

Matthew 24 Series - Matthew 16:24-28

Part 1 in the Series - NO RAPTURE, NO SECOND COMING, NO THIRD COMING

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In my introduction to you last week, I told you that the theme of my ministry for over 30 years now, has been, that Christ is King. I need to be perfectly clear: I do not believe that He's a coming King. I don't believe that someday He'll be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. I believe that He's King right now. Right now, He is ruling and reigning in the lives of all those who will allow His reign. I believe it is the responsibility of every living, breathing creature to conform to His Kingship - right now. In order to believe and preach this, one must have solid, Scriptural basis to make such statements - and further - to live in such a manner because I'm here to tell you that preaching and living that way - is not popular - and it can actually be dangerous. Not dangerous from Christ, of course, but dangerous from those who believe that man is king and that man has the authority from God to rule over other men.

About 30 years ago, I found myself at a point in my life where I cried out to the Lord and pleaded with Him to make Himself real to me. Up until that point in time, I could count on one hand how many times I had missed church. I had attended 2 Bible colleges and I was now working in my second church ministry - but still - something was missing.

I had read Matthew 16:24-28 a thousand times in my lifetime already, but after pleading with God to become more real to me, I found myself back at this passage of Scripture.

I'm going to share some special music with you now. Please take this opportunity to get your Bibles and turn to Matthew 16:24 and prepare to study the Scriptures with me.

I'm reading from the King James Bible beginning in verse 24 of Matthew 16.

[24] Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

[25] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

[26] For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

[27] For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

I need to stop right here for just a moment. All of us need to think about this. Are we

willing to accept this?

[24] Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

[25] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

If we are not willing to take this step - then nothing - nothing else we can do or say relating to this book or to Christ matters. This is the way that Lord Jesus Christ instructed His disciples to walk, and if we are not willing to walk this way, then it is all meaningless.

But then the reward for accepting this way and walking in it is immense.

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Christ had just told His disciples that they were required to lose their lives, give everything up, and follow Him - even if it meant death.

But He was also quick to tell them the reward for doing so. And not only that, but He went a step further and told them when they could expect that reward.

Verse 28:

[28] Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

At that point in time in my life, I had read that passage a thousand times, but for some reason, that night, it spoke to me - no it screamed at me - something I had never seen before.

Christ had just told His disciples that if they would be willing to lay down their lives and follow Him - that some of them - would not die - until they saw Christ coming in His Kingdom.

If the Christ' coming Kingdom is in the future, then some of His disciples, Peter, James, John are STILL ALIVE today. Either that, or He lied to them. I for one, will not accept that Christ lied to His disciples in order to trick them into false hope that if they followed Him - they would receive a great reward and that included that some of them would not taste of death.

I don't know how else to say this, but to come right out and say it - and I'll say it with all boldness: If you believe - as nearly ALL of those who call themselves Christians today - that Christ is returning to this earth in our future to set up His Kingdom - then you have fallen for the greatest deception that has ever come upon mankind.

There is NO rapture. There is no second coming. There is no third coming. Everything you have been taught about the rapture - or the second coming - has already occurred. It's not going to happen again. History may repeat itself - but the prophecies concerning the return of Christ and the setting up of His Kingdom as described in Matthew 16 has already occurred and it occurred in the generation in which His disciples who heard His words lived.

Now, before some of you just completely shut me off - you've got to ask yourself a question. What if he's right? Does it matter? You better believe it matters because your salvation depends on it. What if he's wrong? Does it matter? You better believe it matters because your salvation depends on it.

I believe your salvation depends on what you believe about the Kingdom of Christ.

Listen, if you believe the Kingdom is future - then YOUR SALVATION is future. Are you willing to take that chance?

I for one, am not willing to leave my salvation up to chance. I strongly encourage anyone who may be lingering on the fence trying to decide whether or not to continue listening, to at least stay through this message, search the Scriptures with me, see if there is anything you may have been mistaken about, then decide whether or not more investigation is needed.

The modern day deceived preacher will go from verse 28 of Matthew 16, directly to verse 1 of Matthew 17 and will try to say that the transfiguration of Christ was the fulfillment of Matthew 16:28, but when an honest comparison is made, it simply does not fit.

We can refute that false theology in the first couple words of verse 1.

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,"

So it's 6 days since Christ spoke of His coming in His Kingdom in verse 28 of chapter 16. If you were speaking to a group of people, say twelve people. And you were going to tell them about an event taking place next week - or say - 6 days later. Would you say to them, "Some of you are not going to die until this happens 6 days from now?"

Of course not. We all know it's possible that something could happen to any of us in the next 6 days - but we would not speak of such an occurrence in those terms. Yeah, next week, some of you are not going to die until we get together again. That's ridiculous. We wouldn't speak that way and neither would Christ.

The words of Christ relating to "the Son of man coming in His Kingdom" is synonymous with all the other passages concerning the coming of Christ in His Kingdom.

