

# The Olivet Discourse

Bob Faulkner

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## DEDICATION

To those who believe that every Word from God matters.

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Preface:

I believe it is acceptable to suggest that a beginning of the study of the coming again of Christ should be where the disciples began, with a simple question. That simple question was given by Jesus a detailed, but equally simple, answer – when analyzed carefully. It is this question and answer that I wish to present to God's people for their study.

Here then is the Olivet Discourse, in its fullness, portions of which were heard by the apostle Matthew and by the disciples Mark and Luke, via their apostolic companions. All heard from the Holy Spirit and were told to write and pass on this very important message.

Why is it that so few care to delve into the prophecies? That answer is simple also: confusion abounds. And when one does the research and comes up with a conclusion, he will be silenced so as not to cause division in the assembly.

Understood.

But I will speak anyway. I do hope some will listen. The subject is not just a simple matter of discussion. For some it could be a matter of life or death... at the least, severe disappointment.

Bob Faulkner, 2022

## The Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21

(NASB)

### THE SETTING

#### 1. Before and after the discourse:

**Before.** *Mark and Luke record the story of the widow's mite after which Jesus leaves the temple. Matthew simply records the fact of his leaving. But together it is clear that all are speaking of the same event.*

**After.** *All three writers point to the coming Passover feast and go on to describe the awful events of the trial and crucifixion etc.*

*The words of Matthew 24 (and 25!), Mark 13, and Luke 21, must be seen as one message and every word must be gleaned for the benefit of His followers.*

#### 2. The comment that began the entire discourse.

24:1. Jesus left the temple *area* and was going *on His way* when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

13:1. As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples \*said to Him, "Teacher, look!

What wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”

21:5. And while some were talking about the temple, that it was decorated with beautiful stones and votive gifts,

*Though one disciple may have begun the entire discussion, all joined in, marveling at the wonder of Herod’s refurbished temple. This observation follows Jesus’ scathing remarks against the present rulers of this edifice, and the story of a woman whose entire livelihood was being swallowed up by the owners. Perhaps the disciple was questioning Jesus’ remarks by mentioning that, at least, the temple itself was a worthy object of commendation. Jesus’ response must have amazed them.*

**3. Jesus’ response to the comment of the disciple(s).**

24:2. But He responded and said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not *one* stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”

13:2. And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”

21:6. [He said] “*As for* these things which you are observing, the days will come when there will not be left *one* stone upon another, which will not be torn down.”

*Mark continues to relate that it was one man who questioned and one man to whom Jesus responded. But there is no doubt that all the disciples were keenly interested in the topic and are included as though they themselves had asked the question. Also, literalists will have to reject the oft-quoted interpretation of this prophecy as referring only to the events of A. D. 70, when the devastation of Jerusalem indeed looked like Jesus says here.*

*Why? There is an entire wall still standing to this day, known to us as the "wailing wall," but to the Jews as the Western Wall, letting us believe that the ultimate fulfillment of Jesus' words is still in our future. It is always best to allow prophetic words to carry us where they need to carry us, and not jump off the train before they reach their destination. I believe that as the prophecy unfolds, it will become clear that a fulfillment only forty years after the prediction will not satisfy the text.*

#### **4. The transition from the Temple to the Mount of Olives.**

24:3a. And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives,

13:3a. As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple,

*Luke omits this transition altogether and hastens to the questions now forming in the curious minds of the disciples. The Mount of Olives is a ridge located near the Temple Mount, and it is said that to this day it is the best place to view that holy place. Jesus and*

*His disciples climbed to that vantage point as the discussion unfolded about the temple's future. When they all were seated there, the questions and explanations poured out. Hence the name "Olivet Discourse" for this incredible look into the future.*

*From the verse that follows it would seem that Jesus arrived at Olivet moments before the disciples. From the beginning of their lives together, Jesus knew how to intrigue His students with statements and inquiries. They were true followers though, and on cue they scrambled up that hillside to find out what He was talking about.*

#### **5. The questioners.**

24:3b. The disciples came to Him privately, saying,

13:3b. Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,

21:7a. They questioned Him, saying,

*See how specific is Mark in telling us the names of the four disciples most closely related to Christ, often called (though usually without Andrew) His "inner circle." They were the ones leading the session of questions and answers that is to follow.*

#### **6. The questions.**

24:3c. "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

13:4. “Tell us, when will these things come about, and what *will be* the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?”

21:7b. “Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”

*When will come to pass the thing you just mentioned, the tearing down of the temple buildings to the very individual stones? And how will we know we are getting close to that event? And according to Matthew, they tied this horrible time – rightly, I believe – to the time of His coming at the end of the present age. Knowing what the disciples asked is critical to understanding the Master’s answer. The disciples saw the end of the world as we know it in the simple declaration of Jesus that the destruction of the temple was coming. There is no necessary connection between the two, but they made the connection and Jesus didn’t deny it. What follows is indeed a description, eventually, of the end. But He leads them first through the centuries of history that lead up to it.*

## NOT THE END

### 7. An initial warning.

24:4. And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you."

13:5. And Jesus began to say to them, "See to it that no one misleads you."

21:8a. And He said, "See to it that you are not misled."

