



Chapter 24

The Olivet Discourse

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Matthew 24 and 25, known as the Olivet Discourse, constitute the last of three major discourses in this gospel. They are called major discourses because of the extent, content, and intent of them.

Jesus is speaking to Israel. Sometimes called “The Second Sermon on the Mount” or “The Olivet Discourse.”

We can sense that it is important because it is covered in three of the four gospels (also in Mk 13, 14; Lk 21,22). This is Jesus’ last great utterance upon the earth (in the sense of an extended passage.) It is also probably the second most misunderstood passage (also Mt 13).

Jesus is greater than Moses, and Moses had two roles: Moses gave us the Law, Jesus gave us the Sermon on the Mount. Moses is also a prophet (Deut 18:18) and his pointing towards the Lord Jesus Christ is alluded to in Acts 3:22; 7:37. Heb 3:5, 6 points to Jesus as one greater than Moses, in both roles, lawgiver and prophet. (Moses’ prophecy is Deut 32.) Jesus was likewise a prophet (especially in Mt 24, 25).

Private answers to three questions. Four disciples ask Jesus three questions and Mt 24, 25 and Mark and Luke’s recording together answer the three questions. Matt and Mark are silent on one of the questions and Luke answers that one. A New Testament review of (Daniel’s) “Time of the End.”

Matthew 25 deals with three instructions: responsibilities, accountabilities, significance of judgment of the nations [NOT Cf. vs. Rev 20:11-15.]

The context is intensely Jewish. A rabbi talking to His 12 Jewish disciples, their background is in Judaism. He has just gotten through denouncing the leadership of Judaism (the eight Woes of Chapter 23). The first few verses have to do with the Temple, and the best view of the Temple is from the Mount of Olives. The Temple at that time was spectacular. One of the wonders of the world.¹

JNTC: 1–39 Chapters 24–25, the “Olivet Discourse” (because it was given on the Mount of Olives, v. 3), discusses the future and constitutes Yeshua’s fifth and final teaching in the book of Mattityahu (see 13:1–52N). It is interesting to compare with this chapter a Talmud passage that predicts events prior to the Messiah’s coming:

“Rabbi Yitzchak said that Rabbi Yochanan said, ‘In the generation when the Son of David is to come, scholars will be few in number. As for others, their eyes will fail from sorrow and grief. There will be much trouble, and evil decrees will be renewed, with each new evil coming quickly, even before the other has ended.’

“Our Rabbis taught that the following would happen during the seven years at the end of which the Son of David is to come. In the first year, ‘I will cause it to rain upon one city and cause it not to rain upon another city’ ([Amos 4:7](#)). In the second, the arrows of hunger will be sent forth [food shortages, with no one being fully satisfied]. In the third, there will be a great famine, during which men, women, children, pious men and saints will die; and [hunger will cause] the *Torah* to be forgotten by its *talmidim*. In the fourth, there will be surpluses of some things but

¹ Chuck Missler Notes on Matthew, khouse.org

shortages of others. In the fifth there will be great plenty—people will eat, drink and rejoice; and the *Torah* will return to its *talmidim*. In the sixth year, there will be sounds [in the light of what follows, either rumors of wars (compare Mt 24:6) or heavenly voices or *shofar* blasts (see 8:2N) announcing the Messiah's coming]. In the seventh year there will be wars. And at the end of the seven years the Son of David will come." (Sanhedrin 97a)

This period, with its failing eyes, trouble and evil decrees, is referred to generally in vv. 8, 21; its seven-year duration, following indications in the book of Daniel, is made explicit in the book of Revelation (see Rv 11:1–2N). Hunger and famine appear in v. 7; the death of saints in vv. 9–10; the *Torah* being forgotten by its students in v. 12; eating, drinking and rejoicing in vv. 37–39; the *shofar* in v. 31; wars in vv. 6–7.²

Matthew 24:1

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.

They left probably through the Golden Gate on the eastern edge of the Temple Mount. Here it notes "his disciples," while in the other gospels it mentions that there were four of them: Peter, James, John and Andrew.

[Buildings of the Temple] These were the pride of every Jew. Herod's temple—about 500 cubits square, made of white marble—was one of the wonders of the ancient times.

[went out, and departed from the temple] This prophecy was uttered outside the temple on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:3), while Luke 21 was spoken in the temple before He went out (Luke 21:1,27-28).

Clarke: And Jesus went out, and departed from, the temple—Or, And Jesus, going out of the temple, was going away. This is the arrangement of the words in several eminent manuscripts, versions, and fathers; and is much clearer than that in the common translation. The Jews say the temple was built of white and green-spotted marble. See Lightfoot. Josephus says the stones were white and strong; fifty feet long, twenty-four broad, and sixteen thick. Antiq. b. 15. c. xi. See Mark 13:1.

Barnes: The buildings of the temple. The temple itself, with the surrounding courts, porches, and other edifices. Matthew 21:12. Mark says, that they particularly pointed out the stones of the temple, as well as the buildings. "In that temple," says Josephus, the Jewish historian, "were several stones which were forty-five cubits in length, five in height, and sixth in breadth;" that is, more than seventy feet long, ten wide, and eight high. These stones, of such enormous size, were principally used in building the high

²Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:1). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

wall on the east side, from the base to the top of the mountain. They were also, it is said, beautifully painted with variegated colours.

Although no one knows exactly what this temple looked like, it must have been beautiful. Herod had helped the Jews remodel and beautify it, no doubt to stay on friendly terms with his subjects. Next to the inner temple, where the sacred objects were kept and the sacrifices offered, there was a large area called the court of the Gentiles (this was where the money changers and merchants had their booths). Outside these courts were long porches. Solomon's porch was 1,562 feet long; the royal portico was decorated with 160 columns stretching along its 921-foot length. Gazing at this glorious and massive structure, the disciples found Jesus' words about its destruction difficult to believe. But the temple was indeed destroyed only 40 years later when the Romans sacked Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

McGee: The Lord Jesus has told them that His kingdom would be postponed and that the temple would be left desolate. (The temple was made up of many buildings. This was the temple that Herod was having built, and the construction was still in progress. It was made of white marble, and at this time it was very large and very beautiful.) The disciples are disturbed at the statement of Jesus that it is to be left desolate. So the disciples come to Him, wanting to show Him around the buildings.³

ESV: left the temple. The road from Jerusalem to Bethany, where Jesus and his disciples stay each evening, takes one alongside the Mount of Olives, which affords a spectacular view of the temple in the distance.

Matthew 24:2

And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

These men would very likely think that although things may change, the Temple would never go away.

This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans; Daniel 9:26; Luke 21:20-24).

This prophecy had to strike them as being extremely unlikely. He is obviously prophesying about the destruction of Jerusalem, which is to occur 38 years later by Titus Vespasian and four Roman Legions. They lay siege to Jerusalem and level it, slaughtering 1,600,000 inhabitants. They set fire to the Temple, which causes the gold to melt, so the Roman soldiers to recover the enormous wealth of gold, dismantle the Temple stone by stone. Thus, the prophecy was very literally fulfilled, not one stone was left upon another of the Temple. (Don't confuse the Temple with the Temple Mount, the retaining wall, which is still there.)

³McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:123). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

[stone upon another] Josephus says that some stones were 94 feet long, 10 1/2 feet high, and 13 feet wide. There were 162 columns which held up the porches that were 52 feet high. Every stone was removed and a plow run over the place where it stood, fulfilling Micah 3:12.⁴

Clarke: There shall not be left here one stone—These seem to have been the last words he spoke as he left the temple, into which he never afterwards entered; and, when he got to the mount of Olives, he renewed the discourse. From this mount, on which our Lord and his disciples now sat, the whole of the city, and particularly the temple, were clearly seen. This part of our Lord's prediction was fulfilled in the most literal manner. Josephus says, War, book vii. c. 1: "Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the whole city and temple, except the three towers, Phaselus, Hippicus, and Mariamne, and a part of the western wall, and these were spared; but, for all the rest of the wall, it was laid so completely even with the ground, by those who dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited." Maimonides, a Jewish rabbin, in Tract. Taanith, c. 4, says, "That the very foundations of the temple were dugged up, according to the Roman custom." His words are these: "On that ninth day of the month Ab, fatal for vengeance, the wicked Turnus Rufus, of the children of Edom, ploughed up the temple, and the places round about it, that the saying might be fulfilled, Zion shall be ploughed as a field." This Turnus, or rather Terentius Rufus, was left general of the army by Titus, with commission, as the Jews suppose, to destroy the city and the temple, as Josephus observes.

The temple was destroyed,

1st. Justly; because of the sins of the Jews.

2dly. Mercifully; to take away from them the occasion of continuing in Judaism: and

3dly. Mysteriously; to show that the ancient sacrifices were abolished, and that the whole Jewish economy was brought to an end, and the Christian dispensation introduced.

Barnes: There shall not be left here one stone upon another. At the time this was spoken, no event was more improbable than this. The temple was vast, rich, splendid. It was the pride of the nation, and the nation was at peace. Yet in the short space of forty years all this was exactly accomplished. Jerusalem was taken by the Roman armies, under the command of Titus, x. D. 70. The account of the siege and destruction of the city is left us by Josephus, an historian of undoubted veracity and singular fidelity. He was a Jewish priest. In the wars of which he gives an account, he fell into the hands of the Romans, and remained with them during the siege and destruction of the city. Being a Jew, he would of course say nothing designed to confirm the prophecies of Jesus Christ. Yet his whole history appears-almost like a running commentary on these predictions respecting the destruction of the temple. The following particulars are given on his authority:

After the city was taken, Josephus says that Titus "gave orders that they should now *demolish the whole city and temple*, except three towers, which he reserved standing. But

⁴ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

for the rest of the wall, it was laid so completely even with the ground by those who *dug it up from the foundation*, that there was nothing left to make those believe who came hither that it had ever been inhabited." Maimonides, a Jewish writer, has also recorded that "Terentius Rufus, an officer in the army of Titus, with a ploughshare tore up the foundations of the temple," that the prophecy might be fulfilled, "Zion shall be ploughed as a field," Micah 3:12. This was all done by the direction of Divine Providence. Titus was desirous of preserving the temple; and frequently sent Josephus to the Jews to induce them to surrender and save the temple and city. But the prediction of the Saviour had gone forth; and, notwithstanding the wish of the Roman general, the temple was to be destroyed. The Jews themselves first set fire to the porticoes of the temple. One of the Roman soldiers, without any command, threw a burning firebrand into the golden window, and soon the temple was in flames. Titus gave orders to extinguish the fire; but, amidst the tumult, none of his orders were obeyed. The soldiers pressed to the temple, and neither fear, nor entreaties, nor stripes, could restrain them. Their hatred of the Jews urged them on to the work of destruction; and thus, says Josephus, the temple was burnt against the will of Caesar.-Jewish Wars, book vi., chap. iv. _ 5, 6, 7.

McGee: "See ye not all these things?" The disciples thought they saw it, and they ask Him to take a look. So He says to them, "Do you really *see* it?" In our contemporary society, this is a good question for us to consider. Do we really *see* the world around us?

