

come aware of the antichrist's abomination, they will quickly run into the hills. At this point Jesus confirmed the prophesy of Daniel concerning the desecration of the holy place by the antichrist. He said that this would be a signal for the disciples to leave Jerusalem and flee to the mountains looking forward to the immediate prospect of the destruction of Jerusalem (which happened in 70 AD). Here, it has a double reference: to AD 70 and at the end of the age. He warned the disciples that when the city was surrounded by the armies then they should flee. (Following history tells us that when the city was surrounded by the army of Titus, the Roman general, the Christians who were in Jerusalem remembered the warning of the Lord and fled the city; and not one was lost in it's destruction). So in the middle of the Great Tribulation the Antichrist will declare himself to be God after the two witnesses are killed, and then the Jews eyes will finally be open and will take to the mountains in flight. Then the terrible wrath of God will be poured out on the unrepentant sinners. This will be the climatic tribulation of all ages. It will result in the destruction of the lives of all people of the earth, if it were not providentially shortened (v22) In the midst of this great confusion and tribulation, false prophets will arise and perform great miracles. Christ warned about being deceived by these agents of Satan. Then would come the great

THIRTY FIFTH STUDY

OLIVET DISCOURSE

SIGNS OF THE END OF THIS AGE (Matthew 24:1-51;
Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-38)

1. What did Jesus predict in Matthew 24:1,2
2. What three great questions did the disciples ask Jesus privately, on the Mount of Olives?(Matthew 24:3)
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____ and
 - (3) _____

Jesus left the temple, knowing that it was destined to certain destruction because the Jews had rejected Jesus as their Messiah. The disciples wondered aloud when this terrible judgment would fall on the temple. Jesus gave a clear answer that was recorded in Luke 21:20-24

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

For these be the days of vengeance, that all things that are written may be fulfilled.

But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! For there will be great distress in the land, and wrath upon His people.

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Then the disciples asked Jesus two additional questions

regarding the signs of His second coming and the signs of the end of the world.

In order to understand the meaning of Jesus' prophetic signs in this chapter we must remember that this discourse occurred before the crucifixion. The gentile Church of believers did not exist yet. Jesus was speaking primarily to His Jewish followers and warning of the prophetic signs that would occur just prior to His second coming.

3. The first sign of Christ's return (Matthew 24:4,5) is the rise of false christ's who will deceive many. Can you name some of these impostors, in our day, who have already claimed to be the Messiah? _____

Jesus also warned about the increase of wars before His second coming (see Joel 3:9-10). Statistics show that over the centuries our planet has endured 13 years of war for every year of peace. This was even before the recent war in Iraq. Despite the numerous peace and disarmament treaties enacted since 1945, we have not known a single day of worldwide peace but rather have experienced more wars than any other generation in history. Despite the growing dangers of war, Jesus told His followers not to be troubled because "*the end is not yet.*"

4. In Matthew 24:7,8, Jesus warned that a series of three devastating natural phenomena would characterize His impending return and would also occur in unusual places. Name them. _____

In Matthew 24:9-12, Jesus warns that these terrible judgments will only set the stage for the terrible judgments of the great tribulation. Jesus warned that His followers would be subject to extreme persecution and martyrdom because of a profound hatred of Jesus by the religious authorities. This prophecy was initially fulfilled during the first wave of persecution by the Jewish authorities during the first century but will find its final fulfillment in the terrible persecution of the tribulation.

Because of this persecution in the last days, many will turn from their faith and betray other believers. Jesus also warned of the explosion of false prophets and the tragic alienation of affection between people. In our generation we have seen an astonishing rise of false prophets, and cults. The growing of child abuse by clergy, spousal battery, and abuse of the elderly, reflects the widespread iniquity of our time.

Matthew 24:13,14 Despite the coming trials and persecutions, Jesus promised that those who remained faithful would be saved. The generation of the last days would witness the gospel being preached in an unprecedented way throughout the world. Only then would the end come.

Matthew 24:15-19 At the middle of the great tribulation, when the Antichrist breaks his seven year treaty with Israel, defiles the rebuilt temple and establishes the mark of the beast, Jesus will give His followers a warning sign, the sign of the prophet Daniel (Daniel 9:27; 12:11). When the believers be-