

1. Chapter 23 was a warning for the non-believer. Chapter 24 is for the believer.
 - a) Chapter 23 was a warning to those who refuse to believe in Jesus.
 - b) Chapter 24 is a set of promises and predictions for the believer.
 - c) Chapter 24 focuses on the events of Jesus second coming.
 - i) This is a future event that has not happened yet, but is promised in the bible.
2. The next two chapters deal with the issue of bible prophecy.
 - a) In this context prophecy simply means predictions about the future.
 - b) About the a third of the entire bible is predictions.
 - c) Prophecy mainly to validate the bible, and the bible writers as God-inspired.
3. The Gospel of Matthew is all about explaining how Jesus is the Promised Messiah.
 - a) The Messiah, which means, “king”, is not only a promised king to Israel, he is the “high priest” who intercedes between man and God (Hebrews 3:1); he is also a prophet.
 - b) In Chapter 24, Jesus made predictions that literally came true.
 - c) It is also full of other predictions that will, I believe literally come true as it is written.
4. Let's start Chapter 24 by giving what I believe are the 2 most important lessons in this chapter:
 - a) The first is: “Nobody but God-the Father knows the day nor the hour of Jesus return”.
 - i) This is a paraphrase of Verse 36.
 - ii) Jesus may now know that day and hour, but when not when he stated it.
 - iii) The main point is we don't know, nor can we calculate that day or hour.
 - iv) Don't let any “nut-case” tell you he or she can predict when it is going to happen.
 - b) The second is “watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”
 - i) This is a command by Jesus given in Verse 42.
 - ii) We are to watch for his return.
 - c) So if we don't know the “day nor hour”, why are to we to watch for his return?
 - i) Let me answer that with an illustration: Suppose you work in a large office building in your own little cubicle. At any time, the boss is going to come by and give you a large bonus. The amount of the bonus, if any, is determined by how you are working at the moment the boss comes by. How is that for a financial incentive to be working hard all the time?
 - ii) That is the attitude Jesus wants for us as Christians.
 - iii) “Watching” for Jesus' second coming does not mean to stand around, stare at the sky all day and look for his return.
 - iv) It means to stay busy doing the things God called us to do. That includes the fundamentals of praying, studying God's Word and spending time with other Christians. It further means that God has given us individual talents and passions to do things “for God's glory”. That is how we “keep busy” until God comes.
 - d) The whole concept of “we don't know when Jesus' comes back” and “watch for his return” is to keep doing what God calls us to do.
 - i) Let's face it. We don't know when we are going to die.
 - ii) Our life on earth is going to end either when we die or when Jesus comes back for his church. Those are the only two options for everybody in the world.
 - iii) Since we don't know “the day nor hour” of our death or Jesus' return, Jesus command for us is to “watch” for his return.
 - iv) This is mainly to keep busy doing the things God wants us to do.
 - v) With that said, unfortunately, it is not that simple. ☺
 - vi) Jesus goes on to talk about specific “signs” to look for prior to his return.
 - a) That is what the bulk of Chapter 24 is all about.
 - b) Jesus wants us to keep an eye out for these specific signs.

5. Chapter 24 is commonly called “The Olivet Discourse”.
 - a) It is a fancy name given to this two-chapter speech by Jesus over Chapters 24-25.
 - b) It is called “The Olivet Discourse” because Jesus gives it from the Mount of Olives.
 - c) Remember that Jesus is days away from the crucifixion.
 - d) There is no more public debates, nor public speeches.
 - e) Jesus is going away, and the followers of Jesus, including you and I need to know when is the general time of Jesus return (not the “day or hour”).
6. It is important to understand that parts of Chapter 24 are vague and full of controversies.
 - a) Many good take-your-bible-literally scholars debate over the meaning of certain passages.
 - b) I’m going to try to give alternative views, but know I have my own views on these topics.
 - c) I’ll give you some of the different views, and try to explain why the predictions are vague.
 - i) One view is that Jesus is describing all the events that happened around the time of the crucifixion and soon after. This view (called the “preterist” view) is that Jesus is only talking about the events that happened soon-after this speech.
 - ii) Another view is that this is only talking about the “end time events”.
 - a) The bible teaches there will be a 7-year end time period that is worse than any other period in human history. This is what most of Revelation is all about. This is the time of an Antichrist who will be a world leader.
 - b) This view is that all (or most) of these events only happen around this literal seven-year period.
 - iii) A third view is that there is no literal 7-year period. This view, called the “amillennial” view is popular in the Roman Catholic Church. They believe the events of Revelation are “symbolic” and cover the entire church history.