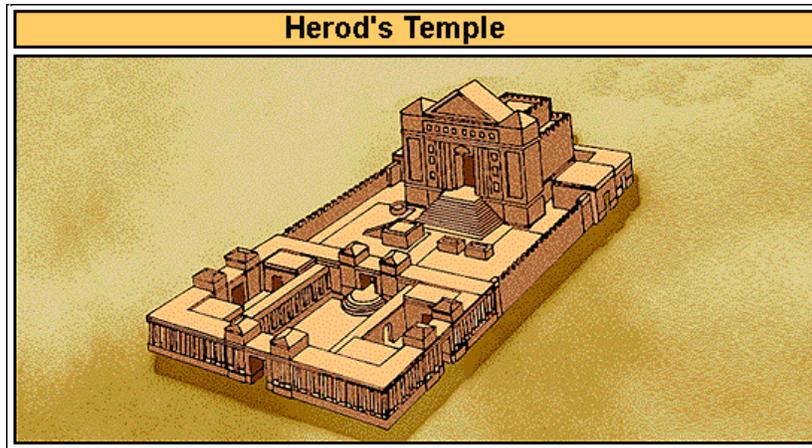
When my wife and I first came to Southern California, we spent every Monday, which was my day off, riding around looking at this fantastic place. (And it *was* fantastic in those days before everybody in the world tried to settle here!) After we had marveled at one beautiful spot after another, I would say to my wife, "But we really don't see it as it is. All of this is under God's judgment. It all will pass away." My friend, all these cultural centers, these great schools, these skyscrapers, these great cities which we see are going to pass away someday. It doesn't seem possible, and that is how the disciples felt.

Jesus continued by saying, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." If His first statement put them in shock, this must have traumatized them.

When I was at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem several years ago, the tour director tried to call my attention to the way the stones had been worn away by the people who had come there over the years to weep. That was certainly worth noting, but the thing that impressed me was that the wall was constructed of many kinds of stones. History tells us that the Wailing Wall was made up of stones which came from different buildings in different periods. At the pinnacle of the temple, which evidently was the corner of the temple area, recent excavations reveal the same thing—there are all kinds of stones from different periods. What does that mean? My friend, that means that not one stone was left upon another—the builders had to go and pick up stones from different places because in A.D. 70 Titus the Roman really destroyed that city!

Although this is ancient history to us, it was a shocking revelation to the disciples. They talked it over, I am sure, then came to Him with three questions.⁵

⁵McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:124). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.



Matthew 24:3

And 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?

[sat upon the mount of Olives] The most commanding view of the temple was obtained from this place. Perhaps in Gethsemane, an olive grove at the base of the Mount of Olives. Or perhaps they were higher on the peak where they could really see the city.

[Privately] Note that this discussion was NOT open to the public. In fact it appears that it was not even a discussion where all 12 were present! It is a very intimate private insight that Jesus will share with them.

[Sign of thy coming] They finally realized that the Lord is going to return. Which is remarkable when you realize that they haven't really understood that He is going to leave yet.

[End of the age] Not the end of the world, but rather the consummation of the age. The world doesn't end there, yet things do change radically at this point.

[when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?] Three questions asked:

1. When will Jerusalem be destroyed? This question is not answered by Matthew. It is answered in Luke 21:12-24.
2. What will be the sign of Your coming? Answered in Matthew 24:4-26,37-39.
3. What will happen when You come? Answered in Matthew 24:27-31,40-51; Matthew 25:1-46.

Clarke: Tell us, when shall these things be?—There appear to be three questions asked here by the disciples.

- 1st. When shall these things be? viz. the destruction of the city, temple, and Jewish state.
- 2dly. What shall be the sign of thy coming? viz. to execute these judgments upon them, and to establish thy own Church: and
- 3dly. When shall this world end? When wilt thou come to judge the quick and the dead?

[sign of thy coming] Dake: Twenty-four signs of the second coming:

1. Deceptions (Matthew 24:4-5,11,24)
2. False Christs (Matthew 24:5,23-26)
3. Wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6-7)
4. Famines (Matthew 24:7; Rev. 6:5-6)
5. Pestilences (Matthew 24:7; Rev. 6:8)
6. Earthquakes (Matthew 24:7; Rev. 6:12-17)
7. Anti-semitism (Matthew 24:9; Mark 13:9,13)
8. Offenses (Matthew 24:10; cp. Matthew 18:1-10)
9. Betrayals (Matthew 24:9; Mark 13:12)
10. Hatred (Matthew 24:10; 2 Tim. 3:1-9)
11. False prophets (Matthew 24:11,24; Rev. 13)
12. Lawlessness abounding (Matthew 24:12)
13. Love decreasing (Matthew 24:12-13; 2 Tim. 3)
14. Increased missionary work (Matthew 24:14)
15. Abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15; Daniel 9:27; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13)
16. New Jewish nation in Judea (Matthew 24:9,15-26; Ezekiel 37; Daniel 9:27)
17. New Jewish temple (Matthew 24:15,26; Rev. 11:1-2; Daniel 8:9-13; Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:45; 2 Thes. 2:4)
18. Great tribulation of 3 1/2 years (Matthew 24:21; Daniel 12:1; Rev. 12:1-19:21)
19. Martyrdoms (Matthew 24:9,22; Daniel 8:24; Rev. 7:9-17; Rev. 11:7; Rev. 15:2-4; Rev. 20:4-6)
20. Flight of Jews from Judea (Matthew 24:16-21; Rev. 12:6,14; Isaiah 16:1-5; Psalm 60:4-8; Daniel 11:40-45; Ezekiel 20:33-38; Hosea 2:14-16)
21. Increased satanic powers (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thes. 2:8-12; Rev. 13; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 19:20)
22. Surfeiting (Matthew 24:38; Luke 17:28; Luke 21:34)
23. Sex crimes (Matthew 24:38; Luke 17:27)
24. Procrastination and lethargy (Matthew 24:39)

[coming] Parousia—Coming Greek: *parousia* (GSN-3952), personal visible presence or reappearing. Two appearances:

1. Rapture—personal coming in the air (not to the earth) for the saints (1 Thes. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:13; 1 Thes. 4:13-17; 1 Thes. 5:23; 1 Cor. 15:23,51-58; 2 Thes. 2:1,7-8; James 5:7-8; 1 John 2:28; John 14:1-3)
2. Second coming to earth with His saints to reign (Matthew 24:3,27-51; Matthew 25:31-46; Jude 1:14; Rev. 19:11-21; Zech. 14:1-5)

[**world**] Greek: *aion* (GSN-165), age, a period of time long or short. It refers to the end of this age, as do all the other places where "the end of the world" is used (Matthew 12:32; Matthew 13:39-40,49; Matthew 24:3; Matthew 28:20). This age will end at the second coming (Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21; Zech. 14:1-5), but the earth and man will continue forever (Genesis 8:22; Genesis 9:12; Eccles. 1:4; Psalm 104:5; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 7:13-14; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 21:3-22:5).

Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the very place where the prophet Zechariah had predicted that the Messiah would stand when he came to establish his kingdom (Zech. 14:4). It was a fitting place for the disciples to ask Jesus when he would come in power and what they could expect then. Jesus' reply emphasized the events that would take place before the end of the age. He pointed out that his disciples should be less concerned with knowing the exact date and more concerned with being prepared—living God's way consistently so that no matter when Jesus came in glory, he would claim them as his own.

Question 1

The first question, "When shall these things be?" seems to imply His remark in verse 2; i.e., the destruction of the Temple. In this account in Matthew this is not dealt with very intensely, however in Luke responds clearer (Luke 21:20-24). While this question is not answered very thoroughly, for us it is a matter of history as this prophecy has been fulfilled. Also, perhaps it is left vague purposely, as it would be easy for us to mix up this last Temple with the one that will be present in the last days.

Matthew 24 & 25 presumes that one understands Old Testament prophecies. This is not a Church age question. It would be very surprising to find a mention of the Church in Matthew 24 & 25, because the Church had not been revealed yet. The Church doesn't surface as a concept until Acts 2. Study these chapters with the possibility that the Church will have been introduced and be gone during the interval between the time Matthew 24 is presented and the time it is fulfilled. Thus, recognize the essential Jewishness of this passage. We can get into deep trouble if we input into this passage Church ideas.

Matthew 23:38: The Lord had just told them, regarding Israel, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." He then prophesied the destruction of the Temple. And He is going to give them a pun that has several interpretations, "this generation shall not pass away until these things be fulfilled." The generation that rejected Moses in the wilderness, did not survive. The same thing happened in Babylon (see Jeremiah). So the generation that rejected Him will experience the destruction of the Temple. There are other meanings to this saying which we will discuss.

Barnes: The disciples came unto him privately. Not all of them, but Peter, James, John, and Andrew, Mark 13:3. The prediction that the temple would be destroyed, Matthew 24:2 had been made in the presence of all the apostles. A *part* now came privately to know more particularly when this would be.

When shall these things be! There are three questions here:

- 1st. When those things should take place.
- 2nd. What should be the signs of his coming.
- 3rd. What should be the signs that the end of the world was near.

To these questions he replies in this and the following chapters. This he does, not by noticing them distinctly, but by intermingling the descriptions of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the end of the world; so that it is sometimes difficult to tell to what particular subject his remarks apply. The *principle* on which this combined description of two events was spoken appears to be, that *they could be described in the same words*, and, therefore, the accounts are intermingled. A similar use of language is found in some parts of Isaiah, where the same language will describe the return from the Babylonish captivity, and deliverance by the Messiah, and therefore was used by the prophet. Isaiah 1:1, paragraph 7.

Sign of thy coming. Evidence that thou art coming. By what token shall we know that thou art coming?

McGee: (1) “When shall these things be?”—when one stone would not be left upon another; (2) “What shall be the sign of thy coming?”—The answer to this question is found in verses 23–51; and (3) “What shall be the sign . . . of the end of the world (completion of the age)?” The answer to this question is found in verses 9–22. The Lord Jesus is going to answer these three questions, and we call His answers the Olivet Discourse because it took place on the Mount of Olives.

The first question, “When shall these things be?”—when one stone shall not be left upon another, is not answered in the Gospel of Matthew. We find it in the Gospel of Luke, and we find segments of it in the Gospel of Mark. Why is it not included in Matthew’s gospel? Because Matthew is the gospel of the kingdom; it presents the King. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 has something to do with this age in which we live, but it has nothing to do with the distant future when the King is coming. Therefore, Matthew does not carry that part of the Olivet Discourse.

Let’s look at our Lord’s answer to the first question, as recorded in Luke’s gospel: “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 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. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 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. 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” (Luke 21:20–24).

Undoubtedly, many of those who heard the Lord Jesus say these things were present in A.D. 70 when the Roman armies surrounded the city, laid siege to it, cut it off from the rest of the world, then finally breached the wall and got in. What the Romans did was terrible. They demolished the city. It was the worst destruction in its history, more devastating than that conducted by Nebuchadnezzar over six centuries earlier. When the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the first part of the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled.

The next two questions asked by the disciples were these: “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?”

The Lord is going to answer the disciples' questions in their chronological and logical order. He will answer their last question first and their second question last. The first thing the Lord deals with is the sign of the end of the world, or more accurately, the end of the age. The world will never come to an end. The old world will pass away and a new earth will be brought on the scene. It will be similar to trading in your old car for a new one. You don't say "This is the end of the car-age for me. I don't have a car anymore." You *do* have a car because you traded your old one in and got a new one. And the Lord is going to trade the old world in for a new one. The world will never come to an end. But it will be the end of an age, and that is the word the disciples are using in their question to the Lord Jesus.

