



Lesson 12 - When will this happen?

Matthew Chapter 24 - Verses 26-51

Lesson 12

Jesus is talking with His disciples and talking with them about false messiahs appearing in the future and warning them to not be deceived. In v. 24:24 Jesus tells them that the false messiahs will perform great signs and wonders. We do not know what those will be but it will be overwhelming enough to challenge many people to think that it is the real messiah. It is hard for us to think that we can be deceived like this but Jesus KNOWS us, He created us. There is a reason why Jesus is warning His disciples.

As Christians we enjoy the certainty of knowing that Jesus will come again because He tells us that He will. Jesus is not just telling us to beware of the false messiahs BUT that will be a sign of the end times. People will be eager to grab hold of anything that looks like it might be able to save them from the misery of the tribulation.

We covered the first 25 verses of Matthew 24 in the previous lesson and so we will pick up here with verse 26.

Matt. 24:26 - *“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.”*

Jesus knows that in the time of the Great Tribulation that there will be many deceivers who try to mislead as many as possible by duping them into believing the Messiah is popping up all over the place. Jesus tells His disciples - DO NOT BELIEVE IT. See, we have been warned ahead of time.

Matt. 24:27-28 - *“For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.”*

Now Jesus is telling His disciples and us as well that when He returns it will be OBVIOUS. It will be as obvious as lightning from the east - meaning that we see it in the west. Lightning makes itself quite visible to everyone in the area. Jesus’ return will be that obvious - to everyone!

Matt. 24:29-30 - *“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.’ **Then** will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”*

Study closely the words that Jesus uses to establish the chronology of events. “Immediately AFTER” tells us that there will be the distress He has already mentioned and AFTER that distress the sun will be darkened. This is repeated throughout the Bible.

Isaiah 13:10-11 - *“The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.”*

Ezekiel 32:7 - *“When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light.”*

Joel 2:10 - *“Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.”*

Amos 5:20 - *“Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light—pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness? Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light—pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?”*

Zechariah 14:6 - *“On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness. It will be a unique day—a day known only to the Lord—with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.”*

Zephaniah 1:15 - *“That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness”*

So there is widespread prophecy in the Old Testament about this special day when the sun will be blackened and the moon will not give its light. We can see it in the New Testament as well.

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.”*

Revelation 6:12-13 - *“I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.”*

Revelation 8:12 - *“The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.”*

So, if there is ONE thing we know to look for - this is it! THEN we will see the Son of Man in Heaven coming on the clouds of heaven and in His power and glory. This will bring about widespread mourning by all the people of the earth. Why will the people be mourning? You would think that they would not know enough to be concerned but the event will be so spectacular that even the total non-believers will not be able to ignore it. They will be sad to know that the end is near and it may be too late for them. Also, it is noteworthy that Jesus does not describe himself as touching the ground. He is coming in the clouds of heaven. Jesus' coming will make those of the world fear because their judgment is at hand. Remember that by this time the world will have been through tremendous chaos, disaster, and tragedy. Many of this world

will be blaming this on God and the Jews and the Christians of the earth.

Matt. 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.”*

Jesus is speaking of Himself as He is the one who will send His angels to gather His elect from all over the earth. At this point in time the Gospel will have been preached to the entire world - all nations and all people of the world will have had their opportunity to accept the Grace of Jesus Christ and the marvelous gift He gave mankind on the cross.

Matt. 24: 32-33 - *“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.”*

Ok, so now it looks like Jesus is backing up a bit to emphasize the events before His arrival. He is also switching His teaching style to using parables. He has laid the foundation for the events themselves and now He is telling them how to know when the time is near. The fig tree is almost certainly Israel. The time that Israel was born was May 12, 1948, but this parable does not say as soon as the fig tree is planted - it says when the twigs and its leaves come out. Fig leaves come out in the spring and this is what Jesus means by knowing that summer is near. The leaves fall out when it gets to October-November. It is hard to know exactly when the twigs were considered “tender” and the leaves came out, but it has been over 70 years so with God’s time table we should be getting close.

Matt. 24: 34-35 - *“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”*

The generation that sees the leaves come out is the generation that will not pass away and we do not know when that is considered to have happened. As Jesus tells us and we see it again in Revelation God will wipe out the current earth and Heaven and a new earth and a new Heaven will appear in Revelation 21:1.

Matt. 24:36-37 - *“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the*

coming of the Son of Man.”

Jesus is quite clear that even He does not know exactly when these things will occur. We have to think that He means that His earthly self does not know but once He resumed His rightful place in Heaven that He knows but while He was with the disciples, He did not know. It is interesting that Jesus ties this in with the days of Noah.

Remember that in the days of Noah, the wickedness of the earth was so great that humans had only evil in their minds and hearts all the time.

Matt. 24:38-39 - “For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

It is easy to get the picture that all the people of the earth were completely oblivious that disaster was almost upon them. It is getting easier today to see how many parts of the world are getting so far removed from God that they will have no idea about God and even when they hear the Gospel their hearts will be hardened against its message.

Matt. 24:40-41 - “Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.”

Jesus is underscoring the urgency and selectiveness of how this will happen. We will look at this in more detail when we cover the rapture.

Matt. 24:42-43 - “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.”

As Dr. Carter always said - “when you see a “therefore” you need to ask - what is the “therefore” there for?” Again, Jesus is emphasizing that since we do not know when this will happen, we must be ever vigilant so that we are always ready for whenever it happens.

Matt. 24:42-43 - “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an

hour when you do not expect him. “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?”

Matt. 24:44-45 - *“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?””*

We must be ready at any time because we do not know when He will return. Jesus has repeated this warning several times and every time the Bible emphasizes a point the more important it is. So, this point is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!!! Jesus starts another parable to help them understand His point.

Matt. 24:46-47 - *“It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.”*

He is encouraging His disciples and those of us today to be a wise and faithful servant. The reward of being wise and faithful is enormous.

Matt. 24:48-49 - *“But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.”*

This is a serious warning that people need to listen to - Jesus is alluding to the fact that it has now been almost 2,000 years since he gave this warning to His disciples. As we can tell it would be easy to start thinking that Jesus is not coming back or that Jesus did not really say He was coming back. If people take that approach then they start acting that way and will fall away - just like in the days of Noah.

Matt. 24:50-51 - *“The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Jesus is not pulling any punches on His warning. This is serious punishment - He will cut them to pieces and assign them a place with the hypocrites and the description of the pain is - weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is symbolic of how severe it will be

and it is far better to be one of the people who gets the reward.

The second coming of the Messiah will be unmistakable and will be accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders. Do not be deceived by amateurs pretending to be the messiah. Why does Jesus place such emphasis on not being deceived? He knows the power of Satan to deceive. He knows what is coming and how powerful the delusions will be. We have not seen it yet but Jesus wants us to be ready.

Lesson Goals - What did we learn?

