

Basic Training Bible Ministries

presents

The Olivet Discourse

The Prophecies and Parables of Jesus' Return

Gene Cunningham



The Olivet Discourse

*"But as the days of Noah were,
so also will the coming of the Son
of Man be." Mat 24:37*

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Introduction

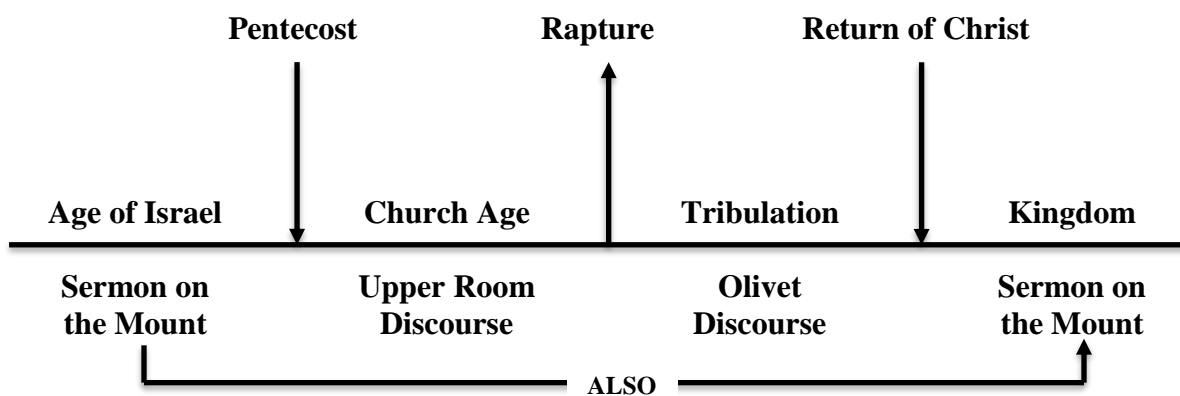
The Olivet Discourse is one of the three major discourses (sermons) of Jesus. They include:

1. The Sermon on the Mount/Galilee Discourse (Matthew 5–7)
2. The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24–25; Mark 13; Luke 21)
3. The Upper Room Discourse (John 13–17)

Each of these messages is aimed at a specific period of history, which we call a dispensation. They lay out God's dispensational plan, like a road map, from the time of the crucifixion to the end of time. The **Sermon on the Mount** was directed to the generation in which Jesus lived and was His platform as King—if Israel would receive Him. Obviously, they rejected Him as their King. However, this will be the basis of Jesus' administration during the 1,000-year Kingdom Age (Millennium).

Then, the **Olivet Discourse** was aimed at the consequences of Israel's rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and anticipated the destruction of the nation (70 A.D.) and the final Tribulation period. Remember that the Church Age is an intercalation—meaning an insertion, like a parenthesis, into the Age of Israel. This means that with the Rapture of the Church, the Tribulation picks up where 70 A.D. leaves off. This is why the Church Age is called a “*mystery*” (Rom. 11:25; 16:25; Eph. 3:1–13; Col. 1:26–27), which is a graduate course to “*the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*” (Eph. 3:10).

Finally, the **Upper Room Discourse** was directed toward the Church Age, which began at Pentecost and would continue to the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13–18). The uniqueness of this Age is summarized by Paul's phrase “*in Christ,*” and all of the elements involved in what we call “positional truth”—our total union with Christ and the indwelling of His Spirit in us, which occurs nowhere else in history. With the removal of the Body of Christ, the Church, Israel would again become the focus of God's working on this Earth (Romans 9–11; Revelation 6–19).



The Olivet Discourse was given two days before the Upper Room Discourse (see Matt. 26:2). The shift here is from “signs” to Israel (Olivet Discourse) to the provisions and principles which guide the Church Age (Upper Room Discourse). The first is full of warning and judgments; the second is full of comfort and blessing.

It should be noted that Matthew 24 is a succinct overview of the entire book of Revelation!

