

Jesus' Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24 & 25



Matthew 24:9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

Matthew 24:10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

Matthew 24:11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Matthew 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

After the church is resurrected and raptured there are no believers on the earth. Not to worry! God raises up witnesses.

Two witnesses, who we believe to be Moses and Elijah, will go about proclaiming the Gospel. They minister for the first half of the Tribulation. They do miracles and are invincible until the Lord allows the antichrist to kill them. As their bodies lie in state, and the world celebrates their deaths, after three and one half days they are resurrected and taken directly to Heaven.

There will also be 144,000 specially sealed Jewish evangelists. They cannot be killed. Multitudes of people will respond and be saved.

At some point angels fly through the heavens and proclaim God's truth.

Multitudes of people will respond to these ministries, and to personal evangelism, and be saved.

Believers, however, will be persecuted. They are the subject of these verses.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation. They and you are the general, generic way we talk about groups of people. In this case it refers to nonbelievers (they) and believers (you).

Nonbelievers will deliver believers means they will actively seek them out to hurt them. Tribulation refers to any kind of trouble they can cause. Kill means put to death and indicates an official effort.

Believers will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. The persecution of believers will be global. Something to take to heart is that persecution is directed against Jesus. Think of it this way: If you could, would you not take upon yourself the suffering of someone you love? Persecution is like that! People want to hurt Jesus but you take His place.

There are going to be a lot of Tribulation martyrs. In the Revelation we read,

Revelation 6:9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

Revelation 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

Revelation 6:11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed.

And,

Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

It's great that such a multitude will be saved. It would be better for folks to trust Jesus before the Tribulation! As many evangelists have said, if you can't live for Jesus now, how will you be able to die for Him then?

There is also a nagging passage in Second Thessalonians that some say teaches that those who have heard the Gospel but reject Jesus will not be able to get saved during the Tribulation. Only those who have never heard will be saved.

The passage is Second Thessalonians 2:6-12,

2 Thessalonians 2:6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

2 Thessalonians 2:10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2 Thessalonians 2:11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

2 Thessalonians 2:12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

I personally do not think the passage teaches it will be impossible for these to be saved. But why take the chance?

Matthew 24:10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

Offended really means *fall away* and refers to people who profess to be believers but renounce Jesus when confronted with persecution. Thus they **will betray one another, and will hate one another**. They will be enlisted by the nonbelieving authorities to rat-out believers.

There are always counterfeit Christians. They are harder to spot in the Church Age, in this day of grace. Not so in times of persecution, though, when their lives are at stake.

We believe these people were never born-again, never genuine believers. Their final defection from Jesus proves their true nature.

Matthew 24:11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

We saw false Christs earlier. These are a different class. These are people who claim to have a message from God. They will teach that there are other ways, other paths, to God. They will **deceive many** into believing they are saved when, in fact, they are rejecting Jesus Christ.

It's not hard, even today, to deceive people. **It will be much easier when to believe the truth will get you martyred!**

The Tribulation will be an intensely religious period of time. Revelation seventeen describes the end-times false religious system as a harlot seducing people away from the love of God.

Matthew 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Lawlessness refers to the blatant disregard and despising of God's laws. Today we see most of what God holds as sacred being eroded. Marriage as an institution, based on the clear teaching of Scripture, is almost destroyed. The sanctity of life is constantly being undermined, whether through abortion or euthanasia.

During the Tribulation the Church will be gone. The very existence of the Spirit-filled Church is a deterrent to lawlessness. Once we are resurrected and raptured lawlessness will prevail.

The result of rampant lawlessness will be that **the love of many will grow cold**. **Many** could be *majority*. **Love** is *agape*. Commentators are all over the spiritual landscape on this. Whose love... and for whom?

The use of *agape* seems to point towards an application to believers. They (we) are the only ones who experience God's *agape* love. That love for God will **grow cold** in many as they face the extreme challenges of the Tribulation.

Even today we are in danger of leaving our first love. We are constantly exhorted in the Bible to be stirred-up. In a moment Jesus will encourage believers to **endure to the end**. It's not at all strange to think that the combination of persecution, apostasy, false prophets,

and rampant lawlessness would affect a believer's love and cause it to grow cold.

The Tribulation will be tough times for believers. If you're not hurt, your heart will be under attack.

A final application: Let's be careful to not let **our** hearts grow cold in these softer times of grace.

