

# **Matthew 24 - Olivet Discourse: Beginning of Sorrows; Abomination of Desolation; Flight of the Remnant; Great Tribulation; Second Coming; Parable of the Fig Tree; Days of Noah**

V. Re-offer and eventual acceptance of the King (Matt 24:1—25:46)

- (1) Christ's prophecy about the Temple (24:1-2)
- (2) Disciples' questions (24:3)
- (3) Events of the tribulation (24:4-31)
  - (A) First half (24:4-14)
  - (B) Middle (24:15-20)
  - (C) Second half (24:21-22)
  - (D) Second Advent (24:23-31)
- (4) Attitude believers should have towards these events (Matt 24:32—25:46)
  - (A) Fig tree: watch for the signs (24:32-35)
  - (B) Days of Noah: do not be caught surprised (24:36-44)
  - (C) Slave: faithfully doing master's will (24:45-51)

## **Context of the Olivet Discourse**

The setting for the Olivet Discourse is found in the events leading up to Matt 24. Christ had presented Himself to the nation as their Messiah, but they rejected Him. Not only did the people reject Him, but the rulers did as well. Thus, Jesus rebukes and exposes their hypocrisy and unbelief in Matt 22-23. Jesus notes that this present generation of Jewish leaders is like those from previous generations who killed the prophets (Matt 23:29-36). Christ then tells the Jewish leaders, "Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation" (Matt 23:36). What things? It will be the curse of judgment, which will come upon the Jewish people through the Roman army in 70 AD.

In spite of the fact that the Jewish people deserved the approaching judgment, like a caring parent about to administer a just punishment, Christ cries out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,

and you were unwilling" (Matt 23:37). Jesus wants to gather His people (as He will in 24:31), but instead He will scatter them via the 70 AD judgment (Luke 21:24).

For a complete review of the differences between Matt 24 and Luke 21, see [Addendum: Olivet Discourse - Luke 21 vs Matthew 24](#).

Jesus then declares in 23:38, "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!" To what does the house refer? In the context of this passage it must be a reference to the Jewish Temple. Matt 24:1-2 brings up a discussion by Jesus with His disciples about the Temple. It is at that time that Jesus startles them by telling them "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down" (Matt 24:2). What Jesus says will be desolate in Matt 23:38 is more precisely described in 24:2, both referring to the same thing—the Temple.

Next, Christ says, "For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (23:39). Not only does this verse hold out the certainty of soon judgment, but also the eventual promise of hope and blessing upon the Jewish nation.

## Matthew 24

V. Re-offer and eventual acceptance of the King (Matt 24:1—25:46)

(1) Christ's prophecy about the Temple (24:1-2) (Cf. Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:5-6)

**1** Jesus left the temple *area* and was going *on His way* when His disciples came up to **point out the temple buildings** to Him.

**1** Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

**1** As Jesus left the Temple and was walking away, his disciples came up to him to point out to him the Temple buildings.

**1** And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

- The disciples were impressed with the temple, and wanted to point it out to Jesus to ensure He saw it. To them, the temple was everything.

— This temple was rebuilt by the exiles back from Babylon, and to be honest, originally, it wasn't that impressive. The old men, when they saw this new temple being built, actually cried because they had remembered the Solomonic Temple 70 years earlier, before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and how gorgeous it was (Cf. Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:5-7).

— Haggai, Zechariah and Ezra all talk about this...

— After the "400 years of silence" (God didn't speak during this time, but God moved heaven and earth in order to prepare the earth for the coming of His Son), the Herodian dynasty came to power, and Herod took that puny temple and built it into something magnificent.

- Herod's remodeling project took 46 years (John 2:20)
- Within Israel, the temple was a sign of nationalistic pride at the time. For some, it became a good luck charm...to many, if the temple existed, Israel would be fine. Israel viewed the Solomonic Temple in the same way (Cf. Jer 7:4).
- Today, the Church is the Temple of God, and the Holy Spirit lives inside of/indwells all believers

2 But He responded and said to them, **"Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."**

2 And He said to them, **"Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."**

2 But he told them, **"You see all these things, don't you? I tell all of you with certainty, there isn't a single stone here that will be left standing on top of another. They will all be torn down."**

2 And Jesus said unto them, **See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**

- "...all these things" - the buildings of the temple complex that they were just commenting about

- "...not one stone will be left" - aorist passive subjunctive verb, along with *ou me* ("not") gives this statement great force in the Greek

— Jesus is saying something against a temple that took 46 years to remodel, and was a good-luck charm for many Jews. It was a source of national pride to Israel, obviously including the disciples...and Jesus tells them it's going to be completely demolished.

— Jesus was simply proclaiming on the Jewish temple (which He disowned in 23:37) one of the curses that were the promised result for Israel if they failed to keep the Mosaic Covenant (Deut 28:49-50).

— God outlined the cycles of discipline for Israel, through Moses, 1500 years before Jesus predicted judgment on the Temple in Matt 24:2

— This cycle of judgment had already played itself out 3x in Israel's history (see Israel's Judgments below)

- This statement by Jesus likely scared the daylights out of the disciples because the temple was their good-luck charm, and Jesus is telling them that it's going to be disassembled, one stone at a time

— This leads them to some questions (v3)...

- This is an astounding prophecy, which came to pass literally 37 years after Jesus spoke these words...

— The prophecy was given, and 37 years later it was fulfilled. The prophecy was literal and the fulfillment was literal. The prophecy was specific and the fulfillment happened as

stated.

- Jesus had a 100% accuracy rating when it came to short-term prophecies:
  - Judas' betrayal of Him: John 13:18,21,26
  - Peter's denial of Him 3x: John 13:38
  - In fact, Jesus said in John 13:19 that He is telling the disciples what is going to happen in the near-term future so that after it comes to pass, it would reinforce their belief in Him as Messiah.
  - Everything in Matt 24-25 is going to happen, just as Jesus says it will, because He has an unblemished track record of every prophecy being fulfilled, exactly as He said it would be.

### **Israel's Judgments**

- Division of the Kingdom (931 BC, 1 Kings 12) - Solomonic disobedience
- Assyrian judgment (722 BC, 2 Kings 17) - northern kingdom rebellion
- Babylonian captivity (586 BC, 2 Kings 25) - southern kingdom disobedience
- **Roman judgment (70 AD, Luke 19:41-44) - rejection of the Messiah**

(2) Disciples' questions (24:3) (Cf. Mark 13:3-4; Luke 21:7)

**3** And as He was sitting on the **Mount of Olives**, the disciples came to Him **privately**, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your **coming**, and of the **end of the age?**"

**3** As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

**3** While Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things take place, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

**3** And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

- "...Mount of Olives" - different setting and audience than v1-2...
- The Mount of Olives was the very place that the *Shekinah* glory had departed from the Temple 600 years earlier (Ezek 11:22-25), and it will also be the spot upon which the Lord will return (Zech 14:4f).
- The location of the Mount of Olives is why Matt 24-25 are called the Olivet Discourse. "Discourse" is probably a bad title because this wasn't a speech or sermon in front of numerous people (Cf. Sermon on the Mount), rather it was more of a conversation.
- "...privately" - only Peter, James, John, and Andrew were present (Mark 13:3)

— A larger audience present before Jesus in Luke's account (Luke 21:5-7), gives us the first clue that Luke may have written of a different conversation than Matt 24 & Mark 13

- Topic—Eschatology:

1. When shall these things (destruction of Temple) happen?
  - Clearly refers to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD
  - Jesus answers this question in Luke 21:20-24; Matthew and Mark do not deal with this question.
2. What will be the sign of Jesus' return and end of the age?
  - The answer to this question is the entire thrust of Matt 24-25 and Mark's accounts, although Luke does answer this as well in Luke 21:25-36. It is also covered in [Pre-Tribulational Events](#).
  - This is a two-part question, as is clear from the Greek construction: it links two nouns, "coming" (*parousias*) and "end" (*synteleias*) with a single article "the" (*to*) and the conjunction "and" (*kai*).
  - The phrasing of the last question implies that the disciples considered the "sign of His coming" and "the end of the world" as the same event: that Jesus' return would end the present age and introduce the messianic age.
  - Both questions, taken together, suggest that the disciples associated the destruction of the temple with Jesus' return to it and the end of the age
  - The disciples wanted to know when in the future the destruction of the temple, Jesus' return to it, and the end of the present age would occur. They didn't ask Him when He would inaugurate the kingdom because they knew this would happen right after He returned to the temple and ended the present age.

- "...coming" - *parousias*, first occurrence in Matthew; means "presence" and later "arrival" or "coming"

— It is the regular Greek word for the arrival of a governor into his province or the coming of a king to his subjects. It describes a coming in authority and power.

— In view of Jesus' statement in 23:39 (that the Israelites would not see Him until they called for Him [Ps 118:26]), it is clear that the disciples were referring to His Second Coming. They wanted to know when He would return to the temple, this time accepted instead of rejected by the nation. Specifically, they wanted to know what would signal His return.

— In the NT, *parousia* does not always have eschatological overtones (Cf. 2 Cor 7:6; 10:10)

- "...end of the age" - the end of the present age that will end at His Second Coming and a judgment of living non-believers (Jer 29:22; 51:33; Dan 3:6; Hosea 6:11; Joel 3:13; Zeph 1:3). This will occur just before the messianic kingdom begins.

— This was a typical Jewish expression, that Jesus used on previous occasions (13:39,40,49; Cf. 28:20)

It is likely that the disciples believed all three events in their two questions would occur around the same event—the coming of Messiah. The OT taught that several eschatological events would happen in the following order:

1. The departure of the King
2. After a period of time, Jerusalem would suffer destruction (Zech 14:1-2; Cf. Matt 24:2)
3. Messiah would come and end the present age (Zech 14:3-8; Cf. Matt 24:39)
4. Messiah would set up His kingdom (Zech 14:3-11)

They had good scriptural ground for this since Zech 14:1-2 describes the razing of Jerusalem. The same passage goes on to describe the coming of the Lord to destroy the nations which warred against Jerusalem (Zech 14:3-8). Following this the millennial kingdom is established (Zech 14:9-11). Jesus understood their thinking, and as He often did when their thinking was incorrect (Matt 5:7; 9:1-8; 12:1-8,46-50; 13:10-23; 15:1-20; 16:13-26; 17:1-9; 18:1-6,21-35; 19:3-12,13-15,27-30; 20:20-28; 21:33-46), corrects it in that they were wrong to relate the impending judgment of Jerusalem and the temple with the Second Coming of the Messiah. In this discourse, Jesus will separate these events and place them into their proper contexts.

A Comparison of the Olivet and Upper Room Discourses		
<b>Discourse</b>	Olivet	Upper Room
<b>Scripture</b>	Matt 24–25	John 13–17
<b>Location</b>	Mount of Olives	Upper Room
<b>Passion week</b>	<u>Third day</u>	<u>Sixth day</u>
<b>General focus</b>	Farewell: Israel	Hello: Church
<b>Specific focus</b>	Israel's future	Divine provisions
<b>Prompting</b>	Temple's destruction	Christ's imminent departure
<b>Explanations</b>	Written OT	Unwritten NT
<b>Apostles</b>	Israel (Matt. 19:28)	Church (Eph. 2:20)

(3) Events of the Tribulation (24:4-31)

(A) First half (24:4-14)

### **1st Seal: False Messiahs (Cf. Mark 13:5-6; Luke 21:8; Rev 6:1-2)**

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

4 Jesus answered them, "See to it that no one deceives you,

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

- Jesus started His discourse with a warning for the disciples about the possibility that they would conclude incorrectly that He had returned or was just about to return

— The destruction of Jerusalem, and other catastrophes, should not indicate that

Messiah's coming and the end of the present age were near, as Zechariah's prophecy seemed to indicate

5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will mislead many people.

