

Exposition and Bible Marking Notes on the Olivet Prophecy

Matt. 24 and Luke 21

In recent times different interpretations of the Olivet Prophecy have arisen sowing confusion in the minds of many who are familiar with long-standing Christadelphian teaching on this subject. The writings of brethren from John Thomas to H.P. Mansfield are very clear that the Olivet Prophecy has application to both the events of AD 70 and to the latter days which will see the Second Advent of Christ. While Bro. Mansfield differs with Bro. Thomas on the interpretation of Matt. 24:31, both agree that from at least verse 30 the Lord is speaking of events pertaining to the latter days. The citations made from the writings of these brethren in the appendices make this clear. The following notes are designed to provide a brief exposition of Matt. 24 and the related words of Luke 21.

<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 24</p> <p>¹ And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to <i>him</i> for to ¹<u>shew him the buildings of the temple.</u></p> <p>² And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, ²<u>There shall not be left here one stone upon another,</u> that shall not be thrown down.</p> <p>³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, ¹<u>the disciples</u> came unto him privately, saying, ²<u>Tell us, when shall these things be?</u> ³<u>and what shall be the sign of thy coming,</u> ⁴<u>and of the end of the world?</u></p> <p>⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.</p> <p>⁵ For ¹<u>many shall come in my name,</u> saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.</p> <p>⁶ And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all <i>these things</i> must come to pass, but the end is not yet.</p> <p>⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.</p> <p>⁸ All these <i>are</i> the beginning of sorrows.</p> <p>⁹ ¹<u>Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted,</u> and shall ²<u>kill you:</u> and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.</p> <p>¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.</p> <p>¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.</p> <p>¹² And because ¹<u>iniquity shall abound,</u> the ³<u>love</u> of ⁴<u>many shall wax cold.</u></p> <p>¹³ But he that shall ⁶<u>endure</u> unto the end, the same shall be saved.</p> <p>¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.</p>	<p><u>Christ foretells the destruction of the temple</u></p> <p>¹ This temple, a major project of Herod, took 46 years to build – John 2:20.</p> <p>² The fate of a leprous house – Lev. 14:44-45; cp. Luke 19:41-44.</p> <p>* Bro. Thomas – “In the 23rd and 24th of Matthew; two comings are evidently brought to view; first, that mentioned in the 39th verse of the former, when Israel as a people shall hail Jesus with acclamation as the blessed of Yahweh: and second, the coming of the Son of man, not ‘in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory’, but with the publicity of the lightning to destroy Jerusalem by Titus and his Romans – Matt. 24:27-28.”</p> <p><u>The disciples ask three significant questions</u></p> <p>¹ Two sets of brothers (cp. Mark 13:12) Peter, James, John and Andrew were the disciples present – Mark 13:3.</p> <p>² Question 1 concerned the issue at hand (V.2) – the coming destruction of the temple.</p> <p>³ The Greek word for “coming” is <i>parousia</i> – being near, presence. Question 2 concerns a clear sign indicating the imminent fulfilment of V.2.</p> <p>⁴ The word “world” here is <i>aion</i> – age. Question 3 seeks a sign indicating the end of the age. In the context two ages are in view* – AD 70 and 2nd Advent.</p> <p><u>A warning about false Messiah's</u></p> <p>¹ Fulfilled – 2 Cor. 11:13; Gal. 1:7-8; Titus 1:10-11; 2 John 7.</p> <p><u>The signs that would precede the destruction of the temple</u></p> <p>Robert Roberts – The Ways of Providence – “The ‘signs’ consisted of natural occurrences of a calamitous nature, which would slowly gather over the Jewish nation. The process extended over thirty years. It began in apparently trifling incidents which, one after another, exasperated the public mind and gradually brought on the tempest which engulfed the</p> <p>¹ Fulfilled – Acts 8:1-3;</p> <p>² See Acts 12:1-2.</p> <p><u>Christ's warning and exhortation for a final generation</u></p> <p>¹ <i>anomia</i> – lawlessness.</p> <p>² <i>plethuno</i> – multiplied.</p> <p>³ <i>agape</i> – sacrificial love.</p> <p>⁴ There is a definite article here – Diag. “the many”.</p> <p>⁵ <i>psucho</i> – to cool by blowing. Refers to the chilled winds of lawlessness cooling the zeal of Christ's followers.</p> <p>⁶ <i>hupomeno</i> – to remain behind after others have gone; to keep one's ground; hold out; bear up.</p> <p>V.14 has been misused by some who suggest that Christ will not come again until the latter day Brotherhood preaches to every nation on earth. This passage refers to the events of AD 70. Paul claims to have done this prior to AD 70 – Col. 1:6,23. The prophecy was fulfilled in the 1st century.</p>
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15 When ye therefore shall see ¹the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And ²woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

21 For then shall be ³great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the ⁴world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the ⁵elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the ⁶very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

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.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the ⁷coming of the Son of man be.

