



Lesson One: Matthew 24 and 25

JESUS TELLS OF TRIBULATIONS

The end is near. I don't say that with a smile. We have watched as Jesus has journeyed step by step through the land of Israel preaching His message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His final messages were preached in Jerusalem, in the courts of the temple, the house of the Lord.



Pray that you will believe that all Scripture is useful
for teaching and training in righteousness.



According to Matthew 23:37-39:

How does Jesus express His compassion for the city?

How does Jesus express the clash of His will with that of the city?

What will happen to the house of the Lord?

What is the bittersweet promise?

Jesus' compassion is palpable. Other touching biblical laments pale in comparison with this one. Jesus is deeply moved for His people and for His city despite the ongoing opposition of its leaders and the horrible sufferings that are still ahead. Christians today must ponder Jesus' compassion for His people and reflect on their own level of concern for Jews. An arrogant attitude toward non-Christians is always inappropriate, but it is especially despicable when it concerns the Jewish people.¹³¹

How do you feel and how do you act toward Jewish people today?

Jesus makes more comments that prompt questions from the disciples. They are still trying to sort things out. What is going on? What's going to happen? When is it going to happen?

Please read Matthew 24:1-3.

Where is Jesus when the disciples come to Him?

What are their specific questions?

This is the introduction to the fifth and final sermon that Jesus gives. Matthew 24 and 25 contain the sermon called the Mount Olivet Discourse. Now you know why!

Buckle your seat belts. There's a lot of turbulence ahead.

You shouldn't be surprised at your first assignment. I want you to see the sermon in its entirety. This will be the main part of your lesson. **Please read Matthew 24 and 25.** (You don't have to understand everything you read!)

Now, please briefly describe the topic covered in each of the following passages of the sermon. Keep it simple.

Matthew 24:4-14

Matthew 24:15-28

Matthew 24:29-36

Matthew 24:37-44

Matthew 24:45-51

Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 25:14-30

Matthew 25:31-46

There are many specific details mentioned in this prophetic sermon. But there are also several general lessons to be learned. Alertness, trustworthiness, fruitfulness, service and compassion are to characterize followers of Jesus, especially in the end-times. We'll consider these after we contemplate the events described.

The first three passages above are Jesus' response to the disciples' question: "what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" There is no mention of rapture in these verses. The disciples were expecting Jesus to come and rule as King, so now they were asking when He would return (after His death) and reign. Jesus describes what will happen before He returns to earth as King of Kings to reign over His kingdom.

Warren Wiersbe points out the parallels between Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24 and John's prophecy in Revelation 6.

Note what the verses say in the chart below.

Matthew 24	Events	Revelation 6
v.4-5	False Christs	v.1-2
v.6	Wars	v.3-4
v.7a	Famines	v.5-6
v.7b-8	Death	v.7-8
v.9	Martyrs	v.9-11
v.10-13	Worldwide chaos	v.12-17

What are the responses that Jesus wants His followers to have during these times, based on Matthew 24:4, 6, 13, 14?

Matthew 24:14 introduces the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom throughout the whole world, and this may well be where Revelation 7 fits in. God may use the sealed 144,000 Jews to share His word with the world, resulting in the salvation of multitudes.¹³²

Based on my understanding of Scripture, the events described above will not take place until after the church has been raptured. Rapture is imminent. It could come at any time. If it doesn't happen before the next lesson, we'll look at the verses that cause us to anticipate it!



Lesson Two: Matthew 24:15-35

JESUS ANNOUNCES AN ABOMINATION

Still here? Let's look at what we're anticipating to happen at anytime.



Ask the Lord to give you His perspective
as you study about the future.



Note the events that occur in the following verses:

1 Corinthians 15:52

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

Whenever someone mentions the Rapture, another is certain to point out that the word *rapture* never occurs in the Bible. While this is true, the concept of the Rapture is clearly present. The words “caught up” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 translate from a Greek word (*harpazo*) that means “to snatch, to seize suddenly, or to transport from one place to another.” It is also used of rescuing someone from a threatening danger (Acts 23:10, Jude 1:23). The translation of this Greek word into Latin is *rapturo*. That’s where we get the English word *rapture* to describe this future event of being caught up to meet Jesus Christ in the clouds. ¹³³

I spent a weekend in a seminary class taught by Dr. Charles Ryrie. Yes! The one who “wrote” the Ryrie Study Bible. He was passionate about prophecy and that’s what our class was about. The final exam included this question: “What do you think is the strongest argument for pre-tribulational rapture?” That means – rapture occurring before the seven years of the Tribulation. My answer to that question (for which I received a check of approval!) was based on Revelation 3:10.

