CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 24 — Signs of the End and the Coming of the Son of Man

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 23 ended with Jesus weeping over Jerusalem.

“Look, your house is left to you desolate.”

Now in Matthew Chapter 24, Jesus walks out of the temple.

His disciples point to the beautiful buildings.

But Jesus tells them something shocking.

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

Later, on the Mount of Olives, the disciples ask Him two questions:

When will this happen?

And:

What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the world?

Jesus answers with one of the longest teachings in the Gospels.

It continues through Matthew 25.

It is often called **the Olivet Discourse**, because Jesus gave it on the Mount of Olives.

In Matthew 24, Jesus speaks about:

- False messiahs and deception
- Wars, famines, and earthquakes
- Persecution and falling away
- The gospel preached to all nations
- The abomination of desolation
- A time of great tribulation
- The visible coming of the Son of Man
- The lesson of the fig tree

- Being watchful and ready

It is important to say something at the beginning.

Sincere Christians have understood parts of this chapter in different ways.

Some believe most of it was fulfilled when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Some believe most of it describes events still in the future, just before Christ returns.

Many believe it speaks of both — the near event of A.D. 70 as a picture of the final event at the end of the age.

This study will explain these views fairly where they differ.

But on the most important truths, all Bible-believing Christians agree:

Jesus is coming again.

No one knows the day or the hour.

We must not be deceived.

We must stand firm.

We must be ready.

Jesus did not give this teaching to satisfy our curiosity.

He gave it to prepare our hearts.

Matthew 24 therefore shows two great truths:

The world and everything in it will pass away, but the words of Jesus will never pass away.

And:

Jesus will come again visibly and gloriously, so His followers must live faithful and ready every day.

The central truth of Matthew 24 is:

Jesus warns His followers of deception, hardship, and judgment, promises His certain and glorious return, and calls them to endure faithfully and live ready at all times.

I. THE BEAUTIFUL BUILDINGS

Matthew 24:1 — As Jesus Left the Temple

“As Jesus left the temple, His disciples came to show Him the beautiful buildings.”

As Jesus left the temple.

This is a serious moment.

In Matthew 23, Jesus said, **“Your house is left to you desolate.”**

Now He walks out.

His disciples came to show Him the beautiful buildings.

The temple in Jesus' day was rebuilt and greatly expanded by King Herod the Great.

The work went on for many years.

Some of its stones were enormous.

Parts of the temple were covered with gold and white marble.

In the sunlight it shone brightly.

It was one of the most impressive buildings in the ancient world.

The disciples were amazed.

Cross References

1 Kings 6:22

> So he covered the whole inside of the temple with gold. He also covered the altar in the inner room with gold.

Mark 13:1

> As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of His followers said to Him, “Look, Teacher! What huge stones and wonderful buildings!”

Haggai 2:9

> The glory of this new temple will be greater than the glory of the old one, says the LORD who commands armies. And in this place I will give peace.

Spiritual Principle

People are impressed by buildings; God is looking for hearts.

II. NOT ONE STONE

Matthew 24:2 — Every One Will Be Thrown Down

“But He told them, ‘Do you see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.’”

Do you see all these things?

Jesus did not deny that the buildings were beautiful.

But He saw what was coming.

Not one stone here will be left on another.

This must have shocked the disciples.

The temple seemed permanent.

It was the center of Jewish worship.

Every one will be thrown down.

About forty years later, in A.D. 70, the Roman army under Titus destroyed Jerusalem.

The temple was burned and torn down.

The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived at that time, described the terrible destruction.

Jesus' words came true exactly.

Cross References

Mark 13:2

> Jesus answered, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left on another. Every one will be torn down.”

Luke 19:44

> They will smash you to the ground, you and the children inside your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time when God came to you.

Micah 3:12

> So because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rubble, and the temple hill will be covered with brush.

Spiritual Principle

Everything built by human hands will one day fall.

III. TWO QUESTIONS

Matthew 24:3 — On the Mount of Olives

“Later, as Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came privately and asked, ‘Tell us, when will this happen? What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the world?’”

As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives.

The Mount of Olives is a hill just east of Jerusalem.

From there, a person could look across the valley at the temple.

Jesus sat down, as teachers did when they taught.

The disciples came privately.

This teaching was for His followers.

Tell us, when will this happen?

This question is about the destruction of the temple.

What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the world?

This question is about the return of Jesus and the end of the age.

The disciples probably thought these events would all happen together.

Jesus' answer speaks about both.

Part of the challenge of this chapter is knowing which verses speak about which event.

The end of the world can also be translated **the end of the age.**

Cross References

Zechariah 14:4

> On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives will split in two from east to west.

Mark 13:4

> Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?

Acts 1:12

> Then the apostles went back to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, which is about half a mile from the city.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes our questions, but He answers in the way that helps us most.

IV. DO NOT BE DECEIVED

Matthew 24:4 — Be Careful

“Jesus answered, ‘Be careful that no one deceives you.’”

Jesus answered.

The disciples asked **when.**

Jesus first tells them **how to live.**

Be careful that no one deceives you.

This is the first warning in the whole teaching.

The greatest danger of the last days is not war or famine.

It is deception.

Jesus will warn about deception again and again in this chapter.

Cross References

Mark 13:5

> Jesus said to them: “Be careful that no one fools you.”

Ephesians 5:6

> Do not let anyone fool you with empty words. Because of these things, God's anger comes on those who disobey.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

> Don't let anyone fool you in any way. That day will not come until the turning away from God happens and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the one who is doomed to destruction.

Spiritual Principle

The first duty of a believer in the last days is to guard against deception.

V. MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME

Matthew 24:5 — Claiming to Be the Messiah

“For many will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and they will deceive many.”

Many will come in My name.

They will use the name of Christ.

They will sound religious.

Claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’

In the years before A.D. 70, several men rose up claiming to be deliverers sent by God.

Throughout history, many others have made the same claim.

And they will deceive many.

Many people will be fooled.

That is why we must know the real Jesus from the Scriptures.

The best way to recognize a fake is to know the real thing well.

Cross References

Mark 13:6

> Many will come in My name, saying, “I am He,” and they will fool many people.

1 John 2:18

> Dear children, this is the last hour. You have heard that the antichrist is coming. Even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

Jeremiah 14:14

> Then the LORD said to me, “The prophets are telling lies in My name. I did not send them or command them or speak to them. They are telling you false visions, worthless predictions, and ideas from their own minds.”

Spiritual Principle

Knowing the true Christ protects us from false christs.

VI. WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

Matthew 24:6 — Don't Be Alarmed

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but don't be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is still to come.”

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars.

Wars will happen.

News of wars will spread.

But don't be alarmed.

Jesus does not want His people to live in panic.

These things must happen.

They are part of life in a fallen world.

They do not take God by surprise.

But the end is still to come.

Wars are not, by themselves, the sign that the end has arrived.

Many people in history have looked at wars and said, **“This must be the end.”**

Jesus says, **“Not yet.”**

Cross References

Mark 13:7

> When you hear about wars and rumors of wars, don't be afraid. These things must happen, but the end is still to come.

Daniel 11:44

> But news from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will go out with great anger to destroy many.

