

The Gospel According to  
Matthew

Lesson #28 – Ch. 24

**The Temple to be destroyed – Matthew 24:1-2**

**The disciples ask Jesus two questions – Matthew 24:3**

**The Tribulation – Matthew 24:4-26**

**The Second Coming – Matthew 24:27-31**

**The parable of the fig tree – Matthew 24:32-35**

**Illustration of the days of Noah – Matthew 24:36-44**

**Illustration of the two servants – Matthew 24:45-51**

King David penned many Psalms. They are rich with highs and lows – great expressions of praise and worship. I want to take excerpts from a few of them for our beginning prayer this week. Would you pray with me?

“Oh how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You. Lord, You have already blessed my life with an abundance of goodness and Your Word says You have laid up continuing goodness for me as I live my life in reverence to You! Thank you for all the blessings You have allowed to flow into my life. I acknowledge that they are from Your hand. Everything I own is from You. Keep my heart content with Your provision in my life.”

“You are also my hiding place. I am so grateful that when my life gets stressful, I have You to run to for safety and rest. You are my strong tower. I can hide myself in You. You shall preserve me from trouble. You preserve my life and fight for me in the spiritual battle that rages which I cannot see. You surround me with songs of deliverance. You instruct me and teach me in the way I should go. You guide me with Your eye. What a wonderful truth to embrace, knowing that the eye of the eternal God that sees *all* things - guards my every move.”

“You Oh Lord look from heaven and see all the sons of men. From the place of Your habitation, You look and see all at once, the inhabitants of earth. Not one of us is ever out of Your sight. You fashion each heart and consider all our works. Lord, as You look down upon me from heaven, may you find a faithful servant, one who is mindful of You every day, one who worships you with my attitudes, thoughts and actions.”

“May my soul pant for You, O God, may my soul be thirsty for the living God, more than anything the world offers me. You say, whoever offers praise glorifies Me, and to him who orders his conduct aright, I will show the salvation of God. I offer You praise now, help me order my conduct aright.... in Jesus sweet name – Amen.”

*Take just a few minutes to lift praises up to Him with your words. Thank Him for His constant watchful eye over your life.*

**The temple to be destroyed – Matthew 24:1-2**

(Mark 13:1, 2; Luke 21:5, 6)

### Would you please read the first two verses of Matthew Ch.24?

Jesus goes out of the temple and His disciples come to Him to admire with Him the beautiful temple of God. The temple at that time was *gorgeous*. It was adorned with huge beautiful stones. According to the Babylonian Talmud, some of the stones were as large as 40'x12x12 and weighed as much as 100 tons each! Can you imagine single stones that large? Have you ever tried to move a rock larger than a bail of hay? It's almost impossible without a backhoe, I don't know how they moved them without the equipment that we have today, let alone put them one on top of the other. It was a masterpiece.

The temple was hands down the most beautiful building in Jerusalem. Everyone admired and revered it as the place that God inhabited. As they were admiring the handy work of the temple, Jesus spoke to His disciples and told them that one day soon, this temple in all its grandeur would be torn down and not one stone would be left in tact.

They just couldn't imagine anything being able to destroy such a fortified building, and they couldn't imagine why the Lord would allow anything like that to happen to the divine house of God.

Less than 40 years later it happened. The Romans came in and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD. The temple was demolished and Jerusalem with it. It was said that the temple was so devastated that it looked as if no one had ever inhabited it.

This statement Jesus made predicting the destruction of the temple sparked some immediate questions from the disciples.

1. What were the two questions the disciples asked Jesus? Matt. 24:3

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Which of the disciples was Jesus talking with? Mark 13:3

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Jesus often spent time alone with these special four.

The first question that the disciples asked was, "When will the temple be destroyed?" Matthew didn't answer that question; he went right into the signs of the tribulation. Luke on the other hand records Jesus' answer for us. What was Jesus' answer to the disciples? Luke 21:20-24

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We already mentioned that the temple was destroyed just a short time after the crucifixion and resurrection in 70 AD.