 - d) I believe the predictions given by Jesus are vague for a number of reasons:
 - i) First of all, when I say “vague”, I mean that it speaks in generalities that can be interpreted a number of different ways. That is why there is a debate over this.
 - ii) Remember that we are discussing future events. When bible predictions do come true, it is usually in a very literal way. Jesus may be describing events future-to-us and therefore it seems “fuzzy” to describe in 1st Century terminology.
 - iii) Most importantly, I believe these predictions are designed on purpose to “keep us on our toes”. Every generation of Christians wants Jesus to return. Therefore, we look at Jesus predictions about the end times and think, “Well, Jesus could be talking about this or that current event in history. Maybe what Jesus says in this passage ties in to what is happening right now in the world”.
 - a) I believe the passages are designed to be that way on purpose. For example, there is a passage about wars between “kingdoms”. Many thought Jesus was going to come back right after W.W. I. or W.W. II. The point is, he didn’t. People can take any time in human history and tie that to “Maybe this is it, these are the signs of Jesus’ return.”
 - b) Again, it is purposely keep vague to keep us on our toes for Jesus’ return.
 - iv) My personal view is the details are vague so Satan himself does not know the day nor hour. The bible clearly teaches that at the end of the 7-year period Satan is “bound for a 1,000 years” (Revelation 20) and soon afterwards he is cast into hell.
 - a) Therefore, Satan wants to delay as long as possible Jesus' return.
 - b) If the details of Jesus return were clearer, Satan could work to delay or prevent that function.
 - c) In the same way, the predictions of the Messiah suffering for your sins, dying for your sins and rising again are vague in the Old Testament. I believe a reason it is vague was to prevent Satan from preventing that plan.

7. With that said, I'm going to do Chapter 24 over two lessons.
 - a) I noticed that all my favorite commentators have at least two lessons on this chapter or have written thicker volumes of work on this chapter. They are indirectly warning me it is too much to cover in a single lesson and I'm taking their advice accordingly. ☺
8. Chapter 24 has 51 verses describing future predictions.
 - a) With each verse or set of verses, I want to describe how these predictions could fit into the past times (when Jesus gave it), the present time (today) and the future.
 - b) Since Jesus teaches us to watch for his coming, I think it is important to teach how the verses could apply to current historical events.
 - i) If I'm wrong, and Jesus second coming doesn't happen for a long time, I can take comfort in the fact that that I'm "doing what I'm suppose to do" by watching for his second coming and analyzing the "signs" of his coming.
 - ii) The most unique thing about our time, as opposed to the last 2,000 years is that Israel is a nation again. For centuries, bible scholars have debated over whether or not the Jewish people need to be "back in the land" again for Jesus second coming.
 - iii) You have to remember that Israel was destroyed as a country in 70AD and was not a country again until 1948. The City of Jerusalem was not part of modern Israel until it was captured and conquered in 1967.
 - c) With that extra long introduction, ☺ let's go to Verse 1:
9. Chapter 24, Verse 1: Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.
 - a) Let's start with the first phrase "Jesus left the temple and was walking away".
 - i) This ties to the last chapter of the "Question and Answer" section with the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Jesus silenced his critics.
 - b) The next phrase is the disciples showing him the different parts of the temple.
 - i) This temple was destroyed in 70 AD.
 - ii) This temple was originally built hundreds of years earlier when the Jews returned from being in captivity to Babylon.
 - iii) Prior to the time of Jesus' birth, King Herod, in order to make the Jews happy, started a great remodeling job and add-on job to the temple.
 - iv) It was lined with gold. Historians wrote that it was blinding in the sunlight. The top was so pure-white people thought it had snow on top. The stones were fit so tight together that no mortar was needed. (Source: Josephus)
 - c) It is funny to think about giving Jesus, who created all things, a guided tour of the temple.
 - d) One has to wonder the motivations of the disciples for giving this tour:
 - i) Maybe they were hoping Jesus was going to overthrow Rome now and wanted to "show him" the details of temple where Jesus "could set up shop".
 - ii) In the last chapter, Jesus just put down the two main religious sects of that time. Maybe the disciples wanted to "say something nice" about Judaism by this tour.
10. Verse 2: "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."
 - a) Well, so much for the guided tour. ☺
 - b) Jesus is saying this temple, with all of its beauty, will be completely destroyed.
 - c) This literally came true in 70AD. About 40 years after this event.
