

MATTHEW 24

The Coming of the Son of Man

The Disciples' Questions

1 Jesus left the temple and was going away,¹ when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.² 2 But he answered them,

You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.³

3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives,⁴ the disciples came to him privately⁵ saying,

Tell us, when will these things be,⁶ and what will be the sign of your coming [as the Son of Man] and of the end of the [Gentile] age?⁷

4 And Jesus answered them,

¹ This mirrors Ezekiel, in which the Shekinah glory departs the temple and goes east to the Mount of Olives.

² **Ps 48:12-13** 12 Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers, 13 consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels, that you may tell the next generation.

³ If Jerusalem and the temple are to be destroyed, how will there be a nation for Messiah to rule? **Mt 23:37-38** 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate. **La 2:7** 7 Yahweh has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary. He has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces. ... **Eze 24:21** 21 Say to the house of Israel, Thus says Yahweh God: Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and the yearning of your soul....

⁴ **Ac 1:12** 12 [The apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

⁵ **Mk 13:3** 3 As [Jesus] sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately.... John both heard the Olivet Discourse and saw and heard what he described in *Revelation*.

⁶ Matthew does not record Jesus' answer to this question, but Luke does. **Lk 21:20** 20 When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.

⁷ They were looking for the literal kingdom of God, the stone of Daniel 2, the Messianic kingdom. **Da 7:13-14** 13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. Arguably, the Olivet Discourse has nothing to do with the Church. The subject is Jerusalem, Israel, and the coming of Messiah's kingdom as foretold by the OT prophets. **Mt 16:18** 18 I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock [Peter's confession] I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

*The First Half of the Tribulation*⁸

See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name saying, I am the Messiah, and they will lead many astray.⁹ ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.¹⁰ See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines¹¹ and earthquakes¹² in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.¹³

⁹ Then (τότε)¹⁴ they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death,¹⁵ and you will be hated by all nations on account of my name. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets¹⁶ will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end [of the Tribulation] will be [physically] delivered [for entry into the Messianic kingdom]. ¹⁴ And this gospel¹⁷ of the kingdom

⁸ Cf. Mk 13:9-13; Lk 21:12-19.

⁹ **Re 6:2** ² I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider [the Anti-messiah] had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

¹⁰ **Re 6:4** ⁴ Out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

¹¹ **Re 6:5-8** ⁵ I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A quart of wheat for a denarius, three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine! ⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come! ⁸ And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with famine, with pestilence, and by wild beasts of the earth.

¹² **Re 6:12** ¹² When [the Lamb] opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake....

¹³ Possibly, Mt 24:4-7, along with the first four seals of Re 6, describe the Church age. **1 Th 5:3** ³ While people are saying, There is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

¹⁴ **Da 9:27** ²⁷ ...He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.

¹⁵ **Re 6:9** ⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

¹⁶ **Re 13:11-15** ¹¹ Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³ It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴ and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

¹⁷ During the Church age, the gospel is proclaimed by Church age believers. During the Tribulation, the gospel is proclaimed by: (1) the two witnesses (Re 11:3); (2) the 144,000 Israelites (Re 7:4; 14:4-5); and (3) the flying angel (Re 14:6-7).

will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations,¹⁸ and then the end [of the Tribulation] will come [at my Second Coming].

The Second Half of the Tribulation¹⁹

15 So when you see the abomination of desolation²⁰ spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),²¹ 16 then let those who are in Judea²² flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation,²³ such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.²⁴ 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect [believers of the Great Tribulation] those days [the final three and a half years] will be cut short.

The Coming of the Son of Man

23 Then (τότε) [during the Great Tribulation] if anyone says to you, Look, here is the Messiah! or There he is! do not believe it. 24 For false messiahs²⁵ and false prophets will

¹⁸ **Re 7:9-10** 9 ...Behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!

¹⁹ Cf. Mk 13:14-23; Lk 21:20-26.

