

The Olivet Discourse: Matthew 24–25

A short Bible study from The Son Of Man Daniel 7

Two days before the cross, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives and answered His disciples' questions about the end of the age. It is the longest teaching on His return that He gave. Read Matthew 24–25 first.

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? What is the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Matthew 24:3 (WEB)

1. First warning: do not be deceived

Jesus answered them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.

Matthew 24:4–5 (WEB)

Wars, famines and earthquakes are “*the beginning of birth pains*” (Matthew 24:8, WEB) (Matthew 24:6–8).

2. Persecution and endurance

“Then they will deliver you up to oppression and will kill you. You will be hated by all of the nations for my name’s sake.

Matthew 24:9 (WEB)

But he who endures to the end will be saved. This Good News of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:13–14 (WEB)

3. The abomination of desolation and the great tribulation

“When, therefore, you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Matthew 24:15–16 (WEB)

for then there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be. Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. But for the sake of the chosen ones, those days will be shortened.

Matthew 24:21–22 (WEB)

Jesus speaks directly to His followers: "when *you* see". The days are shortened "for the sake of the chosen ones", so the chosen ones are there.

4. False christs and false prophets

For false christs and false prophets will arise, and they will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the chosen ones.

Matthew 24:24 (WEB)

5. Immediately after the tribulation: the gathering

“But immediately after the suffering of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. He will send out his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Matthew 24:29–31 (WEB)

The order is clear: tribulation, heavenly signs, the sign of the Son of Man, the trumpet, the gathering. Paul describes the same trumpet and gathering in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 and 1 Corinthians 15:52, and Revelation shows the same signs at the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12–17).

6. Be ready

Watch therefore, for you don't know in what hour your Lord comes. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore also be ready, for in an hour that you don't expect, the Son of Man will come.

Matthew 24:42–44 (WEB)

The parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1–13) ends with the same call:

Watch therefore, for you don't know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Matthew 25:13 (WEB)

Questions for reflection

1. Why do you think Jesus' first words were a warning against deception (24:4)?
2. In Matthew 24:15, who does Jesus expect to "see" the abomination of desolation?
3. What comes first in Matthew 24:29–31, the tribulation or the gathering?
4. What is the "oil" of Matthew 25 in your own life, and how can you make sure you have it?