2 Kings 19:7

> Listen! I will put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report, he will go back to his own country. There I will have him killed with a sword.

Spiritual Principle

God's people can stay calm in a troubled world because God is still in control.

VII. FAMINES, DISEASES, AND EARTHQUAKES

Matthew 24:7 — Nation Against Nation

“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines, diseases, and earthquakes in many places.”

Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Conflict between peoples and governments will continue.

There will be famines.

Hunger and food shortages.

Diseases.

Sickness spreading among people.

And earthquakes in many places.

Natural disasters across the world.

These things have happened in every generation since Jesus spoke.

They remind us that the world is broken.

They remind us that this world is not our final home.

Cross References

Mark 13:8

> Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in different places, and there will be famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

Luke 21:11

> There will be great earthquakes, famines, and diseases in many places. There will be terrible events and great signs from heaven.

2 Chronicles 15:6

> One nation was crushing another and one city another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress.

Spiritual Principle

The troubles of this world remind us that it is passing away.

VIII. THE BEGINNING OF BIRTH PAINS

Matthew 24:8 — Only the Beginning

“All these are only the beginning of birth pains.”

All these are only the beginning.

These troubles are not the end.

They are the start.

Of birth pains.

This is a powerful picture.

Birth pains are painful.

They grow stronger and closer together over time.

But they lead to something good — a new life.

In the same way, the troubles of this world point toward something new.

God will bring a new heaven and a new earth.

The pain is real, but it is not meaningless.

Cross References

1 Thessalonians 5:3

> While people are saying, “Everything is peaceful and safe,” destruction will come on them suddenly, like labor pains on a pregnant woman. They will not escape.

Isaiah 13:8

> Terror will seize them, and pain and agony will grip them. They will twist in pain like a woman giving birth.

Jeremiah 4:31

> I hear a cry like a woman in labor, a groan like a woman giving birth to her first child.

Spiritual Principle

The pains of this age are leading to the birth of God's new world.

Key Truth

Birth pains hurt, but they mean new life is coming.

IX. HATED BECAUSE OF MY NAME

Matthew 24:9 — Persecuted and Killed

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and killed. You will be hated by all nations because of My name.”

Then you will be handed over.

Jesus speaks directly to His disciples.

To be persecuted and killed.

This came true.

According to the New Testament and early church history, most of the apostles suffered greatly, and many died for their faith.

You will be hated by all nations.

Christians would be hated not only by one people, but around the world.

Because of My name.

The reason for the hatred is Jesus Himself.

Even today, in many countries, believers suffer for following Christ.

Cross References

Mark 13:9

> Be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and beaten in the synagogues. Because of Me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.

John 15:20

> Remember what I told you: A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you too.

Luke 21:12

> But before all this happens, they will arrest you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of My name.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus may cost us everything, but He is worth it.

X. MANY WILL TURN AWAY

Matthew 24:10 — Betrayal and Hatred

“At that time many will turn away from the faith, betray one another, and hate one another.”

Many will turn away from the faith.

When following Jesus becomes costly, some will give up.

Jesus warned of this in the parable of the sower.

Some receive the word with joy, but fall away when trouble comes.

Betray one another.

Some will even hand over other believers to save themselves.

And hate one another.

Love will turn to hatred.

This is one of the saddest parts of persecution.

The pain often comes not only from outside the church, but from within.

Cross References

Mark 13:12

> Brother will hand over brother to be killed, and a father his child. Children will turn against their parents and have them put to death.

2 Timothy 3:4

> They will betray their friends. They will be reckless and proud. They will love pleasure more than they love God.

1 John 2:19

> They left us, but they never really belonged to us. If they had belonged to us, they would have stayed with us. Their leaving showed that none of them belonged to us.

Spiritual Principle

Hard times reveal whose faith is real.

XI. FALSE PROPHETS

Matthew 24:11 — Deceiving Many

“Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.”

Many false prophets will rise up.

Not only false messiahs, but false prophets.

They claim to speak for God.

But they do not.

And deceive many.

For the second time, Jesus says **“deceive many.”**

False teaching is one of Satan's main weapons.

That is why believers must test every message by the Word of God.

Cross References

2 Peter 2:1

> There were false prophets among the people in the past, and there will be false teachers among you too. They will secretly bring in destructive teachings and even deny the Master who bought them.

1 John 4:1

> Dear friends, do not believe every spirit. Test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Jeremiah 23:16

> This is what the LORD who commands armies says: “Do not listen to what the prophets are saying to you. They fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.”

Spiritual Principle

Test every message by the Word of God.

XII. LOVE GROWS COLD

Matthew 24:12 — The Increase of Wickedness

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of many will grow cold.”

Because of the increase of wickedness.

Wickedness means lawlessness — living as if God's commands do not matter.

The love of many will grow cold.

When sin increases, love decreases.

Love for God fades.

Love for others fades.

People become selfish, hard, and uncaring.

This is a warning for believers.

It is possible to keep going to church while your love for God grows cold.

Jesus said to the church in Ephesus, **“You have left your first love.”**

Cross References

2 Timothy 3:13

> Evil people and fakes will go from bad to worse, fooling others and being fooled themselves.

Daniel 12:4

> But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of this book until the time of the end. Many will go here and there, and knowledge will increase.

Revelation 2:4

> But I have this against you: You have left the love you had at first.

Spiritual Principle

Guard your heart so that your love for God does not grow cold.

Spiritual Warning

Cold love is often the first sign of a drifting heart.

XIII. STAND FIRM TO THE END

Matthew 24:13 — Will Be Saved

“But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

But.

In the middle of all the bad news, Jesus gives a promise.

The one who stands firm.

This means to remain faithful.

To keep trusting Jesus.

To keep following Him, even when it is hard.

To the end.

To the end of life, or to the end of the age.

Will be saved.

Endurance does not earn salvation.

Salvation is a gift of God's grace.

But true faith keeps going.

God gives His people the strength to endure.

Those who are truly His will hold on — because He is holding on to them.

Cross References

Mark 13:13

> Everyone will hate you because of Me. But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Hebrews 3:14

> We share in Christ if we hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at first.

Revelation 2:10

> Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Be faithful, even if you have to die, and I will give you life as your crown of victory.

Spiritual Principle

True faith keeps going to the end.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is not how you start the race that matters most, but how you finish.

XIV. THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS

Matthew 24:14 — Then the End Will Come

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

This gospel of the kingdom.

The good news that God's King, Jesus, has come to save.

Will be preached in the whole world.

Even while there is persecution, the gospel will spread.

Persecution cannot stop it.

As a testimony to all nations.

Every people group will hear about Jesus.

And then the end will come.

God's plan has a goal.

The end will not come until the gospel has gone out.

Some believe this was partly fulfilled in the first century, when the gospel spread across the Roman world.

Paul wrote that it had been preached **“to every creature under heaven.”**

Others believe it points to the worldwide mission of the church that continues today.

Either way, the mission of the church is clear:

Take the good news to the whole world.

Cross References

Mark 13:10

> And the good news must first be preached to all nations.

Romans 10:18

> But I ask, did they not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Colossians 1:23

> This is the good news that you heard. It has been preached to every creature under heaven, and I, Paul, have become a servant of it.