28 For wheresoever the ⁸carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 ⁹Immediately after the tribulation of ¹⁰those days shall the ¹¹sun be darkened, and the ¹²moon shall not give her light, and the ¹³stars shall fall from ¹⁴heaven,....

The transition from the events of AD 70 to those of the Latter Days is indicated when the language of Christ shifts from singular to plural. Vespasian and his successors restored peace and order to the empire and its regions so this prophecy cannot refer to the period immediately beyond AD 70 – cp. Luke 21:24-26 where this is amplified.

...and the ¹powers of the ²heavens shall be ³shaken:

30 ⁴And then shall appear ⁵the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall ⁶all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall ⁷see ⁸the Son of man ⁹coming in the ¹⁰clouds of heaven with power and ¹¹great glory.

The sign provided to warn to flee Jerusalem

¹ Refers to the defiling presence of invading armies who corrupted the temple mount. Three such 'abominations' are mentioned in Daniel – (1) 11:31 of the Seleucid defilement of the temple; (2) 9:27 of the Roman desecration; (3) 12:11 of the Saracen defilement in the building of the Dome of the Rock over the Most Holy Place site. The Roman is referred to here.

“Tradition has it that before the siege of Jerusalem, Simon, remembering the warnings of Christ in the Olivet sermon, led the Jewish Christians to Pella beyond Jordan, thus saving them from the awful massacres of Titus.” – Arthur Hall “What’s in a name?” pg. 37

² The contrast between the two eras of Christ’s advents is sharp. AD 70 would be a bitter and terrible experience, while his second advent would catch the world and some of his servants in general prosperity and comfort – V.37-39.

³ Some have used this passage to suggest that the latter day brotherhood will face extremely hard times at the end. This is contradictory to the clear message of Christ (V.37-39; Luke 17:26-30; 21:34-36; Rev. 3:14-16) that prosperity and peace would be the greatest challenge of the latter days.

⁴ *kosmos* – order of things. Refers to the Jewish order.

⁵ *eklektos* – Bro. Thomas suggests the elect here refers to the Patriarchs and their seed – Christ; arguing that if the judgements had not been shortened the entire Jewish race would have been destroyed. Bro. Thomas also says that the “very elect” of V.24 is a reference to Christian believers of that era. See Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come – November 1860 Vol. X No.11 pages 256-257 – “In v.22, the shortening of the days has relation to Israel, the enemies of the gospel, but still beloved for the father’s sakes; and ‘the elect’ in v.24 relates to the chosen in Christ, who are warned not to be deceived by false prophets and teachers and pseudo Christs.”

⁶ *eklektos* – clearly refers to believers in danger of being deceived by the claims of false messiahs. The tumultuous and hard times would provide incentive to look in hope to such false claims.

⁷ *parousia* – presence. Christ would be ‘present’ at the head of the Roman legions in fulfilment of Dan. 9:26-27; Matt. 10:23; 22:7. The judgements would be so great as to be unmistakably from God – Luke 17:22-24.

⁸ Drawn from Deut. 28:26,49. Fulfilled when the Roman armies whose standard was an eagle surrounded Jerusalem swollen with 2 million people.

⁹ *eutheos* - straightway, immediately, forthwith.

¹⁰ The events of AD 70.

¹¹ Symbol for political power/government - Isa. 24:21-23; Joel 2:10,31.

¹² Symbol for an ecclesiastical system - Gen. 1:16; Acts 2:20.

¹³ Symbol for rulers – Dan. 12:3; Isa. 14:13.

¹⁴ Symbol for the governing region or aerial. The noun is singular and refers to Judah’s Commonwealth eclipsed in AD 70.

Christ’s prophecies of the Latter Days and his Second Advent

¹ *dunamis* - The word is plural and refers to a number of powers.

² This noun is plural and refers to a plurality of national governments. The period after AD 70 until AD 183 was a period of relative political stability and peace. Prior to that there were rumblings, rumours, conflicts and disasters as Christ foretold (v.6-8). This prophecy refers to the period prior to the Second Advent of Christ.

³ *saleuo* - a motion produced by winds, storms, waves, etc, to agitate or shake. Cp. Luke 21:25-26 where the nouns “powers” and “heavens” and the verb “shaken” in V.26 are all in the plural signifying a multiplicity of nations.

⁴ i.e. following the agitation and turmoil of nations after the events of Luke 21:24, namely, the recovery by Israel of Jerusalem from Gentile control.

⁵ This is a reference to Armageddon – an unmistakable sign in the political arena of mankind (“heaven”). Proof is found in Rev. 1:7 where this prophecy is further amplified by Christ.

