

"The Olivet Discourse"

Matthew 24-25

Part 16

Introduction: The last time we were in our study of Matthew 24 we were looking at Matthew 24:16-24. The events which are recorded here take place after the midpoint of the Great Tribulation. The midpoint is marked by the event Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:15.

Notice Matthew 24:15

This is a reference to the anti-christ and in the middle of the 7 year tribulation he will break his covenant with Israel and he will turn on the people of Israel.

The previous time we were together in our study I told you that there were 3 warnings here which Jesus gave to His disciples here in this section:

I. The Warning of Great Persecution

Notice Matthew 24:16-22

This persecution will be directed specifically at the people of Israel from the midpoint of the tribulation on. Zechariah tells us that at this time two thirds of the Nation of Israel will die.

Zechariah 13:8-9

⁸ *And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.*

⁹ And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

If we look closely at the words of verse 21 we can get a small glimpse of how severe the persecution will be. This verse tells us that the tribulation will be far greater than any other event which has happened or will ever happen. Let me give you something to compare that to. The loss of life from World War II was estimated to exceed 50 million. The military personal alone were over 20 million. There were over 25 million who were left homeless. The loss of life during the Great Tribulation will far exceed these numbers.

Revelation 6:7-8

⁷ And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

⁸ And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

This verse tells us that one fourth of the world's population will die in the when the 4th seal is opened. On Tuesday August 5, 2014 the world's population was at 7.1 billion and it increases at the rate of one birth every 7 seconds and one death every 13 seconds.

If $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population were killed today that would mean the 1.75 billion people would die. That is something we cannot begin to get our minds wrapped around. Today we are shocked if we hear of a plane

crash with 200 who are killed. During the tribulation period billions will die.

The next warning which Jesus gave to His disciples was,

II. The Warning of Great Deception

The Jewish people are going to flee to the hills when the anti-christ breaks the covenant and their hope is going to be in the coming of Jesus Christ Who will set them free from the persecution. So as they are hiding in the hills and the rocks they are going to be looking for the coming of Jesus at the end of the tribulation and they are going to be very vulnerable. They will be so anxious for Christ's coming and so it will be at that time that Satan will send out false teachers and false Christs in order to deceive the people of Israel.

Notice Matthew 24:23-25

III. The Warning of Great Confusion

With the false teachers and the false Christs there will be a great deal of confusion at this time. Let us also not forget that the destruction will still be happening at this time. Therefore many will be confused about what to believe and what not to believe. Satan will do everything he can to lure Israel out of hiding so that he will be able to slaughter even more of the Jewish people. One of the ways he will attempt to get them out of hiding is by having rumors spread about Jesus Christ's return. Remember that the Jews at this time will be looking for His return.

Notice Matthew 24:26

Here Jesus tells them not to believe any reports about His return. This verse then causes me to ask a question, "How are they to know when He returns?"

Notice Matthew 24:27

When Jesus returns the Jews will not need anyone to tell them He has come to earth for that event will be so spectacular that everyone will see His return. Here Jesus tells them His return will be like the flash of lightening which starts in the east and flashes across the sky to reach the west. But what is our Lord talking about here?

There are some other verses which will help us to get a better view of this and will help us to understand what our Lord is saying here.

Revelation 1:7

⁷ Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

When Jesus returns to the earth to set up His Kingdom the entire population of the earth will see Him.

Revelation 19:11-15

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

¹² His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

¹³ And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

¹⁴ And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

John tells us here that the sky will open up and out of heaven in view of the entire world Jesus Christ will return.

Jesus continues in the Olivet Discourse to give us even more details of His return.

IV. The Details of the Lord's Return

Notice Matthew 24:28-29

Verse 28 refers to the Battle of Armageddon and we will come back to this verse later but let us look closely at verse 29 now.

Notice Matthew 24:29 again.

At the end of the Great Tribulation the events which precede the coming of Christ will be terrifying to those who are on the earth.

Luke 21:25-27

²⁵ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

²⁶ Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

²⁷ And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

I have underlined lined something which will help us to see how terrifying the events will be to those who are on the earth. In Luke 21:26 we are told that "men's hearts will fail them". This literally means that "men will drop dead from fear". You have heard the term "scared to death" well here it will be happening. But let us look closer at what is going to be happening.

Notice Matthew 24:29 again.

1. **The sun will be darkened.** - This is not the same darkness as we looked at which will happen during the tribulation and we know this because Jesus tells us this is happening AFTER the tribulation.
2. **The moon will not give any light because there will be no sunlight to reflect.** - This means the darkness on the earth will very intense. The only light which may exist is the light from fires or manmade light.
3. **The stars will fall from the heavens.** - Now this tells us there will be no lights in the sky. It will be totally dark.
4. **The powers of the heavens will be shaken.** - This is the power which keeps the planets in their orbits.

Colossians 1:16-17

¹⁶ For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

¹⁷ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

The word "consist" here means 'to be held together' or "held in place". Jesus Christ holds every planet in its orbit and when the day of His return comes He will shake the powers of the heavens. Let me show you what the Old Testament prophets said about this.

Isaiah 13:9-11

⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

¹¹ And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Joel 2:10-11

¹⁰ The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

¹¹ And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

Joel 2:30-31

³⁰ *And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.*

³¹ *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.*

Every person who is alive at the time of Jesus' return will see Him coming in the clouds.

Notice Matthew 24:30

Here is the magnificent return of Jesus Christ. I want you to notice here that the tribes of the earth will **mourn** at His return. Now let me show you another passage from Zechariah.

Zechariah 12:8-11

⁸ *In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.*

⁹ *And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.*

¹⁰ *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and **they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.***

¹¹ *In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, **as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.***

There will be great mourning when Jesus returns and the Jews will realize that the One whom their fathers crucified and the One whom

they rejected was truly the Messiah. Zechariah tells us that the mourning will be like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. This mourning took place when Josiah was killed in a battle. Josiah had started to reign when he was 8 years old and the people loved him. He was 39 when he died in the battle. Let me show you the account.

2 Chronicles 35:20-25

²⁰ After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him.

²¹ But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.

²² Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.

²³ And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded.

²⁴ His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

²⁵ And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and

made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.

The Bible tells us they will mourn when they see Jesus just as they did when they heard that Josiah died. That tells us their sorrow will be a sorrow of brokenness. These people were so sorry that Josiah was dead and Israel will be so sorry that they had crucified their Messiah.

Let's get back now to Matthew 24.

Notice Matthew 24:31

At this time Jesus will send forth His angels to gather the saved of the Great Tribulation in preparation of the establishment of the Kingdom.

Conclusion:

This is the direction our world is headed in today. It is like a runaway train going faster and faster on a collision course with the Great Tribulation. You had better be sure of your salvation because if you miss that rapture and you are plunged into the Great Tribulation you too will mourn if you live to see the return of Christ to this earth. But it will be too late for you to be saved. In the next couple of weeks we will see what will happen to those who are alive and unsaved at the return of Jesus Christ. Let me leave you with a verse from Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 21:8

⁸ And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.

God has given to each person a choice. Which way will you take?