

## Newsletter 14th November 2021

**Sunday's Readings:** John 18:33-38

### Family Service

Ps. Andrew Everson will be bringing us the Word this week

### Prayers of the people

- Please continue to pray for Murray Burdett, John Ruck, Gordon Williams and Grant Inverarity as they cope with health issues, undergo treatment or await results of tests, and pray for improved health and recovery
- Pray for Jill Dunstan as she recovers from surgery on her shoulder, may it go well.
- Pray for our leaders as they plan to open the country from restrictions of Covid19, may the right decisions be made, and our country be safe. Pray also for the world as the countries are struggling with Covid19.
- Pray for the Barnabas Fund who are working to help people of Madagascar who are suffering and dying from disease, famine and drought. The Barnabas Fund plans, Lord willing, to provide **234 tonnes** of ePap (A special porridge made from maize and soya beans with added vitamins and minerals) for a rolling programme over two years reaching over 79,000 Christians across the 22 regions of Madagascar. This will increase their strength and health, enabling them to fight disease. If you would like to help or know more phone (07) 3806 1076 or 1300 365 799

### Notices

#### Evening gathering – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October 5 pm

- **Watching Episode 5 of "The Chosen**

**TL2:** A presentation of TL2 students will be held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November during the service, further information is available from Yvonne Hogarth.

**AGM Congregational Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> of November:**

AGM will be at 2pm. There will be an agenda and reports available to be read prior to the AGM.

If you have any questions prior to the meeting please contact members of the Church Council, Congregation Secretary Carol Lawrie or Bill Cobbledick Chairman of the Congregation.

**Pastoral care “Munch”**

Following church on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November a “Munch” (morning tea and lunch) fundraiser for the Pastoral Care Workers will be held. \$15 a single, \$40 a family. Please contact Judy Kreek (0429999256) or Yvonne Hogarth (0417815678) for details or to offer assistance.

**Children's Christmas presentation Service**

Come and join in Celebrating Jesus Birthday!

**JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!**



When: December 5<sup>th</sup>

Time: 9.30am

Place: Naracoorte U.C.

Join The Party for Morning Tea following the Service

**Cleaner:** Looking for a cleaner to fill in for 2 weeks after Christmas /New Year. Please let Leanne or Peter Lawrie know if you can help. Thanks

**Church Gardeners Required:** Jill and Eugene are “retiring” as of the 1st of November – Is gardening a passion for you? See Jill and Eugene  
We thank them for the many years of gardening they have given us.

**Name Tags and Updates:** Please use the form at the back of the church if you would like a name tag or need to update your email or phone number to get the newsletter or be able to be contacted.

**Tithe a tin Pray a Packet:** the support that the congregation gives this worthy project is very much appreciated by those who are in need during these difficult times. There is a list of suggestions in the box and on the notice board in Blackwell Hall. Thank you very much

**Church Service:** Due to Covid 19 the guidelines for Sunday are as follows.

- Masks must be worn
- 1/2m<sup>2</sup> distancing applies (**152** persons in the church)
- Singing allowed with masks on.
- Morning Tea under covid 19 guidelines
- Sunday School is on!

**Please** share any news or concerns you may have so we may celebrate or support you in any way we can.

**Mid Week Bible Reading:**

**Matthew 24:1-44**

English Standard Version

**24** Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup> 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."

<sup>3</sup> 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?" <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. <sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

<sup>9</sup> "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

<sup>15</sup> "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, <sup>18</sup> and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. <sup>19</sup> And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>20</sup> Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. <sup>22</sup> And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut

short. <sup>23</sup> Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. <sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup> See, I have told you beforehand. <sup>26</sup> So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. <sup>27</sup> For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

<sup>29</sup> "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

### The Lesson of the Fig Tree

<sup>32</sup> "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>33</sup> So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>34</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>35</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>36</sup> "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. <sup>37</sup> For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. <sup>42</sup> Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

There are many interpretations and quite a bit of confusion over Mathew 24. I will try to explain how I read it.