What does Revelation 3:10 say?

The “hour of testing” relates to Daniel 9:24 and 12:1 which describes a time of testing for the Jews which we call the Tribulation. Revelation 3 was written to the Philadelphian church, which means it was written to Christians, and they were told that they would be kept from the time of testing. Where is there no time? In heaven!

Rapture is the sudden descent of Jesus in the clouds and the calling up to heaven all who have believed in Him for salvation up to that point in time. Those who are “asleep” (dead) will be resurrected first and those who are alive will be caught up in the air where Jesus is. In the blink of an eye, all will be changed from tainted, decaying, mortal bodies to glorified, perfected, sanctified, eternal beings. I can’t wait! Dr. Ryrie is in the presence of the Lord now, but I look forward to seeing him again in the air if rapture happens before I die!

Based on this description of rapture and the description of events of the end-times from Matthew 24:4-14 in your chart, please make a simple timeline of things to come.

Look back at the responses Jesus told His disciples to have. You noted them above. If those are appropriate in the very worst of times, aren't they appropriate right now? Which, if any, do you need to apply to your current experiences?

Are you ready to look closely at the things that are yet to come? We've had an overview of Jesus' final sermon and we've seen the general description of the time before His return. Now we will study the more detailed description of future events that He gives us. Bad news first. Then good news. Then... just be ready!

Please read Matthew 24:15-28.

What did Daniel speak of? What are Jesus' followers to watch for?

What are they to do when they see it? How did Jesus emphasize the urgency of the situation?

Matthew 24:21 indicates a new situation. "For then" ...what?

And disciples are not to believe it when they hear... what?

This passage in Matthew is a description of the Antichrist putting himself on the "throne" and ruling with evil intent against God's people, both the Jews and Jesus' disciples of that day.

Matthew 24:15 is a direct quote of Daniel 9:27. The "code" in Daniel is that one day equals one year. So one week equals 7 years. Based on that timing, what does Daniel 9:27 tell you about the Antichrist and his rule?

What does 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 9-12 tell you about the Antichrist and his rule?

What does Revelation 13:11-18 tell you about the Antichrist and his rule?

There are no words to describe how horrible this time will be. It is called the "great tribulation." The Antichrist will oppress the world more than any previous evil world ruler ever has. Nebuchadnezzar, Attila the Hun, and Adolf Hitler will seem like nice guys compared to him.

But there is good news!

When does Matthew 24:29 say that things will change?

Very specific occurrences are stated in verses 29-31. Please list them.

There is nothing more clearly stated in the Bible than the fact that Jesus Christ is coming again. The second coming of Christ to this earth – His visible, literal, physical, glorious return – is explicitly referred to 1,845 times in the Bible. It is mentioned in twenty-three of the twenty-seven New Testament books. Christ Himself refers to His return twenty-one times in Scripture. ¹³⁴

He's coming back! Just like He said He would! When? Matthew 24:29 tells us. How? Matthew 24:30 tells us. Where? (Hint: Matthew 24 and 25 are spoken there.)

What does Acts 1:9-13 tell you about Jesus' return?

What does Zechariah 14:4 tell you about His return?

What does Zechariah 12:10-11 tell you about His return (compare this to Matthew 24:30)?

I'd like to draw attention to Matthew 24:27-28 now. "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together." The first sentence tells us that Jesus' return will be visible to all, rather than some secret appearance to a select few. And the mention of lightening indicates a sudden, striking, powerful approach. Then there's the strange mention of birds circling over dead meat. But the imagery in both of these statements coordinates perfectly with the awesome description of the triumphant return of Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords found in the book of the Revelation.

Please read Revelation 19:11-21.

What are you most anticipating about the Second Coming of Christ?