

## Gospel of Matthew Chapter 24 Part 2 -- John Karmelich

1. This is Part 2 of Matthew 24. If you have not read Part 1, you may want to read that one first.
  - a) Chapters 24-25 are all one speech by Jesus nicknamed the “Olivet Discourse” as Jesus gave the speech from the Mount of Olives.
  - b) It is the largest bulk of prophecy you can find in the Gospels.
  - c) The speech is also stated in Mark’s Gospel (Chapter 13) and Luke’s Gospel (Chapter 21).
    - i) Each Gospel account has a few variances in the details.
2. Let’s get to the fundamentals: Why is this speech important for Christians to understand?
  - a) The speech is about the Second Coming of Jesus.
    - i) To be a “Christian”, I believe there are only a handful of things one needs to believe in order to have eternal salvation.
      - a) The “apostle’s creed” as found in most Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian churches has those fundamental ideas.
      - b) While these three branches of Christianity disagree on lots of things, they agree upon the fundamentals.
    - ii) One of those fundamentals is to believe that Jesus is coming a second time.
      - a) Exactly “what Jesus does when he gets here” in this second coming is debated among the major Christian denominations.
      - b) One view, taught by most Roman Catholics, is that Jesus comes a second time to take us all up to heaven for eternity.
      - c) The other view, which is taught by Evangelical Christians, is that Jesus comes back to rule on earth for a 1,000 years. We as Christians rule with Jesus. After that, there is a “new heaven and earth” and we live for eternity in the presence of God.
      - d) Either way, the point is that life does not go on forever as it is now.
      - e) A fundamental belief of Christianity is that in the same way human life has a beginning on earth, there is going to be a “wrap up” job by God.
  - b) The most important thing is that near the end of this chapter, Jesus gives us a command to watch for his second coming. This is in Verse 42.
    - i) At the same time, Jesus specifically says that no one but God the Father knows the day and hour of Jesus Second Coming. This in Verse 36.
    - ii) The whole idea is to keep us on our toes and watch out for Jesus’ return.
    - iii) With that said, let us continue Jesus’ speech in Chapter 24:
3. Verse 26: "So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.
  - a) If somebody tells you “Jesus came back to earth, and is currently living in a condominium in Cleveland, Ohio, don’t believe them. ☺
  - b) Unfortunately, many cults claim they have “the true Jesus” in their midst preaching away.
  - c) Jesus point is that when he does come back it will be obvious to everyone.
  - d) That is his point in Verse 27. Speaking of which....
4. Verse 27: For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
  - a) Notice the word “as” in the beginning of the verse.
    - i) Jesus’ Second Coming will be as (like) lightning.
    - ii) If you’ve ever watched a lightning storm, especially in the desert climate of Israel, you will know you can see it across the horizon.
  - b) Jesus point is that when he comes, everyone will know it.

