

**The Shepherd's Heart**  
**Matthew 24:1-14**

I. "Palm Sunday" was a day reserved for praise! (Matthew 21:4-11)

- A. The Son of God would soon fulfill his calling.
  - 1. He would be dishonored, mistreated, tortured, crucified.
    - (a) This is not what he deserves.
    - (b) He endures such treatment because he is faithful.
  - 2. So, in the triumphal entry he is greeted as King.
    - (a) God had set this day as a day his Son would be honored.
    - (b) The Pharisees objected (Luke 19:39-40).
- B. Much happens between "Palm Sunday" and Good Friday.
  - 1. What is on Jesus' heart as he heads to Calvary?
    - (a) A major theme is his compassion amidst consequences (Matthew 23:37-39).
  - 2. He prophesies about trouble near and far.
    - (a) The cleansing of the temple.
    - (b) The withered fig tree (Matthew 21:18-19).
    - (c) The Romans will destroy the temple.
    - (d) There is judgment for rejecting the Messiah (Matthew 21:42-44).
- C. Jesus prophesied about the distant future.
  - 1. The beginning of birth pangs (Matthew 24:4-8).
    - (a) False prophets, wars, natural disasters.
    - (b) But haven't these things always happened?
- D. Yes, but Jesus gives two very significant signs.
  - 1. Israel is the fig tree (Matthew 24:32-35).
    - (a) The Ottoman Empire controlled the Middle East for centuries.
    - (b) There was zero chance for a Jewish homeland.
  - 2. A series of Jubilee events.
    - (a) Jubilee: every 50 years land is restored to its owner.
    - (b) God gave the land to Israel forever (Genesis 13:15)
    - (c) 1917 Balfour Declaration
    - (d) 1967 Six Day War
    - (e) 2017 Jerusalem declared Israel's capital
  - 3. The Gospel will go to all nations (Matthew 24:14).
    - (a) "nations;" Greek is ethnos: a race, a tribe.
    - (b) That requires all ethnos to have the Scriptures.
    - (c) A new coalition and faster translation. ETA:2033!
    - (d) Commissioning David today for translation work.

II. Before the end there will be a great apostasy (falling away).

- A. The Church will be severely persecuted (Matthew 24:9).

- 1. Many people will fall away from the faith (Matt 24:10-11).
- 2. As wickedness increases, people's love will grow cold (Matthew 24:12).
  - (a) This is speaking of people who claim to be Christians.
- 3. Because of persecution and evil, people will fall away.
- 4. There are nominal Christians in the institutional church.
  - (a) "Nominal" means in name only.
  - (b) They think they are Christians but have not been converted.
  - (c) Paul to Corinthians: "test yourselves" (II Cor.13:5).
  - (d) Peter: "make sure of your election" (II Peter 1:10-11).

- B. There is an "elect" of God that Jesus spoke of.
  - 1. God knows who will be with him for eternity.
    - (a) It is not possible for the elect to fall away (Matthew 24:24).
    - (b) But Jesus says others will fall away from institutional church.
  - 2. How can you know if you are of the elect?
    - (a) As Paul said, test yourself. What are you trusting in?
  - 3. Someone came to faith recently who thought he was a believer.
    - (a) In due time, you'll hear his testimony.
    - (b) But this is not an unusual thing.
    - (c) My friend who became a believer at Westminster Seminary.
    - (d) The Baptist pastor converted at a retreat!

III. Jesus tells us to be ready!

- A. He will come like a thief in the night (Matthew 24:42-44).
  - 1. No one knows exactly when (Matthew 24:36).
    - (a) We know the end draws near by the signs.
    - (b) Jesus knows now. He didn't know then.
  - 2. It will be like the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39).
  - 3. The parable of the ten virgins.
    - (a) Have oil (the Holy Spirit) in your lamp (your heart).
  - 4. A special warning to pastors (Matthew 24:45-51).
- B. Why did Jesus say this? Was he being mean?
  - 1. No, he was being compassionate.
    - (a) His warnings are motivated by love.
  - 2. Many will hear, "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:22-23).
- C. Application: Stay in fellowship with God and his Church.
  - 1. Don't let your love grow cold.
  - 2. "Guard your heart for it is the well spring of life."
  - 3. A faithful life: Dyann's Dad