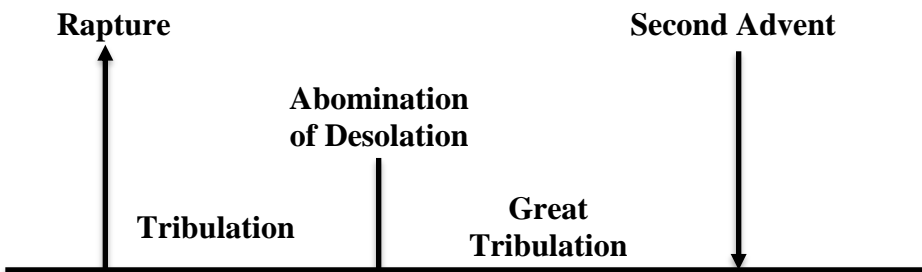
Overview

The Olivet Discourse reveals the consequences of Israel’s rejection of her Messiah (compare Matt. 23:37–39 and Rom. 9:1–5; 10:1–4; 11:25). These consequences are defined by Paul as “*wrath ... to the uttermost*” (1 Thess. 2:15–16).

The outline is actually given by Jesus Himself, by using certain key words as markers of the divisions. Perhaps the most obvious of these words is “**Then,**” a time-word indicating a sequence of events. We find this in Matt. 24:1, 9, 11, 16, 21, 23, 29, 40; 25:1, 7, 16, 24, 34, 37, 41, 44, 45. With the exception of its use in Matt. 24:1, where it connects Jesus’ departure from the Temple with the following discourse, in all the subsequent times, it is used specifically to refer to the Tribulation period followed by His Second Coming. It is worth quoting Mark, here, for the statement he includes:

“For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.” Mark 13:19

In Matthew 24, Jesus gives us an outline, speaking of “**tribulation**” (Matt. 24:9), followed by “**the abomination of desolation**” (Matt. 24:15, see Dan. 11:31; 12:11), which is then followed by “**great tribulation**” (Matt. 24:21) and, finally, “**after the tribulation of those days**” (Matt. 24:29) by the **return of Christ** to Earth (Matt. 24:30–31). Although both Mark 13 and Luke 21 include portions of this message, only Matthew gives us such a clear picture of the chain of events.



Again, we conclude, based on Matt. 26:2 and Mark 13:36–14:1, that the Olivet Discourse was spoken about two days before the Upper Room Discourse. This discourse presents Jesus’ final words to Israel, before He turns to the work of laying the foundation for His Church in the Upper Room.

This foundation is the new supernatural union of believers in the Church Age to Christ—the Head of the Body. The full significance of this amazing revelation was given to the Apostle Paul, and was designated by him as “*the mystery ... hidden in God*” (Eph. 3:9). This new revelation includes:

- a period of history (the Church Age),
- a people (the Church), and
- a unique purpose (spiritual victory over fallen angels) (Eph. 3:9–10; 6:11–13).

The reason for understanding this shift in message is to prevent the all-too-common error of interpreting Christ’s message to Israel as if it were a message directly to the Church.

The spiritual basis for Jesus’ message on the Mount of Olives was that “*Israel rejected the Holy Spirit’s ministry through the Twelve, just as she had rejected the ministry of God the Father through the prophets, and that of God the Son when He was on earth*” (R. B. Shiflet, *An Informal Study of Ephesians*, p. 15).

THE PROPHECIES OF HIS COMING, Matthew 24:1–31

I. The Setting—Matthew 24:1–3

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”
Matthew 23:37–39

As always, it is crucial to get the contextual setting. Jesus “*departed from the temple*” (Matt. 24:1). But this follows His most terrible message to Israel in Matthew 23, in which He announces **eight “woes”** to the nation for their rejection of Him. He concludes this message with the warning, “*You shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’*” (Matt. 23:39). Jesus never entered the Temple again. This departure was a fulfillment of the vision of Ezekiel (Ezek. 10:18–19), where he saw the “*glory of the LORD*” depart from the temple.

The disciples’ comment on the buildings of the Temple (Matt. 24:1) results in Jesus’ prophecy of its ultimate destruction. This, in turn, causes the disciples to ask three questions. These questions are vital to all that follows. Jesus’ response is a prophetic overview of future history.

