

The Olivet Discourse

Just before Jesus went to the cross He was with His disciples in the Temple viewing the great stones in the structure built by Herod and his sons. Jesus shocked the disciples by saying that all these stones would be cast down and the Jews would be led away captive "into all nations and Jerusalem would be trodden down UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:23-24). The disciples asked, "When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?" The Jews were led into captivity in AD70 but the sign of "the end of the age" will be 7 years of great tribulation that is divided into two parts:

- a) "the beginning of sorrows" (travail), after which the abomination of desolation would stand in the holy place (Temple),
- b) the second half of the seven years when there would be "great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt.24:21).

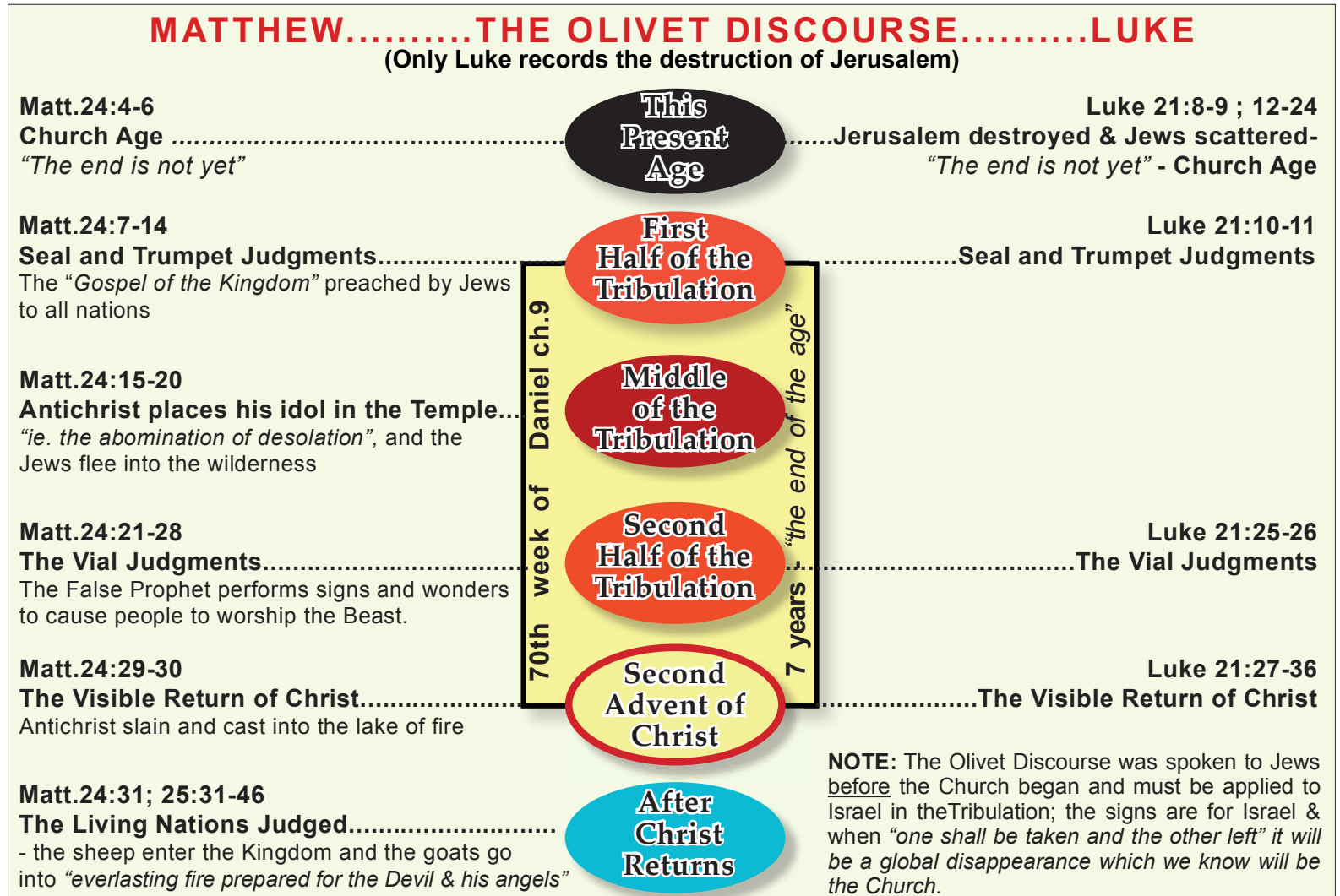
"Immediately after the Tribulation of those days" Christ will come in glory and power to judge Antichrist and the nations that follow him.

Three signs are given by the Lord as to when His coming will occur.

- i) The restoration of Israel as seen in the parable of the fig tree.
- ii) Conditions like the "days of Noah" would prevail. Ignorance of God's word, abounding wickedness and material interests.
- iii) There would be a sudden global disappearance of people.

We should remember that the Gospels record events in the age of Law **before** the Church began and these signs are therefore **to Israel**.

Those "taken" are NOT taken to judgment. The Greek word for "taken" indicates they are "received to one's self". Those "left" are "put away" for the Greek word is also translated of "divorce". The Disciples did not know it was the Rapture of the Church, for the Church did not exist at that time but **WE** know it will be the Church that suddenly disappears; we have Paul's epistles and the Rapture will signal the end of the age.



When Will the Kingdom Appear?

“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation” (Luke 17:20).

