

Notes for Matthew -Chapter 24 Part 1 (Page 1 of 8)

Introduction - Chapter 24 focuses on the events of Jesus second coming.

1. Let's start 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. We don't know, nor can we calculate that day or hour.
 - b. The second is "Watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."
 - i. This is a command given to us in Verse 42. We are to watch for His return.
 - ii. "Watching" for Jesus' second coming does not mean to stand around, stare at the sky all day and look for his return.
 - iii. It means to stay busy doing the things God called us to do.
2. Chapter 24 is commonly called "The Olivet Discourse".
 - a. This is a 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.
3. 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. 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.
 - c. Another view is that this is only talking about the "end time events".
 - d. A third view is called the "amillennial" view. This view believes there is no literal 1,000-year millennium. It is popular in the Roman Catholic Church. This view believes the events of Revelation are symbolic and cover the entire church history. Jesus will just come back and "that's it". There is no literal 7-year tribulation.
4. I believe the predictions given by Jesus are vague for a number of reasons:
 - a. Jesus is describing future events and are "fuzzy" to describe in 1st Century terminology.
 - b. 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".
 - c. My personal view is the details are vague so Satan himself does not know the day nor hour of Jesus' return. The bible clearly teaches that at the end of a 7-year period Satan is "bound for a 1,000 years" (Revelation 20) and soon afterwards he is cast into hell. Satan wants to delay as long as possible Jesus' return.

Verse 1: "Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings."

1. Let's start with the first phrase, "Jesus left the temple and was walking away".
 - a. This ties to the last two chapters. Jesus had a "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.
 - c. The temple at that time 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)
 - d. It is funny to think about giving Jesus, who created all things, a guided tour of the temple.
 - e. Maybe the disciples were hoping Jesus was going to overthrow Rome now and wanted to "show him" the details of temple where Jesus "could set up shop".

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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."

1. Jesus is saying this temple, with all of its beauty, will be completely destroyed. That happened roughly 40 years after the crucifixion in 70AD.
2. Jesus' prediction came literally true. The Romans destroyed the temple brick-by-brick in order to salvage the gold from the temple. (Source: Josephus "The Wars Of The Jews")
 - a. Because this prediction came literally true, I take the view that the rest of the predictions in this chapter will also literally come true.
 - b. This verse supports the validity of Matthew writing this book before 70AD. If Matthew wrote this after 70AD, he would have mentioned how this prophecy was fulfilled.

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?"

1. To a religious Jew of that day, the destruction of the temple meant the end of civilization.
2. The disciples asked Jesus a 3-part question:
 - a. "When will this happen?"
 - b. "What will be the sign of your coming?"
 - c. And finally, "(When) is the end of this age?"
 - d. To the disciples, all three were one in the same event.
 - e. Jesus had to explain that the destruction of the temple was not the end of this age.
3. The rest of the chapter is Jesus answering these questions.
 - a. The debate now begins over which verses are past, present and future to us.
 - b. There is a phrase in Verse 15 that says, "let the reader understand".
 - i. 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

Verses 4-5: "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."

1. Before we analyze Verse 4, let us look at Verse 8: "All these are the beginning of birth pains".
 - a. Everything from Verse 4 to Verse 8 is like the "early contractions" of labor pains
 - b. The first word of Verse 9 is "then". Verse 9 begins the next phase.
2. Here are some comments on the "historical view" of Verses 4-5.
 - a. There are historical records of Jews (post-Jesus) who claimed they were the Messiah and lead an uprising against Rome, only to be killed.
 - b. 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.
3. Here is some comments on the "future view" of these verses:
 - a. 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.
4. 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.
 - a. 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.

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Verses 6-8: "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."

1. Notice the last phrase of Verse 6: The end is still to come.
2. When a big-international trauma comes like a world war or an earthquake or a famine, people think, "This is it, the end of the world. It is so bad, that it has to end now. Jesus must be coming back soon." Jesus point is, "No, it's not the end of the world when these things happened."
3. Let's get back to the view that that all of this prophecy is about end-time events:
 - a. This view is that the "wars and rumors of wars" is speaking of specific wars that happen during the future, 7-year tribulation period.
 - b. 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.