A. Jesus’ Prophecy of the Temple, Matthew 24:1–2

Although this prophecy certainly anticipates the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. (dealt with in Luke 21:20–24), we know that not “every stone” of the Temple was thrown down at this time. The very existence of the western or “wailing” wall is proof of this.

Jesus had in mind the total destruction that would precede His Second Coming (Rev. 16:17–21).

B. The Questions of the Disciples, Matthew 24:3

The three questions are related, yet they address separate issues:

1. **“When will these things be?”** This question has to do with time. The question is answered in the Tribulation portion of the message (Matt. 24:9–28).
2. **“What will be the sign of your coming?”** This specifically relates to the Second Coming of Christ (Matt. 24:29–31). This does not refer to the Rapture, which is at this time part of the unrevealed “*mystery*” of the Church Age (Eph. 3:1–10).
3. The final question has to do with **“the end of the age,”** which I take to mean the “Age of Israel” since the disciples did not yet know about the Church Age. We now know that the Age of Israel has been interrupted by the Church Age (an intercalation). The final seven years of the Age of Israel is the Tribulation period, also known as Daniel’s 70th week (Dan. 9:24–27), which is divided into two portions of “1,260 days,” or “42 months,” or “three and a half years” (see Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:6, 14; 13:5).

II. The Beginning of Sorrows, Matthew 24:4–8

This section deals with what the New Testament calls the “*last days*” (Heb. 1:2), which covers the time from Jesus’ ascension to the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18). It is very clear from this section that the Rapture of the Church is not some “way of escape from suffering” as some present it. The whole history of the Church is one of affliction and persecution. This is, in fact, the normal Christian experience (2 Tim. 3:12).

It is worth noticing that Matt. 24:4–8 covers the same historical time frame as Revelation 1–3. However, since Jesus is addressing Israel here, the “signs” of the times are the main focus. Revelation 1–3, written to the Church, focuses on conditions existing within the Church body and a call to continued spiritual purification.

A. The Two Great Dangers, Matthew 24:4–6

The first great danger to believers is deception. The devil is a deceiver (John 8:44), and this is his greatest weapon against us. Just as he deceived Eve in the Garden, he seeks to deceive each one of us (Gen. 3:1–8; 1 Tim. 2:14; 2 Cor. 11:3). This deception comes from “*false christs and false prophets*” (Matt. 24:11, 24, see 1 Tim. 4:1–2). The second great danger is fear. Remember that fear and faith cannot live together (see Luke 21:34–38).

B. Increasing Birth Pangs (Historical Trends), Matthew 24:7–8

It is my conviction, from simply taking Scripture literally, that the Rapture of the Church occurs at this point, between Matthew 24, verses 8 and 9 (see 1 Thess. 4:13–5:11; 2 Thess. 2:1–8; esp. Rev. 4:1). Jesus does not deal with it here, because the Church is still an unrevealed “*mystery*” (see Eph. 3:1–10).

There are many today who reject the teaching of the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18), because they think it is a “cowardly” hope of weak Christians to escape the Tribulation. In light of the past 2,000 years of church history, this is a foolish notion. It has been the portion of believers throughout world history to suffer affliction and severe persecution, even to horrible torture and execution. The Church has surely paid her dues. Furthermore, we do not know what trials await us, even in the times of increasing birth-pangs ahead.

III. Tribulation Period, Matthew 24:9–28 (read Revelation 6)

Matthew 24:9–31 is parallel historically to Revelation 6–19, covering the entire time we know as “the time of tribulation.”

This message, especially as recorded in Matthew, is very precise in its presentation. Jesus is giving us a very clear, detailed account of how history will unfold prior to His Second Coming. The Tribulation is the time Jeremiah called, “*the time of Jacob’s trouble*” (Jer. 30:7).

A. The Tribulation (first half—3 ½ years), Matthew 24:9–14

- Persecution and martyrdom (see Luke 21:13–19)
- Betrayal and hatred
- Many false prophets arise
- Lawlessness and love-lessness
- He who endures to the end will be delivered from:
 1. deception, vv. 4, 11
 2. fear, v. 6
 3. spiritual failure, v. 12
 4. wrath, death, v. 22.
- Great waves of evangelism (see Mark 13:9–10; Luke 21:13–15)

B. The Great Tribulation (second half—3 ½ years), Matthew 24:15–28

- Begins mid-point with “*the abomination of desolation*” (Dan. 11:31; 12:11; 2 Thess. 2:4).

