Great Distress/Tribulation (focuses on Israel) (labor of childbirth)
 - abomination in temple’s holy place
 - greater distress than any time in history
 - Israel punished, receives world’s wrath
 - Jerusalem trampled, Israel devastated 3½ years
- Phase 3: Cosmic Disturbance (birth of Lord’s kingdom on earth)
 - sun darkened, stars fall, heavenly bodies shaken
 - sea roaring & tossing
 - people terrorized by events
- Phase 4: Day of the Lord
 - sign of Son of Man visible, trumpet
 - Son of Man has power & great glory
 - nations mourn
 - gathering of the elect (“rapture” of the church)

Blessing

May God make all grace abound to you, so that *in all things at all times*, having *all that you need*, you will *abound* in every good work. (2 Co 9:8)