Living in Light of  
THE END  
Matthew 24:1-35

Matthew 24-25 has been called “the most difficult and complex passage in all of scripture.” For the next three weeks, we’re going to be studying this passage. What does it mean to be people of the last days?

I. JESUS IS LEADING US TO ABANDON OUR TEMPLES (24:1-2)

In spite of all that had happened, the disciples were missing the point. For the next stage of redemptive history, Jesus was leaving the temple behind.

“Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

What’s my “temple” – the thing, perhaps even the good thing, that’s keeping me from following Jesus?

II. BAD THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN TO GOOD CHRISTIANS (24:3-14)

- False Messiahs (5)
- Wars (6), famines (7), earthquakes (7)
- Persecution (9)
- Faith decay (10-12)
- The gospel preached (14)

What does it all mean?

“All these are the beginning of birth pangs” (8b). They are like Braxton-Hicks contractions. These occur before real labor and are reminders that labor is near, but not here yet.

When we see bad things happening around us we think “the end must be here.” What Jesus says is, this is just the way things will be . . . “then the end will come” (14).
The real question is not, “What do these things mean?”

The real question is, “What will I do with them when they happen to me?”

III. THERE WILL BE DISASTERS TOO. SOME OF THEM WILL BE FAITH SHAKING (24:15-16, 24)

A. Jerusalem’s Destruction in AD 70

20 When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near . . . 21 Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. – Luke 21:20-24

B. The Great Tribulation

1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . 2 Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. – 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

C. Disasters throughout History

If it were possible, Jesus warned, these kinds of things might even deceive the elect (vv. 24-25).

But there’s another option:

The Law of the Harvest = “Before there is blessing anywhere, there will first be suffering somewhere.” – J. I. Packer

IV. WE CAN TRUST JESUS TO COME AND GET US – WE WIN! (24:29-35)

A. I’m Coming (29)

5 The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice . . . 7 The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook . . . 8 Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it.
He parted the heavens and came down . . .
He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him – the dark rain clouds of the sky.
Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning.
The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded.
He shot his arrows and scattered [the enemies], great bolts of lightning and routed them.

The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of breath from your nostrils.
He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.
He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me . . .

“...The Psalmist was not claiming that after his prayer a storm took place, followed by an earthquake and volcanic eruption that shook the mountains and raised the sea bed. His intention was to declare that when the Lord comes to deliver us, he comes with all his power and glory, and that creation is subject to its master”
– G. R. Beasley-Murray

B. I’m Coming to Get You (30-31)

CONCLUSION
So, then, what does it mean to be people of the last days?
I think it all boils down to trusting him.
• Trust him and abandon your temples
• Trust him, even though bad things happen to good Christians
• Trust him, even though there will be faith-shaking tragedies no one can explain.
• Trust him, because he’s coming to get us – and we win.

C. We Win! (32)