

Jesus Predicts the Temple's Destruction

Key Verse: “Do you see all these things? he asked. Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”
—Matthew 24:2,
New International
Version

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 24:1-14

AFTER JESUS HAD announced to the multitudes and his disciples “woes” that would come upon the Scribes and Pharisees, he concluded with a pronouncement upon the Jewish nation, “Your house is left unto you desolate.” (Matt. 23:1-38) Then, as they were leaving the Temple, his disciples “came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.”—Matt. 24:1

When the group reached the Mount of Olives the disciples asked Jesus three questions: “Tell us, they said, when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming [Greek: *parousia*, meaning presence] and of the end of the age?” (Matt. 24:3, *NIV*; Mark 13:1-4) Jesus’ response began with a warning, “Watch out that no one deceives you.” This implied that various deceptions, both from individuals as well as from religious institutions and denominations, would arise throughout the ensuing age which would “deceive many.”—Matt. 24:4,5, *NIV*

Then Jesus explained that “the end” of the Christian age would not immediately take place, but that many other events such as “wars and rumors of wars,” as well as “famines and earthquakes in various places” would

occur prior to his kingdom being established on the earth. (vss. 6-8, *NIV*) Jesus further warned that because of believing in him, many of his followers would “be persecuted and put to death” and “hated.” He added that many would “turn away from the faith” and “betray and hate each other.”—vss. 9,10, *NIV*

This happened, especially from the 12th to 15th centuries. During the inquisitions which took place throughout Europe, thousands of the Lord’s followers were persecuted, tortured, and violently put to death. Therefore, Jesus spoke these words to warn and strengthen his followers who would suffer this, so that when such persecution happened, they would not think it strange. (Rev. 2:8-10) Jesus also warned that “many false prophets [teachers] will appear and deceive many people.” (Matt. 24:11, *NIV*) Indeed, powerful and popular false religious systems arose, teaching God-dishonoring false doctrines.—I Tim. 4:1-3; Rev. 2:12-15,18-26

Jesus continued, saying, “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.” (Matt. 24:12, *NIV*) Along these lines Paul wrote: “There will be terrible times in the last days,” because people will be “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, ... unholy, without love, ... not lovers of the good, ... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power.”—II Tim. 3:1-7, *NIV*

This is a test permitted upon each of the Lord’s followers, whether to simply “go along” with the worldly spirit and standards, or to strive in following God’s principles. Jesus encouraged his followers, saying, “The one who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matt. 24:13) We need to persevere and “take courage,” in spite of such tribulation, realizing that the end of this time of testing is near. (John 16:33, *New American Standard Bible*) Christ’s kingdom will soon be established throughout the earth and bring “great joy, which shall be to all people.”—Luke 2:10 ■