

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH – Fall 2022

“...whoever reads, let him understand” Matt. 24:15b

Week 7 – JROC - “When will these things be? What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

November 6, 2022

Matt. 23:37-39 - *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’*

Matt. 24:1-2 - *Then Jesus went out and departed from the Temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the Temple. ² And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

Jesus’ words about the seeming destruction of the Temple left the disciples perplexed. As Jesus left the Temple, His disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mk. 13:3), followed Him. The disciples showed Jesus the buildings of the Temple, as if to say, “Jesus, look at these magnificent buildings. The Temple complex is a fortress!”

Herod had started embellishing the Second Temple in 12 BC. In Jesus’ day, the Second Temple was not yet completed. Herod was considered a master builder and had planned that the Temple complex would outlast the pyramids. What he had constructed seemed permanent. (The Second Temple was completed in 63 A.D.)

Jesus’ words, *Not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down* seemed to cause many questions to arise in the disciples’ minds. The Temple was the center of Jewish life! In following Jesus to the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Jesus probing questions. I’m thinking that judgment was on their minds. WHY? The glory of God departed from the First Temple (Eze. 8-10) and the kingdom of Judah was then carried into exile in Babylon for 70 years! Judgment!

Matt. 24:3 - *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?”*

Jesus answered the disciples’ first question but not in Matthew 24. We find Jesus’ answer regarding the complete physical destruction of the Temple in the not-too-distant future in Luke 21:20-24 - *But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹ Then let those who are 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. ²² For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 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. 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.

Jesus announced the coming judgment of Jerusalem by Titus, the Roman General, who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, the Second Temple, on the 9th of the month of

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Av, in 70 AD. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple seemed to declare the cancellation of all Israel's hopes. What was on the mind of the Jewish people?

Is the invasion and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD de ja vu? On the same day on the Jewish calendar (the 9th day of the month of Av), the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the First Temple (Solomon's Temple) – but in 586 BC! The Romans destroyed the rebuilt temple, the Second Temple, on the 9th of Av in 70 AD!!!

NOTE: at the siege of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 AD, 40 years following Jesus' death and resurrection, the Roman soldiers would set fire to the Temple – the Temple that was covered in many places in gold. To recover the gold that had melted between the stones, the Roman soldiers would pry apart every stone! And, in 70 AD, literally, not one stone was left upon another! The destruction was total. Jesus spoke of judgment!

Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD - LITERALLY! There was a real Temple, and it was literally destroyed. The literal fulfillment of this prophecy establishes the tone for the rest of the prophecies in Matt. 24 and all the end times prophecies for Israel aligning with the 70 Weeks Prophecy of Daniel.

Matt. 24:3b - ... *And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?*

These seemingly two questions...are not two questions. The disciples asked Jesus one question! And with this one question, I am suggesting that the disciples were aware of judgment approaching.

These seemingly two questions...are not two questions. The disciples asked Jesus one question! And with this one question, I am suggesting that the disciples were aware of judgment approaching. WHY?

- If they, in their younger years, had read and studied the scroll of Daniel, they knew the prophecy regarding the first coming of the Messiah the Prince, and His being "cut off but not for Himself"- that He would die! (Dan. 9:25b-26a). Had that resonated with them?
 - When Jesus told the disciples that He was going to Jerusalem...that He would be killed and raised on the third day (Matt. 16:21), the disciples were shocked!
 - Might these truths in Daniel have been lost on many who were so focused on the Messiah's coming as a conquering King due to the difficulty to live under the thumb of the Roman Empire?

What did the disciples and many Jewish people understand from the prophecy of Daniel about God's plan to judge and to restore Israel?

From Scripture the Jewish people knew of the history in the book of Daniel...of the Gentile nations that would rise and rule and oppress Israel. The disciples were well aware of the Jewish mindset of the day (NOT from Scripture), centuries before Jesus, that the Messiah would come as a conquering King and break the bonds of the Gentile empires.

And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age? The Jewish people believed in two ages:

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- the Pre-Messianic Age - also labeled as “the present age” - before the Messiah comes. This is the age in which Israel was waiting for the coming of the Messiah.
 - Were the disciples waiting for the Messiah? YES.
 - Was the religious leadership waiting for the Messiah? Perhaps and perhaps NOT. The religious leadership was guarding their status (John 11:48).
- the Messianic Age – also labeled as “the age to come” – when the Messiah would come and establish His kingdom on earth – when He would come in the fullness of His presence.
 - “The age to come” was when God would fulfill all His promises and covenants, and when Israel would enter into her promised blessings as a result of Messiah’s coming.
- “The present age,” according to the Jewish mindset in that day, the age that the disciples were living in when asking these questions of Jesus. “The present age” is the age in which Israel was waiting for the coming of the Messiah. “The present age” would end in JUDGMENT and the Messiah then would come – He would appear – and He will establish His Kingdom -and it would be the end of this “present age.”
- “The coming age” would begin with Messiah’s advent/arrival – when He will establish His Kingdom – following the judgment, devastation, desolation.
- The disciples, it seems, concluded that the judgment Jesus predicted was the one that would end the present age. And, after this judgment, the Messiah would come to introduce the age to come. Therefore, they asked,

...what will be the sign of Your coming AND of the end of the age? Can you now understand, with the explanations of the two ages, that what appears to be two questions on the part of the disciples is one question? The Messiah’s coming would bring the end of the age.

The disciples were asking Jesus – when will you come in the fullness of your presence.

Coming – the Greek word for coming is “parousia.”

What will be the sign of your coming.... The disciples weren't referring to Jesus' "coming AGAIN" as we know it. They weren't anticipating His going away!

The Greek word *parousia* comes from two Greek words, *para* and the verb "to be." It means "to be around," "to be present."

The best translation of the disciples' question: "And what shall be the sign of Your full presence, of Your being here?" The disciples were asking, "When are You going to enter into the fullness of Your Messianic presence?"

Again, they were NOT anticipating Jesus dying!

The disciples were asking Jesus when the final, full, complete, total judgment will take place against those who had been oppressing Israel. They knew that there would be judgment before the fullness of the Messiah's presence arrives!

Can we understand that the context of Jesus' words – speaking of judgment that will fall...is Jesus revealing the prophetic program for Jerusalem...the nation of Israel.

Jesus made no reference to the Church or the prophetic program for the Church.

Jesus' teaching on the Mount of Olives has nothing to do with the Rapture.

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Jesus spoke to the disciples in this discourse about the future Tribulation as revealed in Daniel 9:27.

This portion of Scripture must be interpreted with reference to Israel and not to the Church.

CONSIDER: Remember, many Jewish people came to faith in Jesus – individually...one at a time. Following the nation of Israel rejecting Jesus as the Messiah – through the Jewish religious leadership - Jesus, after having been rejected, spoke of signs that would forewarn the nation Israel of the approaching advent of Christ to the earth, a second time, for judgment but also to restore Israel and establish the Kingdom of God – the Millennial Kingdom.

God is pictured as a tender, loving father who adopted Israel to be His son and entered into a covenant relationship with the nation. His choice of Israel was an act of pure, sovereign grace, not due to any merit within the nation (Dt. 7:6–8).