In this Olivet Discourse, when Christ speaks of His coming, He is referring to His return to the earth to establish His kingdom. The church is not in the picture at all. In fact, by the end of the age, the church will have been removed, and it will be the last days of the nation Israel. He is speaking about the Great Tribulation Period and so labels it in this discourse.⁶

ESV: The disciples ask two questions: (1) **when will these things be**, and (2) **what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?** Jesus' answer to these questions apparently intertwines prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and his second coming. The near event (the destruction of Jerusalem) serves as a symbol and foreshadowing of the more distant event (the second coming). The discourse can be divided into three parts: (1) a generally chronological description of events preceding Christ's return (vv. 4–31); (2) lessons on watching, waiting, and being prepared for Christ's return (24:36–25:30); and (3) a warning of judgment and a promise of reward at the time of Christ's return (25:31–46). On the **Mount of Olives**, see notes on 21:1 and 24:1. Matthew's version of this question, with explicit mention of the second coming, is more developed and detailed than the question in the parallel passages in Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7

Yashanet.com: ... Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Jewish literature is replete with examples of what will proceed the coming of the Messiah. These events are known as the "*Footsteps of Messiah*."

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 49b - *In the footsteps of the messiah insolence will increase and honour dwindle; the vine will yield its fruit [abundantly] but wine will be dear; the government will turn to heresy and there will be none [to offer them] reproof; the meeting-place [of scholars] will be used for immorality; galilee will be destroyed, galban desolated, and the dwellers on the frontier will go about [begging] from place to place without anyone to take pity on them; the wisdom of the learned will degenerate, fearers of sin will be despised, and the truth will be lacking; youths will put old men to shame, the old will stand up in the presence of the young, a son will revile his father, a daughter will rise against her*

⁶McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:124). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be the members of his household; the face of the generation will be like the face of a dog, a son will not feel ashamed before his father. So upon whom is it for us to rely? Upon our father who is in heaven.

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs II:33 - *The Rabbis say: In the generation in which the scion of David will come, the wise men of the generation will die and the rest will waste away with grief and sorrow and much trouble will come upon the community and cruel decrees will be promulgated, one coming on top of another. R. Nehorai said: In the generation in which the scion of David will come, the young will insult their elders and the old will rise before the young, as it says, The daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house (Micah VII, 6), and a son will feel no shame before his father. R. Nehemiah said: Before the days of the Messiah there will be great poverty and scarcity, and the vine will cast its fruit and the wine will turn bad and the whole of the government will be converted to minuth and there will be no reproof. R. Abba b. Kahana said: The scion of David will come only in a generation which is brazen-faced like a dog. R. Levi said: The scion of David will come only in a generation which is full of impudence and deserves to be exterminated. R. Jannai said: If you see one generation after another cursing and blaspheming, look out for the coming of the Messiah, as it says, Wherewith Thine enemies have taunted, O Lord, wherewith Thine enemies he taunted the footsteps of Thine anointed (Ps. LXXXIX, 52), and immediately afterwards it is written, Blessed be the Lord for evermore, Amen and Amen.*

Spurgeon: The little procession continued ascending the mount of Olives until Jesus reached a resting-place from which he could see the temple (Mr 3:3). There he sat down, and 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?" These are the questions that have been asked in every age since our Savior's day. There are here two distinct questions, perhaps three. The disciples enquired first about the time of the destruction of the temple, and then about the sign of Christ's coming, and of "the consummation of the age" (R. V. margin). The answers of Jesus contained much that was mysterious, and that could only be fully understood as that which he foretold actually occurred. He told his disciples some things which related to the siege of Jerusalem, some which concerned his Second Advent, and some which would immediately precede "the end of the world." When we have clearer light, we may possibly perceive that all our Savior's predictions on this memorable occasion had some connection with all three of these great events.

Matthew 24:4

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

How do you prevent someone from deceiving you? You stay in the Word, remember Acts 17:11.

Whose primary mission involves deceiving? Satan. While Satan has many goals, his strategy in achieving them is to deal in counterfeits. Satan is attractive in his ability to weave enticing doctrines. There is only one way to avoid being trapped by enticing doctrines, and that is by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. No hope in intellect or head knowledge, only your walk with the Lord and guidance by the Spirit in the Word of God.

[deceive you] Many warnings against being deceived (Matthew 24:4-5,11,24; Luke 21:8; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:33; Galatians 6:7; Ephes. 5:6; 2 Thes. 2:3).

The disciples asked Jesus for the sign of his coming and of the end of the age. Jesus' first response was "Watch out that no one deceives you." The fact is that whenever we look for signs, we become very susceptible to being deceived. There are many "false prophets" (Matthew 24:11, 24) around with counterfeit signs of spiritual power and authority. The only sure way to keep from being deceived is to focus on Christ and his words. Don't look for special signs, and don't spend time looking at other people. Look at Christ.

McGee: The phrase "Take heed that no man deceive you" is characteristic of this entire age. The Lord gives this word of caution because there will be much deception, especially during the Tribulation Period when the Anti-christ will appear. Peter warns us in 2 Peter 2:1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." We don't have to worry about false prophets, because if anybody starts prophesying in our day, we Christians can pooh-pooh him right off the scene because prophets are not for this period. However, we are to beware of false teachers, and there are a great many of those around. We must test them by Scripture. In this morning's mail a letter has come to me which illustrates this fact. It has come from a woman who apparently has an important position in an insurance company. She tells of a well-meaning friend who introduced her to a cult. After going to her friend's church for one year, she heard our Bible-teaching radio program, and the Scripture alerted her to the error of the cult. Then she tells of how she and her entire family went to a good church in her area. My friend, we need to beware of false teaching. There is a lot of it around in our day. Our Lord warns, "Take heed that no man deceive you."⁷

⁷McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:125). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Spurgeon: Jesus was always practical. The most important thing for his disciples was not that they might know when "these things" would be, but that they might be preserved from the peculiar evils of the time. Therefore, Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." They were to beware lest any of the pretended Messiahs should lead them astray, as they would pervert many others. A large number of impostors came forward before the destruction of Jerusalem, giving out that they were the anointed of God; almost every page of history is blotted with the names of such deceivers; and in our own day we have seen some come in Christ's name, saying that they are Christs. Such men seduce many; but they who heed their Lord's warning will not be deluded by them. Our Savior's words, "Ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars," might be applied to almost any period of the world's history. Earth has seldom had a long spell of quiet; there have almost always been both the realities of war, and the rumors of war. There were many such ever Jerusalem was overthrown; there have been many such ever since; and there will be manysuch until that glorious period when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

"See that ye be not troubled:" is a timely message for the disciples of Christ in every age. "For all these things must come to pass," therefore let us not be surprised or alarmed at them; "but the end is not yet." The destruction of Jerusalem was the beginning of the end, the great type and anticipation of all that will take place when Christ shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. It was an end; but not the end: "the end is not yet."

Matthew 24:5

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

For many shall come in my name—

1. Josephus says, (War, b. ii. c. 13), that there were many who, pretending to Divine inspiration, deceived the people, leading out numbers of them to the desert, pretending that God would there show them the signs of liberty, meaning redemption from the Roman power: and that an Egyptian false prophet led 30,000 men into the desert, who were almost all cut off by Felix. See Acts 21:38. It was a just judgment for God to deliver up that people into the hands of false Christs who had rejected the true one. Soon after our Lord's crucifixion, Simon Magus appeared, and persuaded the people of Samaria that he was the great power of God, Acts 8:9, 10; and boasted among the Jews that he was the son of God.
2. Of the same stamp and character was also Dositheus, the Samaritan, who pretended that he was the Christ foretold by Moses.
3. About twelve years after the death of our Lord, when Cuspius Fadus was procurator of Judea, arose an impostor of the name of Theudas, who said he was a prophet, and persuaded a great multitude to follow him with their best effects to the river Jordan, which he promised to divide for their passage; and saying these things, says Josephus, he deceived many: almost the very words of our Lord.

4. A few years afterwards, under the reign of Nero, while Felix was procurator of Judea, impostors of this stamp were so frequent that some were taken and killed almost every day. Josephus. Ant. b. xx. c. 4. and 7.⁸

McGee: Near the end of the age many people will claim to be Christ. We have such people present with us now. One man established a “holy city” in Northern California and expected any minute to be called to Washington, D.C., to solve the problems of the world. There are no “holy cities” on the face of the earth, but someday the Lord will come from the Holy of Holies in heaven to earth and solve the problems. It should be remembered that even now there are many antichrists, but at the end of the age there will come *one* Antichrist who will oppose Christ and set himself up as the only authority.

I believe that our Lord, up there on the Mount of Olives, looked down to the end of the age and to the Great Tribulation Period, but that at the beginning of His discourse, He bridged the gap by giving us a picture of the present age of the church. I recognize that there are many good Bible teachers, much better than I am, who take the position that in verses 5–8 He is speaking of the Tribulation Period, also; so if you want to disagree with me, you will be in very good company. However, it is my view that our Lord is not referring to the Great Tribulation until we reach verse 9 of this chapter.⁹

ESV: saying, “I am the Christ.” Throughout the history of the church, and even today, many have made claims to messianic identity. Jesus' disciples must be on their guard against such people.

Matthew 24:6

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

McGee: Wars and rumors of wars are not the sign that we are at the end of the age, by any means. The Lord is bridging the gap from where the disciples are to the end of the age. It is easy to think of major wars as indicative of the fact that we are at the end of the age. They are not! There have been many major wars in the past few thousand years and only about two hundred years of peace. When I was a little boy at the end of World War I, I remember hearing my dad and others talking about the books being printed declaring it was the end of the world. World War I caused this type of thinking. But after the war, we had a worldwide depression, World War II, and the atom bomb. By this time, I was a pastor in Pasadena, and I told my congregation that a wheelbarrow load of books would come out saying that we were at the end of the world because of World War II. You know something? I was wrong! Two wheelbarrow loads of books were printed, and they were sensational.

We have come a long way from World War II, and the end of the age still has not come. We should listen to the Lord and stop listening to false teachers. We will hear about wars and rumors of wars, but we should not be troubled because all these things

⁸ Adam Clarke's Commentary

⁹ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:125). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

will come to pass, and still it will not be the end of the age. Friend, we should also keep in mind that man will never solve the problem of war. The League of Nations could not solve this problem, and the United Nations will not be able to solve it either. There will be no peace until the Prince of Peace comes.¹⁰

Matthew 24:7

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Peoples or “ethnic groups” (Greek *ethnê*; see 5:47N). Recent decades have seen a noticeable increase in both ethnic awareness and ethnic strife. The term is distinct from “**nations**,” i.e., political entities (Greek *basileiai*, “kingdoms”).¹¹

[**kingdom**] is a group of nations.

Spurgeon: One would think that there was sorrow enough in "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places"; but our Lord said that "all these" were only "the beginning of sorrows", the first birth-pangs of the travail that must precede his coming, either to Jerusalem, or to the whole world. If famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are only "the beginning of sorrows", what may we not expect the end to be? This prophecy ought both to warn the disciples of Christ what they may expect, and wean them from the world where all these and greater sorrows are to be experienced.

Matthew 24:8

All these are the beginning of sorrows.

key verse—all of these are just the beginning...

[**Sorrows**] in KJV, the Greek word for birth pangs. Labor pains begin slowly, increase in intensity and increase in frequency.

[**All these are the beginning of sorrows**] The first eight signs of Matthew 24:4-7 are the beginning, not the end of sorrows.

[**sorrows**] Greek: *odin* (GSN-5604), birth pangs (Galatians 4:19,27; 1 Thes. 5:3; Rev. 12:2). This refers to the troubles of Israel in the tribulation (Matthew 24:15-21; Isaiah 66:7-8; Jeremiah 30:4-7; Daniel 7:21; Daniel 8:9-14,24; Daniel 9:27; Rev. 12).