- c) I may be wrong on the next point, but I do think there is some significance to the word “east” as in “east to west”.
- i) Let’s face it, when we see lightning, it can come from any direction.
    - a) I kept thinking, “Why did Jesus mention “east to west”?”
    - b) I do know, that the Jews believe, when the Messiah, comes, it will be from the eastern direction. (Reference: see Ezekiel 43:1).
  - ii) There is a gate to the Old City of Jerusalem called the “Golden Gate”. It is currently blocked off. Religious Jews believe that when the Messiah comes, he will enter Jerusalem through that gate. (I hold this view as well.)
  - iii) With all that said, I have to admit every now and then I do look up to east to see if Jesus is coming. I do that not so much as I think I can see him from my driveway as it is to remind myself that one day Jesus is coming back.  
I want to be looking in the right direction. ☺
5. Verse 28: Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.
- a) This is a difficult verse to interpret.
  - b) Why would Jesus, talking about his return, now give this commentary about carcasses and vultures?
    - i) Some commentators believe it ties into “Battle of Armageddon” as described in Revelation 16. If you read that, it is not so much a battle as it is a “wipe out” as Jesus destroys a multi-million-man army out to get him.
    - ii) Revelation describes the birds eating the carcasses of the killed (Rev. 19:17,19:21)
  - c) With that said, I don’t think that is Jesus’ point.
    - i) He just described the “east to west lightening flash”.
    - ii) Now he describes this vulture/carcasses scenario.
    - iii) I believe Jesus’ simple point is, if you see a bunch of vultures in the distance together, you know they caught something. It is obvious.
      - a) “Equally” as obvious will be Jesus second coming.
      - b) Again, Jesus uses simple illustrations to point out that his second coming will not be some secret event that only a “special group” can see.
6. Verse 29: "Immediately after the distress of those days " `the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'
- a) Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 13:10; 34:4
  - b) A few verses back, Jesus just stated that his second coming will be “like lightning” in the sense it is obvious to everyone who sees it.
    - i) Now Jesus is describing “no sunlight, no moonlight and no starlight”.
    - ii) In summary, it will be dark out. ☺
    - iii) Remember when Jesus wrote this, there was no electricity.
    - iv) My personal view is all our electric lights will be out as well.
    - v) With the sky that dark, can you imagine how it will look as Jesus appears?
  - c) I also take the view that somehow, this will be a global phenomenon. It will be visible to every part of the globe. I don’t know how that will happen. That’s God’s problem. ☺
  - d) Notice in Verse 29, the words, “After the distress of those days”. What days?
    - i) This means that all the signs described in the past lesson (the first half of this chapter) are all future tense and describe “those days”.
    - ii) This is why I take the view that this describes the end-times, 7-year tribulation.
    - iii) It is describing some specific time period where “distress” will occur.
      - a) Personally, when I look at all the horror that mankind has committed through the centuries, and Jesus refers to this specific time as “distressful”, that scares me a little. ☺
      - b) Jesus other point is that this distressful period will not go on forever.
      - c) This specific time has a beginning and has an end.

- iv) This is why I disagree with the “amillennial” view.
  - a) The “amillennial” view of the end times is that the time of “7-year” tribulation is not literal. This view is that it covers the last 2,000 years of Christian history (and counting).
    - (1) The amillennial view is Jesus just comes back, and well, that’s it.
    - (2) This view is that there is no literal 1,000-year millennium of Jesus’ ruling on earth. There is just life-in-heaven after Jesus’ return.
  - b) The other major view is the “pre-millennial” view. This view is that there is a literal 7-year period. It is followed by another literal 1,000-year millennium.
  - c) Among “pre-millennialist” are the two views:
    - (1) View #1 is that a “rapture” of the church happens prior to this 7-year period. This is called the “pre-tribulation (“pre-trib.”) view”.
    - (2) View #2 is that a rapture of the church happens after the 7-year period. This is called the “post-tribulation (“post-trib.”) view.
    - (3) Both of these views believe in a literal 7-year period and a rapture of the church prior to a 1,000-year millennium where Jesus rules and reigns from the earth.
    - (4) Jesus rules over those who survive through that tribulation.
    - (5) We as Christians rule with Jesus during this period.
  - d) Now that you know all of this, it is time to go to Verse 30. ☺
- 7. Verse 30: "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.
  - a) I stated a page back, that every part of the globe will see Jesus return.
    - i) Notice that Verse 30 states, “all the nations of the earth will mourn”.
  - b) Ok, the big question: “Why do the nations mourn?”
    - i) To summarize, people will think in some manner, “They blew it”. They worshipped things other than Jesus, false religions, false gods, or simply ignored God all of their lives. Now here is Jesus returning.
    - ii) You have to remember that the tribulation period “features” a large majority of people turning their collective backs on God.
      - a) They worship the Antichrist. They accept this coming world leader as the answer to their problems and worship him as a deity.
      - b) There is a world wide celebration mentioned in Revelation is when God’s two witnesses are killed. The world, “exchanging gifts with one another” to celebrate their deaths! (Reference: Revelation 11:10).
      - c) Revelation 19 speaks of the world having “an army” to go up against Jerusalem to fight against God.
      - d) In summary, this is not a good time for believers in Jesus. ☺
      - e) Then, all of a sudden, the period comes to an end, darkness appears, and the world realizes “Uh oh, we bet on the wrong horse. Here comes Jesus.”
    - iii) There are Christian bumper stickers that say something like” “Jesus is coming back, and this time he’s angry!” I don’t think that is far from the truth. When Jesus comes the second time it is for judgment on the world.
  - c) As to the “world mourning” over Jesus’ return, there is a similar prediction in Zechariah:
    - i) “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me (Jesus), the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. (Zechariah 12:10, NIV).
    - a) The piercing, I believe refers to the nail prints from the crucifixion.

