

The Sermons of Jesus

Lesson 6

The Olivet Discourse

Tuesday night of the Passion Week – The religious leaders had rejected Christ and tried to discredit Him. Jesus denounced them in Matthew 23, turned His back on Jerusalem and told them that their house (temple) is left desolate. The kingdom would be postponed, but eventually Jesus would return as a conquering king to judge the world and set up the kingdom.

1. As they left the temple and were going out of Jerusalem, what did the disciples stop to marvel at (Math 24:1; Mark 13:1; Luke 21:5)? What prophecy about the temple did Jesus make at that time (Math 24:2)? When did this come true (Luke 21:20)? What three questions did His disciples ask privately (Math 24:3)? Where were they by then? Therefore, what is this great sermon called?
2. In Mathew's gospel, the author does not record the answer to the temple question. He answers the other two questions initially by telling what the signs will not be (24:4-7). Should we trust what people say about when these things will occur (v. 4)? Will there be many false Christs between now and then (v. 5)? What other events will be quite normal and repeated during the time between Jesus' first and second coming (v. 6-7)? For the last 2,000 years, have there been many wars, famines or earthquakes around the world? Why do you think people always want to expect the end of the world based on these common events?
3. In Math 24:8, He clearly is using the "But" to say "these things" do not mean the second coming. Verse 9 marks a transition to a different time in the future which begins to answer their questions of v.3. What will they be "delivered" to at that time (v.9)? Will their lives be at risk? What will be the attitude of "all nations" toward them? Therefore, is Jesus predicting a time just before His second coming of intense persecution (Math 24:21)?
4. There has always been speculation and some difference of opinion on who Jesus is referring to when He says "you" in Math 24:9, 15, 23, 25. Jesus is speaking directly to whom (Mark 13:3)? What is their nationality? What city have they been in that prompted this prophecy (Luke 21:24)? Paul later said that it was a mystery never before told that the gospel would be offered to the Gentiles and the church would be made up of both Jews and Gentiles (Eph 3:1-7; Rom 16:25-26; Col 1:25-27; I Cor 12:13). Therefore, since Jesus is talking to Jews in Jerusalem about Jerusalem and no one at that time had any idea that Gentiles would eventually be "grafted in" (Rom 11:17-19), who or what group of people is Jesus referring to as "you" in Math 24:9?

5. Math 24:13 must be interpreted in the context of Chapter 24 and in conjunction with v.22 and 31. The Jewish people alive in “those days” (v.22) of “great tribulation” (v.21) will be saved physically by what great event (Math 24:29-31)? During that time of great persecution and distress, what great world-wide spiritual movement will take place, according to v. 14?

6. Jesus gives an initial answer to their original question on “what will be the sign of the end of the age” in Math 24:15. In doing so, Jesus confirms the prophecy of Daniel that the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem will be desecrated by the great world leader of that future day (Dan 9:27, 11:31, 12:11). What is the sign? Once this sign is revealed, how much time will there be before the end (Dan 12:11)? How does Paul describe this future event in 2 Thes 2:3-4?

7. Even during this future time of unprecedented “tribulation” (v.21), will false Christs and prophets still be on the religious scene deceiving people (v.23-24)? Is there even a remote chance that any of these could be real (v.26)? How sure, how apparent, how obvious will the return of the real Christ be (Math 24:27-31)? Does it sound like the second coming of Christ can be counterfeited?

8. Matthew 24:28 is a difficult passage. It may be a proverb of that time similar to “where there’s smoke, there’s fire.” Possibly it could be a reference to the great feast of Rev 19:17-18 at the battle of Armageddon. Who is invited to come and eat? What do they eat? Is there any distinction as to class, rank or wealth (Rev 19:17-18)?

9. The son of Man is the prophetic, apocalyptic name for the Messiah first given by Daniel the prophet, which Jesus uses here for Himself at the second coming. When the Son of Man comes back, will anyone doubt Him again (Math 24:30)? What did Paul write would be the universal response to Jesus at that time (Phil 2:10-11)? Who will Jesus send His angels to gather in Math 24:31?

10. In Math 24:36, exactly when did He say all this will take place? When His disciples asked Him later after the resurrection, what did He say (Act 1:7)? What analogy did Jesus use to describe the condition of the world and general attitude of people just prior to His coming (Math 24:37-39)? Noah preached for a long time and no one believed him (2 Peter 2:5). In the future, just before the return of Christ, will the world be expecting Him (Math 24:39)? Based on the parables Jesus told immediately after the prophecy about being ready, alert and faithful, what was His main purpose in revealing the future (Math 24:42; 44, 25:13)?