5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

5 because many will come in my name and say, 'I'm the Messiah,' and they will deceive many people.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

- The future appearance of people who claimed to be the Messiah should not deceive the disciples into concluding that He had arrived, either

— This warning is not primarily directed at Christians during the Church Age, but rather at believers (Jews & Gentiles) during the Tribulation

— Spiritual deception is the primary purpose of the Antichrist during the Tribulation, and thus something important to be aware of and avoided

- The warning is against those who claim to be the Messiah; the emphasis is on "many" who would claim such

— Claims of the Messianic office are very rare throughout history (most are "false prophets"), but will evidently be rampant during the Tribulation

- Israel will be in danger of following false christs because it has not yet recognized the true Christ

### **2nd Seal: Wars/Rumors of War (Cf. Mark 13:7-8a; Luke 21:9-10; Rev 6:3-4)**

6 And **you will be hearing of wars** and rumors of wars. See that you are not **alarmed**, for *those things* must take place, but *that is not yet the end*.

6 You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but *that is not yet the end*.

6 You'll hear of wars and rumors of wars. See to it that you aren't alarmed. These things must take place, but the end hasn't come yet,

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

- "...you will be hearing" - *mello*, future tense, indicating that at the time of the false messiahs, you (future Israel) will be hearing of wars and rumors or war
- A false peace and security, along with religious apostasy (the false messiahs inspire their devotees to insurrection and wars), characterize the beginning of the Tribulation. These will develop into multiple wars near and away from the land of Israel.
- Some, specifically preterists, take the "you" here to be speaking specifically to these four disciples, and use that to argue that all of the events described in this chapter had to have taken place during their lifetimes in order for "you" (them) to "see" it.
- However, the Bible uses this type of generic "you" often. In Deut 28:15ff, God speaking with Moses and outlining the covenant curses that will come upon the nation for disobedience. He uses the generic "you" while speaking to Moses, but Moses never actually saw any of these curses take place because they happened after he died.
- Jesus uses the same type of generic "you" here while speaking to these four disciples, to describe future events that they will not be alive to see
- "...wars" - *polemos*, a general word for war that connotes the "whole course of hostilities" rather than just individual battles
- "wars and rumors of wars" - like the false messiahs, should not mislead disciples into thinking that the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem was near
- "wars and rumors of wars" would come, but they would not necessarily be the fulfillment of the prophecies about Messiah destroying His enemies when He returns (Zech 14:2-5). The disciples should not let the presence of wars, or rumors of them, deceive them into thinking that Messiah's return was imminent.
- This is a reference to actual wars that will take place in reference to the future Jewish people
- The Antichrist will be perceived as a man of peace because of his great deceptive ability, but the fact is he comes to power and stays in power because of war (Dan 7:8,24)
- "...alarmed" - only used here, the parallel passage in Mark 8:15, and 2 Thess 2:2, all in context of the Tribulation
- This can be translated: "Look out for wars and rumors of wars, but do not be scared out of your wits by them."
- The Tribulation will obviously be a very scary time for those who do not understand that God is in control of these things. The natural reaction of man will be to cry out in pain. The Bible tells us that the antidote to this is to simply know that "these things must come to pass." Judgment is a necessary part of God's plan because there is evil in the world. Before He can usher in His kingdom, He must purge out the evil through judgment.

- "...not yet" - it's not yet "the end" because these things will happen in the first half of the Tribulation
- "...the end" - the end of the seven year Tribulation (Cf. v3,13)

**3rd Seal: Famine/Earthquakes (Cf. Mark 13:8b; Luke 21:10-11; Rev 6:5-6)**

**4th Seal: Pestilences (Cf. Luke 21:11; Rev 6:7-8)**

7 For **nation will rise against nation**, and **kingdom** against kingdom, and there will be famines and **earthquakes in various places**.

7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

7 because nation will rise up in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

- "...nation will rise against nation" - Jesus points to this sign as the single event that will indicate that the beginning of the end has begun (v8)

— These wars will be coupled with famines and earthquakes

— It is clearly stated that these events are the "beginning" of sorrow (v8)

— Taken in the Jewish context of the day, this phrase points to a total conflict of the area in view. This idiom is also found in two OT passages: Is 19:1-4; 2 Chr 15:1-7. Since the context of the Olivet Discourse is the entire world (Cf. v14,21,30-31), this refers to a worldwide conflict.

— "...kingdom" - *basileia*, the territory ruled over by a king

— A confederation of nations, possibly made up of various nationalities; a group of nations

- "...earthquakes" - the parallel passage in Luke 21:11 says, "...there will be great earthquakes." So these are not ordinary earthquakes that happen throughout the world on a daily basis (Cf. Rev 6:12).

- "...various places" - the famines, pestilences and earthquakes will be worldwide in scope, but not everywhere. These events will occur in various places and apparently simultaneously.

8 But **all these things** are *merely the beginning of birth pains*.

8 But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

8 But all these things are *only the beginning of the birth pains*."

8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

- "...all these things" - includes all of the events described in this passage (v5-14); these things are "*merely* the beginning" because they occur during the first half of the Tribulation

- "...the beginning" - first half of the Tribulation (Cf. v6)

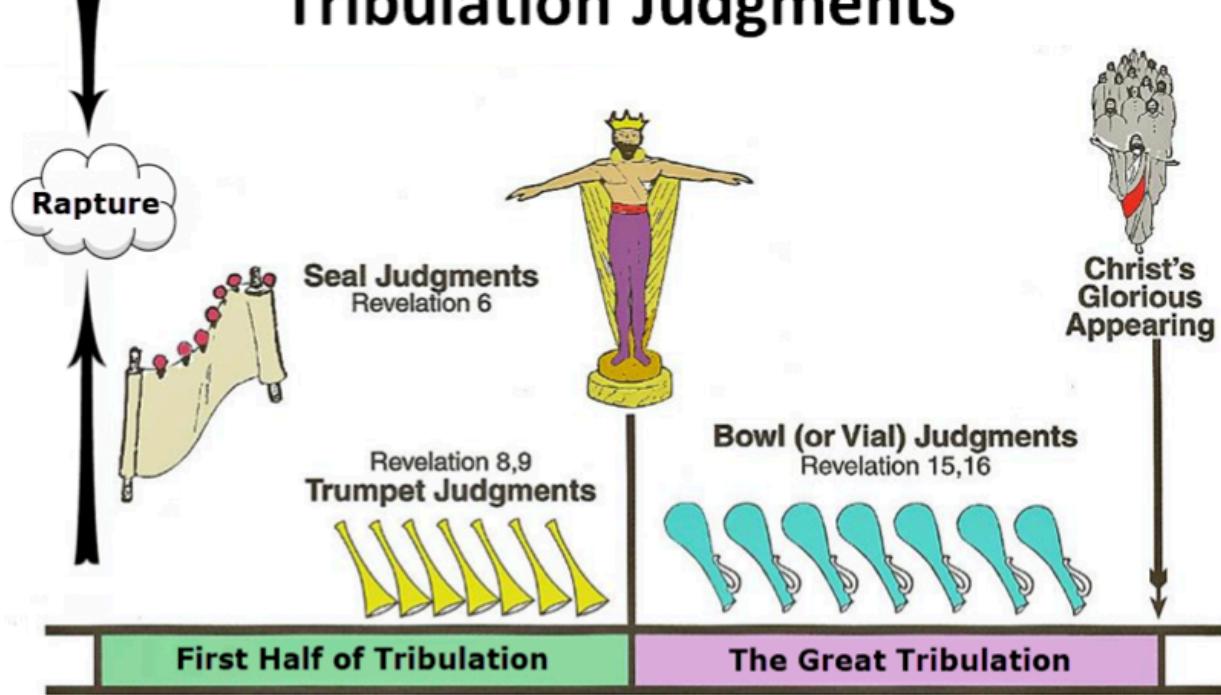
- "...birth pains" – *odinon*, also translated "pain of childbirth," "travail-pain"; it is also said to be "intolerable anguish, in reference to dire calamities which the Jews supposed would precede the advent of the Messiah"
- As child birth closes in, the birth pangs get sharper and sharper, and the time period between them gets shorter and shorter. Once they begin, they cannot be postponed, reversed, or diminished. For a woman, a baby is being birthed. During the Tribulation, the kingdom is being birthed. The kingdom can only come to the earth, through Israel, after these birth pangs begin.
- Labor pain imagery is often used to convey the suffering related to the approach of the Day of the Lord and distinguishes these events from similar trends preceding Daniel's 70th Week (Is 13:8; 1 Thess 5:3)
- Since Jesus is answering a specific question (Matt 24:3) regarding the sign of His coming and the end of the age, it seems unlikely that He would refer to general historical trends of famine, disease, and war as specific signs of His coming unless the famines, diseases, and wars He is describing are a significant intensification beyond what has been normal throughout human history.
- How else would these be signs if there were not something unique and identifiable about them?
- The "pregnancy" began in Acts 2, and has lasted until today; birth pains have not been happening throughout the Church Age...that is a historicist notion. The beginning of birth pains coincide with the beginning of the Tribulation (Cf. Jer 30:6-7; 1 Thess 5:3).
- The birth pangs of the first half of the Tribulation are the beginning of the greater birth pains in the second half (Jer 30:6-7)

### **The Beginning of Sorrows - The 1st Half of the Tribulation**

## Matt 24 / Rev 6 Parallels

Prediction	Birth pangs (Matt 24)	Seal judgments (Rev 6)
False Christ	<b>24:5</b>	<b>6:2</b>
War	<b>24:6</b>	<b>6:3-4</b>
Famine	<b>24:7</b>	<b>6:5-6</b>
Death	<b>24:6-7</b>	<b>6:7-8</b>
Martyrs	<b>24:9-13</b>	<b>6:9-11</b>
Earthquakes	<b>24:7</b>	<b>6:12-17</b>
Evangelism	<b>24:14</b>	<b>7:1-9</b>

# Tribulation Judgments



## 5th Seal: Persecution/Martyrdom (Cf. Mark 13:9-13; Rev 6:9-11)

9 "Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

9 "Then they'll hand you over to suffer and will kill you, and you'll be hated by all the nations because of my name.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

- "Then" - *toute*, links the persecution, killing, and hatred with the famines, earthquakes and wars. The temporal adverb means that v9 will happen simultaneously with the events that occur in v4-8.

— This is in contrast to Luke 21:12, which follows the Matthew narrative until this point. At v12, Luke begins to describe the events that will take place \*before\* the events listed above (the Beginning of Sorrows). Matthew, on the other hand, continues forward in the sequence of events \*after\* the Beginning of Sorrows (start of the Tribulation).

— While Jesus' specific prophecy is directed at the Jews, Christians of all stripes will receive similar harsh treatment during the Tribulation (as noted by the 5th Seal). This sentence only appears in Matthew's account, perhaps because of his Jewish orientation.

- "...they" - must refer to those in v10; they are traitors who betray their brethren and deliver them up to death; "They" will be judged for their actions at the Sheep and Goat Judgment as recorded in 25:31-46.
- "...hand you over" - same word used of Judas' betrayal of Jesus. This supports the notion that this future deliverance unto death will be a similar betrayal of the Lord's people. The word was often used in a technical sense for arrest by the police or military.
- "you" - extends beyond Jesus' immediate disciples to those living in the future when these things will happen; Jesus was speaking beyond His immediate audience.
- "...to tribulation" - *thlipsis*, tribulation, to be persecuted; note Jesus moves from "tribulation" (v9) to "great tribulation" (v21) to "after the tribulation" (v29)
- This persecution will lead many to fall away from the faith and even to hate one another (v10)

10 And at that time many will **fall away**, and they will betray one another and **hate one another**.

10 At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

10 Then many people will fall away, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

- v9-13 describe the spiritual state of Israel during the first half of the Tribulation (parallel passage: Matt 10:16-23)

— The entire world will hate the Jewish believers living in Israel because they hate Jesus

— Many who professed faith in easier times will at this time will be under pressure to deny Him and cooperate in exposing those who are true believers

— The ones being persecuted (the Jewish remnant) are labeled the "Brethren" in Matt 25:31-46 (Sheep & Goat judgment)

- "...fall away" - turn away from the faith; carries the idea of "to cause to sin" or to "let oneself be led into sin"

- "...hate one another" - false professors will turn against and hate true believers. The hatred by the world against believers, especially Jewish believers (the Remnant), will create such external pressure that it will result in hatred within the believing community among themselves.

