

# The DAILY JESUS NEWS #267

## Tuesday of Passion Week... Day of Testing and Teaching Jesus' Private Teaching to His Disciples: The "Olivet Discourse"

### Part I: The Setting, and Key Command of the Discourse

MT 24.1-5 (Parallel Texts: M 13.1-5; LK 21.5-8)

<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. <sup>L</sup>Some of his disciples were discussing how the temple was permanently adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. <sup>M</sup>One of them said to Jesus,

"Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

<sup>2</sup> <sup>MT</sup>"Do you see all these <sup>M</sup>great buildings?" he asked. <sup>L</sup>"As for what you see here, <sup>MT</sup>truly I tell you, <sup>L</sup>the time will come when <sup>MT</sup>not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, <sup>M</sup>opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew <sup>MT</sup>came to him privately.

"Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: *"I command you to keep on watching out that no one deceives you."*

<sup>5</sup> *"For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and <sup>L</sup>'the time is near,' <sup>MT</sup>and will deceive many. <sup>L</sup>'I command you not to follow after them."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On Mount Olivet, Just Outside Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	C. Tuesday: Day of Testing and Teaching
	Jesus' Private Teaching to His Disciples: "The Olivet Discourse"
Title	Part I: The Setting, and Key Command of the Discourse

### COMMENT:

We have considered 16 readings so far covering Tuesday of Passion Week. These involved the Jewish leadership testing and baiting Jesus, and his own response to them. In the afternoon, the focus changed dramatically.

Jesus had concluded his evangelistic, public speaking ministry. Now he would give his full attention to equipping his own disciples for his departure and return to his Father. Two great teaching sessions by Jesus will dominate the narrative of his final hours from Tuesday afternoon, until his arrest around midnight on Thursday night. These are

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the 'Olivet Discourse' (MT 24-25) and the 'Farewell Discourse' (JN 13-17). Today's reading is the first of nine readings that constitute the "Olivet Discourse." Jesus gave this teaching on Tuesday afternoon, while seated on Mt. Olivet, looking at the temple compound.

Today's reading gives us the setting for this crucial teaching, and states Jesus' most important, key command concerning it. The teaching was crucial because it prophesied Jesus' final return to earth in the future, and various conditions that will accompany his coming. Jesus' key command should control how we live in light of this teaching.

### The Setting

After pouring out his sorrow over the future of Jerusalem, and the nation, Jesus had walked out of the Temple compound for the last time in his earthly life. As many times as they had seen and experienced the temple, his disciples were filled with awe and pride concerning it as they left. However, it was an outer, fading glory.

Jesus saw the truth of the hardness of the people's hearts, and the sure destruction that was coming. He was not impressed with mere stone, and ceremonies. The Greek grammar in verses one through three emphasizes the difference in perspective between Jesus and his disciples.

The disciples used the perfect tense to describe the way the stones were laid, one on top of each other. This temple--the third built on this site in Jewish history, had been in the construction process for almost 50 straight years. It was the most amazing building complex in the region--one of the seven wonders of the entire world. By using the perfect tense the disciples were emphasizing the permanence and stability of this building. They believed that it would stand through the ages.

Jesus, on the other hand, used the grammatical tool of "emphatic negation" again to underscore the truth that **"not one stone will be left standing on another."** The destruction would be complete. Nothing can stand before God's judgement, and the temple was certain to be cast down.

Jesus' prophesy was utterly astounding. The disciples were left with nothing but incredulity. At the same time, their Lord was never wrong. His words could not be pushed away. After taking some time for them to sink in, four of Jesus' closest friends, whom he had called to follow him at the same time, and were literally his first disciples, came to him privately to find out more. When would the temple be destroyed? What would be the signs of Jesus' final coming?

Interpreting this prophetic discourse from Jesus is a little bit difficult because the Lord was answering two related questions:

- (1) When will the Temple be destroyed?
- (2) When will Jesus return for the final time?

The four disciples asked these twin questions because they thought the destruction of the Temple was tantamount to the end of all things--the end of the age. They viewed Jesus as a military Messiah like King David, who would return to Jerusalem after its destruction to defeat the enemies of God and establish his reign, just as David extended Israel's territory through the power of the sword.

The disciples had no idea on Tuesday afternoon of Passion Week when they asked these questions, that Jesus would die, rise from the dead, ascend back to heaven, and return to the earth at the end of the age, long after the destruction of Jerusalem. There would be thousands of years of history between the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and his final coming.

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Because Jesus addressed both of these questions in his discourse, we have divided the content of his message in future DAILY JESUS NEWS into separate sections covering the destruction of the Temple, and his final return. These are two distinct, different events. Jesus knew this; his disciples did not.

### APPLICATION:

Jesus' key command is the application we must all obey. ***"I command that you keep on watching out so that no one deceives you."***

The truths of Jesus' final coming are intended to arouse diligence in guarding ourselves in two ways:

- (1) to be prepared for his return, and
- (2) to avoid the many deceptions that are associated with the events of his coming

Unfortunately, Jesus knew that this command was essential for his disciples, because no subject can lead us astray from him faster than this one. The deceptions and temptations regarding the proper attitude toward Jesus' return have spawned huge losses in time, energy, and resources in the Church that have distracted us from fulfilling our primary mission of *"making disciples of all the nations."* Jesus' command addressed our greatest need in obeying this teaching.

Please commit yourself to doing exactly what Jesus commanded: to ***"keep on watching"*** in preparation for his return as we move through the next eight readings of Jesus' words in the "Olivet Discourse."

Pay careful attention to every piece of information, and command in these readings, that all reinforce the central command to ***"keep on paying careful attention"*** to be ready for his return, and avoid deception regarding it.