

Jesus and His disciples were at the temple when one of them comments on the beauty of the temple and how expensively it was decorated. Jesus responds with the prediction that everything they were seeing would one day be totally destroyed. The disciples were amazed that God would allow the destruction of the temple and so they understandably wanted to know more.

Verses 1-4: Jesus was sitting at the temple near where He could watch people drop money into the chests where offerings were collected when He noticed a widow dropping in her two mites (the smallest coins available). Jesus commented on her generosity because she gave what she could not spare while the rich people were giving from what they could easily spare.

5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 *As for* these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Matt. 24:1 says that it was His disciples, particularly one unidentified disciple (Mark 13:1) that was commenting on the beauty of the temple. The temple had been under construction for at least 40 years, having been begun by Herod the Great before Jesus was born. Over the years the temple had been adorned with beautiful stones and gold ornamentation donated by wealthy contributors. This disciple was impressed with the beauty of the temple but Jesus responded to his comments by revealing that the time was coming when the temple would be so completely destroyed that there would not be a single stone left sitting upon another.

7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign *will there be* when these things shall come to pass?

“And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be?” – Jesus was predicting the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 when the Roman general Titus would ransack Jerusalem, killing a million Jews and totally destroying the temple. There were rumors of gold hidden within the walls of the temple, prompting the Roman soldiers to totally dismantle the stones in order to find it. **“and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?”** – The disciples wanted to know when this would happen and how to recognize the signs that the time had come for them to happen.

8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

“And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived” – One of Satan’s favorite weapons against us is deception. He will attempt to draw as many people as he can away from the truth. So Jesus warns us to not be deceived by the lies of Satan or of those who follow him. **“for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ”** – There have been many throughout history that have claimed to be Christ and attempted to accumulate followers. The most dangerous and blasphemous one will be the Antichrist, who will proclaim himself to be God (2 Th. 2:2-4).

“and the time draweth near” – Another deception comes from those who claim to know the future or claim to know the date of Christ’s return. Jesus Himself said “but of that day and that hour knoweth no man” (Mark 13:32). We are not to be deceived by people who try to claim knowledge of the future not revealed to mankind in scripture.

“go ye not therefore after them” – We are to recognize the “red flags” when someone claims to be Christ or claims to know things that Christ said no man will know. We should recognize these people and resist their teachings.

9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

“But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions [instabilities; disturbances]” – There have always been wars and disturbances throughout history but what will be different leading up to Jesus’ return is that they will increase in frequency and intensity, like the labor pains of a woman in child birth (Matt. 24:8 “All these are the beginning of sorrows [labor pains]”).

“be not terrified” – Even though wars and commotion may sound terrifying, Jesus tells us to not be afraid and gives us two reasons here and later gives us a third (v. 28).

“for these things must first come to pass” – It is necessary for these things to happen before His return as they are signs of His return.

“but the end is not by and by [immediate]” – These things are only the beginning of what is to come since they will increase in frequency and intensity as the time of Christ’s return approaches.

10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

“Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” – The time leading up to Christ’s return will be characterized by “wars and rumors of wars” (Matt. 26:6; Mark 13:7) as many nations will be in conflict with one another. We seem to be witnessing an increase in wartime conflicts around the world today.

“And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences” – The world will see an increase in natural disasters before Christ’s return.

“and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven” – These fearful sights and great signs are quite likely the terror inducing events described in Revelation, such as the “stars of heaven” falling to earth (Rev. 6:13-14), the obscuring of the sky (Rev. 8:12), the sun being given the power to scorch men with fire (Rev. 16:8), and others. These events seen in the heavens that will strike fear into the inhabitants of the earth may begin before the tribulation but they will increase in frequency and intensity until the moment Christ returns in Rev. 19.

12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

Even before the events in Revelation, Jesus predicts the persecution that the apostles and Christians will have to face during the period between His departure and His return. They will be arrested and brought before religious and political authorities because of their association with Christ. Whenever this happens, it will be an opportunity for them to give a testimony for Jesus Christ.

Verses 14-19: When Christians are put on the spot to give a testimony for Christ, they are to rely on the Holy Spirit and Christ to give them what to say. Jesus also warns them that they will be betrayed by family and friends and that many will be put to death as a result of the hatred that the world has toward Christ and His followers.

20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

This event occurred in A.D. 70, but that event foreshadowed its ultimate fulfillment in the future when the armies of the world will gather against Israel to destroy the Jews at the end of the tribulation. A comparison of the parallel passages from Matthew and Mark (Matt. 24:15-16; Mark 13:14) suggests that this event is associated with the "abomination of desolation" prophesied by Daniel when the Antichrist will set up an image of himself in the temple and declare himself to be God (2 Th. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15). Perhaps the Antichrist will use military might to force the Jews to allow this desecration of the temple or else the later destruction is the result of it.

21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Jesus warns His followers that the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies signifies that the "days of vengeance" are upon them and that they should flee the judgment of God that is about to be poured out on Jerusalem and the Antichrist.

23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

"But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days!" – The danger will be so severe that it will be difficult for pregnant women or those with infants to flee since they will be hindered by their condition.

"for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people" – God's wrath upon Israel for their sins and their rejection of their Messiah will be poured out on the land and the people.

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations" – This judgment began in A.D. 70, evidenced by the fact that the Jews had been exiled from their land for two millennia until they became a nation once again in 1948. It will happen again during the battle of Armageddon but will be interrupted by Christ's return (**Zech. 14:2-3** "*For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle*").

"and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" – The "times of the Gentiles" refers to the period of time from the Babylonian exile until God restores them in His kingdom in the future. During this time, Jerusalem has not been under the complete control of the Jews. Gentiles exert their controlling influence even today with Muslims controlling access to the temple mount in Jerusalem.

25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

These signs refer to those described in the book of Revelation and Daniel and will culminate with the return of Christ. They will be the result of God's judgment being poured out on the earth.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

These signs will culminate with the return of Christ, which is described in the OT as being accompanied by great darkness and turmoil (**Joel 2:30-31** "*And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come*"). Christ's glory will truly stand out in the darkness. There will be no doubt as to Who He is.

28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Earlier Jesus said not to be terrified (v. 9) and here He gives us the reason why we should not be terrified when we see the things He's describing. They will cause the rest of the world to fear, but we can rejoice when we see them because it means that Christ is soon coming and that our final redemption will immediately follow.

Verses 29-38: Jesus uses a parable of a fig tree sprouting its leaves in the spring to illustrate that signs alert us to the fact that certain events are soon to transpire. Just as a tree sprouting leaves is a sign that summer is near, the signs that Jesus described are evidences that Christ's return is approaching. We are to recognize these signs and be ready.