

YOUTH



LEVEL 8

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 9



Christ's Olivet Prophecy

CHRIST'S OLIVET PROPHECY

Jesus Christ gave some of the most important teachings of His ministry during the last few days of His life. Included in these teachings is the pivotal prophecy of all the Bible—the Olivet Prophecy, which foretells of world events to occur in our time!

In this lesson we will study Christ's prophecy about the end of this present civilization.

In our last lesson, we studied Christ's last public ministry at Jerusalem, including His repeated confrontations with the religious leaders of His day. As you recall, Christ was continually questioned and challenged by the scribes and Pharisees. But now they no longer came to question or criticize Christ. They had determined only to arrest and kill Him.

CHRIST PROPHECIES JERUSALEM'S DESTRUCTION

As Jesus departed from the Temple, one of His disciples commented on the magnificent construction of the Temple. With great anguish, Christ told them of the soon-coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple buildings. "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2).

Christ was speaking of the time about 40 years later when the Temple, along with the

city of Jerusalem, would be destroyed by the armies of the Roman Empire.

After this sobering prophecy, Christ and the disciples walked through the Kidron Valley and up the Mount of Olives. From there they could view the city of Jerusalem. As they looked across the ancient city, the disciples asked Jesus two very important questions.

"Tell us, _____ shall these _____ be [the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple]? and what _____ be the _____ of thy coming, and of the _____ of the _____ [age]?" (Matthew 24:3.)

The disciples wanted to know when the destruction of the Temple would occur, and when Christ would return to set up the Kingdom of God on earth. They expected Christ to return during their lifetime. They did not realize that the prophecy of Christ's return would not be fulfilled until some two millennia in the future.

A COUNTERFEIT GOSPEL

Christ answered the disciples' questions with a stern warning not to be deceived. "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5).

Jesus was explaining that false religious teachers would come, saying that they represented Christ and claiming to be His ministers—even bearing the name "Christian." But in doing this, they would lead many people astray.

These false religious teachers claim to represent Christ, but they preach a false gospel

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

The Kidron Valley near Jerusalem. Christ and His disciples walked across this valley to the Mount of Olives.

YES Photo



Christ warned of a counterfeit gospel—one that would mislead and deceive the many.

about Him. They do not preach the Gospel message that Christ brought.

Jesus said it is necessary to believe the Gospel to be saved. Yet millions of professing Christians today do not know what the Gospel is! Christ's parting commission to His apostles, being sent out as His ministers to build His Church, was this: "Go ye into all the world, and *preach the Gospel*" (Mark 16:15).

Jesus then said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

Notice! Jesus emphasized the importance of believing. They were to believe what they preached—the Gospel! It is necessary to believe the Gospel in order to be saved.

What, then, is the Gospel?

We read in Mark 1:1 that what Mark wrote was the record of the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Next is the story of the baptizing ministry of John the Baptist. Then in verses 14 and 15 we read: "Now after that

John [the Baptist] was put in _____, Jesus came into _____, preaching the _____ of the kingdom of God. And saying, The _____ is fulfilled, and the _____ of _____ is at hand: _____ ye, and _____ the gospel."

From these verses, we see that Christ was proclaiming the Gospel message about the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not man's gospel about the person of Jesus Christ. We hear a great deal today of this false gospel, which confines its message solely to what Jesus supposedly was or what He did. As a result, millions believe *on* Christ, but do not believe His message—the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

For more information about Jesus Christ's true Gospel and the Kingdom of God, write for our free booklets *What Is the True Gospel?* and *Just What Do You Mean . . . Kingdom of God?*

Jesus Christ warned His disciples that many

false preachers would come, misleading and deceiving many people. This began immediately after Christ's death and resurrection.

The Apostle Paul warned in II Corinthians 11:4: "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or *another gospel*, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

Continuing in verse 13: "For such are *false apostles*, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

Even in the first century, false ministers began to teach a counterfeit Christianity and deceived many people. This religious deception grew and actually suppressed Jesus' true message from the world and deceived the whole world about the true Gospel of Christ!

Christ also warned that false "Christs" and false prophets would arise in the end-time. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 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 very elect [God's chosen and converted people]" (Matthew 24:23-24).

