

If you are over 50, you may remember what happened on February 9, 1971. For me, I was nine years old growing up in Southern California, and I was awakened from my bed at 6:05 am. Our house was shaking and creaking. That was the morning of the big Sylmar Earthquake. I guess I remember it because it was the first earthquake I experienced. Sixty-five people died in that earthquake. Most of us have experienced severe earthquakes since, but we always remember that first one.

I remember my mom made some changes in our household afterwards. She and my dad had us prepare. We knew another earthquake would occur, but no one could predict the time and day. We knew there would be tremors and small quakes that would happen. But we also knew that one day the “big one” would occur. The big one was imminent. The big one could come today, tomorrow, months, or even years from now. Since we were sure the big one would come and we wanted to be prepared, my mom stocked up on water bottles, high protein survival food, flashlight, and batteries. She wanted us prepared for the big one.

In the last message, we looked at the first half of Matthew chapter 24. Now we will look at the second half of Chapter 24. Matthew chapter 24 and 25 encompass a dynamic teaching by Jesus called the Olivet Sermon. It's a sermon that took place on the Mount of Olives, which is located up a steep hillside just a short walk east of the city. It was a beautiful spot with a great view of the city. In fact, two days later, Jesus would come back to that mountain, to a garden of Olive trees called Gethsemane to pray on the night he was betrayed and arrested.

In this Olivet sermon, Jesus started out by talking about the tremors, the events and signs leading up to the big one. The events and signs leading up to the return of Christ, which is the future day on the calendar all of world history is building toward. We have come to know this as the day of the second coming of Christ. When all of world history ends as we know it at some point in the future. He tells us, “Expect tremors before the big one.” And He tells us, “Prepare for the big one.”

As they were leaving the temple, Jesus spoke to his disciples and turned their attention to the temple. He had them look at look at the beauty of the inlaid gold, the grand architecture, the sheer size and weight of stones the size of trailers stacked upon each other to construct the foundations and walls of the temple.

**Then as they walked out Jesus told them, “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” Matthew 54:2**

When they got to the Mt. of Olives, the disciples asked him, “How could that be?”

**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?” v. 3**

The disciples asked Jesus two questions in this verse. The first was about the future of their temple. When will this destruction of our temple happen? Their second question is about the Big One. What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age? The disciples would naturally put together the destruction of their temple with the end of the world, but in reality, they are two separate events.

Here is what we have learned so far:

In verses 4 through 14 there will be many things that are thought to be signs of the big one, but they are not. There will be false messiahs, wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, and false prophets. These things seem severe enough to us, but Jesus called these the beginning of birth pains. He wanted it to be clear that these are not signs of the big one because we learned in verse 14 the gospel has to be preached to every nation, tribe, and language before the big one will come.

In verse 15-22 Jesus said there was going to be one particularly tragic event, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which happened in the year AD 70. But even this will not be a sign of his return.

In verse 23-28, Jesus made it clear that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was just one example of the bad things that would happen to people in the course of human history. Then he reminded us about false messiahs, who would appear in secret, in inner rooms, and from out in the desert. And Jesus said, “The Big one, my second coming will not be in secret, but instead it will be as visible “as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west.”

### **What we know about the Return of Jesus Christ**

We know the Return of Christ will be obvious. As obvious as lighting flashing from one end of the sky to another, and as