>>>>>>> Matthew – Lesson 46 <<<<<<<

1) Starting in verse 25, we read two woes. The first we discussed last time but I am going to read it because the two are very closely related.

Matthew 23:25–28(ESV)

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. 28 *So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

2) In the first of the two woes, Jesus did not directly compare them to the corrupt cup and dish but in the second, He actually does compare them to the whitewashed tombs.
   a) One cannot help but see the connection between these two woes.
      i) In the first, they are admonished to clean the inside which will then be truly reflected on the outside.
      ii) In the second, Jesus tells them plainly that they appear clean on the outside (like the cup and the tomb) but inwardly they are "full of greed and self-indulgence" and "full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."
3) So, with that direct comparison, Jesus really hits the nail on the head.
   a) Their whole goal in everything they did was to look more righteous than others.
   b) Yet, inside they were devoid of love and caring for anyone but themselves.

Could Jesus ever say the same things to us? Why?

a) I would have to say yes – when we let ourselves get away from God's heart and become our old selfish selves.
   i) I say old selfish selves because we are to have done away with all that, right?

1) Ok, moving on …

Matthew 23:29-36(ESV)

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, 30 saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' 31 Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. 33 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? 34 Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, 35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you

murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. **36** Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

2) The final "woe" condemns the scribes and Pharisees for being sons of those who were murdering the prophets.

3) At this time in Israel's history, the graves of saints, prophets, and martyrs were revered.

   a) To show this, people would even decorate these graves if the person seemed worthy of such honor.

   b) This was ironic because these martyrs had, in most cases, been killed by the religious establishment of the day.

   c) Jesus pointed out that they were no different from their ancestors.

4) Jesus explained, "Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets."

   a) In these words, Jesus showed that the religious leaders were no different from their ancestors who had killed God's messengers.

      i) The fact of the matter is they were plotting to kill another messenger from God—the Messiah himself.

   b) "Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors" means, "Go ahead and finish what your ancestors started by killing me too."

      i) Stuart Weber comments here basically the same thing … "to keep on sinning, and so prove yourselves to be just as evil as they are." This was not only a prophecy but a pronouncement of judgment.[49]

   c) Weber's comment about prophecy is born out in the very next verse.

34 Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town … BHGNT – Because of this behold, I am sending you …

   d) Jesus' "fill up the measure" language appears to deliberately invoke this older biblical pattern and apply it to His own generation.

   e) The people of Jesus' generation said they would not act as their fathers did in killing the prophets whom God had sent.

   f) Yet, they were about to kill the Messiah himself.

   g) And, as we know, they did all of these things to the disciples and apostles and many other leaders of the early church.

   h) So, we can see clearly why they would become guilty of all the righteous blood shed through the centuries.

5) Looking at vers 36, Jesus talks about all these things coming to pass in this generation.

   a) He appears to be talking about what He said in verses 34 and 35.

   b) Bruce Barton comments on this:

[49] Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 380.

The current religious establishment would be guilty of all of their deaths, for they would be guilty of murdering the Messiah and would face judgment for that act.[50]

6) I have included in the notes a very interesting list of the 12 apostles and how they "traditionally" died.

