**1. Motivate**

When have you been surprised by how difficult something turned out to be?

* taking an online college course
* digging up a bush no longer wanted

A video introduction to the lesson is available. Watch it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_o87ejdhb> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/yckmujhd>

* taking care of a garden
* recovering from knee surgery
* doing a repair on the car
* fixing a meal for the extended family
* building a garage
* using a pattern and sewing a garment
* baking 10 dozen cookies for VBS

**2. Transition**

Most of the things we came up with were normal tasks.

* Today’s Bible study speaks of more serious difficulties.
* Jesus said we should expect difficulty when you choose to follow Him.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 What Will Be the Sign?

Listen for Q and A.

Matthew 24:1-3 (NIV) Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 2 "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." 3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Note the disciples comments as they are leaving the temple area.

* Remarking about the size of the buildings.
* Noting the beauty of the scene.
* May have had to do with how the sun was highlighting them.

What kind of response does Jesus have to their mention of the temple complex?

* take a good look at all the buildings
* despite the size and complexity of the buildings there comes a time when the whole thing will be torn down
* all those big stones will actually be upturned

Why might Jesus’ response to their comment about the temple complex have caught the disciples off guard?

* the temple complex seemed to be something of permanence
* had taken many years to construct … was still some work going on
* why would anyone want to do that?
* why would the authorities let that happen?

What were your feelings when an important place to you was destroyed?

* mad
* sad
* surprised
* it was a classic … why did they have to do that?
* couldn’t they have fixed it up
* what they replaced it with was not near as nice

So, what did they immediately want to know after hearing what He had to say about the future of the temple?

* Ok … tell us when something like that will happen
* that sounds like the end of an era
* what kinds of events will bring such trauma to pass?
* how will we know this is it?
* what does it have to do with your return?

What questions do you have about Jesus’ return? What do you wonder about when it comes to the end times?

* like the disciples …
* when?
* how will we know to see it coming?
* in my lifetime?
* will we be able to see it coming?
* seems like much of what has been prophesied has taken place

We seem to have a natural curiosity about the end of time.

* But it is not always well-informed by a biblical perspective.
* Remember that God is in control … He accomplishes His purposes in His way, in His time.

3.2 The Beginning of the End

Listen for Jesus’ further response.

Matthew 24:4-8 (NIV) Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

What did He caution them to avoid?

* being deceived
* people who claim to be the Messiah
* people who make specific predictions as to when and how Jesus will return

What were some ways in which people could be deceived to think the end of time was near?

* news of wars,
* rumors of wars
* international wars
* famines
* earthquakes

Jesus said these things are like “labor pains” that precede a birth. What can encourage us amidst Jesus’ warnings that things are going to get a lot worse?

* wars, famines, earthquakes are only the signs that it will happen soon, they are preliminary
* it means Jesus is coming sooner and sooner – each day is a day closer to His return
* God is with us – the Holy Spirit will empower us, guide us, enable us
* He is in control
* current events often discourage or frighten us
* God is orchestrating the whole sequence of events
* powerful people think they are in control and moving things they way they want, but God is accomplishing His purposes despite what they do

How does talk of the end times motivate us to live a holy life?

* want to be ready for Christ’s return
* want to be working towards bringing others to Jesus
* want our own lives to be in right relationship to God at all times

At the same time, how can we become sidetracked by discussion of the end times?

* in the extreme, people have sold or abandoned property, dressed in white robes and climbed on their rooftops to wait for the rapture
* trying to discover specific signs or dates
* there are other, more important things for us to be involved in … reaching people with the gospel

How is it helpful that Jesus didn’t give us a specific time or date for His return?

* like school assignments, we would procrastinate
* we are challenged to believe God’s Words
* it’s a matter of living by faith

3.3 A Call to Faithfulness

Listen for a call to faithfulness.

Matthew 24:9-14 (NIV) "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

What are some examples of external opposition Jesus’ followers would face?

* persecution for our faith
* made fun of for living a life separate from the world
* marginalized for advocating Biblical lifestyle
* in some countries, the majority religion may work to eliminate, do away with Christians

What opposition can come from those who stumble and give up on Jesus?

* betrayal … turn in believers to the secular authorities
* act with hate toward former colleagues who are believers



What threat do false teachers pose?

* confusion
* deception
* declare, advocate as “truth” what is contrary to scripture

What happens when wickedness prevails?

* people’s love for Jesus grows cold
* Jesus is no longer given supremacy in people’s lives
* end up with carnal Christians … Christ in the life, but self is on the throne
* their lives end up in disarray
* in contrast to Christ being given control of one’s life

No matter the opposition, what does Jesus expect from His followers?

* worship

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

* submission, obedience, living according to biblical standards
* faithfulness
* trust in His power, authority, and love
* be involved in evangelism – reaching the lost for Christ … around the world.

This passage encourages you to share the gospel.

* Taking the gospel to the whole world is one of the things that must happen.
* People have promoted missions with the phrase “Bring Back the King.”
* According to *Finishing the Task*, 218 ethnic groups are unreached … no church, no missionary, no mission agency.

Application

Realize.

* Take some time this week to write down your views about the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world.
* Pay careful attention to the verses studied today that assure us of God’s plan and His care for us.

Memorize.

* Memorize Matthew 24:8, “*All these events are the beginning of labor pains*.”
* Let this verse give you a biblical perspective when you hear of tragic events throughout the world.

Exercise.

* Review a list of family members, friends, and acquaintances who are not believers.
* Take practical steps to share the good news with at least one of people on your list within the next month.



The video game attaché from our embassy in Yeswe Slorab received this from one of his operatives. It was hidden in a video game screen shot. Some of the pixels got shifted straight down, but not in order. We need to decode the message. Our decoders are busy in middle school soccer season. If you notice, there are several columns with only a single letter missing. These will be easy. Next, look at the two or three letter words and see which letters make the most sense. Also, it's possible the quote is from your Bible Study passage. Your missions chairman is waiting for this important message. Technical assistance and further investigations are available at <https://tinyurl.com/yckmujhd>