

Notes for Matthew -Chapter 24 Part 2 (Page 1 of 7)

Introduction - Chapter 24 focuses on the events of Jesus second coming. This lesson is Verses 26-52.

1. It is called the "Olivet Discourse" as Jesus gave the speech from the Mount of Olives
 - a. The speech is also stated in Mark's Gospel (Chapter 13) and Luke's Gospel (Chapter 21).
2. Why is this speech important for Christians to understand?
 - a. To be a "Christian", I believe there are only a handful of things one needs to believe in order to have eternal salvation. The rest is debate.
 - b. One of those fundamentals is to believe that Jesus is coming a second time.
 - i. Exactly "what Jesus does when he gets here" in this second coming is debated among the major Christian denominations.
 - ii. The main point is that life does not go on forever as it is now.
 - iii. 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.
3. The two most important principals of this sermon are:
 - a. "Watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." (Verse 42)
 - i. This is a command given to us in Verse 42. We are to watch for His return.
 - b. No one but God the Father knows the day and hour of Jesus Second Coming. (Verse 36).

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."

1. If somebody tells you "Jesus came back to earth, and is currently living in a condominium in Cleveland, Ohio, don't believe them. ☺
2. Jesus point is that when he does come back it will be obvious to everyone.

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."

1. Notice the word "as" in the beginning Verse 27. Jesus' Second Coming will be as (like) lightning.
 - a. Again, Jesus point is that when he does come back it will be obvious to everyone.
2. I think there is some significance to the word "east" as in "east to west".
 - a. Lightening can come from any direction. Why did Jesus specify, "east to west"?
 - b. I do know, that Orthodox Jews believe, when the Messiah, comes, it will be from the eastern direction. (Reference: Ezekiel 43:1)
 - c. There is a gate to the Old City of Jerusalem called the "Golden Gate". It is on the east side of Jerusalem. 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.)

Verse 28: "Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather."

1. Some commentators believe it ties into "Battle of Armageddon" as described in Revelation 16.
 - a. Revelation describes the birds eating the carcasses of the dead. (Rev. 19:17,19:21)
2. 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. "Equally" as obvious will be Jesus second coming.

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."

1. Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 13:10 and 34:4.
2. Jesus just stated in Verse 27 that his second coming will be "like lightning" in the sense it is obvious to everyone. Now Jesus is saying in effect, "no sunlight, moonlight nor starlight".
 - a. In summary, it will be dark out. ☺
3. 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 it will be seen, but it will. (Satellite TV?)

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Verse 29 (cont.): Verse 29 says, "After the distress of those days". What days?

4. This means that most or all the signs described in the past lesson (the first half of this chapter) are all future tense and describe "those days".
 - a. I personally take the view that this describes the end-times, 7-year tribulation.
 - b. It is describing some specific time period where "distress" will occur.
 - c. Jesus other point is that this distressful period will not go on forever.
5. Some denominations allegorize this passage. This is called the "amillennial" view.
 - a. The amillennial view of the end times is the 7-year tribulation is not literal, neither is the 1,000 year millennium as described in Revelation, Chapter 20.
 - b. This view says these events cover the last 2,000 years of Christian history (and counting).
6. 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 as described in Revelation 20.
 - a. Among "pre-millennialist" are two predominant viewpoints.
 - i. 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".
 - ii. View #2 is that a rapture of the church happens after the 7-year period. This is called the "post-tribulation ("post-trib.") view".
 - b. Jesus rules over those who survive through that tribulation.
 - c. We as Christians rule with Jesus during this period.

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."

