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Olivet Discourse



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In the "Olivet Discourse," a passage found in the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus discusses the destruction of the Jewish temple and the end of the Jewish age or era. The discourse covers topics such as wars, famines, and the signs of the end of times. While the disciples' questions about signs of Jesus' coming are likely referring to his return to set up his kingdom on earth in Jerusalem, Jesus emphasizes that no one knows when the end of the world will come.

Transcript

The Olivet Discourse is a very much-discussed, controversial passage. Although many people perhaps don't know it's controversial, they've heard it taught from one point of view and have never known that there were other points of view about it. That was my position for many years in the ministry.

I've been in the ministry for 52 years as a Bible teacher. For the first 12 of those years, probably, or more, the Olivet Discourse just had a certain meaning that my teachers told me it meant. I kind of read it through this grid and I never thought there'd be any reason to consider another way of looking at it.

Then I read a book back in the 80s by a guy named Jay Adams. He had written a book actually about Revelation, where he was taking the view that Revelation is actually fulfilled in the past, not in the future. He also had a chapter in there, as I recall, about the Olivet Discourse.

He didn't convince me about Revelation in that book, but what he said about the Olivet Discourse was very eye-opening. Now, that's the first I ever heard of such alternatives. I later ran into other authors and people who got me thinking.

One of the biggest problems I had was I couldn't imagine that anything in this had already occurred, because I thought it was saying something that I now don't think it is saying. That's the job of Bible teachers, trying to unpack what something says and what it means. Now, this is the famous discourse where Jesus talks about wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes and famines and pestilences in diverse places, the abomination of

desolation, all that stuff.

But most Christians who are biblically literate know what I'm talking about when I say that. That discourse is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels. It's found in the 13th chapter of Mark.

It's found in the 21st chapter of Luke, and it's found in Matthew 24, and I would say 24 and 25, because 24 and 25 of Matthew are very long. It appears to be the same discourse, although in Matthew it's three times longer than it is in Mark or in Luke. Now, I'm going to use Matthew here because I believe the reason that Matthew's version of the olive discourse appears to be three times longer is because he brings in things that Jesus said on other occasions, which the other Gospels don't include.

No two of the Gospels, even when they're talking about the same story, the same discourse, will give exactly the same details of it. Whether it's one of the famous miracles of Jesus or one of the parables of Jesus, or whether it's a discourse like this, whether it's the Sermon on the Mount or some other passage, if two or more Gospels cover it, they don't cover it verbatim the same. There's some different wording.

There's some different details included or excluded. Part of that is simply because they're histories, and when people write history, they have to decide what they're going to include, what they're not. There's often the need to abbreviate, but I will say this about Matthew.

There are five major discourses in the and one of them is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 through 7. The next one is the discourse he gave to his disciples, the 12, when he sent them out two by two in Matthew chapter 10. And then in Matthew 13, there's the parables discourse, which has seven or eight, depending on how you count them, parables of Jesus, all in one chapter, chapter 13. And then there's chapter 18, which is a chapter about forgiveness and relationships.

And then there's the Olivet Discourse in chapters 24 and 25. Olivet, it does mean all of it. It's a word from the word olives, the Mount of Olives.

The discourse was given on the Mount of Olives. Theologians have always called it the Olivet Discourse. I don't blame anyone for not knowing that term, if you have been raised around people who talk about it.

I've been around people talking about it so much that I forget that that's a term that certainly a lot of people wouldn't know. But what I would say about the five major discourses of Jesus in Matthew, all five of them appear to be composite discourses. For example, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew is three chapters long.

It has parallels to a similar sermon, if not the same one, in Luke 6. But in Luke 6, it's only half a chapter long. It begins similarly and ends similarly. It has much of the same in

between.

But in Luke 6, it's just a half a chapter. In Matthew, it's three chapters. Now, that's because Matthew apparently not only gives that discourse, but brings in material that we find in Luke and Mark and other places on relevant subjects and brings them together to make one composite, large discourse.

And when Jesus sends out the Twelve in Matthew 10, the first part, little part of that, is parallel to discourses in Luke 9 and 10 where Jesus is sending out the disciples. But then the later part of chapter 10 talks about subject matter way off into the future. For example, when he sent out the Twelve, he said, don't go to the Israel.

But before he's done with that discourse in Matthew, he's added things like, you're going to be, all nations are going to hate you. You'll be brought before synagogues and courts and rulers and you'll be a witness to the Gentiles and so forth. In other words, when he sent them out, he gave these instructions about this short-term outreach that was just going to be in Israel.

But when Matthew gives it, he includes things Jesus said on other occasions that have to do with their later ministry too. And it just puts it all in one chapter. This is what is usually referred to as a topical arrangement of the material.

Now, when we come to the Olivet Discourse, it's about three times as long in Matthew as it is in Luke or Mark. But that's because I believe, now not everyone agrees with this, this is what we'll discuss. I believe there are two different discourses and maybe three that are combined here.

The reason I say maybe three is because the first part of Matthew 24 parallels very, very closely the Olivet Discourse in Mark 13 and Luke 21. But then in Matthew 24, after about verse 35 or so, there's parallels to a different discourse in Luke 17. The material in Matthew 24 verses 36 and following is not found in Mark or Luke's Olivet Discourse, but it is found, much of it is found in Luke 17, a different discourse given by Jesus on a different occasion, not on the Mount of Olives.

So technically, it's not really part of the Olivet Discourse apparently. Then you've got Matthew 25, which just continues. That's three parables that Jesus gives that aren't found in any other place in the Bible.