 - d) The Romans were tired of the Jews rebelling against Rome. They sent a large army to destroy Israel. Millions were killed. The Romans set the temple on fire. In order to preserve the gold, they literally took it apart brick-by-brick.
 - e) The Romans destroyed it so well we are not sure to this day the exact spot of the temple.
 - f) Today, Jews visit the "wailing wall". This is a foundational support wall, and is not part of the walls of the original temple.

- g) The point to notice about Jesus' prediction is how literally true it came.
 - i) Because this prediction came literally true, I take the view that the rest of the predictions in this chapter will also literally come true.
 - ii) It also helps to support the fact that Matthew was written prior to 70AD. I'm sure if it was written after that date, Matthew would have commented on that fact.
 - h) When you study bible prophecy, it often has short-term and long-term fulfillment.
 - i) The short-term fulfillment helps to validate the writer as speaking from God.
 - ii) The long-term fulfillment is often the more important issue or doctrine.
 - i) Let's get back to the disciples guided tour of Verse 1:
 - i) They were probably bragging about all the architectural details.
 - ii) They were hoping Jesus would rule as king from this temple.
 - iii) Jesus destroys their hopes by saying in effect, "This thing will be a goner in your lifetime".
 - iv) Remember as Christians, we can't take credit for anything. God gets all the glory.
 - a) This even includes the temple itself. God can't look at our temple and say, "Hey, pretty good, I'll think I'll move into that one". ☺
 - b) Grant it, Jesus had acknowledged this temple as "His Father's house" when he overturned the tables of the moneychangers.
 - c) My point is that you can't build a house for God and say, "OK, God, here's your new home, lets get this show on the road and start your second coming." God works on his timing, not ours.
11. Verse 3: As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"
- a) As I stated in the introduction, we now have a 2-chapter speech called the "Olivet discourse" as it takes place on the Mount of Olives.
 - b) To a religious Jew of that day, the destruction of the temple meant the end of civilization.
 - i) When Jesus just told them the temple would be destroyed, in their minds that meant, "that is it, a wrap up of civilization as we know it."
 - c) Therefore, they asked Jesus a 3-part question:
 - i) "When will this happen?"
 - ii) "What will be the sign of your coming?"
 - iii) And finally, "(When) is the end of this age?"
 - iv) To the disciples, all three were one in the same event.
 - d) The rest of the chapter is Jesus answering these questions.
 - i) The debate now begins over which verses are past, present and future to us.
 - ii) There is a phrase in Verse 15 that says, "let the reader understand".
 - a) Either Matthew added that phrase or Jesus said it himself.
 - b) The point is that this text is not only for the disciples themselves but also for all who read the Gospel of Matthew with the intent of following Jesus.
 - iii) We are going to get into the classical debate of, "Does this refer to the 2,000 year-and-still-counting era of Christian history or just the 7-year end-time tribulation?"
12. Verse 4: Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ, ' and will deceive many.
- a) Before we analyze Verse 4, let us look at Verse 8.
 - i) It says, "All these are the beginning of birth pains".
 - ii) Everything from Verse 4 to Verse 8 is the "early contractions" of labor pains.
 - iii) When we read the events of Verse 4-8, we can't read them and say, "This is it, Jesus is coming back." These events are the beginning of the "birth pains".
 - iv) The first word of Verse 9 is "then". Verse 9 begins the next phase.

- b) Here are some comments on the “historical view” of Verses 4-5.
 - i) Throughout history, there have been many people claiming to be “The Christ”.
 - ii) There are historical records of Jews (post-Jesus) who claimed they were the Messiah and lead an uprising against Rome, only to be killed.
 - iii) Even in our modern times, part of the “New Age” movement teaches, “to release the Christ that is within you”. They teach how we are all “gods” and we can be like Jesus and release his power within us. Like all false teachings, there are some grain-of truths in there, but the rest is non-biblical and pure nonsense.
 - c) Here is some comments on the “future view” of these verses:
 - i) During the “great tribulation” many people will embrace the Antichrist as a great world leader. My personal view is that this guy lets the Jews rebuild their temple and they accept him as their promised Messiah.
 - ii) Many scholars read this verse and think that the “false-Christ” refers to those who come in the last 7-year period claiming to be the Messiah.
 - a) We will discuss this further later in this lesson.
 - d) If a cultist comes knocking on your door and they say, “We believe in Jesus”, I like to respond with, “Really, you believe in Jesus? Which one? Which one do you believe in?”
 - i) My point is that Jesus said there would be many false-Christ’s coming in his name.
