

▼ **The Beginning Of The End - Part 1**

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▼ **Read the Passage: Matthew 24:1-14**

▼ In response to Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the Temple, the disciples ask three things:

- When will the Temple be destroyed?
- What will be the sign of Jesus' coming (Gk. παρουσία / parousia)?
- What will be the sign of the end of the age?

▼ Before we can go further, we need to unpack each of these:

▼ "End of the Age"

- Timetable: "Present Age" (culminating in the "last days") → "Age to Come" (i.e. "coming age").
- The "end of the age" is the transition to the "coming age" when God's rule over the world has been fully re-established.

▼ Jesus' "coming" (Gk. παρουσία / parousia)

- The word "parousia" (translated "coming") is often used to refer to appearances by rulers.
- It is characterized by the subject population coming out to meet the ruler in order to escort him/her back into their city.
- Examples of this behavior include: 2 Samuel 19:8b-43; Acts 28:11-16

▼ The Temple

- The focus of God's presence with Israel and the place where heaven and earth meet.
- Historically, the temple was built by the King (i.e. Solomon) and the Kings exercised some authority over the Temple.
- Herod attempted to demonstrate his credentials as King by repairing, expanding, renovating the Temple.

▼ Jesus demonstrated his Kingly authority over the Temple by shutting it down when he drove out the money-changers.

- Matthew 21:12-13 - In the phrase "den of robbers", the word "robbers" is a translation of the Greek word "lestai" (λεσται) which, although it means "bandits" or "robbers", was a contemptuous term for rebels like the Zealots.

▼ Big Picture:

- God creates a very good world with humans as his representatives in it.
- Humans rebel, plunging the world into inevitable, eventual frustration and evil.
- God launches a plan to reclaim our broken world by calling Abraham (Abram) as someone through whom all nations would be blessed. Israel becomes the descendants of Abraham, the heirs of this promise, and the focus of God's redemptive plan.
- Israel repeatedly rebels and is ultimately exiled. Although God eventually returned them to the promised land, they never regain full sovereignty.
- Based on promises from Deuteronomy 30 and other passages, Israel longs for the re-establishment of God's reign (i.e. The Kingdom of God) through the King (i.e. the "Christ" or "Messiah"). They expect him to redeem and restore Israel and, through Israel, to establish his rule over the entire earth.
- ▼ Jesus comes as Israel's true King to inaugurate the Kingdom of God. Through his life, death, burial, and resurrection, he:
  - Brings Israel's history to its climax.
  - Embodies God's return to Israel.
  - Redefines Israel as everyone who follows him (i.e. the Church).
  - Launches the confrontation between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdoms of this world.
- The disciples are assuming that the destruction of the Temple will coincide with Jesus revealing himself as Israel's true King and ushering in the coming age in which Israel's sovereignty will be restored.
- ▼ **Read the Passage: Matthew 24:15-28**
  - Here Jesus warns his disciples about the eventual judgment on and destruction of Jerusalem.
  - "Abomination that causes desolation" - Daniel 9 (especially Daniel 9:27).
- ▼ **Read the Passage: Matthew 24:29-51**
  - ▼ There are important references to prophetic books here that must be understood if we are to understand this passage:
    - "sun will be darkened . . ." - Isaiah 13:10
    - "Son of Man coming on the clouds" - Daniel 7:13
- **Questions & Answers**