So those must have been from some other source that Matthew had. Of course, Matthew was an eyewitness, so he would have heard those himself. He may have been his own source.

But the point is, Matthew's Olivet Discourse comes from at least three different sources. One is the source from the Olivet Discourse itself recorded in Mark and Luke. Another is a different discourse of Jesus given in Luke 17.

And another is three parables that we don't know where Matthew got them, but he heard them with his own ears, so he may be his own source. Now having said that, the question that is at issue is, what is the Olivet Discourse about? That is the portion that was on the Mount of Olives uttered, which parallels Mark 13 and Luke 21. Second question, what is the discourse in Luke 17 about, which is brought by Matthew into and attached to the Olivet Discourse? What is that about? And then I guess the third one would be, these parables, what are they about? I think that won't be the biggest difficulty for us tonight.

Let me just read. This is a night where having your Bible with you would be very helpful. You didn't have any advance notice, so if you didn't bring it, I hope you're a good listener, but it's very advantageous to be able to read along here.

In Matthew 24, it says, Now as he said on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately saying, tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? And Jesus answered and said to them, take heed that no one deceives you, for many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ, and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you're not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows, or birth pains is another possible translation of that word sorrows, like a woman's labor pains.

Verse 9, Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation and the abomination of the devil, you will see the abomination of the devil, and you will see the abomination of the devil. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the elect's sake, those days will be shortened.

Then if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ, or there, do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I told you beforehand.

Therefore, if they say to you, look, he's in the desert, do not go out. Or look, he is in the inner rooms. Do not believe it.

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. Verse 29, Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the

earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn this parable from the fig tree.

When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near at the doors. Assured I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away until all these things take place.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field, one will be taken, and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill, one will be taken, and the other left.

Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Now beyond this point, the material is not found in either Mark or Luke. And up to this point, we've already encountered material that's from two different places in Luke. Luke 21, his version of the Olivet Discourse, which is also Mark 13, and the first basically 36 verses of this chapter.

And then after that, the material we read has its closest parallel in Luke 17, a different discourse which may be on a different subject. But what is the first part about? Let's talk about that first. I was raised, as probably many of you were, to understand this is a passage about the end of the world before Jesus returns.

Things that maybe they're even starting to happen as we speak. Earthquakes, wars, rumors of wars, pestilences. Now I have to say that these things were associated in my mind with the end times, the last days.

Some of them with what was called the Tribulation Period. And so it was very common for those who were looking for signs of the times to be saying, oh look how many wars there are. Look how many earthquakes there are.

Look how many of these things are happening. I remember a number of teachers saying, you know, there have been more earthquakes in the last hundred years than in all

recorded history previously. Now I'm not sure how anyone would know that.

I don't know if they could record worldwide earthquakes a hundred years ago and beyond. So I don't know how anyone knows how many earthquakes there were previously. But even if it was true, they're quoting that as if to say, see we're living in the times Jesus described here.

There will be earthquakes. I point out that he doesn't say anything about there being an increased number of earthquakes. He just said there's gonna be earthquakes, there's gonna be wars, there's gonna be pestilences.

Has there ever been a time when there weren't those things? He didn't say they're gonna increase. He said don't let these things make you think that the end is near. It's not the end.

These things have to happen, but it's not the end. In other words, far from saying earthquakes and pestilences, wars, these are a sign of the times, he's saying no, don't think they are. They're not.

These are just things that have to happen, but the end's not yet. After all, there's always those things. There's a lot of calamities that might make you think the end of the world is near, but don't be making that mistake.

That's what he says. But what is he talking about? Is he talking about the end of the world? Well, I don't think he is, but to see that he's not, one has to look carefully at the parallel passages as well. Well, let's look at this passage.

First of all, he left the temple with his disciples, and they observed how magnificent the stones of the temple were. They're pointing it out, look at these great stones, and they were great stones. I mean, Josephus and other authorities say that those stones were huge, enormous, fantastic.

The temple was one of the great wonders of the world, and the disciples were impressed with it. Why did they point out the stones? They'd seen them many times before. It's possibly because Jesus had just said, your house has left you desolate.

That is, he told the Jews that their house, the temple, not God's house. Earlier in his ministry, it was my father's house. Remember when he said, don't make my father's house a house of merchandise.

That was the temple. He's no longer calling it his father's house. The Jews have rejected Jesus.

He's going to be crucified within days, and he no longer calls it my father's house. It's your house. This is yours.

It's all yours. God doesn't own it anymore. Your house is empty, desolate.

It's abandoned. Now, it may be because of that statement that the disciples said, but Lord, look at these stones. Why would God ever abandon this beautiful house? And his answer was, well, you see that? I'll tell you, the day is coming when not one of these stones will be left standing on another.

They're all going to be thrown down. Now, you may know enough about first century history, or you might not, to realize that that actually happened. The Romans attacked Israel and were in a bloody war with the Israelites for three and a half years, beginning in 66 AD and ending in 70 AD.

And in 87 AD, the temple was destroyed and burned by the Romans. Every stone was taken down. What Jesus predicted came true in the year 70 AD.

Okay? That's just history. The Bible doesn't record it. History records it.

It's known to be a fact. Now, we find that the disciples come to him and they have a couple of questions for him. Two or three.

This is where it gets a little tricky. In verse three, he said, as he said on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately saying, tell us when will these things be? That's the first question. And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? Now, when will these things be? He must refer to what he predicted.