 - ii) When you study for example, what the Mormons believe about Jesus or what the Jehovah Witnesses believe about Jesus, you learn that their view of Jesus is different from those of devout conservative Catholics, Protestant and Orthodox churches. All 3 of those groups agree on the fundamentals of who is Jesus.
 - iii) When talking with a cult member, it is best to keep your focus upon Jesus and spending time in God’s word defining just who is and who is not Jesus.
 - iv) This is a part of what Jesus said in Verse 5: “Many will come in my name”.
13. Verse 6: You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.
- a) Notice the last phrase of Verse 6: The end is still to come.
 - b) When a big-national trauma comes like a world war or an earthquake or a famine, people think, “This Is It. This is the end of the world. It is so bad, that it has to end now. Jesus must be coming back soon.”
 - i) Jesus point is, “No it isn’t the end of the world when these things happened.”
 - c) All through the last 2,000 years, we have been through wars, “world-wide” wars, major earthquakes, major famines and some think, “This is it, the “beginning of birth pains”.
 - i) The Jehovah Witnesses are famous for making the prediction during W.W. I that “this has to be it” because they saw World War I as “kingdom against kingdom”. They were right in that the original Greek of that term implies a group of nations attacking another group”. They were wrong in that this was the sign of Jesus immediate coming soon after. They even predicted the exact year in some of their writings of that time.
 - d) Now that we have been through two world wars, is that the “beginning of birth pains?”
 - i) The correct answer is “could be”.
 - ii) Remember that Jesus described all of these events as the beginning of labor pains. Maybe they will get progressively more common in the future.
 - e) In summary, when you hear news reports about wars, or earthquakes and somebody writes a book saying “Look at the statistics, Jesus has to come back next week based on all of this”. Remember God works on His timing and not ours. Nobody knows the day nor the hour, especially those who are writing those books!

- f) Let's get back to the view that that all of this prophecy are end-time events.
 - i) This view is that the "wars and rumors of wars" is speaking of specific wars that happen during the 7-year tribulation period.
 - ii) This last 7-year tribulation again is described in detail through most of Revelation.
 - iii) If you want to get technical, the first 3½ years is fairly peaceful and the last 3½ years is full of wars. This may be the "wars" as described in this verse.
 - iv) If the "7-year tribulation" is new to you, I encourage you pick up a good study on Daniel and/or Revelation to learn more about this.
 - a) We'll also talk about it a little more later in this lesson.
- 14. Verse 9: "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me."
 - a) To me, the key word of Verse 9 is "then". It implies that after the earthquakes, wars, etc. then Christians will be persecuted and put to death.
 - b) The problem is the word "you". Jesus says "you" will be persecuted, etc."
 - i) Jesus was speaking to the disciples. This is why many bible scholars take the view that Jesus is talking about the immediate times and not the end times.
 - ii) The next 200-300 years saw 10 Roman Empires put death sentences on Christians.
 - iii) The Christian church was never united until the Roman Empire Constantine (306 - 337 A.D) became a Christian himself and declared Christianity the official religion of the empire. Prior to that, it was an illegal religion.
 - c) Throughout Christian history persecution was common.
 - i) Millions of Christians died under the Roman Empire.
 - ii) Through the middle ages, anybody who wanted to worship Jesus outside of the authority of the Catholic popes were killed. Some historians believe more Christians were killed by the Roman Catholic Church than the Roman Empire.
 - iii) It is estimated that more Christians were killed in the 20th century than any previous century due to persecutions, especially in Communist countries.
 - iv) Christians through the centuries have read these verses about Christian persecution and said, "This verse is about our present time". They thought that this is the "beginning of birth pains" as Jesus was writing about their persecution.
 - d) This leads back to my introduction about how this speech has its vagueness on purpose.
 - i) I believe Jesus intentionally designed these predictions so that every generation would read them and think, "This is got to be talking about me".
 - ii) The whole idea was for us to "watch" for Jesus second coming and these signs would happen prior to his second coming. The vagueness keeps us "on our toes".
 - e) Now let's look at the "this is all end-times" view of this section:
 - i) You get the impression when you study the events of the end times that Christians and religious Jews will be the scapegoats for the wars going on.
 - ii) That would make sense from a satanic point of view. Once that 7-year period starts, Satan knows he has a limited time. The only thing Satan could do to prevent his own destruction is to prevent believers of that era not pray for Jesus return. How does he do that? He kills them!
 - iii) That is why Revelation is full of comments about martyrs during that period.
 - a) In a matter of verses we are going to get into the "rapture" debate. This is a classical Christian debate over whether or not the church is around during this period. Those of us who do believe the rapture takes place prior to this seven year period also believe many get saved during this period and it is "not too late" if you missed the rapture.