- b) This is a prediction of the Nation of Israel collectively saying in that day, “Oh oh, we made a mistake. Jesus was the Messiah.”
      - c) Notice the aspect of “mourning” in the Zechariah verse.
    - d) OK, what is the deal with “clouds”? Why does Jesus say he is “coming with clouds”?
      - i) Jesus visibly appeared to the disciples and others after his resurrection.
      - ii) Paul said that over five hundred people saw the resurrected Jesus (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:6).
      - iii) Here is the description of what the disciples last saw of Jesus:
        - a) “After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.” (Acts 1:9, NIV)
        - b) In Verse 11 of Acts 1, an angel says He “will come back in the same way”.
        - c) That same way is with clouds.
      - iv) Think of clouds as a “word-picture”.
        - a) Clouds make things “fuzzy”. It makes things hard to see.
        - b) On the other hand, Jesus clearly says that everyone will see his return.
        - c) Maybe “clouds” makes the site of Jesus return more visible.
        - d) My personal view (I can’t prove this) is that the cloud-reference is about the mystery of God the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit.
          - (1) We cannot fully comprehend God. Just as we cannot fully comprehend what is in front of us if it is foggy (cloudy).
8. Verse 31: And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.
- a) This verse is describing “his elect” among the people of the world being taken to heaven.
  - b) Those who hold the “post-tribulation” view love this verse.
    - i) They read this verse and say, “Ah ha! You see, we as believers don’t get “raptured” up into heaven until after the tribulation of those days”.
    - ii) Paul uses “the elect” to refer to the church. (e.g., Romans 8:33, Col. 3:12)
  - c) Those of us who hold the “pre-tribulation rapture” view, have a rebuttal. ☺
    - i) Let’s look at a couple of verses in Isaiah:
      - a) For Jacob My servant’s sake, And Israel My elect, (Isaiah 45:4 NIV))
      - b) I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, And from Judah an heir of My mountains; My elect shall inherit it, (Isaiah 65:9, NIV)
    - ii) My point is that when Jesus says, “my elect” here, he is talking about the Jewish people. I believe specifically, he is talking about Jewish believers in Jesus.
    - iii) I believe that during the tribulation, millions of people become Christians, including many, many Jewish people.
    - iv) Paul also uses the word “elect” to refer to Christian Jews (e.g., Rom. 11:7).
    - v) There is a view among many “pre-trib.” types that prior to Jesus’ second coming, the Jewish nation has to pray for Jesus to return:
      - a) Then I (Jesus?) will go back to my place (heaven, after crucifixion?) until they (Jewish people) admit their guilt. And they will seek my face; in their misery they will earnestly seek me.” (Hosea 5:15, NIV)
      - b) I added the parts in parenthesis. This shows how this prediction by Hosea could be about the Jewish nation “admitting their guilt” (i.e., failure to recognize Jesus) and “earnestly seeking him”, (i.e., praying for his return).
      - c) Given that view, can you see why Satan desires to destroy the nation of Israel today? From Satan’s viewpoint, “If I can destroy the Jewish nation, they can’t pray for Jesus second coming, and therefore I win”. That theory would explain the “illogical” reasons why the Arab-world is so “hell-bent” on the destruction of the modern nation of Israel and the anti-Semitic attitude of the world.

