

Matthew 23:13 - 24:51

Day 1

Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees: Read Matthew 23:13-36

Hindering

1. What effect did the scribes' and Pharisees' legalistic system have? 23:13 What does the repeated use of the word "hypocrite" emphasize?

- The Pharisees would have claimed that their teachings were based on scripture/the law. How did they err? (See Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:9)

FYI: "*hypocrites*, a word that originally meant an actor and came to mean someone who was false...The Pharisaic system, a human system based on hundreds of laws, effectively shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces...any human religious system cannot establish a saving relationship with God." - Africa Bible Commentary (1160)

"The religious leaders kept people from the kingdom by obscuring God's word with human traditions, and by denying Jesus."
- David Guzik

Devouring

2. How did these teachers abuse their position of authority? 23:14

FYI: Some of the older manuscripts do not have 23:14. More conservative modern versions include it. Its content is found in Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47 which are not disputed.

devour widows' houses "Apparently they misused their responsibility as legal arbiters...and betrayed the financial trust innocent widows placed in them."
- Expositor's Bible Commentary

Proselytizing

3. How zealous were these teachers? 23:15 What did their instruction reap?

Digging Deeper

What did Paul say about this type of zeal and motivation?

Galatians 4:17-19

Romans 10:2-3

Blindly Leading

4. To avoid swearing by using the name of God (Exodus 20:7), what types of things did the scribes and Pharisees swear by instead? (Some oaths they claimed were binding and some not.) 23:16-19

- What titles did Jesus give the scribe and Pharisees in 23:16,17,19?

5. In spite of the “elaborate system of oaths” they had made up, what did Jesus say every oath included? 23:21-22 (Cf. 5:34,35)

FYI: “Oaths originally served as a person’s declaration of allegiance to the Lord rather than to idols (See Genesis 24:3-4). But oaths were being abused by those who argued that oaths were not binding if they did not included certain specific phrases. The Pharisees’ teaching enabled people to make oaths without any real intention of keeping their word. They could be let off the hook on the technicality that...they had not actually invoked the name of God. This was pure deceitfulness, hidden under a cloak of honesty.” - Africa Bible Commentary (1160)

Neglecting

6. What important matters did the leaders neglect? 23:23 Why? (See an example in 15:5,6.)
7. What does Jesus’ illustration say about their reasoning/focus? 23:24 (How did they do this later with Jesus? John 7:19)

Deceiving

8. How did the inside character and outside actions of the scribes and Pharisees compare? 23:25 Where did change need to begin? 23:26
9. What titles/phrases did Jesus use to describe their heart and mind in 23:27,28?

Digging Deeper
What does God judge?
1 Samuel 16:7;
1 Corinthians 4:5;
Hebrews 4:12

FYI: “Before Passover, it was the custom of the Jews of that time to whitewash the tombs in the city of Jerusalem so that no one would touch one accidentally, thus making themselves unclean.” - David Guzik

Murdering

10. What claim did the scribes and Pharisees make? 23:30
- On the contrary, what did their attitudes and actions indicate? 23:31,32
11. In conclusion, what titles did Jesus give them? What warning? 23:33 (Cf. 3:7; 12:34)

FYI: Fill up/Finish “Jesus prophesies about how these leaders will complete the rejection of the prophets their fathers started by persecuting His disciples, whom He will send to them...Why did Jesus utter such scathing rebukes? Because He loved these men. These men were the farthest from God and they needed to be warned of coming judgment. What Jesus really wanted was their repentance, not their judgment.” - David Guzik

12. What did Jesus predict about their future actions? 23:34 (See Acts 7:51; 8:2)

- How guilty would they be? 23:35,36

FYI: "Abel was the first person murdered in the Old Testament (see Genesis 4:8); Zechariah was the last (2 Chronicles 24:20-21)." - The Nelson Study Bible (1620)

"Both Abel and Zechariah were killed because their murderers could not bear to see their own sinfulness exposed. Jesus was to be the next in the long line to die." - Africa Bible Commentary (1161)

THE EIGHT BEATITUDES OF MATTHEW 5, AND THE EIGHT WOES OF MATTHEW 23

"THE BEATITUDES" (5:3-12).