¹⁰McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:125). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:7). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

The notion that the Messianic Age will be ushered in with a series of convulsions in history referred to as **the “birth pains”** is familiar in rabbinic Judaism; see the quotations in v. 1N, v. 14N; for more examples see chapter 11, “The Pangs of Times,” in Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, New York: Avon Books, 1979; and compare Revelation 6–18. The “Messianic Age” referred to is the period after Yeshua’s second coming (see v. 30), when he will establish peace among the nations and fulfill the prophecies of Isaiah 2:1–4.¹²

McGee: These are characteristics of the entire age and are therefore not signs of the end of the age, “but the end is not yet” (v. 6). False christs, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes characterize the entire church age, but they will apparently be intensified as we draw near to the end of the age. Right now the population explosion has the world frightened and rightly so. People are starving to death by the thousands and the millions. And this situation is going to increase. The old black horse of famine (see Rev. 6:5–6) hasn’t appeared yet, but at the end of the age the black horse and its rider will come forth. What we see today is just the beginning of sorrows.

The next verse begins with our first “time” word.¹³

Matthew 24:9

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

This verse applies to three groups of people:

- 1) Them: Peter, James and John. They did in fact get delivered up to be afflicted and were hated and killed.
- 2) You and I: As followers of the Lord Jesus, in what we call as the Church period. Indeed there are Church leaders that have been delivered up to be afflicted (even today) and killed.
- 3) Israel: Israel will fulfill her mandate which she has not yet fulfilled. She was called by God, in the Old Testament, to be a witness of Himself to the world. From Rev 7 and 14 we know that the day will come when Israel will be an effective witness, this occurs after the Church is completed (Paul in Rom 11 deals with this issue).

[Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you] Then—during birth pangs of Israel.

[ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake] Jews hated by the Gentiles.

Ye shall be hated of all nations. This was fulfilled then, and has been in all ages. It was judged to be a crime to be a Christian. Multitudes for this, and for nothing else, were put to death.

¹²Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:8). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

¹³McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:126). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

For my name's sake. On account of attachment to me; or because you bear my *name as Christians*.

9-13 You may not be facing intense persecution now, but Christians in other parts of the world are. As you hear about Christians suffering for their faith, remember that they are your brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray for them. Ask God what you can do to help them in their troubles. When one part suffers, the *whole* body suffers. But when all the parts join together to ease the suffering, the whole body benefits (1 Cor. 12:26).

McGee: Now the Lord begins to speak of the time of tribulation. You and I are living in the “age of the church” or the “age of the Holy Spirit,” as some people like to speak of it. The Bible divides the world today into three groups of people: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church of God (see 1 Cor. 10:32). In this age God is calling out a people to His name from both Jews and Gentiles to compose the third group, the church. It is this third group which will be taken out of the world at the time of the Rapture. Then the Great Tribulation will begin, and I believe that verse 9 speaks of this beginning—

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted”—who is the *you*? Obviously, He is not addressing the church but the nation Israel. The affliction He is talking about is anti-Semitism on a worldwide scale.

At this point let me inject an important fact for Christians in our day. As long as the true church is in the world, there could not be worldwide anti-Semitism because the church would resist it. No genuine believer in the Lord Jesus could hate the Jews; it is an impossibility. It is my feeling that the liberal wing of the church is presenting a false front to the Jews and that in the final analysis it will turn against them. But as long as the true church is in the world, there won't be worldwide anti-Semitism; it will break out *after* the church has been removed at the Rapture.¹⁴

Matthew 24:10

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Shall hate one another. Not that real Christians would do this, but those who had professed to be such, would then show that they were not, and would hate one another. Luke adds, that they should be betrayed, "by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends." They would break over the most tender ties to surrender Christians to punishment. So great would be their hatred of Christianity, that it would overcome all the natural endearments of kindred and home. This, in the persecutions of Christians, has been often done; and nothing shows more fully the deep and deadly hatred of the human heart to the gospel.¹⁵

¹⁴ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:126). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁵ Barnes' Study Notes

Betraying and hating each other. Similarly, according to the Talmud,

“Our rabbis taught, ‘For *Adonai* will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees that their power is gone’ (Deuteronomy 32:36). The Son of David will not come until there are many denouncers.” (Sanhedrin 97a)

The phrase, “... when he sees that their power is gone,” is here understood to mean that the people of Israel will be at the mercy of informers. It is then that God will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants by redeeming them through the Messiah, the Son of David.¹⁶

Matthew 24:11

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

The Old Testament frequently mentions false prophets (see 2 Kings 3:13; Isaiah 44:25; Jeremiah 23:16; Ezekiel 13:2-3; Micah 3:5; Zech. 13:2). False prophets claimed to receive messages from God, but they preached a “health and wealth” message. They said what the people wanted to hear, even when the nation was not following God as it should. There were false prophets in Jesus’ day, and we have them today. They are the popular leaders who tell people what they want to hear—such as “God wants you to be rich,” “Do whatever your desires tell you,” or “There is no such thing as sin or hell.” Jesus said false teachers would come, and he warned his disciples, as he warns us, not to listen to their dangerous words.¹⁷

As we saw earlier, the church is warned against false teachers while Israel is warned against false prophets. So here, after the church has been removed, again the warning is against false prophets.

Spurgeon: One would think that there was sorrow enough in "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places"; but our Lord said that "all these" were only "the beginning of sorrows", the first birth-pangs of the travail that must precede his coming, either to Jerusalem, or to the whole world. If famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are only "the beginning of sorrows", what may we not expect the end to be? This prophecy ought both to warn the disciples of Christ what they may expect, and wean them from the world where all these and greater sorrows are to be experienced.

¹⁶Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:10). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

¹⁷ Life Application Notes

Matthew 24:12

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

[iniquity] **anomia**, **Greek 458**, *an-om-ee'-ah*; from Greek 459 (anomos); *illegality*, i.e. *violation of law* or (genitive) *wickedness* :- iniquity, × transgress (-ion of) the law, unrighteousness. (Torahlessness)

May apply spiritually (to you and I), historically (to the first century church) or even post-Church.

With false teaching and loose morals comes a particularly destructive disease—the loss of true love for God and others. Sin cools your love for God and others by turning your focus on yourself. You cannot truly love if you think only of yourself.

Matthew 24:13

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

This passage puts endurance as a requirement for salvation! Some insist that this passage shows that it belongs post-Church.

[**end**] Greek: *telos* (GSN-5056), the actual end of anything (Matthew 24:6,14), not *sunteleia* (GSN-4930), the joining of two ages (Matthew 13:39,40,49; Matthew 24:3; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 9:26). Here *telos* means the end of life or the age as it may be.

[**save**] Greek: *sozo* (GSN-4982). Used 110 times in the New Testament of salvation from sin (Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 7:25), danger (Matthew 14:30; Matthew 27:42), spiritual conflict (John 12:27; 1 Tim. 4:16), sickness (James 5:15), hell (John 3:16-18; Mark 16:16), and slavery (Jude 1:5).

Jesus predicted that his followers would be severely persecuted by those who hated what he stood for. In the midst of terrible persecutions, however, they could have hope, knowing that salvation was theirs. Times of trial serve to sift true Christians from false or fair-weather Christians. When you are pressured to give up and turn your back on Christ, don't do it. Remember the benefits of standing firm, and continue to live for Christ.

McGee: The question is: Who endures to the end? Well, when I study the Book of Revelation, I find that God will stop all the forces of nature and of evil and even the forces of good while He seals a certain number of folk. So who is going to endure to the end? Those whom He seals at the beginning, of course. The Good Shepherd—in all ages—will bring His sheep through to the end. When He starts with an hundred sheep, He comes through with an hundred sheep.

When someone says to me, “So-and-so was very active in the church and has gone into sin. Is he saved?” I can only reply that I do not know. We will have to wait to see what happens. I tell people that the pigs will eventually end up in the pigpen, and the

prodigal sons will all find their way back to the Father's house. It *is* confusing to find a son in a pigpen and a pig in the Father's house. Peter says, "... the sow that was washed [has returned] to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:22). Let's say that one of the little pigs went with the prodigal son to the father's house, that he was scrubbed clean, his teeth brushed with Pepsodent, and that a pink ribbon was tied around his neck. But he wouldn't stay in the father's house. Sooner or later he would go back to the pigpen where he belonged. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." You'll just have to wait and see. Sometimes a son, a Christian, will get into a pigpen, but since he is a son, he will get out someday. Why? Because he has a wonderful Shepherd. "The same shall be saved."¹⁸

Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

The gospel taken to all the world. Ministries such as Wycliff Bible Translators have made their goal to reach the ends of the earth with the Bible. This may or may not be what the verse is referring to. It may be referring to Rev 14:6 when an eagle goes in the midst of heaven and proclaims the gospel to all nations, thus a prophetic event. (However, don't misunderstand, this does not mean we should not preach the gospel to all nations.)

(Revelation 14:6-7) *⁶And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

[gospel of the kingdom] Glad Tidings

Greek: *euangelizo* (GSN-2097), good news or glad tidings of various kinds.

Used In the Old Testament (Septuagint) Of:

1. Any kind of good news (1 Samuel 31:9; 2 Samuel 1:20; 1 Chron. 10:9)
2. God's kindnesses (Psalm 36:10; Psalm 96:2)
3. Messianic blessings (Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 61:1)

Used in the New Testament Of:

1. The kingdom of heaven and of God (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 9:35; Matthew 24:14; Mark 1:14)
2. God (7 times, Romans 1:1; Romans 15:16)
3. Jesus Christ (14 times, Mark 1:1; Romans 1:16; Romans 15:29; 1 Cor. 9:12-18)

¹⁸McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:127). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

4. Salvation, including all phases of redemption of Romans 1:16 (Mark 16:15; Luke 4:18; Ephes. 1:3)
5. The grace of God (Acts 20:24)
6. Peace (Romans 10:15; Ephes. 6:15)
7. The promises (Ephes. 3:6; Hebrews 8:6)
8. The truth (Ephes. 1:13; Col. 1:5)
9. Faith (Phil. 1:27)
10. Hope (Col. 1:23)
11. Immortality (2 Tim. 1:10)
12. The general blessings of the new covenant called "the gospel" 74 times (Mark 16:15; Galatians 1:11; Galatians 3:8). There is only one gospel and both Jews and Gentiles are required to obey the whole New Testament from Matthew to Revelation (Matthew 28:20; Acts 1:1-2; Romans 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephes. 2:11-22; Ephes. 3:5-11).

The gospel of the kingdom is not only of a coming kingdom, but is of salvation and all benefits of the good news of Christ (Matthew 6:33; Matthew 13:11-50; Matthew 18:1-35; Mark 1:14-15; John 3:3-5; Acts 8:12; Acts 20:25; Acts 28:23,31; Romans 14:17; 2 Cor. 4:20; 2 Cor. 6:9; Col. 1:13).

[world] Greek: *oikoumene* (GSN-3625), civilized world as distinguished from the heathen. Not the same as *aion* (GSN-165) (Matthew 24:3), or *kosmos* (GSN-2889), social system (Matthew 24:21).

[nations] To nations, not every individual in every nation, for many will not hear until the Millennium (Isaiah 2:2-4; Isaiah 11:9; Isaiah 66:19-21; Zech. 8:23).