- d) Ok, I admit, I've deviated a little off the topic. ☺
    - i) My point is that when you read of "Jesus gathering his elect" here in Verse 31, consider the possibility that Jesus is either talking about 1) all of us who are Christians who are alive at this time or 2) if you believe the Christian church is "already in heaven watching this from the balcony"), then it refers to a new group of Christian believers who get saved at this time.
  - e) One last point to consider from Verse 31:
    - i) In the last lesson I talked about the day the Antichrist goes into the temple and demands to be worshipped. This event is called "The Abomination of Desolation"
      - a) From that day to Jesus' Second Coming is exactly 1,290 days (Daniel 12:11).
    - ii) Yet we are going to read in Verse 36, Jesus saying, "No one knows the day nor the hour" of his return.
    - iii) Doesn't that sound like a contradiction? On one hand, we know its 1,290 days from "D-day" but Jesus says, "no one knows that day"?
    - iv) You reconcile that by remembering no one knows the day the 1,290 period starts.
9. Verse 32: "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. <sup>33</sup> Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.
- a) Now we get back to the question of when is this going to happen.
  - b) Jesus point is we don't know the day, but by these "signs" Jesus is giving, we should know it will happen soon after these signs occur. That is Jesus simple point.
  - c) For those who don't know about fig trees, they are barren in the winter, and start to grow leaves in the spring. If you don't have a calendar and wonder what time of the year it is, you can tell by looking a fig tree and seeing leaves, but no fruit yet.
  - d) There are commentators who make the point that Israel is often compared to a fig tree in places in the Old Testament. If you do a bible search, you will find 17 references to fig trees in the Old Testament. Almost all of them, if not all, are hints that they apply to the nation of Israel.
    - i) With that said, I think they are reading too much into this verse.
    - ii) I think Jesus is simply saying, "If you see leaves on the fig tree, you can tell the time of the year. If you see all the "signs" I've described in Chapter 24 start to happen, you know that my second coming is near".
    - iii) Remember that this whole speech is an answer to the question of when will be your second coming and what signs will happen prior to its occurrence.
10. Verse 34: I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.
- a) Is Jesus saying, "You guys, the disciples will not die until all of this happens?"
    - i) Remember that some bible scholars hold the view that all of these events are past tense. This view, called "the preterist" view, is that Jesus is describing all the things that happened soon after Jesus death. Remember that the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70AD.
    - ii) The only problem with this view is that Jesus Second Coming didn't happen yet.
    - iii) Historically, the preterist view doesn't work because Jesus said that when his second coming does happen, the whole world will see it.
  - b) There is another view that word "generation" can be translated "race".
    - i) It is the view that the Jewish race will not die out until all of this happens.
    - ii) The Jewish race has miraculously survived for thousands of years. Name any other race of people that has survived for 2,000 years without a homeland. That alone should be proof of the existence of the God of the bible.
    - iii) While this "theory fits the facts", I really think generation means "generation", which leads to the next theory:

- c) When Jesus meant “this generation”, I believe he simply means the generation that sees the start of all of these events is the same generation who sees the end of all of these events.
  - i) My point, and I believe is Jesus’ point, is that “this does not go on forever”.
  - ii) This tribulation period has a definite starting date and a definite ending date. Only the God the Father knows the starting date (See Verse 36).
  - iii) This is another reason why I disagree with the “amillennial” view, which argues that there is no literal 7-year period. I believe Jesus is saying there is a specific time period in which all of this takes place, and the entire scope of events occurs within one generation.
  - iv) So onto the big question: Are we living in that generation?
    - a) Well, first of all, I hope so. ☺ As horrible as these events are, life with Christ and his second coming is going to be greater than our present life.
    - b) Our job as Christians is to live our lives based on how we are going to be treated (rewards) for eternity.
    - c) Many think that because Israel a country again, that started God’s “time clock” of one-generation. I don’t see it that way. Besides it has been 50 years since Israel was reformed. This generation is getting old. ☺
    - d) Personally, I think the “generation” will be obvious when it does happen.
      - (1) Maybe it will be when the Temple is rebuilt.
      - (2) Maybe it will be soon after the rapture of the church.
      - (3) Since Jesus says “no one knows the day nor hour”, I don’t really worry about the starting date.
      - (4) I just know, it will happen, and I am to watch for these events.