⁶ Rev. 1:7 explains that this refers to all nations on earth.

⁷ Rev. 1:7 adds “every eye shall see him”. This is not literal but a way of indicating that the severity of the Divine judgements will be so great that no one will be unaware that Christ is in the earth. That knowledge will be reinforced by the ‘mid heaven proclamation’ that follows - Rev. 14:6-7.

⁸ This is the title referring to Christ’s delegated authority to judge in the earth – John 5:27; Matt. 25:31.

31 And he shall send his ¹angels with a ²great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his ³elect from ⁴the four winds, ⁵from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the ¹fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and ²putteth forth leaves, ye know that ³summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

34 Verily I say unto you, ⁴This generation shall ⁵not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

35 ⁶Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37 But as ⁷the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the ⁸coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until grinding at the mill; the one shall be ¹⁰taken, and the other ¹¹left. the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the ⁸coming of the Son of man be.

40 Then shall two be in ⁹the field; the one shall be ¹⁰taken, and the other ¹¹left.

41 Two *women shall be* the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 Who then is a ¹²faithful and ¹³wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his ¹⁴household, ¹⁵to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him

⁹ *erchomai* – to move from one place to another, hence come. A reference to Christ coming from Sinai to the Sanctuary (Ps. 68:17).

¹⁰ Clouds are a symbol of a multitude (Heb. 12:1; Ezek. 38:9,16). This is a reference to the glorified saints who accompany Christ to establish the Kingdom of God – the ‘heaven’ here.

¹¹ This excludes reference to any other time than the revelation of Christ to the world and the setting up of the Kingdom at his Second Advent.

The work of Elijah and the Second Exodus of Israel

¹ *aggelos* – messengers. These can be mortal or immortal. Here it refers to both - the saints who go forth with Elijah for the work of the Second Exodus (Zech. 9:13), and some mortals of Judah – Jer. 3:18.

² The blowing of the trumpet is associated with the restoration of scattered Israel – Isa. 18:3; 27:13; Zech. 9:14.

³ Here a reference to Israel – Isa. 45:4; 65:15-22.

⁴ Citation from Zech. 2:6 in the context of the Second Exodus.

⁵ Citation from Deut. 30:4 in the context of the restoration of Israel.

The signs of the Latter Days heralding Christ’s return

¹ If there was any doubt about Christ’s meaning in V.31 it is resolved by his immediate reference to the restoration of the nation of Israel in 1948. The fig tree is one of the O.T. symbols for Israel – Joel 1:7,12; Hos. 9:10; Jer. 24.

² When Christ cursed the fig tree (Mark 11:13-14) it was like Israel it had no fruit. Its subsequent withering represented the dissolution of Judah’s Commonwealth in AD 70. When Christ returns the nation will have been restored but will again only have leaves – no fruit.

³ Summer is harvest season. This is a hint at Armageddon (“A heap of sheaves in a valley for judgement”).

⁴ i.e. the generation who witness the sign of the fig tree.

⁵ At Christ’s first advent very aged people were promised that they would not pass until they saw him – Luke 2:25-32. This may hint that the generation who saw the fig tree sprout forth will also be very aged.

⁶ Symbols for rulers and the ruled (Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:1,10). Judah’s Commonwealth dissolved in AD 70 and so will latter day governments and their civilisation.

⁷ Christ’s choice of the days of Noah, and of Lot in Luke 17:28, is very important. He mentions nothing of the major issues of those eras – immortality and violence. He isolates the prosperity of those days and declares that so it will be at his second advent. This is in sharp contrast to conditions in Judea in the days prior to AD 70 which are described by historians and hinted at in V.19-21.

⁸ *parousia* – presence. A reference to Christ being present on earth to raise the dead. Right up to the last day when the responsible are removed to judgement it will be generally prosperous in the world. This is supported by Rev. 3:14-18 which reveals the latter day ecclesia will be found living in prosperity (see Rev. 3:20).

⁹ The field of labour in the truth.

¹⁰ *paralambano* – to receive near; especially into a marriage. See use in Matt. 1:20,24.

¹¹ *aphiemi* – to put out of a marriage – see use 1 Cor. 7:11-12. This is amplified in Luke 17:30-37. It has to do with the resolving of destinies.

¹² In the same discourse Christ amplifies this aspect of service in the parable of the talents – Matt. 25:14-30.

¹³ Amplified in the parable of the ten virgins – Matt. 25:1-13.

¹⁴ *therapeia* - service rendered by one to another; spec. medical service; curing, healing. The English word therapy is derived from it. The ecclesia should be a place for spiritual therapy where each renders a service to others. This is amplified in the parable of the sheep and goats – Matt. 25:31-46.

¹⁵ Citation from Ps. 145:15-16 where God’s open hand is seen.

