

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD TEACHER'S GUIDE: LESSON 11

*[Assigned Reading: Matthew 24 & 2 Timothy 3]
[Themes to Teach: Signs of the End Times & the Rapture]*

The book of Acts concludes with the Apostle Paul living in Rome while awaiting an audience with Caesar around 63AD. Not long afterward, the Apostle Paul would be martyred for his faith, and the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed by Roman legions.

I. JERUSALEM & THE TEMPLE WERE DESTROYED: (Read Luke 19:43-44; Matthew 23:37-24:2)

1. Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, its temple, and the dispersion of the Jewish people.
2. Because they rejected Him and failed to receive their King, they would be chastised by God.
3. In 70AD the Roman general Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem, looted the temple, and scattered the people of Judah.

II. THE NATION OF ISRAEL IS RESTORED:

1. Many of the Old Testament prophets spoke of the scattering of the Jews and of the destruction and restoration of Jerusalem. (Read Isaiah 43:5-6; Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 29:14; Ezekiel 37:21-22)
2. By UN charter, Israel became a nation once again in May 1948.
3. Israel's reunification was an important sign of the end time season.

III. THERE WILL BE SIGNS OF THE END TIMES:

Matthew 24:3 (KJV 1900)

3 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?

The disciples, like many, were eager to know about the end of the world and the return of the Lord Jesus. Jesus gave them some very important truths:

1. No-one knows the day nor the hour.

Matthew 24:36 (KJV 1900)

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

2. However, Jesus teaches that we can know the season. To illustrate this, He gives them the parable of the fig tree.

Matthew 24:32-33 (KJV 1900)

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

3. Jesus said when you see “these things” you will know that it is the end time season. The Scriptures provide a list of signs regarding the end time:

(Read Matthew 24:4-14 & 2 Timothy 3:1-5)

- a. Wars and the threat of war. (Matthew 24:6)
- b. Famines, pestilence, and earthquakes. (Matthew 24:7)
- c. Many will be offended. (Matthew 24:10)
- d. False prophets and powerless religion. (Matthew 24:11; 2 Timothy 3:5)
- e. Iniquity and sin will abound. (Matthew 24:12)
- f. Breakdown of the family – (2 Timothy 3:2)
- g. The Gospel will be preached to all the world. (Matthew 24:6)
- h. Knowledge will increase. (Daniel 12:4)

IV. THE CATCHING AWAY OF THE CHURCH – ALSO CALLED THE RAPTURE:

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (KJV 1900)

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1. The word rapture means to be “caught up” or “snatched away.”
2. The bodies of raptured saints will be transformed.

1 Corinthians 15:51–53 (KJV 1900)

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

3. The rapture will be a sudden event unexpected by many.

Matthew 24:40–42 (KJV 1900)

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

4. The rapture is not the same as the second coming of Jesus. We will meet Him in the clouds, but He will not return to the earth at the rapture.
5. The rapture is the great hope of the church.

Titus 2:13 (KJV 1900)

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;