Spiritual Principle

While we wait for the end, we must work to spread the good news.

Key Truth

Bad news fills the world, but the good news will reach the world.

XV. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Matthew 24:15 — Spoken of by Daniel

“So when you see standing in the holy place the abomination of desolation spoken of through the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand),”

When you see.

Now Jesus gives a specific sign.

The abomination of desolation.

An **abomination** is something disgusting to God, often connected with idol worship.

Desolation means destruction and emptiness.

So this is **a horrible thing that brings destruction.**

Standing in the holy place.

This refers to the temple area.

Spoken of through the prophet Daniel.

Daniel spoke about this three times.

Let the reader understand.

This is a call to pay close attention.

What Is the Abomination of Desolation?

Christians have understood this in different ways.

First, a past example.

Many believe Daniel's words were first fulfilled in 167 B.C.

A Greek king named Antiochus IV Epiphanes set up an altar to a pagan god in the temple and sacrificed unclean animals there.

Jewish people remembered this as a terrible desecration.

But Jesus speaks of the abomination as still to come.

Second, the Roman destruction in A.D. 70.

Many believe Jesus was speaking of the Roman armies who surrounded Jerusalem and defiled and destroyed the temple.

Luke's Gospel says, **“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that its desolation is near.”**

Third, a future event.

Many believe this also points to a future time when a final enemy of God — often called the Antichrist or the man of lawlessness — will set himself up in God's place.

Paul wrote of one who **“sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”**

Many Bible students believe Jesus' words have both a near fulfillment in A.D. 70 and a final fulfillment at the end of the age.

All agree on this:

God knows the future, and He warns His people before trouble comes.

Cross References

Daniel 9:27

> He will make a firm agreement with many for one “seven.” In the middle of that “seven” he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up a horrible thing that causes destruction, until the end that has been decided is poured out on him.

Daniel 11:31

> His armed forces will rise up to make the temple fortress unholy. They will stop the daily sacrifice and set up the horrible thing that causes destruction.

Daniel 12:11

> From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the horrible thing that causes destruction is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word prepares His people for what is coming.

XVI. FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS

Matthew 24:16 — Those in Judea

“then let those in Judea flee to the mountains.”

Let those in Judea.

Judea was the region around Jerusalem.

This instruction was very practical and very local.

Flee to the mountains.

When the sign appears, do not stay and fight.

Run.

The mountains offered hiding places and safety.

Early church tradition says that before Jerusalem was destroyed, the Christians of the city remembered Jesus' warning and fled to a town called Pella, across the Jordan River.

Whether or not every detail of that tradition is exact, Jesus' warning was meant to save lives.

Cross References

Mark 13:14

> When you see “the horrible thing that causes destruction” standing where it does not belong — let the reader understand — then those in Judea must run away to the mountains.

Luke 21:21

> Then those in Judea must run to the mountains. Those in the city must get out, and those in the country must not go into the city.

Genesis 19:17

> As soon as they had brought them out, one of the angels said, “Run for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the valley! Run to the mountains, or you will be destroyed!”

Spiritual Principle

Obeying Jesus' warnings brings safety.

XVII. DO NOT GO BACK

Matthew 24:17 — On the Housetop

“Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house.”

Let no one on the housetop.

Houses in Israel had flat roofs.

People used them to rest, pray, and work.

Often stairs went up the outside of the house.

Go down to take anything out of the house.

There would be no time to pack.

No time to save possessions.

Run immediately.

Like Lot's family leaving Sodom, they must not look back.

Cross References

Mark 13:15

> No one on the roof of his house should go down or go inside to take anything out.

Luke 17:31

> On that day, no one who is on the roof should go down to get his things in the house. And no one in the field should go back for anything.

Genesis 19:26

> But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Spiritual Principle

Possessions are not worth more than your life.

XVIII. NOT EVEN A CLOAK

Matthew 24:18 — The One in the Field

“Let no one in the field go back to get a cloak.”

Let no one in the field.

A worker might leave his cloak at the edge of the field while he worked.

Go back to get a cloak.

A cloak was important.

It kept a person warm at night.

But even that was not worth going back for.

The danger would come so fast that there would be no time to turn around.

Cross References

Mark 13:16

> No one in the field should go back to get his coat.

Luke 9:62

> Jesus said, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and then looks back is fit for service in God's kingdom.”

Philippians 3:13

> Brothers and sisters, I do not think I have reached the goal yet. But one thing I do: I forget what is behind and reach forward to what is ahead.

Spiritual Principle

When God says go, do not look back.

XIX. HARD DAYS FOR MOTHERS

Matthew 24:19 — Pregnant and Nursing Women

“How terrible it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days!”

How terrible it will be.

Jesus expresses deep sorrow.

For pregnant women and nursing mothers.

They would find it hardest to run.

They would suffer most in hunger and danger.

Jesus cared about those who would suffer.

His heart is tender toward the weak and helpless.

Even on the way to the cross, He said to the women of Jerusalem, **“Weep for yourselves and for your children.”**

Cross References

Mark 13:17

> How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant and for those nursing babies!

Luke 23:29

> For the time is coming when people will say, “Blessed are the women who could not have children, the wombs that never gave birth and the breasts that never nursed!”

Hosea 13:16

> The people of Samaria must bear their guilt because they have rebelled against their God. They will be killed in war, and even their little children and pregnant women will not be spared.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees and cares about those who suffer most.

XX. PRAY ABOUT THE TIMING

Matthew 24:20 — Not in Winter or on the Sabbath

“Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.”

Pray.

Even in a time of judgment, prayer matters.

God hears.

That your flight will not take place in winter.

In winter, roads were muddy, rivers were high, and the weather was cold.

Running would be much harder.

Or on the Sabbath.

On the Sabbath, the city gates might be closed.

Travel was limited.

Many Jewish believers would not want to break the Sabbath.

Help might be hard to find.

Jesus teaches His followers to pray even about the details of hard times.

Cross References

Mark 13:18

> Pray that this will not happen in winter.

Exodus 20:10

> But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On that day you must not do any work.

Nehemiah 13:19

> When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut. They were not to be opened until the Sabbath was over.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer matters, even in the darkest times.

XXI. GREAT TRIBULATION

Matthew 24:21 — Unequaled Distress

“For then there will be great tribulation, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.”

There will be great tribulation.

Tribulation means great pressure, distress, and suffering.

Unequaled from the beginning of the world until now.

This will be a time of extreme suffering.

And never to be equaled again.

How Do Christians Understand This?

Some believe this describes the siege and fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Josephus described terrible famine, violence, and the deaths of a very great number of people.

For the Jewish nation, it was a catastrophe.

Others believe it describes a final period of trouble before Christ returns, often called **the Great Tribulation.**

They point out that Jesus says it will never be equaled, and that Daniel 12:1 links it with the time of the end.

Many believe A.D. 70 was a real fulfillment that also points forward to a final time of trouble.

In every view, Jesus is warning His people so they will not lose hope when suffering comes.

Cross References

Mark 13:19

> Those days will be a time of suffering unlike anything since God created the world until now, and nothing like it will ever happen again.

Daniel 12:1

> There will be a time of trouble like none that has happened since nations began. But at that time your people, everyone whose name is written in the book, will be rescued.

