

Lesson 18: The Olivet Discourse And the Seal Judgments

1. Jesus' Prophecy on the Mount of Olives (The Olivet Discourse)

a. This is covered in three of the four Gospels:

- i. Matthew 24 & 25
- ii. Mark 13
- iii. Luke 21:5-36

b. **Note: The scriptural text used in this study is a blend of what we see in the three gospels that covered the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:1-44, Mark 13:1-37 and Luke 21:5-36)**

c. **Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple**

- i. Then Jesus departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. Some were commenting how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and donations. Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these great buildings? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

d. **Disciples Questions to Jesus:**

- i. Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, some of the disciples (Peter, James, John, and Andrew) 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?"
 - a. Question 1: When will these things be?
 - 1. This refers to the destruction of the Temple.
 - 2. Was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.
 - b. Question 2: What will be the sign of Your coming?
 - 1. This refers to the second coming not the rapture.
 - c. Question 3: What will be the signs of the end of the age?
 - 1. This means what will be the signs that take us to the Millennial Kingdom.

e. **Jesus Answers:**

i. **These questions are referring to the second coming of Christ not the rapture of the church.**

- a. To this point Finis Dake writes: "This question does not concern the rapture, but the second coming of Christ to earth with the saints. The disciples knew nothing of the rapture for that was reserved for Paul to reveal (1 Cor. 15:51-58) as we have seen in [Revelation] Chapter Six. They had often heard of the second coming, Mt. 18:1; 19:28; etc. This is further proven by Lk. 21:29-33. (Dake)"

ii. **If these refer to the second coming of Christ and not the rapture, why should we study them now instead of in later studies in Revelation?**

- a. Matthew 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.
- b. The Passion Bible Translation: "This is how the first contractions and birth pains of the new age will begin."

- c. The Amplified Bible reads: All this is but the beginning [the early pains] of the birth pains [of the intolerable anguish].
- d. Rick Renner writes in his book Signs You'll See Just Before Jesus Comes. (Renner)
 - 1. "In Matthew 24:4-7, Jesus catalogued a list of signs that would confirm the end of the age and His return was at hand. These signs are occurrences Jesus said would happen with greater frequency and intensity as we approach nearer and nearer to the wrap-up of the last days."
 - 2. "The word "sorrows" in Matthew 24:8 is translated from the very same Greek word that is used to describe the contractions a pregnant woman experiences as the time of her delivery draws near. Although there are exceptions, it is generally true that in the beginning stages of labor, a woman's contractions are spaced sporadically apart. Those early labor pains unpredictably come and go with irregularity. But as she comes closer to her moment of delivery, those contractions occur more frequently and with greater regularity and intensity as her body prepares for the task of bringing a baby into the world."
 - 3. "Jesus used this phrase "the beginning of sorrows" to tell us that as this period entered its last phases, the signs He was about to enumerate would occur irregularly at first. But by using the word "sorrows" — the very Greek word for a woman in travail — Christ was telling us that when the moment of His return and the conclusion of the age is right upon us, these signs will occur with greater regularity and intensity, almost like a woman in the pains of childbirth. Finally, when it seems the pace and pain of these events can grow no worse, this period will end, Christ will come, and a new prophetic time period will be birthed."
 - 4. "According to Jesus, these last-days "contractions" will begin slowly at first, just like the early stages of labor for a pregnant woman. Then these events will occur closer and closer together — like birth pains — until they will seem like they're happening rapid-fire, one after another."
 - 5. "...these "sorrows" will be felt in the earth's atmosphere, in the physical structure of the earth, in politics, in world events, and in society at large, especially as this age wraps up in its final moments."
- e. These signs will find final fulfillment during the tribulation and ending with the second coming of Christ. However, the labor leading to the birthing of all these things has already shown the first pains of labor,

- f. As time gets closer to the rapture and the start of the tribulation the frequency and intensity of the signs will continue.
- g. To this point Finis Dake writes: “from the first sign to the last, there is to be an increase of these sorrows. They are to last throughout the whole Week. Perhaps they will begin sometime before the Week, for Israel seems to be persecuted when Antichrist makes the covenant with her to protect her for seven years, Dan. 9:27.” (Dake)

iii. **Jesus prophesied that just before the final wrap-up of this age, we would see:**

- a. widespread deception
- b. signs in the heavens
- c. economic instability
- d. great seismic activity
- e. legal prosecution of Christians
- f. warring political systems
- g. imprisonment of believers
- h. emergence of false prophets
- i. the love of many waxing cold
- j. famines
- k. wars
- l. persecution
- m. pestilences
- n. commotions
- o. ethnic conflicts
- p. fearful sights
- q. unknown diseases
- r. rumors of wars (Renner)(outline Adapted)
- s. Notes:
 - 1. All of these events or conditions that will escalate in the last days of the age. Of course, these things have been occurring *throughout the ages* — but Jesus forecasted that these particular signs would *escalate in intensity* as we approached the very end of the age. (Renner)
 - 2. ... Jesus did not list these foreshadowings to scare us, but to prepare those of us who would be living in the wrap-up of the age. His intention was that we would be able to victoriously withstand the storms that are gathering in the times directly ahead. (Renner)
 - 3. These signs have the potential to either trouble our hearts or ignite our faith. (Renner)
 - 4. Our faith should be ignited. God has chosen s to live in these very last days.

iv. **False Christ and deception:**

- a. False Messiahs before the middle of the Week, Mt. 24:4-5; Mk. 13:5-6; Lk. 21:8 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that you

are not deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and 'The time has drawn near.' and will deceive many. Therefore, do not go after them.