The second question the disciples asked was, "What will the signs be of Your coming?"

Jesus answers the disciples by describing the sorrows of the great tribulation. The tribulation will take place before the second coming of Christ, and that is when He will

return to set up His kingdom here on earth. The great tribulation will last for seven terrible years and will occur *after* all believers have been raptured unto heaven. Jesus says in Revelation 3:10 – “Because you have kept My commandments to persevere, I will also keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.” Believers will escape this judgment. The Lord will remove His elect from the earth during this time. Everyone who has claimed Him as Lord will be ushered out of this world and will not have to endure such great testing. Then God will unfold His plan for the nation of Israel and for those who have rejected Him. He will allow these seven years of testing as His divine plan to try changing the hearts of the rebellious, so that He can bring the nation of Israel to blessing once again that He had promised through His covenants to His beloved nation.

Many will continue to reject Him as the Messiah. Even though they are enduring great times of distress, they will bow their necks not turn their hearts to God. Not everyone will continue to reject Christ; some will begin once again to call on the name of the Lord after seeing the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled. There will be 144,000 Jews during this tribulation period that will come to Christ and be a major factor in evangelizing the world for Him.

### **Go on further and read Matthew 24:4-26**

As you do, list all the signs of the coming tribulation that you can find on the space below. (Remember, if you are a believer today, you will be rescued in the rapture of the church, these sorrowful times will be endured by those that are living during that time and have been left on earth after the believers have been raptured and are with the Lord.)

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We will begin to go over each one of these signs and pull truths out of scripture to give us an understanding of *what* must take place in the tribulation before Jesus Christ can return in all His glory and set up His Millennium Kingdom.

I, like the Disciples, ask the Lord *what* and *when* questions often. I’m glad to see in Scripture when the disciples asked the same questions, He was not annoyed. He loved to give them truth, just like He loves to impart truth to you and I.

This lesson will include facts written in scripture, plainly describing the tribulation, but I will also include some speculation that will come from other men’s thoughts and opinions that are much more knowledgeable in interpreting scripture than I am. There are many views on various parts the tribulation. Scholars and commentators all share their own opinions from everything from when the rapture of the church fits in to

the biblical time line of the tribulation, to what the seven seals of Revelation represent. Some of the details of the tribulation we can't be sure of, like - Does Christ rapture the church right before the tribulation begins, or shortly after, and because scripture simply doesn't say specifically, we really don't know. It does state in Rev. 3:10 that He will keep us from that hour of trial. I will try to state the truth in scripture when it's there, and remind you of other points that are just speculation from other knowledgeable men when I quote them.

The tribulation was prophesied by Daniel in the Old Testament. It was part of the plan of God and recognized by the prophets way back then. God gave the prophet Daniel a vision through Gabriel about the future time of the tribulation.

I understand that for some, this kind of study can be dry, but let's pray that the Lord would make it interesting to us and towards the end of the lesson we will try and pull some truths out of this that can be of practical help for us today. One thing this study will prove is how trustworthy God's Word is. Every prophecy so far in scripture has been fulfilled and is continuing even today. This timeline in Daniel will reinforce the fact that God is true to His Word and we are living out prophecy even today. Watch and see His promises being fulfilled as we head toward the end times.

**I want you to please read through David's vision with me. You will find it in Daniel 9:20-27. If you are simple minded like me, this won't be easy to understand. So I will do the best I can to make it more understandable for you. We can learn together!**

2. Read through Daniel's vision in Daniel 9:20-27. This section of scripture is called "Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy". Through this prophecy received by the prophet Daniel, we can find a general starting time for the "end times" and a general ending time, but we still don't know the *exact time* the tribulation will begin and when Christ will once again return. We can only watch for the signs given in scripture.

a. Who was this prophecy written to? Daniel 10:14

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This prophecy wasn't concerned with world history or church history, but with the history of Israel. It was written to the Jews.