1. The kingdom opened to the poor (v. 3).
2. Comfort for mourners (v. 4).
3. The meek inheriting the earth (v. 5).
4. True righteousness sought by true desire (v. 6).
5. The merciful obtaining mercy (v. 7).
6. Purity within, and the vision of God hereafter (v. 8).
7. Peacemakers, the sons of God (v. 9).
8. The persecuted (vv. 10-12).

THE WOES" (23:13-33).

1. The kingdom shut (v. 13).
2. Mourners distressed (v. 14).
3. Fanatics compassing the earth (v. 15).
4. False righteousness sought by casuistry [*the use of clever but unsound reasoning*] (vv. 16-22).
5. Mercy "omitted" and "left undone" (vv. 23, 24).
6. Purity without, uncleanness within. "Blindness" (vv. 25, 26).
7. Hypocrites, and lawless (vv. 27, 28).
8. The persecutors (vv. 29-33).

- Appendix 126 From The Companion Bible

Applying the Word: What does Jesus' anger with religious hypocrisy and greed (21:12) teach you about His compassion for the lost?

When has majoring on the minors ever caused you to neglect more important things? Why made the "minor thing" seem so important?

Day 2

Destruction of Jerusalem; Early Signs: Read Matthew 23:37 - 24:14

13. Why did Jesus mourn over Jerusalem? 23:37a

Digging Deeper
See Luke 19:41-44
for more about
Jerusalem's fate.

FYI: "Calling a name twice **Jerusalem, Jerusalem**, indicates strong emotion (see 27:46; 2 Sam. 18:33; Acts 9:4)." - The Nelson Study Bible (1620)

"This heartfelt cry is another way to see that Jesus didn't hate these men He rebuked so strongly. His heart broke for them. When we sin, God does not hate us, He genuinely weeps for us, knowing that in every way, our sin and rebellion only destroys our life." - David Guzik

14. What did Jesus desire for Jerusalem and hence all of Israel? 23:37b (See Psalm 17:8,9; 57:1; 91:4)

15. When will Israel finally recognize their Messiah? 23:38,39 See Romans 11:26,27

FYI: "**Your house** is variously interpreted as the Jewish nation, Jerusalem or the Temple." - Irving Jensen (99)

16. Why do you think the disciples were pointing out the temple buildings to Jesus? 24:1

- What amazing prediction did He give them about the temple? 24:2

FYI: "This temple was originally rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezra 6:15), but greatly expanded and improved by Herod. It was the center of Jewish life for almost a thousand years - so much so, that it was customary to swear by the temple (Matthew 23:16), and speaking against the temple could be considered blasphemy (Acts 6:13)."

- David Guzik

"The devastation of the temple by the Romans in A.D. 70 was so thorough that the precise location of the sanctuary is still unknown today."

- The Nelson Study Bible (1620)

5TH "OLIVET" DISCOURSE 24:4 - 25:46

17. What questions did the disciples ask Jesus? 24:3 Where were they?

Digging Deeper

See the description that Jesus gave about **Jerusalem's destruction** in Luke 21:21-24.

FYI: "To the disciples, the devastation of the city and the coming of the Messiah were part of one event. The disciple's questions should probably be taken as one question, though the fulfillment would come in stages." - The Nelson Study Bible (1620)

18. What early signs did Jesus give?

- 24:5
- 24:6
- 24:7a
- 24:7b

19. What instructions did Jesus give concerning these signs? 24:4,6

- 24:4
- 24:6

20. List the phrases that describe the timing of these early events? 24:6,8

- 24:6
- 24:8

21. What other things did Jesus warn the disciples about?

- 24:9 (See Acts 4:3; 5:40; 8:3; 12:1,2)
- 24:10
- 24:11
- 24:12

Digging Deeper

What does 2 Timothy 3:1-5 add to the description of these times?

22. Why do you think people will become so *hateful*, *lawless* and *cold*? (Cp. Genesis 6:5)

- What promise is given? 24:13

23. In spite of this persecution, what will happen? 24:14

Applying the Word: What does the promise that Christ will someday put an end to the evil of this world mean to you?

Day 3

Signs of the End Times: Read Matthew 24:15-31

24. What specific event will mark the beginning of the end? 24:15 (See Daniel 11:31; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.)