<p>ruler over all his goods.</p> <p>⁴⁸ But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;</p> <p>⁴⁹ And shall begin to ¹⁶smite his fellowservants, and ¹⁷to eat and drink with the drunken;</p> <p>⁵⁰ The lord of that servant shall ¹⁸come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,</p> <p>⁵¹ And shall ¹⁹cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the ²⁰hypocrites: there shall be ²¹weeping and gnashing of teeth.</p>	<p>¹⁶ Smiting is normally done with a clenched fist (Isa. 58:4). This shows a complete change of attitude from V.45.</p> <p>¹⁷ Another clear indication that Christ will come in the latter days during a period of prosperity and laxity when his servants are in danger of being distracted – 2 Pet. 3:3-4; Luke 21:34-36.</p> <p>¹⁸ heko – arrive. Refers to Christ's 2nd Advent to judge the household – 1 Pet. 4:17.</p> <p>¹⁹ dichotomeo – bisect. Fitting end for the duplicitous.</p> <p>²⁰ hupokrites – an actor, stage player.</p> <p>²¹ Language used of the Judgement Seat – Luke 13:24-30.</p>
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Abbreviations

- RSV – Revised Standard Version
- Roth. – J.B. Rotherham's Emphasised Bible
- Ygs. Lit. – Young's Literal Translation
- Cp. – Compare
- Lit. - Literally

Harmony of Matt. 24:28-30 with Luke 21:24-27

Sequence of Events

1. AD 68-70 – The siege of Jerusalem by the Roman legions
2. AD 70 – Defeat of the Jews and destruction of the temple
3. AD 70 – Eclipse of Judah's Commonwealth, its religious order and elimination of its leaders
4. AD 70 to 1967 – Jerusalem trampled by foreign powers until its release in June 1967
5. 1968 – The watershed year of revolution and chaos that shaped the modern world (see below)
6. 1968 to present – Universal foreboding at the political, religious, economic and environmental chaos
7. 1968 to present – Governments everywhere shaken by political turmoil, terrorism and impotence
8. ? – Armageddon signals a change of government for humanity – The Kingdom restored to Israel
9. ? – Everyone on earth will know Christ and the saints have arrived to establish the Kingdom

See the numbers in brackets inserted in the texts below – where they are placed indicates the fulfilment.

Matthew 24

²⁸ **(1)** For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

²⁹ **(3)** Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven,...

Luke 21:24-26 provide an amplification of events in the long interval between the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the return of Christ to 'restore again the kingdom to Israel' (Acts 1:11).

Just as AD 70 was an unmistakable sign of Christ's presence at the head of the Roman armies, so the events of June 1967 and the watershed year that followed – 1968 are latter day signs of the imminence of the re-establishment of the Kingdom.

³⁰ **(8)** And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, **(9)** and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Luke 21

²⁴ **(2)** And they shall fall by the edge of the sword,

(4) ...and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

²⁵ **(5)** And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

²⁶ **(6)** Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: **(7)** for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

²⁷ **(9)** And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

The importance of 1968 to the shaping of the modern world

A number of Documentary films have been made concerning the significance of 1968 to the modern era. In January 1968 the Time Magazine had a cover story on the 20th anniversary and the BBC (Radio 4) had a three part series on 1968 on the 40th anniversary in 2008. The following quotations from the Time articles in 1988 show the flavor of the aforementioned documentaries:

1968 – Like a knife blade, the year severed past from future – ‘Time’ 11 January 1988

The spasms of unrest seemed almost psychologically coordinated, as if a mysterious common impulse had swept through the nervous system of a global generation.

1968 had the vibrations of earthquake about it. America shuddered. History cracked open..... The year was pivotal and messy. It produced vivid theatre. It reverberates still in the American mind.

1968 was tragedy and horrific entertainment: deaths of heroes, uprisings, suppressions, the end of dreams, blood in the streets of Chicago and Paris and Saigon... and at Christmastime man floating around the moon.

After 20 years, the apocalyptic events of 1968 are still reverberating

An End of Heroes

The year had many legacies, but the assassinations were among the most important and were the hardest to bear. They altered history and broke something essential in the national morale – they broke hope. “The best leaders of our time were dead,” Hayden says now. “They had been murdered. That is the heart of the tragedy. By 1968 I knew I was part of an apocalypse, which is different from the early idealism. You feel you are carried by events that are out of your control.”

APPENDIX

Extract from Logos Vol. 18 pg. 217-218 (P.M.)

We come now to the more difficult portion of our subject. Hitherto, what we have written will find general agreement, for the predictions of Christ follow a sequence that is easily grasped, but his prophecy of events that would follow the overthrow of Jerusalem is not so clear.