People today think in terms of units of ten – decades. People then thought in terms of sevens – heptads. Some examples would be, every seventh year was a Sabbath year, or seven days made a week. This prophecy in Daniel Ch.9, talks about a time of 70 weeks (v.24), 62 weeks (v.26) and then ending with a 1 week period (v.27).

The period consisted of 70 sevens, which would be 490 years. By the time 490 years are completed that are described in this prophecy, God will have completed 6 things for Israel.

3. There are 6 things that Daniel states that God will do during these 490 years. Can you list all six and then we will discuss them. Daniel 9:24

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The first three have to do with sin, and the second three have to do with His kingdom. God loves Israel so much and is still working to restore them to Himself. His will is that no man should perish.

We will study these a little further, because I want you to see how they tie into the signs of the tribulation described in Matthew Ch.24.

At the end of the 490 years, God will “finish the transgression”, which means put an end to the sins of Israel. He will “make an end of sins”; Israel’s sins which had gone unpunished would be punished in Jesus on the cross. He would “make reconciliation for iniquity”; He will make atonement for the sins of Israel and then He speaks of three things He will do for the kingdom. He will bring an “everlasting righteousness”; meaning God will establish an age characterized by righteousness (referring to the Millennial Kingdom). He will also “seal up vision and prophecy”; which means all God’s promises to Israel from the beginning of time would be fulfilled and realized in the Millennial Kingdom.

Until prophecies are fulfilled – they are considered unsealed.

And lastly, He will anoint the Most Holy; this may refer to the dedication of the new rebuilt temple – the Millennial Temple (described in Ezra 41-46) which the Jews adore, or it may refer to Christ Himself. According to Daniel’s Prophecy, all of this would happen in a 490 year period before the Messiah would return to establish His eternal kingdom of righteousness.

This 490 year period is divided into three segments;

7 (sevens) = 49 years -

62 (sevens) = 434 years

1 (seven) = 7 year

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Total = 490 years

In the first 49 years – 445 B.C. – 396 B.C.; would begin with the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. This was done by King Artaxerxes in 445 B.C. (Neh.2:5-6)  
\*(This has already taken place)

In the next 434 years – 396B.C. – 32 A.D.; would be the time of the dedication of the temple to the death of Christ.

\*(This has already taken place)

(The 7 Year Tribulation) this last seven years will begin when Israel makes a covenant the Anti-Christ thinking he would be their deliverer.

\*(Something to be fulfilled in the future)

483 years of the prophecy have already been fulfilled. Seven years are left to be fulfilled. We are not told when the last part of the prophecy will begin, but we can ascertain by the signs of the times, that the time is near when the church will be taken out and the 7 year tribulation will begin. The last week of seven will begin to unfold.

4. Isn't it amazing how true to His Word God is? He doesn't make any mistakes. He doesn't wait too long to usher in His will, He isn't so slow so as to miss something, He doesn't forget to do what He promised He would do. He's amazing! Like the prophecies completed for Israel – even if it takes 490 years – He will fulfill His promise. He is a God of intimate detail.

Are there some little details in your life that you have asked God to do for you? (I'm praying it won't take Him 490 years for you! Ha) In the scope of things your worries might seem trivial or small in comparison with problems other's face like cancer or death of a loved one etc. but if they are a deep concern to you, they are a deep concern to God. Do you realize that God is *extremely interested in the details of your life*? Nothing is too small to bring to Him. Nothing is too trite. The God of heaven is completely able to run the Universe and be intimate with your personal life at the same time. He will accomplish what concerns you!

This is one of my favorite scriptures to hold on to when I am prone to worry.

Write it out here – you might want to memorize it this week.

Psalm 138:8

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The word “perfect” means complete. He will complete that which He has started. He will accomplish His will in your life, in your kid's life, in your husband's life etc. He will finish His work and nothing can stop Him. He is a God of order. He builds things in a progressive sequence and His work stands.

