

The Nights the Lights Went Out on Israel

Olivet Discourse Sermon #6 of 14, January 18, 1998

By David Curtis

Matthew 24:22-29

We are working our way through Matthew's account of the Olivet Discourse. We must remember that in this discourse the Lord is answering the disciple's questions about the destruction of the Jewish temple, the sign of His presence and the end of the age. As we work our way through this discourse, we must fight the temptation to read this as if it was written to us in the twentieth century. Jesus is speaking to his disciples in the first century and we must study it in that context. Audience Relevance is something we must always keep in mind as we read and study the Bible; what did this mean to the original audience? Do you know of any book in the Bible written to the saints in Tidewater, Virginia? I don't. The Scriptures are not written **to us!** They are **for us**, but they were not written to us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Scriptures are God-breathed and profitable for us, but they are not written to us. Thus we must understand the original intent before we apply them to our lives. Now, as I'm sure you understand it is not always easy to find out exactly what the original intent of the author was; we are separated from the original audience by thousands of years, by culture, by history and by language. But if we do our homework and compare Scripture with Scripture, we can get a good idea of the authors original intent.

This passage of Scripture is very difficult to interpret with absolute certainty. This is one of the more difficult prophetic passages in the New Testament. W. Robertson Nicoll said, "What is said thereon is so perplexing as to tempt a modern expositor to wish it had not been there." I don't want to be like the little boy who was drawing a picture. His father asked him what he was drawing and he replied, "I am drawing a picture of God." His father said, "Son, nobody knows what God looks like." "Well," said the son, "they will when I get through with this picture!" Although I love the little boy's confidence, I don't want to assume that once I explain this passage everyone will know the correct interpretation of it. My understanding of this passage comes from comparing Scripture with Scripture, and since I believe that the Scripture interprets itself, I am fairly confident in my interpretation. I would ask that you all be good Bereans and search the Scripture and see if what I am telling you lines up with the truth of Scripture.

We saw in our last study that our Lord told the disciples that they would see the "Abomination of Desolation" spoken of by Daniel, which Luke explained as Jerusalem surrounded by armies, and when they did there would come a time of "Great Tribulation."

Matthew 24:21 (NKJV) "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

We looked at this verse in depth last week and we saw that the "Great Tribulation" is past. Sorry to disappoint you but it is over, it happened 2,000 years ago. It was the destruction of Jerusalem as the context of this and the parallel gospel accounts makes abundantly clear. And as Jesus said, there will never be anything to equal it. Our Savior wept at the foresight of these calamities, and as we

read the accounts of Josephus, it is almost impossible to keep from weeping ourselves. Josephus said, "To speak in brief, no other city ever suffered such things, as no other generation from the beginning of the world was even more fruitful of wickedness."

Matthew 24:22 (NKJV) "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

Josephus computes the number of those who perished in the siege at eleven hundred thousand, besides those who were slain in other places: and if the Romans had gone on destroying in this manner the whole nation of the Jews would certainly, in a little time, have been eliminated. The word "**saved**" here is not a reference to redemption but to physical deliverance. Had the war gone on much longer no one would have been left alive. "**But for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened.**" - Mark puts it this way in 13:20, "*But for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, the Lord hath shortened the days,*" The elect is a well known designation in scripture for Christians. Through the fury of the zealots on one hand, and the hatred of the Romans on the other, and partly through the difficulty of enduring in the mountains without houses or provisions, everybody would have been destroyed either by the sword or by famine, if the days had not been shortened. But providentially, the days were shortened. Josephus said, "Titus himself was desirous of putting a speedy end to the siege, having Rome and the riches and the pleasures there, before his eyes. Some of his officers proposed to him to turn the siege into a blockade, and since they could not take the city by storm, to starve it into a surrender : but he thought it not becoming to sit still with so great an army and he feared lest the length of the time should diminish the glory of his success; every thing indeed may be effected in time, but speed contributes much to the fame and splendor of actions." The Jews, too, helped to shorten the days, by their divisions and mutual slaughters; by burning their own provisions, which would have lasted for many years; and by deserting their strong holds, where they could never have been taken by force, but by famine alone. By these means, "the days were shortened." Otherwise, Jerusalem could never have been taken in such a short time, it was well fortified, and able to sustain a longer siege. The Romans could hardly ever have prevailed but for the factions and seditions within. Titus himself ascribed his success to God, as he was viewing the fortifications, after the city was taken. His words to his friends were very remarkable: "We have fought," he said, "with God on our aide; and it is God who hath pulled the Jews out of these strong holds; for what could the hands of men or machines avail against these towers?" God, therefore, in the opinion of Titus, as well as the inspired writers, "shortened the days."