11 And many **false prophets** will rise up and mislead many people.

11 Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

11 Many false prophets will appear and deceive many people,

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

- "...false prophets" - a Jewish moniker; "false teachers" are within the Church, "false prophets" are Jewish in nature (Cf. Zech 13:2-6)
- The deceiving influence of these false prophets, along with the persecution (v10), will increase wickedness so the "love" of many of them for the Savior, the truth, and one another, will grow cold (v12)

12 And because **lawlessness** is increased, **most people's love will become cold.**

12 Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.

12 and because lawlessness will increase, the love of many people will grow cold.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

- "...lawlessness" - *anomia*, iniquity; deliberately disobeying a specific standard...in this case, God's standard

— This corresponds to the events of the 6th Seal in Rev 6

— This description of lawlessness strikes a parallel to Paul's description of the "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thess 2:3 (Cf. 2 Thess 2:6-7)

— This passage is building toward the abomination of desolation (v15); it is the abounding lawlessness which gives the Antichrist his power, both against the Jew and the temple

— "...is increased" - an unusually rapid or exponential increase; worldwide lawlessness will reach the highest levels in human history

- "...love" - *agape*

- "...most people's" - of the majority; "the many"

- "...become cold" - loss of love; love will be difficult to find anywhere

— Real love is impossible for a lawless person; by definition, a lawless person is motivated by personal, selfish concerns and not by any regard for others or for the rules that govern our relationship with others.

13 But **the one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved.**

13 But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

13 But the person who endures to the end will be saved.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

- "...the one" - the Jew; Matt 24-25 is a completely Jewish context

- "...endures" - stays alive; makes it to the end of the Tribulation; see parallel passages Rev 13:10; 14:12 (see notes there)

- "...the end" - not referring to the end of one's life, but rather to the end of the Tribulation period (Cf. v6, "the end is not yet"; v14, "then the end will come")

— The disciples asked Him specifically, "What will be the sign of your return, and "the end" of the age?" Jesus' use of "the end" in v13 is the same as the disciples' question about "the end" in v3.

- "...saved" - *sōzō*, kept from harm, preserved, rescued; the word is often used in a salvation (spiritual) context (Matt 1:21; Luke 19:10; Rom 5:9; 2 Cor 2:15), but here it is used to describe a physical deliverance or rescue (Cf. Phil 1:19; Heb 11:7). The nuance is determined by the context.
- The context of the Olivet Discourse is not soteriological! Jesus does not mention a person's salvation, how to obtain it, how to maintain it, or anything of the sort. The context is the future Tribulation period, and it's a promise from Jesus Christ Himself that if the Jewish Remnant perseveres to the end, they will be saved (rescued). Jesus is answering two questions posed to Him by Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Cf. v2, see notes there).
- Specifically, this verse is directed at the Jewish Remnant during the second half of the Tribulation, when Satan will indwell the Antichrist and go on a rampage killing the Jews. If they (the believing Jewish Remnant) will persevere to the end of the Tribulation, Jesus will rescue them at His Second Coming and they will go into the kingdom in their mortal bodies (Matt 25:21,34). The fulfillment of the promise in this verse is in v31, at the end of the Tribulation (Cf. Is 27:13).
- Parallel passages that support this interpretation: Dan 12:1; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:18-19; Matt 10:22; Rev 13:10; 14:12
- Working from this verse, post-Tribulationalists go over to 1 Thess 5:9 and tie the two passages together. They then argue that the Church will go through the Tribulation, but will not suffer the wrath of God.
- This is the "go-to" verse for Calvinism to argue in favor of their doctrine of perseverance of the saints. Calvinism takes this verse, completely out of context and uses it to teach that you better have a combination of faith and works for your entire life in order to make it to heaven and be saved (their doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints), otherwise you are not one of the elect
- Calvinism says that if a believer does not persevere, if they fall into a period of disbelief or lack of faith, backslide into sin, etc., then they should question whether or not they're one of the elect (they likely aren't) and they were never saved in the first place. Problem is, this is completely unscriptural (show me one verse [in context]!).
- You have to interpret non-technical words and verses in the context in which they are used. *Sōzō* doesn't always refer to the salvation of the soul. Sometimes it refers to being delivered from something (Phil 1:19) or saved/rescued from the flood waters (Heb 11:7), as it does here.
- None of the references to the doctrine of the believer's endurance speak of "enduring to the end." The passages that speak of enduring to the end all occur in the context of the Tribulation (Matt 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:19; Rev 13:10; 14:12), not the perseverance of the saints.

- In John MacArthur's commentary on Matt 24-25, he gets almost all of it correct and in context. He rightly interprets the timing of these prophecies as the future Tribulation. He links the tribulations that Jesus outlines to Rev 6 (the six Seal judgments), and all is good until he gets to v13. At that point, he forgets all about the context and thinks this verse describes the salvation of Church Age believers, and that if they don't endure to the end in good works, they aren't saved. After this, he goes back to a Tribulation/end times context for the rest of the Olivet Discourse.
- He says the following on this verse: "Endurance is always a mark of salvation...The perseverance of the saints in faith is a very basic element of salvation teaching in the NT. It states that people who are genuinely saved do not depart from the faith (see John 8:31; 1 Cor 15:1-2; Col 1:21-23; Heb 2:1-3; 3:14; 4:14; 6:11-12; 10:39; 12:14; James 1:2-4). Endurance...gives evidence of the spiritual life that resides in the believer...".
- You wonder why he completely leaves the context for one verse, but he interprets the verses before and after v13 in the proper context. He has to do this because he's a Calvinist and believes in the doctrine of perseverance of the saints.
- This is the verse that Augustine cites that changed his belief from premillennialism to amillennialism! Approximately 1200 years later, John Calvin wrote *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536, at age 26). In that work, Calvin constantly refers to Augustine to inform his Calvinistic beliefs.

14 **This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.**

14 This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

- "...gospel of the kingdom" - not the *personal* gospel of salvation, but rather the *kingdom* gospel offered to Israel during Jesus' ministry, through the Offer of the Kingdom (3:2; 4:17; 10:5-7; Luke 10:1,9)

— This is the same "gospel" offered to 1st century Israel with the phrase, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:5-7; Luke 10:1,9). The phrase is only used 4x in the NT (Matt 3:2; 4:23; 9:35; Luke 16:16).

— The "gospel of the kingdom" is always used in reference to the offering of the messianic kingdom to Israel. It is not used in connection with the message of salvation for the Church Age (see parallel passage, Luke 21:31).

- This “gospel” will be offered again to Israel during the Tribulation period by the 144,000 evangelists (Rev 7:2-8). During the Church Age we are not preaching the “gospel of the kingdom” because the kingdom was postponed. During this time, we’re preaching the personal gospel of salvation (Acts 16:30-31).
- The foundation of this “gospel” is found in the OT covenants, specifically the Abrahamic, and its sub-covenants (Land, Davidic, New), as well as governed by the Mosaic Covenant (Deut 17:15).
- Between the time Jesus’ sent the 70 to offer the kingdom to Israel (Luke 10:1,9), until this verse, during the Tribulation period (Matt 24:14; Luke 21:31), the offer of the kingdom is off the table.
- Rev 11:15 explains how the future offer of the kingdom will be accepted...in the same way that the offer of the Promised Land was rejected by the first generation of Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea. Once that offer was rejected, God took it off the table and later offered it to another generation 40 years later, who decided to walk by faith under Joshua.
- “...preached in the whole world” - this verse does not teach that the Gospel of God’s grace must be spread to every nation today before Jesus can return for His Church. It is the Second Coming, not the Rapture, that is in view here. It describes the preaching ministry of the 144,000 (Rev 7) during the Tribulation. Included in their ministry is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom (the re-offer of the kingdom).
- Whatever evangelistic needs are present after the Rapture will be taken care of very nicely by the 144,000, the Two Witnesses, and the angels who will preach this gospel (Rev 14:6-7)
- “world” - *oikoumene*, the entire inhabited earth; scope of meaning is determined by context of the passage. Since the context here is future, this would refer to the entire earth (as opposed to only the Roman Empire in the first century).
- Rev 7:9 paints a scene of saved people from “all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” who are standing before the throne of God in heaven, a fulfillment of this verse (Cf. Mark 13:10).
- Chronologically, this verse comes just before the 3-1/2 year mark of the Tribulation (v15), the time that the Antichrist will require every person to take the mark. Thus, it is important to know that the witness of the gospel will be given to every person, so they have the opportunity to trust Christ and not take the mark.
- In addition, the third angel announces to everyone in the world that there are consequences to taking the mark (Rev 14:9-11); (parallel passage: Rev 14:6-7)
- “...then the end will come” - in v6, Jesus said “the end is not yet.” After the successful preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the entire planet, “then shall the end come.”
- This phrase has in view the end-time conversion of the nations to Christ (Is 2:2-4; 45:20-22; 49:6; 55:5; 56:6-8; Micah 4:1-3)

- Preterists like to use Rom 16:26 and Col 1:6,23 to show that this verse was fulfilled in 70 AD. See notes on each verse. The actual fulfillment of this verse occurs in Rev 14:6-7.

Kingdom Gospel vs. Personal Gospel		
	Kingdom Gospel	Personal Gospel
Biblical example	Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:5-7	Acts 16:30-31
Target audience	National Israel (Matt. 10:5-7)	All nations (Matt. 28:18-20)
Type of salvation offered	National	Personal and individual
Portrayal of Christ	National savior and king	Personal savior
Kingdom expectancy	Imminent	Absent
Contribution to God's program	Appearing of the kingdom	Building of the church (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 11:25b)
Scriptural foundation	Mosaic Covenant (Exod. 19:5-6; Deut. 28:15-68)	Gen. 3:15; 15:6; John 3:16; Gal 3:16
When preached?	Early Gospels and Tribulation (Matt. 3:2; 24:14)	Church Age
Preached today?	No	Yes
Perpetual availability?	No	Yes
Which Gospels?	Synoptics	John
Cross, atonement, resurrection, Ascension, Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sins	No	Yes

(B) Middle (24:15-20) (Cf. Mark 13:14-18)

**15 "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place—let the reader understand—**

**15 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),**

**15 "So when you see the destructive desecration, mentioned by the prophet Daniel, standing in the Holy Place (let the reader take note),**

**15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)**

– "...see" - one couldn't understand how this could be fulfilled literally until recent technological advances came onto the scene

– "...abomination of desolation" - technical term that refers to an act of abomination that renders something unclean, in this case, the Temple (Cf. Dan 11:31; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:15)

— It is a technical reference to the introduction of an idolatrous image or an act of pagan sacrilege within the Holy of Holies that produces the highest level of ceremonial impurity

— This event will shake the Jewish people to the core and begin the process of them coming to their senses first about who the Antichrist is, and second about who Jesus is. It describes something that—because of its abominable character—causes the godly to desert the temple on its account.

— This was a term Daniel used 4x: Dan 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 (Cf. Mark 13:14; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:14-15)

— Dan 9:27 says that this abomination will take place in the middle of the 70th Week. The Antichrist will do at that time exactly what Antiochus Epiphanes did in the 2nd century BC, but that same man will be destroyed 3-1/2 years later.

— Dan 11:31 sets the pattern and provides details about what the abomination of desolation consists of; Dan 12:11 provides the exact chronology

— "...spoken of through Daniel the prophet" - Jesus focused the disciples on Daniel's references to the abomination of desolation, particularly the future ones (Dan 9:27; 12:11), to understand their true meaning

— "...standing in the holy place" - what "stands" in the Holy Place, after the first stage of the Abomination of Desolation, is an "image" of the Antichrist, setup by the False Prophet (Cf. Rev 13:11-15, esp v14)

— "...let the reader understand" - this phrase indicates that what Jesus was teaching would have greater significance for people reading Matthew's Gospel in the latter days

Matt 24:15-31 narrates the second half of the Tribulation from man's (earthly) point of view; to fully understand this passage, we need to also study Rev 12:6-17, which narrates this time period from the angelic (heavenly) point of view.

For background on Hanukkah and Antiochus Epiphanes, see [Hanukkah: History & Prophecy](#).

