

- Why are we studying the Olivet Discourse when our topic is Revelation? The discourse is intimately related to Revelation. Peter, James, John, and Andrew and probably other disciples were present when Jesus spoke the discourse in answer to their questions.
- In the discourse, Jesus talks about the coming destruction of the Temple and End Times.
- A little less than 40 years later, the resurrected Jesus comes to John in visions. John has been exiled to the island of Patmos.
- The topic of the visions is the same as that of the Olivet Discourse - the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and End Times. Two topics are added. The status of the churches in Asia Minor and the glory and power of God.
- Most of the visions are highly symbolic in nature. John is told to write what he sees and hears and send the result to the churches in Asia Minor.
- We study the Olivet Discourse because it is a precursor to Revelation given by Jesus about a generation earlier.

1. **Introduction:** The Olivet Discourse continues. We have considered the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD as Jesus predicted. Jesus also responded to the question that seems to be about the signs of the End Times. ***“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?”*** (Mk 13:4)
2. **Mark 13:5-8:** ***And Jesus began to say to them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁶ Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. ⁷ And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.***
 - Speaking about the time after His death and resurrection, Jesus says, danger will arise to the faith of His followers. One threat will be from people who claim to be “the Christ” and attempt to lead believers astray.
 - Jesus reminds them that not everything that seems like a sign of the end is a sign.
 - Wars and rumors of wars are common to the human situation. They are not signals the end is near. Judea’s relatively peaceful times with Rome ended in the war of 66 -73 AD.
 - In the centuries since the Temple’s destruction, nations have continued to rise against nations, and kingdoms against kingdoms. War is common. Peace is rare.
 - Natural catastrophes like earthquakes, floods, and famines have occurred, but as bad as they may be, they are not signs of the end.
 - Some wars, perhaps even huge massacres, may be the beginning of End Time birth pains. The resurrection of Jesus was a transition from the time of anticipation of His coming to “End Times.” End Times began with Jesus’ first advent, but the time of the end is not yet.

- The fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple were historical events as well as a type and foreshadowing of the final disaster.
 - Disasters are like stepping-stones. By means of them, the end is both foreshadowed and brought closer. As the end draws near, wars, man-made and natural disasters may be more frequent, extensive, and of greater magnitude. Such things point toward the end of the age but do not signal that it is immediate.
 - Jesus doesn't provide a time-table or blueprint for the future. His focus is on exhorting His disciples and His future followers to be steadfast in the faith.
 - The task of believers is to be faithful in the present time even in the face of adversity, trials and suffering. The End will come but no one knows when.
 - The present age will end, but God remains in sovereign control.
 - "God's will" prevails. The ultimate outcome will be, Christ will come again and there will be a new heavens and a new earth. Christ will rule His kingdom of the redeemed.
 - Believers cannot affect these events, but with God's help they can be faithful to the One who has redeemed them. That is their task.
 - The greatest threat to believers comes from within. False christs will come, referring to all who, though they claim to speak in Jesus' name, teach things Jesus did not teach and fail to teach what He did teach. Every false christ has a story, but none is Biblical truth.
 - Other threats will come like natural catastrophes and wars. Believers and nonbelievers alike will suffer. Though to many, these things will be seen as signals of the end, they are only types and paradigms of the end.
3. **Mark 13:9:** *"But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them."*
- The task for the disciples and for all who follow Christ is to persevere through the trials to come that must be faced. Threats to faith will include false christs and persecution.
 - Believers must be on their guard, must be clear in their own minds that persecution is not something that might happen but something that will happen. Persecution of believers will be the norm.
 - Believers will be persecuted by both Gentiles and Jews, by religious and secular authorities. Suffering will not be in vain. Believers who stand fast in the faith under persecution will develop greater steadfastness.
4. **Mark 13:10-11:** *"And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹ And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit."*
- God always intended for Gentiles to be included in the gospel. For the benefit of those to be redeemed, all nations must hear the gospel.