*How telling is it that the very first response of the Master is one of warning about false teachers who will come along and try to steer the church into misunderstandings about His coming! How precious ought every Word of Scripture be to us when we realize there are so many trying to deceive us! Paul adds his own warning along these lines to the Thessalonian church a few years later:*

*"Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit, or a message, or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. No one is to deceive you in any way! For it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction... (2 Thessalonians 2:2-3).*

**8. Not the end 1: Many will come in My Name.**

24:4. "For many will come in My name, saying I am the Christ, and they will mislead many people."

13:6. "Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and they will mislead many."

21:8b. "for many will come in My name, saying, I am He,' and 'the time is near.' Do not go after them."

*Interesting is the fact that "He" is in italics in Mark and Luke. The "I Am" people will surface, claiming to be God Himself, the Messiah from Heaven long promised. Attached to the false prophecy in Luke is what seems to be a separate declaration, namely that the time is close at hand when Jesus will come. We have heard this among God's people forever, but there will be special people rising up "under the anointing" - as they say - saying that at a certain day and time, Jesus will appear. Anyone reading this comment knows that such persons have occurred throughout all history, including recent times. Such a mockery of truth, yet never without a following.*

*The bottom line from these first predictions is that none of this is a sign of the end that the disciples had asked for, except in the most generic of terms. Since men have been saying they are the Messiah in every century, none of them can be taken as the final sign of the final appearance of Jesus. He is slowly leading up to the main event by canceling out those events that will seem to be fulfillments but are not.*

**9. Not the end 2: Wars and rumors of wars.**

24:6a. "And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars."

13:7a. "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars..."

21:9a. "And when you hear of wars and revolts..."

*Every time a war erupts anywhere there are prophecy "experts" willing to tell us that the end is near. Not so, says Jesus... It would seem that Jesus here is talking about wars within the Empire, raised by the Empire, as opposed to the later time in history, when the breaking up of the Empire would create independent nations that would rise against each other.*

**10. False alarms. False Messiahs and endless wars.**

24:6b. "See that you are not alarmed, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end."

13:7b. "... do not be alarmed; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end."

21:9b. "... do not be alarmed; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately."

*Clear enough. False prophets and wars are not the end.*

### **11. International war.**

24:7a. "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom..."

13:8a. "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom..."

21:10. Then He continued by saying unto them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom..."

*Luke indicates there is a break in the lesson here, as Jesus sees further down the annals of our history, to the breaking up of world empires into competing nations. Note that to this day there are in the world people groups that identify as "nations" and others as kingdoms, complete with King. And many of them will be dissatisfied with the land they supervise.*

*Putin's massacre in Ukraine is only the latest (2022) of such evils. While everyone is shouting "Gog and Magog"! The end is near! The student of the Bible calmly looks at the words of Jesus and says, Yes, He was right again. But the end is not near because of that. This is not a sign.*

### **12. Famines and Earthquakes**

24:7b. "And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places."

13:8b. "There will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines."

21:11a. "There will be massive earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines;"

*Again we are faced with phenomena that take place in every generation. But if the added mention of “birth pains” to follow is to be connected here to these two occurrences, it must be stated that indeed these “pains,” as with the mother’s, are increasing worldwide.*

*Earthquakes:*

*“Data compiled by the US government’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows that the number of earthquakes per year has seen significant variation, but **the overall trend shows an increasing frequency** May 14, 2015” [MINT website, [livemint.com](http://livemint.com)].*

*Is famine increasing in the world?*

*“After steadily declining for a decade, **world hunger is on the rise, affecting 9.9 percent of people globally**. From 2019 to 2020, the number of undernourished people grew by as many as 161 million, a crisis driven largely by conflict, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic” [[actionagainsthunger.org](http://actionagainsthunger.org)].*

### **13. Terrible sights and signs.**

21:11b. “... and there will be terrible sights and great signs from heaven.”

*Only Luke records this portion of the prophecy. He will be diverging in other ways soon. Could this be referring to airborne missiles, the space program, nuclear testing? Hiroshima?*

**14. Birth pains.**

24:8. "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains."

13:8c. "These things are only the beginning of birth pains."

*Here Luke is quiet, but the point is made without him. By this portion of the list we are entering the latter days of the latter days. Nations rising, earthquakes rattling, famines devastating. This will be the picture of things as we enter the last stages of earth history. But still the warning: This is only the beginning of the end, not the end itself. Don't jump too far too fast. Some other significant events must take place. Now we must start listening very carefully as he speaks about "you."*

**15. Wait. Back up!**

21:12a. "But before all these things..."

*But wait: Luke tells us we must back up. He's not just in the end times after all. Before the terrible signs and the increasing natural problems and the international wars. In fact, from the beginning of the church's history and stretching down through the centuries until its final hours there is a sign of His coming we must not forget. It is about the disciples of all ages.*

**16. Believers arrested, brought to trial, and killed.**

24:9a. "Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you."

13:9. "But be on your guard; for they will hand you over to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them."

21:12-b, 13-15. "...they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, turning you over to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors on account of My name."

*The accounts begin to diverge even more, but it seems to me that these first mentions of persecution are directed to the men in front of Jesus, which in spirit had to include the coming apostle Paul. They were handed over to rulers of their day. James was killed outright. Paul was flogged, and stood before kings and governors. The location of much of this persecution being the synagogues, we seem to be in first century Israel. But the account does not stay there.*

#### **17. The testimony of the disciples.**

13:11. "And when they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you at that time; for you are not the ones speaking, but it is the Holy Spirit."

