

**XII. THE PROPHECIES OF THINGS WHICH WOULD PRECLUDE
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM
(Matt. 24,25)
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A. MATTHEW RECORDED WHAT JESUS SAID PROPHETICALLY AS HE DEPARTED FROM THE TEMPLE (24:1-3).

As Jesus departed from the temple, where He had been confronted by the religious leaders, His disciples sought to show Him the buildings of the temple. In response Jesus said all those things, which they saw, would be destroyed and not even one stone would be left upon another (Matt. 24:1,2). This prophecy was fulfilled some forty years later when the Roman general Titus brought his soldiers and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.

B. MATTHEW RECORDED WHAT PROMPTED JESUS TO GIVE THE PROPHETIC DISCOURSE THAT FOLLOWED (Matt. 24:3).

1. When Jesus left the city of Jerusalem He journeyed to the Mount of Olives which overlooked the city (Matt. 24:3).
2. As Jesus sat upon the Mount of Olives His disciples came privately and asked Him a two-fold question (Matt. 24:3).
 - a. The first question was - "When shall these things be?" "These things" refer to the destruction of the temple which the Lord Jesus had just described. The answer to this first question is found in Luke 21:20-24. It should be noted that two times of destruction are intimated in Jesus' discourse - the one fulfilled in 70 AD and the other at the end of the age (Rev. 19:11-21; Zech 14:2-4).
 - b. The second question has two parts - "what shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the age?" We know from Scripture that the sign of His coming will be associated with the end of the age (Matt. 24:29,30).
 - c. Note it is very important to identify who the addressees are in this so-called "Olivet Discourse." This discourse refers to the future events concerning the Jewish nation. It describes a time of the outpouring of God's wrath upon unbelievers (Rev. 6:16,17; 11:18; 14:19; 15:1,7; 16:1,19). This time of God's wrath will fulfill His purpose to bring Israel to repentance (Dan. 9:24; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Rom. 9-11; Zech. 12:10). This time of wrath has absolutely no reference to the church or church saints. The Bible says the church will be spared this time of God's wrath (Rom. 5:9; I Thess. 5:9) and the church will be raptured prior to the Tribulation Period mentioned in this discourse (II Thess. 2:1-4).

C. MATTHEW RECORDED HOW JESUS ANSWERED THESE PROPHETIC QUESTIONS AND ADMONISHED ISRAEL (Matt. 24:4-25:46).

1. Jesus answered by describing what would come to pass **before** His coming (Matt. 24:4-28).

- a. Jesus described in detail the signs that would characterize the first half of the Tribulation Period (Matt. 24:4-8). There would be deception, wars, rumors of war, and national unrest. There would also be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. Notice these signs parallel the seal judgments of Revelation chapter six.
- b. Jesus then described in detail the signs that would characterize the second half of the Tribulation Period (Matt. 24:9-14).

These verses describe Israel's persecution when the Anti-Christ breaks his covenant of peace with Israel (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 12:6, 13-17).

- c. Jesus continued to describe this period by giving greater details of the second half of the Tribulation Period (Matt. 24:15-26).

Note the abomination of desolation will be the sign of the start of the second half of the Tribulation Period (Matt. 25:15).

Antiochus Epiphanes who desecrated the temple in 171 BC by offering a pig on the altar is a type of the anti-christ who will put an image of himself in the temple and exalt himself as God (Dan 11:36; II Thess. 2:3,4; Rev. 13:8).

2. Jesus answered by describing what would come to pass **at** His coming (Matt. 24:29-31).

- a. At the close of the Tribulation Period Jesus said He would come again in the clouds with power and great glory and the Jews will mourn at the sight of Him (Matt. 24:29,30). Note how this parallels Zech. 12:10.
- b. At the Second Coming of Christ He will gather His people (Matt. 24:31). Notice the expression "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" is a Hebrew expression meaning from wherever they have been scattered (Dt. 30:3,4; Ezek. 20:34). We know from other Scriptures there will be a resurrection of the O.T. saints, as well, at this time (Dan. 12:2,3; Isa. 26:19,20).

3. Jesus answered by admonishing Israel to be **prepared for** His coming (Matt. 24:32-51).

- a. Jesus spoke a parable of the fig tree to admonish them to consider the signs and get ready for His return (Matt. 24:32-36).

According to this parable when the fig tree puts forth its leaves (April) one knows that the summer is near. So the generation that will see the signs in Matt. 24:9-26 will also be the generation that will witness the Second Coming of Christ (Matt. 24:34).

- b. Jesus used an illustration of the days of Noah to admonish them about being indifferent (Matt. 24:37-41).

