

# The Olivet Discourse

*The Words of Jesus*

From the Kidron Valley  
The Mount of Olives



Separated from the Eastern Hill  
(the Temple Mount and the City of David) by the Kidron Valley,  
the Mt. of Olives has always been an important feature in Jerusalem's landscape.

Matthew 24-25 is often called '**The Olivet Discourse**' because JESUS CHRIST delivered these words to the disciples while on the Mount of Olives.

**'The Olivet Discourse'** is often referred to as  
**the most important single  
passage of prophecy in all the  
Bible.**

**Daniel** was referred to as the **most important prophetic book** of the Bible. But Daniel dealt with a great deal of prophecy that has already been fulfilled, however, here **JESUS CHRIST deals primarily with prophecy yet to be fulfilled.**

Another event that makes this message so significant is that JESUS taught it immediately after He was rejected by His own people.

Another issue that makes these words by our Lord so significant is that it gives a chronological outline of events at the end of the time of the Gentiles; not the end of the world but the end of Gentile Rule Over the Jews.

**Time when JESUS CHRIST gives  
these powerful prophetic words**

The chapters in Matthew leading up to chapter 24 present the setting for what that JESUS CHRIST is about to teach.

Chapter 21	The Rejected King enters Jerusalem
Chapter 22-23	The Rejected King encounters the rejecting leaders
Chapter 23	Woe to Scribes and Pharisees

So here is JESUS CHRIST, who has presented Himself to all Israel as their King, but they rejected Him. The People and the Leaders rejected Him.

In chapter 23 JESUS declares that this present generation of Jewish leaders are like those of previous generations who killed the prophets sent by God (Matthew 23:29-35)

Matthew 23:36 is most interesting:

<b>36</b>	<i>Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.</i>
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## What things?

The wrath of God upon Israel, by means of Rome, in AD 70.  
Matthew 23:37-39 Jesus laments for Jerusalem.

Matthew 23:37

<b>37</b>	<i>“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I <u>wanted</u> to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and <u>you were unwilling</u>.”</i>
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Again we see the conflict between the  
Love of God, the  
Love of JESUS CHRIST and  
the volitional decision of man.

Matthew 23:38-39

<b>38</b>	<i>Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!</i>
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**39** *For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"*

So many people think that the great question of *Angelic Conflict* is

**how can a loving God  
cast His creatures  
into a lake of eternal fire?**

But, as we have well seen in Scripture, that the correct question is:

**how can perfectly righteous God  
not cast all unrighteous ones  
into eternal darkness?**

And the answer to this question resounds through history,

**BY SENDING HIS SON TO DIE ON CROSS  
BEARING THE JUDGMENT OF ALL MANKIND AND  
OFFERING THEM A FREE AND GRACIOUS WAY  
TO BECOME RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD.**

**By faith in His Son.**

But even if we take the incorrect question

**—how can a loving God  
cast His creatures  
into eternal separation from Him? —**

the answer is here given in verse 37:

Matthew 23:37

<b>37</b>	<i>you, yourselves were—<del>are</del>—unwilling—</i>
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meaning they refused to believe in His Son as the only Messiah.

**Jesus' desire is to gather all His people  
as He will according to**

Matthew 24:31.

<b>31</b>	<i>And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.</i>
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But since they are unwilling here,  
He will scatter rather than gather.

And He will scatter them by means of Rome in AD 70—

## Luke 21:24

<b>24</b>	<i>and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.</i>
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## Matthew 23:38

<b>38</b>	<i>“Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!</i>
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## To what does this refer?

*THOSE OF YOU WHO COME ON WEDNESDAY  
NIGHT ARE READY FOR THIS.*

## Matthew 23:38

<b>38</b>	<i>House</i> in the singular refers to the Temple. Also in context, this refers to the Temple for in
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## Matthew 24:1-2.

<b>1</b>	<i>Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.</i>
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2 *And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."*

JESUS CHRIST will discuss the temple with His disciples.

Matthew 23:39

39 *"For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"*

The well-known scholar, Alfred Edersheim, (whom I highly recommend if you are a reader) has several wonderful books including one titled ***'The Temple—its Ministry and Services'*** which is an excellent study of the Temple, which we are studying on Wednesday nights.