21:13. "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves. For I will provide you eloquence and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to oppose or refute."

*Surely these verses have been used to apply to all of Christ's prisoners of all time, but there is no clear evidence that we are yet out of the first century until the next predictions.*

**18. Apostasy and Family betrayal.**

24:10-11. "And at that time many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will rise up and mislead many people. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will become cold."

13:12. "And brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death."

21:16. "But you will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, other relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death..."

*We still see the word "you," at least in Luke, indicating that family betrayal could happen among the families of the apostles. We know for a fact that such traitorous acts have taken place in families over the ages. Jews and Muslims and Buddhists and others have been known to rape and destroy and kill family members who dared leave the faith of their fathers.*

*The church family also will suffer reversals. A great falling away, predicted also by Paul, will encompass the earth before Jesus' return. No, a great revival will not usher in the return of Christ, but a great apostasy. We have been witnessing this scene*

*worldwide and now in our own nation for many decades. How far into the depths of separation from the ways of God that men in and out of the church can go, we are not sure. But the falling away is underway.*

*Still, the absolute end is not in sight here. The sign they have asked for has not been uttered. One does not know how deep the betrayal in home and family will become. But when you see this happening, and the slide towards separation from God continuing, know that it cannot be long before Jesus returns.*

**19. Hated by all.**

24:9b. "...and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."

13:13a. "And you will be hated by everyone because of My name."

21:17. "... and you will be hated by all people because of My name."

*There is agreement here by the three writers, though the statement does not follow an exact sequence in all. The use of "nations" by Matthew is our cue, I believe, that Jesus is now seeing well beyond the view of His present band of disciples to the "you" of the later days, when nation after nation will turn against Christ and His message. Behold Europe today. Behold America in its last throes of freedom and holiness as I write these words. All nations will at one time or another come against Jesus and Jesus' people.*

**20. Endurance enjoined and promised.**

24:13. "But the one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved."

13:13b. "...but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."

21:18-19. "And yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives."

*Here the accounts differ. Jesus said all of this, but different writers picked up only a part. Luke lets us know that we will indeed endure to the end, and by way of a resurrected body will lose nothing of value for our stance against the evil one. God puts into His people a desire and ability to endure all things. This fact must color the seemingly cold demands of Matthew and Mark. It is not that we are capable of such endurance in our own strength. But strength will be given us as needed.*

*Here is the first mention of "the end." The end of this world's government, before the government of Christ is ushered in. The end of the suffering and the shame. The end of antichrist.*

*More about the end now follows as the prophecy comes to a climactic moment.*

**21. Worldwide proclamation of the Gospel.**

24:14. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."

13:10. "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations."

*Notice Mark's addition of the word "first." Before this last array of serious persecution is leveled at the disciples of Christ, there is a worldwide preaching of the Gospel. Matthew does not deny this by putting his statement last in the paragraph, but together we should read this unlike it is being read today, that at the very end of the age there will be of necessity a once for all preaching of Jesus.*

*This gospel has been preached in all the world for these centuries. As far as we can tell, using the idea of "nations" and not individual people groups within those nations, this prophecy could be fulfilled today. The ambiguity of the statement makes it an unlikely answer to the original question of the disciples about a "sign" that His coming is near, along with the destruction of Jerusalem.*

*True, the end will come when the Gospel has reached its last audience, but how will we know when that has happened? Not clear. But very clear is the specific material Jesus now enters.*

*So thus far we have a series of things that people will see as the approaching end, which are not to be seen that way at all. False Messiahs and deceivers, wars, famines, earthquakes, apostasy, hatred, killing of believers... it's all coming. And it's all come. Most of it, from the beginning. Surely this was not the truth*

*they were after. But were they still listening now? Are we still listening now? A very specific sign is now given, and can be looked for, and understood. When we see it, we will know... no more guesswork, no more scanning the newspapers wondering if Jesus is coming soon. EARS OPEN.*

## THE BEGINNING of the END

### **22. *The sign: The abomination of desolation.***

24:15. “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place – let the reader understand – ..”

13:14a. “ Now when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be – let the reader understand – ...”

21:20. “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.”

*Finally, the answer to the question, What shall be the SIGN? They asked for a specific something that they would be able to see and know about. So far everything is general and happens all through history. But not this. This is a one-time event. See it, and you know the end is near. Even specific guidelines as to how to respond to it are given. This is the sign!*

*Immediately there are issues. Luke’s account is so divergent as to make readers believe that all of this was fulfilled in first-century Israel. Not so. Let’s be careful. First let’s truly harmonize this verse. There has been no need to harmonize thus far because the accounts were so close to each other. But recall that any time there is a difference, it is not that Jesus really said one thing but didn’t say the other. Rather, it is that one writer recorded one thing but didn’t*

*record the other. Here was the entire truth from Jesus' lips:*

*“When you see the abomination of desolation that Daniel described in his prophecy, something placed and standing where it should not be, in the holy place, and Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, then you can know that the desolation of Jerusalem is near. And by the way, this information will be written and passed on to a generation that will have to read about it in a book. “*