²⁰ **Da 9:27** 27 ...For half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator. **Da 12:11** 11 From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. **2 Th 2:3-4** 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. **Re 13:14-15** 14 ...By the signs that [the false prophet] is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

²¹ **Re 1:3** 3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

²² This warning is specifically for Jewish believers in the Great Tribulation. **Da 7:25** 25 He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law. And they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

²³ **Jer 30:7** 7 Alas! That day is so great there is none like it. It is a time of distress for Jacob, yet he shall be saved out of it.

²⁴ This cannot be a reference to 70 ad.

²⁵ **2 Th 2:8** 8 Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect [believers of the Great Tribulation]. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, Look, he is in the wilderness, do not go out. If they say, Look, he is in the inner rooms, do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.²⁶ 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.²⁷

29 Immediately after the [Great] tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.²⁸ 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn,²⁹ and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.³⁰ 31 And he will send out his angels with a

²⁶ See *Jesus as the Son of Man*. **Da 7:13-14** 13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

²⁷ **Eze 39:17-18** 17 As for you, son of man, thus says Yahweh God: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field: Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. 18 You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan. **Re 19:17-18** 17 ...I [John] saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great. **Re 19:21** 21 ...The rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of [Jesus] who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

²⁸ **Is 13:10** 10 The stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light, the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. **Is 34:4** 4 All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree. **Joel 2:31** 31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of Yahweh comes. **Joel 3:15-16** 15 The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. 16 Yahweh roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But Yahweh is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. **Ac 2:19-20** 19 ...I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below—blood, fire, and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²⁹ Will it be mourning for Jesus or mourning against Jesus? **Re 1:7** 7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

³⁰ **Da 7:13** 13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. **Re 19:11-16** 11 ...I [John] saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect [believers of the Great Tribulation and perhaps OT believers]³¹ from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree³²

32 From the fig tree learn (μανθάνω, aor.) the parable (παραβολή). As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things [in the Great Tribulation], you know that he [Jesus] is near, at the very gates. 34 Truly, I say to you, this generation (γενεά) [ethnic Israel] will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.³³

Only the Father Knows³⁴

36 But concerning that day and hour [Jesus' Second Coming] no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Then two men will be in the field. One will be taken [the unbeliever] and one left [the believer].³⁵ 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken [the believer] and one left [the unbeliever]. 42 Therefore, stay awake [towards the end of the Great Tribulation], for you do not know [exactly] on what day your Lord is coming.³⁶

The Parable of the Ready Housemaster

³¹ **Da 12:2-3** 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. **Da 12:13** 13 Go your way till the end, and you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.

³² Jesus now gives practical applications in light of his return. Primary application of this section is directed toward Tribulation believers. Church age believers may apply this section secondarily.

³³ **Mt 5:18** 18 Truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. **Re 22:18-19** 18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

³⁴ Cf. Mk 13:32-33; Lk 17:26-37.

³⁵ Those who are left will populate the Messianic kingdom. At the Rapture, being left behind is bad. At the Second Coming, being left behind is good.

³⁶ This applies secondarily to the Church, which is waiting for the Rapture.

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Parable of the Faithful and Wicked Servants³⁷

45 Who then is the faithful and wise servant [believer] whom his master [Jesus] has set over his household [other believers] to give them their food [teaching] at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes [at the end of the Tribulation]. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions [in the Messianic kingdom].

48 But if that wicked servant [believer] says to himself, My master is delayed, 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants [believers] and eats and drinks with drunkards [unbelievers], 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know 51 and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites.³⁸ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth [extreme regret for loss of rewards at the judgment seat of Messiah].³⁹

³⁷ Cf. Mk 13:34-37; Lk 12:41-48. The second coming of Jesus will be a test of his servants.

³⁸ Are these hypocrites believers or unbelievers? This may refer back to the previous chapter, where the hypocrites are the scribes and Pharisees.

³⁹ This seems to be a warning to believers, not unbelievers. Hypocrite believers will lose rewards at the judgment seat of Messiah. They will be cast into the outer darkness during the Messianic kingdom and experience extreme regret. They are still justified for eternal life, however, and will enter the new heaven and earth.

Notes