*(Alfred Edersheim has done much work to provide a context in which readers can understand the Old and New Testaments. This work is no exception. **Temple-Its Ministry and Services** provides a historical examination of the first century Temple at Jerusalem. )*

But in his book *'The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah'* (2 Volumes in one) says of Matthew 23:39:

**39** *For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'*

*"LOOKING AROUND ON THOSE TEMPLE-BUILDINGS - THAT HOUSE, IT SHALL BE LEFT TO THEM DESOLATE! AND HE QUITTED ITS COURTS WITH THESE WORDS, THAT THEY OF ISRAEL SHOULD NOT SEE HIM AGAIN UNTIL THE NIGHT OF THEIR UNBELIEF PAST; THEY WOULD WELCOME HIS RETURN WITH A BETTER HOSANNA THAN THAT WHICH HAD GREETED HIS ROYAL ENTRY THREE DAYS BEFORE.*

*(Alfred Fdersheim believed that some knowledge of ancient Jewish society was necessary for the general reader of the New Testament to fully understand Jesus' life and works. Fdersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* is an informal commentary on the Four Gospels, which highlights the intellectual and religious perspectives of the people who lived during the time of Jesus. By consulting both Rabbinic Law and Talmudic writings, Fdersheim paints a vivid picture of the various locations where Jesus would have walked, prayed, and preached. Not only does Fdersheim provide useful geographical and political clarifications, he also offers insight into the emotional and psychological experiences of individual Biblical characters as well. From Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, to His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven- Fdersheim reports the stages of Jesus' life in exceptional detail, bringing animation and color into a set of stories that may seem distant to readers today. )*



And this was the ‘**Farewell**’ and the parting of Israel's Messiah from Israel and its Temple. Yet a ‘**Farewell**’ which promised a coming again; and a ‘**parting**’ which implied a welcome in the future from a believing people to a gracious, pardoning King”

Pay close attention to *until* in Matthew 23:39.

While immediate judgment is certain, there is, also, hope given to Israel of a generation who will recognize Jesus as their Messiah-Savior.

You will remember we saw this turning point in history in Luke 21:24

<b>24</b>	<i><u>and</u> they will fall by the edge of the sword, <u>and</u> will be led captive into all the nations; <u>and</u> Jerusalem will be trampled under foot <u>by the</u> <u>Gentiles</u> <u>until</u> the times of the <u>Gentiles</u> are <u>fulfilled</u>.</i>
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And we know from our study in Daniel that the end of the time of the Gentiles will be at the end of The Tribulation when our Jesus will return and restore Israel.

Now if you are paying attention you will remember that there are two things that must happen before JESUS CHRIST returns to restore Israel.

From Luke 21:24 we have the first:

<b>24</b>	<u>until</u> <i>the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled</i>
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Then in Matthew 23:39

<b>39</b>	<u>until</u> <i>you Israel say Blessed is He who comes in the name of The Lord.</i>
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“Hebrew Christian Bible teacher, **Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum**, says Israel must call for the Lord to rescue them as a condition for the second coming, based upon Matthew 23:39.

Dr. Fruchtenbaum explains: *BUT THEN HE DECLARES THAT THEY WILL NOT SEE HIM AGAIN UNTIL THEY SAY, BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. THIS IS A MESSIANIC GREETING. IT WILL MEAN THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS.*

*‘ SO JESUS WILL NOT COME BACK TO THE EARTH UNTIL THE JEWS AND THE JEWISH LEADERS ASK HIM TO COME BACK. FOR JUST AS THE JEWISH LEADERS LEAD THE NATION TO THE REJECTION OF THE MESSIAH-SHIP OF JESUS, THEY MUST SOMEDAY LEAD THE NATION TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE MESSIAH-SHIP OF JESUS. ’*

[in his book *The Footsteps of the Messiah* pages 212-215]

*(Using the Book of Revelation as an end time road map, Dr. Fruchtenbaum weaves the prophetic writings of the Hebrew Scriptures and Messiah's teachings to reveal God's plan for the future of Israel and the world. Dr. Fruchtenbaum gathers the many pieces of the prophetic puzzle and places them in sequential order with the result summed up by Dr. Charles Ryrie in his foreword: "Those who read this book cannot help but be instructed and stimulated by his work.")*

