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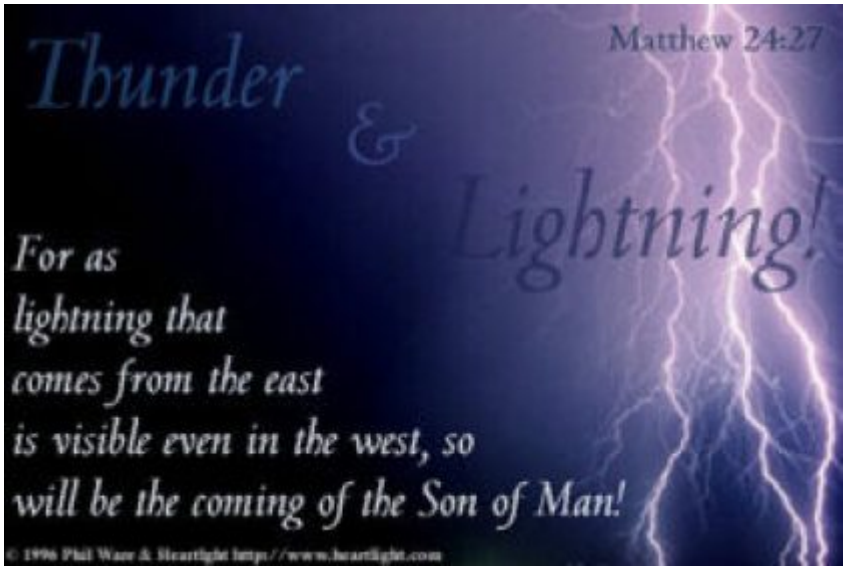
Key Truths That Help You Understand Matthew 24



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #368 ~

Dr. David Jeremiah, a pastor / teacher who has extensively studied the subject of eschatology, said this, *"Matthew 24 and 25 offer the broadest, most comprehensive prophetic truths regarding the end of the world… The Olivet Discourse is one of the most complete outlines of prophecy in all of Scripture. Jesus put all this information together so that we could see and understand the times."* (Signs of the Second Coming – pages 11, 23). I completely agree with Dr. Jeremiah! Without question, Matt. 24 is an extremely important chapter on end-times' prophecy, which is why I just completed a nine-part series on it! To help you understand it more fully, I will restate and expand on its key truths.

1. **A Literal Interpretation –**When you read Matt. 24, you must take it literally, at face value, in its normal, natural, customary sense.

You see, Matt. 24 is for the average, everyday Christian, not just for *"scholars"*. Yes, some parts may be hard to comprehend, but the overall meaning is plain and simple, clear and obvious – it's understandable. *"Let the reader understand."*Matt. 24:15c

2. **The Two Questions –**Jesus' disciples ask Him two important questions: *"What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"*(Matt. 24:3). In Matt. 24:4-28, Jesus shares all these things that must occur before His coming and then, in vss. 29-30, answers these two questions. And He gives us all this advance notice because He wants us to be ready, excited, and looking forward to His coming.

3. **Daniel's 70th week:**This 70th week is a 7-year period, a critical time during which many prophesied events take place. *"He* (Antichrist) *will make a firm covenant with the many* (Israel) *for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering… one who makes desolate"* (Dan. 9:27). At the start of Dan. 70th week, the one who will soon be known as the *"Antichrist"* confirms a treaty with Israel. *"In the middle of the week"*, the Antichrist is revealed. This devilish man shows his true colors by desolating the temple (Matt. 24:15, 2 Th. 2:4), and then persecuting Jews and Christians (Matt. 24:9, 21-22). Since the Antichrist is revealed at the midpoint, the 3½ year mark, and since Christ's coming is after the Antichrist's coming (2 Th. 2:8-9), then we can conclude that the rapture, the first event at Christ's coming, occurs after this midpoint, sometime during the last half of this week. At the 7-year mark, the end of this week, a remnant of Jews is saved. Dan. 9:24, Rom. 11:25-27

4. **Beginning Birth Pains –** The beginning birth pains are comprised of wars, famines, earthquakes, and plagues. *"Those things must take place, but that is not yet the end*(of the age)*"*(vs. 6), meaning that these birth pains are not telling us that the end of the age is imminent, that Christ is coming right away. We learn that these wars, famines, etc. occur in various places and are being heard about (vss. 6-7), signifying to us that most people in the world do

not experience them (Rev. 6:8). It must also be noted that these beginning birth pains are not the Day-of-the-Lord wrath or any part of it. Rev. 6:1-8, 16-17

