

When Judgment Draws Near

Primary Texts

Matthew 24:15–35 • Daniel 7:13–14 • Daniel 9:26–27 • Isaiah 13:9–11 •
Joel 2:28–32 • Luke 21:20–24

Memory Verse

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”

— Matthew 24:35

Lesson Objectives

- I. Explain why Matthew 24:15–35 refers primarily to the judgment on Jerusalem, not a distant modern crisis.
- II. Show how Luke 21:20–24 clarifies the “abomination of desolation.”
- III. Understand prophetic cosmic language as judgment language, not literal end-of-world imagery.
- IV. Recognize that Christ’s words were fulfilled exactly and that His authority was vindicated.

Thesis

In Matthew 24:15–35, Jesus warns of a real, local, historical judgment about to fall upon Jerusalem, using prophetic language rooted in the Old Testament to show that His word would be fulfilled exactly, His disciples must respond in obedient urgency, and His authority as the enthroned Son of Man would be publicly vindicated.

I. The Warning Was Concrete, Local, and Urgent

Key Verse: “When you see the abomination of desolation... then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains” (Matthew 24:15–16).

Jesus gave visible, first-century instructions: flee Judea, don’t go back for possessions, pray it not be winter or Sabbath. Luke 21:20 removes all fog — “when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.”

Questions

- I. Why does the command to flee prove this is not about the end of the physical universe?
- II. How does Luke 21:20–24 clarify the “abomination of desolation”?

Gem: When Christ says flee, the faithful do not theorize — they move.

II. The Great Tribulation & Cosmic Language

Key Verse: “For then there will be a great tribulation... the sun will be darkened...” (Matthew 24:21, 29).

The distress was tied to Jerusalem’s siege. Cosmic language is prophetic judgment imagery (Isaiah 13, Joel 2, Daniel 7), not literal astronomy. The Son of Man “coming on the clouds” is enthronement language from Daniel 7 — public vindication of Christ’s reign.

Questions

3. Why does context tie the “great tribulation” to Jerusalem rather than a future global event?
4. How does the “Son of Man coming on the clouds” prove Christ’s present authority?

Gem: If you ignore the prophets' language, you will mishear the Prophet who fulfilled them.

III. "This Generation" and Christ's Unfailing Word

Key Verse: "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place... My words will not pass away" (Matthew 24:34–35).

"This generation" means exactly what it says — the people alive when Jesus spoke. The fall of Jerusalem proved His word and vindicated His kingship.

Questions

5. Why is it impossible to remove "this generation" from its plain first-century meaning?
6. How does the fulfilled judgment on Jerusalem strengthen your confidence in every other word Christ has spoken?

Gem: When Jesus sets a deadline, history always meets it.

Word Study

TERM	GREEK / HEBREW	MEANING	RELEVANCE
Abomination	βδέλυγμα	detestable profanation	Defiling military reality in Jerusalem
Desolation	ἐρήμωσις	judicial devastation	Temple and city ruin
Tribulation	θλίψις	crushing distress	Siege of Jerusalem

TERM	GREEK / HEBREW	MEANING	RELEVANCE
Generation	γενεά	contemporaries of Jesus	Fulfillment within their lifetime
Dominion	יְהוָה	sovereign authority	Christ's present reign (Daniel 7)

Personal & Congregational Response

Personal: Where are you right now in relation to the enthroned King? Are you obeying, listening, resisting, or playing games with revelation?

Congregational: How will we guard the church against speculative systems and teach the next generation to trust Christ's unfailing word?

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