For example, Luke speaks of signs in the sun, moon and stars, and upon earth, distress of nations with perplexity, and the language he uses, shows that these signs will be contemporary with the return of the Lord in glory; whereas Matthew and Mark both refer to similar signs as though they were associated with the fall of Jerusalem. They write: 'Immediately', "in those days", the "sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light", etc. (Matt. 24: 29; Mark 13: 24). Undoubtedly, such terms as "immediately", and "in those days" must refer to the events of A.D. 70 when the foundations of Jewry were convulsed, but such an explanation does not override the application of Luke's similar words to these days, as we hope to show.

A.D. 70 a Type of Impending Crisis

It is quite certain, that neither Matthew, Mark or Luke have recorded all the words of Christ. Matthew and Mark, for instance, omit the explanatory passage of Luke 21:24, and Luke omits some statements recorded by Matthew and Mark. Each set down those features of the Olivet prophecy relevant to their individual purpose, and it is only by placing the three accounts side by side that the true picture is seen. Matthew and Mark wrote primarily for Jewish believers, and recorded the features of the prophecy in which they would be more particularly interested. Luke, on the other

hand, wrote for Gentile believers also, which may have been the reason why he included those features that are of particular interest to us.

It is also certain that there is a link between the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Gentiles now impending; the one is the type of the other, and for that reason, we believe, these events were grouped together so closely in Christ's Olivet prophecy, and expounded in language so similar. Similar close grouping of events, the fulfilment of which are widely separated in point of time, is found quite frequently in Scripture, for "time" as it appears to us, does not exist for Deity, with whom "a thousand years is but a day".

Extract from Logos Vol. 18 pg. 243

On the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" (Matt. 24:3). The answer is given in verse 30: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." It must be clearly understood that this does not refer to the return of the Lord from heaven, but the visible evidence of his presence on the earth. The word rendered "coming", is "*parousia*" in the Greek, and signifies "presence" rather than "coming". To be present, the Lord must come, of course, but it is not his actual return that the world sees and mourns, it is the token of his presence in the political heavens, in power and great glory, and in the midst of the multitudinous body of the redeemed. "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every (Gentile) eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him (Jewry), and all kindreds of the earth (Jew and Gentile) shall wail because of him." The "Sign" that the Son of Man has ascended into the political heavens, will be his presence with "great power and glory" before Jerusalem, which will then be in the possession of the enemy (Zech. 14:1). This will be an evident token to Jew and Gentile alike, that Messiah has returned. It will cause great heart burnings in both sections, as they realize their past blindness. "The Clouds of Heaven" These are associated with the Lord Jesus in the day of his triumph. They are those to whom the Apostle refers when he says: "We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1), the glorified company of the redeemed. This is "the cloud" upon which Yahweh will ride into Egypt (Isa. 19:1), the "cloud" in which, during the Millennial day, "his strength" will be revealed (Ps. 68:34), and upon which the Ail of Yeshurun will ride to the help of Israel (Deut. 33:26). Thus the sign of the Son of Man in power, will be his presence, surrounded by his resurrected and glorified brethren, the "clouds of heaven" of this verse. In Revelation 19:14 they are termed the "armies of heaven", Paul hoped to form part of these symbolic "clouds of heaven", and wrote to the Thessalonians: "We shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17).

Extract from Logos Vol. 18 pg. 274-275

The angels of Matthew 24:31, are one-time mortal men, soon to be made consubstantial with Deity, and then specially appointed by the Lord Jesus, for the work of regathering and restoring Israel, and making it the "first dominion" in his universal empire. This work will be under the control of Elijah the prophet.

The Trumpet

Israel will be gathered "with a great sound of a trumpet" (Matt. 24: 31), This is an allusion to the Divine method instituted under Moses for calling the people together (Numbers 10). In times of peace, a trumpet was sounded comparatively softly (v. 7), but in times of calamity or war, it was

sounded loudly. In the verse before us, the sound is loud, intimating that it is a time of calamity and war, a time of trouble such as never was. Moreover, in this verse, Christ's angels are represented as sounding this alarm in all parts of the earth, and as we shall show, the gathering and restoration of Israel will not be brought about by peaceful means, but by war. The Jews will have to fight their way back to Palestine, and in this warfare the rebels shall lose their lives.

The Elect

The word means "chosen", and is used both in regard to the individuals God is taking out of the Gentiles for His name (Acts 15:14), and of the nation which He has chosen above all other nations. "Israel mine elect", is Deity's designation of the nation in Isaiah 45: 4. The same word is rendered "chosen" in many places, and likewise applied to Israel (Ps. 105: 6, 43; Isa. 65: 15).

Extract from Logos Vol. 18 pg. 306-309 (HPM)

“This Generation shall not pass away, until . . .”

