

End Time Events According to Jesus

Jesus warned the religious leaders that Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that Jesus would not return until they were willing to receive him. The disciples, who overheard the conversation, asked Jesus when this would happen. Below is a summary of Jesus' answer, based on the three accounts where his answer is recorded – Matthew 24-25; Mark 13 and Luke 21.

Like many prophecies in Scripture, this one makes a reference to more than one event. In Jesus' reply, there was a “near” fulfillment that occurred in AD 70, and a “distant” fulfillment that will occur at the end of the age (when Jesus returns). The two events parallel each other, and the first (destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70) foreshadows the second (events just before Jesus' return).

Matthew, Mark and Luke were written with slightly different emphases, and were originally directed to different audiences. Though all three accounts of Jesus' prophecy are accurate renditions of what he said, there are small differences between them. Luke sometimes focuses more on the way that the prophecy applies to the “near” fulfillment, the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem; Matthew and Mark sometimes have a greater focus on its application to the still future fulfillment, which will occur at Jesus' second coming. The same basic prophecy has application to both events.

I. Background

- A. Jesus warns of judgment against Jerusalem. Down through history, its inhabitants had opposed God's people; and they were doing the same to Jesus. Jesus won't return (to protect Jerusalem) until they are ready to welcome him as the one who comes “in the Lord's name.” (Matthew 23:34-39)
- B. Jesus tells the apostles that the temple will be destroyed. (Matthew 24:1-2; Mark 13:1-3; Luke 21:5-6)
- C. The apostles ask when these things will happen – the destruction and Jesus' return. (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7)

II. Jesus focuses first on how we must respond.

- A. Our #1 priority: Watch out for fakes! (Matthew 24:4-5; Mark 13:5-6; Luke 21:8)
- B. Bad things, such as war, are going to happen; but when they *do* happen, it doesn't prove that the end has arrived. (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9)

III. All kinds of bad things will happen, all the way to the end.

- A. There will be wars, ecological problems, etc. (Matthew 24:7-8; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10-11)
- B. There will be persecution of God's people, false prophets, people departing from the faith, etc. (Matthew 24:9-12; Mark 13:9; Luke 21:12)
- C. Those who remain steadfast will be saved. (Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13b; Luke 21:19)
- D. In all this, the good news will be proclaimed worldwide! (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:9b-13; Luke 21:13-18; see also Matthew 10:19-22 for a similar focus)

IV. Events that will lead directly to the end... and to Jesus' return.

- A. A sudden attack on Jerusalem – an attempt to annihilate Israel. (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14a; Luke 21:20)
- B. When this happens, flee for your life! (Matthew 24:16-20; Mark 13:14b-18; Luke 21:21-23a)
- C. This will bring about a time of great oppression, widespread death and destruction. (See next section.)
- D. Note: These verses apply to Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70, as well as to the events preceding Jesus' return in the future.

V. About this oppression:

- A. Note: Matthew and Mark seem to focus on Jesus' second coming; Luke seems to focus on AD 70, and omits some of the comments included by the other two.
- B. It will be the worst time of trials ever to exist. (Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:19; Luke 21:23b)
- C. Even those God has chosen would perish, if God didn't intervene; but he will do so, for their sake. (Matthew 24:22; Mark 13:20)
- D. There will be worldwide deception – people claiming to have the answer (implied by the word “Christ”), or claiming to be Jesus himself. Even those God has chosen would be deceived, if God didn't intervene and protect them; but he will do so, for their sake. (Matthew 24:23-25; Mark 13:21-23)
- E. When Jesus comes, you won't need to look for him; he will look for you. (Matthew 24:26-28) (See the next section.)

VI. God (Jesus) will step in and bring this oppression to an end.

- A. Implied: Jerusalem will be ready to welcome him! (Matthew 23:39)
- B. This will occur immediately after the great oppression. (Matthew 24:29a; Mark 13:24a)
- C. There will be catastrophic judgment that affects even the environment. (Matthew 24:29b; Mark 13:24b-25; Luke 21:25-26)
- D. People will suddenly realize that Jesus is coming; he will come and rescue those he has chosen. (Matthew 24:30-31; Mark 13:26-27; Luke 21:27)

VII. Our response to all this.

- A. When you see such things happening, you should look forward to Jesus' coming. (Luke 21:28)
- B. When these things start to occur, they will occur suddenly (or in rapid succession). You don't know the time, so be ready *now*. At that point, it will be too late to get ready – you won't have time. Examples – when the Flood came, or when a thief comes. (Matthew 24:32-41; Mark 13:28-32; Luke 21:29-35)
- C. Therefore, get ready NOW, and stay that way! Example – a servant who does his duties, vs. one who doesn't. (Matthew 24:42-51; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 21:36)
- D. Further warnings about those who will survive judgment, contrasted with those who won't survive it. Three illustrations. (Matthew 25)