

Text and Commentary

JOSEPH SMITH—MATTHEW

AN EXTRACT FROM JOSEPH SMITH'S NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

THE APOSTLES INQUIRE OF JESUS

1 “For I say unto you, that ye shall not see me henceforth, and know that I am he of whom it is written by the prophets, until ye shall say, ‘Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord, in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him.’” Then understood his disciples that he should come again on the earth, after that he was glorified and crowned on the right hand of God. ² And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple. And his disciples came to him, for to hear him, saying, “Master, show us concerning the buildings of the temple, as thou hast said, ‘They shall be thrown down, and left unto you desolate.’” ³ And Jesus said unto them, “See ye not all these things, and do ye not understand them? Verily I say unto

you, there shall not be left here, upon this temple, one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.” ⁴ And Jesus left them and went upon the Mount of Olives. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, “Tell us when shall these things be which thou hast said concerning the destruction of the temple, and the Jews; and what is the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world?”

THE SIGNS OF CALAMITY IN THE FIRST CENTURY

⁵ And Jesus answered, and said unto them, “Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁶ For many shall come in my name, saying, ‘I am Christ,’ and shall deceive many. ⁷ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and

1 Although the canonical text is a revision of Matthew 24, the text actually begins a verse previous at Matthew 23:39. The Olivet Discourse (compare Mark 13:1–8; Luke 21:5–11) was delivered during Jesus’s final mortal week, after the triumphal entry (see Matthew 21) but before the Last Supper (see Matthew 26). **1:1–3** In both the King James Version and here, Jesus’s Olivet Discourse is delivered in the context of the Apostles inquiring concerning His prophecy of the destruction of the temple. This framing is brought out more explicitly in Joseph Smith’s revision. *Blessed . . . with him*. Paraphrase of Psalm 118:26 and Daniel 7:13. Compare Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 14:62. *Destruction of the temple*. The temple of Herod was destroyed in AD 70 when Rome sacked Jerusalem after the outbreak of a Jewish nationalist revolt. **1:4** The Mount of Olives is located east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley (compare Zechariah 14:4). Jesus likely chose to deliver this discourse here to avoid the large crowds gathered in the city for the celebration of Passover. Herod’s temple would have been plainly visible as Jesus delivered this discourse. **1:6** New Testament writings preserve mention of some contemporaries of Jesus claiming to be the Messiah (Acts 5:36–37; 21:38) and of anti-Christ’s attempting to deceive the early church (1 John 2:18). **1:7** NT1 originally read, “You shall be

shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations, for my name's sake.⁸ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another.⁹ And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.¹⁰ And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.¹¹ But he that remaineth steadfast and is not overcome, the same shall be saved.¹² When you, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, then you shall stand in the holy place. Whoso readeth let him understand.¹³ Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains.¹⁴ Let him who is on the housetop flee, and not return to take anything out of his house.¹⁵ Neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes.¹⁶ And

wo unto them that are with child, and unto them that give suck in those days.¹⁷ Therefore, pray ye the Lord that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.

THE TRIBULATIONS OF THE JEWS

¹⁸ “For then, in those days, shall be great tribulation on the Jews, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, such as was not before sent upon Israel, of God, since the beginning of their kingdom until this time; no, nor ever shall be sent again upon Israel.¹⁹ All things which have befallen them are only the beginning of the sorrows which shall come upon them.²⁰ And except those days should be shortened, there should none of their flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, according to the covenant, those days shall be shortened.

hated of all men,” which was emended to read, “You shall be hated of all nations” (as also in NT2). **1:8** NT1 adds, “And shall hate one another.” **1:9** Compare Matthew 7:15. **1:11** NT1 reads, “He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved.” **1:12** The “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Jesus is a reference to Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11, which speaks of the “desolating abomination(s)” (*šiqūšim mēšômēm, ha-šiqūš mēšômēm, šiqūš šômēm*, captured in the Greek of Matthew as the *dbelygma tēs erēmōseōs*). It refers to a pollutant that sacrileges the holiness of the temple, leaving it desolate. The desecration of the Jerusalem temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes during the Maccabean Revolt of 167–160 BC, wherein he erected an image of Zeus in the temple, is often linked to this prophecy in the book of Daniel (compare 1 Maccabees 1:54). Jesus uses this imagery from Daniel as a type for both the imminent desolation of Jerusalem (and with it, Herod's temple), as well as the desolating sacrileges preceding His Second Coming (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:32). The disciples are admonished to stand in holy places when they encounter such sacrilege. **1:13–17** To escape the foretold calamities, Jesus warns His disciples to be prepared to flee at a moment's notice. The instruction to flee into the mountains went against conventional ancient thinking, which prompted people during a siege or prolonged warfare to secure themselves in walled cities (such as Jerusalem) for better protection. With this, Jesus warns that the disciples will not find safety in manmade artifices. Those with vulnerable family members such as children will find their situation exacerbated since hunger and famine frequently follow disruptive events like those described here. Likewise, those forced to flee during the rainy winter, when travel is difficult, or the sabbath, when travel is forbidden, will likewise be at a great disadvantage. **1:18–20** The tribulations of the Jews following the disastrous outcome of the Jewish Revolt are described in