John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Disciples all preached, *“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matt.3:2; 4:17; 10:7) and so the Pharisees asked, *“When?”* At this stage the nation had rejected the King and Jesus told them, *“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation”*.

The word translated *“observation”* is a compound word *para* meaning, *“near”* and *teros*, meaning *“to watch”*. It means to *“see-near”* i.e. Jesus told them, the kingdom will NOT be seen in the near future.

Jesus told the Pharisees, *“The kingdom of God is within you”*. He did not say this to Disciples! The words *“within you”* should be translated *“among you”*. He, the King, was **among them** but they had rejected Him! It certainly was NOT within the Pharisees.

Jesus then turned to **the Disciples** and said, *“The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and YE SHALL NOT SEE IT. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day”* (Luke 17:22-24).

Amillennialists teach that the kingdom is here NOW but Jesus said the Disciples **would not see it**; it had been deferred! False Messiahs would seek to establish the Kingdom such as Bar Kockhba (AD132-135) but Jesus said, *“Go not after them”*.

The kingdom would be established when Jesus came **like lightning in the heavens**. It would be AFTER His return **“BUT FIRST he must suffer...”** In other

words, there would be a gap in time before the Kingdom would appear.

Several SIGNS were then given to indicate **WHEN** the kingdom **was near**; it would be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot. In those times there was violence and homosexuality and men were oblivious to the grave danger of Divine judgment. Then suddenly, Noah was taken into the safety of the ark and Lot was snatched out of Sodom, and the Flood and fire came.

The Bible is clear that great Tribulation will come **after** the Church is taken into heaven at the Rapture. There will be a global disappearance of individuals, and so Jesus said: *“I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left”* (Luke 17:34-36).

The word *“taken”* is literally in the Greek original, *“to receive to one’s self”* and *“left”* is *“to put away”*. The one *“taken”* is not taken for judgment but for mercy and those that remain are *“left”* for judgment.

The Disciples asked, *“Where Lord?”* and Jesus said, *“Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together”*. The Greek word for *“body”* is not *ptoma* meaning a carcass, but *soma* meaning a **living body**. The word comes from *sozo* meaning, *“I save”*. Like eagles ascending, the Rapture of the Church will be salvation to believers and a sign of when the Kingdom is near to Israel and the world.

LUKE CH.17:20-37

The Pharisees asked,
When will the kingdom appear?

Jesus replied;
It won't be seen in the near future.
Behold the kingdom of God is among you!
(ie. The King is here!)

To the Disciples Jesus said:
The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and you shall not see it.
When they say, See here, or see there: go not after them, nor follow them...
For as the lightning, that lightens out of the one part of heaven, shines unto the other part of heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day.

But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

SIGNS OF WHEN THE KINGDOM IS NEAR
And as it was in the days of Noah...
Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot...
even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.
There shall be two in one bed...
two shall be grinding together...
two shall be in the field:
the one shall be taken and the other left
The Disciples asked, Where, Lord?

Jesus answered, Wheresoever the **(living) body is**, there will the eagles be gathered together.

“The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1Thess.4:16-17)

The Mystery Church

The doctrine of the Church is central to understanding the prophecies of the end times. The image of the Church created by Christendom is foreign to that taught in the New Testament. Christendom sees the Church as an ecclesiastical organization led by a hierarchy of priests and Bishops who administer the rituals and order of a religious system. Prayerbooks spell out what each communicant should read at each season of the religious calendar. Many traditions are added to the mode of worship and in many instances these carry equal weight with the Scriptures. Clerical garb is prescribed for each level of leadership.

Large property holdings produce financial dividends for the church and consume a lot of time just to maintain and develop. When funds are required appeals are made and fund-raising methods are adopted to meet the needs of specific projects. In many cases, Government grants are sought and received. The stipends of clergy are regulated according to the level of seniority with tax free benefits.

The Church of Jesus Christ as established by the Apostles on the day of Pentecost was quite different; it consisted of Spirit-filled men of God who lived by faith working with their own hands where necessary, and receiving no stipend; they wore no robes, adhered to no prayerbook, sought no political favours and chose to suffer for the Faith they proclaimed rather than compromise the message. All of the Apostles suffered persecution and most lay down their lives for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. Though only a small band, in a few years the Apostles turned the world upside down, led multitudes to personal faith in Christ and established local churches.

A common view in Christendom is that Israel was the Church in the Old Testament and the Church is "spiritual" Israel in the New Testament, but this is contrary to Scripture. The Bible teaches that the Church was "not made known in ages past" and did not exist in the Old Testament (Eph.3:1-10; Col.1:18-27; Rom.16:25-26).

When Jesus came He preached to the **nation of Israel** and the teaching of the Disciples throughout the Gospels was directed to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt.10:6).

The Old Testament prophets knew nothing of the Church and they saw the future events of Christ's first and second coming without

any understanding of the **long interval of the Church age** that lay like a great valley between. The fact that Israel would be blinded in part was foretold by Isaiah (ch.6) but it did not register even with the Godly Jews. Even in Acts chapter 1, only a matter of days before the Church was formed, the Disciples were still looking for an earthly kingdom over which Israel would reign. Jesus had told the Disciples they would NOT see it (Luke17:22).

The Church is quite different to the nation of Israel. The Church is a heavenly people blessed with all "spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph.1:3). Christ is the King of Israel but He is the **Bridegroom of the Church**. When the full number of believers are added to the Church, Christ will come into the air to catch away His Bride and the marriage of the Lamb will take place in heaven while Israel will turn to the Lord on earth.