Considering the above verses, which the reader is to understand, we learn the following:

1. It occurs in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (Dan 11:31; 2 Thess 2:4)
2. It involves a person setting up a statue in place of the regular sacrifice in the holy of holies (Dan 11:31; 12:11; Rev 13:13-14)
3. This act results in the cessation of the regular sacrifice (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11)
4. There will be a time of about 3-1/2 years between this event and another event and the end of the time period (Dan 9:27; 12:11)
5. It involves an individual setting up a statue or image of himself so he may be worshipped in place of God (Dan 11:31; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:14-15)
6. The image is made to come to life (Rev 13:14)
7. A worship system of this false god is thus inaugurated (2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:14-15)
8. At the end of this time period the individual who commits the act will himself be cut off (Dan 9:27)

The Abomination of Desolation will involve two stages:

1. The Antichrist will take over the Jewish (Tribulation) Temple, sit down in the Holy of Holies, and declare himself to be God (2 Thess 2:3-10).
2. The False Prophet will make an image of the Antichrist and stand it up in the Holy of Holies (Rev 13:11-15; Dan 12:11). This will signal the beginning of the second half of the Great Tribulation, and the signal for the Jews to flee the land, as noted in v16-20 (also in Rev 12:13-17).

In this single verse, Jesus does three things:

1. Authenticates the book of Daniel
2. Highlights Daniel 9 ("the 70 Weeks") as the key to end time prophecy
3. Explains precisely what the "Abomination of Desolation" is and that it "stands in the Holy Place" (thus, a Temple is standing)

# DAN 9:27 OVERVIEW OF TRIBULATION PERIOD



## Differences Between the Temple of Matt 24:15 and Herod's Temple

Preterists like to misuse Luke 21:20-24 and say that while that passage does describe the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, they say that Matt 24 is a prophecy of the destruction of the temple as well. However, there are six major differences between the 70 AD temple and the temple of the future Tribulation period, referred to in Matt 24:15:

1. The Temple described in Matt 24:15 is not said to be destroyed, only desecrated (see Rev 11:2). By contrast, the Temple in Jesus' day (or Matt 24:2) was to be completely leveled: "not one stone would be left standing on another" (Matt 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 19:44).
2. The Temple's desecration would be a signal for Jews to escape destruction (Matt 24:16-18), "be saved" (Matt 24:22) and experience the promised "redemption" (Luke 21:28). By contrast the destruction of the Temple in Matt 24:2 was a judgment "because you did not recognize the time of your visitation [Messiah's first advent]" (Luke 19:44b) and resulted in the Temple being level[ed] to the ground and your children [the Jews] within you" (Luke 19:44a).
3. The generation of Jews that are alive at the time that the Temple is desecrated will expect Messiah's coming "immediately after" (Matt 24:29), and are predicted to not pass away until they have experienced it (Matt 24:34). By contrast, the generation of Jews who saw the Temple destroyed would pass away and 2,000 years (to date) would pass without redemption.

4. The text Jesus cited concerning the Temple's desecration, Dan 9:27, predicts that the one who desecrates this Temple will himself be destroyed. By contrast, those who destroyed the Temple in 70 AD (in fulfillment of Jesus' prediction)—the Roman emperor Vespasian and his son Titus—were not destroyed but returned to Rome in triumph carrying vessels from the destroyed Temple.
5. The time "immediately after" (Matt 24:29) the time of the Temple's desecration would see Israel's repentance (Matt 24:30), followed by, as Matt 23:29 implies, a restoration of the Temple. By contrast, the time following the destruction of the Temple only saw a "hardening" happen "to Israel," which is to last "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Rom 11:25)—still 2,000 years and counting.
6. For the Temple that is desecrated, the scope is of a worldwide tribulation "coming upon the world" (Luke 21:26; compare Matt 24:21-22; Mark 13:19-20), a global regathering of the Jewish people "from one end of the sky to the other" (Matt 24:31; Mark 13:27), and a universal revelation of the Messiah at Israel's rescue (Matt 24:30-31; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:26-27). This scope accords with the prophesied end-time battle for Jerusalem recorded in Zech 12-14, where "all nations of the earth will be gathered against it" (Zech 12:3). By contrast the 70 AD assault on Jerusalem predicted in Luke 21:20 is by the armies of one empire (Rome). Therefore, if there are two different attacks on Jerusalem, separated by more than 2,000 years, then two distinct Temples are considered in Matt 24:1-2 and Matt 24:15.

### **Response of the Jewish Remnant**

16 then **those** who are in **Judea** must flee to the **mountains**.

16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

- "...those" - those who see the Abomination of Desolation and are in Israel at the time; these are the "elect" in v22,24,31
- With the Abomination of Desolation, the Antichrist goes from protecting Israel to persecuting them; rampant anti-Semitism will break out
- "...Judea" - this prophecy could not have been fulfilled prior to 1967 because Judea (part of the "West Bank") did not belong to Israel until their victory in the Six Day War
- "...must flee" - Why? Because the Jews will realize that the Antichrist is not their messiah, and will flee persecution to Petra/Bozrah
- This verse refers to literal Jews, living in Israel, who "see" the abomination of desolation. They should immediately flee to the mountains.
- "...mountains" - Rev 12:14 calls the location a "wilderness"

— From OT references, this location is identified as Bozrah, a region of southwest Jordan, where the ancient fortress city of Petra is located (Jer 49:13-14).

### **The Place of Refuge**

It is in Petra/Bozrah where God will protect and provide for the Jewish Remnant for 1,260 days (Micah 2:12; Rev 12:6-17) after the abomination of desolation. God must move Israel (the Remnant) to Petra because otherwise, they'd be completely wiped out. Already, two-thirds of the Jewish people will be killed via the persecution of the Antichrist (Zech 13:8-9). Bozrah is located in the region of Mt Seir, a very rocky range mountains whose name means "hairy mountains." Mt Seir is located on the western side of ancient Edom, extending from southeast of the Dead Sea down to the city of Akaba. Today, this city in southern Jordan is known as Petra.

Dan 11:41 reveals another reason that God will lead the Remnant to this area: "He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but *these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.*" The context is the conquests of the Antichrist in the middle of the Tribulation as he begins his political takeover. Three nations will escape the Antichrist's worldwide conquests: Edom, Moab and Ammon. These three ancient nations comprise modern day Jordan. Since this area will escape the Antichrist's domination, it's a perfect place for the fleeing Jewish remnant.

### **Refuge From Roman Destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD)**

The Book of Hebrews was written to a group of Jewish believers who, because of persecution, were contemplating a return to Judaism. The writer of the Book of Hebrews warned them that they must separate themselves completely from the Judaism that rejected the Messiah. If they failed to do so, they would be caught up in the judgment of 70 AD and suffer physical death. Only if they separated themselves from Judaism completely would they have the opportunity of escaping the judgment upon that generation.

Of course, from the Book of Hebrews it is not known what the results were, but it is known from Josephus and Eusebius, quoting Hegisippus, a believing Jewish historian of the second century. These men recorded how the Jewish believers, in obedience to the writer of the Book of Hebrews, separated themselves from Judaism. When the revolt against Rome began in 66 AD, the entire Messianic Jewish community left the country and waited out the war in the town of Pella, on the east bank of the Jordan. Although 1,100,000 Jews died in this Jewish revolt against Rome, these historians record that not one Jewish believer was killed. Had they not obeyed the writer of the Book of Hebrews, they would have suffered physical death. But since they did obey, they escaped with their lives, and were freed from the judgment upon that generation.

17 Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house.

17 Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house.

17 Anyone who's on the housetop must not come down to get what is in his house,

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 And whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.

18 Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.

18 and anyone who's in the field must not turn back to get his coat.

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 But woe to those women who are pregnant, and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

19 "How terrible it will be for women who are pregnant or who are nursing babies in those days!

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

- Pregnant women and nursing mothers will have a hard time because their physical conditions will limit their mobility

20 Moreover, pray that when you flee, it will not be in the **winter**, or on a **Sabbath**.

20 But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.

20 Pray that it may not be in winter or on a Sabbath when you flee,

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

- "...winter" - during the rainy season—October to April. This would make foot travel through the wadis much more difficult due to flash flooding.
- "...Sabbath" - all public works are closed, and observant Jews would seek to discourage travel

— Clearly speaks to the Jewish nature of this passage; Church Age believers worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-2; Cf. Ex 20:8-11; 31:15-17)

### **Miraculous Provision**

Why is the Jewish Remnant supposed to be aware of a special event that triggers their escape into the Judean wilderness, yet they are not told to make any preparations for that day? Rev 12:6, a parallel passage, states that God has prepared a place so that they might be nourished for 1,260 days. Some OT passages that describe God's provision for His people during this 3-1/2 year period include Is 41:17-20 and Micah 2:12. Rev 12:12-13 tells

us that Satan, after he has been cast to the earth, knows he has a short time and spends that time relentlessly persecuting Israel. Satan unleashes his full wrath on the Jewish Remnant, which requires God's divine protection.

(C) Second half (24:21-22)

21 For **then** there will be a **great tribulation**, such as has **not occurred since the beginning of the world until now**, nor ever will *again*.

21 For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

21 because at that time there will be great suffering, the kind that hasn't happened from the beginning of the world until now and certainly won't ever happen again.

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

- "...then" - *tote*, connects v21 with v16-20; it gives the instructions in v16-20 a sense of urgency; this is the "why" for the above instructions...because things are going to get real bad real quick.

- "...great tribulation" - *megas thipsis*, Christ's label, quoting Dan 12:1

— Israel is about to experience the same wrath of God that the rest of the world has been experiencing for the past three-and-a-half years.

— During the first half of the Tribulation, Israel will enjoy the protection of Antichrist's covenant (Dan 9:27), but during the second half, after the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel, she will experience unprecedented persecution

— Rev 12:6-17 is the parallel passage; Rev 12:1-5 is the genesis of this persecution, which begins after Satan is ejected from heaven permanently

— This revelation from Jesus would not have been surprising to the disciples He was speaking to, as it was prophesied many times in the OT (Joel 2:2; Dan 12:1; Jer 30:7).

— The entire context of Dan 12 provides insight into what Jesus is referring to here. In Dan 12:8-10, Daniel asks God for clarification. God's answer, in v9-10, is that "...many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand."

— v9, Jesus referred to the "Tribulation" (afflicted, KJV); here, it's the "Great Tribulation"

— The length of the "great tribulation" is 3-1/2 years, 1,260 days, 42 months (Dan 7:25; Rev 11:2; 12:7,14; 13:5)

— "great tribulation" in the NT: Acts 7:11; Rev 2:22; 7:14

— "...not occurred since the beginning of the world until now" - some might argue that Noah's flood was a greater tribulation, which would be true. However, Jesus is speaking specifically to Israel, who were not a people at the time of the flood.

## Great Tribulation

The term “tribulation” is used in several different ways in Scripture. It is used in a non-technical, non-eschatological sense in reference to any time of suffering or testing (Matt 13:21; Mark 4:17; John 16:33; Rom 5:3; 12:12; 2 Cor 1:4; 2 Thess 1:4; Rev 1:9). It is used in its technical or eschatological sense in reference to the whole period of the seven years of the Tribulation, as in Rev 2:22 or Matt 24:29. It is also used in reference to the last half of this seven year period, as in v21.

The Tribulation period is not exclusively a NT doctrine. The Tribulation period is a topic that has a rich OT background and the events of this time are directed toward and involve the nation of Israel. The OT speaks of a time of tribulation that Israel is destined to endure (in the latter days), but when this period is past it will result in national repentance and the nation in a right relationship with the Lord. Note some of the following key passages:

Deut 4:30: When you are in distress [i.e., tribulation] and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice.

Jer 30:7: Alas! for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress [i.e., tribulation], but he will be saved from it.

Dan 12:1: Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress [i.e., tribulation] such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Joel 2:2: A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, so there is a great and mighty people; there has never been anything like it, nor will there be again after it to the years of many generations.

In addition to these OT passages, there is a general theme of both individuals and the nation crying out to the Lord in a time of distress and tribulation: Gen 35:3; 1 Sam 10:19; 26:24; 2 Sam 4:9; 1 Kings 1:29; 2 Chr 15:4; Ps 20:1; 25:22; 34:17; 46:1; 50:15; 81:7; 86:7; 107:6,13,19,28; 116:3; 120:1; Is 33:2; Jer 14:8; 16:19; Jonah 2:2; Nahum 1:7. In the NT, Paul writes about Israel's deliverance from the Tribulation in Rom 10:11-15.