They wouldn't just say these things without some kind of a reference, without some kind of an antecedent. He had just said the temple's going to be destroyed, leveled, not one stone to be left on another. And when he said, when will these things be? The only way to understand their question would be, when is the temple going to be leveled, like you just said? When will this be? But that's another question.

In Matthew, it's rendered like this. And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? Now, here's where, look at the parallels in Mark and in Luke. It could be instructive.

The same story is in Mark 13. In verses one and two, the same things we've just looked at. He walks out of the temple.

Disciples comment on the stones. He predicts they're going to be thrown down. In verse three, it says, now, as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately.

Now, Matthew just said his disciples. Here we're put a finer point. Well, not all his disciples.

Four of his disciples came to him privately and asked him privately, tell us, when will

these things be? Okay, that's the same first question we found in Matthew 24, three. But then there's second questions worded differently. And what will be the sign? Now, so far, that's the same.

Because in Matthew 24, they said, when will these things be and what will be the sign? But then in Matthew, it says the sign of your coming and the end of the age. Here it has, what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled? So you have the expression, these things in both places, when will these things, the destruction of the temple be and what sign will there be that these things, the destruction of the temple will be soon fulfilled. They want a general timeframe and they want some kind of warning sign.

And it's interesting that in Mark, they asked the same, they asked about the same subject, two questions about the same subject. When will it be? Okay, give us some kind of a time frame here. And what sign might we look for to know that it's coming soon? He goes on after that the same way Matthew 24 does.

But if you look over at Luke 21, we have the same story. And it's in verse six that he makes the prediction about the stones being destroyed or thrown down. And in verse seven, so they asked him saying, teacher, but when will these things be? So far, all three gospels agree on that first question.

And what sign will there be? So far, all three agree on those words too. What sign will there be when these things are about to take place? Now that sounds like Mark, because those are the same two questions that Mark has been asking. When will these things be? What sign will there be when these things are about to take place? Now the term these things obviously are referring to what he had predicted.

Now, if you look at Matthew 24 again, then in verse 34, Jesus said, assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away until all these things come to pass. Now they said, when will these things be? His answer is this generation will not pass before these things be, before these things happen. He's answering their question directly.

They asked for a time frame. He gave them one. Now, when I was younger and I thought that this was not talking about things that happened in the first century, and I thought these were things still unfulfilled in our future.

I figured that when he said this generation will not pass, he didn't really mean that that generation would not pass, his own generation. My teachers actually told me that what he meant was the generation that begins to see these things start happening will not pass until it all happens. So he's not really giving them an answer to the question, when should these things be? He's not telling them when they'll be.

He's just saying, when it starts to happen, whenever that might be, it'll happen within the span of a generation. But if that's what he meant, and he was talking about some

future generation, one might think that he would say that generation will not pass rather than this generation will not pass, especially in view of the fact that about five other times in Matthew previous to this, he's used the expression this generation. And as far as I know, in each case, he's talking about his own contemporaries, like I talk about this generation, people living at this one time.

If I say this generation or our generation or talking about my generation, many of you are not old enough to know that song. But this generation, in all the other occurrences in Matthew, when that phrase is used, refers to the generation that saw John the Baptist and saw Jesus and rejected them both and said, John the Baptist, he's got a demon, and Jesus is a winebibber and a glutton, a friend of sinners. That's what this generation is saying.

And you can look at the places when he said, all these things in Matthew 23, he said, all the blood guilt of all the righteous blood that was shed is going to come on this generation. And he also said in another place, in chapter 12, he said that, to what should I liken this generation? He said, it's like a man had a demon cast out and seven worst demons came in, so shall it be with this wicked generation. He had come to that generation, he'd cast out their demons, he'd given them rot salvation, but they didn't receive them, and seven worst demons came in.

The nation became totally attacked by demons and Romans. If you read Josephus' account, you'll see that both were involved. Now, there's another view, and that is that the word genea, generation, really doesn't mean a generation like we use that term, but it means a progeny or a family or a race.

Now, actually, the term can mean that. In certain contexts, it is possible for the word generation to mean a race or a people. When I was younger, I encountered people who argued that he means the race of the Jews will not pass away till all these things are done.

So, he would be saying then, these things are going to happen thousands of years off in the future, but the race of the Jews will still be around. However, I don't know why he would say this generation, I mean the Jewish race, will still be around because no one asked him about that. They asked him some specific questions.

Presumably, he's seeking to give them an answer. The question was, when will this be? If he says, well, this race will still be around, well, he's dodged the question and answered a question nobody was curious about. But if he's saying, this generation, people living right now, will not pass away until all these things are fulfilled, then he is answering the question, what is the time frame for this? Now, more than that, Matthew, when he's not using the expression this generation, still uses the word generation.

Like in Matthew chapter one, he talks about there were 14 generations from Abraham to

David, and there were 14 generations from David to the carrying away into captivity, and there were 14 generations from that time to Joseph, the husband of Mary. Now, the word generations there is not talking about races. There weren't 14 races, and then 14 races, and then 14 races.

He's talking about generations the way we use the term, and he expects his audience to know that. So, when he says, this generation will not pass, all the data in the book of Matthew would suggest he means the people living at that time. More than that, he had made another very similar statement earlier than this in Matthew 16.

And there he said, in verse 28, I surely say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Now, if there's some people standing there in his day who would not see death before they see this, that's the same thing as saying, this generation will not pass away. Some people living in this generation will not yet be dead.