This same religious deception is also represented by the white horse and his rider of Revelation 6:2. Write out this scripture on the following lines. _____

Many people have made the error of equating the white horse of Revelation 6 with the true Christ of chapter 19. But notice that the returning Christ of Revelation 19 brandishes a *sword* out of His *mouth* (Revelation 19:15), not a *bow* in His *hand* (Revelation 6:2). Also, the time setting of the two chapters is completely different. Revelation 19 describes the return of Jesus Christ, but Revelation 6



U.S. Army Photo

Christ prophesied that wars would continue until the end of man's civilization.

describes a false Christ and false Gospel deceiving the world prior to Christ's return.

WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

Christ continued His prophecy of end-time events by speaking of a time of wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6).

But to which wars was Christ referring?

Jesus first prophesied of a general condition of war on earth that would continue from his day until the end of man's civilization. Immediately after giving this warning, Christ said, "See that ye be not _____: for all these things must come to pass, but the _____ is not yet" (verse 6).

For nearly 6,000 years, wars—large and small, civil and international—have raged on the earth.

As a project for this lesson, read through a newspaper that reports world news. Then underline or cut out the articles that report wars and rumors of wars. You will find wars of attrition and wars of liberation. There will be religious, sectarian, intertribal and guerrilla wars. All of these fulfill Christ's words.

Verse 7 of Matthew 24 refers to more than the general condition of war around the world. This verse also refers to a specific end-time war of great magnitude—the first and last of its kind—a world war of cataclysmic proportions. Write out the first part of the verse on the lines below.

This particular state of warfare, when "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," indicates global war between allied nations.

The world has already suffered through two world wars, but neither were of the nuclear, world-killing proportions Christ speaks of in Matthew 24:22: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [alive]." Christ referred to this possible total

annihilation of all mankind as the Great Tribulation (verse 21).

Never before has total cosmocide—world death—been in man's power. Never before has man had the potential for the total obliteration of all human life. Just as man has always used whatever weapons were in his possession, mankind will use the weapons that are now in his arsenal.

This prophecy of world war parallels the account in Revelation 6:4, where this condition of war is symbolized by a horseman riding a red horse. "And there went out another _____ that was _____: and _____ was _____ to him that _____ thereon to take _____ from the _____, and that they should _____ one _____: and there was given unto him a great _____."

The first horseman rides forth "conquering, and to conquer" in the name of his false religion (Revelation 6:2). The second horseman symbolizes war, one of the instruments of that conquest. Prophecy describes this end-time military instrument as a future ten-nation alliance (Daniel 2, Revelation 13).

Among those who will be punished at this time are the modern-day descendants of the ancient ten-tribed house of Israel. These represent the peoples of the United States, the British Empire and some of the democracies of northwestern Europe.

Today, power blocks are being formed that will eventually clash in the most titanic series of battles in human history. These are frightening words, but neither God's people nor their children should be frightened if they are obeying God's laws. Christ said to His true followers, "See that ye be not troubled."

THE SCOURGE OF FAMINE

Famine rapidly follows after war. Starvation and scarcity are the results of crop damage, contaminated water supplies, destroyed livestock and the unusually high food demands for the sustenance of a large army.

In Matthew 24:7, Christ spoke of famine in



YES Photo

Famine will rapidly follow the coming world war of cataclysmic proportions.

the context of war. He again used the plural, famines, referring to many recurring instances of famine over the centuries, increasing as never before at the time just prior to His Second Coming.

Famines caused by war still strike the earth periodically. However, despite the occasional famines caused by war, humanity faces a different kind of famine in the 20th century. These famines are caused by the problems of overpopulation and dwindling food supplies in developing nations.

Each year the world has millions more people to feed, mostly in the poorer nations. Although the world's food production roughly keeps pace with this increasing population, the unequal distribution of that food is a primary problem facing the hungry. Food is not being harvested where it is needed, and political and economic difficulties oftentimes prevent delivery of the excess food of rich nations to poorer nations.

Jesus Christ prophesied of this condition when He said, "And there shall be famines." However, Christ was also referring to a specific great famine in the near future.