The purpose and outcome of the “Great Tribulation” is the salvation of Israel: Ezek 20:33-38; Zech 13:8-9; Dan 12:8-10, et al.

22 And if **those days** had not been **cut short**, **no life** would have been **saved**; but for the sake of the **elect** **those days** will be **cut short**.

22 Unless **those days** had been **cut short**, **no life** would have been **saved**; but for the sake of the **elect** **those days** will be **cut short**.

22 If those days hadn't been limited, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be limited.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

- "...those days" - the antecedent is the days Jesus just described in v15-21 (the Tribulation); specifically it refers to the 1,260 days encompassing the second half of the Tribulation

- "...cut short" [2x] - *ekolobothesan*, to shorten, abridge, curtail. The verb is in the aorist tense, indicative mood, used to express past time; that this action was completed in the past.

— God has already decided about the future length of time of the Great Tribulation, and He has already shortened it. He has already decided to cut it off at a specific time rather than let it continue indefinitely. In His omniscience, God knew that allowing it to go on longer than 1,260 days would lead to the destruction of all life on earth, including the "elect."

— Since the Bible is very clear in saying the Great Tribulation is 3-1/2 years long, the Lord couldn't have contradicted that fact in this verse by saying it would be stopped ahead of time.

— Jesus is saying that if the Great Tribulation was allowed to continue to its ultimate conclusion, past the scheduled 1,260 days, not a single soul would survive. Mankind would destroy each other to extinction.

— But for the sake of the elect He will end it at the appointed time, 1,260 days after it begins.

— Mark 13:20, a parallel passage, states that "the Lord" will cut short those days.

- "...no life" - *pasa sarx*, not just people, but all forms of life will experience drastic cutbacks during the Great Tribulation (Cf. Rev 6:7-8; 16:13-21)

- "...saved" - saved physically...not referring to salvation (justification) since the context is physical, not spiritual

- "...elect" - national Israel (v24,31); you cannot include the Church as part of "the elect" because God has chosen Israel (Deut 7:6-8; Cf. Ps 135:4; Is 41:8; 44:1; 45:4; 65:9,22)

— Used 3x in the Olivet Discourse (v22,24,31; also in Mark 13:20,22,27); the people referred to must be the same group

— It can't be the Church, because it has been raptured; the Church is not called "elect" anywhere in the Gospels; it is not until Rom 8:33, some 20 years later, that Paul refers to the Church as "elect"

— In the OT, it is used of Israel: Is 42:1; 43:20; 45:4; 65:9,15,22; Ps 89:3; 105:6,43; 106:5; 1 Chr 16:13.

— In the context of the Tribulation (Dan 9:24: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city...") this refers to the Jewish Remnant, who come to belief

after the Rapture; see note on v16

(D) Second Advent (24:23-31) (Cf. Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28)

### **Warning About Looking for the Messiah in All the Wrong Places**

23 **Then** if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or '*He is over here*,' do not believe *him*.

23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There *He is*,' do not believe *him*.

23 "At that time, if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here's the Messiah!' or 'There he is!', don't believe it,

**23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.**

- "Then" - "at that time"; near the end of the Tribulation

- Apparently, there is hearsay surrounding the impending appearance of the Messiah. The false program of the Antichrist will be laden with rumor and innuendo, but the appearance of the genuine Messiah will be clear for all to see (v27).

— The hearsay about false Christs and various miracles could possibly be an attempt to infiltrate the Remnant tucked away safely in the mountains

— This command is for the Jewish people to not believe anyone, especially the Antichrist (who claims to be the true Christ), because the true Christ is not showing up to rescue you until the end of the Tribulation period

- During the greatest time of upheaval and chaos the world has ever seen, Jesus reminds His disciples that even then the most important thing in life is one's relationship with Christ.

— As time moves into the second half of the Tribulation, the number one priority is to avoid deception.

— The reason avoiding deception is so important is because the Antichrist begins his global rule and requires all to take the mark of the beast (Rev 13:17).

— It is so critical that God sends angels to specifically preach the gospel to the entire world and warn them of the consequences of accepting the mark (Rev 14:6-13).

— Individuals alive at this time will determine their eternal destiny on the basis to their response to the gospel and the Antichrist's appeal to take his mark.

24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and will provide **great signs and wonders**, so as to mislead, **if possible**, even the **elect**.

24 For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

24 because false messiahs and false prophets will appear and display great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were possible*, they shall deceive the very elect.

- People professing to be the Messiah and others, claiming to be prophets, will arise and mislead many people because of their ability to perform impressive miracles (Cf. v11; 7:21-23; 16:1; Luke 17:23-24; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:15)
- "...great signs and wonders" - *dunamis*, one of four Greek words used in the Gospels to describe Jesus' miracles (see note at Matt 11:21)
- The Greek indicates that these false christs and false prophets actually perform these signs and wonders...they are not smoke and mirrors
- Antichrist miracles: Rev 13:3-4
- False Prophet miracles: Rev 13:12-15
- It appears that God grants temporary power to these false prophets and christs so that they will be used of God to attract all unbelievers to themselves in unbelief (Cf. 2 Thess 2:8-10; Rev 13:11-15)
- These miracles will be so compelling that even Israel could be deceived by them. They will be just as real, just as authentic, as the miracles, powers and signs Jesus displayed during His ministry.
- "...if possible" - *ei dynaton*, means the false prophets will hope to mislead the elect during the Tribulation
- "...elect" - see note on v16 (Cf. v22,31)

If you determine truth based on experience (which is where western civilization is headed), you can see how everyone will so easily fall for the authentic miracles of the Antichrist and False Prophet.

This is why the Bible tells us over and over that we should not define truth through experience. The only way to define truth is by its conformance to divine revelation, because God cannot lie. God warns that even if a prophet performs authentic miracles right in front of you, but then his teaching contradicts divine revelation, you determine truth by divine revelation (Deut 13:1-5).

The lesson for us is...the doctrine taught must align with God's Word, even if the speaker/prophet performs incredible, authentic miracles. We don't base truth on our experience (witnessing the miracles), we base it upon God's Word.

25 Behold, I have told you in advance.

25 Behold, I have told you in advance.

25 Remember, I've told you this beforehand.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

- Jesus reminded His disciples that he had forewarned them about these imposters before (Cf. Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36)
- The disciples Jesus addressed undoubtedly thought they would be alive when these events took place. This was not the case, and Jesus said nothing to mislead them.
- He was teaching disciples of His in the years to come, in addition to those who were sitting with Him

26 So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out; or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe *them*.

26 So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe *them*.

26 So if they say to you, 'Look! He's in the wilderness,' don't go out looking for him. And if they say, 'Look! He's in the storeroom,' don't believe it,

**26** Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.*

- The return of the true Christ will be an event for all to see, not hidden somewhere far out or in some back room (Cf. v27; Rev 1:7)

— Preterists and Jehovah Witnesses both believe that Jesus has returned already

- Two things we learn about these false Christs and false prophets:

1. They will perform miracles in order to mislead and deceive many (v24)
2. They will not be visible and out in the open (v26)

— Based on these warnings, the "elect" will not be deceived, however 2 Thess 2:9-12 states that the non-elect *will* be deceived

27 For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will **the coming** of the Son of Man be.

27 For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

27 because just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

- "...the coming" - *parousia*, "to be present; appearing"; 4x in Matthew, all in this chapter, all referring to Christ's Second Coming; no where else in the gospels (20x elsewhere in the NT).

— This verse is the first of three clauses "...so shall also the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of man be" that answers the disciple's question in v3: "What will be the sign of your coming [*parousia*]?"

- The Second Coming, in contrast to the false Christs and false prophets who are "in the back room," will be global in scope, and no one will be able to fake it
- Consequently, the disciples would not need to worry about missing the event, and they should not react to every rumor that announced it was happening
- It will be a public event, not something private that only the disciples or some small group would witness. It would be of such nature that only God could pull it off.

28 Wherever the **corpse** is, there the **vultures** will gather.

28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

28 Wherever there's a corpse, there the vultures will gather.

28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

- Jesus returns to execute a violent judgment against those who don't know Him, and have been cooperating with the Antichrist to destroy Israel

— This verse (proverb) describes the judgment to come upon unbelievers who are poised to war against Him at Armageddon (Cf. Luke 17:37; Rev 19:17-19,21)

— This refers to the "other" supper in Rev 19...the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and the "supper of the great God" (Cf. Rev 19:17)

- "...corpse" - in this proverb, Jewish unbelievers, ripe for judgment

- "...vultures" - a figure of the judgments that fall upon them

— This is not only the judgment of Christ's Second Coming, but also the agents of His wrath doled out during the Great Tribulation.

- This verse can be translated: "Where a corpse may happen to be, there will the vultures be gathered together."

29 "But **immediately after** the tribulation of those days **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

29 "Immediately after the troubles of those days, 'The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of heaven will be shaken loose.'

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

- "...immediately after" - *eutheos*, (adverb) straightway, at once, directly

- It modifies “darkened” meaning that immediately after the Tribulation, the sun will be darkened, then all the other events will take place
- In the chronology, this “darkness” would immediately follow the final Bowl judgment (Rev 16:17-21; Cf. Zech 14:2-5)
- Jesus quotes Joel 2:31, the “Blood Moon” passage; see notes there for a full explanation (Cf. Joel 3:1-2,15; Is 13:9-10; Luke 21:24-25)
- “...sun will be darkened” - 5th Bowl judgment (Rev 16:10-11; Cf. Is 13:10) is darkness
- This is somewhat of a sarcastic response to the spiritual darkness of the Antichrist’s kingdom (Cf. 10 Egyptian plagues countering Egyptian gods)
- In response to the Antichrist’s kingdom of darkness, God will cover the earth in spiritual darkness
- There are five blackouts described in Scripture. One occurs before the Tribulation; the other four occur during the Tribulation and Interval, before the Millennium:
  1. Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20 - Before the Tribulation
  2. Rev 6:12 - After opening the 6th seal
  3. Joel 2:10; Rev 9:2 - Smoke from the opening of the bottomless pit
  4. Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25 - near the time of the Second Coming (5th Bowl judgment)
  5. Joel 3:15 - During the Judgment of the Nations (Sheep & Goat Judgment)
- When God is angry, the principle of anger is set in motion even in the natural world
- “...moon will not give its light” - if the sun is not shining, an effect of that is that the moon would not shine, since the moon reflects the light of the sun
- Preterists argue that “sun darkened...moon will not give her light” should be interpreted as speaking of the 70 AD collapse of geo-political Israel, and that there is biblical warrant for speaking of national catastrophe in terms of cosmic destruction [Kenneth Gentry, *Perilous Times: A Study in Eschatological Evil*, p.77]. For more on this, see [Ice-Matthew 24:34: "This Generation"](#).
- “...fall from the sky” - doesn’t necessarily mean they fall to earth, but they could
- Falling stars are what cause people to hide in caves in Rev 6:13, but the context of that event is different (partial judgment in Rev vs Second Coming in Matt), so they are two different events
- “...powers of the heavens will be shaken” - angelic entities or the physical universe?
- Jesus likely has in mind Haggai 2:6 and Is 34:4; also described in Heb 12:26-28
- The overall perspective of people alive at the time is characterized only in Luke 21:25-26 as “...men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”
- “heavens” - sometimes translated “heavenly bodies”; “the powers of the heavens” is closer to the original Greek

— Paul described these as “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph 6:12)

30 **And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.**

30 And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all ‘the tribes of the land will mourn’ when they see ‘the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven’ with power and great glory.

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

— “...then” - refers to the timing: the cosmic events described in v29 occur first, “then” the “sign of the Son of man” in the heavens, then the people of the earth mourn (because they know what is coming), and the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

— “...sign of the Son of Man” - after complete worldwide darkness, this sign is likely the Shekinah Glory of Christ, which will illuminate the worldwide darkness.

— The “sign” IS the Son of Man. In Greek grammar, this is called the appositional use of the genitive case.

— “Son of Man” - a Messianic title never used in reference to the church

— The actual coming of the Lord is the sign; this is the very point Jesus made to the high priest in Matt 26:64 when He told them that they would see Him “coming on the clouds of heaven”; it is also what the angel told the disciples in Acts 1:11 after watching Jesus being taken up to heaven in a cloud.