*This is a once and future prophecy. It is an event that already happened and will happen again. Daniel wrote about it, a time when a ruler would arise, make desolate, sitting on the wing of abomination (Daniel 9:27). Paul says he will take his seat in the [restored] temple of God, saying that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4). A full and detailed reading of the last chapters of Daniel and 2 Thessalonians 2 will open one's eyes to what is coming, and what has in some measure already come.*

*“Antichrists” of old, such as Antiochus Epiphanes, and Titus, have placed in the Temple of their days, false idols, pigs, etc., to desecrate God's Holy Place. Jesus here declares that another such desecration is coming at the end of all things. This one will place **himself**, says Paul, in a place where he should not be. This is signal number one.*

*But that is not the only signal in this passage. Luke must be included. Luke adds what his companion*

*apostle heard Jesus say: Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies. Yes, it happened before. Yes, Jerusalem is forever being attacked and decimated. Yes, in A. D. 70 there were events that took place that sound so very much like what is here predicted. But it will happen again.*

*Do nations still besiege other nations by such a surrounding, when nuclear weapons can so easily be used from a distance? It is 2022 as I write. My answer, Ukraine. Nuclear war is attempting to be avoided, but the placement of tanks and artillery all around an enemy nation or city can still be used to threaten and lay siege. Thus it will be in Jerusalem. Again.*

*I repeat here what I mentioned above. Jesus said that when this last event was concluded not one stone would be on another. In fact there is an entire wall still standing today from that era, proving that the prophecy of Jesus is not fulfilled yet. The world still hates Israel, and will try to stop her existence as a nation. The coming antichrist will have convinced the world that Jews must be exterminated – as Hitler did – and they will be well on their way to doing this.*

*We are not told how far the siege goes. In Revelation, antichrist's attempts are thwarted. But here at least the attempt is begun. Antichrist is the ruler of the world. Jerusalem is surrounded.*

*An abomination will always make desolate. It did in Antiochus' day, in Rome's day. It will again. Think not*

*that history cannot repeat itself. It will. And I am convinced that it will because this passage, this event, is linked immediately to the coming again of Jesus, both here and in Daniel 12.*

*Daniel 11 and 12 speak of the devastations of the final king, an unprecedented time of trouble and distress, and the resurrection of the righteous all in a few connected verses. The same is the pattern here. Follow the discourse and you will see that this is true.*

*Then one final point that Matthew and Mark both record: this will only be understood by **readers**. Just how far the Gospels had circulated in the years before A. D. 70 is not clear, but it wasn't that far. Now the injunction to read about these things rings true. It is a Book-led generation of the church that will be able to see these things coming and act upon them. Jesus was here reaching out to you and me, dear reader. Let us obey him: He says , let the reader **understand!** That's a command.*

### **23. Judeans flee.**

24:16 "... then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."

13:14:b. "... then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."

21:21a. "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains..."

*The accounts now flow together in lockstep, letting us know that this is the very same prophecy in each*

*Gospel. Yes, it already happened in history. Jews fled to the mountains. The siege of Jerusalem, not its first by any means, was an awful time of suffering and those who could get away, got away.*

*But we have established that the scenario must be repeated. Daniel 9:27 speaks of one who makes Jerusalem desolate, preceding a horrible destruction of Jerusalem. Daniel 12:1 speaks of people who will be rescued from the unrepeatable time of distress, preceding the resurrection. Zechariah speaks of people fleeing in the last days, "then the Lord will come, and all the holy ones with Him" (14:5)!*

*Revelation 12 (written after the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem) speaks of how the enemy persecutes Israel, yet Israel is spared and nourished in the "wilderness". Then it is that the remnant of Israel will "look on Him whom they pierced (Zechariah 12:10)."*

*It all fits together. But Israel must be warned. Another attempted extermination of the Jews is still in their future. Jesus tells of it here.*

**24. [Judeans] don't try to retrieve anything from your house.**

24:17. "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house."

13:15. "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down, nor go in to get anything out of his house."

*In a semi-arid climate, roof-tops are used for a number of things. There is nothing unusual about*

*people being “on the housetop.” The point is, on your way out of the house, even from the top, don’t stop by the lower chambers to gather valuables. Just run. I see pictures of 9-1-1 in our country. Dense Smoke. The added danger of chemical or even nuclear weapons, where every breath can be deadly. Run. Don’t stop until you are in a safe area for breathing. Yes, the admonition fits first and twenty-first centuries.*

**25. [Judeans] leave your cloak in the field.**

24:18. “And whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.”

13:16. “And whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.”

*So you went out to work in the field one cool morning, covered with a cloak. You got to your work place, removed your cloak, and started working. Eventually you were far from that cloak, intending to pick it up on your way home from the field that evening. Forget it. When the word comes to you about what is happening, start running, cloak or no cloak. Nothing matters now but your survival.*

**26. [Judeans] get out of the city!**

21:21b. “...and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city.”

*The danger is in the city. Get off your housetop and leave the city. Those in a field, run as far from the city as you can. If you happen to be out of the city when*

*the tragedy occurs, whatever happens do not return to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the target of God's punishment. Run!*

**27. Woe to the pregnant and the nursing.**

24:19. "But woe to those women who are pregnant, and to those who are nursing babies in those days!"

13:17. "But woe to those women who are pregnant, and to those who are nursing babies in those days!"