***Say it out-loud with some enthusiasm! “He will accomplish what concerns me!”***

He will likewise finish the work of “Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy” and it will end with the tribulation which will at its completion, begin the reign of Christ in the Millennial Kingdom here on earth. His work will one day be complete!

#### **Return to Matthew Ch.24**

The beginning of the tribulation is known as the beginning of the “birth pangs” (v.8) it is also known as the “70<sup>th</sup>” week of Daniel.

Religious deception will be a part the first phase of the tribulation. (V.4-5) This is nothing new that we haven't experienced, but this will be different, this deception will sweep across the nations stumbling millions like something we have never seen before.

Desperate Messiahs will arise promising to deliver men from their problems and then the Anti- Christ will rise up and be the ultimate deceiver during that time. He will set himself up as the ultimate deliverer.

5. "Many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Christ, and will deceive many." (v.5) This comes to the Jews as a warning from Jesus. Jesus knew that in the future the anti-Christ would arise and deceive most Jews. The anti-Christ will be evil incarnate. He promised Israel help and peace for their nation, but he will then place himself in the center of the temple as God, and demand worship from the Jews. They will suffer betrayal by the one they trusted. The Anti-Christ will become the object of disgust as he will not allow any more sacrifice or worship to Jehovah to go on in the temple in Jerusalem. Instead he will demand worship of himself. This period of time is called "The Abomination of Desolation". (Matt. 24:15) Let's look into what the bible has to tell us about the Anti-Christ.

a. What description words can you pull out of these scriptures that describe the evilness of the Anti-Christ?

Daniel 8:23-26

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b. Daniel 11:36-38

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The anti-Christ will set himself up as God and be the destroyer of the mighty and the God-fearing people.

6. In the tribulation, nations will experience great violent wars, wars like we have never seen before. We have seen just in the last few years, how we fight a war has taken a turn. We now worry about nuclear bombs on American soil, car bombs ignited by suicide bombers and the threat of a biological attack. Fighting a war isn't the same as it was a few hundred years ago. Knowing all these things, it doesn't seem impossible for there to be a world-wide war one day. During the tribulation the influence of the church will be gone. The Holy Spirit will remove Himself for a time. Can you imagine how evil it will be without the influence of godly people?

I want to share with you some possibilities of the wars that may occur. Some of this is designated in scripture, but some is man's speculation.

The Kingdom of the Anti-Christ will be the territory once held by the ancient Roman Empire. It will be a 10 nation empire. (Dan.7:23-24) Could this represent the European Common Market that we know today? Some seem to think so.

We know that the King of the South will battle with the Anti-Christ (Dan.11:40) and the King of the North will storm against him. The Anti-Christ will overthrow them. Jews will flee, seeking refuge from various gentile nations. The Anti-Christ will not conquer Edom, Moab and Ammon (Dan.11:41) which is present day Jordan, but the battle will be fierce.

Here are the end-time players:

The King of the South = Africa or the Arab nations in the Sinai area (Dan.11:5-35)

The King of the North = Russia or Gog – Magog in the bible.

The King of the East = Possibly Asia (v.44)

These nations will battle and a third of the world's population will be annihilated.

7. Turn to Revelation 9:14-15 and read of this end time battle. What was the number of the soldiers in one of the armies in the fight? Rev. 9:16 \_\_\_\_\_

It's interesting to note that the Chinese Mainland Army is rapidly increasing its numbers. Could this be the nation scripture is talking about in this battle? We can't be sure, but we will see.

8. The third sign mentioned of the tribulation is world-wide devastation. (Matt. 24:7) What three signs will we see according to v.7?  
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There will be earthquakes of world-wide magnitude and diseases like we have never seen before. Isn't it interesting that we are currently on the threshold of battling diseases that have the potential to wipe out *millions*, like the bird flu and mad cow disease? It's not hard to imagine a disease like one of these eventually taking hold and killing thousands of people at a time. Those living in this time will see the world falling apart.