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."

1. 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.
2. The problem is the word "you". Jesus says, "You will be persecuted...."
 - a. 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.
 - b. The next 200-300 years saw 10 Roman Emperors put death sentences on Christians. 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.
3. Now lets look at the "this is all end-times" view of this section:
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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 way Satan could prevent his own destruction is to prevent believers of that era to not pray for Jesus return. How does he do that? He kills them!

Verses 10-11: "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."

1. Let's start with the phrase "at that time":
 - a. 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.
 - b. Now Jesus is saying "at that time". That phrase refers to the specific, end time, 7-year period. We'll discuss this in more detail later in the lesson.
2. Let's start with the phrase, "At that time":
 - a. 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.
 - b. Therefore, Satan is going to offer a substitute to fill that demand.
 - c. 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.

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Verses 10-11 (cont.):

3. Unfortunately, Jesus predicted the Christian life does cause betrayal.
 - a. 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)

Verse 12: "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,"

1. 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.
 - a. "When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, men go into hiding." (Proverbs 28:12, NIV)
2. 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 and service during this era.
3. Those who believe "the rapture" happens prior to the tribulation, believe the Christian church won't be around during this time era. Jesus may be hinting at this with "increased wickedness".
4. Further, this verse is teaching that when wickedness abounds, things go "downhill" for those who choose to follow the God of the Bible
 - a. "When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan." (Proverbs 29:2, NIV)

Verse 13: "But he who stands firm to the end will be saved."

1. 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.
 - a. To understand the concept of the "rapture", first you have to understand that life as-it-is now, does not go on forever.
 - b. There is a day Jesus comes back and "wraps it up" for believers.
 - c. 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. (Source: Rev. 20:6).
 - d. Prior to this 1,000 year period is a 7-year period where "all hell breaks loose".
 - e. 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.
 - f. Those who believe the rapture happens prior to the 7-year period are nick-named "pre-tribulationists" or "pre-trib's" for short as we are "out of here" prior to this tribulation.
 - g. Others believe the church goes through this 7-year tribulation. They are nicknamed "post-trib's" as the rapture happens after the tribulation.
 - h. If the bible was real clear on this issue, there wouldn't be a debate over the issue.
2. Let's start with the "post-tribulation" view:
 - a. 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 "until the end" get saved. We are all here until that period is over.
 - b. Further, post tribulations will argue, "There is no passage in the New Testament where Jesus specifically says he is coming back twice".

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Verse 13 (cont.): Discussion of the “pre-trib.” vs. “post-trib.” view of the rapture.

- c. 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 (Jesus) comes two times.
 - d. 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.
3. Let’s discuss the “pre-tribulation” view:
- a. 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.
 - b. As to this Matthew passage, “pre-trib’s” believe there are 2 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.

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.”

1. There is a famous Christian outreach group called the “The Gideons International”.
 - a. They take Verse 14 as a “spiritual calling” to them.
 - b. 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.
 - c. We mostly know them as “the guys who leave the bibles in the motel rooms”.
2. As much as I respect the Gideons, I don’t think this verse is about them or those Christian missionary groups trying to do so. I believe Verse 14 ties to another verse in Revelation:
 - a. “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)
 - b. 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.
 - c. My view is not a putdown of the Gideons. They are fulfilling “the Great Commission”.

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 –”

1. From this verse through to Verse 25, I believe the specific focus is 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? My point is that this next paragraph (Verse 15-25) focuses on Israel.
2. Verse 15 ends with the phrase “Let the reader understand”.
 - a. This verse is for the reader of Gospel of Matthew.
 - b. This verse says let the reader understand. That is a command for us.
3. There are three mentions of “the abomination that causes desolation” in Daniel:

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Verse 15 (cont.): "A discussion of the phrase "the abomination that causes desolation".

