

Matthew 24

Prophetic perspective



This is a long, complex and controversial chapter. When it comes to talking about “the End Times” (the technical word is *eschatology*), there is no clear agreement even between evangelical Christians much beyond the basics. We would all say that Jesus will return in glory, but precisely when, where and how (and what precisely we might expect to be able to observe in advance of that moment) ... a whole host of different answers are proposed.

There's no time this morning to give definitive answers to much of this. But I'm proceeding from my conviction that the book of Revelation *doesn't* give a clear chronological ordering of things we must expect to see *literally* fulfilled ... and just looking largely within this single chapter to see what we can make of it.

➤ What is your *perspective* on this chapter?

Work out what your overall scheme concerning “the Last Days” is. You might not have thought it through rigorously, but what general notions do you have?

How do your initial notions stack up with what we have here?

➤ Be alert: “see that no one leads you astray” (4)

Why does Jesus start with this?

What makes this area, above all, such a minefield?

What sways your thinking about where we might be as regards the timetable leading up to Christ's coming?

➤ Be alert: “stay awake” (42)

Here are two clear implications for Christian living, no matter how long the master might be “delayed” (48)

How can we expect the unexpected (44)?

How might we abuse Jesus' apparent delay? Or should that be, how *do* we? How would we feel if Jesus returned *right now*?

➤ Past, future and present

Cast your eye over the whole chapter.

What do you think might be past, ongoing, or future?

Do some things fit into more than one category?

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