— This is why the next time Jesus comes, it will not be some “signless sign” that did not actually exist in the form of the Roman army (which is what Preterism believes), but instead the visible, bodily, physical return of Christ

— Shekinah is the visible manifestation of the presence of God, often showing up in the form of a cloud, light, fire or combination of these. See [Shechinah Glory](#) for list of appearances in Scripture.

— The Shekinah appeared at Jesus’ first advent in the form of a star that flashed upon a darkened sky and led the Magi from the East...it will also appear at His second advent.

— “...all the tribes of the earth” - Jewish (Cf. 19:28)

— “...mourn” - the tribes of mourning because they are in repentance (Cf. Zech 12)

- They are recognizing that the man they thought was their messiah hates them, and their true Messiah came 2000 years ago, and they killed Him
- This is typified in the story of Joseph: once Jacob and the 11 brothers arrived in Egypt and realized who Joseph was, they cried and mourned because of what they had previously done to him, and they cried out to him for help.
- "...they will see" - this is clearly the visible, physical return of Christ (which did not occur in 70 AD)

31 And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT **TRUMPET BLAST**, and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His **elect** from the **four winds**, from **one end of the sky to the other**.

31 And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

31 He'll send out his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they'll gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another."

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

- This verse predicts the opposite of what happened in Luke 21:24, when Jesus proclaimed judgment on Jerusalem and scattered the Jews. This is Israel's conversion and earthly gathering by Jesus (Yeshua), in fulfillment of Is 27:13, at the end of a seven-year process.
- In Matt 23:37, Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, pronounces judgment, and declares "...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!"

— Now in this verse, Jesus returns when again Jerusalem is in danger, but this time the Jews respond positively to Him as the Messiah, so the Lord sends angels out to gather His elect to Jerusalem instead of scatter them.

— Jesus had Is 27:12-13 in mind in v31...this Isaiah passage emphasizes the regathering of the Remnant not in the Land at the time, and restoring them back to their homeland. This is a global regathering of saved Jews in conjunction with the return of Jesus to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

— This verse is a simple summary of all that the prophets had to say about the second facet of Israel's final restoration. It makes clear that the worldwide regathering predicted by the prophets will be completely fulfilled at the Second Coming.

— This "ingathering" of the Jewish Remnant fulfills the prophetic aspects of the Feast of Trumpets for Israel (Cf. Deut 30:1-4; Is 11:12; 27:13; 43:5-7; Ezek 5:10,12; 17:21; Zech 2:6)

— "...trumpet" - Is 27:13 teaches that the scattered children of Israel will be gathered to their homeland in conjunction with the blowing of "a great trumpet"; this is the only OT reference to a "great" trumpet

- Part of God's program is to sound a trumpet for Israel after the Church is removed from the earth. God uses a trumpet to gather the Church at the Rapture (Cf. 1 Cor 15:51), and He will use a trumpet to gather believing Israel at the end of the Tribulation.
- This reference to the regathering harkens back to 23:37, where Jesus expressed a desire to gather an unwilling first century Israel. Although they were unwilling to be gathered by their Messiah, a future generation of repentant Jews will be regathered by Christ upon His return.
- Post-Tribulationism and Pre-Wrath rapturists believe this trumpet is the "last trumpet" of 1 Cor 15:51-53 to justify a Rapture at the end of the Great Tribulation. However, this contradicts the promises Paul made to the Church.
- This passage clearly describes the Lord in His 2nd Coming, in power and glory on His way to Earth, in full view of everyone, to establish His Kingdom. This is different in every respect from Paul's claims in 1 Cor 15:51-52 and 1 Thess 4:16-17 (supported by John and Isaiah) that in an instant the Lord will snatch believers off the Earth to meet Him in the air and then hide us in His Father's house (John 14:2-3) to protect us from the coming wrath (1 Thess 1:10).
- The trumpet of Matt 24:31 is blown to gather the Lord's elect, so it refers to those who are already with the Lord. The companion verse in Mark 13:27 doesn't mention a trumpet, but does say the elect on Earth (Tribulation believers) will be gathered together at this time as well.
  - "...gather" - *episynago*, the same Greek word Jesus used in Matt 23:37 to describe what He tried to do at His first coming
- What Jesus couldn't do the first time, due to Israel's unbelief, He will do the second time, after Israel is refined through the Tribulation period
- This is a "horizontal" gathering of Israel rather than a "vertical" gathering of Church Age saints at the Rapture
- The fulfillment of the final regathering of Israel foretold by the OT prophets (Deut 30:4-5; Is 11:11-12; 65:9; Jer 23:3; 29:14; 31:8,10). With the background of Is 27:12-13, Jesus stated that the angels will be involved in the final regathering.
- This verse makes clear that the second (final) regathering will happen only after the Second Coming
- The Pre-Wrath Rapture view takes *episynagō* in Matt 24:31 and then finds it used again in 2 Thess 2:1 (which actually refers to the Rapture), then argue that if it means Rapture in 2 Thess 2:1, it must mean Rapture in Matt 24:31. When people do this, they commit a basic exegetical fallacy (aka logical fallacy) called an Illegitimate Totality Transfer. An ITT is an illegitimate totality transfer defines the same word based on how it's used elsewhere, and you adopt the meaning of how it's used elsewhere and adopt the meaning into your

present passage when the present passage doesn't have a context that supports that meaning.

- "...elect" - the Jewish Remnant, who come to belief after the Rapture (Cf. Deut 7:7); see notes on v22,24; Jesus uses this term because the Remnant at that time will fulfill the requirements of Deut 30:2; Matt 23:39.
- Church Age believers are elect also, but that isn't the context here; this isn't Church Age context, this is Tribulation period context
- Is 11:11 describes God gathering Israel together a second time from their dispersion, the second time in belief (the first regathering is in unbelief)
- This "elect" in this context *may* also include OT Saints, since they will be resurrected at the Second Coming; this may be the "global" context of the passage, since the Remnant will primarily be located in Petra/Bozrah.
- The "elect" are the same group of people as "...every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan 12:1); this of course refers only to Jews, due to "thy people" earlier in the verse.
- Jesus was called God's "elect" in Is 42:1; Israel was called God's "elect" in Is 45:4; 65:9,22; angels are called His "elect" in 1 Tim 5:21.
- Cf. Is 65:7-16 - God drew a contrast between these two groups and their destinies. In v9, He calls the believing Remnant "mine elect" and in v17-25 He indicated that in the Kingdom, His elect Remnant will be blessed greatly on the earth.
- "...four winds" - because of Israel's persistent rebellion against God, He declared that He would scatter the Jews "into all the winds" (Ezek 5:10,12; 17:21); in Zech 2:6, God stated that He did indeed scatter them abroad "as four winds of the heavens"
- He also declared that in the future, Israel would be gathered from the east, west, north and south, "from the ends of the earth" (Is 43:5-7)
- "...one end of the sky to the other" - Matt 24:31 and Mark 13:27 both describe a call to His elect to join Him in the Kingdom. The reference to "heaven" refers to the resurrection of OT Saints (Dan 12:1-2) and Tribulation martyrs (Rev 20:4).
- Mark 13:27 could add Tribulation believers who survive the judgments and will enter the Kingdom alive (Matt 25:34) which also happens at the time of the 2nd Coming.
- Col 3:4 and Jude 14-15 show that raptured Church Age believers, and those believers who died during the Church Age, also return with the Lord at His Second Coming

### **Rapture or Second Coming, or Both?**

Post-Tribulationists use v31 as a cornerstone verse to argue that the Rapture and Second Coming are a single event. However if this verse describes the Rapture, it violates the Jewish context of the passage without any explanation or justification. Their argument is based primarily on the fact that the Greek word for trumpet appears both here and in 1 Cor

15:52. But that is not an acceptable reason to tie these verses together (see note on illegitimate totality transfer in v31), because there are other factors that make them obviously different. One is that in 1 Thess 4:16-17 the only angel mentioned is "the archangel," not some unknown number of angels scouring the heavens for "His elect." The Greek word *harpazo* is not used in v31, but is used to describe the Rapture in 1 Thess 4:16. Another is that it turns the Rapture from a signless event into one that can't happen until there is a sign for all the world to see, and until the Second Coming is already in progress. It would mean that while all the world is standing there watching Jesus descend from heaven in power and glory, He will suddenly scoop up the Church and return to heaven without completing His trip to earth.

That would also violate His promise, made personally and through Paul, that He will keep us from the hour of trial that's coming upon the whole world (Rev 3:10), delivering us from the time and place of God's wrath (Rom 5:9; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9).

Those who see the Rapture here claim that the Church is "the elect." However, throughout the OT, Israel was called God's elect and since Israel was the topic of the Lord's discussion, it's much more likely that's who He had in mind. Also, according to Dan 12:2-3 Israel's resurrection will take place at the Second Coming making it possible that Matt 24:31 is referring to OT saints being rounded up to receive their resurrection bodies.

Finally, there's no mention of the Church being "the elect" in the Gospels. In the only times the Lord mentioned the Church at all (Matt 16:18; 18:17) He did not use any form of the Greek word for "elect." The first clear description of the Church as "the elect" did not happen until Rom 8:33, which Paul wrote over 20 years later. To think that the disciples would have understood the Lord to be referring to the Church in Matt 24:22,31 is an unwarranted assumption.

See notes on [1 Thessalonians 4 - The Rapture of the Church](#) for a larger comparison between the Rapture and Second Coming.

Upon completion of His discourse about the Tribulation and Second Coming, Jesus now provides eight parables (24:32–25:46) that illustrate and drive home the point of what He had just taught. Since these parables are connected to Christ's preceding Discourse, they provide an important parabolic focus upon the eschatology lesson just given. All of these parables form a group. In other words, all the parables must refer to the same event, in this case, v4-31. This means that it would not make sense to have the first parable refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and then have the final four relate to a still future return of Christ.

The entire passage in context from v32 teaches that:

1. In Jesus' day, no one knew the date of the second advent except the Father
2. That Noah's days were analogous to the last days

3. That the unsaved in Noah's day did not know when the flood would come
4. But that the saved (Noah and his family) did know at least seven days in advance
5. When the Lord comes, He will divide between the saints and sinners
6. We ought to be watching the signs of the times for hints that will tell us when He will come

The parables and lessons of this chapter prepare the way for the parables and lessons in Matt 25.

- (4) Attitude believers should have towards these events (Matt 24:32—25:46)
  - (A) Fig tree: watch for the signs (24:32-35) (Cf. Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33)

### **Eight Parabolic Exhortations (Matt 24:32—25:46)**

**32** “Now learn the **parable** from the **fig tree**: as soon as its branch has become tender and **sprouts its leaves**, you know that summer is near;

**32** “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;

**32** “Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches become tender and it produces leaves, you know that summer is near.

**32** Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

- “...parable” – Jesus now moves into teaching via parable
- The important thing to remember when interpreting parables is that a parable as a single point, not many points
- The single point of this parable is that there is a division coming between believing and unbelieving Israel at the end of the Tribulation, so Jesus is saying to be on the “right side” of that ledger, the believing side instead of the unbelieving side.
- “...fig tree” – national Israel (Judges 9:10-11; Jer 8:13; Hosea 9:10; Micah 4:4; Hab 3:17; Haggai 2:19; Matt 21:19; Mark 11:13,20-21; Luke 13:6-7) but this is irrelevant to understanding the passage.
- Luke 21:19, a parallel passage, states: “And He spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees,”—so the focus is not on a fig tree specifically, but on trees in general.
- “...sprouts its leaves” – in the spring
- When fig tree reaches a certain stage in the seasonal cycle (puts on leaves), then it's a sign that it is a certain time (spring), and you know what comes next/soon/shortly (summer).
- The leaves before summer refer to the events of the Tribulation as outlined in v4-31. Thus, when one sees these events, they are to be aware that Christ's return is near.

33 so you too, when you see **all these things, recognize** that He is near, *right* at the door.  
33 so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, *right* at the door.  
33 In the same way, when you see all these things, you'll know that the Son of Man is near, right at the door.

