

Jesus' Olivet Discourse

"Olive Oral"

Matthew 24 & 25



Introduction

Matthew 24:1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

Matthew 24:2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Matthew 24:3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Herod's Temple was originally rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezra 6:15) but greatly expanded and improved by Herod. It was the center of Jewish life for almost a thousand years.

- being changed to bring change -

After Herod's work the temple was huge - nearly 500 yards long and 400 yards wide. Herod's rebuilding work started in 19BC and was only completed in 63AD taking more than eighty years. The temple was finished only seven years before it was destroyed.

The temple wasn't just big, it was also beautiful. The Jewish historian Josephus says that the temple was covered on the outside with gold plates, that were so brilliant that when the sun shone on them it was blinding to look at. Where there was no gold, there were blocks of marble of such a pure white that strangers, from a distance, thought there was snow on the temple.

Jesus went out and departed from the Temple to return to Bethany by way of **the Mount of Olives**. The words Jesus had just uttered were

still burning in His disciples' ears. He had denounced the nation and said it would be **desolate**.

The **disciples** pointed out the **buildings of the temple** area to Jesus. We can guess that perhaps they felt it was only a matter of days until Jesus would be ruling Jerusalem from the Temple.

Jesus said something that troubled them.

Matthew 24:2 And Jesus said to them, "**Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**"

Jesus' response was not what they expected. **Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.** The temple would be destroyed and Jerusalem with it.

If Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, how would there be a nation for Messiah to rule?

This prompted the disciples to ask when all this would take place. As Jesus reached the Mount of Olives in His walk to Bethany, He sat down and the disciples **came to Him**.

Four disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark 13) plainly asked Jesus two questions:

1. **When will these things be?** That is, when will the temple be destroyed and not one stone left on another?
2. **What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the Age?**

These two questions prompted the following discussion by Jesus, commonly called the Olivet Discourse. The questions related to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and the sign of the Lord's coming and the end of the Age.

One question we must ask and answer before we even begin is whether Jesus' comments refer to Israel, to the Church, or to a combination of Israel and the Church.

I take the approach that the Olivet Discourse has nothing to do with the Church. Jesus said He would build the Church (Matthew 16:18). The Church on earth is His spiritual temple. We are being built up day-by-day until the Lord returns to resurrect the dead in Christ and rapture living believers. The Lord's comments in the Olivet Discourse about the destruction of the physical Temple relate to the postponement of the kingdom of Heaven on earth promised to the Jews.

The Church is not present in any sense in chapters 24 and 25. The disciples' questions related to Jerusalem, Israel, and the Lord's second coming in glory to establish His kingdom. It is entirely prophetic, pointing forward to the Tribulation and the Lord's Second Coming. It skips over the Church Age in which we are living.

It's a huge decision to say that the Church is not in view. Let me give you some reasons from the text itself.

First, the geography Jesus mentions is in the land of Israel:

[Matthew 24:16](#) "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Second, its context throughout is essentially Jewish:

[Matthew 24:20](#) And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

In verse twenty Jesus refers to **the elect**. It is used as a title for Israel. The Church is not found in the prophecies or the parables of this talk.

There are those who see some of the passages relating to the Church, e.g., 24:37-42. Maybe... But I don't think so. You can decide for yourself.

That is not to say there is no application to the Church as a whole or to us as individual Christians. But it is important that we keep Israel and the Church distinct. Many doctrinal misunderstandings, and even some prejudices are avoided if we understand God has a plan for His **elect** of the nation of Israel.

For example: Jesus spoke about the individual stones that comprised the Temple. They fit together perfectly to create a solid and a beautiful structure.

Peter was at the Olivet Discourse. Later he would write,

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living **stones**, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We are the Temple today; **we** are the priests in the Temple today. God is building us into a spiritual house. We each are to **offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**. We do it, according to Romans 12:1-2, by offering ourselves as living sacrifices.

We are to be solid AND beautiful. It speaks of doctrinal purity AND moral purity.

I end with this quote from John Gill:

Saints likewise are compared to stones; they lie in the same quarry, and are the same by nature as the rest of mankind, till dug out and separated from thence by the powerful and efficacious grace of God, when they are hewn, and made fit for the spiritual building; where both for their ornament, beauty, and strength, which they receive from Christ, they are compared to stones, and are lasting and durable, and will never perish, nor be removed out of the building: and because of that life which they derive from him, and have in him, they are called "lively", or "living stones"; the spirit of life having entered into them, a principle of life being implanted in them, and coming to Christ, the living stone, they live upon him, and he lives in them; and his grace in them is a well of living water, springing up into eternal life.