The black horse of Revelation 6:5-6 represents worldwide famine that will result from global war. This terrible famine will afflict the peoples of the United States and Britain as well as the vast majority of mankind. This famine will spread to all peoples and nations until mankind turns to God in total surrender to His way of life.

After mankind learns this lesson, God will once again bless and prosper all nations in the wonderful World Tomorrow.

WORLDWIDE PESTILENCE

Worldwide disease epidemics overlap the famines prophesied by Christ. Millions more will die, even though they survived the initial nuclear blasts and ensuing famines.

Such massive plagues don't presently afflict

the developed countries. Sanitary standards, medical science and organized security measures currently are able to separate "civilization" from wilderness. But the potential for an epidemic is always present when such protective conditions break down.

Christ's prophecy in Matthew 24 is paralleled in Revelation 6:7-8. This time the horrors of disease epidemics are represented by a horseman riding a pale horse. Write out the first part of verse 8 on the lines below.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The events prophesied by Christ in Matthew 24:4-7 have yet to reach their final impact on the world. Notice verse 8: "_____ these are the _____ of _____." These events are the very beginning of the prophesied Great Tribulation, which is the next event to come.

Notice how Jesus explained this time of tribulation to his disciples. "Then shall they _____ you up to be _____, and shall _____ you: and ye shall be _____ of all _____ for my name's _____" (Matthew 24:9).

Christ is speaking of converted Christians as well as the modern-day descendants of the houses of Israel and Judah. Such tribulation did actually occur to the nation of Judah in A.D. 70, but that episode was merely a forerunner of the great national invasions and captivity yet to occur on a worldwide scale in the end-time.

Jesus continues in verses 10-13 of chapter 24: "And _____ shall _____ be _____, and shall _____ one another, and shall _____ one another. And many _____ shall _____, and shall _____ many. And because _____ shall abound, the _____ of many shall _____. But he that shall _____ unto the _____, the same shall be _____."

Continuing in verse 21: "For then shall be _____, such as was not since the _____ of the world to _____, no, nor _____ shall be."

Many people misunderstand when these great end-time events will take place. They often confuse the Great Tribulation with the "Day of the Lord" and the heavenly signs.

The Bible shows us that the Great Tribulation is the time when Satan the devil will vent his wrath upon the world. Satan will be responsible for the suffering of those who are not accounted worthy to escape these horrible occurrences. True Christians who have not remained in contact with God will not be accounted worthy to escape all these things.

This Great Tribulation is a time of war and captivity for the modern-day nations of Israel and Judah, and a time of martyrdom for truly converted Christians.

Do You Remember?

1. Christ's prophecy given in Matthew 24 is called the _____ Prophecy.
2. Christ prophesied to His disciples on the _____.
3. What was the Gospel message that Christ brought? _____.
4. What are the four world-shaking events that Christ described in Matthew 24? _____
_____.
5. What did Christ call the period of time when great troubles would come upon mankind? _____.
6. Who are the elect? _____.
7. What do the four horsemen of Revelation 6 represent? _____.

GOSPEL PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD

Christ's disciples also asked Him about the sign of His Second Coming (Matthew 24:3). In



YES Photo

Christ's apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong, preaches the "good news" of the coming Kingdom of God.

Matthew 24:14 Jesus interrupted His discussion of the order and time flow of world events to tell them when the end would come: "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."

There is Jesus' answer. He had warned His disciples of false ministers doing away with His message. However, He said that just before the end, the real Gospel about the Kingdom of God would be preached in all nations.

That prophecy is being fulfilled today with the **WORLD TOMORROW** telecast, the **PLAIN TRUTH** magazine and other publications of the Worldwide Church of God.

Only the true Church of God and Christ's

apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong, are fulfilling this prophecy. Only God's Church is preaching Christ's Gospel message of the Kingdom of God to the world.

A WAY OF ESCAPE

Christ showed that for most of God's people there is a way of escaping the Great Tribulation. Jesus commands us to watch and pray. "Watch ye therefore, and _____ always, that ye may be accounted _____ to _____ all these things that shall _____ to _____, and to _____ before the _____ of _____" (Luke 21:36).