FYI: "Essentially, the **abomination of desolation** speaks of the ultimate desecration of a Jewish temple, the establishment of an idolatrous image in the **holy place** itself...In the vocabulary of Judaism of that time, an **abomination** was an especially offensive form of idolatry. Jesus describes a gross form of idolatry, **standing in the holy place**, that will usher in great destruction (**desolation**)."

- David Guzik

25. What actions should be taken when this occurs? 24:16-18

- How urgent and rapid will this escape need to be? 24:19-21

FYI: *"Then let those who are in Judea flee:* These are warnings specifically addressed to Israelites. **Judea, housetops, and Sabbath** all speak to a Jewish environment."
- David Guzik

26. What measure will God take and why? 24:22

27. What false claims will be made by many? 24:23,24 (Cf. 24:5,11)

- How convincing will these claims be?

28. How powerful will this deception be? Why does God allow this evil? 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

29. Why should believers know that these false claims aren't true? 24:25

- What instruction does Jesus repeat in 24:4,23b,26b? What does repeating this warning indicate?

30. What is another reason that believers should know that these false claims to Christ are not true? 24:27 (Cf. Luke 17:24)

FYI: "Christ's return will not be confined to a desert or to some inner rooms. When Christ returns, His coming will be so spectacular that everyone will know He has arrived."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1622)

wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered "This is a difficult statement. It was probably a figure of speech with the idea, "when judgment is ripe, it will surely come." - David Guzik [See Job 39:30]

"The proverb may be a colorful way of saying that things come to pass at just the right time...Do not be too eager for Christ's coming, or you will be deceived by false claimants (vv. 23-26). When he comes, his coming will be unmistakable (v. 27), in God's own time (v. 28)--a time when the world will be ripe for judgment." - The Expositor's Bible Commentary

Christ's Return

31. List the events that will occur after the tribulation. 24:29

- How will people react? 24:30 (See Revelation 1:7)

32. Read through the following descriptions and underline what you find interesting.

- Isaiah 13:9-10 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming...10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light. NAS
- Isaiah 34:4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree. NIV
- Joel 3:15-16 The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. 16 The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. ...
- Amos 5:20 Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light- pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness? NIV
- Acts 2:19-20 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 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. NIV

33. What will the Son of Man do at His coming? 24:31

Applying the Word: *How do you think we can keep a good balance between being aware of end time troubles and not being troubled by them?*

Day 4

Be Alert for His Coming. Read Matthew 24:32-51

Parable of the Fig Tree

34. What does the “parable of the fig tree” teach about the timing of the Lord’s coming?
24:32,33

35. How did Jesus emphasize the certainty of His coming?

- 24:33,34
- 24:35

FYI: This generation. It has been proposed that this refers to Israel as a nation; (i.e. that the nation will not cease to exist) or to the generation living at the end times (i.e. it will all occur within one generation), or to the generation living during Jesus’ time *if* they had repented. (i.e. The word *until* (“*heoos*”) followed by the Greek “*ai*” makes the statement conditional.)

36. How secret is the timing? 24:36 (What does this say about Jesus' understanding while on earth?)

FYI: "Mark 13:32 indicates that even Jesus Himself did not know the day and hour of His return. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He voluntarily limited His use of His divine attributes (see John 17:4; Philippians 2:5-8)."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1996)

37. What attitude/expectation will people have at that time? 24:37-39

- How did Jesus illustrate the suddenness of His coming? 24:40,41

38. What attitude does this call for? 24:42

Homeowner and Thief

39. Under what circumstances would a homeowner keep watch? 24:43

- How does that apply to the timing of Jesus' coming? 24:44 (Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3)

Faithful and Evil Servants

40. What adjectives describe the servant in 24:45a?

- What responsibilities does this servant have? 24:45b (What do you think that symbolizes?)
- How is he rewarded? 24:46-47 (What does this teach about watchfulness?)

41. What adjective describes the servant in 24:48? What attitude does he have and what does he do? 24:49

- What happens to this servant? 24:50,51 (Note: To "cut into pieces" = to cut asunder - implies separation, rejection)

Applying the Word: Can you think of a specific example of how the knowledge that Christ is coming again affects your attitudes and actions?