

THE HARMONY OF THE OLIVET

DISCOURSE

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The Lord Jesus gave some of the most detailed prophecies of future events just a couple days before His crucifixion. This teaching by Jesus was recorded in Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Theologians refer to these sections of scripture as the *Olivet Discourse* because Jesus spoke these prophecies while on the Mount of Olives.

There has been much confusion and debate about this discourse over the centuries. Much of the mystery has been removed with the rebirth of the nation of Israel, but views about who is being addressed and the timing of the events are still debated by sincere Christians.

After 35 years of pondering the different views and arguments, I feel it is time to contribute some thoughts in the form of this commentary. I have put the three passages from the three Apostles' writings side by side (using the New King James) so the entire context of Jesus words can be more easily compared and discerned.

<p>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?"</p>	<p>3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"</p>	<p>7 So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"</p>
<p>As we study Jesus' answer, we must remember that the four Apostles asked four questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When will these things [casting down of the stones] be? 2. What will be the sign of your coming [Second Coming]? 3. What will be the sign of the end of the age (Matthew)? 4. What sign will there be when these things [destruction of the Temple] are about to take place (Luke)? 		
<p>6 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 "All these are the beginning of sorrows."</p>	<p>7 "But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. 8 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows."</p>	<p>9 "But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately." 10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."</p>

As discussed above, portions of these verses could easily apply to the time of the Romans around A.D. 70. But some could only apply to the future signs of His coming. Although there have been famines, pestilences (40 percent of Europe died in the plague), and earthquakes throughout history, Luke records that Jesus said “great earthquakes.”

The book of Revelation (16:18-21) predicts a future great, global earthquake, which results in “every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.” Since the time Jesus spoke this warning in Luke, there have not been “great earthquakes” of this magnitude. Therefore, it must apply to a future event.

Evolutionary geology would say it is impossible to have a global earthquake. But Jesus predicts there will be. Therefore the evolutionary paradigm about the root causes of earthquakes must be wrong.

2 Peter 3:5-7, teaches that the world was once destroyed by the flood of Noah, and that the energy reserved in the crust and mantle from this cataclysm will someday burst forth to destroy again by fire (see Dr. Walt Brown’s hydroplate theory of the flood at www.creationscience.com for an explanation of how the flood of Noah occurred and how global earthquakes and magma eruptions are events waiting to happen).

Jesus also said that earthquakes would be in “various places”. Currently, nearly all earthquakes are located in what is called the Pacific Ring of Fire. However, we know that the inner earth is becoming more unstable due to the deep earthquakes (greater than 220 miles) which melt rock along the fault line creating magma that decreases in volume at these pressures. The resultant instability will someday cause earthquakes to occur in “various places” ultimately becoming global.

For a complete explanation for why earthquakes will increase, show up in unexpected places, and ultimately be globally cataclysmic, search on “Earthquakes 2012 update” on Google or Youtube where you can watch my 1 hour, 36 minute teaching based on Dr. Walt Brown’s hydroplate theory.

Josephus also records that there were fearful sights and great signs from heaven when the city of Jerusalem was under siege in A.D. 70 (*Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 5), and Jesus could have been talking about this event in A.D. 70. However, Jesus goes on to explain that the signs in the heavens will include the sun and moon being darkened. Because these things have never occurred in history, it is possible that this portion of His answer to the disciples had a near and far meaning. Since 2008, some have taught that combinations of lunar and solar eclipses on Jewish feast days are what Jesus was talking about when he spoke of “great signs from heaven.” However, solar and lunar eclipses are not “great signs” since they have occurred since the creation, are only seen by a small percent of the earth’s population, only last for short time during one night, and now (Nov 2015) that we are weeks past the last set of feast day eclipses, these speculations are proven to be false. What Jesus was predicting is something so great that everyone on the planet will see it and will know.

As a final note, Jesus also talked of pestilence and famines in these passages. If the world ever experiences a biological weapons attack, the full weight of this prophecy will sink into the hearts of the survivors. Matthew and Mark record that Jesus said these things would be the “beginning of sorrows.” The Greek word for sorrows actually refers to the birth pangs of a woman in labor. Therefore, Jesus is saying that as the last days approach, earthquakes, pestilence, famines, etc., will grow in frequency and intensity, in the same way as the contractions associated with giving birth grow closer and closer together, with more and more intensity as the time of birth approaches. For decades some have claimed that earthquakes are increasing in fulfillment of this prophecy. But this claim is currently easy to challenge depending on how you graph the data (number of quakes?, number of earthquakes above a certain magnitude?, energy released by all earthquakes?, etc.). However, the day is coming when earthquakes are so frequent, widespread and destructive that no one will dispute that Jesus’ prediction has been fulfilled.

