

THE HARMONY OF THE OLIVET

DISCOURSE – PART 3

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Matthew 24:9-22

Olivet Discourse – Part 3

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The Lord Jesus gave some of the most detailed prophecies of future events just a couple days before His crucifixion. This teaching by Jesus was recorded in Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Theologians refer to these sections of scripture as the *Olivet Discourse* because Jesus spoke these prophecies while on the Mount of Olives.

There has been much confusion and debate about this discourse over the centuries. Much of the mystery has been removed with the rebirth of the nation of Israel, but views about who is being addressed and the timing of the events are still debated by sincere Christians.

After 35 (now 51) years of pondering the different views and arguments, I feel it is time to contribute some thoughts in the form of this commentary. I have put the three passages from the three Apostles' writings side by side (using the New King James) so the entire context of Jesus words can be more easily compared and discerned.

MATTHEW 24	MARK 13	LUKE 21
9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 "And then many will be offended [<i>literally – fall away, i.e., from the faith</i>], will betray one another, and will hate one another."	9 "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 "But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 "Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 13 "And you will be hated by all men for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved."	12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. 13 "But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 "Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 "for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. 16 "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 "But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 "By your patience possess your souls."

In the world today, there are two groups of people who are hated for no other reason than because of who they are - the Christians and the Jews. Jews are hated because they are the historical chosen people of God and therefore an enemy of Satan and those who serve him. Christians know that Jesus is the only way and truth whereby man can be saved (Acts 4:12). Therefore, Satan wants to kill all true Christians (Jew and Gentile) so this message will not spread, but he has failed to do so.

The first Christians were Jews. The book of Acts records how Jesus' predictions were literally fulfilled in the early church when Jews who believed in Jesus as their Messiah were brought before the leaders of the synagogues and were persecuted and sometimes killed. Jesus is also addressing the combined (Jew and Gentile) Christian church (then and now) which has also been persecuted and hated by all nations "for My name's sake."

Although Jesus was clearly talking about those who would be persecuted in His name, this warning also seems to apply to the Jews who believe in the name of God (YHWH) and the promise of the Messiah (even though for a season the unbelieving Jew is blinded so as not to see Jesus as their Messiah – Romans 11:25). A poll taken in Europe in November of 2003 showed that 59 percent (now 70% - 2026) of the Europeans believe that Israel is the biggest global threat. There is no logical basis for this fear. This irrational belief can only be understood spiritually. God has called the Jews His chosen people, and Satan in his demented attempt to prove that God cannot keep His promise to His witness people wants to destroy them and those who believe in the Jewish Messiah.

Jesus told His disciples that Christians and Jews would be hated until the end of time as a sign of His coming. He also predicts **that some will fall away from the truth as a result of that persecution**. Certainly, this has been fulfilled in the centuries leading up to our day, and it will get worse in the future. However, it is very likely that the betrayal that Jesus warns about (people turning their own relatives into the authorities for execution) will find its ultimate fulfillment in the last three and a half years of the Antichrist's rule, when the Antichrist demands that the entire world worship him and receive the mark of his name in their hand or forehead. Failure to worship the antichrist results in certain death and it is likely those who take his mark will be required to turn in those who have refused to do so, even if they are members of their own family.

Matthew 24:11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.
12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.
13 "But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

It appears that Matthew alone records this second warning by Jesus of false prophets that will come in the last days. Many New Testament prophecies by the apostles also talk about the false teachers that will come in the last days will result in people turning their ears from the truth in order to believe a lie (2 Timothy 4:3-4, 2 Thess 2:9-12). Paul adds how people will go after doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).

But Jesus defined the false prophets of this prophecy as being those who deceive people to go after false messiahs (Matthew 24:5), **something that cannot apply to the church as explained above**. However, after the church is gone and the world government is established, **the Jews will be deceived into thinking their time of peace has arrived**. They will also be **easily deceived into believing the man who makes peace possible (the antichrist during his first 3.5 years of rule) is their long promised Messiah**. Jesus is emphasizing to the **future Jewish people** that they must not believe the false prophets who will be deceiving them in the last days, even if they and the world leaders let the Jews build the third temple in Jerusalem!