Jesus had just finished denouncing the Pharisees and the teachers of the law as hypocrites (see chapter 23) and had pronounced destruction on Jerusalem **and on the temple**. Notice that Jesus then leaves the temple and climbs the Mount of Olives to the East of the city. Just as in Ezekiel 10:18-19 and 11:23 the glory of the Lord departs the Temple and briefly stops above the Mount of Olives so, as Matthew describes it, God's glory (Jesus himself) has left the Temple. It is no longer a place where God's glory, his Shekinah, can be found. The temple is no longer God's house but merely "**your** house... left to **you** desolate" (23:38). Not one temple stone will be left on another says Jesus. The place will be flattened.

The Disciples are shocked by this, pointing to the massive stones and the wondering how this can happen. The Temple was the focal point of the Jewish faith, the place where heaven and earth met. If the Temple were to be destroyed, then this must mean the end of all things! So, they ask Jesus three questions which they believe are inter-related.

- When will this happen?
- What will be the sign of Jesus' coming?
- What will be the sign of the end of the age?

### When will this happen?

If we don't see these as separate questions, then we will miss the separate answers that Jesus gives. In his answers Jesus distinguishes between the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, and the "end of the age". These are two separate events. The destruction of the Temple will happen within the life span of "this" generation, the generation that Jesus is speaking to. (Verse 34) This is described in the first part of Jesus' answer (verses 24:4-35). The disciples will know when this event is about to happen because they will see "the abomination that causes desolation". Jesus asks them to read and note the book of Daniel (particularly see 9:26 and 11:31). Luke's account of the conversation between Jesus and the disciples makes it clear that the abomination that causes desolation is an army. The fulfilment of this prophecy of Jesus is seen when the Roman army of Titus destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70. (Luke 21:20). Jesus is speaking in the year 30 or 32, so the siege of Jerusalem is, as Jesus indicates, within the life span of the generation he is speaking to.

Jesus tells the disciples that when they see Jerusalem surrounded, then they are to run for the mountains. This is exactly what the Christians of Jerusalem did shortly before the Roman siege when they fled to the city of Pella in the Transjordan mountains.

### **What will be the sign of Jesus' coming?**

Throughout his answer to the disciples, Jesus is at pains to say that his return to earth is not immediately going to happen. (See verses 4-8, 23-26) We need to distinguish two "comings" of Jesus. The **first** mentioned is in verse 24:30 where we read:

<sup>30</sup> Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory".

The reference that Jesus is making is to Daniel 7:13-14:

<sup>13</sup> "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

This is dramatic, visionary, apocalyptic language. The important thing to grasp here is that this "coming" of Jesus is not Jesus returning to the earth, but Jesus "coming" to God the Father with glory and power, just as Daniel describes. The point is that in spite of the people refusing to recognise Jesus as their King, the living Temple of God, and instead condemning him to die, Jesus will be vindicated, the earthly Temple and Jerusalem will be destroyed, and Jesus will reign with all authority in this present continuing age. The tribes (in the New Testament, the Greek word here usually refers to the tribes of Israel) will mourn, obviously, because they got it so wrong! And during this present continuing age the elect, God's chosen, will be called into the Kingdom "from one end of heaven to the other".

### **What will be the sign of the end of the age?**

The **second** coming is then described starting with verse 36:

<sup>36</sup> "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. <sup>37</sup> For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

This "coming" of Jesus is the second coming at the end of the age. This is when Jesus returns to earth, rather than to heaven. And in **contrast** to how Jesus tells his Disciples that they will know from the signs when to run from the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, the time of Jesus' second coming at the end of the age will be a total surprise **is known only to God the Father**.

This coming of Jesus signals the end of the age and the coming judgement with some being “taken” in judgement and consigned to a “place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (verse 24: 51). Notice the referral back to the hypocrisy of Christ’s enemies that Jesus spoke of in Chapter 23), and some will be “left” to live with Christ in the new Jerusalem, on a renewed earth.

The followers of Christ are asked to watch and wait. The important thing to remember in watching for this coming, is not to be ready to run this time, **but to be found faithfully serving our Lord** when he appears.

Next week I will explain the meaning of a number of other verses in this passage – particularly 24:9-14 and 26-30 and try to draw some lessons for how we should apply Jesus’ words to our lives now.

Andrew