5. **Great Tribulation –**The ending birth pain is great tribulation. *"They will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of Me."*(Matt. 24:9). All over the earth, the elect is being persecuted and killed (vss. 9-10, Rev. 6:9-11). This tribulation is also called Satan's wrath (Rev. 12:10), for it's instigated by the Antichrist, Satan's man on earth. It begins in Jerusalem at the midpoint of Dan. 70th week, being directed at Jews, but then spreads to Christians (Rev. 12:16-17). This persecution is cut short by God, at which time this age ends and Christ comes back to gather the believers to Himself, those on earth, and those who have gone to heaven. Vss. 29-31, 2 Thess. 2:1

6. **The End of the Age –**We live in an evil age controlled by the devil (Gal. 1:4, 1 Jn. 5:19). This age ends after the events prophesied in Matt. 24:4-26 take place. Vs. 13 informs us that *"the one who endures to the end*(of the age), *he will be saved"*, that is, physically saved, raptured. Vs. 14 says that *"the end* (of the age) *will come"* after the gospel is preached in the whole world. The sign of the end of the age are cosmic disturbances, which result in the world going dark (vs. 29). Vss. 22, 29 say that this age ends immediately after great tribulation is cut short, which is sometime during the 2nd half of Dan. 70th week. So it's at the end of this age that Christ returns to rapture the church. Vss. 29-31

7. **The Coming of Christ –** Christ's coming is the primary theme of Matt. 24. *"Just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be"*(vs. 27). The word coming is a noun, and it's singular. There's only one coming of Christ, and it begins just after the end of this age (vss. 29-31). This word means arrival and ongoing presence. And it's at His coming that we see Christ clearly carrying out His plans on earth (Rev. 11:15). Again, His coming takes place after the

Antichrist's coming (2 Th. 2:8-9), sometime during the 2nd half of Dan. 70th week. The initial event to occur at Christ's coming is the rapture, the gathering of all believers to Himself. 1 Thess. 4:15, 17

8. **The Rapture –**Christians usually focus on the rapture, but this word describes only one aspect of what happens when Christ returns for the believers on earth. Matt. 24 speaks of it in three ways: 1) Believers on earth at the end of this age are saved, are physically delivered and glorified (vs. 13). 2) Angels will *"gather togetherHis elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to another"* (vss. 30-31). 3) Believers on earth are taken to be with Jesus, but unbelievers are left behind (vss. 40-41). Many other words are used to communicate what takes place when believers are raptured: made alive, transform, redeem, change, relief, rescue, etc., and we will talk about these at another time.

9. **Deception and Lies –**The devil continually lies about the truths of Christ's coming and, nowadays, many Christians naively believe these lies. So three different times, Jesus warns you about false teachers misleading people with regards to these truths. *"See to it that no one misleads you"* (Matt. 24:4, 11, 23-25; 2 Th. 2:3). Jesus does not want you to be deceived or misled, but to know the truth, and to be on the lookout for the devil's deception, for his lies and misinformation. It's paramount that pastors carefully study eschatology, especially in these end-times, and get it right, and to their church, refute the lies and teach the truth. 2 Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17, 4:1-2

10. **The Timing of the Rapture –** Why would Jesus give us all this information (Matt. 24:4-26) about what needs to happen before His coming if it was imminent, if no prophesied events needed to occur before the rapture, if it could happen today or tomorrow or, as many pre-tribulation advocates say, before vss. 4-26, before beginning birth pains and great tribulation? God gave us all this information because He wants us to know the season. *"So, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door"*(vs. 33). Of course, we don't know the specific time of His

coming, *"the day or hour"*(vs. 36). But we can know the general time, we can *"see the day drawing nearer"* (Heb. 10:25). The generation of believers who see all these things take place will know what to expect, will have hope, will be encouraged, and will be thrilled that they will soon see Jesus. Lk. 21:28

11. **All the Signs –** *"Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place"*(Matt. 24:34). Twenty-two different events or series of events must happen before the rapture of the church (Vss. 4-28). God told us all these things in advance because He wants us to know these things, to have hope, and to be telling our children and our church. There is a specific and special generation of Christians who will see all these things, and He does not want them to be surprised, to be caught off guard; He wants them to be alert, and to be watchmen, to be looking for all these things to happen. I call this the last generation, and I believe it's the next generation, or the one after that. O *"that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born."*Ps. 78:6

