

# ARE WE IN END TIMES?

## “The Olivet Discourse”

Scripture Reading: MATTHEW 24:1-3

- ) **SLIDE 7.** Scripture reading.
- ) **SLIDE 8.** Today’s message: “*The Olivet Discourse.*”
- ) **SLIDE 9.** This is our third week in this study. We have covered these two points so far: 1) We respond to the possibility of living in end time events with great anticipation and joy, knowing the FATHER and not living in FEAR. 2) It is a certainty that Jesus Christ will return visibly and audibly to planet earth the way He left (on a cloud). The Day of the Lord.
- ) **SLIDE 10.** There are five main views of eschatology. Here they are. This is where I stand. It is not the most popular view today. It is the view of the Reformers. The most popular view and the one you probably know and subscribe is Premillennial Dispensationalism.
- ) Today we begin the interpretation of end times prophecy Scripture texts. We can make this process simple, or we can make it complicated. I like it simple. The view I subscribe to (amillennialism) is simple. I will be teaching from this view.
- ) There are three rules of Scripture interpretation we must follow when interpreting eschatological passages.
- ) **SLIDE 11.** **CLEAR** passages always govern **UNCLEAR** passages. If you are not sure about what the passage is saying, can it be found elsewhere in the Scriptures with a clearer meaning and understanding?
- ) **SLIDE 12.** **LITERAL** passages always govern **SYMBOLIC** passages. We do not take the symbols themselves literally. We treat the symbolism based on the literal texts.

- ) **SLIDE 13.** Symbolic passages are **APOCALYPTIC** which means they have a hidden meaning. Sometimes the Book of REVELATION is called the Book of the APOCALYPSE because it contains hidden meanings. More on that later.
- ) **SLIDE 14.** Literal passages would include MATT 24 (Olivet Discourse), 1 THESS 5, 2 THESS 2, 2 PETER.
- ) **SLIDE 15.** Symbolic passages would be the Book of REV and the Book of EZEKIEL.
- ) **SLIDE 16.** There are Biblical interpretative challenges with the above rules. Again, I am teaching this series from my view. In today's text we encounter our first challenge in interpretation. And that challenge is found in a portion of Scripture we call "*The Olivet Discourse.*" What, exactly, is the Olivet Discourse?
- ) **SLIDE 17.** What is a discourse? A discourse is "*a formal and orderly and usually extended expression of thought on a subject.*" In other words, a discourse is not a one- or two-line speech or some short response to a question. It is lengthy.
- ) **SLIDE 18.** Why is it called the Olivet Discourse? It is called the "*Olivet*" Discourse because Jesus spoke these things from the Mount of Olives which is an area overlooking the city of Jerusalem.
- ) **SLIDE 19.** Parallel passages are found in MARK 13:1-37 and LUKE 21:5-36. The date? It's Tuesday. Two days before the Last Supper.
- ) So, what challenge do we run into? Let's look at our text.
- ) **SLIDE 20.** Read MATT 24:1-2. The parallel passages in MARK and LUKE are similar. So, we don't need those as a reference just yet. We will later on. This comment from Jesus sets the stage for the rest of this discourse. We must identify exactly what Jesus is commenting on. Read and explain.

- ) **SLIDE 21.** Verse 3. How many different questions are the disciples actually asking? Is it one big question? Are they assuming all three of these things are one in the same? Or are there two or maybe three distinct questions? And the end of what age? The end of the age of humankind? Or the end of the Jewish age? And this is where the interpretive challenge begins. Depending on the exact nature of the disciples' questions determines how we interpret Jesus' response in the remaining verses of this discourse and applying the rules that we learned earlier.
- ) **SLIDE 22.** In the verses following (4-51), what question is Jesus answering with what words? And folks this is where the five different views take off down their own interpretation trail. We amillennials look at this as two separate questions.
- ) **SLIDE 23.** I want to introduce you to two historical events that happened in first century Palestine. The first is the death and resurrection of Jesus which happened around 30 AD. This will be our start point on our timeline for all five views we will be covering.
- ) **SLIDE 24.** The second is the Destruction of Jerusalem which happened in 70 AD. Why is this important? Because we need to ask, is some or all of Jesus' response in the Olivet Discourse prophecies about this event? Or is Jesus prophesying totally about end times? Or is it a little of this and a little of that?
- ) **SLIDE 25.** Could Jesus' response be proleptic? PROLEPTIC: *"the representation or assumption of a future act or development as if presently existing or accomplished."* Are you beginning to see the challenge yet? It's not that simple.
- ) Let's use our rule of thinking literally about the prophecies found in MATTHEW 24. And remember we have the luxury of having this Olivet Discourse also in MARK 13 and LUKE 21. And looking at those parallel passages will help us answer some of these questions.

- ) **SLIDE 26.** LUKE 21:20-24. Jesus specifically says here in LUKE 21:20 that destruction will happen to Jerusalem. And history tells us that it did. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple occurred in 70 AD. This goes along with what Jesus said in MATT 24:2 that “*not one stone will be left upon another.*” Because the city was pretty much left in ruins after the Roman (Gentile) armies destroyed it.
- ) The destruction of Jerusalem marked the end of the Jewish age and the Mosaic Covenant. The Jews in Jerusalem at that time were either killed or scattered. No more temple. No more sacrifices. It was the end of an age. Horrible things occurred. DEUT 28:49-57 prophecy fulfillment.
- ) **SLIDE 27.** This was also a fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy about the fig tree. The fig tree was always a representation of Israel. Jesus is cursing the nation of Israel for their rejection of the Messiah. Read. And that curse was fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.
- ) **SLIDE 28.** So, if we look at what we know from historical records from historians like Josephus, what passages in the Olivet Discourse literally point us to the destruction of Jerusalem? MATT 24:15-20; MARK 13:9-13; LUKE 21:12-24.
- ) And if we can rightly conclude that these passages spoken by Jesus are clearly prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem, then we can safely say that the remaining passages spoken by Jesus are concerning end times, because He is answering two separate questions posed by the disciples. Refresh.
- ) Today we had to get these passages out of the way because there are some who could think that either 1) everything Jesus is saying in the Olivet Discourse is concerning end times or 2) everything that Jesus is saying is concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

- ) Which leads me to my final point this morning. There are those who do believe that everything that Jesus is saying in the Olivet Discourse are destruction-of-Jerusalem prophecies.
- ) **SLIDE 29**. Not only that, but they also believe that everything that is written in the Book of REVELATION was fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem. Not only that but they also believe Jesus has already returned. These people are called full preterists.
- ) **SLIDE 30**. Partial preterists believe all prophecies have been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem but they do not believe that Jesus has returned.
- ) **SLIDE 31**. Let's go back to our list of eschatological views and cross off the preterists. Not only have we covered what they believe, I can't agree with their eschatology because I do not believe all prophecies have been fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem. There is still tribulation yet to come and prophecies yet to be fulfilled.
- ) So, there you have a very in-depth lesson on the interpretation of the Olivet Discourse. The passages that are not about the destruction of Jerusalem, are about end times. We will look at those and others next week.

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