It wasn't in Jerusalem alone but all over the country that the war waged, and had it gone on many of the Christians who fled to the outlying areas would also been in danger.

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

Jesus had cautioned his disciples against false christs and false prophets before, but he gives a more specific caution against them about the time of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

We learn from Josephus that many such impostors did arise about that time and promised deliverance from God, being persuaded by the tyrants or governors to prevent the people and soldiers from deserting to the Romans; and the worse the Jews situation, the more open they would be to listen to these deceptions, and the more ready to follow the deceivers. Hegesippus, too, in Eusebius mentions the coming of false Christs and false prophets about the same time.

These false christs and prophets were so convincing that if it were possible, they would have even deceived the elect. Dositheus was reputed to work wonders, according to Origen : Barchoebibas too, who Jerome saith pretended to vomit flames.

25 "See, I have told you beforehand.

Christ had warned them about the coming of these false christs and false prophets.

26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

Several of the false christs and false prophets led their followers "into the desert." Josephus, in his Antiquities says, "Many impostors and cheats persuaded the people to follow them into the desert, where they promised to show manifest wonders and signs done by the providence of God; and many being persuaded suffered the punishment of their folly; for Felix brought them back, and chastised them." Again in his history of the Jewish war, speaking of the same people, he says, "These impostors, under a pretense of divine inspiration, affecting innovations and changes, persuaded the multitude to grow mad, and led them forth 'into the desert,' as if God would there show them the signs of liberty. Against these Felix, for it seemed to be the foundation of a revolt, sent horse and foot soldiers, and slew a great number of them." Josephus mentions another impostor, "Who promised salvation to the people, and a cessation of all evils, if they would follow him 'into the desert;' but Festus sent horse and foot soldiers against him, and destroyed the deceiver himself, and those who followed him." Several of these impostors led their followers into "the secret chambers" or places of security. Josephus mentioned a false prophet who, "Declared to the people in the city, that God commanded them to go up into the temple, and there they should receive the signs of deliverance. A multitude of men, women, and children, went up accordingly; but instead of deliverance, the place was set on fire by the Romans, and six thousand perished miserably in the flames, or by throwing themselves down to escape them."

I'm sure you can understand that during a time of such distress, the people would be open to hear and follow anyone who promised them deliverance from their miseries.

27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

His coming will not be in this or that particular place, but like the lightning, will be **sudden** and **universal**. The appearance of the true Christ will be clearly distinguishable from that of the false Christ. Josephus says, "The Roman army entered into Judea on the east side of it, and carried on their conquest westward, as if not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very route, which the army would take, was intended in the comparison of the lightning coming out of the east, and shining even unto the west." While this may be true, I think that Christ's emphasis here, based on the immediate context, is that His coming will be swift and universal judgment.

What this verse tells us is that the Lord's coming will be like lightning in some manner; there is a comparison here "*for as*" and "*so also*." The word "**coming**" here is the Greek word *parousia*. This word is used four times by Matthew, all of them in chapter 24. This is the same word the disciples used in their question to Jesus. They asked, "*What will be the sign of Your coming?*" Remember from our earlier study on [verse 3](#), that as we compare all three gospel accounts of this question, you see that the disciples considered His coming and the end of the age to be identical events with the destruction of Jerusalem. To the disciples, the *parousia* was not used of a second coming but signified the full manifestation of His Messiahship; a glorious appearing in authority and power. So

we could translate it this way, "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the glorious appearing in authority and power be of the Son of Man.

What does the idea of lightning tell us? Many of the modern futurists interpret the idea of lightning as something visible to the whole world. Walvoord says, "Apparently, the heavens will be ablaze with the glory of God." F.C. Cook says, "The coming of Christ shall not be an obscure one, confined to a particular place, and signified from thence by report, but one visible to the whole world. Surely this again is an intimation that the second coming of Christ is not to be identified with any local event, such as the destruction of Jerusalem."

