

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.

MATTHEW 24	MARK 13	LUKE 21
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."	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."	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."
When the Jews were hearing of wars and rumors of wars leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 , they would have been thinking, "This is the end of the Jewish people," and rightfully so. Josephus recorded the brutality of the Roman conquest. Every man, woman, and child was killed in cities that put up resistance. Most of the men were killed in cities that did not, and survivors were then taken from the land and sent into slavery throughout the Roman empire. Jesus was promising the Jews who would see this coming destruction of the Jewish nation that "the end" was not yet, nor would the end come "immediately" after this destruction.		
How perfectly His prophecy has been fulfilled. The Jews were dispersed for almost 1,900 years. They have been suffering wars and rumors of wars from the time of Jesus until now. After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, any hope of being in the land again would have seemed absurd to many. But Jesus promised the Jews they would survive until His coming, with or without a homeland.		
Today, the Jews have been faced with wars and rumors of wars that make some believe they could again be wiped off of the map of the Middle East and destroyed as a people. But Jesus assures them this is not the way it is going to end.		

		<p>20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.</p> <p>21 "Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her.</p> <p>22 "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.</p> <p>23 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.</p> <p>24 "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."</p>
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Only Luke records this portion of Jesus' answer. Jesus further explained to the four Apostles that the Roman army would surround Jerusalem, and when it did, those who were in the city should flee. Those who listened to Jesus would have been spared the death that awaited all those who stayed. Some historians have stated that there were no Christians in Jerusalem when it fell to the Romans.

The "Time of the Gentiles" that Luke refers to actually started in 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed Solomon's temple and Jerusalem. Since then, the Jews have never again been in sovereign control of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. When King Cyrus of Persia allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple in 539 BC, the Jews did so, but were still under the sovereignty of Persia. Then the Greeks took control of Jerusalem and then the Romans until Jerusalem was again destroyed in 70 AD (because the Jews kept trying to fight to regain their own sovereignty).

The Gentiles have continued to "trample" Jerusalem to this day. In 1967, the Jews took Jerusalem and the Temple Mount back from the Gentiles for the first time since 586 BC. However, the next day their famous general, Moshe Dayan, foolishly gave control of the Temple Mount back to Jordan as a gesture of peace. This act actually fulfilled prophecy and kept a portion of Jerusalem under the foot of the gentiles, where it will remain (according to Revelation 11:2) until Jesus returns.

As a side note, Moshe Dayan was quoted as saying the following about the orthodox Jews rejoicing that they had sovereignty over the Temple Mount for the first time in 2,500 years:

Wikipedia - Dayan in one recollection, having seen rabbis flocking on the Temple Mount shortly after Jerusalem was captured in 1967, he asked "*what is this? Vatican?*" Dayan later ordered the Israeli flag removed from the Dome of the Rock, and gave administrative control of the Temple Mount over to the Waqf, a Muslim council. Dayan believed that the Temple Mount was more important to Judaism as a historical rather than holy site.

<p>7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.</p> <p>8 "All these are the beginning of sorrows."</p>	<p>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>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>
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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.