

***SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS*****Keep Watch      Matthew 24:1-51**

*"...but he who stands firm to the end will be saved." Matthew 24:13*

This week's passage is unlike any other we have encountered so far in Matthew. It contains prophecy and teaching that are complex and full of Old Testament symbolism. Some of the suffering Jesus describes may be general trials and persecution experienced by Christians throughout human history. But much of Jesus' prophecy here centers on two particular events: first, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans in A.D. 70; and second, the return of Christ at an unknown time at the end of the world. While these two events are separated by a large span of time, they are both characterized by turmoil, distress, and judgment.

**Day 1: Read Matthew 24:1-8.**

1. The temple was God's dwelling place on earth and the center of worship for the nation. What does Jesus say will happen to the temple? What do you think this would mean to the disciples?
2. What two events do the disciples ask Jesus about?
3. Jesus answers their questions with an exhortation to be on their guard. What events are coming that might deceive or alarm them? (vv. 5-7; 23-26)

**Day 2: Read Matthew 24:9-25.**

4. What does Jesus tell his disciples to expect? (vv. 9-12)

Why is he telling them this now? (Jn. 16:1-4)

5. What truths give hope to the believer? (vv. 13-14)
6. What does it look like to "stand firm"? (Phil. 1:27-28a; \* Eph. 6:10-18)

Is there an area in which you are struggling to stand firm? Pray and ask another person to pray for you.

7. The "abomination that causes desolation" (v. 15) is an image from the book of Daniel. The term refers to "something blasphemous, sacrilegious, some abominable object."<sup>1</sup> Daniel's prophecy was first fulfilled in 168 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple by building an altar to Zeus there and sacrificing a pig on it. Jesus' prophecy looks ahead to A.D. 70, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, carrying standards that were venerated by the Romans but considered blasphemous by the Jews.

What dire statements does Jesus make in verses 21 and 22 about the days when the abomination will appear?

\* The  symbol identifies verses for further study.

<sup>1</sup>Wright, Tom, *Matthew for Everyone, Part Two* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 118.

8. In the midst of these distressing times what provisions does God make for his elect? (vv. 15-25)

**Day 3: Read Matthew 24:23-35.**

9. The disciples have asked for the signs to look for his coming. (v. 3) What are they not to believe as signs of his coming? (vv. 23-26)

10. What is Jesus' coming compared to? (v. 27) Why?

11. What will happen when the Son of Man appears? (vv. 30-31)

12. Why will the nations mourn at Jesus' return? (Rev. 6:15-17)

**Day 4: Read Matthew 24:36-44.**

13. While Jesus gives the disciples the time of his coming, who is the only one who knows the exact day and hour?

14. What does the description of Noah's time tell us about the coming of the son of man?

What is the lesson from this for our time?

15. Jesus exhorts us to keep watch and be ready. How do we do this? (Col 3:1-4; 4:2; 1 Pet. 1:13-16)

**Day 5: Read Matthew 24:42-51.**

16.

	What Characterizes:	What lies in Store for:
The Faithful Servant		
The Wicked Servant		

17. A faithful servant is watchful and ready. In what ways do you need to prepare yourself to be ready for Christ's coming?