

Diligently Seeking God (Hebrews 11:6)

PRAIRIE VILLAGE CHURCH OF CHRIST
4616 VALLEY STATION ROAD

Church Bulletin Articles from November 20, 2011 Hear sermons online at www.pvchurchofchrist.com

Scripture of the Week



Matthew 24:1-2

“Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.’”

In Matthew 24 Jesus warned His disciples about a very dark day that was looming on the horizon. They had been walking around in the temple complex and His disciples commented on the beautiful stones and buildings (Mark 13:1). Jesus told them later as they sat together on the Mount of Olives that soon the temple and all its surrounding structures would be reduced to rubble. As you can imagine, this troubled them greatly, and they wanted to know when this would happen and what the sign would be of the end of the age (verse 3). Notice that this isn't a reference to Christ's Second Coming and the end of the world as most people believe. Two parallel passages in Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7 make it

clear that they asked two simple questions: “When will this happen” and “What will the sign be.” Jesus answered the second question first. He said the sign for them to flee Jerusalem would be when they saw “The Abomination of Desolation” standing in the holy place as spoken of by the prophet Daniel (Daniel 9:27). That passage prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. Luke 21:20 says, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.” Jesus then answered their first question. He said “This generation will not pass until all these things take place” (verse 34). Matthew 24 has nothing to do with the end of the world but with the end of the nation of Israel.

A Goat or a Sheep

While Jesus warned in Matthew 24 of God's impending judgment upon the nation of Israel for their continual sinfulness and rejection of their Messiah King and not the end of the world (consider Matthew 23:29-39), He actually did end His Olivet Discourse with a view of that final day of reckoning in chapter 25. In chapter 24 He informed his disciples of the coming doom to provide them an opportunity to flee the carnage. But in chapter 25 He notifies all people that there's a great day of judgment coming that no one will escape. In verse 31 Jesus said that He will appear in all His splendor with His holy angels and sit on His glorious throne. In verse 32 He

said that all people of “all nations” will be gathered before Him and He will separate them as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats, and everyone will be judged. Just a couple of points about this incredible scene. First of all, please notice that Final Judgment will be based upon the works that people perform or neglect to do. In verses 34-46 Jesus spoke of the criteria He will use to determine who will be the goats on His left hand and the sheep on His right. He said that we will be lost or saved eternally based upon whether we cared enough about other people to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and impris-

oned. As with the Parable of the Talents in verses 14-30, Jesus teaches here that Christianity is a performance based religion. Even though grace is a gift and we are saved by faith, faith without works is useless (James 2:20). We could never earn our way into heaven, but if we neglect righteous works, we'll be lost. Secondly, Hell is just as real and eternal as Heaven. Jesus said of the goats and sheep: “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (verse 46). Jesus isn't talking about total annihilation for the lost, but eternal, conscious punishment. Judgment Day is coming! Make certain that you are a sheep and not a goat!