

Matthew Chapter 24-25 – The Olivet Discourse – Part 11  
Matthew 24:23-31 – The Coming Christ – Deception vs. Reality

## Review

Matthew 24:4-31 is about the seven-year tribulation (Jacob's Trouble; Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week). Verses 4-14 are a general timeline for the entire seven years. Verse 15 steps back to the halfway point of the seven years and refers to the main prophetic sign of that time.

The abomination of desolation is fully explained in Daniel 9-12. This section informs the readers about what will happen in the last days between the prince that is to come (the king that does what he pleases, the false messiah, the man of lawlessness), unbelieving Israel (the many), and believing Israel (those who have insight, the Remnant).

- The false messiah will set up a treaty with Israel for seven years (one set of seven).
- The false messiah will convince the Nation of Israel to turn to godlessness. But there will be some who will recognize what is happening. They are referred to as those who have insight, The Remnant.
- The Remnant will try to convince the many (Nation of Israel), that this false messiah is evil, but they will be betrayed by the many and will be martyred.
- The false messiah will be confronted by ships from Kittim, and he will be enraged and violate the covenant halfway through the seven-year treaty.
- The false messiah will bring his people and invade Israel and Jerusalem; then they will set up the abomination of desolation.
- The abomination of desolation is signified by the false messiah who sets himself up as god; he is the epitome of an idolator, and he is an immoral person beyond all measure. He causes all to honor and worship him and will kill those who oppose him. He will parcel out Israel and Jerusalem for a price.
- Some of the Remnant will fall into corruption, but the remaining portion of the Remnant will either be martyred or flee to survive.
- This period will refine the Nation of Israel. The many will be destroyed, the fallen Remnant will be martyred, some of the Remnant will also be martyred, and there will be a portion of the Remnant that will survive until the Lord returns.
- The Remnant is told how long this period of great distress will be so they can endure until the end. Once they see the abomination of desolation, there will be 1290 days until the desolation is over. Then, there will be another 45 days until the true Messiah inaugurates His kingdom.
- The instruction to those who are in Judea at the time of the abomination of desolation is to flee and run for the mountains, and God will supernaturally safeguard them for 3 and one-half years, probably in the current region of Petra, Bozrah in the Hebrew text.
- They need to run because they will be persecuted beyond all measure; the death that will be experienced by Jewish believers (The Remnant) will be beyond all previous persecutions. The stress that will be placed on them will be tremendous, and the desire to be saved will increase exponentially.

### **Matthew 24:23-26 – Do Not Believe Them**

Jesus' next statement in this scenario is, "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him."

The conjunction *then* (τότε tote) is an adverb of time. In this context, it indicates a contemporaneous activity. At the time of the great persecution, there will be a great deception.

The great deception will be about false claims about the messiah. Notice that this is right after they are to run. Why would there be an influx of false messiah claims at this time? I think it is because the man of lawlessness is using false claims to draw out the Remnant from hiding.

Why would the Remnant be drawn to the false messiah(s)?

1. The advocacy of others – Notice that the false christs do not announce themselves but have others announce them. I suspect that those who announce the false messiahs are Jews who are either willing participants in betraying their brothers or are useful fools.
2. Great signs and wonders – The word "megas" is used as an attributive adjective. These are mega signs and wonders.
  - a. The Pharisees were given all the information and evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, but what did they want in the end? Matthew 16:1 – "The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven." Instead of paying attention to the Word of God, the Jews have a history of being deceived by "signs."
  - b. This will not be a sign that can be easily explained but will be great in nature. What will the signs be? Revelation 13:1-6, 11-18
    - i. Fatal wound healed
    - ii. Powerful in war
    - iii. Fire called down from heaven
    - iv. The image of the beast will speak

*Do not believe* – The signs and wonders are performed by the false messianic system to sure up the grip over the unbelievers, and the sign is so significant that it could deceive the Remnant. *If possible* is an accurate translation; this indicates that without the intervention of God, they would be deceived.

How does God intervene? He tells them in advance. Regardless of the "evidence" of divine powers, Jesus will have not yet returned.

Jesus is emphatic and repeats, "Do not believe." Why?

### **Matthew 24:26-31 – The Sign of the Coming of Jesus**

Verse 26-27 – The return of Jesus will not be hidden. When Jesus returns, there will be no doubt; there is no reason to question the return of Jesus because everyone will know. The return of Jesus will be overt and spectacular; it will be glorious and public; it will be rejoicing to those who love Him and

Matthew Chapter 24-25 – The Olivet Discourse – Part 11  
Matthew 24:23-31 – The Coming Christ – Deception vs. Reality

dread to those who hate Him, but all will see and understand that Jesus has returned. (Revelation 19:11-12)

Verse 28 – The return of Jesus will bring about a righteous judgment upon His enemies. There are many attempts at interpreting this verse, but the obvious cross-reference is Revelation 19:11-21. Jesus will come and destroy the enemies, and it will be vicious and gruesome.

Verse 29 – The return of Jesus will be accompanied by astronomical events. This must not be allegorized. The return of Jesus will be marked by the God of creation demonstrating power over all of creation, including the celestial bodies (Isiah 13:9-10; Joel 2:31).

Four celestial events –

1. Sun darkened
2. Moon has no light
3. Stars falling
4. Shaking of the heavens

Verse 30 – The return of Jesus will come from the sky, and all will see. There are questions about the sign of the Son of Man. Is this a separate event from the coming of Jesus? The most popular view among literalists is that the Shechinah will be in the sky for a time before His arrival.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days, there will be a total blackout with no light penetrating at all, followed by a sudden, glorious, tremendous light that will disperse the blackness. This Shechinah light will be the sign of the Second Coming of the Messiah. The light will be followed by the return of the Messiah Himself.” – Arnold Fruchtenbaum

Maybe. This is a good guess. But there is nothing in Scripture that validates this theory, but I also do not dismiss it. I think that Daniel 7:13-14 is a better understanding (Matthew 26:63-64).

Verse 31a – The return of Jesus will be announced by “angels” with great sounds (trumpets). The word *angel* means messenger. Is this a reference to the holy heavenly angels, or does this refer to the holy ones (glorified saints), or is it both? Personally, I think that this is both; the entirety of God’s spiritual creation, including all the glorified saints coming back with Him.

Verse 32b – The return of Jesus will end with the gathering of the Remnant. Is this the rapture? Some think it is. It is not. Next week, we will look at the view that this is the rapture and compare and contrast it with what the Bible actually says.