So, there's every reason to believe that Jesus is indeed giving a time frame when he says, this generation will not pass. But the other question, and it did happen, by the way, 40 years later, how could it be more precise? He made the prediction in 30 AD. It was absolutely fulfilled in 70, 80, 40 years later.

If he is saying that that generation would live to see the destruction of the temple, it is the most specific and accurate prophecy we have on record of Jesus ever making, of something that wasn't fulfilled in his own lifetime, but happened in the very time frame he said. So, I'm of the opinion that when Jesus said, this generation will not pass until all these things are fulfilled, that he was talking about what they asked him about, which is a nice thing to do. It's a polite thing to do.

If someone asks you a question and you go off at length for 35 verses, it's nice that you take a moment, at least, to address the question they asked you about. But what was the second question? Now, in Mark and Luke, the second question is rendered, and what signs shall there be that these things are about to take place? Certainly, no evidence that these things in the second question are different than these things in the first question. They only have one thing on their mind.

Jesus, by the way, had not mentioned to them the end of the world. He only mentioned that the temple would be destroyed, not one stone be left withstanding another. They don't have any prediction from him about the end of the world here.

So, in Mark and Luke, the disciples are saying, what shall be the sign that these things are about to take place? And if that is what they're asking, he actually answers that, too. Because he says in verse 15, Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, whoever reads, let him understand. Then let those who are in Judea flee the mountains.

Let him who is on the house go down. Now, he says there is a sign you can look for. It is the sign of the abomination of desolation.

We have that same expression used in Mark 13 in the parallel. And this expression, the abomination of desolation, is clearly taken from Daniel, as Jesus says in Mark 13, 14. So, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, let the reader understand.

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Why? Because the very danger that's going to cause the temple to be dismantled is going to be dangerous for everybody in Judea. So, when you see this, get out of there.

I'm giving you some sign that you will see that this is about to take place. Now, you'll notice that both Matthew and Mark have it. When you see the abomination of desolation, and then in parentheses it says, let him who reads understand.

Like, okay, it may be that the reader might have trouble understanding this, but this is what Jesus said. I hope you'll understand what he's talking about here. Well, abomination of desolation is a very Hebraic statement from Daniel chapter 9, verse 27.

Luke was writing to a Greek man who probably had no familiarity with Daniel. And Luke, when he comes to the very same place in the narrative, changes it. I would say interprets or paraphrases it because Luke knew what he meant.

I believe Matthew and Mark knew what he meant too, but Matthew and Mark weren't sure their audience would know what he meant. Because they'd say in parentheses, let him who reads understand. Like, maybe you won't.

This is hard to understand what I'm talking about. Daniel spoke of the abomination of desolation. I hope you can understand.

Well, Luke just assumed his reader, Theophilus, a Greek guy, wouldn't understand. So, instead of saying that, he just kind of paraphrased it so that he could understand. And you find that in Luke 21, in verse 20.

This is the very point in the discourse where Mark and Matthew say, when you see the abomination of desolation. In Luke 21 20, it says, but when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then flee to the mountains.

He says, just like Matthew and Mark said to flee the mountains when you see the abomination of desolation. In Luke, it says, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, its desolation is near. This is the abomination that's going to bring about its desolation.

And it's time for you to flee. Now, you see then, if the disciples asked two questions

about the destruction of the temple, which they apparently did, if you only had Mark and Luke and never seen Matthew, you'd never dream otherwise. They asked, when will it be? The answer is in this generation.

The second question, what sign will there be that it's about to happen? Well, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, or what Daniel called the abomination of desolation, then you know it's near. So, both questions are answered very directly in the discourse. Now, Daniel used the term abomination of desolation in three different places, but the place Jesus is referring to particularly, I think, is Daniel 9, 27.

Because in Daniel 9, 26 and 27, it says that the Messiah is going to be killed, and then the people of the prince who is to come is going to come destroy the city, Jerusalem, and the sanctuary, the temple. So, and the next verse refers to that as the abomination that causes desolation. So, what do we have? In Matthew 24, we have a prediction of the destruction of the temple.

The disciples asking a question, Jesus answering the question. In Mark and Luke, they have two questions, and we find Jesus answering both. But in Matthew, their second question is reworded.

In Matthew 24, 3, their questions are said to be this, tell us when shall these things be? Okay, all the gospels agree about that question. And what will be the sign? Now, at this point, all the gospels agree also. They said, what shall be the sign? But in the other gospels, what should be the sign that these things are about to happen? But in Matthew, it reads, what should be the sign of your coming and the end of the age? Now, the King James Version actually says of your coming and the end of the world.

Well, no wonder people have read this passage to think it's about the end of the world. But Jesus had not predicted the end of the world, only the end of the temple, which was the end of the Jewish age, or what we call the second temple era. The disciples and all their ancestors for the previous 1400 years had lived in the age of the law, the age of the Mosaic covenant, which was dominated by first the tabernacle, later the temple.

The destruction of the temple was the end of that era. And the end of the era meant that's the end of the age, the age that they were living in, and the age that they'd always lived in and their ancestors had too. But what is the sign of your coming? Now, you can see when we think of the second coming of Christ, we immediately think of his second coming at the literal end of the world.

Now, they didn't say the end of the world. They said the end of the age, which is age. So the King James was a little confusing by translating the end of the world because they probably were not thinking of the end of the world.

Or maybe they were. Maybe they thought the destruction of the temple, since they knew

nothing about beyond that, maybe thought that'd be the end of the world. Maybe they did.

