Elder's Corner

"Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" . . . . . " So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter.
(Mark 13:4, 14-18)

The vast majority of the Bible's timeline consists of Israel. Since its establishment as an independent state in 1948 in the land that was promised to its forefathers, Israel has taken up a disproportionate portion of the world's politics and news media. Since the Oct. 7, 2003 attack on the state of Israel and its citizens there has been a never-ending round of attacks and failed cease fire agreements leading up to the current simultaneous conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran to the east. Although all of this has been difficult for the Jewish people, there is coming a time when all this pales in comparison to what's coming for the people and nation of Israel.

In the portion from Mark above our **Lord** and His apostles are headed to the Mount of Olives, hence His teaching on the way is called the Olivet Discourse. His words are intended for Israel and the Jewish people alone—the church is nowhere in sight in this discourse. When the events that our Lord reveals in it occur, the church will have already been raptured **(1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-57** and **thus shall always be with the Lord.** In verse 4 above the disciples ask **Jesus** two questions—**"when will these things be?"** (when will the temple be destroyed so that one stone will not be left on another), and what would be **the sign** of His (second) coming. In **Mark 13:14-18** above our Lord answered the second question. In a coming day, after 3 and one-half years of tribulation upon the whole world, the lawless one **who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that** he **sits as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God (2 Thess. 2:3, 4**; also **Dan. 11:36, 37)** breaks the seven year covenant that he made with Israel, in which he promised to protect Israel and its people, and puts the **image of himself in the temple, the abomination that makes desolate (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 13:14, 15).**

This changes everything for the Jewish people alive at that time. Now, they are fair game to all, especially to **the beast,** the lawless one. It will be **the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7),** and **a time of great tribulation** for the Jewish people as recorded in Matthew's account of this discourse **(Matt. 24:21).** In Matthew's account **Jesus** said that if the days had not been cut off at 1260 **days, no flesh would be saved (Matt. 24:22).** Indeed, the prophet Zechariah looked forward to that horrible time and wrote:

> **For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. (Zech. 14:2)**

The lives of Jewish people will be in such imminent peril when **the beast** reveals that his goal is their extinction, that there will not be time to gather up even the barest of necessities **(Mark 13:14-18**). Those hindered by pregnancy or **babies** will be at a disadvantage. **"Flee to the mountains"** is the Lord's urgent plea to the Jews of that time. There are some Bible scholars who believe their destination will be **Bozrah (Isa. 63:1-3)** and **the woman** (Israel) fleeing in **Rev. 12:6** is a reference to the same destination. One writer shares these thoughts about the matter:

> Bozrah (Petra) is the place where up to a couple of million Jews will have been hidden away since the middle of the tribulation when they fled from Judea. The Lord has nourished them for those three and a half years and now He defends this Jewish Remnant that by the time of the second coming has converted in mass to Jesus as their Messiah. Christ has blood on His garments from defending the Jews against the army of the Antichrist, who have gathered themselves to attack the Jews at Armageddon. Such a force arrayed against the Lord's people requires His personal intervention. This He does first at Petra.[1]

Mark Hitchcock, in his book *The End,* shares this view as well, along with others.

From this we learn that **the tribulation** will be a time of spiritual purging and cleansing for the entire world, especially for the Jewish people. Satan will use his emissaries, **the beast** and the false prophet to attempt to exterminate the Jewish people. **The Lord God** will supernaturally protect a faithful remnant of Jews that they might populate the kingdom that is promised them repeatedly in the Old Testament. The Son of **David, Jesus Christ** will reign **(Ps. 89:35, 36)!**
Maranatha.

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[1]Thomas Ice, *Understanding the Olivet Discourse: A Futurist Interpretation of Matthew 24-25* (Middletown, RI: Stone Tower Press, 2021), 108.