

The Olivet Discourse Part 3

Text: Mark 13:19-27

Introduction:

1. This is the longest recorded answer of Christ to a question in the Gospels which says something of its importance. Some have called it “the Little Apocalypse.”
2. Remember! Israel is in view, not the church. Keep the law of double reference in mind (the near and far principle).
3. In our previous lesson we looked at the beginning of sorrows (first half of tribulation) and the abomination of desolation (mid-point). In this lesson we will look at the great tribulation (second half of tribulation), the second coming and the concluding exhortations.
4. Review of outline so far:
 - I. The setting of the discourse (vs. 1-4).
 - II. The present age (vs. 5-7).
 - III. The beginning of sorrows (birth pangs) (vs. 8-13).
 - IV. The abomination of desolation (mid-point of the tribulation) (vs. 14-18).

V. **THE GREAT TRIBULATION (2nd half of the tribulation) (VS. 19-23; Matt. 24:21)**

The great tribulation will be characterized by two phenomena according to Christ:

A. **Devastations (Vs. 19-20)**

1. The severity of those days (Vs. 19)
 - a. Unbearable Tribulation. The word ‘affliction’ comes from the Greek word θλιψις (thlipsis) which means “a pressing together.” It is most commonly translated as ‘tribulation’ in the N.T.
 - b. Unparalleled Tribulation. This time of tribulation will be worse than anything else in human history, past or future – “such as was not from the beginning of creation...neither shall be.” The Book of Revelation gives us the details of this terrible time with the pouring out of the vial plagues upon the earth (bowl judgments).
2. The Shortening of those days (Vs. 20)
 - a. What if they weren’t shortened? (Vs. 20a)
 - i. This further adds to the picture of the intensity of this period. Except God had set a Divine time limit on these days of tribulation, the entire planet would be wiped out.
 - ii. Note: This verse is not teaching that the 7-year tribulation period will be shortened but rather that God has set the

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time limit on this period already. “If those days with their awful judgments were allowed to continue indefinitely, the human race would be totally destroyed. God will allow that period to run its course but will terminate it according to His timetable so that a remnant will be spared.”
(Pentecost)

- b. Why they were shortened? (Vs. 20b)
 - i. “for the elect’s sake” = the reason God has shortened the days. Within the context of this passage, the elect would be believing Israel.
 - ii. The world has little idea how much judgment it is spared and how many blessings it receives on account of the presence of God’s Redeemed people.

B. Deceptions (Vs. 21-23)

1. The People of the Deceptions (Vs. 21-22)

During this time there will be...

- a. False Messiahs (Vs. 21-22a)
 - i. It appears there will be an attempt to lure the godly Jewish remnant out of the safety of their hiding during this time. Matt. 24:26 “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; **go not forth**: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.”
 - ii. The Antichrist will be the most prominent false messiah during this time but the plural indicates there will be others also making false claims in the tribulation period. It will be a time of unparalleled deceptions with the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit removed from the earth (See 2 Thess. 2:7).
 - iii. Macarthur: “Due to the chaos and catastrophes that will characterize the great tribulation, religious liars and deceivers will take advantage of people’s terror and desperation.”
- b. False Messengers (Vs. 22b)
 - i. False prophets will also abound during this time as the messengers for the false messiahs. Again, the most prominent example will be the Antichrist’s false prophet who is described in Rev. 13:11-18. See also 2 Thess. 2:8-9.
 - ii. These prophets will have seductive, satanic power to the point they will almost be able to seduce God’s elect people. The phrase “signs and wonders” is “a common phrase for miracles. ‘Wonders’ views these signs with reference to the astonishment that they produce; they are startling, amazement-evoking portents.” (E. Hiebert)

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- iii. **Warning!** Signs and wonders do not automatically mean a movement is of God. The signs and wonders movement sweeping the world today is preparing the way for the Antichrist.
2. The Protection against the Deceptions (Vs. 23)
 - a. “take ye heed” = the phrase “take heed” comes from the Greek word ‘blepo’ which literally means “to see”. Spiritual vigilance and watchfulness are re-occurring themes in the Olivet Discourse. This is the antidote for the godly Jewish remnant during the tribulation period.
 - b. “behold, I have foretold you all things” = the Lord’s words of warning were to be their guide to be discerning.
 - c. Challenge: These principles of spiritual discernment that will be vital for that godly Jewish remnant in the Tribulation Period are the same principles that we need to apply in order to guard ourselves against the end times apostasy we are faced with today. With the Word of God as our guide, and the help of the Holy Spirit, we can discern the deceptions that come our way.

VI. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (VS. 24-27)

Look at...

A. The Signs Announcing the Coming (Vs. 24-25; Isaiah 13:9-11)

There will be supernatural, cosmic signs in the heavens that will precede the coming of Christ. There will be...

1. The Sun and Moon darkening (Vs. 24) Imagine how dark the world will be without the light of the sun or moon. The whole earth will be enveloped in thick darkness. “The cosmic backdrop for history’s most climactic moment will be total darkness, after God extinguishes the sun, moon, and stars.” (Macarthur)
2. The Stars falling (Vs. 25a) The picture is of star after star falling (lit. “shall be falling”).
3. The Heavens shaking (Vs. 25b) There will be vast convulsions in the heavenly world. In Acts 16:26 the verb ‘shaken’ is used to describe the effect of an earthquake.
4. Joel’s prophecy describes it as follows: “The sun and moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.” (Joel 3:15-16)

B. The Son Descending at the Coming (Vs. 26)

1. “And then shall they see the Son of man” = all of a sudden in them midst of the darkness, heaven will be opened and Christ will

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descend with “great power and glory.” This “means not only that the returning one possesses power and glory but that He comes accompanied by a visible display of great power and glory, exercising divine authority and clothed with heavenly glory.” (Hiebert)

2. Daniel 7:13-14 “I say in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”
3. Rev. 19:11-16 “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

C. The Seraphs Gathering after the Coming (Vs. 27)

1. Upon Christ’s arrival, angels will be sent out to gather in elect Israel from the uttermost parts of the earth. The phrase from the four wings” suggests people alive in all parts of the world.
2. “from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of the heaven” = the phrase are “apparently a reference to the fact that the visible extremes of earth and sky meet at the horizon; it thus seems to denote space in all directions. There will not be a spot on the face of the globe where any of the elect will be overlooked.” (Hiebert)
3. Pentecost: “Since this whole discourse has been devoted to the prophetic program for Israel, the reference to “his elect” (Matt. 24:31) cannot refer to the church. During the tribulation Israel will be scattered out of the land by military invasions. The Israelites will flee and find refuge among the Gentile nations. God will supernaturally bring the people of Israel back to the land through the instrumentality of angels.”

Conclusion: Are you saved? If so, are you living for Christ?