15. Verse 10: At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.
- a) Let's start with the phrase "at that time".
 - i) The verses prior to this can be interpreted as being "signs through the entire 2,000 year history of Christianity" and/or specific "end-time-last-call" signs.
 - ii) I think things change from Verse 10 onward.
 - iii) Now Jesus is saying "at that time". We will discuss in detail in a page or so what exactly is this "end time" seven-year period. For now, take my word on it. ☺
 - b) At this time, many false prophets arise. Why is that?
 - i) Well, Satan knows his time is almost up.
 - ii) This time will also be marked by lots of wars and tragedies. During such times, many people get "more spiritual" as to look for answers and explanations.
 - iii) Therefore, Satan is going to offer lots of substitutes to fill that demand.
 - iv) When you read Revelation, you discover there is "not just" an Antichrist, but there are actually two people. One is a man who is a world leader, and another is a spiritual leader who gets people to worship the world-leader. Jesus discussion of false prophets may refer to these two guys and others who follow them.
 - c) These two verses also predict many will turn away from the faith and betray each other.
 - i) Let's face it, during times of persecution, you find out who really believes in Jesus and who is faking it.
 - ii) Imagine a time with say, a "\$5,000 reward for anyone who turns in a Christian to the authorities." You can see people betraying family members for such a cause.
 - iii) During the time of the Roman Empire, to be a Christian was a death sentence. You were a "friend" of Rome if you helped catch and turn in such people.
 - iv) My point is this type of betrayal has existed in the past and will exist again.
 - v) One of the things you learn quickly as a Christian is that God tests you.
 - a) God wants us to grow in our faith as believers and he tests us.
 - b) Often, and in many places, God allows Christians to go through major persecutions in order to build our faith in him.
 - vi) Unfortunately, Jesus predicted the Christian life does cause betrayal.
 - a) Being a good witness for Jesus often causes guilt and resentment by siblings and other family members.
 - b) Jesus said, "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." (Luke 12:51-53, NIV)
16. Verse 12: Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,
- a) This final period will be one of persecution and wicked people in power. These false prophets will influence many away from worshipping God. Many God-fearing people will go into hiding.
 - b) The principal taught in Verse 12 is also taught elsewhere in the bible:
 - i) "When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, men go into hiding." (Proverbs 28:12, NIV)
 - c) Remember the biblical concept of love is to give of oneself. It is the idea of putting other's needs in front of your own. Christians during this era will have to meet in secret and can't be of public service to others. With non-believers "flourishing", there will be less Christian love during this era.
 - d) Those of us who believe in the "rapture" believe the Christian church won't be around during this time era. Jesus may be hinting at this with the idea of "increased wickedness".

- e) Further, this verse is teaching that when wickedness “abounds”, things go “downhill” for those who choose to follow the God of the Bible:
 - i) “When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.” (Proverbs 29:2, NIV)
- 17. Verse 13: but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.
 - a) This verse is a great “splitter” between those who believe the rapture happens prior to the seven-year tribulation and those who believe all Christians living at that time don’t get called into heaven until the end of the tribulation.
 - i) To understand the concept of the “rapture”, first you have to understand that life as-it-is now, does not go on forever.
 - ii) There is a day Jesus comes back and “wraps it up” for believers.
 - iii) Revelation Chapter 20 speaks of a 1,000 year period where the Messiah will rule and reign from Jerusalem over the whole world. Believers get to rule with Jesus. I’m not exactly sure what that means; maybe we’re all mayors and governors. ☺ More likely it just means we rule, “along side him” in some fashion.
 - iv) Prior to this 1,000 year period is a 7-year period where “all hell breaks loose”.
 - a) That is when most of the events of Revelation take place.
 - b) Some Christians believe “the church” won’t be around during that seven-year period. They believe Jesus takes the church up to heaven before this period begins. That event is called “the rapture” of the church.
 - c) Those who believe the rapture happens prior to the 7-year period are nicknamed “pre-tribulationists” or “pre-trib’s” for short as we are “out of here” prior to this tribulation.
 - d) Others believe the church goes through this 7-year tribulation. They are nicknamed “post-trib’s” as the rapture happens after the tribulation.
 - e) Let’s face it, if the bible were real clear on this issue, there wouldn’t be a debate among people who study the bible and take it seriously.
 - b) Let’s start with the “post-tribulation” view.