9 "Then they will deliver you

9 "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and

12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you,

<p>up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 "And then many will be offended [<i>literally – fall away, i.e., from the faith</i>], will betray one another, and will hate one another.”</p>	<p>you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 "But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. "But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will 11 "But But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 13 "And you will be hated by all men for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”</p>	<p>delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. 13 "But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 "Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 "for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. 16 "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 "But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 "By your patience possess your souls.”</p>
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In the world today, there are two groups of people who are hated for no other reason but because of who they are - the Christians and the Jews. Christians know that Jesus is the only truth whereby man can be saved (Acts 4:12). Therefore, Satan wants to kill all true Christians (Jew and Gentile) so this message will not spread, but he has failed to do so.

The first Christians were Jews. The book of Acts records how Jesus’ predictions were literally fulfilled in the early church when Jews who believed in Jesus as their Messiah were brought before the leaders of the synagogues and were persecuted and sometimes killed. Jesus is also addressing the combined (Jew and Gentile) Christian church (then and now) which has also been persecuted and hated by all nations “for My name’s sake.”

Although Jesus was clearly talking about those who would be persecuted in His name, this warning also seems to apply to the Jews who believe in the name of God (YHWH) and the promise of the Messiah (even though for a season the unbelieving Jew is blinded so as not to see Jesus as their Messiah). A poll taken in Europe in November of 2003 showed that 59 percent of the Europeans believe that Israel is the biggest global threat. There is no logical basis for this fear. This irrational belief can only be understood spiritually. God has called the Jews His chosen people, and Satan, in his demented attempt to prove that God cannot keep His promise to His witness people, wants to destroy them and those who believe in the Jewish Messiah.

Jesus told His disciples that Christians and Jews would be hated until the end of time as a sign of His coming. He also predicts that some will fall away from the truth as a result of that persecution. Certainly, this has been fulfilled in the centuries leading up to our day, and it will get worse in the future. However, it is very likely that the betrayal that Jesus warns about (people turning their own relatives into the authorities for execution) will find its ultimate fulfillment in the last three and a half years of the Antichrist’s rule, when the Antichrist demands that the entire world worship him and receive the mark of his name in their hand or forehead. Failure to worship the antichrist results in certain death and it is likely those who have taken his mark will be required to turn in those who have refused to do so, even if they are members of their own family.

11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive		
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<p>many. 12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 "But he who endures to the end shall be saved."</p>		
<p>It appears that Matthew alone records this second warning by Jesus of false prophets that will come in the last days. Many New Testament prophecies by the apostles also talk about the false teachings that will come in the last days, and how people will turn their ears from the truth and believe a lie (2 Timothy 4:3-4); how people will go after doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1). But Jesus defined the false prophets of this prophecy as being those who deceive people to go after false messiahs (Matthew 24:5), something that cannot apply to the church as explained above. However, after the church is gone and the world government is established, the Jews will be deceived into thinking their time of peace has arrived. They will also be easily deceived into believing the man who makes peace possible (the antichrist during his first 3.5 years of rule) is their long promised Messiah. Jesus is emphasizing His warning again; don't believe the false prophets who will be deceiving you in the last days!</p>		
<p>Jesus also warned that in the last day's kingdom of the antichrist, lawlessness will increase to the point that people will lose their ability to love one another. Bribery, betrayal, treason, extortion, theft etc. will cause all people on earth to live in fear and suspicion rather than love.</p>		
<p>There will be many Jews and Gentiles who will place their trust in Jesus during the 70th week of Daniel (The Tribulation). They will be under great pressure to abandon their faith in Jesus and to instead put their trust in the global leader. Those who hold onto the gospel of Jesus Christ to the end shall be saved. Those who don't, and are offended (fall away) by the Gospel of Jesus will show that they never truly believed and, like Judas, had other motives for calling themselves Christians.</p>		
<p>14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."</p>	<p>10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations."</p>	
<p>According to Revelation 14, an angel will literally fulfill this during the tribulation period.</p> <p><i>Rev 14:6-7 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth-- to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people-- saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."</i></p>		
<p>God promises that the end will not come until He gives the inhabitants of the world one last chance to repent. Tragically, most will ignore this angelic warning.</p>		
<p>Some Christians who are not aware of the prophecy of Revelation 14 think Jesus was saying that the church must fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28 in order for Jesus to return. Jesus did command us to go into all nations to spread the gospel, and the Holy Spirit has for centuries been leading those who are willing to heed the call. But the Church has not, and probably will not, succeed in taking the gospel to every tribe, tongue, and nation before the Seven Year Tribulation. When the church is taken away at the Rapture (which occurs some months/years before the Seven Year Tribulation starts), the Lord will continue spreading the message of the Gospel using: the Bibles and studies that are left behind by those who are raptured, by the 144,000 of Revelation 7, and the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 during the first 3.5 years of the Tribulation, and finally the angels of Revelation 14 during the last 3.5 years. Only after all nations have heard the gospel during this time will the final wrath of God be poured out upon the unbelieving world.</p>		