I can't say what they thought or didn't think. But according to Mark and Luke, they weren't asking about really the end of the world, but about the destruction of the temple specifically. Now, what is the sign of your coming and the end of the age? The word coming, the word parousia, which is in the Greek, the term often used for the second coming of Christ, is also a word that's used many times in the Greek for things that are not the second coming of Christ.

Remember, the disciples at this point didn't even know yet that Jesus was leaving, much less coming back. When we hear of Jesus coming, we're hearing it from the framework of he's been gone a long time and we want him back. Can't wait till Jesus comes because he's not here and we want to be here.

But when he spoke to the Earth, he was there. As far as they knew, his next thing he's going to do is go set up his kingdom in Jerusalem. They didn't know he'd be crucified.

You might say, well, he told them, didn't he? Yeah, but their ears were dull of hearing. They didn't understand what he said. When he got crucified, it blew their minds.

They were totally unexpected, even unexpected of his resurrection. Even after he was resurrected and people told him he was resurrected, they still didn't believe it. Even though Jesus had predicted several times, I'm going to die, I'm going to rise again on the third day, they just didn't register.

If they asked, what would be the sign of your coming? It's very unlikely that they were thinking in terms of what we call the second coming of Christ because they didn't know there was going to be a second coming. They didn't know there's going to be a going away. I think it took them by surprise when he was caught up in Acts chapter 1 and a cloud received him out of their sight and two angels had to say to him, well, he's going to come back.

Why are you looking at this same Jesus you saw go up? He's going to come back in the same way. That was probably the first time they realized there's actually going to be a second coming because until he died and disappeared into the clouds, they thought he's already here. He was, but he went away.

They did not have, when Jesus gave this discourse, they did not have in their minds a frame of reference of what we call the second coming yet because he was still there the first time and for all they knew he would be perpetually. So why would they use that term, your coming? Because remember we saw just a moment ago in Matthew 16, 28, some of you standing here will not taste death until you see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Now Jesus could be said to come in more ways than one.

Remember in Revelation Jesus, behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him. Okay, so that's like different than his second coming.

In the book of Revelation, the seven letters to the seven churches, each of the seven churches are told that, well not each of them, but about four or five of them are told that they need to watch out because Jesus is going to come to them and fight with them with the sword out of his mouth. He's going to come and remove their lampstand from its place or something like that. Most of those things he threatened already happened centuries ago.

Now those cities aren't even there anymore. Those churches are not there anymore. It's not going to happen in the future.

But more than that, the idea of God coming was a commonplace bit of language in the Old Testament prophets and Jesus spoke like an Old Testament prophet for good reason. His disciples knew about the prophets. They'd heard them read all their lives in the In Isaiah 19 verse 1, we read this, The burden against Egypt.

Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud and will come into Egypt. Now this is Yahweh, the Lord God. He's riding on a cloud and he's going to come into Egypt.

Now that's not like we expect Jesus to come here on the clouds in his second coming, but this is not talking about the second coming. It's not even talking about a literal coming at all. As you read on, you see in the prophecy, this is about the fall of Egypt to the Assyrians.

The Assyrians conquered them in the 8th century BC and this is predicting that. The Assyrian armies are God coming because God is bringing them. God is judging Egypt using the Assyrian armies as his tool or as his weapon.

In Isaiah 10, he used the Assyrians also to destroy the northern kingdom of Israel and he referred to them as his weapon, his tool. He said the Assyrians, they give themselves the credit for it. But can the saw boast against him who saws with it? Can an axe boast against one who's cutting with it? Notice God's using Assyria as a tool to bring his judgment on, in that case, Samaria, in this case, Egypt.

But when God does that, the armies coming at the behest of God are often spoken in the poetic language of the prophet. This is poetic, as God himself coming. It's not uncommon in the prophets.

Another great example would be also, this time is about the Assyrians coming, as near as I can tell, against Jerusalem. In Micah chapter 1, it says, in Micah 1, 3, for behold, Yahweh is coming out of his place. He will come down and tread on the high places of the land.

Now, this is referring to the Assyrians coming and wasting Judea, as they had done the northern kingdom of Israel. This is, it's the Lord coming out of his place. It's really armies from Assyria coming, but God is sending them.

God is bringing them sovereignly against them. It's his judgment. So in the poetry of the prophets, it's God coming against them.

I believe also that's what we have in Zechariah chapter 14. Probably people will have trouble with this more than maybe the other two passages, because this is a favorite passage that maybe people use about the second coming, but in Zechariah 14, it talks about the destruction of Jerusalem, I believe in AD 70. It says, behold, the day is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst.

I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem. That was the Roman armies were all the nations that had been conquered by Rome, and now we're part of their armies, the whole empire, to battle against Jerusalem. This city shall be taken, as Jerusalem will be taken.

Oh, there it is again. It gets destroyed. The women are ravaged.

Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnants of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Now, when it says the remnants of the people will not be cut off, they won't go into captivity, because it doesn't say half. It says the remnants.

Half of them will go into captivity. Another almost half of them were wiped out by the Romans, but the remnants, which was the believers in Jerusalem, the Jewish church, they escaped, and they remain citizens of the true Jerusalem. They have not been cut off from the city.

All the Jews who rejected Christ were cut off either went into captivity or were slaughtered in 70 AD. The Christians fled and got away and continue to be the citizens of Zion. They're not cut off from it.

It says that in Hebrews chapter 12, that we Christians, we have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the city of God, which he goes on to say the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven. The new Jerusalem is the spiritual Jerusalem of the church in Hebrews chapter 12. And that's what Paul means also in Galatians 4 when he says the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

He means the church is the mother of all God's children. So the point is, the next verse says in Zechariah 14.3, then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations. Now this speaks of his going forth, not against Jerusalem, but against apparently the nations.