 - i) They read Verse 13 and say, “You see, those who are “saved” don’t get saved until after all the events of the seven-year tribulation”. This verse says that those who hang in there “till the end” get saved. We are all here until that period is over.
 - ii) Further, post tribulations will argue, “there is no where in the New Testament where Jesus specifically says he is coming back twice”.
 - a) My “pre-trib” response to that statement is “Where in the Old Testament does it say the Messiah is coming two times?” The answer is, “it doesn’t”. It is only by studying the passages of a “suffering Messiah” and a “ruling Messiah” that one has to come to the conclusion that either 1) there is two Messiah’s (wrong) or that the Messiah comes two times (Jesus!)
 - b) This means that just because an idea is not explicitly stated (such as Jesus coming back twice) in the bible, does not mean that the idea doesn’t exist.
 - c) The “pre-tribulation” view is based on inductive reasoning.
 - i) You will not find clear passages that say Jesus’ comes for the church prior to the tribulation. What you do find is a lot of “contradictions” that can only be explained by the concept of the church not going through the tribulation.
 - ii) This method of making a conclusion based on resolving contradicting information in the arguments is called “inductive reasoning”.
 - iii) As to this passage in Matthew, “pre-trib’s” believe there are two groups of saved people: There is the “Christian church” who gets raptured (taken up) into heaven prior to this seven-year period. There is also a new, special set of believers who get saved during this period. I can make an argument that the reward of the second group is a little different from the first group in Revelation.

18. Verse 14: And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
- a) There is a Christian outreach group called the “Gideon Society”.
 - i) We mostly know them as “the guys who leave the bibles in the motel rooms”.
 - ii) Their ministry is actually much larger than that.
 - iii) They take Verse 14 as a “spiritual calling” to them.
 - iv) Their ministry is to try to translate the gospel into every known language so that the gospel “is preached to the whole world”, and print bibles in those languages.
 - b) As much as I respect the Gideon Society, I don’t think this verse is about them or those Christian missionary groups trying to do so. Let me show you a Revelation verse.
 - i) “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” (Revelation 14:6-7, NIV)
 - a) Personally, I think God himself gets the credit for preaching the gospel into the whole world during the end times, and not man. This is another way in which God gets the glory.
 - ii) This is not a putdown of the Gideon’s and missionaries. They are doing what God called them to do. (See Matthew 28:19). I simply believe the “effort” to preach the gospel into every nation and language can only be accomplished by God himself.
 - iii) During the tribulation, there is a great spiritual battle going on for salvation.
 - a) Satan and his army are sending out lots of false prophets.
 - b) God has angels flying around so that nobody in that era has the excuse of “I didn’t know any better”.
19. Verse 15: "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--"
- a) OK, now we get more Jewish. ☺
 - i) From this verse through at least Verse 25, I believe the specific focus is on Israel.
 - ii) The past verses are mostly about how the end-times will affect the whole world.
 - iii) We talked of “wars and rumors of wars” and “kingdoms fighting kingdoms” and earthquakes in various (world-wide) places.”
 - iv) Now the focus is more on Israel. How do I know this?
 - a) Well, for starters, we are talking about some event called “the abomination that causes desolation” as spoken of by Daniel. That is pretty Jewish. ☺
 - b) In Verse 20, Jesus says, “Pray that your flight (from danger) doesn’t happen on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a Jewish day of rest in Israel. All the buses, airports, etc. shut down on Saturday’s (Sabbath’s). Why would this verse be significant to any non-Jew or anyone not in Israel? Again, my point here is that this next paragraph (Verse 15-25) focuses on Israel.
 - b) Verse 15 ends with the phrase “Let the reader understand”.
 - i) That means this verse is for the reader, i.e., you and I.
 - ii) This verse says let the reader understand. That is a command for us.
 - iii) Therefore, Jesus wants us to understand what “the abomination that causes desolation” is all about. I need at least a page to explain this one. ☺
 - c) There are three mentions of “the abomination that causes desolation” in Daniel:
 - i) The first is in Chapter 9: “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (Daniel 9:27 NIV)

- a) In my Daniel studies, I spent about 3-4 pages on this verse, so it's going to be tough to summarize it. ☺
- b) The word "seven" this comes from a Hebrew word that can mean 7 days or 7 weeks or 7 years. It happens to mean 7-years here (trust me on this ☺).
- c) The word "He" refers to the last noun in Verse 26. That is as follows:
 "The ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary".
 Obviously, that is not Jesus. It refers to an/the "Antichrist" who will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Jesus does not nor will not do that.
