

Jesus' Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24 & 25



Matthew 24:22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Matthew 24:23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe *it*.

Matthew 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Matthew 24:25 See, I have told you beforehand.

Matthew 24:26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*.

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matthew 24:28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

If anyone were to ask you, "How long will the Great Tribulation last?", you would say, "Seven years."

How, then, can Jesus say **unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved?**

The simple answer is that it is precisely because those days will *only* last seven years mankind will not destroy itself. A translation of the Bible called the Complete Jewish Bible reads, **indeed, if the length of this time had not been limited, no one would survive.**

But for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. There are those who say that since the church is called **the elect** the church must be in the Tribulation period. It's not just Christians who are called the elect. In passages such as Isaiah 45:4, 65:9 and Romans 11:28 God specifically calls Israel His elect. In fact there are three

groups in the Bible who are called by that name: Israel, the church, and those saved in the Tribulation.

Jesus was still speaking to Israel. One of the great purposes of the Tribulation is to ready the Jews who survive it to receive Jesus as their Savior and King at His return. In the verses just prior He warned the Jews to flee Jerusalem and hide until His coming. Now Jesus discusses His return in the remaining verses of our text.

Matthew 24:23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

Jesus didn't say, "I'm coming again to Brooklyn in 1921 to reveal Myself to the Watchtower Society." He didn't say, "I'm coming again in the late 1800's to reveal Myself through lost tablets and magic spectacles to Joseph Smith."

During the Tribulation there will be movements like the JW's and the Mormons who will claim insider information about the return of the Lord. Those who are familiar with God's Word won't fall for it. They will know exactly what is going on and when Jesus is coming and where to look for Him.

So today it is by familiarity with the Bible that we are able to deny the deception of the many cults, false religions, and philosophies of man that seek to draw us away into some spiritual wilderness.

Matthew 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

It always confuses folks when someone performs a sign or a wonder. **It shouldn't!** There are powerful supernatural forces in the realm of evil. When Moses went to deliver the nation of Israel from Egypt he performed a series of signs and wonders. The magicians of Pharaoh could duplicate some of them!

You read in Deuteronomy 13:1-5,

Deuteronomy 13:1 "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder,

Deuteronomy 13:2 and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods' - which you have not known - 'and let us serve them,'

Deuteronomy 13:3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 13:4 You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

Deuteronomy 13:5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

It's not the sign or the wonder that you follow after. It is the Word. Use the Word to judge the message and methods and even the miracles of those claiming to represent Jesus Christ.

Matthew 24:25 See, I have told you beforehand.

Some people say that since Jesus was talking to the twelve disciples that these were events they would face in their lifetime. Usually the troubles alluded to are said to be the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. James was martyred in about 44AD. Peter was martyred around 68AD. We don't have solid dates on the rest of the guys but it should be obvious Jesus wasn't preparing His immediate disciples for the siege of Jerusalem in 70AD.

Jesus was talking to Jews who would be alive during the future Great Tribulation that would be unlike anything the world has ever known.

Matthew 24:26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

An Egyptian false prophet mentioned by Josephus and in the Acts (21:38) led out into the desert four thousand men, who were murderers, but these were all taken or destroyed by Felix. Another promised salvation to the people if they would follow him to the desert, and he was destroyed by Festus. Also, one Jonathan, a weaver, persuaded a number to follow him to the desert, but he was taken and burnt alive by emperor Vespasian.

As some conducted their deluded followers to the desert, so did others to the secret chambers. Josephus mentions a false prophet who declared to the people in the city at the time of the siege of Jerusalem that God commanded them to go up into the temple and there they should receive the signs of deliverance. A multitude of men, women, and children, went up accordingly; but, instead of deliverance the place was set on fire by the Romans, and 6000 perished miserably in the flames or in attempting to escape them.

In our own time we see people believing in Jim Jones or David Koresh to a disastrous end. **It is so important we understand the Word of God in its context.**

Jesus lets you know that His Second Coming will be unmistakable:

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

His coming will be sudden, dramatic, loud and clear. It will be obvious to everyone everywhere. It is no secret coming in some desert or closet. For one thing He will be accompanied by tens of thousands of believers from the Church Age. He's coming back to the very spot He was speaking from.

Matthew 24:28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.- being changed to bring change -

Jesus makes an allusion to the battle of Armageddon that is further illuminated in Revelation nineteen. When the nations of the world come together for war in the Valley of Megiddo, carcasses will indeed abound and vultures will follow:

Revelation 14:19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Revelation 14:20 And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

The armies of the world will be gathered together to oppose the Lord in the Valley of Megiddo; it's what the Bible calls the Battle of

Armageddon. Jesus will easily overcome His enemies. There will be great bloodshed. Blood will flow four feet deep.

The Lord honors us with so much clear and concise information about the future history of the world. We should put it to good use – both in allowing it to purify our lives and letting it motivate us to serve others with the Gospel.