[then shall the end come] Then—when the gospel of the kingdom is preached again as a witness to all nations. This could only refer to the original gospel, including preaching, teaching, and healing, as it began with Christ and the early church (Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 9:35; Luke 4:18; 1 Cor. 4:20). It could not be an announcement of the coming kingdom, for people of nations do that now and pray daily, "Thy kingdom come." This clearly teaches another great outpouring of the Spirit and a revival of the original New Testament program in all fullness (Acts 2:16-21).

And this gospel shall be preached in all the world. The evidence that this was done is to be chiefly derived from the New Testament, and there it is clear. Thus Paul declares that it was preached to every creature under heaven, Colossians 1:6,23 that the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout rite whole world, Romans 1:8 that he preached in Arabia, Galatians 1:17 and at Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, Romans 15:19. We know also that he travelled through Asia Minor, Greece, and Crete; that he was in Italy, and probably in Spain and Gaul, Romans 15:24-28. At the same time, the other apostles were not idle; and there is full proof that within thirty years after this prophecy was spoken, churches were established in all these regions.¹⁹

¹⁹ Barnes' Study Notes

Jesus said that before he returns, the gospel of the kingdom (the message of salvation) would be preached throughout the world. This was the disciples' mission—and it is ours today. Jesus talked about the end times and final judgment to show his followers the urgency of spreading the good news of salvation to everyone.

JNTC: Again, a surprisingly similar view of how the Messianic Age will come can be found on the same page of the Talmud:

“It has been taught that Rabbi Nechemyah said, ‘In the generation of Messiah’s coming impudence will increase; esteem will be perverted [people won’t esteem each other]; the vine will yield its fruit, yet wine will be expensive [because everyone will get drunk and become careless and lazy, so that there will be scarcity]; and the Kingdom will be converted to heresy, and no one will rebuke them.’ ” (Sanhedrin 97a)

The Soncino English edition of the Talmud has this note on “the Kingdom will be converted to heresy”: “Hebrew *minut* [which can mean “heresy” generally or “Christianity” specifically, 22:31–32N]. By ‘the Kingdom’ is meant the Roman Empire, and the statement is a remarkable forecast by R. Nehemia (150 C.E.) of the conversion of Rome to Christianity under Constantine the Great in 313.” However, Travers Herford believes this does not refer to the conversion of Rome but “is merely a way of saying that the spread of heresy and the consequent decay of religion will be universal” (*Christianity in the Talmud*, p. 209). The passage continues:

“This supports Rabbi Yitzchak, who said, ‘The Son of David will not come until the whole world is converted to the beliefs of the heretics.’ Raba said, ‘What verse [proves this]?’ [Answer:] ‘It is all turned white: he is clean’ ([Leviticus 13:13](#)).” (Sanhedrin 97a)

The Soncino Edition’s note says, “This [in the light of Leviticus 13:9–17] refers to leprosy: a white swelling is a symptom of uncleanness; nevertheless, if the whole skin is so affected, it is declared clean. So here too; when all are heretics, it is a sign that the world is about to be purified by the advent of Messiah.”²⁰

McGee: The gospel of the kingdom is what John the Baptist preached—“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). And the Lord Jesus began His ministry with that message—“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). Also, He sent His apostles out with that message (see Matt. 10). But in Matthew 11:28, we saw that our Lord’s message changed to “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And in Matthew 20:28 He said that He had come to give His life a ransom for many. But during the Tribulation Period the gospel of the kingdom will again be preached. It is not for our day, because we are to preach the gospel of the grace of God. Is the gospel of the kingdom another gospel? No, my friend, it is not. It is the same gospel with a different emphasis. We have no right to say that the kingdom of heaven is at hand because we don’t know. But when the Great Tribulation Period begins, the people will know that they

²⁰Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:14). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

are close to the end, although they will not know the day nor the hour. Therefore, the message will be, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Now let me answer our critics who say that we who hold the dispensational view of Scripture teach that there are two or more ways of being saved. No, God has never had more than one basis on which He saves men, and that basis is the cross of Christ. Every offering before Christ came looked forward to the cross of Christ, and every commemoration since He has come looks back to the cross of Christ.

To illustrate this, let’s go back to Genesis 4 and look at the offering which Abel brought to God. He brought a little lamb. If you had been there, you could have asked Abel, “Why are you bringing this little lamb? Do you think that a little lamb will take away your sins?” He would have said, “Of course not! I’m bringing this little lamb because God told me to do so. I am bringing it by faith.” Then you could have asked him, “Well, if it won’t take away your sins, why would He ask you to bring it?” Abel’s answer would have been something like this: “This little lamb is pointing to One who is coming later, the seed of the woman, my mother. That One will take away our sins. I bring this little lamb by faith, recognizing that I am a sinner and need a substitute.” You see, Abel was looking forward to the One who was coming.

John the Baptist not only said, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:2), but he also said, “. . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). John identified Him. Before the coming of Christ everyone who had come to God on *His* terms was saved on *credit*. And they were forgiven on the basis of the death of Christ. In the Old Testament God never saved anyone by Law. At the heart of the Mosaic system was the sacrificial system. They brought a lamb to God because the Law revealed that they were lawbreakers, that they were not obeying God, and that they did need to have a substitute to pay the penalty of their sins. The Law was given “. . . that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19). My friend, you and I are lawbreakers, we are sinners needing a Savior. The thing to do is to receive Christ as your *Savior* before He comes as the Sovereign of this universe when He will be your *Judge*.

Now, going back to the verse we have been considering, “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” This does not mean that while the church is here in the world the end can’t come until the gospel of the grace of God is preached worldwide. I know there are those who use this verse to promote their Bible-teaching programs. While it is laudable to want to get the gospel to the ends of the earth, this is not the verse to use to promote it. You see, my friend, it is important to interpret Scripture in its context. Remember that our Lord is answering the question, “What is the sign of the end of the age?” (see v. 3). He is speaking of that end time.²¹

²¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:127). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Matthew 24:15

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:)

This is an important verse to understand (this does not mean that it applies to you personally).

[Spoken of by Daniel the prophet] Here authenticates the book of Daniel being written by no other than Daniel (and it notes that Daniel was a prophet)!

[When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place] When—this marks the starting point of the middle of Daniel's 70th week when the Antichrist will break his 7-year covenant with Israel and enter Judea to take over Jerusalem as his capital and the Jewish temple as his capital building (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:40-45; Daniel 12:1,7; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2; Rev. 12:1-17; Rev. 13:1-18). All this prophecy from Matthew 24:15 on must be fulfilled the last 3 1/2 years of this age.

[abomination of desolation] This refers to the Antichrist and his image in the Jewish temple at Jerusalem during the last 3 1/2 years of this age (Daniel 8:9-14; Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:45; Daniel 12:1,7,11; Rev. 13:1-18; Rev. 14:9-11; Rev. 20:4-6).

When Antiochus IV (“Epiphanes”) conquered Jerusalem in 167 B.C.E. he erected an altar to Zeus in the Temple. 1 Maccabees 1:54 and 6:7 refer to this as a fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy, but Yeshua is pointing to an additional, future fulfillment.²²

McGee: What is the abomination of desolation? Well, Daniel tells us about two of them. One of them was Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian, who came down and destroyed Jerusalem. In Daniel 11:31 we read: “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 bears out the fact that Antiochus Epiphanes came against Jerusalem in 170 B.C., at which time over one hundred thousand Jews were slain. He took away the daily sacrifice from the temple, offered the blood and broth of a swine upon the altar, and set up an image of Jupiter to be worshiped in the holy place.

However, our Lord is undoubtedly referring to the second abomination of desolation to which Daniel alludes (see Dan. 12:11), and I believe that it will be an image of Antichrist which will be set up in the temple. During the Tribulation the temple will be rebuilt and the nation of Israel will be back in Palestine. Obviously, our Lord is speaking of the temple rather than the church, because the church has no holy place. However, we cannot be certain that this is the abomination of desolation to which our Lord refers in the passage before us; this is just our surmising.

²²Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:15). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

I am not looking for the abomination of desolation—I wouldn't know it if I met it on the street—but the people in the last days will be looking for it because it will be the sign to prove that they are in the Great Tribulation Period. Instead of our looking for Antichrist and his abominations, we are told to be “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

Our Lord says, “(whoso readeth, let him understand:),” which means the people who are living at that time *will* understand. Since you and I won't be there, He hasn't given us many details.

Now we are given another *time* word. When the abomination of desolation appears, “Then”—²³

Matthew 24:16

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

This passage is addressed to those living in Judea.

[Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains] Then—when Antichrist enters Judea and takes over the temple (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:40-45). Israel will have to flee from Judea.

[mountains] Into Edom and Moab which escape the Antichrist

McGee: You and I are not expecting to flee to the mountains of Judea. I live very near the San Gabriel Mountains, and my neighbor tells me that if an atom bomb is dropped in Southern California, he is going to head for a certain canyon up there (and I may follow him!), but that will not fulfill this prophecy. In fact, it has nothing whatever to do with it. Rather, it has to do with people who are in Judea. Our Lord is giving that prophecy to those people, not to us.²⁴

Matthew 24:17

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

[housetop] The rooftop is typically a patio.

[Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house]
Let Israel flee from Judea without taking time for valuables, lest they be overtaken by Antichrist's armies.

²³McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:128). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²⁴McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:128). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Barnes: Him which is on the housetop. The roofs of the houses in eastern countries were made flat, so that they were favourable places for walking and retirement. Matthew 9:2. The meaning here is, that he who should be on the house-top when this calamity came upon the city, *should flee without delay*; he should not even take time to secure any article of apparel from his house. So sudden would be the calamity, that by doing it he would endanger his life.

The housetop in Palestine corresponds to our front porch or our patio. Again let me emphasize the fact that our Lord is speaking to the folk in Palestine, not to you and me. This warning is not applicable to us; we don't spend our time on our housetops!

Matthew 24:18

Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

This refers to people engaged in agriculture. If a worker in the fields leaves his cloak at the end of the row in the early morning when it is cool, and the word comes that the abomination of desolation has appeared, he is not to go back and get his cloak, but he is to start running.

Matthew 24:19

And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

[woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days] It will be hard on women with children or those great with child to flee before the swiftness of the invaders.

Matthew 24:20

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

He is talking to the remnant who will flee to Petra to escape the Antichrist!

[But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day] Pray that the invasion will not take place in winter as it would be difficult to flee without preparation at this time; nor on the sabbath, because orthodox Jews hold it unlawful to travel more than a mile on that day (Acts 1:12), so would be overtaken by the invaders.²⁵

²⁵ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

Matthew 24:21

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

[For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be] For then—the great tribulation of the last 3 1/2 years of this age will begin (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:40-45; Daniel 12:1,7,11; Jeremiah 30:4-7; Rev. 7:14; Rev. 11:1-19:21).

McGee: “For then shall be great tribulation”—in Revelation 7:14 the literal translation is “the tribulation the great one,” placing the article before both the noun and the adjective for emphasis. In other words, this tribulation is unique; there has been nothing like it in the history of the world, and there will never again be anything like it. And notice that our Lord is the One who labels the end of the age as the Great Tribulation. (If you want to find fault with it, talk to Him, not to me.)

“Such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” Since that is true, believe me, people will know it when it gets here! I hear people today talking about the church going through the Tribulation, and they don’t seem to realize how severe it will be. In fact, some folk say that we are in the Great Tribulation at the present time! Well, things are bad in our day, I’ll grant that, but this period can be matched with many other periods in history. When the Great Tribulation gets here, there will be nothing to match it in the past or in the future.²⁶

Matthew 24:22

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

[elect] Not referring to the Church, but God’s elect in those days on the earth.