9. What does Matthew 24:8 tell us about all these sorrows the world will have to endure as part of God's judgment? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Aren't you glad that you are part of the redeemed? As I read End Time Prophecy – it just give s me a renewed gratitude that I am a child of God, protected from all these horrible judgments. You will never know what it's like to see God's judgment because you have the blood of Jesus covering your sin. That atonement made you in right standing with God. You will never see His face of disappointment. Worship Him right at this moment for that!



You have been *excused* from all those sorrows you have just read about, and you and I deserved to be a part of the judgement because of the sins we have committed, but because of the grace of God, we were excused!! That's enough to make us SHOUT Hallelujah!!!

11. What will be the fourth sign of the tribulation? Matt. 24:9

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At this time severe persecution of believers will be experienced by the world. Believers will be HATED by ALL nations! Isn't it getting that way today?

Tony Dungee, the coach of the Indianapolis Colts football team has been long time friends with the coach of the Chicago Bears, Lovie Smith. Their teams played against each other in a past Super Bowl. What a great game! Over and over commentators commented how different their coaching styles were than most in the NFL. Their policy was to never cuss at their players to get them to play how they wanted. They always treated them with respect.

After the game was over, Tony stood on the platform and professed his faith in Jesus Christ. His comment to the world was, "I'm proud to be the first African American coach to win a Super Bowl, but more than that, my friend, Lovie Smith and I are proud to coach football as the Lord would have us coach! He made the same comments recently at an awards banquet in his honor and the liberals went crazy. They were so offended. They thought it was politically horrendous to claim God's name in public in that way. What a far cry from the past when the founding Fathers of our country based many of their decisions about our country on the bible and prayer.

The world is becoming increasingly intolerant of believers, when they claim we need have more tolerance for them. When did it become politically incorrect to mention God's name in a country that was founded on the premise "In God we Trust"?

12. The fifth sign mentioned in this chapter of the tribulation is that people will begin to betray one another and hate one another. We can even see the trend of society swaying that way today. How many marriages do you know of that you can say, "The two parties truly love and respect one another? How many marriages do you know have had to work through a betrayal? \_\_\_\_\_

It will only get worse as we head toward the tribulation. Betrayal will be a common wound among those living in the end times.

False prophets will rise up and lawlessness will abound (v.11, 12) but he who endures to the end will be saved! (v.13)

13. What is the 6<sup>th</sup> sign mentioned here in Matthew ch.24? (v.14)

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They will see the last evangelization of the world, then the opportunity for salvation will be over and the end is near, all those who made it through the tribulation and stood for Christ, whether still living or martyred for His name will be saved and will enjoy eternity with Him.

14. Jesus tells the Jews, “When you see the “Abomination of the Desolation” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy Place – flee to the mountains!” (V.15-16)

“The Abomination of Desolation” is the disruption of Jewish worship. The anti-Christ who had pretended to befriend Israel will change his stripes about mid-way through the Tribulation and towards the end he will position himself in the temple. He will refuse to allow them to sacrifice to Yahweh anymore and command worship to himself. He will be standing in the Holy Place. (v.15) He will be as bold as to stand in the Holy of Holies where God’s present dwelt!

a. One of the other names for the Anti-Christ is “the beast”. Read Revelation 13:1-10. List some of the descriptive words of the beast.

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The dragon in this chapter of Revelation is the False Prophet. The False Prophet apparently will give the Anti-Christ demonic powers to do miracles.

15. What will these evil signs and wonders be?  
Matthew 24:24

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That’s a good reminder that not all miracles done - are miracles done by the power of God. I see magicians doing miraculous things on television today that give me the “heebie-jeebies”... they are evil. Their power doesn’t come from our God; they are empowered with power straight from hell. Even in Jesus’ day there were many that did sign and wonders from a power that wasn’t from God. Remember the magicians and sorcerers that Moses battled in front of Pharaoh? (Ex.7:10-11) They were able to turn their staffs into serpents, just as Moses did, except their power to do so was demonic.