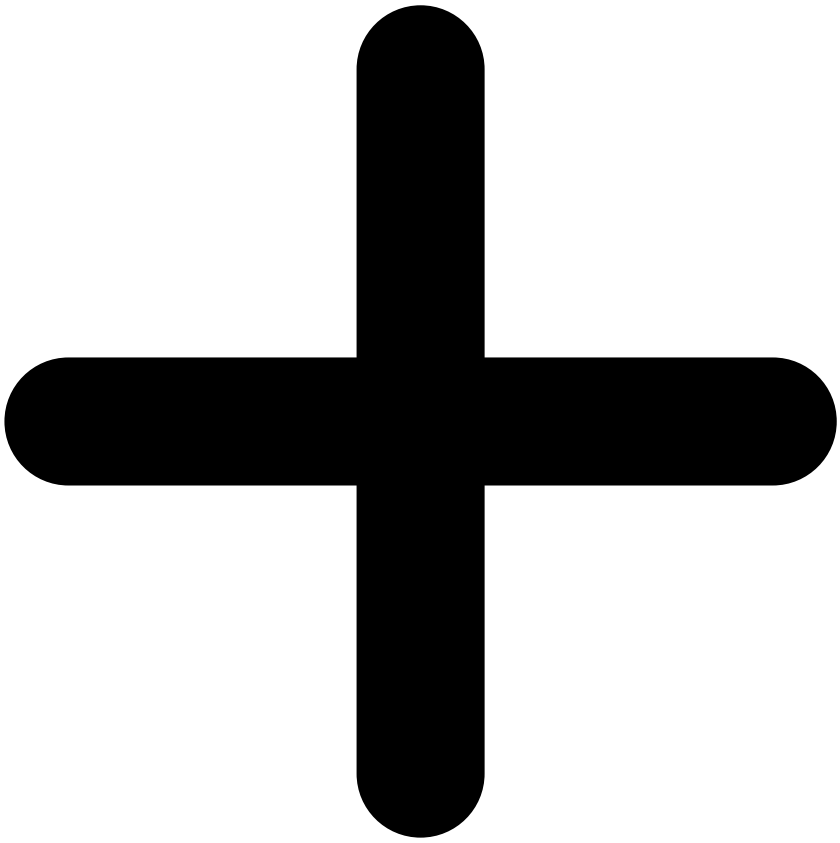
12. **Living for Christ –** How are we to live for Christ in these days? God tells us several things in the New Testament, but I want to focus on Matt. 24. **1)**Get your *"PhD"*in Matt. 24. Carefully study it so you fully and clearly understand what will be taking place before Christ's coming. **2)** Do not be fooled by the lies of the devil (vs. 4). **3)** Do not be afraid – *"See that you are not frightened"* (vs. 6). **4)** Be holy, and be loving people, both saved and lost. *"… lawlessness is increased…"* (vs. 12). **5)** By God's grace, endure, persevere to the end (vs. 13). **6)** Preach the *"gospel of the kingdom"* (vs. 15). **7)** Be alert, be ready (vss. 42-44). **8)** Serve the Lord, be using your gift – be a *"faithful and sensible slave"* (vs. 44).

Let me conclude with a statement that summarizes Matthew 24 and the coming of Jesus Christ. <u>In the end-times, there will be beginning birth pains in various places around the world, after which time the Antichrist, at the midpoint, the 3½ year mark of Dan. 70th week, desolates the temple in Jerusalem, at which point, he persecutes</u>

Jews and then Christians. This great tribulation affects the elect, but it's cut short, does not last the entire 2nd half of Dan. 70th week and then, at an unknown time, the skies suddenly go dark and this age comes to an end, at which time, the skies suddenly light up and Christ is seen coming on the clouds, and at the blast of a great trumpet, He sends forth His angels and they gather together all believers from all time and bring them to Himself.

"For this we say by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

P.S. I am thankful that you are reading this particular post, for it summarizes key truths about one of the most important chapters in the Bible, and what you and all believers need to understand at this time in history. The most read article on this website is *"Matthew 24 – the Most Important Prophecy Chapter in the Bible."* Read it when you get time!





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