11. Verse 35: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

- a) John’s translation of Verse 35: “Jesus words? Bank on it! ☺”
- b) Many people think, “Hey, its been 2,000 years. You really believe he’s coming back?”
- c) Jesus is saying it will happen. We don’t know the day, just that it will happen.
  - i) They (scoffers) will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:4, NIV)
  - ii) Peter’s point: People scoffed 2,000 years ago at Jesus return. They still do it today.
  - iii) Remember from the last lesson how literal was the fulfillment of Jesus’ prediction of how “not one stone will be left upon the other”. The bible is 100% accurate in its predictions coming true. It is that way about the future.
- d) I heard a wonderful comment based on the following verse:
  - i) Jesus said, “In My Father’s house are many mansions (“dwellings”); if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:2-3, NIV)
  - ii) The modern comment is, “If the Lord created the heaven and earth in 6 days, and the same Lord has spent 2,000 years preparing a “mansion” for us, can you imagine how wonderful that place is going to be?”
  - iii) The reason I believe Jesus has waited so long in his 2<sup>nd</sup> coming is that He wants heaven to be full of believers. God loves people so much, he just wants to be with us for eternity. The longer Jesus takes, the more people will accept him, and the more people will be in heaven.
    - a) On the other hand, it can’t go on forever, as Jesus promised he would return. Given that, there are a “fixed” or finite number of believers in heaven.

- e) One last thing about this verse. It says “heaven and earth will pass away”.
  - i) Did you know the bible says on several occasions that God will destroy the heavens the earth? (The “heavens” in this case refers to the sky, the stars, etc.)
  - ii) Here are some examples:
    - a) “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. (Isaiah 65:17 NIV)
    - b) “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,” (Revelation 21:1a, NIV)
  - iii) So why does God destroy the heavens and the earth?
    - a) First of all, so we don’t focus too much on material things. Remember that God is going to blow this whole place up one day.
    - b) Second, I believe “sin” in a figuratively way, has corrupted the earth as well as people themselves. Lets face it, man has messed up the beautiful environment God created for us via sin. Therefore, in the day when we live with God in paradise, there has to be a new earth and heaven not corrupted by sin.
      - (1) We get a “hint” of this in Romans 8:22 (NIV):
      - (2) We know that the whole creation (earth/heavens) has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

12. Verse 36: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
- a) You know, I believe I talked about this verse a little bit already. ☺
  - b) I stated in last week’s and this week’s introduction that this verse, along with the word “watch” in Verse 42 are the keys to this whole chapter.
  - c) When Jesus says “no one, he meant no one”.
  - d) Why did Jesus mention that he himself, “The Son” didn’t know the day nor hour?
    - i) Because if he didn’t, I guarantee you, people would be studying Jesus words for “hidden clues” as to the day and hour of his return.
    - ii) That is the same reason Jesus mentioned that, “angels don’t know”. If Jesus didn’t say that, people would say, “an angel told me the exact date of his return”.
  - e) Remember that we can’t control the timing of Jesus return.
    - i) We do pray “thy kingdom come”, which probably refers to His second coming.
      - a) That prayer is to get our focus upon God ruling in our lives.
    - ii) Jesus did say in Verse 20 to “pray...that it not be in winter or on the Sabbath”.
      - a) So, somehow, we do have “some control through prayer” over the timing of this event.
    - iii) But as to the event itself, it is going to happen. We just don’t know the exact time.
    - iv) On the other hand, Christians cannot go to Jerusalem, build a temple, and say to Jesus, “OK, Jesus here it is, let’s get the show on the road”. ☺
    - v) Jesus point is it is going to happen. We can tell “roughly” when it will start by some signs, but we don’t know the exact date.
    - vi) As I stated in the last lesson, the signs are purposely kept a little vague as to keep us on our toes for time of his return.
13. Verse 37: As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.
- a) You can read lots of commentaries where people “analyze” what Jesus meant by the expression “in the days of Noah”.
    - i) They go through the story of Noah in Genesis and how “especially corrupt” people were during that time period.