A WARNING OF FALSE CHRISTS

²¹ “Behold, these things I have spoken unto you concerning the Jews. And again, after the tribulation of those days which shall come upon Jerusalem, if any man shall say unto you, ‘Lo, here is Christ, or there,’ believe him not. ²² For in those days there shall also arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant. ²³ Behold, I speak these things unto you for the elect’s sake. And you also shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars. See that ye be not troubled, for all I have told you must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ²⁴ Behold, I have told you before. ²⁵ Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, ‘Behold, he is in the desert,’

go not forth, ‘Behold, he is in the secret chambers,’ believe it not. ²⁶ For as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

THE FIRST PARABLE AND MORE SIGNS OF JESUS’S COMING

²⁷ “And now I show unto you a parable. Behold, wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together; so likewise shall mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the earth. ²⁸ And they shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars. ²⁹ Behold I speak for mine elect’s sake. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ³⁰ And

graphic detail in such sources as works by Josephus, the first century Jewish historian. *Variant reading.* NT1 originally read, “. . . such as was not before since the begining of the world to this time no nor ever shall be and except those days should be shortened all these things are the beginings of sorrows and except those days should be shortened there should flesh be saved but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened.” This was revised both in NT1 and again in NT2 with other additions to produce the current reading. **1:21** Jesus informs His disciples of the immediate context of the previous verses—namely, the events of the first century connected to the destruction of the temple and its aftermath. Here He pivots into a description of future signs that will precede His glorious return, beginning in 1:22–26 with a description of false Christs that will arise in the vacuum left by the destruction of the temple and, more broadly, in the Great Apostasy. *Lo here, lo there.* Compare Joseph Smith—History 1:5. **1:25–26** Jesus promises that His return will be accompanied by great glory that will cover the earth. Those who claim to be Christ but insist on secreting themselves away into small factions are to be dismissed as false Christs. **1:27** The first of four parables illustrating the principles of Jesus’s discourse commences with this verse. *Eagles.* The Greek *aetoi* can indeed mean “eagles,” but in this context it more likely means “vultures.” The imagery, especially appropriate in the context of war and tribulation, is that of a flock of carrion raptors circling over a rotting carcass (compare Deuteronomy 28:25–26; 1 Samuel 17:44; Psalm 79:1–2; Ezekiel 39:17–20). True to His hyperbolic didactic method (see Matthew 5:29–30), Jesus uses this vivid imagery to great effect in this parable describing the gathering of the elect in the last days. But the imagery is powerful not just because of its setting in a reeling, rotting world but also because it highlights the speed at which vultures seem to rapidly converge from long distances to find their nour-

again, because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall not be overcome, the same shall be saved. ³¹ And again, this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked. ³² And again shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled.

³³ “And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

³⁴ Verily, I say unto you, this generation, in which these things shall be shown forth, shall not pass away until all I have told you shall be fulfilled.

³⁵ Although the days will come that heaven and earth shall pass away, yet my words shall not pass away, but all shall be fulfilled. ³⁶ And as I said before, after the tribulation of those days, and the powers of the heavens

shall be shaken, then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. ³⁷ And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived, for the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

THE SECOND PARABLE AND AN ADMONITION TO WATCHFULNESS

³⁸ “Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When its branches are yet tender, and it begins to put forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh at hand. ³⁹ So likewise mine elect, when they shall see all these things, they shall know that he is near, even at the doors.

