

Sermon Reflections

Thinking About the Future (Part 1) • Matthew 24:1-14

Summary: Adopt these four perspectives to sustain your faith until Christ's return.

Perspectives for perseverance...

1. Don't lose focus (vv. 1-2)

- How could an impressive structure such as the temple be destroyed? Yet, within 40 years, the majestic symbol of ancient Judaism would be completely devastated as Jesus predicted in verse 2. Imagine someone describing majestic "symbols" of our 21st American civilization being laid to waste ... what might be your initial reactions be? Hurt feelings of pride? ... perhaps even anger? Read Exodus 20:4-5. What might God think when too much focus and misplaced hope is given to these types of symbols?
- Read 1 John 2:15-17. What warnings and exhortations does John give us in these verses? How are these helpful in keeping a God-focused worship?

2. Don't be deceived (vv. 3-5)

- Jesus' response to the disciple's questions about "when will these things be" is a warning to every believer to test all claims of knowledge with Scripture - the Word of God ... read Acts 17:10-11. When trying to avoid deception and seek truth, what important lessons can we learn from the Bereans?
- Read John 4:23-26. Why is truth important to God and what is the relationship between truth and the proper worship of God?

3. Don't be alarmed (vv. 6-8)

- Wars and rumors of war: Very few of us have witnessed the carnage of war ... and yet, Jesus says that those living during the "end of the age" must not be afraid – it's all part of God's plan. Considering the current geopolitical uncertainties, how can we as believers keep our hearts from being distressed?
- Using your favorite Bible search tool¹, look up the phrase "fear not." What do many of the search results in the Psalms, Proverbs, and other books of Scripture say about God's character and our fear? In what specific ways can these verses be comforting and reassuring in times of distress?

4. Don't give up (vv. 9-14)

- In verses 9-14, Jesus gives us insight on what signs to expect prior to the end of the age. Do we see any similarities in the present age? Verse 14 concludes this section of verses with God's promise to do what? How does this promise encourage us not to give up under trials?
- Read and prayerfully consider Rev 22:16-20. What is the importance of preparing now (spiritually) for something that is supposed to happen at some point in the future? How can we be encouraged or encourage others in the body to prepare for the return of Christ?

¹ One suggestion when using the internet is Blue Letter Bible: <https://www.blueletterbible.org>