- ii) While that is all good and well, that is not Jesus' point.
      - iii) Jesus point is simply "life will go on as usual until Jesus return".
    - b) It may help to remember Jesus is not just describing a single moment in time of His second coming, but a period of time around the second coming of Jesus.
      - i) Until this period of time starts up, life will go on as usual.
      - ii) People were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" until the weather got really bad in Noah's day. ☺
      - iii) The same thing will happen around the time period of the second coming. Life will go on "as usual" and then these events will occur.
      - iv) Getting back to my pre-trib. soapbox, ☺ this is another reason why I think the Christian church is "out of here" before all of this begins.
      - v) Personally, I don't see "life going on as normal" during this seven-year period. I think the final 3½ years will be a time of world wars and terror.
        - a) This is another reason why I think Jesus is describing no one will know when this period of time begins as opposed to the single point in time of Jesus second coming.
14. Verse 40: Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.
- a) I think this is a good spot to talk about the concept of "rapture" itself.
    - i) You won't find that word in the bible. It comes from the Latin. The Greek word "Harpazo" means to be "snatched up" like an eagle swooping down and grabbing its prey off the ground very suddenly.
      - a) Remember that "amillennialists" don't believe in this concept. They just believe Jesus comes back, and then its judgment time.
    - ii) Imagine grabbing a little child when they are not looking and picking them up. That is "sort of" the idea of how this group will be taken into heaven.
    - iii) The concept is that it will happen so fast, it will be like the speed of an eye blink.
    - iv) There are only two passages in the New Testament that discuss this idea.
      - a) One is in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:52 and the other is in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:16.
  - b) Now let me tie the concept of the rapture to Verses 40-41.
    - i) In Matthew we have two women grinding at the mill and two men in the field.
    - ii) One of the each is taken, and one is left.
    - iii) In Luke's account of this story, he adds another example:
      - a) I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. (Luke 17:31, NIV)
    - iv) What's my point?
      - a) People sleep in bed (Luke 17:31) at night.
      - b) Women of that day grinded at the meal (Matthew 24:41) in the morning.
      - c) Men worked in the field (Matthew 24:40) during the day.
      - d) My point is that this rapture can occur at any time of the day or night.
    - v) In the next lesson (Chapter 25) we get into a discussion of what happens to the people who don't make the rapture, so I'll spare you some theories for now. ☺
15. Verse 42: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.
- a) Here is the other key verse for Chapter 24.
  - b) Verse 42 is a command for us as Christians: We are to keep watch.
    - i) As I stated in the last lesson, this does not mean Jesus wants us to spend all day staring up at the sky looking for his coming.
    - ii) Nor does it mean we are to spend all day reading news stories trying to interpret if those news stories are "signs" of his comings.
    - iii) Grant it, those things are fun to do every now and then.
    - iv) I personally love going to bible prophecy conferences just to learn new things.