1. Notice that Verse 30 states, "All the nations of the earth will mourn". Why do they mourn?
 - a. To summarize, people will think in some manner, "they blew it". They worshipped false religions, false gods, or simply ignored God all of their lives. Now here is Jesus returning.
 - b. You have to remember that the tribulation period "features" a large majority of people turning their collective backs on God. They worship the Antichrist. They accept this coming world leader as the answer to their problems and worship him as a deity. 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. 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." ☺
2. As to the "world mourning" over Jesus' return, there is a similar prediction in Zechariah:
 - a. "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)
 - i. I believe the piercing in Zechariah refers to the nail prints from the crucifixion.
 - ii. This is a prediction of the Nation of Israel collectively saying in that day, "Oh oh, we made a mistake. Jesus was the Messiah."
3. Why does Jesus say he is "coming with clouds"?
 - a. Here is the how the apostles last saw Jesus: "After he (Jesus) 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. My personal view (I can't prove this) is that the cloud-reference is about the mystery of Trinity. We can't fully comprehend God, and thus the word picture is "cloudy".

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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."

1. This verse is describing "his elect" among the people of the world being taken to heaven.
2. Those who hold the "post-tribulation" view love this verse:
 - a. 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".
 - b. Paul uses "the elect" to refer to the church. (e.g., Romans 8:33, Col. 3:12)
3. Those of us who hold the "pre-tribulation rapture" view, have a rebuttal. ☺
 - a. When Jesus says, "my elect" here, he is talking about the Jewish believers in Jesus.
 - i. 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. Paul also uses the word "elect" to refer to Christian Jews (e.g., Rom. 11:7).
 - iii. 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, parenthesis-text inserted)

Verses 32-33: "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. ³³ Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door."

1. 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.
2. Fig trees 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.

Verse 34: "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened."

1. Is Jesus saying, "You guys, the disciples will not die until all of this happens?"
 - a. 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.
 - b. The big problem with this view is that Jesus Second Coming didn't happen yet.
2. There is another view that word "generation" can be translated "race".
 - a. It is the view that the Jewish race will not die out until all of this happens.
3. I believe Jesus 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.
 - a. 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).
4. 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. 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. ☺
 - c. Personally, I think the "generation" will be obvious when it does happen.
 - d. Since Jesus says, "No one knows the day nor hour", I don't really worry about the starting date. I just know, it will happen, and I am to watch for these events.

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

1. Many people think, "Hey, it has been 2,000 years. You really believe he's coming back?"
 - a. 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." (2nd Peter 3:4, NIV)
 - b. Peter's point: People scoffed 2,000 years ago at Jesus return. They still do it today.
2. I heard a wonderful comment based on the following verse:
 - a. 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)
 - b. The comment is, "If the Lord created the heaven and earth in 6 days, and He has spent 2,000 years preparing "mansions" for us, can you imagine how wonderful that place will be?!"
3. The reason I believe Jesus has waited so long in his 2nd 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. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2nd Peter 3:9)
4. This verse says, "Heaven and earth will pass away".
 - a. Did you know the bible says that God will destroy the heavens the earth?
 - i. "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)
 - ii. "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)
 - b. So why does God destroy the heavens and the earth?
 - i. First of all, so we don't focus too much on material things.
 - ii. Second, I believe "sin" in a figuratively way, has corrupted the earth as well as people themselves. Therefore, in the day when we live with God in paradise, there has to be a new earth and heaven not corrupted by sin.
 - iii. We know that the whole creation (earth/heavens) has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (Romans 8:22 NIV).

Verse 36: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

1. Why did Jesus mention that he himself, "The Son" didn't know the day nor hour?
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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".
2. But as to the event itself, it is going to happen. We just don't know the exact time.
3. On the other hand, Christians cannot go to Jerusalem, build a temple, and say to Jesus, "OK, Jesus here is the temple, let's get the show on the road". ☺
4. Jesus point is that this is going to happen. We can tell "roughly" when it will start by some signs, but we don't know the exact date.

Verses 37-39: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ 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; ³⁹ 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."

1. You can read lots of commentaries where people "analyze" what Jesus meant by the expression "in the days of Noah". Jesus point is simply, "life will go on as usual until Jesus' return".

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Verses 37-39 (cont.)

2. 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.
 - a. People were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" until the weather got really bad in Noah's day. ☺
 - b. 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.

Verses 40-41: "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left."

