



February 28, 2021
“Signs of the Times”
Matthew 24
Pastor Gary Hamrick

In Matthew 24, Jesus spoke about different events that will happen just prior to his Second Coming. Many of the things we read in this chapter are happening in our day! And even though we don’t know the exact day Jesus will return, we can certainly sense the season. In today’s study, Pastor Gary teaches about the three phases of events that will lead up to the Second Coming of Christ.

1. The Temple

- a. It was Jesus’ practice when he was in Jerusalem at Feast times to teach in the outer courtyard of the Temple.
- b. At the end of each day Jesus and the disciples would leave the city, cross over the Kidron Valley, and find a place on the Mount of Olives to rest for the night.
- c. As Jesus and the disciples were leaving Jerusalem on this particular day, in the last week of Jesus’ earthly life, the disciples remarked about the Temple and its beauty.
 - i. **Matthew 24:1** - *“Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.”*
- d. The Temple in Jesus’ day was not the original one built by King Solomon; it was in the process of being refurbished by King Herod.
 - i. The details about the construction of Solomon’s Temple are found in **1 Kings 6**.¹
 - ii. The Temple was a remarkable structure measuring ninety feet long, thirty feet wide, and forty-five feet tall.
- e. Jesus’ response to the disciples must have caught them completely off guard.
 - i. **Matthew 24:2** - *“And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these*

¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/nkjv/1ki/6/1/s_297001

things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

- f. Under the leadership of Emperor Titus Vespasian, the Temple was destroyed by the Roman army in 70 A.D.
- g. The Jewish people have not built a new temple because they have always been under the control of a foreign government, that is until 1948 when Israel became a nation.
- h. At the time of the formation of the new nation of Israel the city of Jerusalem was divided.
 - i. East Jerusalem was under the control of the Jordanians.
 - ii. West Jerusalem was under the control of the Israelis.
- i. In the Six-Day War of 1967 the Israelis regained control of Jerusalem, except for the Temple Mount, which covers about thirty-five acres.
 - i. As part of the peace agreement at the end of the war, Moshe Dayan, the Israeli Minister of Defense, ceded administrative control to the Muslims.

2. The Disciples' Questions

- a. **Matthew 24:3** - *“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ ”*
- b. Pastor Gary said, “It is thought that when the disciples [heard] Jesus talk about the destruction of the Temple, they [thought it was] tied to the end of the age. So, they wanted to know when these things [would] happen... because that must mean that [would be] the end of the age. ... It’s unlikely that they understood that he was coming again, so what they probably [were] asking was, ‘When will be the coming of your power and your ruling?’ They understood he was Messiah, but their concept of the Messiah was that [he] was coming to put down the oppression of Rome, and [he] was going to establish his kingdom. ... [They thought that when Jesus described the destruction of the Temple, he was going to come into power.]”

3. Jesus Is Coming Again

- a. There are more than three hundred prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the first coming of Jesus.
- b. Pastor Gary said, “Related to his Second Coming, the Bible [has] more than three times as many prophecies.”
- c. The statistical improbability of one man fulfilling the 300+ biblical prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah is mind-boggling to say the least. Dr.

Peter Stoner,² Professor Emeritus of Science at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, calculated that the likelihood of one person fulfilling 48 of the 300+ prophecies would be 1:10¹⁵⁷ (that's an additional 157 zeros!).³ Well, how many people have lived on earth? The numbers vary widely; however, some have estimated that a good number would be 100 billion people. If you used this number for the prophecy fulfillment calculation, it would read 1:10¹¹ (that's just eleven zeros). Practically speaking, mathematicians and scientists aren't that concerned about a number that goes beyond 1:10⁵⁰, so, statistically, it's not possible that anyone other than Jesus could be the Messiah, and that would just be the fulfillment of 48 of the 300+ Old Testament prophecies. Dr. Stoner said, "Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world."

4. Jesus Is Coming Again - Phase One

- a. **Matthew 24:4-8** - *"And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.' "* (Emphasis added)
 - i. **Matthew 24:8** - *"All these are the beginning of birth pains."* (1984 NIV)
 - ii. **1 Thessalonians 5:1-3** - *"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape."*
- b. Deception by false Christs
 - i. In the 18th century there were two people who claimed to be Jesus.
 - ii. In the 19th century there were seven people who claimed to be Jesus.
 - iii. In the 20th and so far in the 21st century there are thirty-six people who claim to be Jesus.
 1. This group includes Sung Young Moon, Jim Jones, Charles Manson, David Koresh, Sergey Torop, and A.J. Miller.
 - a. Mary Luck, who is married to A.J. Miller, believes she is Mary Magdalene!

² Peter Stoner (Born June 16, 1888 - Died March 21, 1980) was Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College until 1953; Chairman of the science division, Westmont College, 1953-57; Professor Emeritus of Science, Westmont College; Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Astronomy, Pasadena City College.