Christ's Olivet prophecy concerns two main stages in the purpose of God: the overthrow of Judah's-Commonwealth in A.D. 70, and the restoration of the Kingdom of God at the second advent of the Lord. It takes no cognisance of the long arch of time between these two events, but groups them closely together. It is, therefore, a prophecy of particular interest to the generations of disciples existing just prior to its fulfilment, namely those of the Apostolic age, and our own times.

The Lord declared: "Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 4:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32). In point of time, a generation was accounted as forty years (Heb. 3:9-10), and in his warning of coming retribution on the nation which preceded the Olivet prophecy, Jesus declared: "All these things shall come upon this generation" (Matt. 23:36). His words implied that within 40 years, all the things of which he had been speaking and warning—the domestic troubles of the nation, the political dissention, the persecution of ecclesias, the rising tide of Roman wrath against Judah, the invasion of Palestine, the overthrow of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple, the scattering of Israel into all nations—all these things would happen within the scope of a generation. "Heaven and earth," or the Jewish polity (see "The Logos" p. 241) would pass away in vindication of his prediction, but, as he added, "My words shall not pass away."

How true this proved! Meanwhile, none knew the day nor hour when the crisis would come; not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son himself. Keen vigilance was required by the wise of that generation, that the rising tide of nationalism, and the strong political current of fleshly patriotism that flowed through the nation, and swept even some of the elect saints along with it, might be resisted. Christ's prophecy not only enabled his disciples to intelligently interpret the signs of the times, but also revealed the wisdom of standing aside from the national aspirations of the times. It was a wise provision that none should know the day or hour of the coming crisis. This uncertainty, in relation to a prophecy the fulfilment of which was sure, kept the disciples on the tip-toe of expectancy. Their eyes were focussed upon the signs of the times which alone could reveal how near was the end, and thus they were constantly aligning the passing scene with the divine prophecy. They knew that they were living "in the last days" of the Mosaic age, and that those "last days" would witness the disruption of the Jewish state, and the dispersion of the Holy people. They were reminded, by Christ's words, that in the development of such a crisis would reveal a flood of evil, wickedness and ungodliness in all avenues of Jewish life. This constituted a challenge to the individual, and it was to such that Christ's exhortation was directed. He instanced the experience of

Noah, when not only the world, but even the "sons of God" were lead astray by the wickedness that surrounded them. The general apostasy from God's way brought about a state of apathy and indifference to the significance of the signs, so that right up to the very moment when the storm was about to break, men continued to mock the divine message and ridicule the counsel of the patriarch.

Other examples of history teach the same lesson, so Christ appealed to his disciples, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life so that day come upon you unawares, for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." This was wise counsel to those with ears intent upon the divine message and hearts attune to its wisdom, to stand aside from the currents of life that swirled around them, and to avoid the temptations of the age. To be "overcharged" is to over-eat, and when one does this he becomes dull and drowsy, totally unfit for that vigilant watchfulness which should characterise the true disciple of Christ. The material benefits of business and pleasure have ever constituted a snare to the world of mankind, and comparatively few have seen the wisdom of restraining and restricting their endeavours in these fields, to serve God. To most it seems that "all things continue as from the beginning of creation." The majority of the holy people in the days of Christ and his apostles, like the "sons of God" in the days of the faithful Noah, were busily intent upon these things, and were carried away in the flood of evil that submerged Judah in A.D. 70. For within 40 years (the aeon of a generation), all had come to pass. All, that is, relating to the first aspect of this prophecy, the incidents and trends leading up to the time when the Jewish "heavens and earth passed away" (Matt. 24:35). The things of the Kingdom in "the name of Jesus Christ" had been proclaimed to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles. Judah's Commonwealth had served its purpose and had been removed. The call had gone forth to the Gentiles, and Jerusalem had commenced its long period of Gentile domination. Christ's ministry commenced approximately A.D. 30, and the generation which witnessed it, did not pass away "until all things had been fulfilled" relating to that time.

But have these words no application today? We believe they have. The Olivet prophecy predicted the overthrow of Judah's Commonwealth, and the restoration of the Kingdom of God at Christ's second coming, and as the generation of the Apostolic age did not pass away until all things relating to the former event had been fulfilled, so, we believe, the present generation will not pass away until it *sees* the Israelitish fig-tree yield its fruit in the coming of the Lord Jesus, and the development of the last great crisis of Gentile times—Armageddon. Thus the exhortation of the Lord Jesus takes on a double application, and we can apply his warning voice to these modern times, even as his disciples did to their day, 1900 years ago. "Take heed to yourselves!" The exhortation is for individual application, and will be acted upon by the wise among the ecclesias today. They will see the need to stand aside from the things in which the world delights, and which sometimes find expression within ecclesial circles also. The day and hour of Christ's advent we do not know, but we are assured, from the signs of the times, and particularly from events in Palestine, that we stand on the very threshold of the Kingdom of God, and therefore the parables of Christ—the good and evil servant, the ten virgins etc.—also proclaimed from Olivet, have application to us. "Take heed!" "Watch and pray!" is the keynote of all he says.