In Matthew 26:64, Christ tells Caiphas:

[64] Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

In Mark 13:26, Christ says:

[26] And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

In Mark 14: the discourse with Caiphas was like this

[61] But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

[62] And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

In Luke 21: the Lord Jesus said describes His own coming like this:

[25] And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

[26] Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

[27] And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

[28] And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

The words of Christ in Matthew 16:28 were not in reference to His anointing in Matthew 17 - but were His reference to His revealing to the whole world as King of kings and Lord of lords - which would be - revealed to some of His disciples and would

be greatest show of power the world had ever seen. And this did not occur in Matthew 17.

The promise to Christ's disciples of their reward for following Him was repeated again in I Thessalonians 2:

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Go back with me where we started in Matthew 16. There is a very fundamental understanding of the Scriptures that we have to grasp and hold to or we will be lost in our studies and a lot of the Scriptures will be confusing to us.

We have got to understand how important the generation was - the people that Christ was first manifest in the flesh to. We should all be able to agree that this had to be the most significant time in the history of mankind. God the Father caused His Son to be born as a man and walk this earth for the purpose of bringing salvation.

What could be more important? This generation and the events that occurred in and to them were the most significant things to happen to the human race up to that time.

God's own Son was physically walking on this earth. How can we not see the vast importance and implications of such a time?

This was the generation that would witness first hand all the many miracles that Christ would perform. Time and time again, He would back up His words with good deeds, but ultimately, it would be this generation that would reject His Kingship over them - decide that the kingship they demanded in I Samuel 8 was the preferred method of government - and they killed Him.

They did this willingly, some knowingly, some ignorantly, but it was all done so that the prophecies would be fulfilled - and it all happened to that generation.

It is without question that we must understand the phrase "this generation" as it appears over and over in the gospels - what it means - and who it was - or else we will not be able to understand the words of Christ - and again - our salvation depends on it.

Time does not permit to examine every time the phrase "this generation" occurs in the gospels. Please research this yourself.

Since we are going to spend a great deal of time in Matthew 24, let's look at a parable of Christ found in Matthew 21, then we'll go to chapter 23 and examine the phrase "this generation" as it is found in Matthew 23.

Matthew 21:33

Now who is Christ talking about in this parable? Verse 45. ...they perceived that he spake of them.

Go to Matthew 23:1

Who is He talking to? Very clearly. He's talking to His disciples and to the multitude.

Let's start in verse 13:

Let's examine the word generation in verse 33. The Greek word here is ghennaymah 1081 which means the offspring - referring back to John 8:44 when Christ told the unbelievers they were of their father the devil.

In verse 36, the word is genea which means an age, the period or or the persons, age, generation, nation, time. He's talking about that specific group of people in that specific time period.

I concluded something many years ago relating to my understanding of the Scriptures and it will help you too. Listen closely.

Not one word of the Bible was written to you or me.

But EVERY word was written for you and me.

It is of utmost importance that we understand time and place of when and who certain things were said to in order for us to understand the Scriptures.

We are to ascertain the principles from the Scriptures that apply and teach us how to live our lives in following Christ. Christ did not speak one parable to you and me. Christ did not preach one message to you and me. But every parable and every message and every principle taught from them was written or said for us. It matters greatly that we understand these things.

Now, time permitting, let's get right to Matthew 24. It will take several weeks to complete the rest of this message.

Beginning in verse 1 - remember all the while that not one word of this was written to us - but every word was written for us:

We have so much to cover now that we are in Matthew 24 and we'll get to it, but tonight, we may only have enough time to discuss the world as it appears in Matthew 24.

The word "world" is a very interesting word when used throughout Matthew 24. The word "world" appears three times in Matthew 24. A simple study of those words shows that each time the word is used, it comes from a completely different Greek word, each

with a completely different definition in the Greek. The first time it is mentioned is in verse three, "and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

The Greek word for "world" here is number 165 in the Greek dictionary of Strong's and means - aion: an age; perpetuity; by implication the world; specifically (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future): - age, course, eternal, (for)ever etc. The word "world" here is concerned with the Jewish AGE or the Messianic period. Keep this in mind while we look at the other two times that the word "world" is used in this passage.

Are there any passages of Scripture that talk about an end to the Jewish age? There are, and I will bring them to you later. There is something curious about this usage here that only recently dawned on me as having any significance. The religious communities that have disregarded the Authorized Version of the Bible in favor of such versions as the New International Version and others, still cling to the phrase "the end of the world," even though in the NIV, the Greek word "aion" is translated in the English as AGE.

They still talk about the "end of the world" (and use that exact same phrase) but the Bible that they use doesn't even say that. Interesting. The word "world" is also found in verse 14, where Christ tells his disciples: 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.

The word "world" here comes from the Greek word oikoumene (oykoomenay) which is 3625 in the Strong's and means - land, i.e. the (terrene part of the) globe; specifically the Roman empire: - earth, world. Now we find that Christ says that the gospel will be preached in all the Roman empire, then shall the end come. In all my days of being brought up in the religious world, not once was I told that the word "world" here could have meant anything other than the entire inhabited world. Does this change anything?