³ For more information, check out the link for the entire book, *Science Speaks* by Dr. Peter Stoner. The specific information is found in the last part of chapter three. <http://sciencespeaks.dstoner.net>

- c. Wars and rumors of wars
 - i. There are currently eight hundred and fifty-one conflicts in seventy countries ⁴
- d. Famines
 - i. In 2019 there were eight hundred and twenty-one million people were considered to be food insecure, and, of that number, one hundred and forty-nine million were considered to be starving.
- e. Pestilences
 - i. In addition to Covid-19, there are many other diseases like antibiotic-resistant bacteria, cancers of all kinds, MRSA, and HIV.
- f. Earthquakes
 - i. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that every year there are more than twenty thousand earthquakes in the world, which is more than fifty-five per day.
 - ii. Since 1900, when records started being kept, there are on average sixteen major earthquakes in the world with a Richter scale of 7.0 or higher.
 - iii. In 2010 there were twenty-four major earthquakes.

5. Jesus Is Coming Again - Phase Two

- a. **Matthew 24:9-14** - *“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”*
- b. Persecution of Christians
 - i. The top five countries in the world where Christians suffer the most persecution includes North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, and Pakistan.
 - ii. There are more than three hundred and forty million Christians in the world today who suffer high levels of persecution for their faith, which translates to one out of every eight Christians. ⁵
 - iii. In 2019, there were 4,136 Christians who were killed for their Christian faith.
 - iv. In 2019, 2,625 Christians were detained without trial or arrested and sentenced to prison for their Christian faith.
 - v. In 2019, 1,266 churches or Christian-owned buildings were attacked.
- c. Apostasy

⁴ <https://www.warsintheworld.com/?page=static1258254223>

⁵ <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/2021-world-watch-list-report/>

- i. Apostasy is an abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion or departure from one's faith or religion. ⁶
 - d. Betrayal and hatred
 - e. Increased deception by false prophets
 - f. Increased wickedness
 - i. Pastor Gary said, "[This] means that [people] shun the law of God.
 - g. Decreased love
 - h. Spreading of the Gospel globally
- 6. Jesus Is Coming Again – Phase Three
 - a. **Matthew 24:15–28** “ *‘Therefore when you see the “abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone says to you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “There!” do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, “Look, He is in the desert!” do not go out; or “Look, He is in the inner rooms!” do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.’ ”*
 - b. Appearance of the antichrist
 - i. Pastor Gary said, “[When Jesus spoke of the ‘abomination of desolation,’ he was speaking about] the anticipation of the antichrist. There will be a charismatic, [world] leader who [will emerge] on the world scene to be a world dictator over [every nation and people on earth]. This antichrist will be opposed to God and everything about God. He will be possessed by Satan. ... [He] will proclaim himself to be God and demand to be worshiped. [This] also tells us that the temple will be rebuilt... unfortunately, it will be rebuilt to honor the antichrist. And he will set himself up there to be worshiped as Messiah. [The] eyes of many will be opened when he breaks a covenant of peace... halfway into a seven-year deal. [The] eyes of the Jewish people will be opened in particular to the fact that they have been duped because he [won’t]

⁶ <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/apostasy>

be the real Messiah. This person is coming onto the world scene, but again, I don't believe that we will be here because we will be taken; we will be raptured before the appearance of the antichrist, but he is going to come."

- ii. **2 Thessalonians 2:4** - *"[Who] opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*
- c. Great tribulation on earth
- d. The rise of more false christs and false prophets who will false signs and wonders
 - i. Pastor Gary said, "The Second Coming of Jesus will be visible and powerful, and every eye will see him, and every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. ... You don't need to worry that you are going to miss it. ...
 - 1. **Philippians 2:10-11** - *"[That] at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*
- e. **Matthew 24:29-30** - *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**" (Emphasis added)*

7. Which phase are we in now?

- a. Pastor Gary said, "Clearly we are in phase one and most of phase two. It's undeniable really. ... More Christians have been persecuted in the last century than in the previous nineteen [centuries] combined. ... When you talk about apostasy, there is a denial of truth and God's Word in churches and seminaries like never before. ... There's a hatred in our country, a vitriol, like I've never seen before. There's the increase of wickedness for sure! [Our government is legalizing sin like never before. People are celebrating sin like never before.] We are seeing also, in a good way, the Gospel spreading around the world at a record pace because of social media and technology. So, I think we are into phase two. I would never presume to put a date on when Christ will return. [The one who does that is a false teacher], so I would never do that kind of a thing. ... The only thing that separates phase two from phase three is the rapture of the Church. So, we need to be ready! ... [Are] you ready?"
- b. **Matthew 24:36** - *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."*

- c. [Matthew 24:44](#) – *“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Matthew 24:1-14](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Provide an overview of Pastor Gary’s outline and comments about the Temple and the disciples’ questions. (See #1 and #2 above)
3. Read and discuss Dr. Peter Stoner’s mathematical calculations that demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah, and that the Bible is very clear about the fact that Jesus is coming again!
4. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s outline and the associated Scriptures concerning phase one. (See #4 above)
5. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s outline and the associated Scriptures concerning phase two. (See #5 above)
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s outline and the associated Scriptures concerning phase three. (See #6 above)
7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s comments concerning the answer to the question, “Which phase are we in now?” (See #7 above)
8. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)