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

– "...all these things" - in context, this refers to a specific generation of Israelites/Jews in the second half of the Tribulation

– "...recognize" - *ginosko*, to know; to grasp the significance or meaning of something; understand; comprehend

— When you see the events of the Tribulation period take place, you know that His Second Coming is near

34 Truly I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all **these** things take place.

34 Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

34 I tell all of you with certainty, this generation won't disappear until these things happen.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

– "...you" - Jesus is speaking to the generation of Jews alive during the Tribulation period, who "see" the Antichrist desecrate the temple and declare himself to be God

– "...this generation" - *houtos genea*, this is speaking of a specific generation; in context, it is the generation who sees the abomination of desolation (Cf. v15-16,20) at the midpoint of the Tribulation

— The biggest mistake people make here is that they apply "this generation" at the wrong starting point (*terminus a quo*). The reason everyone starts at the wrong starting point is because they don't understand the context of Matthew's Gospel or the Olivet Discourse, and think it applies to the church when it really applies to unbelieving Israel.

— Many people took "this generation" as the generation after Israel became a nation again (1948), and say a generation is 40 years, so the Second Coming will take place in 1988. — No.

— Then they found a loophole and instead use 1967 (when Israel retook Jerusalem) + 40 years = 2007. — No.

— Then another loophole...Ps 90:10 says a lifespan is 70-80 years, so take 1948 + 80 years = 2028. Or better yet, take 1967 + 80 years = 2047.

- This verse is the holy grail to a preterist, who builds his entire theology on this verse, then crams every prophetic utterance in Scripture into a 70 AD fulfillment

— Preterists claim that "this generation" refers to the one in existence when Jesus addressed His disciples

- They also claim that every time “this generation” is used in the NT, it refers to the generation to whom Jesus was speaking...but that is not accurate (see notes on each passage):
- In Heb 3:10 “this generation” clearly refers to the generation of Israelites that wandered the wilderness because of the contextual reference
- In Mark 8:12 we conclude that “this generation” refers to Christ’s contemporaries because they are the referent of the passage in the immediate context
- In Matt 23:36, “this generation” refers to Christ’s contemporaries because in context “this generation” is governed by the phrase “all these things,” which refer to the judgments that Christ pronounced in Matt 22-23
- In v34, “This generation” does not refer to Christ’s contemporaries because the governing referent is “all these things,” which refers to v4-31
- Since Christ is giving a prophetic discourse on future events, one must determine the nature of “all these things” in v4-31 to know what generation He is referencing
- Since “all these things” did not take place in the 1st century, the generation Christ speaks of must be future. Essentially, the generation who will see the beginning of the end will see the end of the end.
- Compare Matt 23:36, where Jesus contrasts the *judgment* of Israel, to 24:34 when He prophesies the *deliverance* of Israel
- “...these” - yet another way to prove that Jesus was speaking of a future generation, not the generation alive at the time He spoke these words

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will **not** pass away.

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

35 Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.”

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

- “This generation” will not pass away before the end, once these events begin. However, heaven and earth *will* pass away, but His words are more lasting than even the heavens and the earth. Heaven and earth will be taken away, but what He has proclaimed will last for eternity.

- “...not” - *ou me*, double negative, emphatic; the strongest negation in the Greek language

— Jesus is further stressing the certainty of what the signs anticipated. He is claiming that His predictions had the same authority and eternal validity as God’s words.

What Jesus is saying here is that God will keep and protect/preserve the believing remnant during the Great Tribulation until the time that Jesus returns to rescue them. The Jewish generation that sees the Antichrist desecrate the temple at the midpoint of the Tribulation,

and flees into the wilderness to safety, will not pass away until Messiah returns to rescue them.

Why would Jesus say this? Because these people will need a promise from God to stand on. Satan will have been cast out of heaven (Rev 12:6-17) and attempt to devour Israel through full-scale warfare. Satan knows at this point that his days are very short (1,260 days, 3-1/2 years, 42 months), and he knows that the kingdom will be birthed/inaugurated through Israel, so he will attempt to destroy Israel in a pre-emptive attack to wipe out Israel. The warfare will be so intense that 2/3rds of Israel will be killed (1/3rd of Jews were wiped out in WWII).

A generation that is this precarious for elimination and extinction by Satan himself will need a promise from God. If this generation is exterminated, there is no one left for the kingdom promises of God to come through.

(B) Days of Noah: do not be caught surprised (24:36-44) (Cf. Mark 13:32-37)

The point of this discourse about the Days of Noah, and v41-42 about the separation of believers/non-believers is preparedness. During the days of Noah, there was no expectation of judgment on the part of non-believers, and it took them by surprise. They went about their daily lives, eating, drinking and marrying, oblivious to the fact that judgment was on their doorstep.

**36** *"But about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.*

**36** *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.*

**36** *"No one knows when that day or hour will come—not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father,*

**36** *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

- This verse is the lead sentence of a concept that is developed here through 25:30...
- Those who argue that the Rapture is found in the Olivet Discourse often point to this verse to show imminency. They argue that this verse cannot refer to the Second Coming since people will know the time of that event (exactly 7 years after the Antichrist enters into a peace treaty with Israel, Dan 9:27), thus it must refer to the Rapture.
  - However, for those unbelievers on the earth, whom this verse is referring to in context, they will be completely unprepared (like those who perished in the flood) for the judgment that is coming (Cf. v42; 1 Thess 5:6; Rev 16:15)
  - The time of the Rapture is unknown to all; the time of the Second Coming will be unknown to unbelievers

- The certainty of fulfillment, stressed in v35, should not lead the disciples to conclude that they could predict the time of fulfillment exactly. Jesus explained that only the Father knew precisely when Jesus would return (Cf. Acts 1:7).
- The parallel passage in Mark 13:32 also notes that the Son does not know the time of the Second Coming (at least He didn't at that time)
- This lack of omniscience on the part of God the Son confuses some. However, Jesus became a Man, and thus voluntarily put Himself under certain limitations. One of those was a limitation of His knowledge, which was part of His "humiliation" (Luke 2:52; Phil 2:7).
- Rapture date-setters never use Rapture passages as a basis for their date-setting schemes...because there are none
- They invariably go to passages related to Israel (rather than the Church) or Second Coming passages that they confuse as Rapture passages
- God's Word is sufficient for everything needed to live a life pleasing to Christ (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4), so if something (a date) is not revealed in Scripture, then it's not needed to accomplish God's plan in our lives (Cf. Deut 29:29)

### **The Day and Hour**

- Matt 24:36: But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Mark 13:32 is an exact parallel.
- Matt 24:42: Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.
- Matt 24:44: For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.
- Matt 25:13: Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. Mark 13:33-37 is a parallel passage.
- Acts 1:7: He said to them, It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;
- 1 Thess 5:1-2: Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

37 For the coming of the Son of Man will be **just like** the days of Noah.

37 For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

37 because just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be when the Son of Man comes.

37 But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

- "...just like" - *osper*, a marker of similarity between events and states; the Second Coming will be *just like* the days of Noah

- The point of comparison between the “days of Noah” and the Second Coming is the unexpectedness of the judgment to unbelievers and their unpreparedness for it
- Other Second Coming to Noah’s Flood comparisons (Luke 17:26-27; 2 Peter 2:4-11)
- The point of the analogy is not so much that the generation that was swept away by the flood was exceptionally wicked (although they were), but that it was so absorbed in its worldly pursuits that it paid no attention to warnings of destruction.

38 For as in those days before the flood they were **eating** and drinking, **marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,**

38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

38 In those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage right up to the day when Noah went into the ark.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,

- "...eating" - *trogo*, munching on food, not the typical *esthio*, eating

— This appears to be implying ignorance of the times, luxurious living; the unprepared will be so absorbed in pleasing themselves, they miss the fact that they are living in extraordinary times, and fail heed solemn warnings

— Instead of saying “It is certain to come; therefore we must make preparation and always be on watch,” they say, “No one knows when it will come; therefore there is no need to trouble oneself about it yet. Other matters are much more urgent.” A desire for the status quo is a manifestation of unpreparedness.

- "...marrying and giving in marriage" - illustrates unpreparedness concerning one's long-range perspective

— The point is that one should not be involved in long range planning (even of good things, such as marriage) and be unprepared for impending judgment

— Just as it would make no sense to plan a wedding just before the flood of Noah, if one was unprepared to face God’s judgment it would make no sense to plan for marriage in the face of the events of the Tribulation.

— In the days of Noah, he preached of coming judgment (2 Peter 2:5). Yet no one, other than his family, paid attention to his message. Instead, they went about business as usual, ignoring the warnings of God’s Word.

- "...until the day that Noah entered the ark" - the practices of the unprepared ceased the day Noah entered the ark, just as they will in the future when Christ returns

39 and they did not **understand** until the flood came and **took them all away**; so will the coming of the **Son of Man** be.

39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

39 They were unaware of what was happening until the flood came and swept all of them away. That's how it will be when the Son of Man comes.

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

– "...understand" – *ginosko*, recognize; to grasp the significance or meaning of something; comprehend

— "did not understand" in v39 is juxtaposed with the admonition to believers in v33

— The difference between the one who understands (v33) and the one who does not (v39) is based upon who accepts God's Word

— "...took them all away" – took who away? The flood took away the unbelievers ("they did not understand").

— Misinterpretation occurs when you don't read this verse closely to understand who is taken away, through the example of the Flood. It was the unbelievers who were "taken away" in judgment; the same will be the case at the Second Coming, while believers will NOT be taken away, but instead ushered into the kingdom.

— Here, being taken away is a BAD thing; being left behind is a GOOD thing. This is completely opposite of the Rapture, where being taken away is a GOOD thing and left behind is a BAD thing.

— Not understanding the players in v39 leads to misinterpretation of v40-41 as the Rapture instead of the Second Coming

— "took" – *airō*, to take away; a different Greek word than Matthew uses in v40-41 (see note on v40)

— "...Son of Man" – quoted from Dan 7:13-14, when Daniel described how the kingdom of God would instantaneously manifest itself on the earth, and overthrow the kingdom of the Antichrist, not at the end of the Church Age but at the end of the Great Tribulation

— When Jesus uses the expression "Son of Man" He is not talking about the Rapture; in fact, the expression "Son of Man" is never used anywhere when referring to the Church. Instead, it's always used in an Israel context.

— Interestingly, Jesus doesn't use the term "Son of Man" during the Upper Room Discourse, which is focused on the Church, not Israel

— When we interpret the parables in v32-51, we need to keep in mind the Second Coming timeframe and the Jewish imagery of Son of Man

The single point of this parable for believing Israel during the Great Tribulation: don't be caught up in daily life, your daily existence and survival, that you become unbelieving Israel rather than believing Israel. If Israel does not heed this advice, and is instead caught up in

their daily existence and survival, remaining in unbelief, they will be caught off-guard upon Jesus' return in judgment.

### **Two Men/Two Women Illustration (Cf. Luke 17:34-37)**

Often this parable is used to illustrate the Rapture. And while it could be applied to the Rapture in that there is a separation of believers from non-believers, that is not the context of the passage nor what Jesus was referring to. This is clearly a passage that in context refers to the Second Coming, specifically the separation of believing and unbelieving Jews at the end of the Tribulation.

Those who were not prepared in the days of Noah were taken away, in judgment, by the flood. To maintain the context, the ones taken in v40-41 are those being whisked off to judgment (Sheep & Goat judgment, Matt 25:31-46), while those who remain will be ushered into the Kingdom in their mortal bodies. This parable drives the point home by giving a couple of examples of the coming separation that will occur at this time of judgment.

40 **At that time** there will be two *men* in the field; one **will be taken** and one will be left.

40 Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.

40 At that time, two people will be in the field. One will be taken, and one will be left behind.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

– "At that time" - *tote*, links v40-41 with v37-39

— If we understand who was taken in Noah's day, it will help us understand who will be taken in v40-41

— So v40 cannot be separated from what was said in v36-39, thus we must import into v40-41 the fact that "taken" = BAD and "left behind" = GOOD, the opposite of the Rapture

— Verse 39 is a reference to the unbelievers who did not enter the ark and consequently were taken away by the Flood. While the unbelievers of Noah's day were taken away in judgment, Noah was preserved from being swept away in judgment thereby allowing him to enter the next dispensation of Human Government.

