



Week 1: The Beginning of the End

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INTRODUCTION – Kicking Some Left Behind

What's the BIG IDEA?

Before we can understand what the Bible says about the future, we first need to correct some misunderstandings about the past. For Jesus, the end of the world was about the end of religion, the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, and the end of sacrifice as a way to have peace with God. It was the end of the world as we know it.

Interpretive Principles...

- 1) Read it simply.
- 2) Read it Jesusly.
- 3) Read it in context.

Matthew 11:25-26; 18:2-3

DINE IN – The End of the World As We Know It

Matthew 24 // Mark 13 // Luke 21

Matthew 10:23, 16:28, 21:12, 23:36; Luke 19:41-44, 21:20; John 2:21

Some things to notice...

- 1) Jesus is responding to questions about the destruction of the temple.
- 2) Jesus repeatedly refers to it as “the end”.
- 3) Before it is destroyed, the temple will be desecrated.
- 4) Jesus offers specific timely advice for his generation.
- 5) False leaders will use false miracles to deceive many.
- 6) Jesus talks about it as the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man in the clouds.
- 7) Jesus uses apocalyptic language to describe a cataclysmic event.
- 8) Jesus says plainly that his predictions will happen within his own generation.
- 9) Jesus doesn't encourage setting dates – not even Jesus knows.
- 10) Jesus' emphasis is on how we live now, not how we predict the future.

Some questions worth answering...

- 1) Doesn't the gospel have to be preached to all nations first?
Acts 2:5; Colossians 1:6, 23
- 2) Doesn't Jesus switch to talking about the coming of the Son of Man *instead of* the destruction of the temple?
Isaiah 19:1
- 3) Why doesn't Jesus know everything if he is God?
Philippians 2:5-7

TAKE OUT – I'll Have That to Go Please

The end of the world that is important to Jesus – and should be important to us – is the end of the world of _____. Dramatically, God said NO to the way of sacrifice, sacred buildings, and holy leaders as our “middle-men” with God. Our challenge now is finding healthy ways to use buildings, organizations, structures, and leaders in our lives to help us express the love and life of God.

CONCLUSION – How's Your Love Life?

Matthew 24:12; Luke 21:34

For further research, check out our series on the Book of Revelation (January 2000), called “Revelation 2000”. (We weren't so creative in our series titles back then.)

Q & Eh? Text 647.330.2789 or email ask@themeetinghouse.ca.

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. Talk about your experience with Christian prophecy about “the end of the world”. Did you grow up in the church? Hear about it on TV? Read any (good) books? Seen any (good) movies? Hear any (good) preachers?
2. What is the strength of being a church that emphasizes prophecy and the soon return of Christ? What is the weakness of that same approach?

Look to the Book...

3. Read **Matthew 24**. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) See **verse 9**. Tacitus described Christians as “the hated ones of mankind”. Why do you think the early Christians were so hated? Why do you think we aren't? C) Why would Jesus tell people to “pray” in **verse 20**? Isn't every detail of prophecy settled and destined to happen as planned? D) How is **verse 35** a strong statement of Jesus' deity? In what ways this past week has your life reflected the eternal, enduring importance of Jesus' words? F) Why would **verse 36** be sometimes used to argue against the deity of Christ? How does it also argue for his exalted position?

So What?...

4. In **verse 12**, Jesus says that increased sin in our lives leads to our love growing cold. Have you ever experienced that trend in your life? How did you turn it around?
5. Read **Luke 21:34**. Do you tend to lose your focus on Jesus by partying in unhealthy ways, or by worrying in unhealthy ways? Talk about a practical next step you could take to become more “alert” to the reality of Jesus, in history and in your life today.

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