Joel 2:2

> It will be a day of darkness and gloom. Nothing like it has ever happened before, and nothing like it will happen again for many generations.

Spiritual Principle

Even the worst suffering is not outside God's control.

XXII. THOSE DAYS SHORTENED

Matthew 24:22 — For the Sake of the Elect

“If those days had not been shortened, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened.”

If those days had not been shortened, no one would survive.

The suffering would be so great that, if it went on, no one would live through it.

But for the sake of the elect.

The elect are God's chosen people — those who belong to Him.

Those days will be shortened.

God limits suffering.

He sets its boundaries.

He cares for His people even in the worst of times.

Just as God was willing to spare Sodom for the sake of a few righteous people, He shows mercy for the sake of His own.

Cross References

Mark 13:20

> If the Lord had not shortened those days, no one would survive. But because of the people He has chosen, He has shortened them.

Isaiah 65:8

> This is what the LORD says: “When juice is still found in a bunch of grapes, people say, ‘Don't destroy it; there is still something good in it.’ I will do the same for My servants. I will not destroy them all.”

Genesis 18:26

> The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

Spiritual Principle

God sets limits on the suffering of His people.

Key Truth

Suffering has an end date, and God holds the calendar.

XXIII. DO NOT BELIEVE IT

Matthew 24:23 — Here Is the Christ!

“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There He is!’ do not believe it.”

At that time.

In the middle of great trouble, people look for a rescuer.

That is when false messiahs find followers.

If anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’

Someone will claim Christ has come secretly.

Or, ‘There He is!’

Do not believe it.

Jesus' command is simple and clear.

When Jesus returns, no one will need to tell you where He is.

Cross References

Mark 13:21

> At that time if anyone says to you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “Look, there He is!” do not believe it.

Luke 17:23

> People will tell you, “There He is!” or “Here He is!” Do not run after them.

Jeremiah 29:8

> This is what the LORD who commands armies says: Do not let the prophets and fortune-tellers among you fool you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have.

Spiritual Principle

Do not believe every claim about Jesus; believe what Jesus said.

XXIV. GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS

Matthew 24:24 — Even the Elect, If Possible

“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive— even the elect, if that were possible.”

False messiahs and false prophets will appear.

Again Jesus warns of deception.

And perform great signs and wonders.

This is important.

Not every miracle comes from God.

Satan can do signs to deceive.

Miracles alone do not prove that a message is true.

The message must agree with God's Word.

To deceive—even the elect, if that were possible.

The deception will be powerful.

But the words **if that were possible** give hope.

God keeps His own.

Cross References

Mark 13:22

> False christs and false prophets will appear and do signs and miracles to fool even God's chosen people, if that were possible.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

> The coming of the lawless one will be the work of Satan. He will use all kinds of power, signs, and false wonders.

Deuteronomy 13:1

> A prophet, or someone who tells the future through dreams, may come among you and announce a sign or a wonder.

Spiritual Principle

Signs and wonders must be tested by the truth of God's Word.

Spiritual Warning

A miracle does not prove a message is from God.

XXV. I HAVE TOLD YOU AHEAD OF TIME

Matthew 24:25 — See

“See, I have told you ahead of time.”

See.

Pay attention.

I have told you ahead of time.

Jesus warns before trouble comes.

When it comes, His people will not be surprised.

Their faith will be made stronger, not weaker.

Because they will remember:

Jesus told us this would happen.

Cross References

John 14:29

> I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

John 13:19

> I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it happens you will believe that I am He.

Isaiah 46:10

> From the beginning I tell what will happen in the end. From long ago I tell things that have not yet happened. I say, “My plan will stand, and I will do all that I please.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus prepares His people before trouble comes.

XXVI. NOT IN THE WILDERNESS OR THE INNER ROOMS

Matthew 24:26 — Do Not Go Out

“So if anyone tells you, ‘He is out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.”

He is out in the wilderness.

Some false leaders gathered followers in the desert.

They promised that God's deliverance would begin there.

Do not go out.

Here He is in the inner rooms.

Others claimed Christ was hidden in a secret place.

Only a few special people knew where He was.

Do not believe it.

The return of Jesus will not be secret.

It will not be hidden.

It will not need to be announced by a special group.

Cross References

Jeremiah 23:21

> I did not send these prophets, but they ran with their message. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied anyway.

Deuteronomy 13:3

> You must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and all your soul.

Deuteronomy 18:22

> If what a prophet says in the name of the LORD does not happen or come true, that message is not from the LORD. That prophet has spoken out of pride. Do not be afraid of him.

Spiritual Principle

The return of Christ will not be a secret known only to a few.

XXVII. LIKE LIGHTNING

Matthew 24:27 — From East to West

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

As lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west.

Lightning is sudden.

Lightning is bright.

Lightning lights up the whole sky.

No one has to point it out.

Everyone sees it.

So will be the coming of the Son of Man.

When Jesus returns, it will be sudden, visible, and unmistakable.

No one will have to ask, **“Is that Him?”**

Cross References

Luke 17:24

> The Son of Man in His day will be like lightning that flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other.

Zechariah 9:14

> Then the LORD will appear over them. His arrow will flash like lightning. The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet and march in the storms of the south.

Habakkuk 3:11

> The sun and moon stood still in the sky at the flash of Your flying arrows and the shining of Your bright spear.

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus returns, the whole world will know it.

Key Truth

You will not need a news report to know that Jesus has come.

XXVIII. WHERE THE VULTURES GATHER

Matthew 24:28 — A Dead Body

“Wherever there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.”

Wherever there is a dead body.

This sounds like a strange saying.

It was probably a common proverb.

There the vultures will gather.

When vultures circle in the sky, everyone knows there is a dead body below.

It is impossible to miss.

Bible students understand Jesus' point in different ways.

Many believe the meaning is that judgment will come wherever there is spiritual death, as surely as vultures come to a dead body.

Some believe it points to the Roman armies, whose battle flags carried an eagle, gathering around a spiritually dead Jerusalem. The same Greek word can mean eagle or vulture.

Others believe it simply means that the coming of Christ will be as obvious as vultures circling in the sky.

In every view, the point is the same:

Christ's coming and His judgment will be certain and unmistakable.

Cross References

Luke 17:37

> “Where, Lord?” they asked. Jesus answered, “Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.”

Job 39:30

> Its young ones feast on blood. Where there are dead bodies, there it is.

Habakkuk 1:8

> Their horses are faster than leopards and fiercer than wolves at dusk. They fly like a vulture swooping down to eat.

Spiritual Principle

Judgment always finds what is spiritually dead.

XXIX. SUN, MOON, AND STARS

Matthew 24:29 — The Heavenly Powers Shaken

“Immediately after the distress of those days: ‘The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly powers will be shaken.’”

Immediately after the distress of those days.

After the tribulation, something greater happens.

The sun will be darkened.

The moon will not give its light.

The stars will fall from the sky.

The heavenly powers will be shaken.

These words come from the Old Testament prophets.

How Do Christians Understand This?

Many believe these are literal events in the sky that will happen when Christ returns.

The whole universe will be shaken at His coming.

Others believe this is prophetic picture language.