21:23a. "Woe to those women who are pregnant, and to those who are nursing babies in those days..."

*The scene described calls for immediate exit and tireless running for great periods of time to avoid the fallout of explosions. No place for a slow jog. The pregnant, in attempting to keep up, will easily lose their babies. Nursing mothers will be encumbered by the child hanging on to them for dear life. Run! Run! Save your life if you can. But many will not.*

**28. Pray to avoid this escape in the winter or on a Sabbath.**

24:20. "Moreover, pray that when you flee it will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath."

13:18. "Moreover, pray that it will not happen in winter."

*The victims of this assault have already been told to leave all their belongings behind. That would include any clothing that could protect them from winter's elements. And if there are winter winds and even*

*snow or rain pelting them as they dash out of Jerusalem, what a hindrance that will be!*

*And what will the religious Jews do when they are faced with the possibility of violating the Sabbath by running more than the allowed 1/8 of a mile that the rabbis had enjoined? Will he be steadfast, keep the Sabbath, and die?*

**29. The days of ultimate fulfillment, final punishment, unprecedented tribulation!**

24:21. "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will again.

13:19. "For those days will be such a time of tribulation as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will again.

21:22, 23b. "... because these are the days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled... for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people.

*Here is the passage that demands that Jesus is talking of an end-time scenario, not something that will take place in A.D. 70. Here also, using all three accounts, we must conclude that this is "Jacob's Trouble" spoken of by Jeremiah (30:7). That is, it is a judgment leveled on Israel for its ongoing idolatry and its rejection of Messiah. "This people" is the key here. Much of the world will feel the effect of what happens during these days, but Israel will bear the*

*brunt of it. The day of mercy is ending. The chance to repent is over. Judgment has come.*

*Unprecedented judgment, says Jesus. Never anything like it in history. Think of the flood. The world wars. The Holocaust. Famines. Nothing like it! Thus, although the first century attack was horrific, it was only a preview of what will happen in this picture Jesus is painting of the last days, answering the question the disciples asked, for the benefit of those who will live in those times.*

*All things? Everything the Scripture points out about the end of history will be fulfilled in this final judgment. Wrath? Oh yes, He has been angry, but patient.*

**30. Killed. Captured. Scattered. Trampled.**

21:24. "... and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

*To be consistent with the flow of the text, and the clear words that have been spoken about an unprecedented tribulation, and wrath to Israel, we must include this very difficult description in the series of events that will take place.*

*To be remembered is the revelation of John, who consistently with Daniel speaks of a three- and one-half year period of tribulation. What we have just read is not to be accomplished in a day. Yes, there is still time for Jews to be sent to the nations. A*

*scattering of millions. We have been able to see how this will work by Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Where are untold thousands of Ukrainians today? In the nations, scattered all over Europe and the United States. That's how it can happen.*

*And like some of the cities of Ukraine, Israel's Jerusalem will be trampled by invading armies headed by antichrist, as the world will turn against Israel under his leadership. In a day of nuclear possibilities, cautious political leaders will still use conventional warfare when needed.*

*As to falling "by the edge of the sword" there is also visible in today's world the sword of Muhammad's people. Yes, they still kill with swords in our day.*

*Everything that has happened in the past will happen again, and be multiplied and magnified in the final playing out of God's perfect justice!*

*Is there any hope of relief during this time? Matthew and Mark share that part of the story. And it is not about a secret rapture. There is no hint of His having come somewhere during this time and gathered His elect to Heaven. Quite the contrary...*

*What about the "times of the Gentiles"? Forty-two months are given to the nations to take over the Holy City, according to Revelation 11. The same three- and one-half years' time period is sprinkled throughout the book. Luke and John are in perfect accord. The very word for "tread upon" or "trample" is the same*

*in both Luke and Revelation. Scripture interprets Scripture.*

**31. An abbreviated time for the tribulation to favor the “elect.”**

24:22. “And if those days had not been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”

13:20. “And if the Lord had not shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.”

*Once more we turn to Ukraine for an understanding of this. Eventually sieges and bombardments and attacks must stop, or the nation is emptied of all its people by death or escape. Usually sane men realize it is absurd to be fighting over a country that no longer even exists! Peace is made.*

*Which elect are meant here? The Jewish remnant or the church of Jesus? The slaughter of Christians is a given in Revelation, and they are taken immediately to be with the Lord. So the ending of hostilities would not necessarily be a benefit to them.*

*We read elsewhere that the remnant of Israel is carried off to a place of safety during this time. They are the ones that will meet their Messiah and repent of their sin. They also are the ones who will be present to initiate the reign of Christ when He returns soon after the Tribulation is over. For their sake, even where they are hiding, all the spreading of noxious*

*wartime poisons must stop. It would seem to me that they will emerge from their hiding place and come back to Jerusalem, joining the entire body of Christ in a glorious meeting on Mt. Zion.*

*Though I speculate a bit regarding those details, certain ones are clear now: Jesus is not talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century. He is talking about an event so cataclysmic as to take out all life if not suspended from Heaven. And He is talking about the moments just before His coming!*

**32. False prophets claim Jesus has returned during the Tribulation.**

24:23-25. "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'He is over here,' do not believe him. For false christs and false prophets will arise and will provide great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance."