[shortened] Curtailed. The persecution itself will be cut short, not the 1260 days themselves (Rev. 11:1-3; Rev. 12:6,14; Rev. 13:5; Daniel 12:7).

[elect’s sake] Jews, not the Church because:

1. Jesus is answering a Jewish question (Matthew 24:3; Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 1:6)
2. False Messiahs primarily concern Israel (Matthew 24:5,23-26)
3. Anti-semitism proves it (Matthew 24:9)
4. The travail of Israel (Matthew 24:8)
5. The abomination of desolation concerns Israel only (Matthew 24:15)
6. The Jewish temple (Matthew 24:15)
7. Flight of Israel (Matthew 24:16)
8. The sabbath is Jewish (Matthew 24:20)
9. The great tribulation (Matthew 24:21)

²⁶McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:129). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

10. Jews are the only people to be gathered (Matthew 24:31)
11. The coming of Christ is to deliver Israel (Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46; Zech. 14)
12. Judgment of the nations is based on treatment of Israel (Matthew 25:31-46)
13. The eagles eating carcasses was predicted to be at the time of Israel's deliverance (Matthew 24:28; Ezekiel 39:17-22; Luke 17:34-37; Rev. 19:17-21)
14. The church will be raptured before the above events (see *The Hinderer of Lawlessness, and Rapture Before Antichrist*)

21-22 Jesus, talking about the end times, telescoped near future and far future events, as did the Old Testament prophets. Many of these persecutions have already occurred; more are yet to come. But God is in control of even the length of persecutions. He will not forget his people. This is all we need to know about the future to motivate us to live rightly now.

Matthew 24:23

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

Christ will not come in hiding. You will not be able to miss His Coming if you tried.

[Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not]

Then—during the great tribulation days of Matthew 24:15-21.

23-24 Jesus' warnings about false teachers still hold true. Upon close examination it becomes clear that many nice-sounding messages don't agree with God's message in the Bible. Only a solid foundation in God's Word can equip us to perceive the errors and distortions in false teaching.

23-26 The rabbis similarly warn against credulity:

“Rabbi Shmu’el taught in the name of Rabbi Y’hudah, ‘If someone tells you when the day of redemption is coming, don’t believe him, for it is written, “The day of vengeance is in my heart” (Isaiah 63:4). If the heart does not tell its secrets to the mouth, how can the mouth tell anything?’” (Midrash on Psalm 9:2(1))

On **false messiahs** see 1:22N.²⁷

Spurgeon: It is a grand thing to have such faith in Christ that, you have none to spare for impostors. It is important not to distribute your faith too widely. Those who believe a little of everything will, in the end, believe nothing of anything. If you exercise full faith in that which is sure and steadfast, "false Christs and false prophets" will not be able to make you their dupes. In one respect, the modern teachers of heresy are more successful than their Judeean prototypes, for they do actually "deceive the very elect", even though they cannot "shew great signs and wonders." One of the saddest signs of the times in which we live is the ease with which "the very elect" are deceived by the smooth-tongued

²⁷ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:23). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

"false Christs and false prophets" who abound in our midst. Yet our Savior expressly forewarned his followers against them: "Behold, I have told you before." Forewarned is forearmed. Let it be so in our case. Our Savior's expressive command may be fitly applied to the whole system of "modern thought" which is contrary to the inspired Word of God: "Believe it not."

Matthew 24:24

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

They will do miracles.

"If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" implies that it is not possible, only by the grace of God.

Elect is protected: 1 John 2:20.

Lies: 1 Thess 2:9-12.

[shew great signs and wonders] Satanic powers will be manifest in the tribulation (2 Thes. 2:7-12; Rev. 13:1-18; Rev. 16:13-16; Rev. 19:20; Daniel 8:24).

[elect's sake] Jews, not the Church because:

1. Jesus is answering a Jewish question (Matthew 24:3; Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 1:6)
2. False Messiahs primarily concern Israel (Matthew 24:5,23-26)
3. Anti-semitism proves it (Matthew 24:9)
4. The travail of Israel (Matthew 24:8)
5. The abomination of desolation concerns Israel only (Matthew 24:15)
6. The Jewish temple (Matthew 24:15)
7. Flight of Israel (Matthew 24:16)
8. The sabbath is Jewish (Matthew 24:20)
9. The great tribulation (Matthew 24:21)
10. Jews are the only people to be gathered (Matthew 24:31)
11. The coming of Christ is to deliver Israel (Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46; Zech. 14)
12. Judgment of the nations is based on treatment of Israel (Matthew 25:31-46)
13. The eagles eating carcasses was predicted to be at the time of Israel's deliverance (Matthew 24:28; Ezekiel 39:17-22; Luke 17:34-37; Rev. 19:17-21)
14. The church will be raptured before the above events (see The Hinderer of Lawlessness, and Rapture Before Antichrist)

Matthew 24:25

Behold, I have told you before.

24-28 In times of persecution even strong believers will find it difficult to be loyal. To keep from being deceived by false messiahs, we must understand that Jesus' return will be unmistakable (Mark 13:26); no one will doubt that it is he. If you have to be told that the Messiah has come, then he hasn't (Matthew 24:27). Christ's coming will be obvious to everyone.

McGee: Don't miss what He is saying here. The ability to work miracles in our day should be looked upon with suspicion because the next great miracle worker will not be Christ; he will be Antichrist with his false prophets.

"If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Who are the elect? In the Scriptures there are two elect groups: the elect of the nation Israel and the elect of the church. We have to use common sense to determine which group is meant. Who has our Lord been talking about up to this point? Israel. All right, Israel is the elect in this verse, also. Jesus is not talking about the church. You can fool some of the people some of the time. You can fool all of the people some of the time. But you cannot fool God's children all of the time. It just can't be done. I have read many letters which testify of this. A recent letter is from a woman who has come out of a religious cult. She listened to our Bible-teaching radio program for months before she could see the error of the cult's teaching. It isn't possible to fool God's children all the time. They will come out of a cult eventually.²⁸

Matthew 24:26

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

[**he is in the desert**] Anyone claiming to be Christ (Matthew 24:23).

[**secret chambers**] Daniel 11:45; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13.

Matthew 24:27

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

McGee: When He comes, there will not be any John the Baptist to announce Him. But when He comes, the whole world will know and it will be as public as lightning. Those of you that live in the Middle West know that a lightning storm is a public affair. When it comes, everybody knows about it, and sometimes it is a frightful experience. The Lord's second coming to the earth will be like that. No one will need to announce it. When our

²⁸McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:129). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Lord comes the second time to establish His kingdom on earth, everyone will know He is coming. (Remember that His second coming to earth does not refer to the Rapture.)²⁹

Matthew 24:28

For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

[carcass] Job 9:26; 39:27-30; Hab 1:8.

[wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together] Where the dead bodies are slain at Armageddon the birds will be gathered together to eat them (Job 39:30; Ezekiel 39:17-22; Luke 17:34-37; Rev. 19:17-21). The rapture will have taken place years before this (see Rapture Before Antichrist). Christ is not a dead carcass nor are the saints eagles to be caught up to such a carcass. This is not in the air, but on earth (Ezekiel 39:17; Rev. 19:11-21).

Wherever there's a dead body, that's where you find the vultures. Birds preying on carrion seem to refer here to persons used by demonic spirits to carry out evil purposes; they gather around false messiahs (corpses) and draw people away from the truth. Scholars surmise that Yeshua is quoting a folk proverb.³⁰

McGee: This is the most difficult verse to understand in the entire Olivet Discourse. After speaking of His coming in glory like lightning out of heaven, then to speak of carrion-eating birds seems strange indeed. But I believe it refers to Christ's coming in judgment, because Revelation 19 tells us about an invitation that went out to the birds to come together for a great banquet, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army" (Rev. 19:17-19). The birds that feed on carrion seem to be agents of divine judgment. When the Lord comes again, He will come in judgment.³¹

²⁹ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:130). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³⁰ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:28). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

³¹ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:130). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Matthew 24:29

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

[**darkness**] Ex 32:7-8; Joel 3:15-16; Ex 32:7-8; Isa 13:10 (“The Day of the Lord” is always associated with God’s wrath; Cf. 1 Thess 5).

Matthew 24 parallels the first 6 seals of Revelation (Rev 6).

[**Powers of Heaven ..shaken**] Eph 6:12 (spoiled= Col 2:15); 2 Pet 2:4. Satan is the Prince of the Power of the Air.

Notice that this is to be “Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days.” It is my understanding that all of these things will take place at Christ’s second coming to the earth.

[**those days**] Great tribulation (Matthew 24:15-21).

Spurgeon: Our Lord appears to have purposely mingled the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and his own second coming, so that there should be nothing in his words to satisfy idle curiosity, but everything to keep his disciples always on the watch for his appearing. These verses must apply to the coming of the King at the last great day. There may have been a partial fulfillment of them in "the tribulation" that came upon his guilty capital; and the language of the Savior might have been taken, metaphorically, to set forth the wonders in "the heavens" and the woes on "the earth" in connection with that awful judgment; but we must regard Christ's words here as prophetic of the final manifestation of "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." There will be no further need of "the sun and the moon and the star," when HE, who is brighter than the sun, shines forth in all the glory of his Father and of his holy angels.

Christ's coming will be the source of untold joy to his friends; but it will bring unparalleled sorrow to his foes: "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." When Jesus comes, he will find the nations still unsaved, and horror will be their eternal portion.

Matthew 24:30

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

[**clouds of heaven**] Acts 1:9; Matt 17:5; Exodus - Shekinah = pillar of fire by night, cloud by day = the presence of the Lord! Dan 7:14; Rev 1:7; 19:11-16 (Zech 12:10 prophecy - He is pierced!).

[**And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven**] And then—immediately after the tribulation (Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46).

[all the tribes of the earth mourn] All in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, including the armies of all nations surrounding the city (Zech. 14:1-5; Rev. 1:7). Many will not see Christ until He is here reigning and the saints take over all parts of the earth. Then people will go up to Christ (Isaiah 2:2-4; Isaiah 52:7; Isaiah 66:19-21; Zech. 8:23).

[see the Son of man coming] See with the natural eyes. Therefore it is not a spiritual coming (2 Thes. 1:7-10; Rev. 19:11-21; Zech. 14:1-5).

[clouds of heaven] He went away in clouds and He will return with them (Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13-14; Rev. 14:14,16).

[power] Coming in power sufficient to defeat the armies of earth and Satan, all his fallen angels and demons in one day (Zech. 14; Rev. 19:11-21; Rev. 20:1-3; Jude 1:14; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; Isaiah 24:21-23; Joel 2).

[great glory] Matthew 25:31; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; 2 Thes. 2:8.

The nations of the earth will mourn because unbelievers will suddenly realize they have chosen the wrong side. Everything they have scoffed about will be happening, and it will be too late for them.

JNTC: All the tribes of the Land will mourn. Zechariah 12:10–14 refers to the day when the people of Israel will mourn over God, who has been pierced, as they would mourn over a firstborn son (see Yn 19:37&N).

Here and at Rv 1:7, where the same passage of Zechariah is cited, Greek *gê* in other English versions is rendered “earth,” not “Land.” Besides obscuring the New Testament’s support for the Jewish people’s claim to the Land of Israel today, this erroneous translation ignores the fact that Zechariah is clearly speaking of the Land of Israel and not of the whole earth. See 5:5&N and last paragraph of Section VI of the Introduction to the *JNT*.

