

# Eschatology

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## The Olivet Discourse

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples (Peter, James, John, and Andrew) came to Him privately, saying “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”  
- Matt. 24:3

The primary purpose of the discourse was to answer the disciple’s questions:

1. When will the temple be destroyed?
2. When will Jesus return again?
3. What will be the sign of Jesus’ return and the end of the age?

The answer to the first question is answered, not in Matthew, but in Luke 21:20-24. This portion of the discourse had to do with the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in 70 A.D.

The entire passage in Matthew 24 & 25 was written to answer the question of the sign of Messiah’s coming, which would terminate the end of the age. The Lord is giving the course of the end of the age prior to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, as it relates to Israel and her program. This program is developed in strict chronological order.

“No question is of greater importance in the understanding of the Olivet Discourse than the method of its interpretation.”  
- J D Pentecost

There are three major methods of interpreting the discourse:

I. Amillennialist :

All events of the discourse have been fulfilled. the great tribulation is a thing of the past and the Lord Jesus came again in the destruction of the of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D.

II. Post-tribulation Rapturist:

The first predictions of the discourse is to be applied to the current Church Age, in which we are living in now. They maintain that the church is to remain on the earth in this end of age and to pass through the great tribulation, and therefore the exhortations contained in the latter chapters are meant for Christians living in the end of the age.

III. Pre-tribulation Rapturist:

This literal method of translation looks upon the predictions about the end of the Jewish age as being still future. When we look at the prophecy schemes as a whole and place them into their proper context, we realize that this method is the correct and only key to understanding the Olivet Discourse verses.

Overview of the chronology of events:

The outline of events in the first 3½ years of the tribulation period.

The outline of events in the last 3½ years of the tribulation period.

The second advent of the Lord Jesus.

The re-gathering of Israel.

The illustrative parables.

The judgment on Israel.

The judgment of the Gentile nations.

“Birthing Pangs” (Matt 24:4-8; Mark 13:5-8; Luke 21:8-9)

1. “For many will come in My name, saying “I am the Christ, and will mislead many.” (1<sup>st</sup> Seal of Rev. 6: 1-2)
2. “You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars, for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Seal of Rev. 6: 3-4)
3. “There will be famines.” (3<sup>rd</sup> Seal of Rev. 6: 5-6)
4. “There will be pestilence/plagues.” (4<sup>th</sup> Seal of Rev. 6: 7-8)

During the first 3½ years of the tribulation, Israel will dwell in relative safety under the false covenant with the anti-Christ (Dan 9:27).

“Great Tribulation” (Matt 24:9-26; Mark 13:9-23; Luke 21:12-24)

Matthew 9-14 gives us big picture “snap-shot” of the second 3½ years of the tribulation period, referred to as the great tribulation.

Verses 15-26 of Matthew give the details within the “snap-shot” of vs. 9-14:

In the middle of the week (Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup>) great persecution will break out (v.9; Rev. 12:12-17) because of the Desolator (v.15; 2 Thess.2; Rev. 13:1-10), who will cause Israel to flee from the land (vs. 16-20). Unbelieving Israel will be deceived by the false prophet (v.11; Rev. 13:11-18) and go into apostasy (v.12; 2 Thess.2:11). Believing Israel will be a witnessing people, carrying the good news that these events herald the approach of the Messiah (v.14). This period will be Terminated by the second advent of the Messiah (v.27).

“And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.”

-Matt. 24:30

The Second Advent of Jesus (Matt. 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28)

Following the description of the tribulation period Jesus carries the chronology of events a step further by describing the Second Advent.

It is here that Jesus answers the question of the disciples “What will be the sign of your return and the end of the age?” Matthew 24:30 is His answer.

The Re-gathering of Israel (Matt. 24:31; Deut. 30:3-4; Ezek. 20:37-38, 37:1-14)

“And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.” (Mark 13:27)

The Parables (Matt. 24:32-25:46; Mark 13:28-37; Luke 21:29-36)

**Parable of the fig tree:** The fig tree is used as a natural illustration. Because the fig tree by its nature brings forth leaves late in spring, if one sees leaves on a fig, it is evidence that summer is very near. Therefore, when the preceding events of Matt 24 occur, “**Be ready.**”

**Parable of the ten virgins:** Refer back to page 18 of your notes for A refresher on the three stages of a traditional Jewish wedding.

Jesus is using this illustration to focus on the virgin guests (Israel) to the wedding (marriage supper of the Lamb). This parable was relatable to all of Israel because all knew the wedding stages and the related traditions. Again, Jesus is stressing, “**Be ready.**”

**Parable of the Talents:** When put into its proper context of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus is addressing the issue of Israel’s faith. The “wicked, lazy servant” is the focus of this parable. The reason that the master was so hard on this servant was because the servant indicated that he had serious doubts that the master would return. Again this is a warning to Israel to “**Be ready**”, unlike the First Advent of their Messiah and don’t doubt His return. (2 Peter 3:3-4)

### Israel's Judgment

God's judgment upon Israel is anticipated in Matt. 24:28:

Unbelieving Israel is likened to a lifeless corpse, which is turned over to the vultures. In the Old Testament, this is always a sign of judgment.

This judgment is expanded in Matt. 25:10 with the preparedness of the virgins.

The parable of the talents further illustrates that Israel will indeed be judged at the Second Advent of Jesus to determine who will go into the Millennium and who will be excluded. (Also, Ezek. 20: 33-38)

### Gentile Nations Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46)

This is a judgment to determine who among the living Gentile peoples will be permitted to "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (v. 25:34)

This judgment has been preceded by a time in which the sealed 144,000 and the believing remnant of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel have preached the gospel of the kingdom. This judgment determines the response of the individual to this preaching.

The "sheep" are the believers and the "goats" are the non-believers.

Therefore, in the Olivet Discourse, the Lord Jesus has given us a chronology of the events of the 70<sup>th</sup> week (Daniel). His chronology is an accurate guide in interpreting the sequence of events during this period.

**"But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance." (Mark 13:23)**

Having a solid understanding of the Olivet Discourse is extremely important for us to navigate through and understand how the events of REVELATION fit into Eschatology.