- v) The point is to keep our focus on his second coming. If an occasional bible study on this topic or looking up at the sky helps, then do so.
  - vi) My personal view is that 30% of the bible is prophecy.
    - a) That is too big a chunk to ignore, but at the same time it is still a minority. The amount of time we spend studying bible prophecy as Christians should have that percentage as a balance to the rest of the bible.
  - c) Remember that this verse is to be read in balance with the fact we don't know the exact day or hour Jesus is coming.
    - i) He commands us to watch out for his coming, and at the same time, it cannot be predicted. The "signs" are there to know when it is near, just not the exact time.
16. Verse 43: But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
- a) These 2 verses are an illustration of the fact we are to watch for Jesus second coming.
  - b) Jesus is saying we are to be like a security guard.
    - i) If a security guard knew the exact time a burglar was coming, he would be there at that time. Since he does not know the time or place, he has to be on the watch.
  - c) Some commentators try to read "too much" into this story.
    - i) Jesus is not comparing himself to a thief in the sense he wants to rob us!
    - ii) He is coming "like a thief" in that we don't know the exact time of his coming.
  - d) I find I live my life best when I have the "eternal focus" in the forefront of my mind.
    - i) Somehow, my problems don't seem as bad when I realize I will live forever.
    - ii) Even the great little joys are kept in perspective when one thinks about eternity.
    - iii) This is the same concept Jesus is teaching us here. When we are thinking about Jesus second coming, that is an incentive to us to have an eternal focus and live in the way God desires for us to live.
17. Verse 45: "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?" <sup>46</sup> It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.
- a) This same parable continues until the end of the chapter.
  - b) Jesus wants us to live our lives as if he can return at any moment. Notice the end of Verse 46 when Jesus says, "whose master finds him doing so when he returns".
    - i) This is one reason I would rather live my life as if the rapture could happen at any moment ("pre-trib. view") as opposed to at the end of the 7-year tribulation (the "post-trib. view").
    - ii) If you have a post-trib. view, then you believe the rapture cannot happen until the Antichrist comes first, and then that 7-year period happens.
    - iii) Even if I were wrong on this issue, which I don't believe I am, I would rather choose to live my life as if Jesus can return at any moment.
    - iv) This view requires me to either have a "pre-trib." view or the "amillennial view".
      - a) The latter simply means that there is no literal 7-year period, there is no literal 1,000-year millennium. Jesus just returns, and that's a wrap. There are too many passages I take literally that disprove this view.
  - c) Let's get back to this part of the illustration. Jesus says that he put us "his servants" in charge of, "his household to give them their food at the proper time."
    - i) So, what does that mean?
      - a) Part of our responsibility as Christians is to serve and help one another grow and mature as Christians.

- b) Christianity is meant to be a team-effort. We survive, grow and mature as a team.
  - c) For some “team-members”, it means teaching God’s word. For others it means to be of other types of service such as comfort, counseling or just plain helping.
  - d) Remember that the Christian concept of “love” means to put other’s needs as priority over our own.
    - (1) “This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.” (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:2, NIV)
  - ii) So, given all of that, what is our “household”?
    - a) This is the fun part. God calls all Christians to get involved.
    - b) I believe all Christians have special gifts, talents and passions that we can combine and use to help others.
    - c) Whether your “household” is a million people, a hundred or just one, does not matter. The point is if you are doing what you believe God called you to do and it is biblically based in its teachings.
18. Verse 47: I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. <sup>48</sup> But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ <sup>49</sup> and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. <sup>50</sup> The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.
- a) First, let me tell you what this verse does not mean:
    - i) It does not mean that if you are daydreaming for 5 minutes, and not thinking about God at that moment, you will miss the rapture. ☺
    - ii) It does not mean if you are committing a sin at that moment, but still are following Jesus in your lifestyle, you will miss the rapture.
  - b) This verse gets back to the idea of who is saved for eternity and who is not saved.
    - i) The person who is saved “puts their money where their mouth is”.
    - ii) The fact that they believe in God and his commandments becomes obvious to the observer by their lifestyle.
    - iii) If you believe Jesus paid the price of your sins for eternity, you in turn, just want to live a life in gratitude of what he did for you.
    - iv) A half-page back I quoted 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:2. It states that if we are “God children” then we are to “carrying out his commands”.
      - a) His commandments are a topic unto itself.
      - b) Back in Matthew 22, Jesus states that we are (paraphrasing) to love God with all of our heart and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves.
        - (1) He stated that all the commandments “hang” on those two.
        - (2) Those two commandments are a good summary of how we are to live the Christian life. The rest is the details.
  - c) This verse is addressed to those who think, “I don’t have to be a Christian now. I can change my lifestyle at any time and still get into heaven.
    - i) Technically that is correct. The hard part is the longer you live your lifestyle that way, the harder it is to change.
    - ii) The verse is for those who are delaying accepting Jesus. Jesus is teaching that you never know when he is coming back. Along that same line of thinking, one never knows when their life is going to end.
  - d) Let’s get back to these verses. Jesus gives two illustrations of “bad servants”.
    - i) Jesus says they, “(1) begins to beat his fellow servants and (2) to eat and drink with drunkards.”
      - a) Notice the first “sin” deals with how the servant treats his fellow servant.
      - b) Notice the second “sin” deals with how the servant acts with non-believers.