1. I think this is a good spot to talk about the concept of "rapture" itself. You won't find that word in the bible. It comes from the Latin. The Greek word "Harpatzo" means to be "snatched up" like an eagle swooping down and grabbing its prey off the ground very suddenly.
 - a. There are only two passages in the New Testament that discuss this idea.
 - b. One is in 1st Corinthians 15:52 and the other is in 1st Thessalonians 4:16.
2. Now let me tie the concept of the rapture to Verses 40-41.
 - a. In Matthew we have two women grinding at the mill and two men in the field.
 - b. One of the each is taken, and one is left.
 - c. In Luke's account of this story, he ads, 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)
 - d. What's my point?
 - i. People sleep in bed (Luke 17:31) at night.
 - ii. Women of that day grinded at the meal (Matthew 24:41) in the morning.
 - iii. Men worked in the filed (Matthew 24:40) during the day.
 - iv. 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.

Verse 42: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

1. Jesus does not want us to spend all day staring up at the sky looking for his coming.
 - a. 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.
2. 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.

Verses 43-44: "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. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

1. Jesus is saying we are to be like a security guard. 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.
2. 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.
3. Some commentators try to read too much into this story.
 - a. Jesus is not comparing himself to a thief in the sense he wants to rob us!
 - b. He is coming "like a thief" in that we don't know the exact time of his coming.

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Verses 45-46: "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? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns."

1. 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".
2. 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"):
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
3. 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." What does that mean?
 - a. Our Christian responsibility is to serve and help one another grow and mature in faith.
 - i. Christianity is meant to be a team-effort. We survive, grow and mature as a team.
 - ii. "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands." (1st John 5:2, NIV)
 - iii. The Christian concept of love means to put other's needs as priority over our own.
4. So, given all of that, what is our "household"? It is those God called you to minister to!
 - a. All Christians have gifts, talents and passions that we can combine and use to help others.
 - b. Whether your "household" is your family, a million people, 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.

Verses 47-50: "I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ 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."

1. These verses do not mean that if you are daydreaming for 5 minutes, and not thinking about God at that moment, you will miss the rapture. ☺
 - a. 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.
2. These verses get back to the idea of who is saved for eternity and who is not saved.
 - a. The person who is saved "puts their money where their mouth is". The fact that they believe in God and his commandments becomes obvious to the observer by their lifestyle.
3. These verses are 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."
 - a. Technically that is correct. The hard part is the longer you live your lifestyle that way, the harder it is to change.
4. Let's get back to these verses. Jesus gives two illustrations of "bad servants". 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.
 - c. The sins Jesus picks are good examples of how we are a witness to other people.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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.

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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.

1. I personally don't suspect "cut him in pieces" is literal, but I don't know.
2. I think these verses and this parable is about salvation and this part is about eternal hell.
 - a. Whenever Jesus uses the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in Matthew, he is describing eternal hell.
3. What did Jesus mean by "a place with the hypocrites"?
 - a. 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. They go through the motions, but in their heart, they don't really believe Jesus paid the price for their sins.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.

Conclusion: To summarize, Jesus uses a "carrot and a stick" motivation for eternal salvation.

1. This expression, "carrot and a stick" refers to motivating horses.
 - a. You give them a carrot as a reward for doing what you want them to do.
 - b. You hit them with a stick as punishment.
2. Jesus uses that same concept with us as believers.
 - a. Jesus wants us to accept him and live with him for eternity.
 - b. I believe the most important bible verse on the "purpose of human history" is:
 - i. "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)
 - ii. God loves us with a perfect love. He wants to spend eternity with us to show us the "incomparable riches of his grace".
 - c. To motivate us to spend eternity with God the Father, Jesus gives us both the "carrot and the stick" approach.
3. 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".
4. The "stick" is the warning of eternal hell.
 - a. Jesus spends more time in the Gospels talking about hell than he does heaven.
 - b. God does not enjoy sending people to hell.
 - c. He simply gives people what they want.
 - d. 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.