

# Jesus Talks About Jerusalem's Destruction and the End Times Matthew 24:1-28

by David Servant

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*Jesus gave His disciples a warning about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, and He also gave them two signs that would occur before His return.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 24:15

**Topics:** "End Times", "Second Coming"

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## Description

David Servant discusses Jesus' predictions about the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the signs of His return, and the end of the world. He explains how historical events align with these prophecies, emphasizing the importance of being prepared for Christ's return. Servant highlights the significance of the gospel being preached worldwide and the emergence of the antichrist as signs of the end times, leading to the great tribulation and Christ's ultimate return in glory.

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## Transcript

If you were giving Jesus a tour of your city and pointed out the city hall, public library and largest old stone church, and He told you that the time was coming when those buildings would be completely destroyed, you'd probably want to know when! That is how the disciples felt when Jesus predicted that the massive Temple buildings in Jerusalem would be destroyed. They knew that if the Temple was to be demolished, a building that took forty-six years to build, it could only be for one of two possible reasons. Either a highly motivated enemy would destroy it during a major war, or God would destroy it. In either case, to the disciples, such an event would surely be a sign of the end of the world. So they asked Jesus when this would take place, and what signs would signal His return and the end of the world.

We know from history that Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed about forty years later by the Roman army, and Jesus told His disciples what would happen immediately preceding that disaster so they could preserve their lives. However, only Luke recorded that portion of what Jesus said: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived. Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. Let those in Jerusalem escape, and those outside the city should not enter it for shelter. For those will be days of God's vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be fulfilled. How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for mothers nursing their babies. For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. They will be brutally killed by the sword or

sent away as captives to all the nations of the world. And Jerusalem will be conquered and trampled down by the Gentiles until the age of the Gentiles comes to an end" (Luke 21:20-24).

History tells us that Jerusalem was surrounded by Roman armies around A.D. 70, but for a short time they were drawn away to fight elsewhere, and that is when all the Christians escaped, obeying Jesus' words. When the Roman armies returned to besiege the city and destroy it, not one true follower of Christ was harmed during the siege, while tens of thousands of nonbelievers lost their lives.

Matthew, whose record we've read today, seemed to focus more on Jesus' predictions that related to His return and the end of the age. Notice that Jesus first talked about things that would not be signs of His return and the end of the world. False christs, wars, famines and earthquakes would be many, but they are not signs that the end is near. Neither are severe persecution, false prophets or rampant sin and selfishness indications that Jesus will soon come back.

However, Jesus did give us two signs that will occur within a short time before His return. First, when the gospel has been proclaimed to the whole world, the end will be near. As I write this, as many as half the people in the world have not heard the name of Jesus. However, that looks like it is changing as the church takes Christ's command to preach the gospel to every person more seriously.

The second sign is something that Daniel predicted about 2,500 years ago, what Jesus called "the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the holy place" (Matthew 24:15). We don't have the space to explore this in detail, but one day a man whom the Bible calls the antichrist will walk into the new Temple in Jerusalem and proclaim that he is God. Paul wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica about that man, saying, "He will exalt himself and defy every god there is and tear down every object of adoration and worship. He will position himself in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

That event will be a sign that the end of the world and Christ's return are very near. Many Bible scholars believe that, according to other scriptures, that event will precede Christ's return by three-and-a-half years. It will be a time of terrible distress for people in Jerusalem and around the world, what the Bible calls the "great tribulation," of which we can read in the book of Revelation. God's wrath will be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth like never before. At the end of it, Jesus will return in a way that no one will miss seeing Him, lighting up the entire sky like a flash of lightning does for only a split second. And although the world will consider that to be the end, we will consider it to be another beginning!

Q. The Jerusalem Temple that was destroyed in A.D. 70 has never been rebuilt. Does this mean that Daniel, Jesus and Paul were mistaken about the future antichrist walking into the holy place of the Temple to proclaim himself as being God?

A. No, you can be sure that Scripture will be fulfilled. Obviously a new Temple will have to be built before the antichrist can fulfill Daniel's, Jesus' and Paul's predictions. Therefore, when we hear that a new Temple is being constructed in Jerusalem, this will be a sign to us that the end is drawing closer. Think about this: It wasn't until 1948 that the Jews repossessed the region of ancient Israel as their homeland for the first time since A.D. 70, and it wasn't until a short war in 1967 that they repossessed Jerusalem as their own city. These are two relatively recent events that were both necessary before the Jerusalem Temple could ever be rebuilt.

Q. When God's wrath is poured out upon the earth during the tribulation period that the Bible tells us about, will true Christians be punished along with nonbelievers?

A. No, they will not. Some Bible scholars believe that all true Christians will be taken up to heaven prior to the tribulation period. This is called the "rapture," and Paul wrote about it in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. There is no doubt that it will happen; the only question is when it will happen. Those who think the rapture won't happen until some point during the tribulation period or at the end of the tribulation period agree that Christians will be protected from God's wrath upon the ungodly, as this is what God has always done in the past. They will not, however, be necessarily spared from the persecution of the anti-Christ.

Application: It sure is good to know that we have nothing to dread about the future. We will not have to suffer God's eternal wrath like those who don't follow Jesus. And any trials we face on the road to heaven are only temporary.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/jesus-talks-about-jeruselems-destruction-and-the-end-times-matthew-24-28/>

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