

"The Olivet Discourse"

Matthew 24-25

Part 13

Introduction: Tonight we return to our study of the Olivet Discourse in which our Lord has given to us the details about the coming tribulation period. Now before we get to our study tonight I want to give to you something to think about.

In our world today there is a great desire among the population for world peace. But as people cry for peace there is an increase in fighting across the globe. Just as one area seems to cool down then another seems to heat up. All the efforts to attempt to bring about world peace seem to be futile. But the point is the world desires peace and that desire for peace is setting the stage for the coming of a false peace.

In our study we have finished looking at the birth pains which Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:4-14.

They were:

1. Deception
2. Civil unrest
3. Great catastrophes
4. Persecution
5. Betrayal
6. Proclamation

So tonight we have come to a very interesting verse.

Notice Matthew 24:15

This is a key verse in our study of the Olivet Discourse. Let me remind you what it was that caused Jesus to preach this sermon. He had made the announcement about the destruction of the Temple. His disciples already believed Jesus was about to set up His Kingdom so when they heard about the destruction of the Temple they were on the edge of their seats. They then asked Jesus 3 questions.

Matthew 24:3

³And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

They asked Him:

1. When would the Temple be destroyed?
2. What would be sign of His coming?
3. What would be the sign of the end of the age?

Now there is something here which we need to see. When Jesus spoke of the birth pains He spoke about certain events which would unfold during the tribulation period. But as we come to Matthew 24:15 He now tells them about a specific sign. Therefore Matthew 24:15 is a direct answer to their questions about His coming and the end of the age. Jesus knew that when the tribulation comes there would be a lot of rumors during the unfolding of the different events. He also knew that from the time when He gave this prophecy until it would be fulfilled there would be times of great suffering for the nation of Israel as well as much of the world. He knew there would be people who would attempt to convince others they were in the tribulation when in reality they were not. This actually happened to the church at Thessalonica.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

² That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

The persecution had become so severe they believed they had missed the rapture. Then along with the persecution there was a letter sent and made to look like it came from Paul announcing they had entered the tribulation.

Jesus was aware of false teachers and false prophets so in Matthew 24:15 He announces a "sign" that will happen which will let all who understand know that the Great Tribulation is happening.

Notice Matthew 24:15

Now as we look at this verse there are some questions which come up.

1. What is the abomination of desolation?
2. What is the holy place?
3. What is the event which our Lord speaks of here?

I want to take some time and answer these 3 questions which will really help us to understand why this will be such a significant event.

1. What is the abomination of desolation?

Notice Matthew 24:15

When we read this verse we can clearly see that whatever this is a reference to it is spoken of by Daniel. But before we go to Daniel's record we need to look closely at something which Luke has recorded.

Luke 21:20

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

This is Luke's record of the same event which we are looking at in Matthew. Luke says that when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies then they will know that the desolation is very close. This is so important for us to know. The word "desolation" means "ruination".

But now we must ask why the armies are surrounding Jerusalem? Zechariah will give us some insight into this.

Zechariah 14:1-2

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

² For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

During the tribulation there will be a full world assault against the nation of Israel. This should be of no surprise to you and I today because of the hatred the world has for the nation of Israel. If many in the world had their way they would completely do away with Israel. Those forces of evil are being held back today but in the tribulation

the restraints will be removed. But there is something else which will be restraining these armies in the tribulation. The anti-christ will also restrain the armies surrounding Jerusalem.

Let me show you a verse from Daniel 9.

Daniel 9:27a

²⁷ And he [the anti-christ] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:

Here we see that the anti-christ will confirm a covenant with Israel for 1 week and this is a week of years so the covenant will be a 7 year covenant. In this covenant he will promise to be their savior. He will protect them from any armies which come against them. But he will not stay true to his word.

Daniel 9:27

²⁷ And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Here we see that in the middle of the week, which will be three and one half years into the tribulation period, the anti-christ will turn on Israel and he will shut down the sacrificial system at the Temple. We are also told here that "for over spreading abominations he shall make it [the Temple] desolate". This is the same wording which Jesus refers to in Matthew 24:15.

Matthew 24:15

¹⁵ *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*

Daniel gives us another glimpse of what will happen in Daniel 11. In Daniel 11:21-35 Daniel writes about a man who will come in the future. His name was Antiochus Epiphanes and he was a type of the anti-christ. I want you to see what Daniel said about him in Daniel 11.

Daniel 11:30-31

³⁰ *For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.*

³¹ *And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.*

History tells us exactly what Antiochus Epiphanes did. He took a pig into the Temple and he sacrificed it upon the altar. Then he erected a statue in the Temple of the false god Zeus. This was the abomination that made the Temple desolate in his day. This is the event which Jesus had in mind when He referred to the writing of Daniel. Therefore the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes were a picture of what was to come.

Notice Matthew 24:15

2. What is the holy place?

The holy place which Jesus speaks of here is the Temple. We can see this in the book of Acts.

Acts 21:28

²⁸ Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

So we know the anti-christ will enter into a 7 year covenant with the nation of Israel. He will agree to protect Israel and he will do so for three and one half years. . His protection will give to Israel a great sense of security but it will be a false sense of security. In the middle of the covenant Israel will be surrounded by the armies of the world, which will be a sign of what is about to happen. It will be at this midpoint that the anti-christ will break the covenant with Israel. He will then do something which will desecrate the Temple. Whatever he does will be the "abomination of desolation". But what is it that he will do?

3. What is the event which our Lord speaks of here?

We need to look at the 13th chapter of Revelation to get insight into what the anti-christ does.

Revelation 13:4-8

⁴ And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

⁵ *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*

⁶ *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*

⁷ *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*

⁸ *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Here we see that he will continue 42 months which is three and one half years. But what we need to see is what he does in the Temple. Now remember that Antiochus Epiphanes set up a statue of Zeus in the Temple. The anti-christ set himself up in the Temple to be worshipped. But there is also something else here. Let me show you what the false prophet does at this very time which is also part of the abomination of desolation.

Revelation 13:11-15

¹¹ *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*

¹² *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*

¹³ *And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,*

¹⁴ *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

¹⁵ *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

The false prophet will cause the people to make an image to the beast. The false prophet will then give life to the image. So just as Antiochus Epiphanes erected a statue of Zeus in the Temple so there will also be an image of the anti-christ erected in the Temple at the midpoint of the tribulation.

Let me show you one more passage where we get a view of the abomination of desolation.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

³ *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

⁴ *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

This is the abomination of desolation. It will be the anti-christ setting himself up as God in the Temple at the midpoint of the tribulation.

Conclusion:

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The Olivet Discourse

This will be a sign to the Jews that they need to flee as quickly as they can for at this point the tribulation becomes the GREAT TRIBULATION.

Notice Matthew 24:16-21

We will look closer at these verses in the weeks to come.