   a) I must emphasize not all of this is information is substantiated historically – some are traditions with no real factual or historical proof – interesting, nonetheless.

~~~ Side Note: Deaths of the 12 Apostles ~~~

The Twelve Apostles

Apostle	Traditionally reported death	Historical confidence
Peter	Crucified in Rome, traditionally **upside down** at his own request	**Strong** evidence for martyrdom in Rome; upside-down detail is later tradition
Andrew	Crucified at Patras in Greece, traditionally on an X-shaped cross	Early tradition, but details uncertain
James son of Zebedee	**Executed by the sword** under Herod Agrippa I, around **AD 44**	**Very strong** — explicitly recorded in Acts 12:1–2
John son of Zebedee	Died of old age at Ephesus, traditionally after exile on Patmos (Romans)	**Reasonably strong** early tradition that he was not martyred
Philip	Traditionally crucified or otherwise executed at Hierapolis in Phrygia	Uncertain; competing traditions
Bartholomew	Traditionally flayed alive and then beheaded or crucified in Armenia	Very late and conflicting traditions
Matthew	Traditionally martyred in Ethiopia, Persia, or elsewhere	Highly uncertain; multiple traditions
Thomas	Traditionally speared to death near Mylapore, India	Relatively strong early Eastern tradition for his mission and martyrdom in India, though details vary
James son of Alphaeus	Traditionally stoned or beaten to death in Jerusalem	Uncertain; confused with other Jameses in some traditions
Thaddaeus/Jude	Traditionally martyred in Persia, often with a club or axe	Uncertain; later traditions
Simon the Zealot	Traditionally sawed in half, crucified, or martyred in Persia	Extremely uncertain; several contradictory accounts

[50] Bruce B. Barton, *Matthew*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 460.

Apostle	Traditionally reported death	Historical confidence
Matthias *(replacement for Judas)*	Traditionally stoned and beheaded in Jerusalem, or martyred in Ethiopia	Uncertain; conflicting traditions

1) To conclude this chapter, we have Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem.

Matthew 23:37–39(ESV)

Lament over Jerusalem

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who
are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen
gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is
left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say,
'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' "

2) Jesus' opening statement in this passage says that He is possibly still thinking of what the religious establishment had done and would continue to do.
3) Jerusalem was the most important city in Israel.
   a) It was where the temple, the house of God himself was located.
   b) So much could be said for its importance.
   c) And, of course, this was the Passover and virtually all the people of Israel had come to the city for the event.
4) Jesus wanted to gather the nation and bring it to repentance, but the people were not willing.
   a) Here we see the depth of Jesus' feelings for lost people and the city that would in a very few years, be destroyed.
5) Perhaps, even beyond that, Jesus is not only speaking personally as the Messiah, but also, He is doing so as the divine Son.
   a) Throughout the Old Testament, there is imagery of God sheltering His people under His wings.
   b) The desire to gather Jerusalem under His wings is Jesus' own desire.
      i) Yet the Old Testament imagery of God sheltering His people under His wings strongly suggests that Jesus is also identifying Himself with the divine role of Israel's protector and shepherd.
      ii) And that makes the final phrase – "and you were not willing," all the more impactful.
      iii) The One who came to gather them was the very One Israel had been waiting for, yet Jerusalem refused to be gathered by Him.
6) I am sure that Jesus did not like denouncing the religious establishment He had come to save, but they would not let him!
7) It is perhaps a bit of irony that in the final comment of this passage – His effectual good-bye – He echoes the words of the crowds who had welcomed him into Jerusalem not too many days before.

a) Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

8) This next passage begins what is known as the Mount Olivet Discourse …

Matthew 24:1–3(ESV)

Jesus Foretells Destruction of the Temple

24 Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. **2** But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

9) We don't really know if the disciples heard the last things Jesus said about Jerusalem – likely, they did not.

a) We do know that He is now leaving the temple area and, I think perhaps by inference, the disciples were approaching Him from somewhere else – pure conjecture of course.

10) One way or the other, if one thinks about it, to the disciples, this must have really been a strange if not disturbing statement.

a) They were simply admiring the temple and then, unexpectedly, Jesus makes this ominous and strange prediction.

1) Well, with no other conversation that we know of, and given a while to think, as they went along, they come to the Mount of Olives.

2) The disciples decide to venture to ask when what he had just said might take place …

Signs of the End of the Age

3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

3) We must note here that the question the disciples asks actually contains three parts:

a) They wanted to know when this would take place, meaning the destruction of the temple.

b) But they also wanted to know what would be the sign of his coming?

c) And third, the end of the age?

4) The parallels in Mark and Luke contain only the first question and a request for a sign.

Mark 13:4 (ESV)

4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"

Luke 21:7 (ESV)

7 And they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"

a) The sign "when all these things are about to be accomplished" might be projected to Jesus' return but it is not explicit.

5) Current scholarship generally falls into three broad positions on how exactly Jesus answers this question or questions in the passages that follow.

6) ***First Position*** – ***Jesus answers both questions (minority but significant).***

   a) The common outline for this group is:

      i) 24:4-35 – destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE)

      ii) 24:36 and 25:46 – Second Coming and final judgment.

   b) Among the scholars who promote this view are D. A. Carson, Craig Blomberg, Craig Keener.

7) ***Second Position*** – ***The disciples thought they were asking one question (majority view).***

   a) The argument here stems from the assumption that the disciples thought that:

      i) The destruction of the Temple, the Messiah's return, and the end of the age would all occur together.

   b) Stated simply, in their perspective these were one event.

   c) Among the scholars who promote this view are R. T. France, N. T. Wright, and Dale C. Allison Jr.

8) ***Third Position*** – ***Jesus answers only the first question (prevalent among many critical scholars).***

   a) In this view the "coming" language refers primarily to Jesus' vindication and royal judgment, not to the final return at the end of history.

      i) Here, "coming" (παρουσία) is understood largely in terms of the imagery of Book of Daniel 7.

      ii) In that passage, the Son of Man comes to the Ancient of Days to receive authority rather than descending to earth.

      iii) Thus, Jesus is primarily answering the question about the Temple, while employing apocalyptic language that later Christians associated with the Second Coming.

   b) Among these scholars are N. T. Wright, R. T. France, and Tom Holmén.

9) Now, for me personally, I fall in primarily the second and a little in the third categories.

   a) I think the disciples were asking one question with three parts, not multiple questions.

   b) Second, I agree with the stand that Jesus really only answers part of their intended "one question" and that the apocalyptic language may or may not have been understood by the disciples in the same way we might.

10) I have included a set of references in the notes for this lesson that you can use to explore these three perspectives more fully if you desire.