Note seven reasons the Rapture occurs before His “revelation” to the world (2 Thess. 2:1–8):

1. Because the coming of Jesus Christ and our gathering to Him is cause for comfort from all fear, vv.1–2.
2. The “departure” (better rendering of “*falling away*”) or Rapture, must precede Antichrist’s coming, v. 3.
3. Antichrist will stand in the rebuilt temple (v. 4), which will not be built until after the Church is gone.
4. Paul refers them back to what he has already taught them about the Rapture, v. 5, see 1 Thess. 4:13–18.
5. The “restrainer” (vv. 6–7) can only be the Holy Spirit indwelling the Church. When the Church is removed, the restraining power departs also.
6. Only “*then*” (remember, a key word in the Olivet Discourse) will “*the lawless one*” be revealed, v. 8. This verse accords with Revelation 13, the coming of Antichrist and the false prophet.
7. These points all agree with Paul’s statement in Rom. 11:25 that “*blindness in part has happened to Israel until [time limitation] the fullness of the Gentiles has come in [i.e., the Rapture of the Church].*”

Note: Regarding the word “*revealed*” (2 Thess. 2:3, 8) two words are used: *apokalupto* and *epiphaneia*. Concerning the first, “*the word is very significant, not only as marking the ‘superhuman’ character of the one spoken of, but as placing it in mocking counterpart to the revelation of the Lord Jesus Himself*” (Milligan). And concerning the second, “*the word usually has some idea of striking splendor and was often used by the Greeks of a glorious manifestation of the gods*” (Morris). Both of the above quotes are found in *The Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, pp. 608, 609, by Rienecker and Rogers.

- The urgent flight of Jews from Jerusalem (compare Matt. 24:15–20 with Luke 21:20–24). Luke 21 seems to be more about 70 A.D., the Matthew passage about the Tribulation. Note Jesus’ statement, “*Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*” (Luke 21:24). The “***fullness of the Gentiles***” (Rom. 11:25) and “***the times of the Gentiles***” are not referring to the same thing. The first refers to the harvest of believing Gentiles, the second to the domination of unbelieving Gentiles.
- This begins the “Great Tribulation,” the last three and a half years (see Mark 13:19), “*the time of Jacob’s trouble*” (Jer. 30:7).
- This time will be so severe that all mankind would die if it were not shortened.
- Again, there will be many “*false christs and prophets*” (see Matt. 24:11, 24).

IV. The Second Coming of Christ, Matthew 24:29–31

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” Revelation 19:11–16

The Second Coming of Christ anticipates the fulfillment of Jesus’ promises in passages such as Matt. 23:37–39 and Luke 18:8, where He declares that He is leaving, but that He will one day return.

In both the Old and New Testaments, it is prophesied that His coming will be preceded by great, world-wide judgments. What we call the Tribulation period is spoken of in the Old Testament as *“the Day of the LORD”* and a time of *“wrath”* (see Joel 2–3; Zeph. 1:15, 18; and Zechariah 12–14)

A. The Powers of the Heavens Shaken, Matthew 24:29; Isaiah 13:10

The sun, moon, and stars are for signs and seasons (Gen. 1:14–15).

B. The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, Matthew 24:29–30 (see Rev. 19:14–16)

C. Angels Sent to Gather Saints Together, Matthew 24:31; 13:41–43

THE PARABLES OF HIS COMING, Matthew 24:32–25:46

I. Introduction to the Parables

- A. Just as we study the past (the Old Testament) for instruction, so we can learn from the prophetic future (see Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11–12).
- B. The principle remains, “*to whom much is given ... much is required*” (Luke 12:48). We in the Church Age have been given so much more than Israel; therefore, we have greater accountability.
- C. We must all stand before the Bema Seat of Jesus Christ and give an account of our life (Rom. 2:6, 16; **1 Cor. 3:10–15**; 2 Cor. 5:10). In this, we find three fundamental truths of life:
 1. There is but one foundation for eternal building, 1 Cor. 3:11.
 2. There are only two kinds of building material, 1 Cor. 3:12.
 3. There will be a final accounting for each of us, 1 Cor. 3:13–15.