Does the fact that Christ used the Greek word for the Roman Empire do anything to the meaning of this passage? If nothing else, it should show us that someone or some people are not doing even a minimal amount of studying when preparing messages on these passages.

The last time we find the word "world" is in verse 21. Christ is telling his disciples that there would be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. The word "world" here comes from the Greek word cosmos (2889 in Strong's) which means orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively. - adorning, world. Why wasn't this word used for verse 14? Or even more so for verse three? Shouldn't the "end of the world" be the "end of the cosmos?"

Each one of these usages are extraordinary in and of themselves. Organized religion would have us believe that Christ was teaching the end of the cosmos in verse three. The truth is, Christ was referring to the end of the Jewish age or the Messianic age. They would also have us believe that the gospel had to be preached to the ends of the cosmos before the end would come. Years ago, someone told me that we were getting closer than

ever to the return of Christ because of something that Oral Roberts was getting ready to do. I was told that Oral Roberts was going to play a major part in the fulfillment of the Bible prophecy concerning the gospel reaching the entire world. I was told that he was going to parachute television sets down into the remotest tribes of Africa so that they could tune into his show and hear the gospel, then Christ would come. My reply was then, well, what would they plug the TV's into? They have electricity coming into their huts, but they've never heard the gospel???

The truth is, Christ said the gospel would be preached throughout the Roman empire, then the end of the AGE would come. Those two miscarriages of Scripture have caused great harm to the truth of Christ's message in Matthew 24. Before we dig deeper into this wonderful chapter, I think there is something else that is extremely vital to the proper understanding of this passage. Who was Christ talking to? Verse one makes it clear that Jesus and his disciples are the key figures in this passage of Scripture. Verse 2 says And Jesus said unto THEM, See YE... Verse 3: ...the disciples came unto him privately saying, Tell US... Verse 4: And Jesus answered and said unto THEM, Take heed that no man deceive YOU. Verse 6: And YE shall hear of ...wars: see that YE be not troubled:... Verse 9: Then shall they deliver YOU up to be afflicted, and shall kill YOU: and YE shall be hated... Verse 15: When YE therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,... Verse 20: But pray YE that YOUR flight be not in the winter,... Verse 25: Behold, I have told YOU before. Verse 26: Wherefore if they shall say unto YOU, Behold 15 Definitions of the Word "World" he is in the desert... Verse 32: Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, YE know that summer is nigh: Verse 33: So likewise YE, when YE shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verse 34: Verily I say unto YOU, THIS generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. I have added the capital letters for emphasis. In my Bible, I have gone through Matthew 24 and have circled every time there is a word that describes who is talking and to whom the words are spoken. It is overwhelmingly clear to me that Christ was talking to his disciples, 2,000 years ago, and not to some future generation some 2,000 years later. Why is it so hard to believe the Bible for exactly what it says? When it says that "Christ said to his disciples", why can't we just believe that? Once again, was Christ speaking to His disciples, or was He again misleading them? Was He lying? Did He intend those things for the ones that He said them to, or was it all a clever way of keeping them faithful and devoted by giving them false hopes of His return for them? What about John 14? Was Christ just "planting seeds" for His deception when He told His disciples in verses 1 through 3: Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. Verse 2: In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. Verse 3: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there may ye be also. What was He telling these disciples? Remember the words of the angel in Acts 1 when Christ ascended into Heaven? Take a quick look and see for yourself. Not one word of the Bible was written to us, but every

word was written for us! None of us were alive 2,000 years ago when “The Book” was written. How can we say that any of the New Testament was written to us? When Christ told His disciples that they would see all these things... why is it so difficult to simply believe what Christ said? Here is one Who was Christ Talking To? 16 reason. Virtually all of the prophecy that is being preached in the church buildings today has come from a scheme of Bible interpretation propagated by C.I. Scofield early in the 1900's.

Organized religion has embraced Scofield's new interpretations. In Scofield's own writings - “What Do the Prophets Say?” on page 161, he admits to having "controversy with well-meaning Bible students over the too exclusively Jewish conception of the age to come.” Let's examine what Scofield says about Matthew 24 in his reference notes. I will show you how he intentionally has mislead those individuals who have chosen to adopt his schemes. In verse 34, Christ tells His disciples, Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Scofield says in his notes that we know that Christ could not have possibly been referring to that “generation” in which the disciples were living because of the definitions of the Greek words for “generation.” He says that “generation” here comes from the Greek word GENEIA. It does. It is number 1074 in the Greek dictionary of Strong's Concordance. But, Scofield the deceiver, does not give you the definition of GENEIA, he instead goes down to 1085 - GENOS - and gives you that definition, all the while telling you that he is giving you the definition for GENEIA. He uses the definition GENOS, which says "off-spring, stock, nation, et.al." and tells you that it means that the word generation in Matthew 24:34 means A RACE OF PEOPLE (specifically, the Israelis) and NOT the time period for the people that Jesus was talking