- b. Note: Matthew 24:3 lines up with the first seal as we see the rider on a white horse - the spirit of antichrist.
- c. **Rev. 6:1-2 (NKJV)** Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

v. **The sign of Wars and Commotions:**

- a. Wars and rumors of wars, Mt. 24:6; Mk. 13:7; Lk. 21:9. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars and commotions. See that you are not troubled or terrified; for all these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.
- b. Nations against nations, Mt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:10. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
- c. Note: Matthew 24:6 lines up with the opening of the second seal when we see the rider on the red horse. This rider has a great sword – a weapon of war.
- d. **Rev. 6:3-4 (NKJV)** When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

vi. **Whole of Creation affected:**

- a. Famines, pestilences and earthquakes, Mt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences;
- b. Fearful sights and distress on earth, Lk. 21:11. and there will be fearful sights
- c. Great signs in the heavens, Lk. 21:11; Acts 2:16-21. and great signs from heaven.
- d. Note: Matthew 24:7 lines up with the third and fourth seal. Here we see the rider on the black horse that brings famine and the pale horse that brings much death through the sword and hunger etc.
- e. **Rev. 6:5-6 (NKJV)** When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So, I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."
- f. **Rev. 6:7-8 (NKJV)** When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." So, I looked, and

behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

vii. Birth Pains:

- a. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

viii. Persecution of believers:

- a. Persecution of the Jews by all nations, Mt. 24:9; Mk. 13:9-11; Lk. 21:12. But watch out for yourselves. Before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. When they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry as it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore, settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.
- b. Note: Matthew 24:8-9 lines up with the fifth seal where we see martyrs under the altar in heaven.
- c. **Rev. 6:9-11 (NKJV)** When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

ix. Betrayal and Hatred:

- a. Many offences and betrayals, Mt. 24:10; Mk. 13:12-13; Lk. 21:16. You will be betrayed even by parents, children, brothers, relatives and friends; and by their betrayal they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost.
- b. Note: this is part of the reason some are charged with a sentence of death.

x. False Prophets Deceive Many Resulting in Lawlessness:

- a. False prophets before the middle of the Week, Mt. 24:11, 15; Dan. 9:27. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.
- b. Iniquity abounding and love waxing cold, Mt. 24:12. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

xi. Gospel preached to all:

- a. The gospel of the kingdom to be preached again as a witness to all nations, Mt. 24:13-14. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

xii. Abomination of Desolation:

- a. The abomination of desolation set up, Mt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27; 12:7-11; Rev. 13:1-18; 14:9-11; 20:4-6. Therefore, when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not - in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand). But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.

xiii. Israel flees to safety:

- a. Flight of Israel into the wilderness, Mt. 24:16-20; Mk. 13:14-18; Isa. 16:1-5; Ezek. 20:33-35; Hos. 2:14-16; Ps. 60:8-10. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

xiv. Great Tribulation:

- a. The great tribulation days, Mt. 24:21-22; Mk. 13:19-20. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations.

xv. Times of the Gentiles:

- a. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

xvi. Another Warning about False Christ:

- a. False Messiahs and Prophets after the middle of the Week, Mt. 24:23-26; Mk. 13:21-22. "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. "Therefore, if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

xvii. Signs of the Second Coming of Christ:

- a. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

- b. Note: Matthew 24:29 lines up with the sixth seal that refers to the devastation that occurs at the Second Coming of Christ.
- c. **Rev. 6:12-17 (NKJV)** I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

xviii.

Reaping of the Earth:

- a. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other - from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

xix.

The Fig Tree:

- a. "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So, you also, when you see all these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

xx.

No One Knows the Day and Hour:

- a. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

xxi.

Days of Noah:

- a. Conditions of the days of Noah repeated Mt. 24:37-39.
But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

xxii.

WATCH!

- a. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.
- b. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

- c. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.
- d. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch! Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.
- e. Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.
- f. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

2. The Parables Unique to Matthew:

a. The Parable of the Faithful and the Evil Servant:

i. **Matthew 24:45-51 (NKJV):**

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

b. The Parable of the Ten Virgins

i. **Matthew 25:1-13 (NKJV):** "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

He answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of

Man is coming.

3. The Last Days of Preparation before the rapture:

- a. Increase of false prophets and religious compromise within the church
 - i. Mt 24:4-5, 10-11, 24; Lk 18:8; 2Th 2:3; 1Ti 4:1; 2 Ti 3:1, 13; 4:3-4; 2Pe 2:1-3; 3:3-4
- b. Increase of crime and disregard of God's law
 - i. Mt 24:12, 37-39; Lk 17:26-30; 18:8; 1Ti 4:1; 2Ti 3:1-8
- c. Increase of wars, famines and earthquakes
 - i. Mt 24:6-8; Mk 13:7-8; Lk 21:9
- d. Decrease in love and family affection
 - i. Mt 10:21; 24:12; Mk 13:12; 2Ti 3:1-3
- e. More severe persecution of God's people
 - i. Mt 10:22-23; 24:9-10; Mk 13:13; Jn 15:19-20; 16:33; Ac 14:22; Ro 5:3
- f. Those who stand firm will be saved
 - i. Mt 24:13; Mk 13:13
- g. Gospel will be preached to the whole world
 - i. Mt 24:14; Mk 13:10
- h. The Spirit will be poured out on God's people
 - i. Ac 2:17-21, 38-39 Jude 1:24 (Fire Bible: A Study Bible for Spirit-led Living, 2001) (Outline Adapted)

Works Referenced:

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