The return of Jesus to this Earth will result in judgment in which God “*will render to each one according to his deeds*” (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6) and will “*judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel*” (Rom. 2:16). It is in light of this that the following parables each teach the personal responsibility and accountability of those who will be living on the Earth at that time. This also has application for each of us, as we will also give an account of our lives at the Bema (or Judgment) Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:9–11).

It is crucial to view these parables in light of the time-frame in which they were given. These parables are addressed **to Israel—not the Church**, which was not yet in existence. Specifically, they are aimed at Israel during the Tribulation period. That is not to say we cannot find applications which are valuable, but application is not the same as interpretation. Inaccurate interpretation will inevitably lead to flawed applications.

II. The Parables Regarding Jesus’ Return

A. The Fig Tree Parable, Matthew 24:32–35

The main lesson of this parable has to do with timing. Jesus says, “***this generation,***” meaning of the Tribulation. Some take *genea* to refer to the Jewish race. Jesus took the parable from the “*fig tree*” cursed in Matt. 21:18–22. The fig tree is a symbol of Israel, which promised fruit, but had none.

Three Trees Represent Israel in Scripture

- The “*vine*” (Psalm 80:8–11; Isaiah 5:1–7; Jer. 2:21)
- The “*fig tree*” (Matt. 21:18–19; 24:3; Mark 11:12–14, 20–21; 13:28–31; Luke 13:6–9; Jesus relates the fig tree to Israel)

- The “*Olive tree*” (Jer. 11:16–17; Rom. 11:16–24)

Each of these trees represents the unique national and spiritual relation of Israel to God and her intended role in history. (See *Dispensational Truth*, Clarence Larkin, pp. 155–158.)

B. The Days of Noah Parable, Matthew 24:36–42

The focus of this parable is that of **unexpected judgment**. In the days of Noah, they were living as if time would go on forever. The flood came unexpectedly, even though Noah had been preaching for 120 years. Unbelief blinds the eyes (2 Cor. 4:3–4). Noah and his family were saved in the Ark, the rest were “*taken*” in judgment. Again, this is not a picture of the Rapture. Those “*taken*” here are the chaff swept into the fire John spoke of, called the “**baptism of fire**,” Matt. 3:11.

C. The Faithful Steward Parable, Matthew 24:43–51

“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.” 1 John 2:28–29

Here, the lesson has to do with personal **vigilance**. Remember that all of Israel was called God’s servant (Isa. 41:8; 44:21; 49:3). Out of the nation of Israel, some would be “wise servants,” looking by faith for the coming of the Lord. Some would be “foolish servants” and ignore the signs of His coming in unbelief.

D. The Ten Virgins Parable, Matthew 25:1–13 (John 8:12; 1 John 1:7)

The emphasis in this parable is on **foresight** and **preparation**. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. This is why kings and priests were anointed with oil in the Old Testament (Lev. 4:3, 5; 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:6). Jesus was “the Christ,” which means “the anointed one.” In Heb. 1:9, it says Jesus was “*anointed ... with the oil of gladness*,” a picture of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to Him.

Remember that all of Israel was referred to as “*the virgin, the daughter of Zion*” (Isa. 37:22; Jer. 14:17; 18:13; 31:4, 21; Lam. 2:13). This was prophetic “love language” from Jehovah to Israel so that all in Israel would understand. The problem was that the wise had oil (the Holy Spirit), and the foolish did not. The contrast is that of believers vs. non-believers.

E. The Talents Parable, Matthew 25:14–30

The goal of this parable is to emphasize **personal accountability**. Remember again that the entire nation of Israel was designated as “*My servant*” by Jehovah (Isa. 41:8; 44:1–2, 21; 49:3; Jer. 2:14, etc.) and was to reflect the coming Messiah—the ultimate “*Servant*”

(Isa. 42:1). Therefore, every Jewish person shared in the glorious provisions of Israel (Rom. 9:4–5), and was accountable to God to be a faithful servant in using those provisions for His glory.