Coming on the clouds. Again, in the same part of the Talmud we read:

“Rabbi Nachman said to Rabbi Yitzchak, ‘Have you heard when *Bar-Nafle* will come?’ ‘Who is *Bar-Nafle*?’ he asked. ‘Messiah,’ he answered. ‘Do you call Messiah *Bar-Nafle*?’ ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘for it is written, “In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David *hanofelet* [that is fallen]” ([Amos 9:11](#)).’ ” (Sanhedrin 96b–97a)

The Soncino English edition of the Talmud adds in a note by the general editor, Isidor Epstein, that *bar-nofelet* means “literally, ‘son of the fallen.’ *Bar-Nafle* is generally assumed to represent the Greek *uios nephelôn*, the ‘son of the clouds’; cf. Daniel 7:13, ‘there came with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man,’ which R. Nachman gave a Hebrew connotation.” The passage from Amos is also quoted in Ac 15:16.³²

³²Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:30). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

McGee: “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.” What is that sign? Again I will have to speculate. Back in the Old Testament, you remember, the nation Israel was given the glory, the *shekinah* presence of God. No other nation or people has ever had that, nor does the church have it. The *shekinah* glory rested over the tabernacle and later the temple at Jerusalem. But because of Israel’s sin, the *shekinah* glory left the nation. When Christ came the first time, He laid aside, not His deity, but His prerogative of deity, His glory—although John says, “... we beheld his glory ...” (John 1:14), because there were times when it broke through. However, at His second coming, I believe that the *shekinah* glory will hover over the earth before He breaks through, and that will be the “sign of the Son of man in heaven.” “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” This is His return to earth to set up His kingdom.³³

Matthew 24:31

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

[angels] We know that they are very busy during this period. Cf. Heb 1:6; 2 Thess 1:7-8; Matt 13. The angels are also involved in the return of Israel to the land (Isa 27:13; 11:11,12; Jer 16:4-16).

[angels] Literal angels accompany Him to earth (2 Thes. 1:7-10) to gather Israel (Deut. 30:4; Isaiah 11:11-12) and separate the tares from the wheat (Matthew 13:38-50).

[trumpet] Trumpets always sounded at gatherings of Israel (Exodus 19:13-19; Leviticus 25:9; 1 Samuel 13:3; 2 Samuel 2:28). This trumpet is predicted in Isaiah 18:3; Isaiah 27:13; Zech. 9:14. This is not the same as the seven trumpets of Rev. 8:2,6 or the trumpets in connection with the resurrection of the righteous (1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:51-58).

[four winds] Four directions of the earth (Isaiah 11:11-12; Rev. 7:1-3; Rev. 20:8).

Shofar, “ram’s horn,” or, loosely, “trumpet.” The ram’s horn is blown at the season of the Jewish High Holy Days, one hundred times on *Rosh-HaShanah* (New Year), also called the Feast of Trumpets; and once at the end of *Yom-Kippur* (Day of Atonement). Judaism also understands that the Day of Judgment will be announced by blasts on the *shofar*. Ten *Tanakh* verses mentioning the *shofar* are recited in the *Rosh-HaShanah* synagogue service. See also 1C 15:52&N, 1 Th 4:16&N, Rv 8:2&N.³⁴

³³McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:130). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³⁴Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:31). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Matthew 24:32

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

[parable of the fig tree ...] First of five parables in Matthew 24-25: the fig tree, illustrating the nearness of His return (Matthew 24:32-33). These are the last five parables in Matthew.

[fig tree] It is universally interpreted to mean the Jewish nation, but this could not possibly be the meaning. Just like a fig tree (Luke adds, "and all the trees," Matthew 21:29) putting forth its leaves indicates that summer is near, "so likewise" the signs of Matthew 24:4-26 indicate the nearness of Christ's coming. This is all that is meant, so to use a few fig leaves to represent certain events of Israel is just as unscriptural as to pick a few oak leaves to represent truths about Gentiles.

The **fig tree** here is often taken to represent the Jewish people—for example, by the Messianic Jew Paul Liberman, who called his 1976 book on the end-time revival of the Jewish people *The Fig Tree Blossoms* (Tree of Life, P.O. Box 19381, San Diego, CA 92119). See also Mk 11:12–14, 20–24N.

Matthew 24:33

So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

[know that it is near] It refers to the whole discussion about His Coming. Remember that this whole discourse is in response to His disciples' question.

[it is near, even at the doors] The second coming, not the rapture, which is not once referred to in Matthew 24-25. There are no signs of the rapture for it is itself one of the greatest signs of the second coming. There are no prophecies to be fulfilled before the rapture for it could have taken place any time in the past or can take place any time in the future without any sign or prophecy coming to pass (Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:20-21). All signs of the coming of Christ point to the second coming and not the rapture. There will be at least seven years between the two events (see Rapture Before Antichrist). The rapture is not the second coming, nor one phase or stage of it, for Christ does not come to the earth at that time. He meets the saints in the air and takes them back to heaven (1 Thes. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:13; Rev. 19:1-11). The saints stay in heaven with Him for these years and then return to the earth at the second coming (Zech. 14:5; Jude 1:14; Rev. 19:11-21).³⁵

McGee: I do not see how the fig tree could represent anything other than the nation Israel (e.g., see Jer. 24; Hos. 9:10). There are certainly fig trees growing in abundance in Israel even in our day after all that has happened to that land. I was impressed with the fig orchards north of Jerusalem and the vineyards south of Jerusalem—the area south of

³⁵ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

Bethlehem is filled with vineyards. Fig trees and grapevines identify the land, and I believe that our Lord is using the fig tree as a symbol of that land.³⁶

Matthew 24:34

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Three interpretations of what this means:

- 1) He is telling them that they, the disciples, will not pass away until this is all done. Problem is that they did pass away and all these things are still not fulfilled.
- 2) The word “generation” can mean “race.” Thus, “this generation” might mean the Jews. This would be a miracle as there really are no races today that can trace themselves as clearly back like the Jews can. Clearly there has been no group that has been more repeatedly singled out for extermination than the Jews (Pharaoh, Hitler..). If this is what the verse means then it is being redundant as He has already noted that the Jews have to be around to fulfill these prophecies (e.g., for the Temple to be desecrated it must be consecrated, thereby must be observant Jews.)
- 3) “This generation” referring to the ones that see the green leaves. Meaning the whole scenario will occur in one lifetime.

Fig Trees

The Fig Trees are used to speak of Israel. Israel is bearing leaves today! (No fruit yet, but it is coming!)

Jotham, days of Judges: Jer 9:10-11.

Israel: Hos 9:10; Jeremiah 24:2 (= Judah specifically?); Joel 1:6-7.

vine =? Whole nation (Isa 5, Ps 80). Isa 5:7, house of Israel vs. Judah (vineyard vs. pleasant plant = fig? Ju 9:11).

Luke parable 13:6. Cf. Jer 24:5-6. Ezra’s prayer 9:8-9. Christ sought this remnant, found none (Luke 13:6).

His branch (only singular in NT!): Isa 4:2; 11:1; Jer 23:5; 33:14; Zech 3:8; 6:12-13; Cf. Luke 21:29-30 = no branch!) In Matthew & Mark:

the branch = Messianic Hope (Rom 11:25).

[This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled] The last generation living on earth at the time all these things will be fulfilled. Always used of a particular span of life and not a race of people (Matthew 11:16). This shows that all these things will be fulfilled in one generation only and not in several of them.

JNTC: This people will certainly not pass away. If “this people” is the correct translation of Greek *ê genea avtê*, Yeshua is guaranteeing that the Jews will persist as a people until his second coming. He is echoing the promise of Jeremiah 31:34–36(35–37):

“Thus says *Adonai*, who gives the sun for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, who stirs up the sea

³⁶McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:131). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

and its roaring waves—*Adonai* of Heaven’s Armies is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, says *Adonai*, then the seed of Israel also will stop being a nation before me forever. Thus says *Adonai*: If heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth beneath searched out, then I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done.”

Thus after proclaiming the New Covenant at Jeremiah 31:30–33(31–34), God immediately states that the Jewish people will last at least as long as the sun and the moon. Both Yeshua and Jeremiah refute Replacement theology (see 5:5N, 5:17N).

However, *ê genea avtê* could mean “this generation.” If so, Yeshua must have meant either his own generation or a future one. If his own, then either **all these things** already happened long ago, an interpretation which strains credibility if words mean anything; or they did not happen, in which case the prophecy was false, since his own generation passed away by the early second century at the latest. Those who think he meant that a future generation will see **all these things happen** have the problem of determining how to recognize it, because vv. 4–33 can be variously understood. Thus some believe “this generation” began with the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 or with Israel’s recovery of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967, while others maintain it has not begun yet. Also, what constitutes a generation’s passing away? A biblical generation (40 years), the average age at death (70–80 years), or when the last person born at the indicated time has grown old and died (100–plus years)?

Arndt and Gingrich’s *A Greek-English Lexicon* is inconclusive. Under “*genea*” it gives the root meaning, “family, descent,” and adds: “1. Literally, those descended from a common ancestor, a *clan*; then *race, kind* generically The meaning *nation* is advocated by some in Mt 24:34, Mk 13:30, Lk 21:32; but see also 2. 2. Basically, the sum total of those born at the same time, expanded to include all those living at a given time—*generation, contemporaries* (cf. Genesis 7:1, Psalm 11:8 [and many New Testament references, including all three cited under ‘1’]).”³⁷

McGee: “This generation”—the Greek word can mean race and refer to the nation Israel. Or it could refer to the generation that will be living at the time these predictions come to pass. A generation is reckoned to be about twenty years, and certainly the predicted events of this section will take place in a much briefer time than twenty years. My feeling is that it could refer to either one, but I much prefer the interpretation that it refers to the preservation of the Jewish race. Haman was not able to destroy them, neither was Pharaoh, nor did Hitler succeed in his attempts. And no dictator in our day will be able to exterminate these people—God will see to that.³⁸

³⁷ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:34). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

³⁸ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:131). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

[pass away] Pass Away

Greek: *parerchomai* (GSN-3928), to change from one condition or state to another; pass away, as a person passes away in death, or as old things pass away at the new birth (2 Cor. 5:17). It never means annihilation, but a change only. The heavens and earth are eternal (Psalm 72:5-17; Psalm 89:3-37; Psalm 104:5; Eccles. 1:4) and cannot pass out of existence. They will be changed (Hebrews 1:10-12; Hebrews 12:25-28; Romans 8:21-23), be renovated by fire (2 Peter 3:5-13), and be renewed (Rev. 21:1), but never pass out of existence. They will be changed but "My words will not be changed."

Matthew 24:36

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

In Mark this verse includes "not the Son"!

It is good that we don't know exactly when Christ will return. If we knew the precise date, we might be tempted to be lazy in our work for Christ. Worse yet, we might plan to keep sinning and then turn to God right at the end. Heaven is not our only goal; we have work to do here. And we must keep on doing it until death or until we see the unmistakable return of our Savior.

JNTC: But when that day and hour will come, no one knows—not the angels in heaven, not the Son, only the Father. (In some printings of the *Jewish New Testament* the words "in heaven, not the Son, only the Father" were inadvertently omitted.) Compare Daniel 12:8–10, Acts 1:6 and the following citations, again from Tractate Sanhedrin in the Talmud:

“Rabbi Shmu’el bar-Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, ‘May the bones of those who calculate the end [that is, the time of the Messiah’s coming] be blasted away! As soon as the time [which they have determined] arrives and the Messiah has not come, they say, ‘He will never come!’” Rather, wait for him, as it is written, ‘Though he tarry, wait for him’ (**Habakkuk 2:3**).” (Sanhedrin 97b; the same phrase from Habakkuk is echoed in Article XII of Maimonides’ creed.)