When all these have taken place, at the end of one seven – or 7 years, the time will come for Christ’s Second Coming!

**The Second Coming of Christ – Matthew 24:27-31**

**The parable of the fig tree – Matthew 24:32-35**

**The illustration of the days of Noah – Matthew 24:36-44**

**Illustration of the two servants – Matthew 24:45-51**

Read Matthew 24:27-51

16. At the second coming of Christ, what signs will be seen in the heavens that have never been seen before? Matt. 24:27-29

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17. Why do you think all the tribes of the earth will mourn? V.30

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18. I'm sure the Lord God of heaven is excited to gather His own to himself at this time. He has waited for this moment – to gather His children – His loved ones. Who will be sent to get the elect that have endured the tribulation? (V.31, 44)

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19. Even though we know there is a time-line for the tribulation, scripture declares that no one knows the hour He is coming. That means that even the Son, Jesus Christ Himself doesn't know when the Father will send Him! (V.42-44) Father God is the only one that knows and He will send the Son at the right moment!

a. Have you ever heard of someone on the radio or on television predicting the time when Christ will return? \_\_\_\_\_

There have been many over the years that claim to have heard from God and know when he will return, if Jesus Himself doesn't know... I doubt very seriously that God told anyone else!

20. What are we to be about while we are watching for all these things to happen in the future? Matt. 24:45-46

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a. The evil servant says in his heart, "The Master will not come back for a long time".

(v.48) Have you been guilty of living out your days this way? \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes we tend to think, "Every generation expected to see Jesus return – He will not come for a long time – or maybe ever."

Has the Lord been asking you to deal with something in your life and you procrastinate, believing you have all the time in the world? \_\_\_\_\_

Maybe, in thinking that way you are missing great opportunities that the Lord would have loved to have given you!

Is there a person God wants you to apologize to? Someone who needs to hear the words, "I love and appreciate you".

Is God been asking you to deal with a bad habit? \_\_\_\_\_

**"Habits are first cobwebs and then cables"! – Author unknown**

A faithful and wise servant is one who is managing well the work of the Lord. A wise servant rules her household well and does it faithfully until the Lord comes. Blessed are all of you who are doing it well! Keep your hand to the plow! God will reward you for all your service, even the tedious stuff that goes unseen!

### **Wrapping it up and making it personal!**

Wow, this was a lot of information to swallow this week! I call it the “broccoli” of scripture. You know, broccoli is necessary for a healthy diet, but I would rather feast on “chocolate” (the Lord’s promises for me)! To be a healthy Christian though, we need to understand both. I pray that this lesson brought you a better understanding of the coming end-times tribulation and the second coming of our Messiah, Jesus Christ! I pray going over this chapter in Matthew causes us to prioritize our life, as if Christ could come tomorrow. He could you know – everything prophesied in Scripture that needs to happen before His return has been fulfilled.

We are so blessed as believers aren’t we? We are rich with inheritance! We have a helper the Holy Spirit, speaking God’s truth and encouragement to us until He comes again to take us home. We are never left alone in the darkness without light. We have eternity secured. We have peace with a righteous God. We have a ticket through His Son, Jesus that allows us to escape judgment and sorrow. We are truly the most blessed.

Go this week with that in mind. *Instead of focusing on what you don’t have, focus on what the Lord allowed you to miss.* The tribulation is God’s final plea to a rebellious people. He planned it all with the hopes that during suffering and sorrow, the hardened heart would once again call out to Him for salvation. “Thank you heavenly Father that we have already done that and in doing so, have been saved from much sorrow the world will have to endure.”

“You are our most precious gift Lord. We love you with all of our hearts!” -Amen