⁴⁰ But of that day, and hour, no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God

ishment (that is, the rapidity and scale of the final gathering). **1:30** NT1 reads, “He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved.” **1:32** The prophecy of the abomination of desolation (compare Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:12) is explicitly said to have two fulfillments or types: one concerning the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in the first century and another concerning the events of the last days before Jesus’s glorious return. **1:33** Quotation of Isaiah 13:10 (compare Joel 2:10). **1:34** As recorded in Matthew 24:34, Jesus prophesied that the events described in the previous verses would occur in His own generation (*genea autē*). This has historically proven problematic for Christian interpreters since the events described obviously were not fulfilled in the first century. As revised here, the events of Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:27–33 are projected onto a future date and are yet to be fulfilled. **1:36** Jesus evokes similar language at the beginning of this discourse (see 1:1). Compare also Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62, where Jesus repeats this language (a paraphrase of Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13) during His interrogation before Caiaphas. **1:38–40** The imagery in the parable of the fig tree is correlated to the need for the disciples to remain watchful for the return of the Son of Man. Just as the budding branches of the fig tree anticipate the coming of summer, so the events described in the previous verses anticipate the coming of the Son of Man. By recognizing such,

in heaven, but my Father only. ⁴¹ But as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴² For it shall be with them, as it was in the days which were before the flood; for until the day that Noah entered into the ark they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. ⁴³ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁴ Then shall be fulfilled that which is written, that in the last days, two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴⁵ Two shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴⁶ And what I say unto one, I say unto all men. Watch, therefore, for you know not at what hour your Lord doth come.

THE THIRD PARABLE

⁴⁷ “But know this, if the good man of the house had known in what watch

the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to have been broken up, but would have been ready. ⁴⁸ Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.

THE FOURTH PARABLE AND FINAL WARNING

⁴⁹ “Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant? Whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season. ⁵⁰ Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. And verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods. ⁵¹ But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming,’ ⁵² and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, ⁵³ the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he

the disciples can be on their guard for when the Second Coming commences (the timing of which only God himself knows). **1:41–43** See Genesis 6–7; Moses 8:12–30. The final cataclysm will parallel the primeval cataclysm, with the majority of the world unaware of or otherwise unconcerned with paying heed to the signs of the forthcoming danger. **1:44–45** The text revises Matthew 24:40 to include reference to an otherwise unknown or unattested written prophecy. These verses at Matthew 24:40–41 have been marshalled to support the doctrine of the rapture, or the teaching that Jesus’s true disciples will be snatched away suddenly to meet Him in the clouds at his coming (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:17). Modern revelation speaks of righteous Saints being “caught up” to dwell with the Lord at His coming but does not elaborate on what precisely this means (see Doctrine and Covenants 27:18; 88:95–97). Compare also Moses 7:62–65. A sense of what early Latter-day Saints imagined by being “caught up” to meet the Lord at His Second Coming can be gained from the lyrics to the hymn “Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise,” composed by Edward Partridge and included in the first hymnbook of the Church, published in 1835. **1:47–48** With this parable Jesus again emphasizes that the disciples cannot know when He will return, so they must be watchful and diligent. **1:49–50** Jesus uses one more parable to ask rhetorically who qualifies as a good servant and then provide the answer: those who are prepared for His coming and are found working diligently over their stewardship (compare Matthew 25:1–13). By contrast, evil servants are those who abandon their duty be-

is not aware of, ⁵⁴ and shall cut him asunder, and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵⁵ And thus cometh the end of the wicked, according to the prophecy of Moses, saying, ‘They shall be cut off from among the people.’ But the end of the earth is not yet, but by and by.”

cause of the delay in the Lord’s return (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:51–54). **1:54** Similar language is used in Jewish texts from Jesus’s time to refer to excommunication from the community (compare Galatians 5:11–12). **1:55** NT1 originally read, “. . . and thus cometh the end of the world but the end of the earth is not yet but by and by,” and was revised to replace “world” with “wicked according to the prophecy of Moses saying they should be cut off from among the people,” as reflected in NT2 and the current text. *The prophecy of Moses*. Likely referring to Deuteronomy 18:15–19. The quotation offered in this verse is not present in this passage as preserved in the Hebrew Bible. However, it does feature elsewhere in the books of Moses (see Genesis 17:14; Exodus 12:15, 19; 31:14; Leviticus 7:20–21, 25; 7:27; 17:4, 9, 14; 18:29; 19:8; 20:17–18; 22:3; 23:29; Numbers 9:13; 15:30; 19:13, 20).