Unless those nations is a reference to the, you know, northern and southern kingdom,

which weren't actually separate nations at this time, but they had been. But the Lord going forth is the same language you have in Isaiah and Micah and other places where God comes. He goes forth.

He goes out and fights. He's doing those things. Now, that's why I think when Jesus said, some of you standing here will not taste death until you see the Son of Man coming.

I believe he's probably referring to the Roman armies coming against Jerusalem because Jesus predicted several times that that was going to happen. In Luke chapter 19, he wept over the city of Jerusalem and said, oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if only you had known in this your day the things that pertain to your peace, but now they're hidden from your eyes. For the days are coming when your enemies will lay a siege mound against you and surround you round about and they will lay you to the ground and your children within you and not one stone will be left standing on another.

Same prediction he made with the temple. In Luke 19, he made it with the city. Jesus in the end of his ministries made a lot of references to the destruction of Jerusalem, I believe, and that was what would happen in those days.

But in the Jewish prophetic verbiage, that would be him coming just like Yahweh came on clouds against Egypt, but it was really the Assyrian armies. Now I do believe in a future second coming, but what I'm saying is that when the disciples said what will be the sign of your coming and the end of this age, I believe that Mark and Luke have paraphrased what they said because they use Jewish idioms. Matthew's the only gospel written to a Jewish audience.

He retains Jewish idioms that Jesus used more than any other gospel does. Mark, a little less so. Luke, much less so.

If the disciples said what is the sign of your coming and the end of the age, and Mark and Luke say what they meant was what are the signs that these things are about to happen, then Mark and Luke are interpreting this second question as being about AD 70. And the answer to it is, well, when will it be? In this generation, it'll be in this generation. What sign will there be? When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, that's the sign.

Better get out of town. That's the abomination that makes desolate, that Daniel spoke about. Now, you might say, but did those things happen before 70 AD? Earthquakes, yes.

Wars, rumors of wars, yes. Pestilences, famines, lots of them. Now Jesus didn't say there'd be an increased number of them, but there actually were a great number of them.

Some of them are recorded in the Bible itself in the Roman historians of the time. Some are mentioned by Josephus, the Jewish historian who was there, who was actually in Jerusalem during the war, or outside at some of the time. The historians of the period

record there are lots of earthquakes, lots of pestilences, lots of civil wars, lots, and even in diverse places, even in Rome.

Nero committed suicide in 68. In the next 18 months, there were four emperors because they killed each other off. Rome was filled with civil war after Nero died, and lots of people wanted his job.

One guy named Galba was the first one to lift himself up a general, made himself emperor. He was killed off in three months. The next one was Otho.

He didn't last much longer, a few months. Next guy's name was Vichellus. He didn't last long either.

Eventually, the thing was settled when the Senate elected a permanent replacement for Nero. But all that time, the city of Rome was in uproar. If you read the Roman history, the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, you find that historians say it's amazing Rome survived that turmoil because there was just chaos and war.

So the disciples in Jerusalem, they were hearing of wars in faraway places, kingdoms rising up against kingdom, and those kind of things. All those things did happen, but there's a part of it that some people think probably didn't happen, and that's in Matthew 24, verse 29 through 31. Let me read this section.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. The stars will fall from the heavens and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the sun man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the sun man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And he will send his angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from before winds from one end of heaven to the other. The imagery in that statement immediately strikes us as the future end of the world, second coming of Christ, sends his angels to gather his people in. They see him in the clouds, cosmic disturbances, sun and moon, stars going dark.

Did those things literally happen? Some of them amazingly did, but not all of them happened literally. The ones that did not happened in the sense that the prophets used that terminology. We as American Christians, unless you study the prophets a lot, are not that familiar with the prophetic language.

But let me show you something Isaiah said. In Isaiah 13, he's prophesying the fall of the Babylonian empire to the Medes and the Persians. This happened in 539 BC.

He names the Medes in particular as being involved in this, but the Medes and the Persians together were. And as it talks about the destruction of Babylon, it says in verse

10, Isaiah 13.10, For the stars of the heaven and their constellations will not give their light. The sun will be darkened and it's going forth.

The moon will not cause its light to shine. Well, that didn't all literally happen when Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians, but it was kind of the end of the world for them. But it's just poetic language.

If you turn to Isaiah 32, there's another prophecy, or maybe 34. Let me check it out here just to make sure. I think it's 34 actually.

There's a prophecy against Edom. Now, Edom isn't a nation anymore. The last Edomite that history knows of was Herod the Great.

The Edomites were enemies of the Jews in Old Testament history, but they were taken into Babylon three years after Jerusalem was. Jerusalem went into Babylon in 586 BC. Three years later in 583 BC, the Edomites were taken into captivity into Babylon too.

They never recovered. Some of them came back or just remained in the land, but they were subsumed in the intertestamental period into southern Judah and put under Jewish law by force. So they ceased to be a nation anymore.

And the last of them that is known to have been in existence was Herod. This is an extinct nation. But this predicts the destruction of Edom.

It says this in Isaiah 34, 4. All the host of heaven, meaning the stars, shall be dissolved. The heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll. All their hosts shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine and its fruit falling from a fig tree.

For my sword shall be bathed in heaven. Indeed, it shall come down on Edom and the people of my curse for judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood.

It is made overflowing with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, etc., etc. It says, well, I don't need to read on anymore. We can see that he's talking about the destruction of Edom.