13:21-23. "And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ,' or 'Look, there He is;' do not believe it; for false christs and false prophets will arise, and will provide signs and wonders, in order to mislead, if possible, the elect. But beware; I have told you everything in advance."

*There have always been false prophets and false christs. This passage is specifically aimed at the Tribulation period, and given to a church that will be here present and needing such advice. Notice the use of the "elect" again. If indeed these are the Jewish*

*elect, hidden away from the main catastrophe, perhaps they are made aware of prophets in the communities surrounding them who are saying that Christ has indeed returned. And even though Jesus will have manifested Himself to them in ways that break their hearts, some may be curious about what they are hearing.*

*Or these elect are the church itself. If so we have here proof that the church will be present during the Tribulation, for those who still doubt this.*

*Notice how signs and wonders are given to unbelieving fakes. Not only then, but now. We need to be followers of Christ and His Word, and if signs come, let them follow, never lead.*

*Now Matthew heard one more word of warning about Jesus' coming.*

### **33. Instantaneous Return!**

24:26. "So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out; or 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

*If He is in some wilderness or some hidden room, He is taking a slow gradual approach to His return. I have heard some push forward the notion that it is the Spirit that is being referenced. He will slowly but surely over the years, if not centuries, rise within our*

*consciousness as the Body and one day we will just know, He is here! He has returned!*

*Hogwash is the proper term, though not Biblical, to refer to this sort of teaching. Why do people insist on everything except what God said? God says here it will be as quick as the lightning, as fast as a gathering of vultures over a dead body in the countryside. One moment not here. The next moment here.*

*And still no mention of a secret coming. Or a separate coming. An escape route.*

*We are now ready to answer fully the question the disciples asked. What will be the sign **of your coming**? He has spelled out several years of clear events that will take place, and now the signs in the heavens, and here comes Jesus!*

## THE RETURN

### 34. AFTER the Tribulation...

24:29a. "But immediately after the tribulation of those days..."

13:24a. "But in those days, after that tribulation..."

*The Son of Man is now about to come. Absolutely no hint of His coming before now. "What will be the sign of your coming?" asked the disciples. Answer: an extended time of tribulation, unprecedented in the annals of history, then signs in the heavens that will be unmistakably unnatural. Then I will come. How specific could His answer be? How could it have been clouded so thickly with the opinions of men? The word is "after." After the tribulation, Jesus comes. Not before. Not in the middle of. After. I want to shout it.*

### 35. Sun, moon, and stars all react.

24:29b. "...the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

13:24b-25. "The sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken."

21:25a, 26b. "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars... the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

*Reading all accounts, the order seems to be that, although signs in the heavens will begin immediately after the Tribulation period, they will not end immediately. But in a relatively short period of time, nature will suddenly go “haywire.” Eclipse of sun and moon. Supernovas of stars, or the falling toward earth of meteors that people will see as stars falling. And all three add that Jesus mentioned the “powers” that are in the heavens will be shaken. What “powers” are in the heavens other than sun, moon, and stars etc.? I believe this could be read as demonic powers. Principalities. The government of Satan, the Prince of the power of the air, which has long held sway over unsaved earthlings, will suddenly be out of control. Darkness will be banished from the realm. Light is on the way.*

**36. People on earth react.**

21:25b-26a. “... and on the earth distress among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting from fear and the expectation of the things that are coming upon the world;”

*Surely such physical phenomena occur today. People die from anxiety and fear of the future, especially in nations under direct attack. Men have always been nervous when they see “signs” in the heavens. But here will be more breaking of precedent. Here will be an avalanche of signals from space that this world is about to change forever. It’s quitting time. The King is coming!*

*Of course, unbelievers won't be aware of what is happening and that all this is merely the grand introduction of the rightful Ruler of the planet. The few believers that have not been massacred by antichrist will know what's going on. They are the blessed that Daniel spoke of in his twelfth chapter.*

**37. The second coming. The only coming we have been promised. The only coming that answers the disciples' questions.**

24:30. "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."

13:26. "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."

21:27. "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

*The final sign to look for is the actual coming itself. How will this sign be communicated to the entire planet? That is an unanswerable question for first-century persons all the way down to just several generations ago. It is not a problem for us. World-wide communications have been created for this very thing! Oh it will be known instantly!*

*And it will be mourned instantly. Instinctively the people of earth will know what this means. They will be calling for rocks and mountains to fall on them. Repentance. But too late.*

*As to His coming with the clouds, other major texts that report of His coming mention them: Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Revelation 1:7. This is no secret coming, "Every eye will see Him!" (Revelation 1:7). The mourning of all the tribes is also mentioned in that verse of John's Apocalypse.*

### **38. The rapture.**

24:31. "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet blast, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

13:27. "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of heaven."

21:28. "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

*The Luke passage should probably come first. The heavens go crazy. Jesus appears in the sky. That's the time to look up, because you will be lifted up soon to be with Him in the air and on the earth.*

*Here indeed is the much talked-of "rapture," the seizing up of the church into the sky after having been gathered from all over the planet and wherever humans are.*

*And this passage meshes perfectly with the other Scriptures that talk of His coming but have been*

*hijacked by those who see Him secretly coming seven years earlier. Consider for example the trumpet blast:*

*I Corinthians 15:51-52, "...we will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound..." 1*

*Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven... with the trumpet of God."*

*Do we believe in a "rapture," a catching away of the Bride to Jesus? Of course we do! And here it is. Angels, trumpets, catching up, gathering together. The rapture indeed!*

*The prophetic utterance is finished. But Jesus continues the discourse with a series of warnings. Take note, even though He has been very specific, given clear-cut signs, described in detail the events of that day of His coming, He still tells the disciples of every age to watch... because they do not know the time!*

### **39. The parable of the fig tree.**

24:32-33. "Now learn the parable of the fig tree: as soon as its branch has become tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near; so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door."

