

BIG IDEA: We're to keep our eyes on Jesus, the center of our faith.**1) INTRO**

- Deep Impact/Armageddon – Y2K scare –the end of the world (as we know it)...fascination w/ end of the world

- JC will return – how are we supposed to live until then?
 - How to live as followers of JC until his 2nd coming
- Now in one of the most disputed ch in Bible
 - Many diff ideas of interpretation
 - Charts & graphs, who Antichrist is, menu at marriage
 - Sometimes the details cause us to miss the point
 - True for today's passage too
- JC shows that we should be less concerned w/ knowing the exact date of his return & more concerned w/ being prepared
 - Be living God's way so that we'll be ready when he returns

2) SETTING THE STAGE (vv1-2)

- Woes just took place – hearts far from God
- Begins w/ disciples looking at temple buildings – kids in Vancouver
 - JC reigns on their parade
 - b/c the true center of God has shifted from temple to himself
 - JC is the center of right relationship w/ God
 - He produces changed hearts
 - He died as the ultimate, perfect lamb forgiving
 - Says temple will be destroyed...which was in AD 70 by Rome
 - Contrasted w/ JC who will rise from the dead

3) SIGNS OF JESUS' RETURN (vv3-44)

- Disciples ask JC two questions – 1) when will these things be? & 2) what's the sign of your coming & the end of the age?
- The answer to “when?” is...only God knows v36
- JC lays out the signs of his coming & the end of the age
 - “coming” – “parousia” – 24x in NT...4x in Matt 24...always tied closely to JC glorious coming/return/appearing at the end of human history

- “end of the age” – GRK phrase is used 6x in NT...5x in Matt
 - Looks to final judgment & consummation of all things
- JC's 2nd coming is what's being talked about here
 - As sure as his 1st coming is his 2nd coming
- And, JC's 1st instruction is to make sure no one leads us astray
 - Do you know how that happens?
 - We keep our focus/eyes on JC
- Matt 24 addresses what we're supposed to be paying attention to & what we're to be up to until 2nd coming
 - **What are the events leading up to his return?**
 - **How should we live until his return/2nd coming?**
- We see a number of signs that point to JC's return/2nd com/parousia
 - I see 10 sign in this ch
- 1) v6 – Wars & rumors of wars
 - 123 million died in war in 20th century...called the bloodiest century
- 2) v7 – Famines & earthquakes
 - 815 million undernourished people in world today
 - Over 14,000 4.0+ earthquakes per year
 - Seismologists have noticed a significant increase in past decade
- 3) v9 – Christians will be persecuted – (Open Doors)
 - In 2018 – 3,066 Christians killed, 1,252 abducted, 1,020 raped or sexually harassed, 793 churches attacked
 - 1 in 12 Christian worldwide are being persecuted
 - Believed that persecution will rise in 2019
 - Globally – North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan
 - We have brothers & sisters all over the world who are facing persecution right now
 - Let's pray for them...we're the body of Christ
 - Be hated just for being a follower of JC
- 4) v10 – Many will fall away
 - Many swept away by cultural agendas opposed to the Bible
- 5) v11 – False prophets & false christs (v5, vv23-28 as well)
 - Teach what's contrary to the Bible
 - Offer their way of salvation instead of JC

- Do you look to other people to make things right – a church leader, a previous church leader, a friend, a political leader? Or Jesus?
- D.A. Carson – “one of the greatest temptations in times of difficulty is to blindly follow any self-proclaimed savior who promises help”
- False prophets tell ppl what they want to hear...contrasted w/ woes
- When we line up teaching with the Bible – letting the Bible be our guide – we’ll see that false messages don’t line up
 - God’s Word must be our solid foundation
 - May we follow Jesus...keep eyes on Jesus
- 6) v12 – Lawlessness will increase
 - w/ false teaching & loose morals comes loss of love for God & others
 - Sin lessens love for God & others – b/c focus on self
 - Those who know the law of God, but turn from God & choose to do evil and call it good
- 7) v13 – Nominal Christianity will dissipate
 - Those who persevere/endure in loving JC, walking in the HS will be saved...Sunday morning Christian
 - When our eyes are on JC, we will endure to the end
 - Good words for us...passionate about Jesus?
 - How often do you check the state of your soul?
 - Difficulty/persecution purifies the body of professed followers...it costs something to live in the name of JC
 - Stand firm for JC
- 8) v14 – The Gospel message will go out
 - Christianity has spread the greatest in last 50 yrs globally
 - Grown like crazy in South America, Africa, and Asia
- 9) vv37-38 – Life will go on as usual/normal
 - Picture given is the same as in the days of Noah before the flood...people we’re going on w/ their lives and were unaware until the flood came and swept them away
- 10) vv36, 40-43 – JC’s return will quick/sudden & unexpected
 - Be going on w/ life as usual...be working in field or mill
 - Like a thief in the night

4) KEEP LIVING FOR JESUS & BE READY (vv45-51)

- In the meantime, we’re to be faithful about doing God’s work
- 1) Keeping JC at the center of our hearts & lives
 - Not to live in fear in the midst of turbulent time/persecutions
 - To persevere to the end
 - We just walked through a long list of some of the signs that point to JC’s imminent return
 - And, there’s nothing that gives hope to an exhausted heart like knowing that JC is coming back
 - One day we’ll be with JC
- 2) Be ready & long to see JC
 - Times away from Jordan
- 3) Be proclaiming the good news
 - We’re here w/ a purpose – the Great Commission
 - Such need in town, province, country, North America, world
 - In our families, neighborhoods, schools, place of work

5) CONCL

- The King is coming back...are you ready? Watching? Longing?
- JC will return to judge
 - His 2nd coming is very diff from his 1st coming – redeem/judge
 - Whether JC is the center of our lives is of utmost importance
- Only God knows when JC return is...even JC doesn’t know
 - But some still think they can nail it down
 - But we’re to be ready
- It’s good we don’t know exactly when JC will return
 - If we knew, some might be tempted to be lazy in our walk w/ JC and to be lazy in our work for JC
 - Or worse, some might keep on sinning & then turn to God at the very end
 - Heaven isn’t our only goal
 - We’re called by God to shine as light for him too
 - May we obey him today...and be ready
- Oceanography class – Hurricane Katrina – 1,833
 - Let’s be ready for JC’s return
 - How? By keeping our eyes on him, loving him, living for him