The prophets used these same words when God judged nations like Babylon and Edom.

In that view, it means the powers of this world are falling and God is acting in judgment.

Some believe both are true: the language describes God's judgment, and at the end it will also be fulfilled in the heavens themselves.

In every view, the meaning is clear:

When Jesus comes, everything that seemed solid will be shaken.

Cross References

Isaiah 13:10

> The stars in the sky and their groups will not give their light. The rising sun will be dark, and the moon will not shine.

Joel 2:31

> The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn red like blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

Isaiah 34:4

> All the stars in the sky will melt away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll. All the stars will fall like dry leaves from a vine, like shriveled figs from a fig tree.

Spiritual Principle

Everything that can be shaken will be shaken, but Christ's kingdom cannot be shaken.

XXX. ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN

Matthew 24:30 — With Power and Great Glory

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven. All the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven.

Jesus does not say exactly what this sign is.

Many believe the sign is simply the Son of Man Himself appearing in glory.

All the peoples of the earth will mourn.

Those who rejected Him will mourn in sorrow and fear.

Zechariah spoke of people mourning when they look on **the One they have pierced.**

When they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.

This comes from Daniel 7.

Daniel saw **one like a son of man** coming with the clouds of heaven to receive an everlasting kingdom.

Son of Man was the title Jesus used for Himself more than any other.

Clouds in the Bible often show the presence and glory of God.

With power and great glory.

The first time, Jesus came in weakness — a baby in a manger.

The second time, He will come in power and glory.

The first time, He came to save.

The second time, He will come to reign and to judge.

Cross References

Daniel 7:13

> In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was One like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence.

Zechariah 12:10

> I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and the people of Jerusalem. They will look on Me, the One they have pierced. They will mourn for Him as someone mourns for an only child.

Revelation 1:7

> Look, He is coming with the clouds! Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. And all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. Yes, it will be so. Amen.

Spiritual Principle

The Jesus who came in humility will return in glory.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The first time He came to a manger; the next time He will come on the clouds.

XXXI. THE TRUMPET CALL

Matthew 24:31 — Gathering His Chosen Ones

“And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

He will send His angels.

The angels belong to Jesus.

They obey His command.

With a loud trumpet call.

In the Bible, trumpets announced God's presence, called people together, and signaled great events.

Paul wrote that the Lord will come down from heaven **with the trumpet call of God.**

They will gather His chosen ones.

This is wonderful news.

Jesus will not forget a single one of His people.

From the four winds.

From north, south, east, and west.

From one end of the heavens to the other.

No matter where they are, He will bring them home.

Cross References

1 Thessalonians 4:16

> The Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the chief angel, and with the trumpet call of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Isaiah 27:13

> On that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were lost in Assyria and those who were sent away to Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 30:4

> Even if you have been scattered to the farthest land under heaven, the LORD your God will gather you from there and bring you back.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will gather every one of His people to Himself.

Key Truth

No believer will be forgotten when the trumpet sounds.

XXXII. THE FIG TREE

Matthew 24:32 — Summer Is Near

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know summer is near.”

Learn this lesson from the fig tree.

Jesus uses a simple picture from nature.

As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out.

In Israel, many trees stay green all year.

But the fig tree loses its leaves in winter.

When new leaves appear, it is a clear sign of change.

You know summer is near.

You do not need a calendar.

You can read the signs.

Cross References

Mark 13:28

> Learn this lesson from the fig tree: When its branches become tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.

Luke 21:29

> He told them this story: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees.”

Song of Solomon 2:13

> The fig tree is forming its early fruit, and the blossoming vines give off their sweet smell. Get up, my love, my beautiful one, and come with me.

Spiritual Principle

God gives signs so His people can be ready.

XXXIII. RIGHT AT THE DOOR

Matthew 24:33 — It Is Near

“In the same way, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.”

When you see all these things.

The signs Jesus described.

You know that it is near.

It may mean the event, or it may mean **He** — the Son of Man.

Right at the door.

Close enough to knock.

Close enough to walk in.

Believers are to live with a sense that the Lord is near.

Cross References

Mark 13:29

> In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.

James 5:9

> Brothers and sisters, don't complain against one another, or you will be judged. Look, the Judge is standing at the door!

Revelation 3:20

> Look! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with Me.

Spiritual Principle

Live as if the Lord is standing at the door.

XXXIV. THIS GENERATION

Matthew 24:34 — Until All These Things Have Happened

“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.”

Truly I tell you.

Jesus speaks with solemn certainty.

This generation will certainly not pass away.

Until all these things have happened.

This is one of the most discussed verses in the chapter.

How Do Christians Understand “This Generation”?

First view: the people living in Jesus' day.

Many believe **this generation** means the people Jesus was speaking to.

In Matthew 23:36, Jesus used the same words for the people of His day.

In this view, **all these things** refers to the signs leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which happened about forty years later.

Second view: the generation that sees the final signs.

Others believe Jesus means the generation alive when the final signs begin.

That generation will see everything fulfilled, right up to His return.

Third view: a kind of people.

Some believe **generation** here means a kind of people — either the Jewish people, who will be preserved until the end, or the human race in its rebellion against God.

Faithful Christians hold each of these views.

What is certain is this:

Jesus' words came true in A.D. 70, and His words about His return will come true just as surely.

Cross References

Mark 13:30

> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened.

Matthew 16:28

> Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

Psalm 102:18

> Let this be written for a future generation, so that people not yet born will praise the LORD.

Spiritual Principle

Every word Jesus speaks will come to pass.

XXXV. MY WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY

Matthew 24:35 — Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”

Heaven and earth will pass away.

The sky above us seems permanent.

The ground beneath us seems solid.

But one day, they will pass away.

But My words will never pass away.

This is an amazing claim.

Isaiah said that **the word of our God** stands forever.

Jesus says **My words** will never pass away.

Jesus speaks of His own words the way the prophets spoke of God's Word.

The temple fell.

Empires fell.

Heaven and earth will fall.

But the words of Jesus stand forever.

Cross References

Mark 13:31

> Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.

Isaiah 40:8

> The grass dries up and the flowers fall, but the word of our God lasts forever.

Psalm 119:89

> Your word, LORD, lasts forever. It stands firm in the heavens.

Spiritual Principle

The words of Jesus are the most certain thing in the universe.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Build your life on the words of Jesus, because they will outlast everything else.

XXXVI. NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR

Matthew 24:36 — Only the Father

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

But about that day or hour.

The day of Jesus' return.

No one knows.

No prophet.

No preacher.

No date-setter.

Throughout history, many people have predicted the date of Christ's return.

Every one of them has been wrong.

Not even the angels in heaven.

Nor the Son.

This is a deep mystery.

Jesus is fully God.

But He also became fully human.

As a man on earth, He chose to live in dependence on the Father.

He did not use His divine knowledge in every way.

Christians have explained this in different ways, but all agree that Jesus is truly God and that He humbly submitted to the Father's plan.

But only the Father.

The timing belongs to God alone.

Our job is not to know when.

Our job is to be ready.

Cross References

Mark 13:32

> But no one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Acts 1:7

> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority.”

Zechariah 14:7

> It will be a unique day, a day known only to the LORD, with no difference between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.