13:28-29. "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: as soon as its branch has become tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near. So you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door."

21:29-31. And He told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees: as soon as they put forth leaves, you see for yourselves and know that summer is now near. So you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the Kingdom of God is near."

*Inspired Luke heard from Paul or the Lord Himself that Jesus speaks of His coming and the coming of the Kingdom of God as one and the same thing. He comes to establish the Kingdom long foretold by the prophets. And when the disciples see all these things happen, it is near. All what things? Certainly not the vague and untraceable signs of the first section of the prophecy. But when you see Jerusalem's demise followed by a three-year reign of evil followed by a breakdown of nature, Jesus is about to return. We are to watch for these things to happen, with excitement, but not keep assuming that any one of these pieces alone is the sign of His coming. "All" these things, Jesus said.*

*Until then, we know that our own coming to Him is uncertain and comes with no warning. This fact alone should be enough to keep Christians pure and holy before Him.*

**40. The final generation.**

24:34. "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."

13:30. "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."

21:32. "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place."

*The Gospels are certainly in accord here, as throughout the discourse. But what does Jesus mean? What He could not have meant was the generation He was speaking to. That era has long passed away and certainly "all these things" have not taken place.*

*Is he speaking of the Jewish people in general? A weak suggestion, in my opinion.*

*Then He must be talking about the application of the parable He has just given the disciples. There is a "fig-tree" generation. A generation that will see the rise of antichrist and His enthroning of Himself in the new Jewish Temple. A generation that will experience unprecedented horrors, probably of a nuclear sort, or weapons yet to be created that are more horrific. A generation that will see a rise of false prophets, signs and wonders, fake miracles, even more than at present. A generation that will watch nature go off course and Satan's power over mankind broken. That generation will continue on until all that is prophesied shall be fulfilled (Luke 21:22).*

**41. God's eternal Word.**

24:35. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

13:31. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

21:33. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

*Of course, true. But why here? Nothing will keep His word from coming to pass. The heavens will grow shaky, the earth too will be shaken. The generation that sees them fall apart also will pass away. But what I have just told you will happen. Write it down. Pass it on. Every detail of what I have said is important and to be taught to My people. Let no one pass over these words as just another theory of men. I have spoken. I will do it.*

*After all this definite talk, the next words of Jesus surprise us. Yet they are the ones most quoted out of this entire passage.*

## THE WARNINGS

### **42. Only the Father knows the exact time.**

24:36. "But about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

13:32. "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

*I wonder how many have dropped out of their interest in last things by reading only this line and not studying in detail all the rest? Jesus did not say we cannot know the time, when the time comes! He simply said we do not know when that final season will be. Not the day. Not the hour.*

*Think of it. The Father knows perfectly well when everything will wrap up. But if He had communicated that to us, what would the people living in all those centuries have thought? "My Lord delays His coming..." There would be a temptation to let up.*

*Why give us this long description if the timing of His coming doesn't matter? I ask this of those who feel that watching football games and knowing everyone's golf scores is tremendously more important than the coming of our Lord to set up His Kingdom.*

*I want to be well-versed in this matter because the disciples asked the question and Jesus gave a precise answer. And if I do happen to be living in the*

*generation that sees all this happen, I'll know exactly what I am looking at. For sure, if I am not, I won't be oohing and aahing at every headline or every earthquake etc. and shouting out , "He is coming!"*

*Of course He's coming! But have you looked at this prophecy to figure out when? And if you haven't figured it out, are you watching carefully for His return and living a life pleasing to Him?*

*The writers now take divergent directions, some having heard one warning, some another. Together they form an important message for us, but not a message that should dampen our desire to know exactly when Jesus will return.*

**43. Some taken, some left.**

24:37-41. "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. At that time there will be two *men* in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two *women* will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left."

*Only Matthew records this portion of the discourse. Another picture of the rapture is before us. Jesus appears in the sky and catches up His Bride, who will reign with Him. Those that are left will be left for*

*judgment or as subjects in the Kingdom that is to come on the earth. The division of these two groups is recorded in Matthew 25.*

**44. Be alert! You don't know the time. Like a man guarding his house.**

24:42-44. "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you must be ready as well; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will.*"

13:33-36. "Watch out, stay alert; for you do not know when the *appointed* time is. *It is* like a man away on a journey, *who* upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, *assigning* to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay alert. Therefore, stay alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—so that he does not come suddenly and find you asleep. What I say to you I say to all: 'Stay alert!'"