Bezro is the capital of Edom. He's talking about something that happened almost 600 years before Christ. He describes it as the host of heaven being dissolved, the heavens being rolled up like a scroll.

All the hosts shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine. That is, all the stars will fall like a leaf falls from the vine. And so what we have here is, of course, the language of a cataclysm, to be sure, but not literally.

This is the way the prophets talk when something very, very bad permanently happens to a nation. That's how they talk about it. Now, Jesus said those things will happen, too, in that generation.

Did they literally happen? Well, not exactly, but they happened in the same sense that they happened in Isaiah 19 or Isaiah 13 or Isaiah 34 or in some of the other passages that use this language. We didn't look at Ezekiel 32, which talks about the same thing when Egypt fell to the Babylonians, talks about how the sun and the moon and stars were darkened. And there's other places like that.

So what we have is when Jesus said after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened. The moon will not give its light. The stars will fall from the heaven.

Everything there is language from Isaiah or some other prophetic passage, which in their original context referred to the destruction of some nation of some kind. In this case, it apparently is Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. It says the sign of the son of man will appear in heaven.

Now, what is the sign of the son of man? Because it's spoken of separately than him coming, because a few lines later it says, and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven. This is the sign of the son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn. The word earth can be translated land, and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven in power and great glory.

Now, the sign of the son of man in heaven is a term used only here. We don't have any other passage to clarify what it means, but one possible meaning is it's a sign that the son of man is in fact in heaven. The reason I say that is because to the Jews, the son of man in heaven calls to mind Daniel, chapter 7, verse 12 and 13, I think it is, where he says, I saw one like the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, and he came to the ancient of days.

So, he's going up. He's going up to God. It's the ascension of Christ from the Mount of Olives is what's referred to.

Son of man, Daniel's on the other side. He sees the heavenly throne. He sees the son of man came up through the clouds.

The disciples saw him disappear into the clouds. Daniel's on their side. He sees him come up through the clouds to the ancient days.

He's given a throne as Jesus sat down at the right hand of God when he ascended. The coming of the son of man is an expression that comes from that verse, first of all, and so he could be saying you'll see the sign that the son of man has in fact come in that sense. You'll see it.

Now, one argument that has been made is that the very fact that the temple was destroyed and the Jewish system that crucified Christ will be the sign that God has vindicated him, that Jesus is reigning now. He's not on the cross anymore. He's not their victim.

He's their judge as he sits at the throne at the right hand of God. It's not clear entirely what this refers to the sign of the son of man in heaven. When it says the tribes of the earth, again, the word earth is in Greek.

It's a word which means earth or land. Usually it's Israel that's divided into tribes, not the planet. The planet is usually divided into nations.

Israel is divided into tribes. So to say the tribes of the land will mourn makes plenty of sense, especially since it's a term that comes from Zechariah 12:10, which talks about all the inhabitants of Jerusalem mourning and seems to be a reference to that. So it's the people of Israel in the land of Israel that are mourning because of this.

And they see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven. Well, Egypt saw God coming on the clouds of heaven, but not literally. They saw the Assyrians coming.

That was God coming on the clouds. If Israel saw the Romans coming and that was Jesus sending them like Isaiah talks about, then they saw that in the Romans. But then there's this.

Verse 31, he will send his angels with the great sound of a trumpet and they'll gather together as elect from the four winds, that is the four compass points, from one end of heaven to the other. That is from one horizon to the other horizon. Or is he gathering them too? And who are these angels that are gathering them? The word angeloid, which is translated angels, is the word in Greek that generally means messengers.

In the Bible, it often means special messengers sent from God from heaven. And that's what the word angel, when we find angel in the New Testament, usually we're thinking of a supernatural angel. It is a translation of angelos, but the same word is the ordinary word for a messenger, a human messenger.

John the Baptist sent two messengers from prison to ask Jesus, are you the one who's to come or not? Luke refers to those two messengers as angeloid. Many times, like in James, it talks about how Rahab received the messengers and sent them away safely. Angeloid is the word used.

Human messengers are called angeloid too. What if we just translate this as the Greek allows? He'll send out his messengers, the apostles, the evangelists, the missionaries, and they'll gather his elect into his body, into the church. It doesn't say they're going to go away to another planet.

After Jerusalem falls, the gospel is no longer focused on the Jews. It's now an international message. The messengers of the gospel go out and they gather his elect from all the parts of the world, which has been what's been going on for the last 2,000 years.

Now, all I've tried to do is show you that everything Jesus said here has parallels, in many cases multiple parallels, in the Old Testament that use the same language, the same imagery, and are not talking about the end of the world or a literal second coming of Christ. Yes, Dennis. I'm wondering if we could, if you want to just make it, there's not, you know, several questions.

If you could go back and go through the same video. Yes, let me say only one more thing, and that is I've only dealt with that first part of the discourse. I'm not going to deal in detail with the other part, but the part that parallels Luke 17 is the part that talks about the days of Noah and the one should be taken on the other left, which people all have associated with the second coming, usually.

But I think in Luke 17, it's not talking about that. Well, I mean, I believe it is talking about that, but I don't think it's part of the same subject as the earlier, because he says at the end of this discourse, and Mark and Luke end with this, he says, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away, but of that day and hour, no one knows. Now, when he says heaven, earth will pass away, but no one knows when that will be.

I think he's referring to the end of the world. He's contrasting it. It's the fall of Jerusalem.

Well, I can tell you when that's going to be. This generation won't pass before that happens. The end of the world, nobody but God knows that.

