

Matthew 24:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Analysis

The disciples' question 'what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?' follows Jesus' prophecy of the temple's destruction (vv. 1-2). They conflated three events: temple destruction (70 AD), Christ's second coming (future), and the age's consummation. Jesus' discourse addresses all three, requiring careful interpretation to distinguish near fulfillment (temple destruction) from future fulfillment (second coming). The disciples assumed these were one event; history proved otherwise.

Historical Context

The disciples asked from the Mount of Olives overlooking the temple. They couldn't conceive the temple's destruction apart from world's end—the temple represented God's presence with Israel. Jesus' answer includes both near prophecy (70 AD) and far prophecy (second coming), teaching vigilance for an uncertain time.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing Jesus' dual-fulfillment prophecy help interpret the Olivet discourse?
2. What does Jesus' teaching about uncertainty regarding His return teach about watchfulness?

Interlinear Text

Καθημένου	δὲ	αὐτῷ	ἐπὶ	τοῦ	Ὄρους	τῶν	Ἑλαιῶν
as he sat	And	unto him	upon	G3588	the mount	G3588	of Olives
G2521	G1161	G846	G1909		G3735		G1636
προσῆλθον	αὐτῷ	οἱ	μαθηταὶ	κατ'	ιδίαν	λέγοντες	
came	unto him	G3588	the disciples	privately	G2398	saying	
G4334	G846		G3101	G2596		G3004	
Εἶπε	ἡμῖν	πότε	ταῦτα	ἔσται	καὶ	τί	τὸ σημεῖον
Tell	us	when	these things	be	and	what	G3588 shall be the sign
G2036	G2254	G4219	G5023	G2071	G2532	G5101	G4592
τῆς	σῆς	παρουσίας	καὶ	τῆς	συντελείας	τοῦ	αἰῶνος
G3588	of thy	coming	and	G3588	of the end	G3588	of the world
	G4674	G3952	G2532		G4930		G165

Additional Cross-References

Acts 1:7 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Matthew 24:37 (Parallel theme): But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 13:49 (Parallel theme): So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

Matthew 21:1 (Parallel theme): And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

Luke 21:7 (Parallel theme): And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Matthew 24:39 (Parallel theme): And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:27 (Parallel theme): For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Hebrews 9:26 (Parallel theme): For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Matthew 28:20 (Parallel theme): Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 17:19 (Parallel theme): Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?