

## HANDOUT FOR “THE PRELUDE TO CHRIST’S RETURN”

### BIBLE STUDY Matthew 24:1-35

Jesus is predicting the End – something that could never be rehearsed – and He needs no rehearsal. But we do, if its reality is ever to sink in. One such rehearsal of future glory occurred in miniature at the Transfiguration (17).

Here in this passage Christ starts by telling His disciples about the “end” of something they would be very familiar with – the temple.

**1** Verses 1-3: It is vital to observe the nature of the disciples’ questions – two questions in one! What were they assuming?

**2** Now scan verses 4-21, as Jesus gives two answers in one. One is on the global and futuristic scale, the other on the local and immediate – with the division occurring at verse 15. Broadly, what are these two predictions about? Why does Jesus telescope them?

**3** Rome’s destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple, in AD 70 (verses 15-21) was itself prefigured and “rehearsed” in 169 BC by the desecration of Jerusalem’s temple by the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes – the “abomination that causes desolation” predicted in Daniel 11:31. What is Jesus emphasising by alluding to this familiar and terrible episode of Jewish history?

**4** The teaching is of an approaching catastrophe, the bitter memory of the past – both pointing to the march of history, referred to in verses 4-14 and 22-28. What is the general pattern of events in our own history that believers should be prepared for? Try and list them from these verses.

**5** Jesus then speaks of the final end itself (verses 29-35) – of the whole chain of events that would begin to have happened in the lifetime of those present (verse 34). How should Christ’s words affect our lives today?

### REFLECTION

**A** Read Matthew 24:3-14. Try to list the events and patterns foreseen by the Lord as taking place between His departure from earth and His return.

In what way do you think they apply to this generation?

**B** Why was Jesus not more specific?

Compare your findings with Matthew 12:38-42 and Matthew 24:36.

**C** Reflect on the attitude that we should have regarding Jesus’ warnings of world events.

How do His words affect our lives today?

**D** What is faulty in the desire to know the precise details about the Lord’s coming?

Compare your answer to Matthew 24:42 and Deuteronomy 29:29.

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### BIBLE CHECK

**In the Natural realm:**

Luke 21:11,25; Romans 8:22

**In the Social realm:**

2 Timothy 3:1-5; Jude 18; 2 Peter 3:3-4

**In the International realm:**

Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9-10

**In the Family realm:**

Mark 13:12; Matthew 10:34-36

**In the Personal realm:**

Luke 21:26; Matthew 24:37-39

**In the Spiritual realm:**

Matthew 24:4-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10

### KEY TRUTH

Before Christ returns, Christians may expect to see varying degrees of disorder in the world. This gives them an opportunity to evangelise and offer hope.