*We must always assume that it is the Father Who puts into the mind of the Son, His very words. The Father knew exactly the time He would send the Son, but here instructs His Son to tell the disciples to be*

*alert. Why? Because for them individually and for us individually to this day, Jesus may come.*

*The appointed time of His actual return is not known, but the season in which it will appear has been made clear to us by the Olivet discourse. Those who do not live in that season must stay alert anyway, for He may come for me today.*

**45. “My master is not coming for a long time.”**

24:45-51. “Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household slaves, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and he eats and drinks with those habitually drunk; *then* the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect, and at an hour that he does not know, and he will cut him in two and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

21:34-35. “But be on your guard, so that your hearts will not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that this day will not come on you suddenly, like a trap; for it will come upon all those who live on the face of all the earth.”

*Two parts of the same general warning. Wicked slaves will have no idea of His coming even in the season predicted. They are the ones about whom the “thief in the night” passages of Scripture are talking. On the other hand, faithful servants, even if they know He is not coming for centuries, will be consistently serving the Lord.*

**46. The great escape from the wrath of God.**

21:36. “But stay alert at all times, praying that you will have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

*Totally taken out of context, this verse is used by some to say that we can by good works escape the coming Tribulation. But the placement of this warning at the very end of that time of trouble lets us know that Jesus is speaking of servants who remain faithful in the darkest of times and are therefore called to escape the final wrath of God at Jesus’ coming. We indeed are not called to endure God’s wrathful judgment, but no one of us is called to escape trials and tribulations.*

**47. The ten virgins.**

25:1-13. “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they did not take *extra* oil with them; but the prudent ones took oil in flasks with their lamps. Now while the

groom was delaying, they all became drowsy and *began* to sleep. But at midnight there finally was a shout: 'Behold, the groom! Come out to meet *him*.' Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. But the foolish *virgins* said to the prudent ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' However, the prudent ones answered, 'No, there most certainly would not be enough for us and you *too*; go instead to the merchants and buy *some* for yourselves.' But while they were on their way to buy *the oil*, the groom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Yet later, the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, because you do not know the day nor the hour."

*The Olivet Discourse does not end in Matthew 24, but extends for one more chapter with a continuation of the warnings. The Father speaking through Jesus knew that the promised coming would not be for many centuries, and emphasizes faithfulness in every generation by calling His people to stay awake.*

*Here is a story of an entire group of "believers" who all seemed to be on the same page in terms of being invited to the wedding, but on different terms in the matter of preparation. Half of this "church" had not dealt with the things of the Spirit, but seemed to be*

*virgin in name only. They were of the sort that dabbled in church matters but not in the deeper matters of Christ. They were not born again of God's Spirit, but were merely church members. They were surprised and in panic when their day came. Jesus warns all believers to examine themselves to be sure they are in the faith.*

#### **48. The talents.**

25:14-30. "For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. The one who had received the five talents immediately went and did business with them, and earned five more *talents*. In the same way the one who had received the two *talents* earned two more. But he who received the one *talent* went away and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

"Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have earned five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master.'

“Also the one who *had* received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have earned two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master.’

“Now the one who had received the one talent also came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter *seed*. And I was afraid, so I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you *still* have what is yours.’

“But his master answered and said to him, ‘You worthless, lazy slave! Did you know that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter *seed*? Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my *money* back with interest. Therefore: take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’

“For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. And throw the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

*Another harsh warning, and a clue that the master is on a long journey, that is, it may be a long time*

*before He returns. No connection is made to some immediate return, but rather an exhortation to be faithful in all the Master's dealings while He is away. Worthless slaves can only mean those who were pretenders, and eventually who were forced to lie and make excuses about not doing anything for the Lord. Less than super disciples are given less than super rewards, but non-disciples are cast into outer darkness.*

## THE JUDGMENT of the NATIONS

### 49. Judgment of the nations.

25:31-46. “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left.

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? And when did we see You *as* a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did *it* for one of the least of these brothers *or sisters* of Mine, you did *it* for Me.’

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you accursed people, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you

gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or as a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do *it* for one of the least of these, you did not do *it* for Me, either.’ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

*The Discourse ends, not with another parable, but a preview of an extraordinary event. I do not believe this story, this prophecy, has been given its due in the way it has been interpreted over the years.*

*First, notice that it is nations, and not individuals, which are gathered before Him. They are divided into two groups based on their personal service to Him, or the absence thereof.*

*Then look at their responses to His praise or condemnation. They act surprised that He would single them out for their deeds or misdeeds, and apply their work for others to Himself. But if this indeed a story of what will indeed happen in that day, how could most any true believer be surprised at such a thing, having read this story for centuries?*

*It seems rather that Gentile nations, many of whose people did not know the Lord and this Word, are shocked to hear that their service to God’s people*

*during the Tribulation is now being rewarded personally by the One it affected most.*

*And for those who see the **church** being separated into sheep and goats, take another look. Chapter 25 follows on the heels of chapter 24, during which the day of Christ has already come, the saints have already been gathered together in the sky, and are probably seated nearby as Jesus gives this oration to the nations. It is nations that are separated here, not Christians.*

*Those nations that showed some favor to the Jews or Christians are allowed to enter the Millennial Kingdom, and thus become the basis of the world that Jesus and His saints will rule over for the next one thousand years.*

## Afterword

As I stated on the first page, the Olivet Discourse is only a beginning. Now the student of end-time prophecy must visit in earnest, chapters in Paul and John that provide the *rest of the story*. And each additional fact from an apostle will only encourage the inquirer that he is coming closer and closer to the truth about the things that shall surely come our way. Perhaps soon?

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