- d) Daniel 9:27 says this Antichrist will make a covenant (contract) with the Jewish people. It will have something to do with allowing the Jews to build and have their temple and have animal sacrifices.
- e) Notice in 9:27 that this Antichrist puts an end to the sacrifice in the middle of the 7 years. The last part of the verse says the Antichrist will set up "an abomination that causes desolation." We'll discuss that more in a second.
- ii) The next mention of this phrase is in Daniel 11: "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation." (Daniel 11:31, NIV)
 - a) Most commentators say this was a historic event, future to Daniel, and past tense to us. About 200-300 years prior to Jesus, there was a Greek ruler over Israel (Antiochus IV). He couldn't stand the fact that Israel was worshipping God and not him. Therefore, he set up a statue of himself in the temple, and slaughtered a pig (non-kosher) on the altar.
 - (1) That event was called the "abomination that causes desolation".
 - b) The problem is Jesus says, "When you see" this event.
 - (1) Jesus is speaking of some event that will happen in the future.
 - c) Therefore, Jesus is saying this will happen again as the Greek ruler who did this was past tense.
- iii) The last mention is in Daniel 12: "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. (Daniel 12:11, NIV)
 - a) Translation: From the day this event happens in the future (whenever that is) until the time Jesus stops this (his second coming) is 1,290 days.
 - b) The Hebrew "year" has 360 days; 1,290 days is 3½ years + 30 days.
 - c) Here's another argument in favor of the "pre-trib." view. Once we know the exact day this "abomination" takes place, we know it will be exactly 1,290 days until Jesus returns. Yet Jesus says, "no one know the day or hour" of Jesus second coming (Matthew 24:36).
 - (1) That sounds like a contradiction unless you believe there is two "groups" of saints, one of which is raptured prior to this event and another more "naïve" group that doesn't know their bibles!"
- iv) When Jesus is saying to watch for the "abomination that causes desolation" I believe is warning about the Antichrist making this "contract" with Israel. I suspect many Jews will hail this guy as their Messiah. In the middle of the 7-year period, he does a "double cross". I suspect he will demand to be worshipped as God and stop the temple sacrifices.
- d) Let's get back to Matthew. Jesus said, "When you see standing in the holy place".
 - i) For centuries, bible critics have scoffed at this verse. They said, "How can the world, or Jews for that matter "see" this event when only the High Priest can go into the inner most parts of temple?"
 - ii) Now that we live in era of "CNN" and satellite TV, this is no longer an issue!

20. Verse 16: then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
- Translation: "When this happens, make a run for it!" All hell is going to break loose.
 - There are those who take this whole paragraph as being a past event.
 - Remember that the temple was destroyed in 70AD and millions were killed.
 - The problem with that view is that it does "not exactly fit" the way Jesus described it. There was no "abomination of desolation" performed on the temple, other than its destruction. To the Jewish reader of Matthew, a future event would be similar to the one of the Greek-king who slaughtered the pig in the temple. Besides that destruction didn't fit in with any "seven year" period. That is why I believe this is all future to us.
21. Verse 17: Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.
- Jesus point: Run! Don't delay, run!
 - The question is then, where do they run to?
 - Daniel 11:41 describes an area that will not fall into the hands of the Antichrist. That area today is called Jordan. Daniel 11:41 uses the "old biblical names" for that territory. This territory borders Israel.
22. Verse 19: How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!
- Jesus point is that whenever this happens, people will still be having babies. In a sense, "life will go on" during this time." It will be extra difficult for these women at this time.
23. Verse 20: Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.
- In Israel, life "shuts down" on the Sabbath. Therefore, this is why Jesus is saying to pray it doesn't happen on that day of the week. This is why it is so significant that the Jews are back in the nation of Israel. This prophecy can't be true unless the Jews are in the land.
 - Further, Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains. Have you ever tried to travel through mountain passes in the middle of a winter? Not everybody has 4-wheel drive and snow chains! ☺ At that time, to travel in and out of Jerusalem in winter is close to impossible.
 - This verse has some tremendous implications. It says pray that these events don't happen in wintertime or on the Sabbath.
 - In Verse 34, Jesus states that only God-the-Father knows the day and hour when all of this is going to take place.
 - Yet somehow, God is getting us involved in the process. Jesus is specifically telling us to pray that this event doesn't happen on that day or season.
 - This means, that somehow, we have the power to control when this event occurs, or at least, make it less miserable for those who suffer during this time.
24. Verse 21: For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again.
- This verse is frightening. This verse is saying, "This time will be worse than any other in history". Remember the focus is now on Israel.