We should be watching world events. This will enable us to see the Bible prophecies of the

end-time being fulfilled as Christ's return draws nearer.

Have any of Christ's prophecies been fulfilled since He first started the Church? On the lines below, write out some of these prophecies. You may want to ask your parents for assistance. _____

_____.

You should pray for help in obeying your parents and keeping God's laws so that you can be considered worthy to escape the Great Tribulation.

In Matthew 24:15-20, Christ urged us to pray that we would not need to escape on a Sabbath day or in winter. Special warnings are also given to pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Jesus Christ promised to His own elect protection from the prophesied tribulation that will soon strike this world. And fortunately, God is not only going to save these elect, but millions of others "for the elect's sake" (Matthew 24:22). This is mankind's only hope for survival.

HEAVENLY SIGNS PRIOR TO CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

Immediately following the period of tribulation, mankind will witness startling events. "Immediately _____ the _____ of those days shall the _____ be _____, and the _____ shall not _____ her _____, and the _____ shall _____ from _____, and the _____ of the _____ shall be _____" (Matthew 24:29).

The prophet Joel also spoke of this same time. "The _____ shall be turned into _____, and the _____ into _____, before the _____ and the _____ day of the LORD come" (Joel 2:31).

Joel refers to these heavenly signs as the beginning of the terrible Day of the Lord.

Let's notice what the Bible says concerning these heavenly signs: "And, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" (Revelation 6:12-14).

This is the time when God will directly intervene in world affairs. The Day of the Lord is the time when God will punish the rebellious nations of this world (Revelation 6:17).

God says He will bring distress upon defiant and sinful people who hate truth and peace and love evil (Zephaniah 1:14-15, 17). This day of the Eternal's wrath will come after the heavenly signs in the sun and moon. And these frightening supernatural signs will immediately follow the Great Tribulation.

We have learned from Matthew 24 and Joel 2:31 the following sequence of events:

- 1st _____.
- 2nd _____.
- 3rd _____.
- 4th _____.
- 5th _____.
- 6th _____.
- 7th _____.

Do You Remember?

1. What supernatural event immediately follows the Great Tribulation? _____.
2. It is important that we _____ and _____ always to be worthy to escape.
3. The Great Tribulation is the wrath of _____ upon mankind.
4. What, according to Christ, is the sure sign of the end of this age? _____

_____.
5. The time of God's intervention in the affairs of mankind is called the _____.

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

Christ described His Second Coming as lightning that flashes from the east and is seen in the west. All those alive when He returns will be able to see it (Matthew 24:27).

Christ will return to the earth in power and glory to rule the earth and bring peace: "And then shall _____ the _____ of the _____ of _____ in heaven: and then shall all the _____ of the _____ mourn, and they shall _____ the _____ of _____ coming in the _____ of _____ with _____ and great _____" (Matthew 24:30).

Christ warned His disciples earlier that false prophets would arise to deceive many people. For centuries Satan has sent his false prophets to deceive people into expecting the imminent return of the Messiah. As a result, many people have become doubtful that Christ will ever return. Now that God's true servants are finally announcing the imminence of Christ's Second Coming, most people do not believe!

Events will be further confused as a powerful religious leader of enormous influence dominates the world scene. Christ says that this great false prophet, who will hold sway during the Great Tribulation, will perform great miracles and wonders trying to deceive even converted Christians (Matthew 24:24).

Christ will return to this earth as the seventh trumpet sounds. These trumpets will begin to sound during the Day of the Lord. Notice Matthew 24:31: "And he [God] shall send his _____ with a great _____ of a _____, and they shall _____ his _____ from the _____, from one end of _____ to the other."

God's people will be gathered from all over the earth. This will include God's people who will be alive when Christ returns and those who have died in Christ over the centuries. This is the first resurrection.

The Apostle Paul wrote in I Thessalonians

4:15-17 that those who are dead "asleep" will be resurrected. As Christ returns at the sound of the trumpet, those Christians who are alive, along with those who have qualified and died, will all be caught up in the air to join Him in the clouds. They will then descend with Christ as He returns to take over the rulership of the earth.

