

Mathew 24: Signs Of Jesus' Return; The Olivet Discourse 1.

I. 1-2: Jesus Predicts The Destruction Of The Temple.

After the destruction of Solomon's temple, this temple was originally built by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezra 6:15). Herod the Great (who ruled when Jesus was born) greatly expanded and improved it, nearly 500 meters long and 400 meters wide. This temple was the center of Jewish life for almost a thousand years - so much so, that it was customary to swear by the temple (Matthew 23:16), and speaking against the temple could be considered blasphemy (Acts 6:13).

It was also beautiful. The Jewish historian Josephus said that the temple was covered with gold plates and when the sun shone on them it was blinding to look at. Where there was no gold, there were blocks (fifty feet long, twenty-four broad, and sixteen thick) of marble of such a pure white that from a distance strangers thought there was snow on the temple.

Some 40 years after Jesus said this, there was a widespread Jewish revolution against the Romans, but ultimately Roman soldiers crushed the rebels. In A.D. 70 Jerusalem was leveled, including the temple - just as Jesus said would happen.

II. 3-31: Signs Of Jesus' Return.

- i. Deception about the Person and the return of Jesus, natural disasters, international conflicts, persecution of Christians, lukewarm-ness, lawlessness and a continuous Gospel spread.

Revelation 14:6-7 - *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."*

- ii. The Abomination Of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel.

Daniel 12:11 - *"And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."*

The abomination (extremely offensive to God) that brings desolation (destruction) is the ultimate desecration of a Jewish temple, the establishment of an idolatrous image in the holy place itself, which will inevitably result in the judgment of God. It is the abomination that brings desolation.

- a. There will arise a diplomatic, peaceful and brilliant man who will strike a seven year peace deal with Israel and the Arabs allowing the construction of a new temple without demolishing the Rock Of The Dome Mosque in Jerusalem. At the time the whole world will then be under one political and economic (666) system that ensures world peace, Christians who reject the mark are persecuted.

Revelation 11:2 - *“But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.*

- b. Three and a half years into the peace deal, the man (anti-christ) walks in the temple, abolishes the Jewish sacrifices, desecrates it (put his image in the temple and claims to be God, demands worship), openly becomes deceptive as Satan’s chief agent.
 - c. The great tribulation starts as God unleashes His wrath upon him and the Christ rejecting world.
 - d. At that time the some Jewish and gentile Christians will revolt against him and others flee to safety, he gathers the world army to subdue them.
 - e. A series of solar and lunar eclipses casts darkness on the earth.
 - f. Christ appears in the clouds in His shining brilliance to be seen by the whole world.
 - g. The armies turn to fight against Christ.
 - h. Christ gathers His believers and defeats the armies.
- iii. **32-35:** It surely will happen as the signs unfold; every generation has seen the signs of the return of Jesus Christ.
 - iv. **36-44:** Just like in the days of Noah and like a thief in the night; business was going on as usual amidst majority sinful and minority righteous, so will it be and so it is. It will be surprising to both believers and unbelievers.

v. **46-51:** Parable of faithful and the unfaithful servant.

Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing: Jesus told us that we must carry on with diligence while the Lord is gone. We must be that faithful and wise servant who takes care of his master's business while the master is away. Jesus also promised that we will be rewarded for our diligence. The servants serve the master, but the master knows how to take care of and reward the servants.

1 Corinthians 15:58 - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Jesus warns us of the attitude which says, "my master is delaying his coming."

The most dangerous lie is not "There is no God", not "there is no hell"; but the most dangerous lie of Satan is "there is no hurry."

2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

He was not about the business that the master left for him, he fought with and mistreated his fellow servants and he gave himself to the pleasures of the world instead of serving his master.

We must live in constant anticipation of Jesus' return, and that means being about our business for Him now.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 - For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.