*Footsteps is detailed, thorough and scholarly, yet written in a style that the average reader can easily understand. With a wealth of wisdom drawn from his Jewish background and extensive research, the author even tackles the "problem passages" to provide a comprehensive overview of the entire range of prophetic truth. "In a thoroughly biblical, balanced, and clear presentation, Arnold Fruchtenbaum plainly lays out God's plan for the future while avoiding the sensational errors of other prophetic writers. I have relied on this book as a resource for years." – Michael Rydelnik, Professor of Jewish Studies Program, Moody Bible Institute)*

Another Hebrew scholar, Dr. David Cooper, in 'Messiah: His Final Call to Israel' says,

**" SINCE JESUS CAME IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, AND SINCE HE WILL NOT RETURN UNTIL ISRAEL SAYS, ' Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, ' IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WILL SEE AND RECOGNIZE THAT JESUS WAS AND IS THEIR TRUE MESSIAH. "**

*(Messiah His Final Call To Israel )*

(Psalm 19:1).

<b>1</b>	"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork"
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(Psalm 14:1)

<b>1</b>	"But the fool has said in his heart, There is no God."
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*AND THEN HE WILL RETURN!*

*AND HOW WILL ISRAEL COME TO THIS AWAKENING?  
PARTLY BY THE MINISTRY OF THE 144,000  
JEWISH EVANGELIST AND PARTLY BY READING  
BIBLICAL PROPHECY LIKE  
DANIEL AND MATTHEW 24-25 AND REVELATION.*

So these closing verses of Matthew 23 clearly teaches that there is coming in the near future judgment against Israel, namely Jerusalem.

But it also speaks of a redemption for Israel in the future. **Matthew 24 is about this still future redemption of Israel.**

(Merrill Frederick Unger (1909–1980) was a Bible commentator, scholar, and theologian. He earned his A.B. and Ph.D degrees at Johns Hopkins University, and his Th.M and Th.D degrees at Dallas Theological Seminary. After serving as a pastor at several churches, Unger taught for a year at Gordon College. For the next 19 years, until 1967 – at which time he became professor emeritus, Unger was professor of Old Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. Unger was a prolific writer who authored some 40 books many of which are well received in Christian colleges and seminaries. Unger was also a well known Biblical archaeologist.)

We shall just note Merrill F. Unger's outline of Matthew 24-25.

I	24:1-3	Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem
II	24:4-26	Events of the Tribulation
III	24:27-30	Second Coming of the Messiah
IV	24:31	Re-gathering of Israel
V	24:32-36	The Certainty of the Messiah's Coming
VI	24:37-51	Exhortations to Watchfulness
VII	25:1-30	the Judgment of Israel
VIII	25:31-46	the Judgment of the Nations

## **“Historical Setting for Christ’s Discourse”**

Matthew 24:1

<b>1</b>	<i>Jesus came out from the temple and was going away —how symbolical— going away from the Temple.</i>
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He was on His way to the Mount of Olives.

This means He probably walked down the Kidron Valley and up to Olivet;

He will cross over this Kidron after He observes the last Passover and first Communion with His disciples. But for now He is leaving the temple headed for Olivet *when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.*

If we compare this with Mark 13:1-2 and Luke 21:5-6 we know they were pointing out its beauty:

Mark 13:

<b>1</b>	As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples *said to Him, “Teacher, behold what <u>wonderful stones</u> and what <u>wonderful buildings!</u> ”
<b>2</b>	And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down.”

Luke 21:5-6

<b>5</b>	<i>And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts,</i> Gifts given as a result vows made. He said,
<b>6</b>	<i>“As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.”</i>

*which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.”*

They are greatly impressed with Herod’s temple that is truly

magnificent. It has been some 50 years in the making. It was so magnificent that Rome did not want to destroy it when they invade Judah.

The disciples must have been taken back by the Lord's response to their praise of the Temple Building.

Matthew 24:2

<b>2</b>	<i>And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."</i>
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There is a break between verses 2 and 3

Matthew 24:3

<b>3</b>	<i>As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, <u>the disciples came to Him privately</u>, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your Coming, and of the End of the Age?"</i>
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Mark 13:3 tells us which disciples came up to Jesus:

**3** *As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives therefore this is called the Olivet discourse opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,*

Even today it is beautiful, standing on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple area.

