

Matthew Chapter 24-25 – The Olivet Discourse – Part 6
Matthew 24:4-14 – Overview of Jacob’s Trouble

Matthew 24:4-14

In the first section, Jesus gives a very general run-through of the end times. Specifically, the Time of Jacob’s Trouble.

Verses 4-8 state that there will be many false christs, there will be wars and reports of wars, and there will be (supernatural) disasters. But this is not yet the end of the age.

Verses 9-14 provide what is going to happen nearer to the end of the age. Jesus tells them that there will be great persecution, many will “fall away” (deception, self-interest, and betrayal), the love for others is nearly non-existent, and this gospel of the kingdom will reach all nations.

Over the last two lessons, we asked the main question about this passage. When? Did these things take place? Are they taking place? Or will they take place in the future? Many people whom we all respect politely disagree. My conclusion is that all the information in Matthew 24-25 is about the Time of Jacob’s Trouble (The 70th Week of Israel; The Great Tribulation). Again, my conclusion is that none of this information pertains to the current age, the Church, or the time prior to the rapture of the Church.

We will evaluate this text with three criteria.

1. Consistent Literal (Normative) Grammatical Historical (Cultural) Method. Specifically, this is a book to Israel, and this must be read as to the mindset of the Hebrew believer **without** the revelation of Paul in mind.
2. Consistent with the revelation of Matthew and the main point of Matthew remaining intact.
3. Consistent harmony with Old Testament prophecy, Matthew 24-25, and Revelation 6-19.

Matthew 24:4-5

See to it – βλέπω blepo – look, observe, watch, careful observation.

Mislead – πλανάω planao – to cause to go astray from a specific way, literal or metaphorical; to proceed without a sense of proper direction.

Interestingly, Jesus begins a discussion about the end of the age with instructions about being aware and careful about being misled. The biggest peril for them is not the dangers from physical destruction or persecution, but rather of being misled.

The word “πλανάω plano” is used four times in Matthew 24 (4, 5, 11, 24). Jesus does not warn them before this. So why was this time different? The main problem was that Jesus would not be there, and the second problem was that many would come claiming to be Jesus.

In the Book of Matthew, we consider this passage to be directly applicable to the believing Remnant during the time of Jacob’s Trouble. Being led astray from God to false gods is in Israel’s history, and it is in their prophetic history as well. Hosea 4:12; Micah 3:5-12; Revelation 12:9, 13:14 – it is in these end times that deception is at its peak.

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The misleading is about false messiahs and false prophets. This is why Jesus tells them how He will return. It will be public, and it will be undeniable (Matthew 24:26-27).

Matthew 24:6 – Wars and Rumors of Wars

When we reviewed this passage a couple of lessons ago, we saw that this is an idiom that indicates wars near and wars far. Wars have happened since nations were created. We have conflict pre-flood, and there were wars in Scripture in Genesis and wars that have been surrounding Israel for their entire history. What makes this statement stand out in the Time of Jacob’s Trouble?

Micah 3:5 – This will be a holy war, driven by false religion.

Joel 2:1-10 – The army wars will be extremely terrifying, and an army like this has never been seen before in both, number, array, and ability. There will be nothing to do but faint.

Zechariah 14:1-2 – A conglomerate of nations will come against Jerusalem.

Revelation 6:3-4 – The second seal

Revelation 9:13-19 – The 200,000,000-man army

Of these things, they are told not to be frightened, for these things must take place. This is not just any war, but it is the war that signifies the end. But this is not yet the end.

Matthew 24:7 – National Conflicts, Earthquakes, and Famines

Once again, this has been the way of the world since the fall. Notice that this does not state that this will grow, be more frequent, or be more severe; rather, this points to specific prophecies. What makes these events signify that the end is nearing?

Nations and kingdoms in constant war - Reiteration

Micah 4:9-13 – Nations against the Nation

Earthquakes

Joel 2:10, 3:16

Haggai 2:6-7, 21

Revelation 6:12-14 – The sixth seal begins with a great earthquake.

This is not just a run-of-the-mill earthquake; this is the whole earth supernaturally shaken. This is a moment in history that will alter the landscape of the earth.

Famines

In the Hebrew Text, famine is known to be a curse from God on wicked nations (Ezekiel 14:12-13, 21).

Revelation 6:5-8 – Seals 3-4

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Again, these are not normal. These are obvious supernatural acts that will be known as judgment from God. If these were simply normal to the activity of man, these would not be signs. But these signs will indicate to the ignorant that the world is ending. The Messianic Jew or believer may interpret these events as the end of the Tribulation, but this is not the end. These are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Matthew 24:8 – Birth Pangs

The imagery of this verse is undeniable. This is the first part of the time of Jacob’s Trouble. Any mother would tell you that near the end of her pregnancy, she begins to have some pains, Braxton Hicks, false labors. At the time, for the first-time mom, it felt real. But those with experience will tell her that she will know when it’s time. This is not yet the end.

Jesus’ information about the time near the end gives a guide to what the Remnant is to expect and experience, but there are more and worse events to come.