Now, folks isn't lightning a local event? Can a flash of lightning be seen by the whole world? No, but it can possibly be seen by a whole city.

I think that by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can see that lightning refers to God's **judgment**, not to a bright light of glory that everyone will see. In these Old Testament passages we see local judgments of God described by the use of lightning.

2 Samuel 22:14-15 (NKJV) "The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice. 15 He sent out arrows and scattered them; Lightning bolts, and He vanquished them.

The Hebrew word for lightning is *baraq*, it means lightning.

Psalms 18:14 (NKJV) He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe, Lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them.

Zechariah 9:14 (NKJV) Then the LORD will be seen over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, And go with whirlwinds from the south.

Habakkuk 3:11-12 (NKJV) The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering (baraq,) 12 You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger.

Habakkuk interprets his imagery as a prophecy of the military invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans.

The Greek word used for lightning in Matthew 24:27 is *astrape*, it means lightning; by anal. glare:-- lightning, bright shining. The same Greek word is also used in other passages that speak of judgment.

Luke 10:18 (NKJV) And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

That speaks of the judgment of God on Satan.

Revelation 16:18-19 (NKJV) And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. 19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

It seems to me, that when Jesus compares his coming to lightning, that he is saying that His coming will be seen in **judgment**. Albert Barnes, in his commentary on this verse says, "...the destruction of Jerusalem is described as his coming, his act."

I think that the designation "Son of Man" is significant here. Son of man is a New Testament designation for Jesus as God incarnate in flesh and agent of divine **judgment**. I think that this verse is clearly telling us that Christ's parousia will be seen in the destruction of Jerusalem. The immediate context bears this out, these verses all speak of judgment.

28 "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The Jewish nation was a **carcass**, which was morally and judicially dead, and the Romans descended upon it and devoured it. This language is also seen in the judgment language of the Old Testament.

Habakkuk 1:6-8 (NKJV) For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. 7 They are terrible and dreadful; Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. 8 Their horses also are swifter than leopards, And more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar; They fly as the eagle that hastens to eat.

Isaiah 46:10-11 (NKJV) Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, (Cyrus the Persian King) **The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.**

Jeremiah 7:33-34 (NKJV) "The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten them away. 34 "Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For the land shall be desolate.

Hosea 8:1 (NKJV) "Set the trumpet to your mouth! He shall come like an eagle against the house of the LORD, Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law.

The victories of the Romans were not confined to the city of Jerusalem, but like a flood, overran the whole land. Where ever the Jews are, there will Christ be taking vengeance upon them by the Romans. Josephus said, "There was no part of Judea, which did not partake of the calamities of the capital city. At Antioch, the Jews being falsely accused of a design to burn the city, many of them were burnt in the theater, and others were slain. The Romans pursued, and took, and slew them every where, as particularly at the siege of Machaerus; at the wood Jardes, where the Jews were surrounded, and none of them escaped, but, being not fewer than three thousand, were all slain ; and at Masada, where being closely besieged, and upon the point of being taken, they first murdered their wives and children, and then themselves to the number of nine hundred and sixty, to prevent their falling into the enemies' hands. Many were slain in Egypt, and their temple there was shut up: and in Cyrene the followers of Jonathan, a weaver, and author of new disturbances, were most of them slain; he himself was taken prisoner, and by his false accusation three thousand of the richest Jews were condemned and put to death." With this account, Josephus concludes his history of the Jewish war.

Albert Barnes says, "This verse is connected with the preceding by the word 'for,' implying that this is a reason for what is said there-that the Son of man would certainly come to destroy the city, and that he would come suddenly. The meaning is that he would come, by means of the Roman armies, as certainly, as suddenly, and as unexpectedly as whole flocks of vultures and eagles, though unseen before, see their prey at a great distance and suddenly gather in multitudes around it ... So keen is their vision as aptly to represent the Roman armies, though at an immense distance, spying, as it were, Jerusalem, a putrid carcass, and hastening in multitudes to destroy it" (Commentary on Matthew 24:28).

John Broadus(1886) said, "Christ shall be revealed with a sudden vengeance; for when God shall cast off the city and people, grown ripe for destruction, like a carcass thrown out, the Roman soldiers, like eagles, shall straight fly to it with their eagles (ensigns) to tear and devour it."