 - In 70 AD millions of Jews were killed. This will be worse.
 - Six million Jews died in the Holocaust. Jesus is saying this will be worse.
 - There is a prediction by the prophet Zechariah which may tie here:
 - "In the whole land," declares the LORD, "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it." (Zechariah 13:7, NIV)
 - Unfortunately, many religious Jews believe this verse is about the Holocaust, as close to 2/3 of all Jews in Europe died.
 - When Zechariah talks about the "whole land", I believe he is referring to the land of Israel. That is why I believe this prediction by Zechariah refers to the horrible future event that will take place in Israel.
 - There are Jewish critics who claim evangelical Christians are anti-Jewish because of this prediction and somehow "we want this to happen to prove the bible is true". This is nonsense! God is stating this fact as a warning for those to flee!

25. Verse 22: If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.
- a) Jesus point is this tribulation will not go on forever. This horror period goes on for exactly 3½ years (Plus, there is that extra 30 days. Commentators believe this is the “clean-up” operation by Jesus in that last 30 days.
 - b) When horrible events happen, people think, “When will this ever end? It just seems to go on forever”. Jesus point is that there will be an end to this. It is not an eternal trauma.
26. Verse 23: At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.
- a) During this time, false Christs will appear as well as false-prophets. The difference is “Christ’s” are kings and prophets are well, prophets. ☺
 - b) Notice in Verse 24 they will perform “great signs”.
 - i) I believe whoever these guys are will have great technology available to do “con jobs” and do signs and miracles. Possibly, God may grant Satan powers to do all sorts of signs that are beyond human explanation.
 - ii) Remember what Paul says, “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” (Galatians 1:8, NIV).
 - a) My point here is that even if someone is “an angel” we should listen to the message rather than the “signs and wonders” that angel performs.
 - b) Joseph Smith, who founded the Mormon movement claimed to have seen angels. Personally, I believe that is true. The real question is not whether or not he saw angels, but whether or not the message he received agrees with the fundamental principals of Christianity. The reason Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Christians reject Mormonism is because they deny that Jesus is God. (Every other issue is secondary!)
 - c) Notice Jesus says, “to deceive even the elect--if that were possible”
 - i) The “elect” are those who are saved during that time period.
 - a) Those who hold the “post-trib.” view believe “the elect” is the church.
 - b) Those who hold the “pre-trib.” view believe “the elect” are those saved during this time era.
 - ii) This verse tells me that these “signs” are so powerful, it would convince anyone.
 - iii) God preserves his “elect”. It is not possible to deceive someone on a permanent basis who spends eternity in heaven. There are times when we go astray from God, but God calls the “elect” back toward him.
 - iv) I think Jesus is giving us this statement as for Christians not to fear.
 - a) If you are putting your trust in Jesus, you are preserved. Those “fantastic signs” will not be enough to deceive you. You may be impressed, but if you are grounded in the bible, you’ll remember, “Hey, Jesus said this is going to happen, so I’m aware of it.”
27. Verse 25: See, I have told you ahead of time.
- a) Remember in Verses 1-2 of this chapter Jesus described how the temple would be torn down stone by stone. That literally came true. Since that part is literal, I take the rest of this section to be equally as literal.
 - b) We don’t know the future, so some of this is “fuzzy” to us as to how it will happen.
 - c) Ever watch a television drama and think, “How is our hero going to get out of this one?”
 - i) You know they will, because there is another episode next week.
 - ii) Jesus is telling us in advance that a lot of horrible things will happen. Like the TV show, you know “the good guys will win in the end”. Read the end of the bible: “We win”. That should give us comfort during the “tribulations” of our life.

- d) We ourselves may or may not see this event. If I happen to be wrong in my “pre-trib.” views, so be it, I’ll take comfort in the fact that the tribulation will not be forever.
 - i) I don’t believe I am wrong, but that’s a different story. ☺
 - e) Jesus is telling this to Christians all through history to be on the watch for these events.
 - i) A reason is to keep us motivated and on our toes.
 - ii) We warn others of this event as a motivator to accept Jesus free gift of salvation.
 - iii) Further, it is a reminder to us that “Jesus the Prophet” knows all things and warns of all things in advance. Tribulation is less painful if we know there is an end.
 - f) Next, week, the last 26 verses of this chapter, we will get into more “signs” of when this will happen.
28. Heavenly Father, help us to “stay on our toes” and watch for your coming. Help us to keep our focus on the eternal perspective and to be persistent in the things you have called us to do as believers. We wait and watch for your coming. We ask this in Jesus name, amen.