

## Does Matthew 24 Support a Pre-Tribulation Rapture Or Not?

Matthew 24 is one of the *most lengthy important passages* regarding the End Times; it also gives specific information on the timing of The Rapture. Matt 24 can be stated as the “End Time Discourse,” (Mark 13, and Luke 21 also give very similar details), as so much information is contained in this one chapter. Therefore, Matt. 24:1-31 ought to be included as a significant passage when dealing with a teaching on End Time Events, and the foundation for studying or teaching the book of Revelation. There are many facts and events listed in Matt. 24 that precede The Rapture. Furthermore, Jesus describes what will be *"The specific sign of His coming, (to rapture us)."* Therefore, in order to better understand End Times and The Rapture, it is crucial to understand Matthew 24. Let's see what Jesus says, beginning in verses 1-4, *“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, **when** shall these things be? And **what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?** 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.**”* The disciples wanted to specifically know when will it be that there shall not be left here one stone upon another, and what would ***be the sign of the Lord Coming.***

Jesus then goes into great detail ***and lists all sorts of events that would precede*** His coming. We must understand that though Matthew was Jewish, the gospel of Matthew is very relevant to Jew and Gentile. The gospel means the “good news,” and it is for everyone. Jesus knew the disciples would not physically be alive when He returns. Nevertheless, Jesus tells them what events would precede His return. His words regarding His return were especially for those who would be alive for His return, so that they would not be deceived. Let's be very careful that ***we don't omit, or exclude any of these events!*** *“And Jesus answered and said unto them, **take heed** that no man deceive you;”* these ***are strong words of caution about being misled or deceived.*** Therefore, we need to take special notice and see what events will precede His coming and ***not let anyone deceive us*** regarding those events! We can be deceived either by someone's deliberate attempt to deceive us, or not deliberately- this is usually the case. People are often deceived by a lack of knowledge or understanding. Verse 5, *“For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ, and will deceive many. 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not*

*troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these things are the beginning of sorrows.*

The previous verses state that these things “*are the beginning of sorrows.*” They are the birth pangs, or only the beginning of difficult times. The following events are sequential, because Jesus keeps using “*then.*” He uses “*then*” 8 different times; the last two are “*and then.*” This is of special emphasis; so you will realize that these events are sequential. 9 ***Then*** shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 ***And then*** shall many be offended, and shall betray one another (The Apostasy), and shall hate one another. Verse 10 is about The Falling Away or Apostasy. (Lk. 21:16 provides additional facts, “*And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.*”) 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and ***then*** shall the end come.” At this point, there is no mention by Jesus about the sign of His coming. Therefore, it can not be presumed that He comes before these events, or that The Rapture had already occurred. The following verses make it clear (to those who follow the context), that there are additional events to precede the Lord's coming.

Verse 15, “When ye therefore shall see (it's in the future, not a past occurrence) ***the abomination of desolation***, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand:)” Dan. 8:11, “*Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.*” Dan. 11:36, “*And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.*”

**“The Abomination Of Desolation” is one of the main events that would precede Jesus’ 2nd Coming!** Notice that Jesus says “*When ye therefore shall see;*” Jesus was not referring to a past occurrence, but to a future occurrence. Therefore, Antiochus Epiphanes IV in 167 BC could not have been the antichrist.

Furthermore, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, that was not the Abomination of Desolation, as no Roman leader was exalting and magnifying himself above every god and speaking marvelous things against the God of gods. 16 **“Then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto those that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not be in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For **then** there shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.**

Verse 21 clearly mentions **“Great Tribulation.” This is *The Tribulation***, and Jesus emphasizes this because it will be the worst time in the history of the world. Therefore, it will be worse than the Inquisition, Hitler, Stalin, etc. 22 *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 **Then** if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there: believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert: go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers: believe it not.”*

Jesus has still not identified *“The Sign of His Coming;”* Therefore, The Rapture would not have yet taken place. This also implies that Christians are on earth during The Tribulation; the reason is that Jesus hasn't yet come to rapture His saints. However, beginning in the very next verse, verse 27, Jesus then mentions additional facts about *“the sign of his coming.”* 27 *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.”* 28 *For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Verses 29-30, **“Immediately after the tribulation** of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And **then** shall appear the **sign of the Son of man** in heaven: and **then** shall all the tribes of the earth mourn . . .”*

(non-Christians will mourn, Christians will be rejoicing) *and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”*

**Immediately after The Tribulation**, there will be what many Bible scholars believe will be a dreaded world-wide Meteorite Shower of staggering proportions. *“The sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.”* However this is still not the sign of the Son of Man. The Lord hasn't yet appeared and come to gather (take away- Rapture) those who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior. However, after the Meteorite Shower, verse 30, ***“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn (non-Christians will mourn, but true Christians will rejoice), and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory!”***

The **“Sign of the Son of man”** is when Jesus returns in the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. This is referring to verse 30 regarding, ***“the sign of the Son of man in heaven.”*** This is the ***sign of the Lord’s Coming to rapture His followers***. Matt. 24:1-30 really makes it quite clear regarding the events leading up to The Rapture. Then, afterwards Jesus Rapture's His Church- the *Christians, for the next verse, verse 31 states, “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”* Therefore, Matt. 24 states that The Rapture **is after** The Apostasy, The Abomination of Desolation, The Tribulation, The Meteorite Shower. Matt. 24 show these events ***precede the Sign of the Lord’s Coming*** to gather His Saints- The Rapture.