Note that what was required of each was “*according to his own ability*” (v. 15). The unfaithful servant, as in Matt. 8:12, is an unbelieving Jew, who although a “son of the kingdom” by the election of the nation, chose to forfeit his blessings through unbelief (see Rom. 9:1–5; 10:1–4).

F. The Sheep and Goats Parable, Matthew 25:31–46

Here, the focus is on “*faith working through love*” (Gal. 5:6), as demonstrated by the nations. Only those who trust in Christ will be willing to identify with Him and His people (believing Israel) against Satan (v. 41). These will be called “*sheep*” (John 10:7–16, 27–28). Believers from all the nations who stood with Israel will survive to enter into the Kingdom (Matt. 24:13), but all those who rejected Christ will persecute Israel. They will be cast into eternal condemnation (see v. 46 with Matt. 3:11–12, “baptism of fire”).

WHAT THE OLIVET DISCOURSE TEACHES US

1. We are living in the times of “birth-pangs,” which will continue to increase in both timing and intensity.
2. Our two great dangers are deception and fear. Only faith and Bible knowledge can conquer these.
3. We are living in the “perilous times” spoken of by Paul (1 Tim. 4:1–5; 2 Tim. 3:1–4).
4. If God’s grace can sustain believers in the Tribulation, we know that He can also sustain us in our time. Fear not!
5. We should be eagerly looking for the blessed hope of Christ’s coming for His Bride, the Church (Titus 2:13–15), and living boldly for Christ.

Spiritual Preparation for Perilous Times (Luke 21)

In this abbreviated version of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus gives the disciples seven valuable directions/instructions for facing perilous times. If these steps can preserve believers in the time of Tribulation, they can certainly sustain us as well. We might even call these:

The Be-Attitudes of Perilous Times

1. Be not deceived, v. 8.
2. Be not terrified, v. 9.
3. Be a faithful witness, vv. 13–15.
4. Be tenacious; possess/control your souls, v. 19.
5. Be hopeful, vv. 28–31 (see Titus 2:13–14).
6. Be vigilant against the distractions of this world, v. 34.
7. Be vigilant, prayerful regarding your spiritual condition, v. 36.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TEN PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY—FROM THE BIBLE

1. Keep the focus on the Author, Eccl. 12:10–11, “*The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright—words of truth* [inspiration and unity—the whole Bible should be considered one unit]. *The words of the wise are like goads* [convicting power], *and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails* [enabling power], *given by one Shepherd.*” Jesus Christ, the Living Word, is the Author of the written Word.

Jesus Christ is the key to the interpretation of the Bible (John 6:46; Luke 24:27, 32, 44, 45—remember the law of repetition). Ask: What does this passage say about the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Never pour new wine into old wineskins, Matt. 9:17; Ezra 7:10. Let the Word change us, making us new. (Peter violated this rule two times: Acts 10:14–16; Gal. 2:11–21, Paul rebuked Peter for going back into the Old Covenant.) We are not growing in our faith if we are hearers but not doers (Luke 11:28; James 1:22).
3. Be prepared not only to learn but to do the Word of God, John 7:17. Never dismiss the discipline of God. He’s refining us. Interpretation demands application. Only accurate interpretation can result in correct life-application!
4. Always remember the law of three witnesses, Dan. 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; John 5:31–40. Verify the truth in multiple passages. (The Puritan’s “rule of faith”: Interpret the complex in light of the simple.)
5. Keep the law of non-contradiction in view, John 10:35. Two opposing propositions cannot both be true. Truth cannot contradict itself.

According to Ravi Zacharias:

- a. Truth must be coherent.
- b. Truth must be consistent, Rom. 5:18; 1 John 2:2; John 3:16.
- c. Truth must correlate to life as we know it.

God communicates to us within the world He created for us.

6. Keep an eye on the law of first mention. Recognize that when “weighty” words appear for the first time in Scripture, the context defines them. Some examples are:
 - a. “Grace,” Gen 6:8, “*Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD*”; only faith can find grace. Merit has no claim on grace. With God, we find what we’re looking for, 1 Pet. 5:5.
 - b. “Believe,” Gen. 15:16, “*And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*” See also Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23.

