

## What Christ said about the End Times

### **Matthew 24**

Matthew 24-25 is called the **Olivet Discourse** because Jesus taught his disciples on the Mount of Olives. Jesus talks about his **second coming**. In order to understand what Jesus is talking about we must understand both the **historical setting** and what it **meant to** the people who heard this from Jesus.

#### **Historical Setting**

For many centuries, the Jewish people had been ruled over by **one power** after another. The northern ten tribes had been conquered by the **Assyrians** in 722 BC. The southern two tribes had been conquered by the **Babylonians** in 587-586 BC. The Jewish folks then fell under the rule of the Medo-Persian Empire, then the Greeks, and then the Romans. Because of this they had a **great desire to be free**.

Along with this history were **future promises** of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament God had promised to **conquer** their enemies and to establish His Kingdom. They also knew the Messiah would come and bring about **His Kingdom** (Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 11:1-2; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Jeremiah 30:9-10; Zechariah 14; Daniel 2:44).

With those passages in mind they had **made up** an order to the events:

- 1) The Messiah would return after a terrible **tribulation** (Zechariah 14).
- 2) There would be a **forerunner** telling of the coming Messiah.
- 3) The Messiah would come and establish His **Kingdom**.
- 4) A federation of nations **uniting** against the Messiah.
- 5) The destruction of those nations who come against the **Messiah**.
- 6) Jerusalem would be **restored**.
- 7) Jews **scattered** throughout the world would be brought back to Israel.
- 8) Jerusalem would become the **center of the world** and the nations of the world would obey the Lord.
- 9) With this new kingdom established by the Messiah would come a new **eternal age** of peace, righteousness, and divine glory.

In this timeline of future events there were **three things missing**. They did not see the **Messiah** coming the first time. They did not see his **sacrifice for sin**. They also were not looking at an **inward deliverance** from sin but only an outward deliverance from being conquered by other empires.

The Jewish people at the time of Christ were ready for the **Messiah**- they had been conquered by the Romans and out of nowhere **John the Baptist** showed up. Jesus then showed up teaching and healing folks. Jesus then has Psalm Sunday (Matthew 21:9), and Jesus' followers thought the nations would unite and come after the Messiah. This is where Jesus' ministry took a different turn- remember Jesus came to bring an **inward deliverance**.

### **Matthew 24:1-2 ESV**

*Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2But 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."*

Jesus leaves the temple to return to **Bethany** by way of the Mount of Olives. When leaving Jerusalem the disciples were **amazed by** the temple (which was one of the greatest buildings man had made back in the ancient world) {Mark 13:1; Luke 21:5}. Jesus makes the statement about the **temple**.

### **Verse 3**

*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?"*

Four of the disciples (Mark 13:3) Peter, James, John, and Andrew had come to Jesus and asked two questions; 1) When will this happen (the **destruction** of the temple)? 2) What will be the sign of your **coming** and of the end of the **age**?

Those two questions were **answered** by Christ in chapters 24 & 25 of Matthew- known as the Olivet Discourse.

It should be noted that the Olivet Discourse has nothing to do with **the church**. Jesus said He was going to build his church (Matthew 16:18). The questions these disciples were asking about were about **Israel**, Jerusalem, and the **Lord's second coming**.

Matthew does not record the answer the Lord gave referring to the first **question**. However, Luke does in Luke 21:20.

*"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near."*

What Jesus is speaking about is when **Rome destroyed** Jerusalem and the temple in **70 AD**. The famous historian Josephus said that the **destruction** was so complete it would be hard for anyone who saw Jerusalem after 70 AD to believe that **anyone** had lived there or that the **great temple** even existed there.

The disciples thought that the destruction of Jerusalem that Jesus spoke about would bring the Messiah and the **Kingdom**. They thought this **destruction** referred to Zechariah 14:1-2. Zechariah's reference and this destruction in 70 AD are **two separate** events. Another key to this passage was when **Jesus** went into the synagogue at the start of his ministry (Luke 4:18-21). During the service he read from **Isaiah 61:1-2** and stopped in the middle of verse 2. Not reading the rest of the verse which spoke of the day of **vengeance** of God. Jesus was saying that he came to preach the gospel and heal diseases this trip.

#### **Luke 4:18-21 ESV**

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
19to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."  
20And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all  
in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has  
been fulfilled in your hearing."*

#### **Isaiah 61:1-2 ESV**

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
2to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;*

In the **Tribulation** these things will occur:

#### **Verses 4-5**

*And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. 5For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.*

- 1) There always will be people **claiming** to be the Messiah- but in the end times it will **multiply greatly**. Jesus warns not to be led astray by these false messiahs- and Jesus says many will follow them.

### Verses 6-7

*And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.*

- 2) The second sign will be **hot wars** and **cold wars**. These conflicts will increase both in intensity and **numbers**- believers should not be in a state of fear when this happens because this must happen before **Jesus** comes back.
- 3) Along with false messiahs and wars there will be **famines** and **earthquakes**.
  - a) **Revelation 6:12-14** *When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, 13and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. 14The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.*

### Verse 8

*All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.*

The events Jesus is talking about does not mean a disastrous period in the history of the race. It is referring to the **beginning** of Christ coming back.

### Verse 9

*"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.*

- 4) There will also be **persecution** of believers that the world has never seen before.
  - a) **Will deliver**- means "giving over" and when used in a technical sense it refers to being **arrested** by the police or military.
  - b) In **Mark 13:9** *"But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them."* there are two groups mentioned. The **Gentile** authorities and the **Jewish** authorities- both groups will bring persecution.
  - c) Jesus' **followers** are **warned** the end times will mean serious trouble for them. They will be **hated** not for anything they have done but for being followers of **Christ** (Revelation 6:9-11).

### Verses 10-13

*And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*

- 5) Jesus is telling us that many people who **say** they are **believers** will leave. He also tells us the three reasons for leaving.
  - a) The price is **too high**.
  - b) Deception by **false teachers**
  - c) Sin will be too **attractive**
    - i) **1 John 2:19** *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*
- 6) Also, there will be lawlessness- the word **lawless** means "a **complete disregard** for laws" and probably refers to **man's** law and **God's** law (2 Timothy 3:1-5).
  - a) **The one who endures**- The ones who have **real faith** will **endure**, which is a proof of real salvation (John 8:31; Matthew 10:22; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2).

### Verse 14

*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.*

- 7) The last sign that we are in the end times; the **gospel** will be **proclaimed** throughout the world. There will be the **two witnesses**, there also will be the 144,000 Jewish Evangelists, and there will be an **angel** proclaiming the gospel (Revelation 14:6-7).

### Verse 15

*"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),*

What Jesus is describing here is the **timetable** that **Daniel** gives us in the book of Daniel.