

## The Olivet Discourse

# “Jesus Foretells the Destruction of the Temple”

**The Big Picture:** The four Gospels were written in response to the need of the early believers. While they all told of the life of Christ, they were more than simple biographies in that they were selected by God (i.e., God breathed) to direct people toward faith in Jesus Christ. The earliest need for a Gospel arose among the earliest believers, the Jews. Matthew’s Gospel is written to the Jews. Mark wrote to the Romans. Most of the civilized world at the time of Christ was ruled with an iron fist by the Romans, and as Paul went out on his missionary journeys believers sprang up from among the Roman provinces in Asia. Luke’s Gospel was written to the Greek world, as Paul’s journeys had also brought him in contact with the Greeks. Luke being a companion of Paul authored this third Gospel. These three Gospels are called the synoptic Gospels because of their common approach to the life of Christ. The fourth Gospel, John’s Gospel, is unique in its presentation of Jesus as the Son of God.

**Matthew’s Contribution:** Matthew’s Gospel records Christ’s life on Earth clearly showing a two-fold mission. First, He was to fulfill the promise of a kingdom made to David (II Samuel 7:12), and then He was to fulfill the universal promise of redemption made to Abraham (Genesis 12:3). With respect to the promised kingdom, Matthew’s Gospel can be divided into four distinct stages of progression. For instance, in Matthew chapters 1-10 we see that the kingdom is being offered. In Matthew 11-12, we see that the Jews are rejecting that offered kingdom. In Matthew 13 we see that the kingdom is held in abeyance. And in Matthew 14-28 we gain a glimpse of the church before the king is ultimately rejected.

In Matthew chapters 1-10 we see that Jesus offers the kingdom to the Jews. The continuing theme of this section of scripture is that the kingdom of God is at hand. Matthew tells us that Jesus was born a king as a descendent of David. He emphasized that the circumstances surrounding His birth were prophesied of the messiah, such as the fact that He was born of a virgin, and that He was born in Bethlehem. He indicated that Herod feared Him as a king and sought to kill Him. And Matthew indicated that His mission was to save His people, the Jews, from their sins. Matthew records His forerunner John the Baptist, who preached that the kingdom of God was at hand. Jesus himself began to say this very thing. His teachings centered on what the subjects of the kingdom should be, and He demonstrated His kingly power by performing miraculous signs for His people. He ultimately sent forth His disciples to teach the Jews that the kingdom of God was at hand. Clearly Jesus came to His own offering the kingdom that was promised to David.

However, in Matthew 11-12, rejection of the offered kingdom by the Jews is in view. In this passage we see Jesus assuring John the Baptist that He is in fact the promised one. He also implies that the Jews must be willing to accept the kingdom for the kingdom to be fulfilled without delay. However, the Jews would not repent (11:20), and when their rejection is foreseen, He predicts that they will be judged for their unbelief. From this point on, we see a transitioning of His mission. Jesus’ message shifts to one of personal invitation and blessing to the individual. The word “Gentiles” is used for the first time. Jesus advances that the rabbinical teachings are invalid, and

He says that the abiding relationship with Him is deeper than a simple blood connection.

In Matthew 13 we see that the kingdom is held in abeyance, or postponed. The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which had long gone unrevealed, were now explained to His disciples. And this phase of the kingdom, this period of postponement, is parallel with the age in which we now live.

And finally, in Matthew 14-28 we gain a glimpse of the church before the king is ultimately rejected. Jesus tells the disciples of His future church, and then teaches them that He must suffer many things and die. He gives some of them a glimpse of the future when He is transfigured before them, showing Himself in His state of glory. He formally offers Himself as king to fulfill the Prophet Zechariah, and He is momentarily received. But sensing their hearts, Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, declares that it will be destroyed, and that the nation will suffer great tribulation for their unbelief. Finally, He is betrayed, and after telling the Chief Priests, the Council, and Pilate that He is "the Christ" and the "King of the Jews", He is crucified at the hands of those that He came to save.

#### **The Details of Holy Week:**

- The Arrival in Bethany (John 11:55-12:1, 9-11)
- The Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-17, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:29-44, John 12:12-19)
- The Authority of the King (Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:12-18, Luke 19:45-48)
- Invitations by the King (John 12:20-50)
- Proof of the Authority of the King (Matthew 21:20-22, Mark 11:19-25, Luke 21:37-38)
- The King's Authority Challenged (Matthew 21:23-22:40, Mark 11:27-12:34, Luke 20:1-40)
  - By the Priests and Elders
  - By the Pharisees and Herodians
  - By the Sadducees
  - By The Pharisees
- The Challenge by the King (Matthew 22:41-46, Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44)
- The Judgment by the King (Matthew 23:1-39, Mark 12:38-40, Luke 20:45-47)
- Instruction at the Treasury (Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4)

**The Texts:** Portions of the Olivet discourse are recorded in each of Matthews Gospel (Matthew 24-25), Mark's Gospel (13), and Luke's Gospel (21:5-36). We need each of these to get the full picture of what Jesus is teaching his disciples.

**The Text:** [Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup>But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."](#) (Matthew 24:1-2 [ESV])

**Conclusion:** In an effort to encourage their frustrated and disappointed master, the disciples pointed out the magnificence of the Temple. Jesus responded that the temple would soon fall at the hand of the Gentiles and be gone. This did not fit the disciples' expectation of the coming kingdom. They were still having a great deal of difficulty understanding how this fit into the program of Messiah.

**Next Week:** "General Signs of Jesus' Second Coming (Part 1)"