Spiritual Principle

God has not told us when, so that we will always be ready.

Spiritual Warning

Anyone who sets a date for Christ's return is going beyond what Jesus said.

XXXVII. AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

Matthew 24:37 — The Coming of the Son of Man

“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

As it was in the days of Noah.

Jesus compares His coming to the flood.

In Noah's day, the world was full of wickedness.

God warned the people.

Noah built the ark and preached righteousness.

God waited patiently.

So it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

The world will be carrying on as usual.

And then, suddenly, the end will come.

Cross References

Genesis 6:5

> The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth. Every thought in their hearts was evil all the time.

Luke 17:26

> Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man.

1 Peter 3:20

> They disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.

Spiritual Principle

God's patience gives time to repent, but it will not last forever.

XXXVIII. EATING AND DRINKING

Matthew 24:38 — Up to the Day Noah Entered the Ark

“For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark.”

Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.

These things are not sinful in themselves.

They are normal parts of life.

The problem was that people lived as if God did not exist.

They were busy with daily life and ignored God's warning.

Up to the day Noah entered the ark.

Life went on as normal — right up to the last moment.

Then the door was shut.

Cross References

Genesis 7:7

> Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.

Luke 17:27

> People were eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

Isaiah 22:13

> But instead there is joy and celebration, eating meat and drinking wine. “Let us eat and drink,” you say, “for tomorrow we die!”

Spiritual Principle

The greatest danger is living a normal life while ignoring God.

XXXIX. THEY KNEW NOTHING

Matthew 24:39 — Until the Flood Came

“They knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

They knew nothing about what would happen.

They had been warned.

But they did not believe.

So they did not understand.

Until the flood came and took them all away.

The judgment was sudden and complete.

That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Jesus' return will catch the unprepared by surprise.

But it does not have to catch you by surprise.

God has given His warning.

And God has provided an ark — Jesus Christ.

Cross References

Genesis 7:23

> Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

2 Peter 3:6

> By water the world of that time was flooded and destroyed.

Job 22:16

They were carried off before their time. Their foundations were washed away by a flood.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the ark of safety for all who come to Him.

XL. ONE TAKEN, ONE LEFT

Matthew 24:40 — Two Men in the Field

“Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.”

Two men will be in the field.

They are doing the same work.

They look the same on the outside.

One will be taken and the other left.

Christ's coming will separate people.

How Do Christians Understand “Taken” and “Left”?

Some believe taken means taken to be with Christ.

They connect this with Paul's words that believers will be **caught up** to meet the Lord in the air.

Others believe taken means taken away in judgment.

In the verse just before, the flood **took them all away.**

In that view, the one **left** is like Noah — left safe after the judgment passes.

Both views agree on the main point:

When Christ returns, there will be a sudden and final separation, and every person must be ready.

Cross References

Luke 17:36

> Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

Zechariah 13:8

> In the whole land, says the LORD, two-thirds will be struck down and die, but one-third will be left in it.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

A Note on Luke 17:36

Luke 17:36 is not found in the oldest manuscripts of Luke. The same words appear without question here in Matthew 24:40.

Spiritual Principle

People who live side by side may have very different eternal destinies.

XLI. TWO WOMEN AT THE MILL

Matthew 24:41 — Grinding Grain

“Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other left.”

Two women will be grinding at the mill.

Grinding grain was daily work.

Two women would sit facing each other and turn a hand mill together.

They were as close as two people could be.

One will be taken and the other left.

Even people who work side by side, every day, may not share the same destiny.

No one can be saved by being close to a believer.

Each person must belong to Christ personally.

Cross References

Luke 17:35

> Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.

Exodus 11:5

> Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave woman at her hand mill.

Isaiah 47:2

> Take millstones and grind flour. Take off your veil.

Spiritual Principle

Each person must be ready for Christ's return personally.

XLII. KEEP WATCH

Matthew 24:42 — You Do Not Know the Day

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”

Therefore keep watch.

This is the main application of the whole chapter.

Keep watch means to stay awake and alert.

It means living ready.

Because you do not know on what day.

Since we do not know, we must always be ready.

Your Lord will come.

Notice the word **your.**

He is not only **the** Lord.

For His followers, He is **your** Lord.

His coming is not a threat to them.

It is the day they have been waiting for.

Cross References

Mark 13:35

> So keep watch, because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, at midnight, when the rooster crows, or at dawn.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

> So then, let us not be like others who are asleep. Let us stay awake and be clear-minded.

Revelation 16:15

> Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes on, so that he will not go naked and be shamed.

Spiritual Principle

Not knowing when Jesus will come is the reason to be ready always.

XLIII. LIKE A THIEF

Matthew 24:43 — The Owner of the House

“But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and not allowed his house to be broken into.”

If the owner of the house had known.

No thief tells you when he is coming.

He would have kept watch.

If you knew, you would stay awake.

You would lock the doors.

And not allowed his house to be broken into.

Jesus is not saying He is like a thief in character.

He is saying His coming will be unexpected, like a thief's.

The only way to be ready for an unexpected visitor is to be ready all the time.

Cross References

Luke 12:39

> But understand this: If the owner of the house had known what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

1 Thessalonians 5:2

> For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:10

> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar.

Spiritual Principle

The only way to be ready for an unexpected day is to be ready every day.

XLIV. BE READY

Matthew 24:44 — At an Hour You Do Not Expect

“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

So you also must be ready.

Ready with a heart that belongs to Jesus.

Ready with a life that is faithful to Him.

Ready with nothing to hide.

Because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.

Jesus does not say the hour that no one expects.

He says **when you do not expect Him.**

Even believers can be caught off guard.

That is why readiness is not a one-time decision.

It is a daily way of life.

Cross References

Luke 12:40

> You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.

Mark 13:33

> Be on guard! Stay alert! You do not know when that time will come.

Revelation 3:3

> But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Spiritual Principle

Readiness is not a moment; it is a way of life.

Key Truth

The question is not, “When is He coming?” but, “Am I ready if He comes today?”

XLV. THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT

Matthew 24:45 — Giving Food at the Proper Time

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the household to give food at the proper time?”

Who then is the faithful and wise servant?

Jesus now tells a parable to show what readiness looks like.

Faithful — he can be trusted.

Wise — he understands what matters.

Whom the master has put in charge of the household.

He has been given responsibility over others.

To give food at the proper time.

His job is to care for the other servants.

Readiness does not mean sitting and staring at the sky.

It means faithfully doing the work the Master has given us.

For church leaders, this means feeding God's people with His Word.

For every believer, it means serving others faithfully.

Cross References

Luke 12:42

> The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom the master puts in charge of his servants, to give them their share of food at the right time?”

1 Corinthians 4:2

> Those who have been trusted with something must prove to be faithful.

Titus 1:7

> A church leader manages God's household, so he must be without blame. He must not be proud, quick-tempered, a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money.

Spiritual Principle

Being ready means being faithful in the work Jesus has given us.

XLVI. BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT

Matthew 24:46 — Found Doing So

“Blessed is that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”

Blessed is that servant.

Happy.

Honored.

Rewarded.

Whose master finds him doing so.

Doing what?

Doing exactly what he was told to do.

Feeding the household.

Serving faithfully.

When he returns.