Jesus also warned that in the last day's kingdom of the antichrist, lawlessness will increase to the point that people will lose their ability to love one another. Violence, bribery, betrayal, treason, extortion, theft etc. will cause all people on earth to live in fear and suspicion rather than love.

There will be many Jews and Gentiles who will place their trust in Jesus during the 70th week of Daniel (The Tribulation). They will be under great pressure to abandon their faith in Jesus and to instead put their trust in the global leader. Those who hold onto the gospel of Jesus Christ to the end shall be spiritually saved but physically killed. Those who don't remain faithful to the gospel, and are offended (fall away) will show that they never truly believed and, like Judas, had other motives for calling themselves Christians. They may temporarily save their human life, but will lose their eternal soul into hell as a result.

14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations."

Here, Jesus is answering their questions, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" God promises that the end will not come until He gives the inhabitants of the world one last chance to repent. Tragically, most will ignore this angelic warning.

Some Christians who are not aware of the prophecy of Revelation 14 think Jesus was saying that the church must fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28 in order for Jesus to return. Jesus did command us to go into all nations to spread the gospel, and the Holy Spirit has for centuries been leading those who are willing to heed the call. But the Church has not, and probably will not, succeed in taking the gospel to *every* tribe, tongue, and nation before the Seven Year Tribulation.

When the church is taken away at the Rapture (**which occurs some months/years before the Seven Year Tribulation starts**), the Lord will continue spreading the message of the Gospel using: the Bibles and studies that were left behind by those who were raptured, by the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14, and the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 during the first 3.5 years of the Tribulation.

Midway through the tribulation, the 144,000 are again seen in heaven and have therefore completed their witness mission after the church was raptured (Rev 14).

The two witnesses were killed by the antichrist, resurrected 3.5 days later, and then ascend to heaven. As a result their witness mission is also complete.

Since the witness of the church, the 144,000 and the two witnesses are no longer available, God sends the angels of Revelation 14 to warn the entire surviving population of the earth. These angelic missionaries call the world to repent during the remaining 3.5 years of the Great Tribulation before Jesus physically returns.

Rev 14:7 - "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Rev 14:8 - "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Rev 14:9-11 - If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

These warning by the three angels will fulfill Jesus' prophecy of the gospel being preached to the entire world before Jesus returns. Only after all nations have heard the gospel during this time will the *final* wrath of God be poured out upon the unbelieving world. The wrath of God came upon the earth when Jesus started opening the seals of the scroll (Rev 6).

Matthew 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),
16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.
18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.
19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!
20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.
21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.
22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.'

Mark 13:14 "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
15 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house.
16 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his garment.
17 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!
18 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter.
19 "For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.
20 "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.'

Luke 17:31 "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back.
32 "Remember Lot's wife.
33 "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

Notice that Luke does not record this portion of Jesus' teaching in his **Chapter 21** record of the Olivet Discourse. It appears that God wanted Luke to concentrate on the near destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies (covered in Luke 21:20-24 and fulfilled shortly after in 70 AD), but Matthew and Mark were commissioned to record what would happen in the distant future – yet future to us. In chapter 17 of Luke, Luke does record a very similar teaching that Jesus gave in Jerusalem to those asking him about when the kingdom was coming. The Luke 17 teaching could have been immediately before Jesus left Jerusalem and gave the Olivet Discourse, and is included here for completeness.

A background of the book of Daniel is critical to understanding this portion of the Olivet Discourse. Jesus refers to the *abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel*, found in Daniel Chapters 9 and 12. The following are the applicable verses from Daniel 9 and 12, with my interpretation/comments in bold brackets or indented. For a more detailed teaching on the reasoning behind this interpretation, the reader can go to our website (calvarypo.org or calvarypo.com) and listen to the complete teaching of Daniel, Chapters 9 and 12, in MP3 format.