- c. “Love,” Gen. 22:2, “*Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love ...*” Paul makes a strong statement about love in Rom. 8:38–39, “*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” It is also worth noting, in Genesis 22, that the phrase “*your only son*” (Isaac being a picture of the Lord Jesus), occurs three times, in vv. 2, 12, and 15.
- d. “Worship,” Gen. 22:5, “*And Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.’*” Worship always honors God, Rom. 12:1–2, “*to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [reasonable] service of worship ...*” (NASB).
- e. “Obey/obeyed,” Gen. 22:18. The order of appearance of these words is instructive: grace, faith, love, worship, and obedience.
- f. “Redeem,” Exod. 6:6–7, “*I will rescue you from their [Egypt’s] bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.*” The word “redeem” actually means “being rescued from the slave market of sin.” God says “*I will*” seven times in this passage. He alone does all the work of redemption. See Exodus 12 as an illustration, where the redemption is through the application of the blood of the lamb.

The order of their appearance is quite amazing!

7. Don’t overlook the emphasis of repetition:

- a. Gen. 1:11–24, “*according to*” its kind. (See also Rom. 16:25. Here, Paul declares that God is able to establish believers “*according to*” (that is, “in keeping with the standard of”) the Gospel as preached by Paul, the revelation of the mystery of the Church Age, and the commandment of God—for “*obedience to the faith*”);
 - b. John 3:10–18, Jesus stresses seven times the importance of believing;
 - c. Eph. 1:6, 12, 14, these three verses emphasize the importance of bringing praise and glory to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
8. Be a wise scribe (teacher), Matt. 13:52, “*Then He said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.’*” See also Matt. 5:19b and Ezra 7:10. Ezra was an example of a wise scribe. We should also mine the treasures of the Word of God by distinguishing and correlating that which is Old Testament and that which is New. Not all Scripture is written to us, but all Scripture is written for us.
9. Pay attention to detail, Matt. 5:18, “*For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*” The jots

and titles are the smallest parts of the Hebrew language—pay attention to even the smallest of details in the Word. For example, in Gal 3:16, Paul quotes the Old Testament when he says, “*Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ*” (emphasis added).

10. Learn to teach what you’ve learned, Acts 17:1–4. When Paul went into the synagogue, as was his custom, he “*went in to them, and for three Sabbaths*”:
 - a. He “*reasoned with them from the Scriptures,*” Acts 17:2 (*dialogomai*, the Socratic method, reasoning and dialogue/rhetorical questions that challenged the thinking of the listener). This was designed to “correct.”
 - b. By “*explaining,*” Acts 17:3 (*dianoigo*, to open the mind, leaving the listener to ask for the answer). This was designed to “convict.”
 - c. “*And demonstrating [paratithemi, “to place beside” or “to make a deposit”]: place the truth safely in the mind of the listener] that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.’*” Paul’s purpose was to “confirm” or prove that Jesus was the Christ.

DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE

1. Perseverance is the price of victory in the spiritual war, Rev. 3:10 (regarding the Church—not talking about the Rapture).
2. Perseverance is greater than patience (stamina) or endurance (physical perspective). Perseverance bears up and drives toward a clear goal, Phil. 3:12–14 (nothing we go through gets past God when He isn’t looking, Heb. 1:14).
3. Perseverance is the key ingredient of Christian character and can only be developed through trials/suffering, Rom 5:3–4.
4. Only genuine spiritual growth can develop perseverance, 2 Pet. 1:5–6.
5. The greatest arena for displaying perseverance is prayer, Eph. 6:18. We might not be suffering, but we should always be praying.
6. Only by perseverance do we experience the truth of Rom. 8:28 and James 5:11.
7. While perseverance develops through trials, it becomes the sustaining power to withstand persecution, 2 Tim. 3:11–12.
8. Perseverance is the path to victory, the key to character, and the secret of invincibility.
9. Perseveration is the outward expression of three spiritual virtues: faith, hope, and love, 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8. It is the avenue to confident assurance, Gal. 5:6.
10. Perseverance is not guaranteed, but God’s faithfulness is, 2 Pet. 2:7–9; 1 John 2:28–29.

THE FOUR WAVES OF EVANGELISM DURING THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