This illustration indicates that indifference will characterize that generation during the Tribulation Period. Just as the anti-deluvians were indifferent to Noah's message, so will those be in the Tribulation Period. Note this is not a reference to the rapture. The ones who are taken away are taken away in judgment just as those taken away by the flood. Note Lk. 17:27-37. The ones who are left will enter the Millennial Kingdom.

- c. Jesus spoke a parable of the Householder to demonstrate the need to be sober-minded and watchful (Matt. 24:42-44).
- d. Jesus spoke a parable of two servants to reveal the reward for those who are ready and the retribution for those who are not (Matt. 24:45-51). The evil servant represents the Jew who fails to prepare for His coming and will be caught unawares and consigned to judgment.

4. Jesus answered by admonishing Israel about the judgments to come (Matt. 25:1-46).

- a. Jesus spoke two parables which represent the judgment to come upon the Jews (Matt. 25:1-30).

(1) The parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).

In this parable the five foolish virgins represent unbelieving Israel that fails to prepare for the Messiah's return. These will be shut out of the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:10).

(2) The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30).

In this parable the ones having five and two talents are those who properly interpreted the signs during the Tribulation Period and prepared themselves. The one-talent person is the Jew who lives during the Tribulation and ignores the signs of the Messiah's return. He will be excluded from the Millennial Kingdom like the five foolish virgins. (Matt. 25:26-30).

- b. Jesus spoke the parable of the sheep and goats to represent the judgment to come upon the Gentiles (Matt. 25:31-46).

(1) Notice the word "nations" (*ethnos*) identifies this event as a judgment of individual Gentiles or ethnic groups (Matt. 25:32).

(2) The sheep of this parable represent believing Gentiles who hear and believe the message of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists and demonstrate their faith by extending kindness to them and the Jews (Matt. 25:40). These will inherit the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:34).

(3) The goats represent unbelieving Gentiles who refuse to respond to the gospel of the kingdom message as proclaimed by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Rev. 7:4-8). Their lack of faith will be demonstrated in their failure to

show hospitality and kindness to God's messengers during the Tribulation Period. These will go away into eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46).

EXPOSITORY NOTES

- Matt. 24:13,14** These verses are oftentimes misapplied to the church today and the progression of the gospel so that the end of the age will come when the gospel is preached unto all nations. Notice, however, that the gospel here is the gospel of the Kingdom. It was preached to the Jews by John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, and His disciples (Matt. 3:2; 9:35; 10:6,7). But since it was rejected, the Kingdom was not established. Here we note that the very same gospel will be preached again to the Jews and the Kingdom, meaning the literal, earthly, Davidic Millennial Kingdom, will be established at the Second Coming of Christ.
- Matt. 24:15** The abomination of desolation mentioned here is a reference to what the anti-christ will do in the middle of the Tribulation Period. Just as Antiochus Epiphanes defiled the temple in 171 BC by offering a pig on the altar, anti-christ will place his image in the temple and demand worship (Dan. 11:36; II Thess. 2:3,4; Rev. 13:8).
- Matt. 24:31** The "elect" mentioned in this verse has absolutely no reference to church saints. Contextually, in this discourse it refers to the regathering of the Jewish people who have been scattered throughout the earth. Note that this will be the fulfillment of Dt. 30:3-5.
- Matt. 24:37-41** This passage is oftentimes applied to the rapture of church saints; however, this cannot be correct for several reasons: First of all, this discourse is to Israel. Secondly, the church will not go through the Tribulation Period (Rom. 5:9; I Thess. 5:9). Thirdly, from a parallels passage in Luke 17:27-37, it reveals that those taken away are taken away in judgment.
- Matt. 25:31** Notice the "throne" upon which Christ will sit is not now occupied. Presently, Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father's throne. This shows that the church is not the Kingdom and it is not now established.

QUESTIONS WE MAY APPLY TO OUR LIVES

1. To whom does the Olivet Discourse apply? _____
2. Why can we as Christians rejoice when we read of passages such as Matt. 24:4-31?

3. How does the gospel of the Kingdom (24:14) differ from the gospel in the church age?

4. According to Matt. 24:37-41 what will characterize people in the Tribulation Period

What about today? _____
5. What two parables illustrate judgment upon the Jews at the Second Coming of Christ?

6. What parable speaks of judgment upon the Gentiles at the Second Coming of Christ?

7. How is Matt. 24:14 misapplied by certain religious groups today?

8. How is Matt. 24:37-42 misapplied by groups in our day? _____
9. How is Matt. 25:31-46 misapplied in our day? _____
10. Do you understand what the abomination of desolation mentioned in Matt. 24:15 will involve?

11. According to Matt. 24:35 what assurance do we have that these prophecies will be fulfilled?

12. To whom does the "elect" in Matt. 24:31 refer? _____