To summarize the main points in verses 27, 29 and 30. First, immediately after The Tribulation, there will be a world-wide Meteorite Shower. Second, the Lord’s Coming will be *“as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west.”* Third, all the tribes of the earth, *“and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”* Those who have accepted Jesus as Lord will be rejoicing, whereas ***many will mourn***, because they hadn't accepted Jesus as Savior and will become subject to His wrath. This is also stated in Rev. 6:15-17. *“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains: 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”*

Do you remember 2 Thes. 2:1, that The Rapture is *“the coming of our Lord, and by our gathering together to Him? Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.”* And that before The Rapture would occur, the Apostasy, and the Abomination of Desolation had to first occur. Verse 3, *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (The Rapture) shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (the antichrist).”* Matt. 24 and 2 Thes. 2 state that The Falling Away and The Apostasy take place before The Rapture.

Matt. 24 also dispels the myth of a Secret Rapture. Verse 26, *“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert: go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.”* Also verse 27, *“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”* Verse 30, *“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”* The Rapture doesn’t sound very secret, but instead, it’s going to **be one of the most visible all-time events of all history!** It's not visible for just the 12 tribes of Israel. All the tribes (nationalities) of the earth will see the Lord coming. The Lord Jesus returns for all those who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior. Matt. 24 is loaded with facts about The Rapture, and the events preceding The Rapture. You will need to read it several times, and meditate on it, especially if you have been deceived. Ask the Lord to confirm and show you that what the words say, is literally **what the words say**, and not some other obtuse meaning or contrived interpretation. The verses clearly state when the Lord **returns**, to Rapture His saints, after all the previous events listed in Matt. 24.

There will be those who say, “that’s not really what Matt. 24 is saying.” However, Jesus says in Matt. 24:4, *“. . . Take heed that no man deceive you.”* He then clearly lists major events that will precede His coming. Nevertheless, some people will often use other verses to give their view, but **the verses are out of context**. They often don't include the sequential verses that explain the meaning of the passage. They say when the Lord returns, in Matt. 24 that The Rapture already took place, and that Jesus comes with His previously Raptured Saints with power and glory. However, **verse 30 in Matt. 24 doesn’t say, “the Saints or His Raptured Church are seen with** the Lord when He returns.” The reason is simple; The Rapture hasn't taken place yet. This is also consistent and confirmed in 1 Cor. 15:51-52, *“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an*

eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (previously deceased Christians) will be raised incorruptible, and we (Christians who are living) shall be changed.” Previous deceased Christians are raptured first, they receive their incorruptible body, then Christians who are alive will also be raptured and changed (receive our incorruptible bodies).

Therefore, when Jesus comes, The Rapture hasn't yet taken place, because verse 30 doesn't say that the saints are seen with the Lord in their glorified bodies. Don't read anything extra into this verse! Furthermore, verse 31 **also clarifies** that The Rapture **hadn't yet** taken place! “*And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall **gather together** His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*” The Rapture then takes place as 1 Cor. 15:52, states, “*Then, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (dead Christians) will be raised incorruptible, and we (Christians who are living) shall be changed.*” The Lord gathers us, **after He comes**, which is **after** the Abomination of Desolation, **after** The Tribulation, **and after the** Meteorite Shower. Then the Lord will be seen coming in the clouds; **and then He gathers and Raptures His Saints** (verses 30-31). Some people say this is The Millennium. However, at The Millennium, the saints come with the Lord. Jesus states in Matt. 24:31, that the angels, “*shall gather together His elect.*” In other words, the elect, which are His followers, haven't yet been raptured; it's after they are gathered.

Nevertheless, many Christians basically say these verses mean The Rapture had already occurred earlier, and that the Lord is now coming back with His previously Raptured Saints to punish the wicked at this time, referring to Rev. 19:14, “*And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*” However, the verses don't support that view. Verse 31 states, “*And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, **and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.***” The Rapture hadn't yet occurred, **and that's why the Christians needed to be gathered** from all four corners of the heaven, or the world. Many even say these are the people who didn't go up in The Rapture which is supposed to have occurred earlier. However, if that was the case, then Matt. 24:30 would have had to state that the Saints **are seen with the Lord coming**. Nowhere in Matt. 24 is it stated or implied that the saints are seen with the Lord when He is seen in the sky! **There is also only one Rapture**, and let's agree with what the Bible states in context, and with other related verses.