The master did not tell him when he would come back.

But whenever he came, the servant was found faithful.

Cross References

Luke 12:43

> It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns.

Luke 12:37

> It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, have them sit at the table, and come and wait on them.

Proverbs 27:18

> The one who takes care of a fig tree will eat its fruit, and the one who looks after his master will be honored.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus wants to find us faithfully at work when He returns.

XLVII. IN CHARGE OF ALL HIS POSSESSIONS

Matthew 24:47 — The Reward of Faithfulness

“Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.”

Truly I tell you.

This is a sure promise.

He will put him in charge of all his possessions.

The reward for faithfulness is greater responsibility.

Like Joseph, who was faithful in Potiphar's house and later became ruler over all Egypt.

Faithful service now leads to greater service in God's kingdom.

Cross References

Luke 12:44

> Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

Genesis 39:4

> Joseph found favor in his master's eyes and became his helper. Potiphar put him in charge of his house and trusted him with everything he owned.

Psalm 105:21

> He made Joseph master of his household and ruler over everything he owned.

Spiritual Principle

God rewards faithfulness with greater opportunity to serve.

XLVIII. "MY MASTER IS STAYING AWAY"

Matthew 24:48 — The Wicked Servant

“But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’”

But suppose that servant is wicked.

Now Jesus describes the opposite kind of servant.

And says to himself.

The problem begins in his heart.

My master is staying away a long time.

He thinks the master's delay means the master is not coming.

Or at least not coming soon.

So he decides he has plenty of time.

Peter warned that in the last days people would mock, saying, **“Where is the promise of His coming?”**

But God's delay is not forgetfulness.

It is patience.

Cross References

Luke 12:45

> But suppose the servant says to himself, “My master is taking a long time to come back,” and he begins to beat the other servants.

2 Peter 3:4

> They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ He promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

Habakkuk 2:3

> The vision is for a set time. Though it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come; it will not be late.

Spiritual Principle

God's delay is patience, not forgetfulness.

XLIX. ABUSING THE MASTER'S TRUST

Matthew 24:49 — Beating His Fellow Servants

“and he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.”

He begins to beat his fellow servants.

Instead of feeding them, he hurts them.

Instead of serving them, he rules over them harshly.

And to eat and drink with drunkards.

Instead of caring for others, he lives for himself.

This is what happens when people stop believing the Master is coming back.

They become cruel to others.

They become careless with their own lives.

Cross References

Isaiah 56:12

> “Come,” each one cries, “let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better.”

Ephesians 5:18

> Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to wild living. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

> Those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

Spiritual Principle

Forgetting that Jesus is coming leads to careless and cruel living.

L. AN UNEXPECTED DAY

Matthew 24:50 — When He Does Not Expect Him

“The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.”

The master of that servant will come.

The master's delay did not cancel his return.

On a day when he does not expect him.

The servant thought he had more time.

He was wrong.

And at an hour he is not aware of.

There was no warning.

No chance to clean up the mess.

Cross References

Luke 12:46

> The master of that servant will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know.

Proverbs 29:1

> A person who keeps being stubborn after many warnings will suddenly be destroyed, with no way to recover.

Jeremiah 51:8

> Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken. Cry for her!

Spiritual Principle

Do not assume you have more time to get ready.

LI. A PLACE WITH THE HYPOCRITES

Matthew 24:51 — Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

“He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

He will cut him to pieces.

These are severe words.

They describe the seriousness of judgment.

And assign him a place with the hypocrites.

He claimed to be the master's servant.

But his life proved otherwise.

He belonged with the hypocrites Jesus warned against in Matthew 23.

Where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus uses these words several times in Matthew to describe final judgment.

Weeping — deep sorrow.

Gnashing of teeth — anguish and regret.

Jesus says this not to frighten us into despair, but to wake us up while there is still time.

Cross References

Matthew 8:12

> But those who should have had the kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:50

> And they will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Psalm 37:9

> Evil people will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will receive the land.

Spiritual Principle

How we live while we wait shows whether we truly belong to the Master.

LII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 24

1. The Temple Was Temporary, but Christ's Word Is Eternal

All human structures will fall, but His promises remain.

The temple fell in A.D. 70, just as Jesus said.

Principle:

Stones fall, but the words of Jesus stand forever.

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2. The Last Days Will Bring Deception and Chaos

Wars, disasters, and false prophets will multiply.

Jesus' first warning was, **“Be careful that no one deceives you.”**

Principle:

Know the true Christ so you will not be fooled by false ones.

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3. Endurance Is Required

Those who remain faithful to Christ until the end will be saved.

Love may grow cold in many, but true faith keeps going.

Principle:

Finish the race faithfully.

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4. The Gospel Must Go to All Nations

The end will not come until the message reaches the world.

While we wait, we must work.

Principle:

The mission of the church is to take the good news to everyone.

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5. Christ's Return Will Be Visible and Unmistakable

Like lightning across the sky, no one will miss it.

It will not be secret, hidden, or announced by a special few.

Principle:

When Jesus comes, the whole world will see Him.

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6. No One Knows the Day or Hour

We must live ready at all times.

God has hidden the date so that we will always be watching.

Principle:

Do not try to know when; make sure you are ready.

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7. Faithful Service Will Be Rewarded

Christ will honor those who are watchful and obedient when He returns.

Principle:

Be found faithfully doing the Master's work when He comes.

LIII. HOW CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND MATTHEW 24

Sincere, Bible-believing Christians understand this chapter in different ways.

Here are the main approaches, explained simply.

The Past Fulfillment View

Most of Matthew 24 — especially verses 4–34 — was fulfilled in the first century, ending with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70.

This view takes **“this generation”** in verse 34 to mean the people of Jesus' day.

Most who hold this view still believe in the future, bodily return of Christ, which they often see in verses 36–51.

The Future Fulfillment View

Most of Matthew 24 describes events still to come at the end of the age.

This view sees a future Great Tribulation, a future abomination of desolation, and a future Antichrist before Christ returns.

Some in this view also connect verses 40–41 with the rapture of believers.

The Double Fulfillment View

Many believe Jesus' words have both a near and a final fulfillment.

The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 really fulfilled His warnings.

But it was also a preview and pattern of the final trouble and judgment at the end of the age.

The prophets often spoke this way, with a near event pointing to a greater one.

What All Agree On

- Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple, and it happened.
- Deception is a great danger for believers.
- Believers must endure suffering faithfully.
- The gospel must go to the nations.

- Jesus will return visibly, personally, and in glory.
- No one knows the day or the hour.
- Every believer must be watchful, faithful, and ready.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

We may differ on the timeline, but we must agree on the command: be ready.

LIV. HOW TO LIVE READY

Jesus gave many commands in Matthew 24.

Together they show what it means to be ready.

Do Not Be Deceived (Verses 4, 11, 23–26)

Know the true Christ through His Word.

Do Not Be Alarmed (Verse 6)

Trust that God is in control.

Stand Firm (Verse 13)

Keep following Jesus, even when it is hard.

Spread the Gospel (Verse 14)

Take the good news to the nations.

Obey His Warnings (Verses 15–20)

When Jesus says go, go.

Pray (Verse 20)

Bring even the hard times to God.

