

"The Olivet Discourse"

Matthew 24-25

Part 1

Introduction: In our day people will go to great lengths in an attempt to know the future. Some will pay large amounts of money to physics and mediums who "claim" to be able to see into the future. I worked with a man years ago and he shared with me how his wife had run up a phone bill with a famous physic and his monthly bill was somewhere around \$400.00 dollars. He said his wife was given small amounts of information and then she was told to call back the next day and it went on and on. So many people are caught up in seeking out a medium who can tell them something about the future.

The Bible tells us all we need to know about the future. The physics and the mediums have no ability to somehow see into the future. I will say this, if they could see into the future it would not be a pleasant picture. They would be truly terrified if they knew what is coming in the future.

Tonight we have the great privilege of entering into a study of two very important chapters in God's Word. They are two of the most misunderstood and misapplied chapters in the Bible. There are many questions we will address as we go through these chapters. For example: When are the events described here going to unfold? Do we see evidence of these events unfolding today? How do these chapters apply to the church? This list of questions keeps going and we shall do our best to search out all the answers. These two chapters contain the great detail about what the future of this world. The words of these

chapters are very important because they will tell us the ultimate fate of this world.

The first thing we need to consider is:

I. What Inspired the Teaching in Matthew 24-25?

In order to understand why Jesus spoke the Words we find in these two chapters we need to look at what happened at the end of Matthew 23 and we also need to understand what was in the minds of Jesus disciples.

In Matthew 23 Jesus preached one of His sharpest sermons as he unmasked the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. Then as Jesus gets to the end of this sermon He says something which stirred the minds of His disciples.

Matthew 23:37-39

³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

³⁸ Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

³⁹ For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Here in these verses Jesus tells the religious leaders His ministry to Jerusalem was over for now. In verse 38 He says, "Your house is left unto you desolate." Their house was a reference to the temple and the city. That phrase is very important because the temple is no longer

referred to as "God's House" but it is now "their house" and the reason was because the glory of God had departed.

Then Jesus told them they would not see Him again until Israel would cry out, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." This was a reference to Jesus second coming when He would establish His Kingdom.

Now they knew there would be judgment on the city of Jerusalem for how they had treated the prophets. They had just heard the Words of Jesus on this matter.

Matthew 23:34-36

³⁴ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

³⁵ That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

³⁶ Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

Now there are many thoughts rolling through the minds of Jesus' disciples when they heard these Words. They have heard a pronouncement of judgment on the people of Jerusalem, the desolation of the city and the temple, and they have heard Jesus mention the His Kingdom.

Now His disciples are all about the Kingdom. They were Kingdom minded and their minds are focused upon Old Testament passages which speak of the coming Kingdom. Let me give you some passages which they would have been familiar with.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

⁵ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

⁶ In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Notice Matthew 24:1

Here is a very interesting verse. As Jesus departed from the temple His disciples came to Him to point out the size and the beauty of the temple and the buildings connected with it. Now when I read this it makes me want to ask, "Why"? Jesus had seen the temple and He was

very aware of the size and the splendor of all of it. So, why did they do this?

I believe there were questions in their mind about what was going to happen to the temple in the midst of all that was announced by Jesus. I think they pointed to the buildings in their entire splendor and they were going to inquire about what would happen to them but Jesus knew their thoughts and before they could get to the questions He made a statement that seemed unbelievable.

Notice Matthew 24:2

This verse is so very important when it comes to what we are about to consider in Matthew 24-25 and I will get to the importance in a moment.

If we could have seen the temple and the surrounding buildings this verse would have seemed unbelievable to us also. The stones which made up the temple were great in size. Some of them were over 40 feet long, 15 feet wide and 12 feet high. They were cut out of 1 stone and would have weighed hundreds and hundreds of tons per stone. It is estimated that some of the stones were around 570 tons. They were cut in the stone quarry and were somehow transported to the construction site. They were then elevated to the place where they were placed on the wall. Some of the stones were stacked as high as a 10 story building and a "story" on a building is considered to be 10 feet. That means these stones were elevated over 100 feet high.

That is why I say when Jesus told His disciples there would not be one stone left upon another it was something that would have been difficult for them to get their minds wrapped around.