- ii) The sins Jesus picks are not necessarily the worse or least of sins.
  - iii) The sins Jesus picks are good examples of how we are a witness to other people.
    - a) Let's face it. If we are beating up fellow Christians, they won't be too crazy about us. ☺ Even worse, we become bad witness to that other believer.
    - b) The other example is a bad witness to the world. If outsiders see you getting drunk, they will consider you a hypocrite in your belief in God.
      - (1) The topic of "can Christians drink alcohol" is a classical debate.
      - (2) The bible never condemns drinking, but strongly condemns being drunk. Personally, I would rather err on the side of too little as opposed to too much. Further, I want to be a good witness to others and I don't want to set a bad example.
19. Verse 51: He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- a) Well, that's not good. ☺
  - b) I personally don't suspect "cut him in pieces" is literal, but I don't know.
  - c) I think these verses and this parable is about salvation and this part is about eternal hell.
    - i) Whenever Jesus uses the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in Matthew, he is describing eternal hell.
  - d) What did Jesus mean by "a place with the hypocrites"?
    - i) In the salvation-aspect, a "hypocrite" refers to one who outwardly acts religious, but in the inside, he or she does not really believe it.
    - ii) It is as if that person is an actor or actress, and is "acting religiously" like a role in the theater. The word "hypocrite" in the Greek is associated with acting.
    - iii) Remember Jesus called the Pharisees "hypocrites".
      - a) They were very religious, but were trusting in their works for salvation.
  - e) Jesus point here is that the "procrastinators" are just as bad as the hypocrites when it comes to accepting Jesus. Either way, it will cost you your eternal salvation.
  - f) What if you're not sure? We'll let's get that important first step out of the way.
    - i) There should be some moment in your life that you recall where you have said something similar to this idea: "Jesus, I'm a sinful person and the only way I can get into heaven is by trusting you. Take over my life, amen."
    - ii) If you do this sincerely, welcome to the family of God.
  - g) For the rest of us, this verse is another reminder to stay busy doing the things God commands us to do to be witnesses for him.
20. To summarize, Jesus uses a "carrot and a stick" motivation for eternal salvation.
- a) This expression, "carrot and a stick" refers to motivating horses.
    - i) You give them a carrot as a reward for doing what you want them to do.
    - ii) You hit them with a stick as punishment.
  - b) Jesus uses that same concept with us as believers.
    - i) Jesus wants us to accept him and live with him for eternity.
    - ii) I believe the most important bible verse on the "purpose of human history" is:
      - a) "And God raised us up with Christ... in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6-7, NIV)
      - b) God loves us with a perfect love. He wants to spend eternity with us to show us the "incomparable riches of his grace".
  - iii) To motivate us to spend eternity with God the Father, Jesus gives us both the "carrot and the stick" approach.

- iv) The bible is full of teaching of how wonderful and powerful our life can be here on earth if we choose to follow Jesus and his commandments. The rewards here and now, let alone for eternity are far greater than anything and everything we give up to follow Jesus. That is the “carrot”.
    - a) To help us, Jesus is constantly reminding us and commanding us to have the eternal perspective. Part of those commands is to watch for his second coming. It keeps our focus upon Him.
  - c) The “stick” is the warning of eternal hell.
    - i) Jesus spends more time in the Gospels talking about hell than he does heaven.
    - ii) God does not enjoy sending people to hell.
      - a) He simply gives people what they want.
      - b) On earth, people choose to willfully disobey God.
      - c) God in a sense says, “Ok, you don’t want me, fine, than I don’t want you either”. You will spend eternity not in my presence, which is called “outer darkness” in the bible.
    - d) On that cheerful note, ☺ we’ll wrap it up for this week.
21. Heavenly Father, First of all, we are grateful that we get to spend eternity in your presence. Help us to live our life in gratitude of that fact. With that, help us to keep our focus upon you. Help us to let you rule in our hearts, so that when you return, it will not be a “surprise” to us. Help us to remember the sober reality of these verses as we act as living witnesses for you to a lost and dying world. At the same time, help us to be of service to other believers so that we may all grow in our maturity and faith. Jesus, hurry up and come back now! We ask this in your name, Amen.