Though there is a "set time to favour Zion" (Ps. 102:13), we are in ignorance of the day and hour. These are matters, however, that are no longer withheld from the Master. He was given a "revelation" of things previously hid, some of which he has been pleased to reveal unto his servants through his apostle John (Rev. 1:1). This knowledge will make us wiser than our contemporaries, and reveal the true significance of world events. It will also enlighten us as to the real nature of the world of flesh, so that one, educated in the Apocalypse will never be in danger of being misled by

the pretensions of Christendom so-called. This wonderful revelation, provides us with a programme of events, as complete as that revealed to the Apostles on Olivet concerning the crisis of their day, by means of which we can see the steps leading to the grand consummation of the Age—the apocalypse of the Lord Jesus in glory and universal power.

How wise we are to watch! If there existed a need for Christ to warn such redoubtable disciples as Peter and John against being overcharged with the pleasures and cares of this life, there is a greater need for such lesser men as ourselves to take heed to the exhortation. The times are evil and insidious. The constant meditation of the Word, the continual seeking of God in prayer, is needful to counteract the deceitfulness of the flesh. Christ exhorted his disciples to "Take heed," and the Psalmist supplements the exhortation with the words: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word" (Ps. 119:9). This requires that we measure our standards of morality by those set forth in the Word; that we so imbibe this word as to cause it to become the mainspring of our existence, dominating our thoughts, overshadowing our actions and habits, changing our lives. Early in the Olivet prophecy, Christ warned his disciples of the evil influence of others. "Take heed," he declared, "that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in my name... go ye not after them" (Luke 21:8). Now he concludes his prophecy by warning them to take heed to themselves. In solemn conclave with our own hearts, we can examine ourselves in the light of his commandments, comprehending the urgency of the times, sure that "this generation shall not pass away before all will be fulfilled."

Christ followed up his Olivet prophecy with a series of parables, the keynote of which is, "Watch!" Matthew records these parables, and whilst it is not our intention to expound them, it is quite obvious that they have a double application. They served to warn the disciples of 1900 years ago, that they need be circumspect, else they would personally suffer (as unfortunately, many of them did) in the holocaust that ultimately came on Jerusalem; and they warn us, in these closing days of the Gentiles, that we need be circumspect lest we be taken unawares in the developing crisis of these days. We live at the epoch when the Lord Jesus shall return in power and great glory, to complete the fulfillment of the Olivet prophecy uttered 1900 years ago. H.P.M.

Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come – Bro. John Thomas – Vol. 10 pg. 254

*The first twenty-nine verses of Matt, xxiv, relate to the first of these epochs, namely, to the Destruction of the City, Temple, and Commonwealth of Israel; the 30th and 31st verse to the second Epoch, when Jesus shall appear in the heaven, and the tribes of Israel shall mourn, and He shall appear, in his glory, &c.; and from the 32d verse to end of the chapter, and so on to verse 30, inclusive, of chapter xxv, the reader is presented with illustrations such as the Fig Tree, the Days of Noah, the Faithful and Wise Servant, the Evil Servant, the Ten Virgins, and the Absent Traveller, to show what would be the state of the Jews, both unbelieving and Christian, when the *first epoch* should be consummated. From verse 31 to the end of the 25th chapter, is revealed the crowning event that shall happen when Jesus shall come in his glory; and as a King, shall give his servants the kingdom; and, as a Judge, shall arraign his tribunal the nations, and give eternal life to them whom he shall pronounce as righteous. Thus ends the prophecy, which he delivered two days before he was betrayed.*

Extract from Logos Vol. 36 pg. 80 (HPM)

It is significant, that when the three accounts of the Olivet Prophecy are brought together, the comment of the Lord recorded by Matthew but omitted by Luke, should follow on from his comment

concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem, thus: "...**Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity**" etc. (Luke 21:24-25; Matt. 24:29-30).

Placed in this context, the "tribulation of those days," relates to the termination of Gentile times that will witness the return of the Lord Jesus, and his elevation to power, which will constitute the "sign of the Son of Man in heaven."

Extract from Logos Vol. 37 pgs. 318-319 (Logos Prophetic Supplement)

THE CALL TO ISRAEL TO RETURN

Elijah's Mission

John Baptist, in the spirit and power of Elijah, was sent to the people of the land with a message of preparation, warning them that the Messiah was already in their midst. That will also be the mission of Elijah at the Lord's second coming. It would seem, however, that whereas John's mission was limited to the people of Judea and surrounding districts, Elijah's will be to the Jewish people of the dispersion. He will thus have opportunity to complete the mission he commenced so long ago. On Mount Carmel he had prayed for the redemption of Israel, and that prayer yet awaits its answer; he was taken away in the midst of his labours, and will return to consummate them.