“Whenever Rabbi Zera’ came upon scholars trying [to calculate when the Messiah would arrive], he would say to them, ‘It has been taught that three things come when the mind is diverted: the Messiah, finding a lost article, and a scorpion. So don’t postpone his coming by thinking about it!’” (Sanhedrin 97a)

According to the Zohar, Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Y’hudah were in a cave, where they found a supernatural book and began studying it, but it disappeared in a flame and a gust of wind. When they came and told Rabbi Shim’on what had happened,

“he said to them, ‘Perhaps you were examining the letters that deal with the coming of the Messiah? ... It is not the will of the Holy One, blessed be He, to reveal too much to the world. But when the days of the Messiah approach, even children will be able to discover secrets of wisdom, and through them be able to calculate the time of the end; then it will be revealed to all.’ ” (Zohar 1:117b-118a)³⁹

Spurgeon: There is a manifest change in our Lord's words here, which clearly indicates that they refer to his last great coming to judgment: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man." Some would be prophets have wrested this verse from its evident meaning by saying, "Though we do not know the day and the hour of Christ's coming, we may know the year, the month, and even the week." If this method of "renting the words of Jesus is not blasphemous, it is certainly foolish, and betrays disloyalty to the King. He added that, not only does no man know of that day and hour, but it is hidden from angelic beings also: "No, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." We need not therefore be troubled by idle prophecies of hair-brained fanatics, even if they claim to interpret the Scriptures; for what the angels do not know has not been revealed to them. Even Christ, in his human nature, so voluntarily limited his own capacities that he knew not the time of his Second Advent (Mr 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.). It is enough for us to know that he will surely come; our great concern should be to be ready for his appearing whenever he shall return.

Matthew 24:37

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Several times Jesus refers to the Days of Noah in a prophecy sense.
Cf. Gen 6; Luke 17:26,27, 1 Pet 3:19,20; 2 Pet 2:5,6, 7.

Noe. The Greek way of writing *Noah*. See Genesis 6:1-9:29. The coming of the Son of man would be as it was in the days of Noah:

- 1st. In its being sudden and unexpected, the precise time not being made known, though the general indications had been given.
- 2nd. The world would be found as it was then. Nephilim in the land Gen 6.

Matthew 24:38

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

Don't misunderstand what He is saying. There is nothing wrong with marrying or eating. His point is that things were business as usual. Noah did not just build the Ark, he had it

³⁹Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 24:36). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

sitting in his driveway for over 120 years! The ark stood as a witness to the world that a flood was coming! Jesus' point here is that they ignored the signs.

There was indeed something very supernatural going on in the Days of Noah between the *B'nai Elohim* (the Sons of God, the Old Testament term for angels) and the daughters of men (Gen 6:1-5). They had unnatural offspring called "the Fallen Ones." Apparently, the strange creatures that this gave rise to is entrapped in our own myths and legends (the Demi-gods of ancient Greek mythology, etc.). Some believe that this will happen again in the end times from this and other passages. The intervention of the occult in the end times would be consistent with this view of the days of Noah. Cf. Luke 17:26,27 and continuing through verse 37. The story of Lot is in Gen 18, 19. Cf. 1 Pet 3:18+; 2 Pet 2:5-7.

Noah was the close of the flood age. Jesus is here in Matthew 24 is talking about the close of another age.

[until the day that Noe entered into the ark] Premillennial Coming

Sin continued up to the very day Noah entered the ark, so sin will continue up to the day of the second coming of Christ. Hence, there is no room for a Millennium of righteousness before Christ's coming. In fact, Christ must come before the Millennium begins (Rev. 19:11-20:10) and sin will continue in the Millennium (Isaiah 65:20-25; Rev. 20:7-10; Ephes. 1:10). The purpose of the Millennium is to put down all sin and rebellion (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

Matthew 24:39

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

[took them all away] Rapture Or Destruction?

Destroyed them all (Luke 17:27), that is, the ones that needed to be destroyed, and saved Noah and family. So Christ will destroy some at His coming and leave some to replenish the earth in the Millennium (Zech. 14:16-21; Isaiah 2:2-4; Isaiah 66:19-21; Rev. 20).

McGee: Now, the days of Noah were characterized by gross immorality—every thought and imagination of man's heart was only evil continually (see Gen. 6:5). But our Lord says that His coming will be in days like the days of Noah, and He mentions only that they were eating and drinking. Is there anything wrong with eating and drinking? No, we are told that whatever we do—whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God (see 1 Cor. 10:31). However, the people in Noah's day were not eating and drinking to the glory of God. In fact, they were living as though God did not exist.

A little boy was invited out to dinner for the first time in his life. He was just going next door, but to him it was a big event. So when the time came to go, he made a beeline for the house next door. When they sat down to the table to eat, the boy automatically bowed his head to offer thanks for the food because he came from a Christian home. Suddenly he realized he was the only one with a bowed head and the rest of the folks were passing food back and forth. He opened his eyes and, not having any inhibitions,

said, “Don’t you thank God for your food?” There was embarrassing silence for a moment, and then the lady of the house said, “No, we don’t.” The little fellow thought for a moment and then said, “You’re like my dogs—they just start right in!”

In our day there are multitudes of people who receive a meal that comes from the hand of God three times a day while millions of people are starving to death, and they never think of thanking God. And in that future day, they will be right on the verge of the coming of Christ, and they will be living as though it will never take place.

Also, the people of Noah’s day were “marrying and giving in marriage.” Certainly our Lord is not saying that marriage is wrong. His point is that they rejected so completely God’s warning through Noah that they went ahead and had their weddings—maybe even “church” weddings—right up to the day that Noah entered into the ark. They lived as though God did not exist. They did not believe that He would judge them and scorned the warning that a flood was imminent. “And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”⁴⁰

Matthew 24:40

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matthew 24:41

Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Cf. Luke 21:34-36, where there are three examples given of those taken and those left. This can be viewed in several ways. Most tend to see it as speaking of the rapture, as Jesus says in verse 42 “your Lord cometh.”

The whole impression here is not that of the coming of vengeance of the Day of the Lord, but rather the secret coming of Jesus Christ!

Matthew 24:42

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Cf. 1 Thess 5:2-4, 5-10 tells you that He won’t come as a surprise to you, if you are a child of the light. No man knoweth the day or the hour, we are expected to anticipate His Second Coming. 1 Thess points out two distinct classes: those of the light and those of the darkness. Our blessed hope is that He shall come at any moment!

40-42 Christ’s second coming will be swift and sudden. There will be no opportunity for last-minute repentance or bargaining. The choice we have already made will determine our eternal destiny.

⁴⁰McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:131). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

McGee: *Watch* is the important word, and it has a little different meaning from the watching that the child of God does now in waiting for the Rapture. Today we have a comforting hope. In that future day it will be watching with fear and anxiety. In the night they will say, “Would to God it were morning,” and in the morning they will say, “Would to God it were evening.” Today we are to wait and long for His coming. In that future day they will watch with anxiety for His return.

You may think that I am splitting hairs, but I’m not. I looked up the Greek word for *watch* and found that it had about eight different meanings. Although in English we have only the one word, it has several different meanings, also.

Let me illustrate this by a man who goes deer hunting. Every year this man goes into the woods to about the same spot. He puts up camp, and early in the morning he goes over the hogback on the hill and sits down by the trunk of an old tree and waits. After a while he hears a noise in the brush and thinks it might be a deer. He lifts his rifle and waits. He is watching for a deer.

Two weeks later you meet this same man down on the main street corner of town, and you see that he is looking intently down the street. You know that he is waiting for someone. You walk up to him and say, “Who are you watching for?” He replies, “I’m waiting for my wife; she is forty-five minutes late.” He is watching for a dear again, but it is a different deer and he is watching in a little different way. Before, on the hill, he had his deer gun with him, and he sort of wishes he had it with him again, but it is against the law for him to shoot her! But he is watching, and watching in a different way, you see.

A month or two later you go to the hospital and you pass a room and see this man and his wife sitting by the bedside of a little child. The child has a burning fever, and the doctor has told them that the crisis will come about midnight. They are watching. My friend, that is a different type of watching than watching for a deer or waiting for a wife on the corner. This is watching with anxiety. And I think it will be somewhat with the same feeling that they will watch for our Lord’s second coming.⁴¹

Matthew 24:43

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

The householder is actually a usurper. The thief is coming to take that which He has already purchased. The householder is the god of this world, Satan. The thief in the night is Jesus Christ!

The Second Coming is the only thing not timed, to catch Satan by surprise! Cf. Rom 11:25.

⁴¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:132). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

[But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come ...] The second parable of Matthew 24-25, illustrating readiness in view of His coming (Matthew 24:43-44).

Matthew 24:44

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Jesus' purpose in telling about his return is not to stimulate predictions and calculations about the date, but to warn us to be prepared. Will you be ready? The only safe choice is to obey him *today* (Matthew 24:46).

Matthew 24:45

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

45-47 Jesus asks us to spend the time of waiting taking care of his people and doing his work here on earth, both within the church and outside it. This is the best way to prepare for Christ's return.

Matthew 24:46

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

A servant lives in a state of readiness, while his Lord is absent.

Matthew 24:47

Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

Spurgeon: His lord had formerly made him "ruler over his household", the steward who had charge of all the household servants. His faithful and prudent conduct in that office won for him promotion to a higher post, so that his lord resolved to "make him ruler over all his goods." Thus is it among the servants of King Jesus, there are rewards for faithful service not of debt, but of grace; not according to the rule of the Law, but according to the discipline of the house of God, and the higher rule of Love. It should be noted that faithfulness in one form of service is rewarded by further service and increased responsibility. The servant, whose pound gained ten pounds, received authority over ten cities (Lu 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.).

Matthew 24:48

But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

Spurgeon: This man was a "servant ", so that we have here a warning, not to the outside world, but to those who are inside the Church of Christ, and who profess to be servants of God. This is also specially a warning to ministers of the Word, those who are made rulers over God's household. This man, though a servant, was an "evil servant"; a hypocrite, one who had intruded into an office which he had no right to occupy. His thoughts and words were evil: "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming." His conduct towards those put under him was evil: "and shall begin to smite his fellowservant." His own life was evil: "and to eat and drink with the drunken." His evil-doing would be suddenly cut short by his master's appearance: "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." Immediate and terrible punishment would be meted out to him: "And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites:" he was one of them, he pretended to be a servant of God when all the while he was a slave of Satan, serving self and sin; let him go to his own company. He was really cut in two before, outwardly he was a follower of Christ, inwardly he served his own lusts; to "cut him asunder" will only be a righteous perpetuation of his own double-faced character. Will that be the end of him? No; "there shall be weeping and: gnashing of teeth." What a "portion" for one who was numbered amongst God's servants! As we read of it, let us, in deep humility, remember the solemn injunction of the apostle, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Matthew 24:49

And shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

Matthew 24:50

The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

Knowing that Christ's return will be sudden and unexpected should motivate us always to be prepared. We are not to live irresponsibly—sitting and waiting, doing nothing; seeking self-serving pleasure; using his tarrying as an excuse not to do God's work of building his kingdom; developing a false security based on precise calculations of events; or letting our curiosity about the end times divert us from doing God's work.

Matthew 24:51

And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Weeping and gnashing of teeth” is a phrase used to describe despair. God's coming judgment is as certain as Jesus' return to earth.

Abomination of Desolation—Daniel 9:27; 2 Thess 2:2-4