Furthermore, had the Bible said, "The Lord returns with His saints," then Matt. 24:30 would have been in contradiction to 2 Thes. 2 and other key verses. The Bible never contradicts itself, however many people often misinterpret certain verses, (sometimes to meet their own views and beliefs, or due to lack of understanding), they pull verses out of context. People will say, but the Bible says in 1 Thes. 4:14, "*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*" This verse is pulled out of context, because the next 3 verses explain that their spirit does come with the Lord, but they don't have their glorified body yet. These verses are covered more fully in a later chapter, "When The Lord Returns in 1 Thes. 4, Are The Raptured Saints Already With Him?" Verse 14, and verses 15-17 are in full agreement to what Matt 24 states, and 1 Cor. 15:51-52. People need to not be so quick to come up with a conclusion about End Time Prophecy; they need to see how all the related scriptures actually *fit together as a whole*.

These verses in Matt. 24:4-28 are *about events preceding The Rapture*. Yes, it is true, that after Christians are raptured, then the Lord begins His Wrath on those who hadn't accepted His free gift of salvation. That is why when they see the Lord coming with power and great glory, they will mourn; they will be freaking out and hiding in the caves. They realize they will face His Wrath, and it's too late to accept Him. The Wrath was already explained in an earlier foundational chapter (Are The Tribulation And The Wrath The Same Or Are They Different?). Jesus provides more than sufficient information of the events that need to take place before The Rapture. He has listed these events in sequence, and used "*then,*" plus "*and then,*" so that we could see these events are in sequential order. We ought not try to complicate and confuse the order of events as Jesus stated in Matt. 24:4-31.

The devil knows that if he can get Christians into thinking they will be Raptured before the Tribulation, *he can deceive them*. Then, many Christians won't be prepared, and they won't be as effective. Christians will need to closely trust the Lord at this difficult time, and to be a witness to bring others into a saving knowledge of Jesus. However, if Christians *aren't prepared*, they won't be as effective as they could have been. This point can not be under estimated. Many Christians will become greatly disappointed that The Rapture hasn't come to take them away, *and some will fall away at this time and be part of the Apostasy!* The Apostasy is the falling away of believers, it was previously covered in the chapter, "Why Is 2 Thessalonians 2:1:4 Foundational To Understanding The Rapture?" Jesus has given us strong words

of caution while He was on earth concerning the Last Days and of The Rapture. He said in Matt. 24:4, ***“Take heed that no man deceive you.”*** No man means **no one**, not even a renowned Bible teacher, if their teaching is different from that given in the Scriptures. However, ***too many people are being deceived, and getting the order of events in 2 Thes. 2, and Matt. 24, out of order!***

Contrary to what many have been told, we are **absolutely not** on the brink of The Rapture, or that The Rapture can occur at any moment, or that The Rapture is the next main event in Bible prophecy, or that Christians won't go through the Tribulation. Matt. 24 lists at least 4 major events: (1) The Apostasy, (2) The Abomination of Desolation, (3) The Tribulation, and (4) the Meteorite Shower. It would be great if the next prophetic event would be The Rapture, however, Matt. 24 and 2 Thes. 2 (and other verses) state it will not occur until ***after these world-wide events take place***. There are many other verses in Revelation and Daniel that show that The Rapture is after The Tribulation. These are covered in the chapter, “Does The Book Of Revelation Show That The Church Is Raptured Before The Tribulation And Before The Seals Are Opened?” The verses in Daniel are covered mainly in Part III which is about Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week.

**Matthew 24- Events Prior To The Rapture**

Event #	Description Of Event The events in the following verses are chronological. All verses are quoted exactly; bold italics are used for emphasis.	Verse
1	<i>For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.</i>	5
2	<b><i>And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.</i></b>	6
3	<i>For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: <b>and</b> there shall be famines, <b>and</b> pestilences, <b>and</b> earthquakes in divers places.</i>	7
4	<b><i>Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.</i></b>	9
5	<b><i>And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another (this is <b>The Apostasy or The Falling Away</b>).</i></b>	10
6	<b><i>And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.</i></b>	11
7	<b><i>And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.</i></b>	12
8	<b><i>And this gospel of the kingdom shall be <u>preached in all the world</u> for a witness unto all nations; <b>and then shall the end come.</b></i></b>	14
9	<i>When ye <b>therefore</b> shall see the <b>abomination of desolation</b>, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) The parentheses and words are exactly as shown in the KJV.</i>	15
10	<i>For <b>then</b> shall be <b>great tribulation (The Great Tribulation)</b>, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.</i>	21
11	<i>Immediately <b>after the tribulation</b> of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. This is a colossal <b>Meteorite Shower</b>.</i>	29
12	<b><i>And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: <b>and then</b> shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, <b>and they shall see</b> the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.</i></b>	30
13	<b>“The Rapture”</b> <b><i>And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet (The Last Trumpet), and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (The <u>gathering</u> is The Rapture as in 2 Thes.2:1 “Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him.”).</i></b>	31