

A Summary of the Olivet Discourse

1. As Jesus and the disciples were leaving the temple that day, the disciples made a comment about the stones and the buildings of the temple, and Jesus told them that not one stone would be left upon another.

2. This stirred up questions in their minds.

They knew He is the Messiah who would one day set up His kingdom. But He has been rejected by the leaders of Israel. And Jesus has denounced them and pronounced a judgment of destruction to come upon Jerusalem.

They don't understand how all the pieces fit together. When and how will the kingdom be set up?

And as they went down from Jerusalem into the Kidron Valley and then up onto the Mount of Olives, they came up with three specific questions that they thought would give them the missing pieces to their puzzle.

- i. When will these things, the destruction of Jerusalem, happen? And what will be the sign that it is about to happen?
 - ii. What will be the sign of His coming?
 - iii. What will be the sign of the end of the age?
3. Before He can answer their questions, He needs to describe this present age.

He says there will be wars and rumours of wars until the end. And there will be false messiah's.

These are not signs of the end of the age. They are normal characteristics of this age.

4. But when they see a world-wide war, that will be the beginning of birth pangs.

In other words, there will be a series of events to mark the approaching end of the age, beginning with a world war, famines and earth quakes.

5. By the way, He says, they will not live to see these things.

They will be persecuted and they will be given what to say when they need it. This will provide opportunities to preach the gospel to all nations.

They will even be betrayed by relatives and friends and put to death. In spite of this, their eternal life is secure, they will see the Kingdom, and they will win many souls for the Kingdom.

6. Then He tells them about the fall of Jerusalem that would happen in AD 70.

The sign that it was about to happen would be the surrounding of Jerusalem by the Roman armies.

Then they must flee to the mountains. Those who have not fled to the mountains will either be killed or led captive into all the nations.

And Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

7. Then He paints a picture of the tribulation.

a) The first half

He begins with the first half of the tribulation, in which Israel will be hated and killed by all the nations because of His name.

Many of them will stumble over Him because of their unbelief and disobedience. Consequently, they will betray each other and hate each other. And false prophets will mislead them. And their love will grow cold.

Nevertheless, there will be those who survive until the end. And they will all be saved!

And the good news of the kingdom will be preached to all the gentile nations.

b) The second half

The second half of the tribulation will begin when the Abomination of Desolation is set up in the temple.

Then those who are in Judea are to flee to the mountains, because then there will be a great tribulation, the greatest ever seen. And at that time there will be false messiahs and false prophets. And false reports that the Messiah has come.

But do not believe them, because the coming of the Son of Man will be as visible as lightning that flashes from the east to the west.

And He gives them a cryptic indication of where the second coming will take place. It will be wherever the Gentile armies have gathered together against Israel.

Now He has given the background necessary for the sign of His second coming.

8. At the end of the tribulation:

The sun, the moon and the stars will stop giving their light to the earth. And the seas will be roaring. Men will be in a state of dismay and perplexity. And they will be fainting with fear.

Then the Shekinah glory will pierce the darkness, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great glory.

9. Then, He says, there will be a regathering of Israel, both the living and the dead, from wherever they are in heaven or on the earth.
10. Then He exhorts them to take hope and courage when they see the destruction of Jerusalem, because then their redemption is once again drawing near.
11. And just as the blossoming of the fig tree and all the trees tells you that it is spring and therefore summer is near, so when you see the Abomination of Desolation you will know that the return of the Messiah to set up His kingdom is near. In fact, He is right at the door!

And the Jewish generation that sees the Abomination of Desolation will survive Satan's best attempts to destroy it. They will still be there when He comes.

12. Now, having described the events that will take place at the end of the age and the sign of His second coming, He tells them about the coming of the Son of Man that will have no sign.

At this coming:

believers will be taken from the earth into heaven to stand before Him,
and unbelievers will be left to experience the events of the tribulation.

So He exhorts them to believe while there is still time before He comes.

Once He comes there will be no escaping the earth and the tribulation will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. It will be like a trap without escape.

Therefore believe now, while there is still time!

13. Then He gives them five parables, first of all to explain and illustrate what He means by being on the alert, and secondly to illustrate the last detail He wants to add to His description of the end times.

- i. The first parable illustrates what it means to be on the alert and reiterates that exhortation four times.
- ii. The second parable answers the question that arises about what needs to be done.

The head of the house needs not only to be alert, but to be ready to stop the thief when he comes. So, we need to be ready to meet Him when He comes.

- iii. But what does it mean to be ready?

He answers that question in the third parable, in which He contrasts the faithful and sensible slave with the evil one.

To be ready means to believe the master and consequently to be labouring in his business. That one will be put in charge of all his possessions, but the evil one will be punished severely and cast out with the hypocrites.

- iv. The fourth parable, the parable of the ten virgins, describes what will happen when the Kingdom is established.

Jesus, the Messiah, will return with His bride, the church. Those who have become believers during the tribulation will enter into the Kingdom with Him, and the door will be shut. There will be no further opportunity for people to enter the kingdom and the unbelievers will be excluded.

Again, He gives the exhortation to be on the alert. And just as there are two occasions when He will return, He gives two reasons for being on the alert.

Those living before the Rapture have the opportunity to participate in the Kingdom as His bride and therefore to escape the tribulation.

Those living during the tribulation have the opportunity to accompany the bride and Groom into the Kingdom. And this opportunity will be the subject of His last parable.

- v. The message of the parable of the talents is that everyone will be given an opportunity to serve their master, and when he comes they will have to account for how they used that opportunity.

Those who were faithful will be rewarded and enter into the joy of their master.

But the wicked will be punished in outer darkness.

And again, the contrast is between those who believe their master and those who do not.

14. And the application of the parable of the talents is found in His description of the judgment of the Gentiles.

When He comes in His glory, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the Gentiles will be gathered before Him and He will separate them according to how they treated the Jews during the tribulation.

The righteous will care for the Jews who are being persecuted, while the unrighteous will not.

The righteous will inherit the Kingdom and then enter into eternal life. The unrighteous will be excluded from the kingdom in hell and ultimately will enter into eternal punishment.