

HOME GROUP STUDY
7TH September 2025

Sermon – Matthew 24 v1-14 – Personal / Group Study and Reflection
Living with certainty in uncertain times

Matthew 24 v1-14 (English Standard Version)

1 Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2 But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” 3 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?” 4 And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. 9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away (or stumble) and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The following questions relate to the 8.30 and 10.30 services on Sunday 7th September 2025 (available on the church website).

Feel free to **pick and choose questions / sub-questions as appropriate** for your group's interest, preferred study style and time available. They are simply there to facilitate good discussion / reflection. Do **NOT** feel you need to go through them all.

(1) Icebreaker.

(a) To what extent do you think about Jesus' return and the end of the present age? Does it in any way shape how you live today or do you see it as some far-off event which you don't need to worry about and largely ignore?

(2) Understanding the passage and biblical prophecy. The disciples ask Jesus three questions (v3) - when will the Temple be destroyed; what will be the sign of your coming; and what will be sign of the end of the age. Jesus answers their questions in v4-14. But in answering them, it can be tricky to discern whether he is referring to their first question alone, their second and third questions alone, or all three questions at the same time.

(a) Which of the three questions do you think Jesus is referring to in v4-14 and why? In other words, are the wars, earthquakes etc., signs preceding the fall of the Temple, signs preceding His return and the end of the age, or both?

(b) If of interest, you may want to think more broadly about biblical prophecy and its fulfilment, and whether a prophecy can have both a near term and longer-term fulfilment where the first outcome foreshadows or is a type of the latter outcome. Think of some Old Testament prophecies which might be interpreted in this way.

(3) Destruction of the Temple. Jesus foretells the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple which was regarded as one of the wonders of the ancient world. It happened within 40 years in AD 70 exactly as Jesus prophesied.

- (a) Why would this prophecy have been so shocking and destabilising to his disciples and immediate hearers?
- (b) What is the significance of this event for us beyond being just an interesting historical event from 2000 years ago?
- (c) We do not have a Temple like the Jerusalem Temple. But we can have 'temples' which become the focal point of our lives and shape our identity. What might such temples be (e.g. addiction to social media)? And to what extent do they shape and dominate your life and keep your eyes off, rather than on, Jesus and God's Word?

(4) Signs of Jesus' return and End Times. Jesus gives a number of signs which will precede His return and the end of the present age. People have spent much time trying to map these against events in their own generation and predict when things will happen. See v36 for what Jesus says on this.

- (a) Jesus though is quite generic in what he says. He says there will be wars, earthquakes, famines, false teaching, persecution etc. But these seem to be ever-present in any age. Why do you think Jesus is generic in this way?
- (b) Jesus's aim in saying all this is not to scare and panic us. What do you think are the benefits of knowing these signs in the way Jesus presents them in terms of our understanding of and responding to the uncertain times we live in?

(5) Living in uncertain times. Jesus gives some quite practical advice on how we should live as we await His return and the end of the age.

- (a) What all the practical commands Jesus makes, and what he warns us to watch for and avoid doing (throughout v4-14).
- (b) To what extent do you live in this way? What changes could you make?

(6) Our hope. This might seem a gloomy passage. But Jesus describes the signs presaging His return and the end of the age as "the beginning of birth pains" (v8). In other words, while the signs may be hard to live through, they are birth not death pains. They presage something deeply joyful to come (see Revelation 21 v1-7 for example).

- (a) To what extent do you take such an eternal, long sighted perspective in how you view the world and your life today? How might taking a more long-sighted view impact you?