

Olivet Discourse 2 Signs of the End

20 July 2025

Life BPC Sunday School



Judgment on Jerusalem (c.f. “woe” in ch 23)

¹ And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Matthew 24:1-2

The Question(s)

³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matthew 24:3

The Question(s)

³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, **when shall these things (the destruction of Jerusalem OR the Parousia) be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming (the Parousia), and of the end of the world?**

- **Are these TWO questions or ONE?**
- **The disciples may have thought them to be ONE**
- **Christ answers them as TWO**

The interpretative challenge:

A.D. 70 vs **Parousia**

Brown text – the view that the events are those of A.D. 70

Blue text – the view that the events are those of /before the Parousia

The Question(s)

³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, **when shall these things (the destruction of Jerusalem OR the Parousia) be?** and **what shall be the sign of thy coming (the Parousia), and of the end of the world?**

- **Are these TWO questions or ONE?**
- **The disciples may have thought them to be ONE**
- **Christ answers them as TWO**

“The beginning of sorrows”

⁴And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. ⁶ And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but **the end** is not yet. ⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.

- “beginning of sorrows” = Labour pains - It’s just starting!

Persecution for the gospel's sake

- ⁹ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. ¹³ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

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“the abomination of desolation”

¹⁵ When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

¹⁶ Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

¹⁷ Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

¹⁸ -- Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

¹⁹ And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

²⁰ But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

²¹ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

²³ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

²⁵ Behold, I have told you before.

²⁶ Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

²⁷ For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

²⁸ For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

“the abomination of desolation”

- ¹⁵When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet (**Dan 11:31**), stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand):
 - **This indicates a clear /critical sign, a precise marker, prefigured by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (God manifest) who set up idols and sacrificed pigs in the temple. C.f. 2Th 2:3-4 “... that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition...” c.f. Rev 13**
 - **Some equate the Roman legions’ standards carried into the temple or the Zealots (self) appointment of priests as the fulfilment in AD 70**
 - **However, Luke’s account (Lk 21:20) is:**
²⁰ And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.
- ¹⁶ Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains (**Christians were reported to have largely left /fled Jerusalem and Judea prior to the Roman siege**): ¹⁷ Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: ¹⁸ -- Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. ¹⁹ And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! ²⁰ But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:
 - So v15-20 has to be understood as **referring to A.D.70 or else requiring either another temple in Jerusalem or another interpretation of “holy place”**

“the abomination of desolation” + great tribulation

²¹ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. **(Is this just a figure of speech – i.e. the destruction of Jerusalem is the greatest calamity to have befallen Israel OR to be taken literally? – requiring an even greater tribulation than A.D.70 in the future)**

²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

²³ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. ²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. ²⁵ Behold, I have told you before. ²⁶ Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. ²⁷ **For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** ²⁸ For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. **(The coming of Christ will be very obvious so don't be deceived!)**

“... the sign of the Son of man in heaven:...”

²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: ³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. *Matthew 24:29-31*

“... the sign of the Son of man in heaven:...”

- ²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days (which days? **The destruction of Jerusalem OR the more general v4-14**) shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: **(some consider this may just be apocalyptic language referring to cataclysmic or dreadful events, e.g. the Roman invasion)**
- ***But the following seem too detailed to be anything other than a visible and overt return of Christ. Difficult to fit into an A.D. 70 only view.*** ³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
³¹ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

“This generation shall not pass”

³² Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: ³³ So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. ³⁴ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. ³⁵ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. Matthew 24:32-35

“This generation shall not pass”

³² Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: ³³ So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. **(The events so described will reliably occur – just like the fig tree’s regular pattern)** ³⁴ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. ³⁵ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. **(Is “this generation” the generation alive when Christ gave this prophecy OR the generation alive when the signs of the final tribulation (final hard labour pains; v4-28) take place)**

³⁵ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Can these difficulties in
interpretation be resolved?

A “middle view”

- Prophecy with near and distant fulfilment.
- The destruction of Jerusalem prefigures /foreshadows the tribulation before the Parousia

Though, largely by the time Christ is speaking of His return (v27-31) it is hard to fit that in to the A.D. 70 view – for Christ has not visibly come.

Other dual fulfilment prophecies:

Joel 2:28 – 3:2 – Pentecost and ...

Isa 7:14 – Isaiah’s son and the virgin birth of Christ

2Sa 7:11-13 – the everlasting kingdom of David in Solomon (partial) and then in Christ (full)

Only the Father knows

- ³⁶But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Matthew 24:36-41

WATCH!

⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

⁴³ But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. ⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Matthew 24:42-44

What does watching consist of? Next week's lesson

What can we know? What do we need to know?

- Christ is certainly coming
- His coming will be unmistakable
- There will be tribulation – but it will be shortened for the elect's sake
- There will be persecution of believers
- There will be false Christs and false prophets
- The gospel will be preached
- Only the Father knows the exact timing of this
- Our duty is to watch (be vigilant)