— Thus, by way of analogy, the man taken from the field and the woman taken from grinding at the mill (v40-41) are unbelievers being taken away into judgment at the Lord's return. While the unbelievers will be taken away in judgment, the believers will be left behind thereby allowing them to enter the next dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom.

— This correlates with other Matthean judgments: Matt 13:30,40-43,47-50; 25:41,46

— The Rapture is an event at the end of the Church Age; what is being described in Matt 24-25 is an event at the end of the Inter-Advent Age. This is why the events do not line up

exactly (Taken = GOOD at Rapture, BAD at Second Coming), because they are describing two different events.

- "...will be taken" - *paralambanō*, to take into close association, take to oneself, take with/along; same word used in v41
- The only place where this word is used to describe the Rapture is in John 14:3, "...I will come again and receive you to Myself." In every other usage in the NT, *paralambanō* is used in taking someone to judgment.
- Those who attempt to force v40-42 into Rapture passages point out the fact that *paralambanō* is used here, as well as in John 14:3, an obvious Rapture passage. However, *paralambanō* is not a technical term, thus it doesn't have the same definition everywhere it is used.
- While it can refer to the Lord taking believers to Himself (John 14:3), it can also refer to a taking away in a negative sense (Matt 4:5,8; 12:45; 27:27; John 19:16). Whenever *paralambanō* is used, its meaning must be determined from its context.
- The reason why Matthew uses two different Greek words for "taken" in consecutive verses is because when God took unbelievers away into judgment in Noah's day (v39), He used an impersonal agency (the flood). However, when He takes the unbelievers away into judgment following His return, He will use a personal agency to do so (angelic beings, Matt 13:39,49).
- This parable is dealing with the survivors of the Tribulation period because those are the ones being taken into judgment (Matt 25:31-46). Being left behind in these parables is a good thing because those are the people who will be ushered into the kingdom to re-populate the earth in their mortal bodies.
- See [Rapture 27 Matt 24-25 - Part 7 \(Matt 24:36-41\)](#) and [Rapture 28 Matt 24-25 - Part 8 \(Matt 24:40-41\)](#) for additional details on this passage, and the reasons and answers to objections on why it doesn't refer to the Rapture.

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

41 Two women will be grinding grain at the mill. One will be taken, and one will be left behind.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

- In the parallel passage in Luke 17:24-37, Christ speaks of the coming of the Son of Man being just like the days of Noah and Lot. In both illustrations, it was the wicked one who was taken in judgment (destroyed).

— Luke 17:34-37 gives three illustrations of the separation of believers from unbelievers, then in v37 the disciples ask Jesus "Where Lord?" (meaning where are the unbelievers taken). Jesus response is, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered

together." Such language clearly supports the notion that the ones taken are removed to judgment.

— The ones taken in v40-41 are the same as the ones taken for the Judgment of the Nations (Matt 25:31-46); they are gathered for judgment.

**42 "Therefore be on the alert,** for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

**42 "Therefore be on the alert,** for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

**42 "So keep on watching,** because you don't know on what day your Lord is coming.

**42 Watch therefore:** for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

- "Therefore" - indicates that this parable is the result of the preceding parable

- "...be on the alert" - stay awake, to be in constant readiness (Cf. Matt 25:13; Mark 13:33-35; Mark 13:37; Luke 21:36; 1 Thess 5:6; Rev 16:15); an admonition related to the Second Coming.

— The context demands that the admonition to "watch" relates immediately to events occurring in the Tribulation. Thus, these Tribulation events are leading up to the Second Coming of Christ, not the Rapture.

— The Church is instructed to "wait", not "watch" since there are no prophetic events to be fulfilled prior to the Rapture. See [Doctrine of Imminence](#).

### **The Faithful Steward (Cf. Luke 12:39-40)**

The point of this parable is that if we know the time and place of when something will occur, then the responsible thing to do would be to take conscientious action in light of the impending event. We are to be faithful to the Lord in service until the time comes.

**43 But be sure of this,** that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the **thief** was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

**43 But be sure of this,** that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

**43 But be sure of this:** if the owner of the house had known when during the night the thief would be coming, he would have stayed awake and not allowed his house to be broken into.

**43 But know this,** that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

- "...thief" - the thief idea in relation to a coming of Christ is used 7x, only in the NT (v43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thess 5:2,4; 2 Peter 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:5)

- The context of “thief” in both this verse and the corresponding passage in Luke 12:39 do not speak of the Rapture; both contexts are of the Second Coming. In fact, none of the “thief” imagery references allude to the Rapture.
- In both passages (here, Luke 12:39), Jesus is referring to the need for the nation of Israel to remain faithful to the Lord and watchful for His return in the midst of the Tribulation, unlike those Jews who were not looking for the coming of the Messiah at His first coming (Cf. Matt 16:1-3).

44 For this reason you **must be ready** as well; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*.

44 For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*.

44 So you, too, must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour you are not expecting.”

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.  
- “...must be ready” - readiness; there are no passages in Scripture where readiness is a command for the believer in relation to the Rapture

— “Being ready” seems to refer primarily to being saved, of being spiritually prepared to meet Christ as Lord and King rather than Judge. Preparation is made when one trusts Jesus as their Messiah.

— Believers in the Church Age are instructed to “wait eagerly” (Rom 8:23,25; 1 Cor 1:7; 1 Cor 4:5; Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 1:10; Jude 21)

— In this context, “you” refers to the Jewish Remnant, as it does throughout the Discourse. He only has in mind believers, because they are the only ones who will be alert (1 Thess 5:6). Unbelievers are never alert to what God is doing.

— Israel was not prepared nor ready (Matt 16:1-3) when Christ came the first time (in spite of the fact they were given the exact day, along with 300+ prophecies and specifications), but the Remnant will be prepared and ready when He arrives the second time.

(C) Slave: faithfully doing master's will (24:45-51) (Cf. Luke 12:42-48)

The emphasis of this parable is the fact that Christ has forewarned His servants concerning end times matters. He had sent prophets and others to warn the nation the Messiah was coming, yet most did not pay attention to these matters because it did not fit into their personal agendas. They were not good stewards, and it had bad consequences. Likewise, there will also be bad consequences allotted when the Master returns and evaluates the faithfulness of his servants who witness the signs. Rewards of higher authority and rule are given to the faithful servant (v46-47; Cf. 25:21,23; Luke 16:10a),

while severe judgment falls upon the derelict servant (v51). Since the parable deals with the Second Coming, the words apply to the Kingdom Age to come.

In order to ensure believers did not misconstrue the previous emphasis on watching as meaning to sit around and look at the sky, Jesus emphasizes the necessity of working while one is waiting.

**45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household slaves, to give them their food at the proper time?**

**45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?**

**45 "Who, then, is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has put in charge of his household to give the others their food at the right time?**

**45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?**

– "...faithful and sensible slave" – Jewish Remnant

– Based on the context of v42-44, a faithful and wise servant is one who sees the time signals on God's prophetic clock and prepares accordingly

– In His first coming, the "faithful and wise servant" (the Pharisees) led the people astray by not knowing much about what their own Scriptures taught about the expected Jewish Messiah

– "...household" – Israel

– "...give them their food" – the responsibility of the faithful and wise servant

– "...proper time" – at the proper time; the emphasis of this verse

– Israel was entrusted with knowing that the time of the Messiah had arrived

**46 Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.**

**46 Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.**

**46 How blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing this when he comes!**

**46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.**

– Doing what? — displaying faithfulness which springs from faith in Christ; the exhortation is to be watchful, prepared, and faithful

– This is an example of how what one thinks about the future impacts their behavior in the present. In contrast to the evil servant in v48, the faithful and wise servant is faithful and watching for the signs of His coming, so that he is ready upon His arrival.

– This servant has a proper future orientation, which drives his behavior in the present

**47 Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.**

**47 Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.**

47 I tell all of you with certainty, he will put him in charge of all his property.

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

- The reward for faithfulness is to be trusted with higher responsibilities (25:21,23; Luke 16:10a). Since the parable deals with the Second Coming, the words apply to higher activities and responsibilities in the age to come.

48 But if that evil slave says in his heart, '**My master** is not coming for a long time;

48 But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,'

48 "But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master has been delayed,'

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

- "...My master" - because of the possessive used here, some conclude that this slave is really a believer (saved), but is disobedient. However, this interpretation must be examined in light of the larger context (see notes on v51).

— Part of Jesus' concern is for those headed to destruction for not having believed in Him. For example, v37-39 discuss those who were not prepared for Noah's flood. So it should surprise no one that the following parables would be concerned for those who had not yet turned to Christ as well as for believers.

— However, this does not prove that the "evil slave" is an unbeliever, but having an unbeliever in the story would not be out of place in the Olivet Discourse

— So although the evil slave spoke of the master as "My master," this should not be taken to mean he possessed eternal life. This is parable, not an allegory, so most of the details are there for scenery for the story. In this parable, the slave obviously belongs to the master, but nothing more should be read into it.

— A parallel situation is found in the parable of the two sons working in the vineyard (Matt 21:28-32). This parable contrasts the Jewish religious leaders who rejected Jesus with the seemingly unworthy tax collectors and prostitutes who believed, though both had the role of "sons" in the parable.

— The relationship role they have in the parable does not automatically translate into an analogous role in reality. The Jewish religious leaders were not sons of God (John 1:11-12), and neither is the evil slave in Matt 24:48.

— This conclusion is supported by:

1. The general context of Matt 24, which mentions unbelievers who are unprepared for Christ's return
2. Terms like "cut in pieces," "hypocrites," and a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth," which beg to be understood as the destiny of one who has never believed upon Christ.

- Christ is warning that if people are unfaithful to the stewardship entrusted to them and if they ignore the signs of the return of the Lord, they will be kept from the kingdom to be

established at his coming.

- The evil servant does not understand the importance of his continued faithfulness and obedience, since he believes the time for his accountability is far in the future
- The difference in behavior and faithfulness of the two servants is based upon their view of the future

49 and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and he eats and drinks with those habitually drunk;

49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards;

49 and begins to beat his fellow servants and eat and drink with the drunks,

49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 *then* the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect, and at an hour that he does not know,

50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him* and at an hour which he does not know,

50 that servant's master will come on a day when he doesn't expect him and at an hour that he doesn't know.

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 and he **will cut him in two** and **assign him a place with the hypocrites**; in that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.

51 and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 Then his master will punish him severely and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

— "...will cut him in two" - *dichotomeo*, "shall cut him in pieces"; likely a figurative expression denoting to "cut him off"; a reference to the most severe form of Hebrew punishment. However, it's clear that after being "cut asunder," the victim remains alive.

— The word is associated with covenantal unfaithfulness, which would be the case of those within Israel who did not properly dispense their stewardship

— The only other usage in the NT is the parallel passage in Luke 12:46

— Elsewhere **διχοτομέω** is used literally of cutting a ram into pieces as part of the priestly ordination ceremony (Ex 29:17, LXX). Solomon pronounced judgment for the two women

who both claimed to be the mother of a baby (Cf. 1 Kings 3:16-28). To determine the real mother, Solomon ordered the baby "cut in two" (**διχοτομέω**).

— From the limited data we have, then, relevant options for **διχοτομέω** in the context of Matt 24:51 would be a literal cutting in two of a person or a metaphorical expression of severe punishment. But the guilty one is not literally cut in pieces, because he lives on in the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. So this word here then means "punishment," but certainly connotes more than mere verbal rebuke or mild chastisement.

— Loss of reward is one thing, but severe punishment as suggested by **διχοτομέω** is another (Cf. John 5:24). Based on this, the word is quite inappropriate for describing a believer in Christ, even one who might have been thoroughly disobedient and unfaithful.

— "...assign him a place with" - to be placed with the hypocrites is to receive their punishment

— This use of this term in this context points to the evil slave being an unbeliever. In the parallel account (Luke 12:41-48), the evil slave is assigned a place, not with the "hypocrites" but with "the unbelievers."

— "...hypocrites" - used 17x in the NT, all of which were spoken by Jesus; all but two occurrences (Matt 7:5; Luke 6:42) are used as strong rebukes against the Jewish religious leaders (Cf. Matt 23:13).

— "...weeping and gnashing of teeth" - the response of the hypocrite while experiencing judgment. Denotes bitter anger for having been an unwise steward.