29 "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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Modern commentators generally understand this, and what follows, as the end of the world; but the words "*immediately after the tribulation of those days*," show, that he is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately following the tribulation just mentioned, and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem. The word "**immediately**" is the Greek word *eutheos*, it means directly, at once or soon, as soon as, forthwith, immediately, shortly, straightway. Notice carefully when this takes place -- immediately after the tribulation of THOSE days. We have seen that the tribulation happened in 67-70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem so what ever this verse is referring to, happened immediately afterward.

If you are not familiar with the **apocalyptic language** of the Old Testament, you will not understand what Christ is saying here. This language is common among the Old Testament prophets. This idea is seen clearly as we look at passages where mention is made of the destruction of a state and government using language which seems to set forth the end of the world.

Isaiah 13:1 (NKJV) The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

In this chapter God is talking about the judgment that is to fall upon Babylon. The word "burden" is the Hebrew word "massa", an utterance, chiefly a doom. This introduction sets the stage for the subject matter in this chapter, and if we forget this, our interpretations of Isaiah 13 can go just about anywhere our imagination wants to go. This is not an oracle against the **universe** or world but against the nation of Babylon.

Isaiah 13:6 (NKJV) Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Isaiah 13:9-13 (NKJV) Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. 11 "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. 12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.

Now remember, he is speaking about the destruction of Babylon, but it sounds like world wide destruction. The terminology of a context cannot be expanded beyond the scope of the subject under discussion. The spectrum of language surely cannot go outside the land of Babylon. If you were a Babylonian and Babylon was destroyed, would it seem like the world was destroyed? Yes! Your world would be destroyed.

Isaiah 13:17 (NKJV) "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, Who will not regard silver; And as for gold, they will not delight in it.

This is an historical event that took place in 539 BC. When the Medes destroyed Babylon, the Babylonian world came to an end. This destruction is said, in verse 6, to be from the Almighty, and the Medes constitute the means that God uses to accomplish this task. This is apocalyptic language. This is the way the Bible discusses the fall of a nation. This is obviously figurative language. God did not intend for us to take this literally. If we take this literally, the world ended in 539 BC.

In Isaiah 34, we have a description of the fall of **Edom**, notice the language that is used:

Isaiah 34:3-5 (NKJV) Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses, And the mountains shall be melted with their blood. 4 All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree. 5 "For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse, for judgment.

This is Biblical language to describe the fall of a nation. It should be clear that it is not to be taken literally. Let's look at other Old Testament use of this language.

Nahum 1 (NKJV) The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. 2 God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; The LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies; 3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way In the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet. 4 He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, And dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, And the flower of Lebanon wilts. 5 The mountains quake before Him, The hills melt, And the earth heaves at His presence, Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.

The subject of this judgment is Nineveh, not the physical world. This is the way God describes the fall of a nation. If this language describes the judgment of God on nations, why, when we come to the New Testament, do we make it be the destruction of the **universe**? It is only because we do not understand how the Bible uses this apocalyptic language.

Ezekiel speaks in the same manner of Egypt:

Ezekiel 32:7-8 (NKJV) When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. 8 All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, and bring darkness upon your land,' Says the Lord GOD.

The prophet Daniel speaks, in the same manner, of the slaughter of the Jews by the little horn, the power of the Romans.

Daniel 8:10 (NKJV) And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.

In the **prophetic language**, great commotions and revolutions upon earth are often represented by commotions and changes in the heavens. None of these things literally took place!

Milton Terry said, "From these quotations it is apparent that there is scarcely an expression employed in Matthew and Luke which has not been taken from the Old Testament Scriptures. Such apocalyptic forms of speech are not to be assumed to convey in the New Testament a meaning different from that which they bear in the Hebrew Scriptures. They are part and parcel of the genius of prophetic language."