Now it was this statement which stirred the minds of His disciples even more and they then asked 3 questions which brought about the "Olivet Discourse" which is found in Matthew 24-25.

Let us now consider the 3 questions.

Notice Matthew 24:3

Here are the 3 questions which they asked Jesus.

1. When shall these things be?
2. What shall be the sign of thy coming?
3. What shall be the sign of the end of the age (world)?

Now Jesus will answer 2 of the 3 questions in this teaching. He will answer the 2nd and the 3rd questions but He will not answer the first. But Luke tells us that Jesus did give details of the destruction of Jerusalem. You see the prophecy Jesus gave in Matthew 24:2 when He said there would not be one stone left upon another was a prophecy of what would happen in 70 AD when the Romans would overtake Jerusalem and burn the temple.

Luke 21:20-24

²⁰ And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

²¹ Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

²² For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

²³ But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

²⁴ And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

This passage describes what would happen when the Romans would overthrow Jerusalem. This is not to be confused with what we will see when we get deeper into Matthew 24.

Notice Matthew 24:16-21

Luke 21:20-24 is not talking about the same time. Luke is writing about 70 AD and Matthew is pointing to the Great Tribulation.

Now let us get back to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD as Luke wrote about. All of this would be fulfilled just 40 years later when Titus and his Roman armies would overthrow the city.

Notice the historical account:

When the Romans came to the city it was divided among three warring factions of Jews who were so at each others' throats that they paid no heed to the approach of the Romans. Thus Titus came up and surrounded the city while it was distracted by its own internal warfare. The Romans assaulted the walls again and again, and gave every opportunity to the Jews to surrender and save their capital from destruction. During the long siege a terrible famine raged in the city and the bodies of the inhabitants were literally stacked like cordwood in the streets. Mothers ate their children to preserve their own strength. The toil of Jewish suffering was horrible but they would not

surrender the city. Again and again they attempted to trick the Romans through guile and deliberate breach of trust. When at last walls were breached Titus tried to preserve the Temple by giving orders to his soldiers not to destroy or burn it. But the anger of the soldiers against the Jews was so intense that, maddened by the resistance they encountered, they disobeyed the order of their general and set fire to the Temple. There were great quantities of gold and silver in the Temple which had been placed there for safe keeping. This melted and ran down between the stones of the Temple. When the soldiers captured the Temple area, in their greed to obtain this gold and silver they took long bars and pried apart the massive stones. Thus there was not "one stone left upon another". The prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled to the very Word.

Now I need to explain why this fulfillment was so important.

Jesus knew before the disciples ever asked any questions that He would teach this discourse found in Matthew 24-25. He also knew that much of what He said would come under attack by critics of the Bible and therefore there would be many who would be led to doubt the teaching of this discourse.

Now when I first look at this discourse and that which led up to Jesus' teaching I realize that the prophecy of the Roman invasion in 70 AD has nothing to do with what we will study in Matthew 24:4- 25:46. But that is just the conclusion I reach at first glance. There is a connection and it is so very important with what we are about to study. Let me take you back to the Old Testament to see something which will illuminate this entire teaching in Matthew 24-25.

Deuteronomy 18:18-19

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

¹⁹ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

Here is an Old Testament prophecy about Jesus Christ and how He will be a Prophet. But wait. There was something which "marked" a true prophet from a false prophet.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22

²⁰ But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

²¹ And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

²² When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him

The "mark" of a false prophet was when his message did not come to pass. The "mark" of a true prophet was that every word he spoke would come to pass just as he spoke it.

Back to Matthew: This prophecy about the Temple was given so that everyone would know Jesus was the True Prophet. The prophecy we are about to study is so important and it is so intense that Jesus took the time before he gave the prophecy to establish His credibility so we can

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be sure what we are about to study will come to pass exactly as it was spoken by our Lord.

Conclusion:

Next week we will dive deeper into other thoughts surrounding these chapters which we are about to study and I am sure you will find next week very interesting. We will use this discourse to establish a time line for the events which are yet future on God's calendar. We will talk about the rapture in relation to these two chapters. We will talk about what these two chapters mean to you and I who are saved.