

The Olivet Discourse Matthew 24

One day as Jesus and his disciples were leaving the temple, they marveled at its beauty. Jesus surprised them with a future prediction. **Matthew 24:2** “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.”**

Jesus was predicting the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. (but also his death and resurrection). The disciples, knowing the book of Daniel, naturally thought Jesus was talking about the destruction of the Temple during the end times. Therefore, Jesus sat down on the Mount of Olives with his disciples to answer their questions about THE END.

Matthew 24:3 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?”**

Jesus’ Answer Matthew 24:4-14

Jesus began with a warning to his disciples to not allow themselves to be deceived by many false messiahs who were to come. (Jesus will give nine such warnings in this discourse.)

Matthew 24:4-5 Jesus answered: **“Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah (Christ),’ and will deceive many.**

Historically and today, we have to deal with deception, false teachers, and false prophets but this will increase as the end nears, and there will even be a greater deception.

Road Signs of The End Times

WAR

Matthew 24:6-7a 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.**

Currently our world has experienced over 15,000 wars as of 2001. Many thought WWI in 1914 -1918 and WWII 1939 to 1945, with both killing over 20 million people, was the beginning of THE END.

Famines and Earthquakes

Matthew 24:7b There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

- Famines are one of the problems the Omo Valley and the Kara Tribe face.
- *It is estimated that there are 500,000 detectable earthquakes in the world each year. 100,000 of those can be felt, and 100 of them cause damage.¹*

Matthew 24:8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Wars, famines, and earthquakes will increase until the End. They will keep getting worse, like childbirth that increases in frequency and intensity, setting the stage for The Great Tribulation.

The Rapture

A common mistake is to try to find the “Rapture of the Church” in Matthew 24. It is not there. The church was not yet formed when Jesus spoke these words. This message predicts the events of Israel’s future. But much of this text applies to believers as we will experience some of these end times events.

The Rapture was not a major teaching of our Lord except in John 14:1-3. **“...I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”**

He left comments about the Rapture to be made by the apostles Paul and John.

The Tribulation

Jesus gave his disciples a brief description of the Seven Year Tribulation which is described in Revelation 4-19. This is limited to Seven Years according to both Daniel and John.

Matthew 24:9-14 covers the first half of the Tribulation (3 ½ years).

Matthew 24:15-26 covers the second half of the Tribulation, The Great Tribulation (3 ½ years). The first half is bad enough, but the second half, when the Antichrist shows his true colors, is far worst.

Matthew 24:9-14 The First Half of the Tribulation (3 ½ years)

Matthew 24:9-14 “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 the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Even after the rapture of the church, people will continue to be born again and will have to deal with trials, persecution, and even death for their faith. They will have to stand firm.

John sees these believers in Revelation 7:9-14

Revelation 7:9-14 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” / 13 Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” 14 I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Matthew 24:14 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.

- The Greek “nations” can also be interpreted as a “people” or people groups.
- IMB identified 3,150 people groups that are unreached and unengaged. An unengaged people group is where there are no Christians in the group, and no plan for anyone to take the gospel to them. (Estimated over 190 million people.)ⁱⁱ

The rapture could occur now, even with more people groups to reach, but the end won’t come until every people group has heard the gospel message.

Matthew 24:15-26 The Second Half of The Tribulation (3 ½ years), The Great Tribulation!

Matthew 24:15-20 “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ (orchestrated by the antichrist) spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—

16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak.

Destruction will arrive so quickly that people must waste no time fleeing from the city. (During the Roman siege of Jerusalem shortly before A.D. 70, many Christians fled to The Transjordan Mountains.)

19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!

20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.

(Jews were not allowed to travel more than a half a mile on the Sabbath.)

Matthew 24:21-26 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. 22 “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. 23 At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. 24 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the

elect. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time. 26 “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.

The **Elect** are referred to in vs. 22, 24, and later in 31. I believe this is the Jewish remnant who would later become born again, accepting Jesus as savior during the tribulation.

The Glorious Appearing Matthew 24:27-29 (Revelation 19:11 – 16)

Matthew 24:27-29 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. 29 “**Immediately after the distress of those days** “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

While no one knows the exact day or the hour of Jesus’ return, but we do know when the glorious appearing, the second coming of Christ will occur – “immediately after the tribulation.”

There is a difference in Jesus coming in the air to catch up His church (the rapture) and Jesus coming back to the earth in His second coming.

Most bible scholars agree that there are more events to occur before the return of Christ Jesus to the earth, but there is nothing else that needs to occur for Jesus to come and rapture up His church!

The Ultimate Sign of The Second Coming

Matthew 24:30-31 “Then will appear **the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.** And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. (They mourn because they rejected Christ.) 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather **his elect** from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. (Not the rapture.)

All this will happen so quickly it will be too late for people to get ready for it. The decision whether to accept Christ as the resurrected Messiah must be made before He comes in power to set up His Kingdom, for that decision alone determines who will go into the Millennial kingdom (the one-thousand-year reign on earth) and who will be cast into everlasting punishment.ⁱⁱⁱ

At this point may be “**The Judgement of the Nations**” recorded in (Matthew 25:31-46).

The Generation That Sees These Things

Matthew 24:32-34 “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. 34 Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. That is the generation that sees the events of the Tribulation will also see the coming of Christ Jesus and the other end time events.

What Are We to Do Considering The End?

1) Know that the Words of Jesus Will Never Fail Us.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. You can believe these words are true and know that Jesus’ words will endure for all time!

2) Watch and Be Ready

Matthew 24:36-39 “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, **but only the Father.** 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and

giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and **took them all away**.
That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:40-41 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.
41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.
(THIS IS NOT TALKING ABOUT THE RAPTURE)

Again, there is a difference in Jesus coming in the air to catch up His church (the rapture) and Jesus coming back to the earth in His second coming.

Matthew 24:42-44 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. **43** But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. **44** So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

3) Be Faithful to Our Calling and Mission

Matthew 24:45-51 “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? **46** It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. **47** Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. **48** But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ **49** and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. **50** The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. **51** He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The faithful servant was rewarded and the unfaithful servant was punished. God has commanded all of us to be good stewards of our gifts and faithfully carry out our purpose, no matter what.

4) **Maintain a Fullness of the Holy Spirit** Jesus continues to teach about readiness and preparation in **Matthew 25:1-13**, in the parable of the Ten Virgins.

5) **Be Good Stewards of Our Gifts Until Jesus Returns** **Matthew 25:14-30**. This is where we will find joy as we serve.

Matthew 25:23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

A wise man once said...

It is useless to set the day and hour for Christ's coming. It is folly to neglect it.^{iv}

ⁱ <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/earthquake-hazards/cool-earthquakefacts#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20there,100%20of%20them%20cause%20damage>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.imb.org/2022/07/19/going-against-the-flow/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Tim LaHaye, Thomas Ice, Charting The End Times (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001), p. 37

^{iv} David R. Shepherd, SHEPARDS NOTES, Matthew (Nashville: B & H Publishing House, 1997), p.103-104