- Authentic proclamation of the gospel will be resisted. Those who rightly proclaim the gospel will likely be ridiculed as well as persecuted in more severe ways.
 - Authentic gospel preaching and teaching separates believers from unbelievers.
 - Believers are to trust that God will give them grace to finish their service in His name, even to the point of supplying the words they need in their deepest need. In suffering God speaks through the Holy Spirit.
5. **Mark 13:12-13**: *“And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”*
- When governing authorities oppose believers, the pressure they apply will cause family members to reveal to authorities those in the family who are believers even when the penalty for being a believer is death.
 - In the Neronian persecution of 64 AD, anyone admitting to be a Christian was arrested and interrogated seeking to identify other Christians. Neither kinship nor suffering are to be allowed to take precedence over commitment to Jesus Christ.
 - Believers cannot overcome every adversary but can choose to remain steadfast in faith to Christ. The temptation to deny Christ may be strong. Jesus says those who persevere to the end (end of their life) will be saved.
 - That promise is a supreme comfort during severe trials. It is a reminder that while we have been saved, we are being saved to a more glorious future.
 - Next few verses, Jesus returns to the time of destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.
6. **Mark 13:14-18**: *“But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, ¹⁶ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁷ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ¹⁸ Pray that it may not happen in winter.”*
- An abomination is “something that causes disgust or hatred.” A desolation is “a state of complete emptiness or destruction.”
 - “These things” (13:4) relate to the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD and as a type of events in “those days” (13:17).
 - “The abomination of desolation” triggers a specific disaster. As with many prophetic utterances, this enigmatic saying may have “near” and “far” term realizations.
 - The “abomination of desolation” appears to allude to deliberate desecration of holy things by something or someone causing emptiness and destruction. Daniel prophesied such events.
 - The first partial fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy occurred in 167 BC. Antiochus erected a statue of the Greek god Zeus in the Jerusalem temple.

- Antiochus ordered that swine, biblically unclean animals, be offered on the temple altar, desecrating the holy place.
 - Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled a second time in 70 AD when Roman armies under Titus desecrated and destroyed the temple, going even into the Holy of Holies. They captured things used in Temple worship (like the 7 branched menorah) and carried them to Rome for Titus' victory march. The holy objects are seen inscribed on Titus' victory arch.
 - In End Times, Jesus foresees a powerful opponent arising, an Antichrist, who would bring terrible tribulation to believers. That tribulation will end in the return of the Lord.
 - From the treatment of that event by Paul in 2 Thessalonians, the 3rd fulfillment will be related to the advent of the Antichrist and the final tribulation before the return of Christ.
 - Jesus' discussion about the "abomination of desolation" is embedded in His talk about End Times. Thus, it appears there will be another fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy to occur in the future connected with End Times.
 - We all would like a "foolproof" date for the end. The disciples asked for a sign (meaning a clear indication) of when those things would occur.
 - But Jesus said no one knows the time except the Father. There is no path for anyone to accurately predict the precise time of Christ's return.
 - Certain knowledge would mean we wouldn't need to live in expectancy that Christ's return might be today or tomorrow. The message is, don't fret and strive to learn precisely when He will return; stand fast and be on guard!
 - The Roman army approaching Jerusalem in 70 AD was a warning to flee the coming disaster. Many believers did flee to Pella.
 - Rather than fleeing, other many other Jews entered the city to celebrate Passover. The Romans let them enter but then surrounded the city and let no one leave.
 - Extra people in the city used up food supplies fast, causing starvation for many. Having many non-combatants within the city walls produced other problems. In total, about one million Jews were killed in the war.
 - Likewise, there will be signs of the impending disaster of the Great Tribulation. Will those signs be ignored or will people understand the danger and flee to the safety of Christ?
 - "In Christ" is safety for your soul though your body may suffer to the point of death.
7. Next: Begin Revelation 1.