4. The first of 3 references is in Daniel, 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. 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 in this context of Daniel 9:27.
 - b. The word "He" refers to the last noun in Daniel 9:26. That verse says, "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 (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary.
 - c. Daniel 9:27 says, He (Antichrist) will make a covenant (contract) with many..."
 - i. Most commentators believe the Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews to allow them to build their temple and have animal sacrifices.
 - d. Daniel 9:27 then says, "In the middle (half-way point) of the 'seven' (years) he (Anti-Christ) will put an end to sacrifice and offering."
 - e. Daniel 9:27 then says, "he (Antichrist) will set up an abomination that causes desolation".
 - i. We'll discuss what the "abomination" means in a few moments! ☺
5. 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 believe Daniel 11:31 was a historic event, future to Daniel, and past tense to us.
 - i. 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. That was called, "the abomination that causes desolation."
 - b. The problem is Jesus says, "When you see" this event. Jesus is talking in future tense.
 - c. Jesus is saying this will happen again as Antiochus IV was a past tense event.
6. 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 calendar 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).
 - i. That is a contradiction unless you believe there is 2 groups of saints, one of which is raptured prior to this event and the other group gets saved, "post-rapture".
7. When Jesus is saying to watch for the "abomination that causes desolation", I believe he 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.
8. Let's get back to Matthew. Jesus said, "When you see standing in the holy place..."
 - a. For centuries, bible critics have scoffed and said, "How can the world, "see" this event when only the High Priest can go into the inner most parts of temple?"
 - b. Now that we live in era of "CNN" and satellite TV, this is no longer an issue!

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Verse 16: "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

1. There are those who take this whole paragraph as being a past event.
 - a. Remember that the temple was destroyed in 70AD and millions were killed.
 - b. The problem with the destruction as it happened in 70AD is it does not exactly fit the way Jesus described it. There was no "abomination of desolation" performed on the temple at that time, just its destruction.
 - i. Besides, there is no "seven-year period" around the 70AD period and Jesus did not come back 1,290 days after it was destroyed.
 - ii. Therefore, Jesus must be talking about some future event.
 - c. 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.

Verses 17-18: "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."

1. Jesus point: Run! Don't delay, run! The question is then, where do they run to?
 - a. 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.

Verse 19: "How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!"

1. 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.

Verse 20: "Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath."

1. 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.
2. Further, Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains. Have you ever tried to travel through mountain passes in the middle of a winter? That is why there is an "anti-winter" warning.
3. This verse says to pray that these events don't happen in wintertime or on the Sabbath.
 - a. 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 God asks us to pray about the specific date!

Verse 21: "For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now-- and never to be equaled again."

1. 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.
2. In 70 AD millions of Jews were killed. This will be worse. Worse than the Holocaust!
3. "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)
 - a. Unfortunately, many religious Jews believe this verse in Zechariah is about the Holocaust. During the Holocaust close to two-thirds of all Jews in Europe died.
 - b. When Zechariah talks about the "whole land", I believe he is referring to the land of Israel. That is why I believe this prediction refers to a future event.

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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."

1. 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 last 30 days is the "clean-up" operation by Jesus after the wars of the tribulation.

Verses 23-24: "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."

1. During this time, false Christs will appear as well as false-prophets. The difference is "Christ's" are kings and prophets are well, prophets. ☺
2. Notice in Verse 24 they will perform "great signs". I believer whoever these guys are will have great technology available to do "con jobs" and do signs and miracles, or just demonic power.
3. 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).
4. Notice Jesus says, "to deceive even the elect (i.e., "saved")--if that were possible".
 - a. Those who hold the "post-trib." view believe "the elect" is the church.
 - b. Those with the "pre-trib." view believe "the elect" are those saved during this time era.
5. 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.
 - 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."

Verse 25: "See, I have told you ahead of time."

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. I would rather live my life "pre-trib.", than "post-trib." even if I'm wrong in my view:
 - a. Jesus wants us to watch for his return. In a "pre-trib." view, Jesus can come back at any moment. In a "post-trib." view, Jesus can't come back at any moment because the Antichrist has to come first, as well as the horrible events of the 7-year tribulation.
4. Jesus is telling this to Christians all through history to be on the watch for these events
 - a. A reason is to keep us motivated and on our toes.
 - b. We warn others of this event as a motivator to accept Jesus free gift of salvation.
 - c. 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.