~~~ Side Note: Additional Information from Questions to ChatGPT ~~~

There are two questions the precede the Olivet Discourse. In current scholarly opinion, does Jesus answer both questions?

This is one of the central questions in the interpretation of the Olivet Discourse, and the answer depends on how scholars understand the relationship between the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the end of the age.

The two (or three) questions appear most clearly in Gospel of Matthew 24:3:

"Tell us,

1. **When will these things be?**
2. **What will be the sign of your coming?**
3. **And of the end of the age?**"

The parallels in Gospel of Mark 13:4 and Gospel of Luke 21:7 contain only the first question and the request for a sign:

- "When will these things be?"
- "What will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"

This suggests that Matthew has expanded the disciples' question, perhaps because of his theological emphasis.

The scholarly issue

Current scholarship generally falls into three broad positions.

1. Jesus answers both questions (minority but significant)

Many evangelical scholars argue that Jesus first discusses the destruction of Jerusalem and then shifts to the Second Coming.

A common outline is:

- 24:4–35 → destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE)
- 24:36–25:46 → Second Coming and final judgment

The transition is usually located at:

"But concerning that day and hour no one knows..." (24:36)

Scholars in this camp include:

- D. A. Carson
- Craig Blomberg
- Craig Keener (with some nuance)

Their argument is that Jesus intentionally addresses both questions, although they overlap in the discourse.

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2. The disciples thought they were asking one question (majority view)

Many contemporary critical scholars argue that the disciples assumed:

- destruction of the Temple,
- Messiah's coming,
- end of the age

would all occur together.

From their perspective these were not separate events.

Jesus therefore answers the disciples as they understood the question, but in doing so distinguishes events that they had conflated.

This is probably the dominant scholarly position today.

Representatives include:

- R. T. France
- N. T. Wright
- Dale C. Allison Jr.

France, for example, argues that the disciples naturally assumed that the destruction of the Temple would coincide with the consummation of history.

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3. Jesus primarily answers only the first question (prevalent among many critical scholars)

Another influential position is that almost the entire discourse concerns the destruction of Jerusalem.

According to this reading:

- the "coming" language refers primarily to Jesus' vindication and royal judgment,
- not to the final return at the end of history.

This is associated with scholars such as:

- N. T. Wright (strongly emphasizes this)
- R. T. France (though not exclusively)
- Tom Holmén (in aspects of his work)

Here, "coming" (παρουσία) is understood largely in terms of the imagery of Book of Daniel 7, where the Son of Man comes **to** the Ancient of Days to receive authority rather than descending to earth.

Thus, Jesus is primarily answering the question about the Temple, while employing apocalyptic language that later Christians associated with the Second Coming.

Where is the current scholarly consensus?

If we speak broadly of New Testament scholarship today:

- **Most scholars believe the disciples intended these questions as one complex question**, since they assumed the Temple's destruction and the end of the age would coincide.
- **Most scholars also believe Jesus intentionally separates those expectations**, at least to some degree.
- **There is much less agreement on exactly where the discourse shifts from Jerusalem to the final consummation—or whether it shifts at all.**

A rough estimate of contemporary opinion might be:

- **Majority:** Jesus addresses the destruction of Jerusalem extensively while also reshaping the disciples' mistaken assumptions.

- **Substantial evangelical minority:** Jesus clearly answers both questions, with a transition around Matthew 24:36.
- **Another significant critical group:** Most or all of the discourse concerns Jerusalem and the vindication of Jesus rather than the final Second Coming.

An observation from comparing the Synoptic Gospels

One reason many scholars hesitate to see two sharply distinct answers is that only Matthew explicitly separates the questions into "your coming" and "the end of the age." In both Mark and Luke, the disciples simply ask when the Temple's destruction will occur and what sign will precede it. This has led many scholars to conclude that Matthew has framed the question in a way that reflects the concerns of the early church after the resurrection, while preserving Jesus' discourse about the Temple.

Given your interest in scholarly consensus and historical context, the next step would be to compare how **R. T. France, N. T. Wright, D. A. Carson, and Dale Allison** each outline Matthew 24. They all agree the discourse is rooted in the Temple's destruction, but they differ significantly on where—and whether—Jesus turns to the final Second Coming. That comparison highlights the main interpretive divide in contemporary scholarship.

Below are simplified outlines of Gospel of Matthew 24 according to four influential scholars. Notice that they agree on many individual passages but disagree on **what event those passages describe**.