In the final restoration of the nation, we constantly come upon the terms "Judah" and "Israel". These are treated in Scripture in both a tribal and a political sense. The former usage treats of Judah as the tribe, and Israel as the twelve tribes. When treated politically, however, Judah relates to those Jews in the land (whatever tribe they may belong to), whilst Israel relates to those who are not of Judah and remain in dispersion. For example, those Jews who returned with Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, are treated politically as Judah, irrespective as to what tribe they may have related to originally. That also is the manner in which they are treated by the Word in relation to the latter-day prophecies, for those in the land, at Christ's coming, are classed under the general title of "Judah". Thus: "**Yahweh shall save the tents of Judah first**" (Zech. 12:7). He shall first save those Jews who are in the land, and afterwards, those who remain outside of it. He shall save the former by intervening at Armageddon, which period of national judgment is described as "the day of Yahweh" (Zech. 14:1). But though the "tents of Judah" will be first saved, the initial preparations for the redemption of Israel scattered abroad will already have been commenced. Before the day of national judgment (Armageddon) dawns, Elijah will be sent to the Jews scattered abroad to make them ready for an inheritance in the land which they will occupy after Gog is destroyed and the Kingdom set up. We plan to try and trace the steps that Elijah will take to accomplish his mission.

Elijah's Associates

The statement of Malachi that Yahweh "will send Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of Yahweh" (Mal. 4:5), does not necessarily mean that Elijah will go forth on that mission unaccompanied by others. In fact, the very opposite is implied. In his Olivet prophecy, the Lord declared: "**He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other**" (Matt. 24:31). This statement is frequently applied to the judgment of the household, but a careful consideration of the context will reveal that the Lord is alluding to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 30:4, and that the statement relates to the complete restoration of the tribes of Israel. In the previous verse, the Lord

declared that they (the nations) shall "see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory". The word "coming" is *erchomai* and signifies to move from one place to the other.

The previous verse states that:

- 1. The sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven;**
- 2. The nations shall be caused to mourn;**
- 3. They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

What is meant by those terms? It is obvious, from other parts of the Word, that there will not be any great "sign" in the literal heavens to herald the coming of the Lord, for he shall appear "as a thief" (Rev. 16:15), taking the world off its guard. However, the term "heaven" is frequently used to indicate ruling places, and there does not seem any reason why it should not do so here. What will be the sign of the Son of man in authority and power? Obviously his presence at Armageddon. As his resurrection witnessed to his Sonship (Rom. 1:3), his presence at this battle of the nations will testify to his Kingship—his status in the political heaven. Moreover, his belligerent manifestation there shall cause "all the tribes of the earth to mourn" for it will be accompanied by great outpouring of divine judgment.

But what of the third point mentioned above? The "clouds of heaven" represent the glorified saints who will be his associates in the governing of the nations. Some of them are referred to in Hebrews 12:1 as a "cloud of witnesses" whose example has encouraged the saints of later ages. Such are to be made "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36), and will exercise authority over the world of the Millennial age (Heb. 2:5; Rev. 2:26, 5:9-10). The nations, including Jewry already gathered into the land, will mourn because of past blindness as they witness the Lord taking up his position of authority in Jerusalem in company with his glorified brethren. They will constitute his "angels" or messengers (as the word signifies) of the future age, and part of the duty of some of them will be to restore the twelve tribes. Thus the reference quoted above from Matthew 24:31. All the allusions of this verse can be aligned with the restoration of Israel. Thus the sounding of the trumpet by which people were drawn together, is given in a context relating to the complete restoration of Israel (see Isaiah 18:3; 27:13; Zech. 9:14). His "elect" is a term applied to the nation of Israel as well as the saints, for it signifies "chosen," and it is the chosen nation (see Ps. 105:6, 43; Isa. 65:15). The gathering from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, is a reference to Deuteronomy 30:4. Those "angels" of the Lord, deputed to go forth and supervise the restoration of Israel, will be under the direction of Elijah. This is fitting to his labors in the days of Ahab, for Elijah did not work as an individual, but as leader of the "sons of the prophets" (2 Kings 2:15). His work of reform had the assistance of a group of dedicated men given to the prophetic office, and who formed an organised resistance to the evil policies of the king and his consort, such schools of the prophets, organised originally by Samuel so described as "the first of the prophets" (Acts 7), continued throughout the centuries. That is the point of the protest of Amos: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son" (Amos 7:14). He was not one of the organised group of prophets in the midst of Israel at that time. Placed in charge of the work of restoring Israel, Elijah will have associates with him whose labors he will supervise. Though sent out "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh" (Mal. 4:5), the restoration will not be effected until after Armageddon, and, in all, will occupy some 40 years in its completion (Micah 7:15).