It is most interesting to study what Jesus taught in public contrasted with what Jesus taught in private. The nation has rejected Him as their Messiah-King, therefore, He will teach mostly in private; in the upper room and the discourses after the upper room.

In Matthew 12 the nation rejects Jesus as their Messiah King, therefore, from Matthew 13 on JESUS CHRIST speaks publically only in parables.

In Matthew 13 tells Jesus tells exactly why He spoke in parables to the people who have rejected Him as their Savior-Messiah-King.



Matthew 13:11

<b>11</b>	<i>Jesus answered them to you, it has been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted</i>
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Matthew 13:13

<b>13</b>	<i>Therefore I speak to them in parables, because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.</i>
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So here in the Olivet Discourse Jesus will explain the future events for the benefit of believers.

**PLEASE DO NOT EXPECT THE WORLD TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE.**

**ONCE THEY REJECT THE BEING OF GOD, HOW CAN THEY UNDERSTAND CREATION? AND ONCE THEY REJECT JESUS AS SAVIOR HOW CAN THEY UNDERSTAND ANYTHING ABOUT THE FUTURE.**

The Question  
**“What will be the sign?”**

<b>3</b>	<i>As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your Coming, and of the end of the age?"</i>
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Greek confusion:

**Are they asking one question or two questions or three?**

**This is important.**

If one question then all these events will occur at the same time. That is, the sign of His coming will also be the sign of the end of the age, and the time of these will be the same.

If there are two questions then the second question contains two parts.

- 1 ∞ When will these things happen?
- 2 ∞ What will be the sign of your coming?
- 3 ∞ What will be the sign of the end of the age?

or:

- 1 ∞ When will these things happen?
- 2 ∞ What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?

How we answer this depends on our understanding of the Greek **ARTICLE *KAI*** translated *and* and the placement of the **DEFINITE ARTICLE**, translated *the*.

The literal Greek reads:

<b>3</b>	<p><i><u>the</u> sign of your coming <u>and</u> end of the age</i> you will note there is no definite article <i>the</i> after <i>and</i>;</p> <p>it reads <i>and end of the age</i>.</p>
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Without going into boring detail, A.T. Robertson: ‘*A Grammar of the Greek N.T. in Light of Historical Research*’ on page 787, in his discussion of the use of several Greek articles ***KAI*** classifies Matthew 24:3 under *Groups Treated as One*.

But if we apply the **Granville Sharp’s rule**, we will see that there are **two basic questions**.

By not repeating the definite article –*the*– before *end of the age* links the coming of Christ and the end of the age together as one event.

It is clear that we have two different questions and two different times being spoken of.

The First question *when will these things happen* refers to the destruction of the Temple, which will occur in AD 70 when Rome invades Judah and destroys both the city and the Temple.

The events spoken of in asking for *the sign* are not at the same time as the destruction of the Temple. Nor have these two things yet occurred in history: *His coming* and *end of the age*.

It is also important to remember that to these disciples all three of these events would occur around the **coming of Christ**.

## Why?

Because they do not know about the coming Church-Age. As Dr. Toussaint has insightfully pointed out the disciples would have missed all this by their understanding of Zechariah.

Zechariah 14:14

<b>14</b>	<i>Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance.</i>
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Zechariah 14:12 = destruction of Jerusalem

<b>12</b>	<i>Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth.</i>
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Zechariah 14:3-8 = coming of the Messiah to destroy the nations which came together to destroy Israel.

<b>3</b>	<i>Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.</i>
<b>4</b>	<i>In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.</i>
<b>5</b>	<i>You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!</i>
<b>6</b>	<i>In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle.</i>
<b>7</b>	<i>For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about</i>

	<i>that at evening time there will be light.</i>
<b>8</b>	<i>And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.</i>

Zechariah 14:9-11 Christ will be King over the millennial kingdom

<b>9</b>	<i>And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.</i>
<b>10</b>	<i>All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses.</i>
<b>11</b>	<i>People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.</i>

So in the thinking of the disciples all three of these events were related and would happen in short time of each other. The problem is they did not know about AD 70 or of the Church-Age.