Passage	R. T. France	N. T. Wright	D. A. Carson	Dale C. Allison Jr.
24:1–3	Setting and disciples' question	Same	Same	Same
24:4–14	Events leading to Jerusalem's fall	Jerusalem before AD 70	General characteristics of the age leading toward Jerusalem	Both immediate and typological; intentionally broad
24:15–28	Siege and destruction of Jerusalem	Jerusalem under Roman invasion	Primarily Jerusalem	Primarily Jerusalem
24:29–31	Apocalyptic description of Jerusalem's judgment; "coming" = vindication of Son of Man	Symbolic language for Jesus' vindication after Jerusalem falls	Literal Second Coming	Deliberately ambiguous; likely both judgment on Jerusalem and foreshadowing final coming
24:32–35	Jerusalem will occur within "this generation"	Same	Same	Same
24:36–44	Shift to unknown future consummation	Shift to unknown final return	Definite shift to Second Coming	Shift to final coming, though connected to previous section
24:45–51	Be watchful for Christ's return	Same	Same	Same

1. France's Outline

France's commentary is perhaps the clearest representative of the modern historical reading.

24:4–35

- Entirely about the destruction of Jerusalem.
- "Coming of the Son of Man" is interpreted through Book of Daniel 7 as Jesus' vindication and enthronement, not His bodily return.

24:36–25:46

- Now Jesus turns to the future Second Coming.
- The emphasis becomes readiness because its timing is unknown.

Key transition: 24:36.

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2. Wright's Outline

Wright is even more emphatic.

24:4–35

- Almost everything concerns the catastrophe of AD 70.
- The cosmic language is standard Jewish prophetic symbolism describing God's judgment on nations.

For Wright:

"The coming of the Son of Man" is the Son of Man coming **to God**, not from heaven to earth.

Only after verse 36 does Jesus begin discussing His future return.

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3. Carson's Outline

Carson represents a classic evangelical approach.

24:4–28

- Destruction of Jerusalem.

24:29–31

- Actual visible Second Coming.

He argues the cosmic signs should be taken much more literally than France or Wright do.

24:32–35

- Difficult passage.
- "This generation" refers primarily to the generation witnessing the preceding events.

24:36 onward

- Clearly the Second Coming.

Thus Carson believes Jesus genuinely answers **both** of the disciples' questions.

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4. Allison's Outline

Allison is much less rigid.

He believes Matthew intentionally blends:

- Jerusalem,

- the final judgment,
- and recurring patterns of history.

His outline is roughly:

24:4–28

- Jerusalem,
- but also a pattern repeated throughout church history.

24:29–31

- Deliberately layered.
- Refers both to Jerusalem's judgment and the ultimate coming of Christ.

24:36 onward

- Final consummation.

Allison often describes biblical prophecy as having a **telescoping** or **multiple-horizon** character, where a near event anticipates a greater future fulfillment.

Where they agree

Despite their differences, these four scholars agree on several important points:

- Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple.
- Much of Matthew 24 refers to events leading up to AD 70.
- Verse 36 marks a significant literary transition ("But concerning that day and hour...").
- The latter part of the discourse emphasizes watchfulness because the exact timing is unknown.

Where they differ

The principal disagreement centers on **Matthew 24:29–31**:

- **France:** Jerusalem only (using apocalyptic imagery).
- **Wright:** Jerusalem only (Jesus' vindication, not His bodily return).
- **Carson:** The visible Second Coming.
- **Allison:** Both—a historical judgment on Jerusalem that also foreshadows the final return.

This section is widely regarded as the pivotal interpretive crux of the Olivet Discourse, and how a scholar understands verses 29–31 largely determines how they interpret the discourse as a whole.

~~~ END - Side Note ~~~

1) Just a couple more comments here before I begin looking at the discourse.
   a) First, we must always remember Jesus is speaking to the disciples and answering their question.
   b) Second and related, please take special note of the “you” pronoun used throughout this passage.
      i) I believe this is significant because it is placing the disciples as being the ones who will witness or be affected by all that Jesus is saying in His answer.
      ii) When we reach verses 29–31 we will see a shift to “they” indicating, that the disciples may not be the only affected persons.

c) Finaly, there are really three sections to this discourse:

i) **Verses 4-14** – Jesus describes the circumstances and challenges His disciples will face in the period leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

ii) **Verses 15-28** – Jesus describes the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the events surrounding it.

(1) This begins with the quote from Daniel, "when you see the abomination of desolation."

iii) **Verses 29-31** – Finally, as N.T. Wright describes it – Jesus uses symbolic language for His vindication after Jerusalem falls.

(1) Vindication here is simply meaning that all that Jesus had prophesied had come to pass and that in itself proclaims again His Sonship, and Messiahship.

iv) We will be dealing with each of these sections separately.