The angels don't know. I don't know. He says nobody knows.

Only the Father knows that. It's a different thing. Likewise, he gives signs to look for, for the fall of Jerusalem, but he gives no signs for the end of the world.

He said it'll be like the days of Noah. Before the flood came, people ate, drank, got married, bought and sold, and they didn't know, didn't have a clue until the day that Noah and the ark and the flood came and took them all away. There were no signs.

Noah's preaching might be seen as a sign, until the day that the flood came, they had no clue. They were doing the same things people do when they don't expect to die that day, getting married, buying, selling, doing things, eating and drinking. If you thought you're going to die in a cataclysm later this evening, you might choose not to have a meal.

You might choose not to follow through on your marriage plans. You might not buy anything significantly because you don't expect to be here more than another hour or two. What Jesus said is when the flood came, and the same thing is true of Lot leaving Sodom, is until the day the judgment came, they didn't have a clue.

They're just doing all the stuff people always do when they don't expect to die that day. And there's no signs, no signs that this is going to happen. It just happens, catches them by surprise.

And that's when Jesus said, you know, there's going to be two sleeping in one bed, one will be taken, another left, and so forth. Now, I understand that to be the rapture at the end of the world when I was being taught it when I was younger. And I do believe this is talking about the end of the world.

I believe that at this point, his transition from this generation, 70 AD, to heaven and earth will pass away. No one knows when that is, but when it does happen, people will be caught totally by surprise. And one will be taken and the other left.

When Jesus comes back, one will be taken and the other left. But what is it? I was always under the impression the Christians were taken in the rapture and the wicked were left behind for something, for the tribulation or something else. But if you look at the passage in Luke 17, which is the parallel, this is where this prediction is found that Matthew, I think, incorporates into his version of the Olivet Discourse, but he's now talking about another subject, which transition by Jesus saying heaven and earth is going to pass away, but no one knows when that's going to be.

In Luke chapter 17, it says in verse 34, I tell you, in that night, there will be two men in one bed, one will be taken, the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together, one will be taken, the other left. Two men will be in the field, one will be taken, the other left.

Then the disciples answered and said to him, where, Lord? And he said to them, wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together, or wherever the corpse is, the birds will come to eat him. Now he's just said two people will be in very close proximity, one will be taken, the other will be left. They said, where? Where are they taken to? Well, the birds will find them, usually enough.

Wherever the corpses are, there's birds. In other words, they're dead. The ones who were taken were not raptured, they're dead.

And in the parallel in Matthew 24, it says, as in the days of Noah, they ate and drank and did all that stuff and did not notice how the flood came and took them all away, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man, one will be taken, the other left. The people who were taken away in the flood were the wicked. They weren't raptured, they were just killed.

Taken away is just a euphemism for killed. And here we have the disciples asking, where Lord, where are they taken? Well, wherever the corpses are, there'll be birds. You really want to find them? They shouldn't be hard to find.

You want to find the forest fires? Look for the smoke. You want to find the dead bodies? Look for the vultures or the eagles. And what I believe he means by that is that when Jesus comes, the wicked will be judged.

It says in 2 Thessalonians 1, verse 8, that when Jesus comes, he'll come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God and don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Psalm 91, it says to the righteous, a thousand will fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. Only with your eyes you'll behold and see the reward of the wicked.

The wicked are judged, the righteous remain. And when Jesus comes, he's going to judge the wicked and the righteous will be spared. But I'm not going to go into that in detail.

I'm only going to say those features did not apply to 70 AD. Before 70 AD happened, all the Christians had fled from Jerusalem. There weren't righteous and unrighteous sleeping in the same bed, working at the same field.

The righteous had fled across the Jordan to another mountainous area called Pella. Everyone in Jerusalem during the siege and the fall of Jerusalem were the wicked. There wasn't one righteous and one unrighteous in close proximity.

There will be when Jesus comes back, but there wasn't in 70 AD. Furthermore, when 70 AD happened, they weren't getting married, eating and drinking. They were starving.

They were starving in the siege. They were eating each other in starvation, but that's not exactly what Jesus describes. I doubt they were getting married as there was total havoc during the siege.

Buying and selling, I don't think that was going on. Jesus describes people involved in peacetime activities as if they don't know they're in danger at the time that it comes. That was not the case in 70 AD.

And for these reasons, I don't believe that the material in Luke 17, which Matthew incorporates at the end of the Old Testament, I don't think that's also about 70 AD. I think there's two subjects here. And the first one is summarized by Jesus saying, this generation will not pass before all these things take place.

And that was the questions the disciples asked about the destruction of Jerusalem. The other part is the future when Jesus said, heaven and earth will pass away, but no one knows when that's going to be. And so that could be why many people find the discourse confusing.

Matthew has taken two judgment discourses of Jesus and put them together. And the transition between the two is him saying, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. That's when he transitions from the destruction of the temple where not one stone is left standing another to the end of the cosmos when Jesus comes back.

So that's what I understand. Now, if that's new to you, and it probably is to many of you,

just know it's not really new information. This view was the view, well, I don't know about dividing it like I did, but Eusebius, the church historian in 325 AD, quoted from the Olivet Discourse and said this was fulfilled when the Romans came and destroyed Jerusalem.

So at least from the early 300s, the church recognized that Jesus was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. We may not have heard it because our teachers don't teach that view, but there's plenty of teachers that do. They're just not maybe teaching on the radio or places that you'd run into them, but it's a very early view of the church and a very exegetically sound one.