Samuel Hinds (1829) said, "It requires but a slender acquaintance with the writings of the Old Testament prophets to enable us to observe the peculiarity. It is not only figurative, but the figures are of the boldest kind, involving analogies so remote, as in some instances to be scarcely discoverable. If revolutions in empires be the subject, the prophetic representation is filled with disturbance of the laws of the natural world, and the sun, moon, and stars, are exhibited in commotion. If a deliverer is promised to the Jews, the prophet expresses the promise by the rising of a star, and the like" (Hinds, pp. 209-210)

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) said, "The figurative language of the prophets is taken from the analogy between the world natural and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic. Accordingly, the world natural, consisting of heaven and earth, signifies the whole world politic, consisting of thrones and people, or so much of it as is considered in prophecy; and the things in that world signify the analogous things in this. For the heavens and the things therein signify thrones and dignities, and those who enjoy them: and the earth, with the things thereon, the inferior people; and the lowest parts of the earth, called Hades or Hell, the lowest or most miserable part of them. Great earthquakes, and the shaking of heaven and earth, are put for the shaking of kingdoms, so as to distract and overthrow them; the creating of a new heaven and earth, and the passing of an old one; or the beginning and end of a world, for the rise and ruin of a body politic signified thereby. The sun, for the whole species and race of kings, in the kingdoms of the world politic; the moon, for the body of common people considered as the king's wife; the stars, for subordinate princes and great men; or for bishops and rulers of the people of God, when the sun is Christ. Setting of the sun, moon, and stars; darkening the sun, turning the moon into blood, and falling of the stars, for the ceasing of a kingdom."(Observations on the Prophecies, Part i. chap. ii)

Dr. John Owen (1721) said, "Not to hold you too long upon what is so plain and evident, you may take it for a rule, that, in the denunciations of the judgments of God, through all the prophets, heaven, sun, moon, stars, and the like appearing beauties and glories of the aspectable heavens, are taken for governments, governors, dominions in political states, as Isa. 14:12-15; Jer 15:9, 51:25. Isaiah 13:13; Ps. 68:6; Joel 2:10; Rev. 8:12; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25; Isa 60:20; Obad. 4; Rev 8:13; 11:12; 20:11." (vol. 8, p. 255, in a sermon entitled Shaking and Translating of Heaven and Earth, preached on April 19, 1649)

James Stuart Russell (1878) said, "The symbols are, in fact, equivalent to those employed by our Lord when predicting the doom of Israel." Immediately after the tribulation of those days (the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem) shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (Matt 24:29). Both passages refer to the same catastrophe and employ very similar figures; besides which we have the authority of our Lord for fixing the event and the period of which He speaks within the limits of the generation then in existence: that is to say, the reference can only be to the judgment of the Jewish nation and the abrogation of the Mosaic economy at the Parousia." (p. 289-290).

John Gill (1809) said, "Ver. 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, &c.] That is, immediately after the distress the Jews would be in through the siege of Jerusalem, and the

calamities attending it; just upon the destruction of that city, and the temple in it, with the whole nation of the Jews, shall the following things come to pass;..... and that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, will not answer to the word 'immediately', or show that that should be understood of two thousand years after: besides, all the following things were to be fulfilled before that present generation, in which Christ lived, passed away, #Mt 24:34 and therefore must be understood of things that should directly, and immediately take place upon, or at the destruction of the city and temple."

We see this apocalyptic language used all through the book of Revelation. I believe that the book of Revelation is an expanded version of the Olivet Discourse. Notice how John used apocalyptic language.

Revelation 6:13-17 (NKJV) And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Is this talking about the end of the world in our future? NO! John is dealing with Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70. Look at what Jesus said as he was on his way to be crucified:

Luke 23:28-30 (NKJV) But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 "For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' 30 "Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!""

Jesus was telling the women of His day to weep for THEMSELVES because judgment was going to come upon THEM. In Revelation 6, during the great tribulation which happened in AD 67-70, we see them crying out for the mountains to fall on them, just as Jesus said they would. This language is picturing the response of sinful man to the awful judgment of God.

The biblical evidence is overwhelming, the Olivet Discourse, in its entirety, is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The only thing that would make us push any of these things into the future are our own presuppositions. In this vivid picturesque language Jesus is describing Jerusalem's destruction. In AD 70, the lights went out in Israel for good. When the tribulation was over, physical Israel ceased to exist. God's people were no longer distinguished by physical birth, but by spiritual birth alone. The Old Covenant was over, and the New fully instituted.

This message was preached by [David B. Curtis](#) on January 18, 1998.