Paul also wrote: "Behold, I shew you a _____; We shall not all _____, but we shall all be _____, In a _____, in the _____ of an _____, at the last _____: for the _____ shall sound, and the _____ shall be _____ incorruptible, and we shall be _____" (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

Can you imagine such a wonderful event? Imagine seeing your parents along with other converted members of God's true Church changed into immortal, spirit-composed members of God's Family! They will rise to meet Christ in the air as He returns to this earth. They will touch down on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem as Christ ushers in a Millennium of world peace. What a fantastic future we have to look forward to!

NO MAN KNOWS THE HOUR

The inevitable question asked by Christ's disciples, and doubtless one that concerns you and me, is—exactly when will Christ return?

Jesus did not tell us. Christ said that no man, not even the angels in heaven, know the exact time of His Second Coming (Matthew 24:36).

Christ did say that it is possible to know when His return is very near. In the parable of the fig tree, Christ said that we know when summer is near when a fig tree puts forth leaves. In the same way, we observe world conditions to know approximately when Christ will return.

As we have already seen, Christ spoke of many signs and conditions in the world that will immediately precede His return. Another sign that Christ gave is found in verses 37-39. In your own words, summarize these verses on

the lines below. _____

Just as the people at the time of the Flood were corrupt, selfish, obsessed with entertainment and interracially marrying, similar conditions will exist at the end-time. In fact, these very conditions exist now.

By watching world events we are able to see ample evidence of end-time conditions. And just as the Flood suddenly came and swept that civilization away, so will the end-time events and Second Coming of Christ come swiftly.

On the lines below, write out the ways in which you can watch world events. _____

Again Christ repeats His previous warning: “_____ therefore: for ye _____ what _____ your _____ doth _____” (Matthew 24:42). We as Christ’s disciples are to be in a constant state of readiness for His return by watching world conditions, praying and remaining close to God.

If Christ’s people are doing this, they will not be caught unprepared by Christ’s return. In the same way, Christ said that the owner of a house would be prepared against robbery if he were warned in advance (Matthew 24:43).

BEING A FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT

In the latter few verses of Matthew 24 and all of chapter 25, Christ admonishes His Church to be ready for His return. He exhorts His people to be prepared spiritually. They should be obedient to His laws, and living the example expected of a Christian. They should be practicing the “give” way rather than getting for themselves. They should be doing His work until He returns.

In the parable of Matthew 24:45-51, Christ

likens Himself to a lord who has entrusted his affairs and work to a servant. In the same way, Christ has entrusted His Church and Work to His people. What does He expect to find upon His return? “_____ is that _____, whom his lord when he _____ shall find so _____. Verily I say unto you, That he shall _____ him _____ over all his _____” (Matthew 24:46-47).

Just as the baptized members of God’s Church are preparing themselves to become spirit beings at Christ’s return and to rule with Him, so must the young people in God’s Church be preparing. You can prepare for an exciting job in the World Tomorrow through obedience to God and your parents, as well as through involvement in the Church’s youth programs.

In our next lesson, we will conclude the final week of Christ’s life with the events of Christ’s final Passover.



Young people can begin preparing today for exciting jobs in the World Tomorrow.

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Produced in cooperation with Imperial Schools.

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BIBLE MEMORY

John 3:16

UNSCRAMBLE THE LISTS

Listed below are 20 key words and phrases found in the Olivet Prophecy in Matthew 24. Unscramble each of the words and phrases and write them in the list to the right. When you have completed the new list, unscramble the letters in the boxes to complete the verse below. When you have finished, write a short paragraph about how this scripture is being fulfilled today.

BTIULRNIOTA

SWRA

SNMFAIE

KSUHEREAQTA

SCEIPSETLNE

YTEABR

SEFLATPOREHSP

ERUDNE

LEPSOGEDEHCARP

SWNEROD

WTHCA

GNOTIARNEE

PGNIEWE

SYDAFNOOHA

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LTNIGNHIG

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_____ □ _____ □ _____ □ _____

“And this _____ of the _____
shall be _____ in all the _____
for a _____ unto all _____;
and then shall the _____” (Matthew 24:14).