Learn the Signs (Verses 32–33)

Live aware that the Lord is near.

Trust His Words (Verse 35)

Build your life on what will never pass away.

Keep Watch (Verse 42)

Stay spiritually awake.

Be Ready (Verse 44)

Live every day as if He might come today.

Be Faithful (Verses 45–47)

Keep doing the work He gave you.

Key Truth

Being ready is not about watching the news; it is about watching your heart.

LV. WHAT MATTHEW 24 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 24 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The True Prophet

He predicted the destruction of the temple, and it came true.

The Knower of the Future

He told His disciples what would happen before it happened.

The Shepherd Who Warns

He warned His followers so they would not be deceived.

The Lord of the Mission

He promised that His gospel would reach all nations.

The Protector of His People

He shortens days of trouble for the sake of His chosen ones.

The Son of Man

He is the One Daniel saw coming on the clouds of heaven.

The Coming King

He will return with power and great glory.

The Lord of the Angels

He will send His angels to gather His people.

The Eternal Word

His words will never pass away.

The Humble Son

He submitted to the Father, even about the day and the hour.

The Returning Master

He will reward His faithful servants and judge the unfaithful.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who walked out of the temple will one day come back on the clouds.

LVI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did Jesus say would happen to the temple?

He said not one stone would be left on another. This happened when the Romans destroyed the temple in A.D. 70.

Question 2

What two questions did the disciples ask Jesus?

When would the temple be destroyed, and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age?

Question 3

What was Jesus' first warning in His answer?

“Be careful that no one deceives you.”

Question 4

Why did Jesus call wars, famines, and earthquakes “the beginning of birth pains”?

Because they are painful but are not the end. Like birth pains, they point toward something new that God will bring.

Question 5

What happens to the love of many when wickedness increases?

It grows cold.

Question 6

Who will be saved, according to verse 13?

The one who stands firm to the end.

Question 7

What must happen before the end comes?

The gospel of the kingdom must be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations.

Question 8

What is the abomination of desolation?

It is a horrible, unholy thing that brings destruction to the holy place. Christians see it fulfilled in the Roman destruction of the temple, in a future enemy of God, or in both.

Question 9

Why should we not believe someone who says Christ is in the wilderness or in a secret room?

Because Jesus' return will be like lightning — sudden, visible, and seen by all.

Question 10

Do miracles prove that a message is from God?

No. False prophets can perform signs and wonders. Every message must be tested by God's Word.

Question 11

What will happen when the Son of Man comes on the clouds?

All the peoples of the earth will see Him, and He will send His angels to gather His chosen ones from all over the world.

Question 12

What will never pass away?

The words of Jesus.

Question 13

Who knows the day and hour of Jesus' return?

Only the Father.

Question 14

How will the days before Jesus' return be like the days of Noah?

People will go on with normal life, ignoring God's warning, until judgment comes suddenly.

Question 15

What is the difference between the faithful servant and the wicked servant?

The faithful servant keeps doing his master's work while he waits. The wicked servant thinks his master is delayed, mistreats others, and lives carelessly.

Question 16

What should Matthew 24 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 24 should cause believers to live:

- Watchful against deception.
- Calm in a troubled world.
- Faithful in suffering.

- Loving, not cold-hearted.
- Sharing the gospel with the nations.
- Trusting the words of Jesus.
- Not trying to set dates.
- Ready every day.
- Faithful in their work for the Lord.
- Kind to others while they wait.
- Looking forward to Christ's glorious return.

LVII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 24 asks several important questions.

Am I More Impressed by Buildings Than by Jesus?

Am I Building My Life on Things That Will Pass Away?

Do I Know the Real Jesus Well Enough to Recognize a False One?

Am I Living in Fear or in Faith?

Is My Love for God Growing Warmer or Colder?

Will I Stand Firm If Following Jesus Becomes Costly?

Am I Helping the Gospel Reach the Nations?

Do I Test What I Hear by God's Word?

Do I Believe Jesus Is Really Coming Again?

Am I Spending More Time Guessing When Than Getting Ready?

Am I Living Like the People in Noah's Day?

Am I in the Ark — Do I Truly Belong to Jesus?

If Jesus Came Today, Would He Find Me Faithful?

LVIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Stones Fall, His Words Stand”

Matthew 24 begins with stones.

The disciples pointed to the temple.

The stones were huge.

The buildings were beautiful.

They seemed permanent.

But Jesus said:

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

And it happened.

Matthew 24 also has a promise in the middle.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”

This is the lesson.

Everything we can see will one day fall.

Buildings.

Nations.

Bank accounts.

Careers.

Even the sky and the earth.

But the words of Jesus will stand forever.

So the wise person builds on what lasts.

Not on stones, but on the Savior.

Not on what we can see, but on what He has said.

Principle:

Do not build your life on stones that will fall; build it on the words that will never pass away.

LIX. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 24 begins with Jesus leaving the temple.

The disciples admired the buildings.

Jesus said they would be destroyed.

And about forty years later, they were.

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus told His disciples what was coming.

Deception.

Wars.

Famines.

Earthquakes.

Persecution.

Falling away.

Cold love.

False prophets.

Great tribulation.

But He also gave them promises.

The one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

The gospel will reach all nations.

God will shorten the days for the sake of His people.

The Son of Man will come on the clouds with power and great glory.

His angels will gather His chosen ones from the ends of the earth.

And His words will never pass away.

Jesus did not tell us the day or the hour.

He told us something better.

He told us how to be ready.

Like Noah, trust God's warning and enter the ark.

Like the faithful servant, keep doing the Master's work.

Do not say, **“My master is staying away a long time.”**

Live as if He could come today.

Because He could.

So today:

Do not be deceived.

Do not be afraid.

Do not let your love grow cold.

Stand firm.

Share the gospel.

Keep watch.

Be faithful.

And until He returns:

Be ready.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You hold the future in Your hands.

Thank You that nothing takes You by surprise.

Forgive us for being more impressed by buildings than by Your Son.

Forgive us for building our lives on things that will pass away.

Lord Jesus, thank You for warning us before trouble comes.

Keep us from being deceived.

Help us know You so well through Your Word that we can recognize every false christ and false prophet.

When we hear of wars and disasters, keep us from fear.

Remind us that You are still in control.

When following You becomes costly, give us the strength to stand firm to the end.

Keep our love for You from growing cold.

Use us to carry the good news of Your kingdom to all nations.

Thank You for the promise that You are coming again.

Thank You that You will come on the clouds with power and great glory.

Thank You that You will gather every one of Your people.

Thank You that Your words will never pass away.

Help us not to waste time guessing the day or the hour.

Instead, help us to be ready every day.

Keep us from living like the people in Noah's day.

Keep us safe in You, our ark of salvation.

Find us faithful, doing Your work, when You return.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.” — Matthew 24:44

Central Truth

Jesus warns His followers of deception, hardship, and judgment, promises His certain and glorious return, and calls them to endure faithfully and live ready at all times.

Matthew 24 in One Sentence

Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple, warns His disciples of deception, persecution, and great distress, promises that He will return visibly on the clouds with power and great glory to gather His people, and calls every believer to keep watch, stay faithful, and be ready, because no one knows the day or the hour.