

# Fulfilled Prophecies

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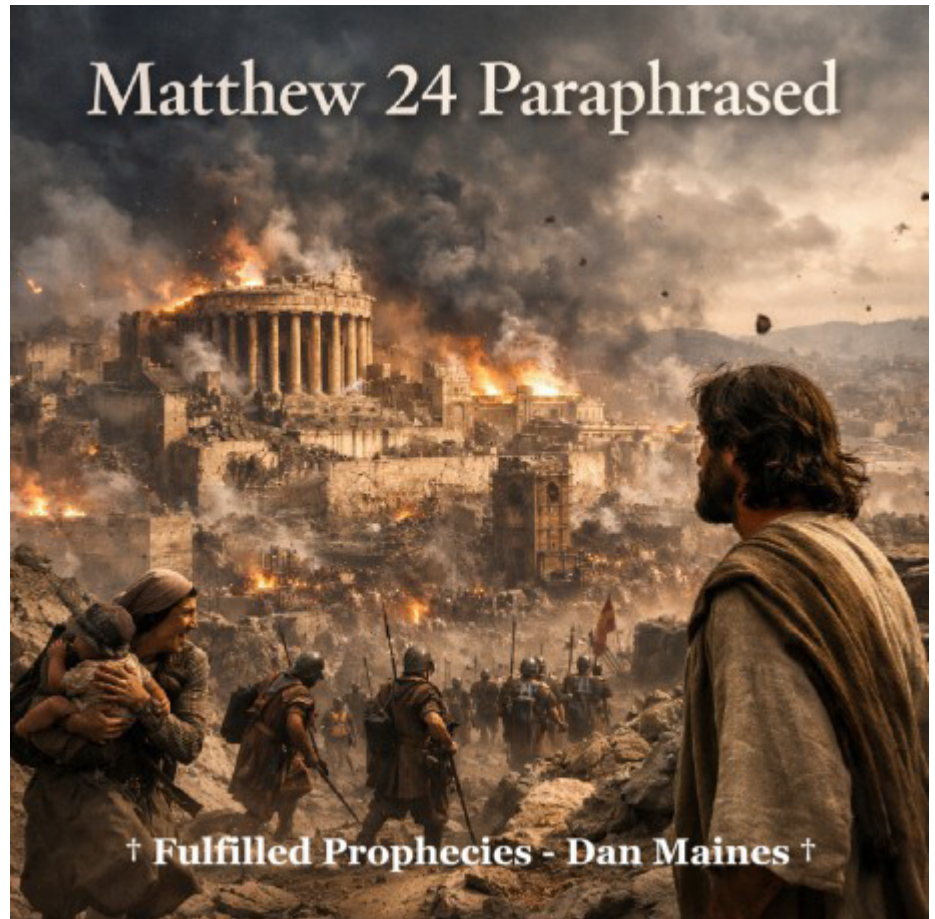
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## Matthew 24 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

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### Introduction

† Matthew 24 records Jesus explaining the coming judgment that would fall on Jerusalem and the temple within that generation. The disciples had just admired the temple buildings, but Jesus immediately warned them that the entire system was about to collapse. This chapter is not about the end of the physical world, it is about the end of the Old Covenant age and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

† Jesus repeatedly tied these events to the lifetime of the

people standing before Him. The timing statements throughout the chapter make it clear that the prophecy concerned their generation, not a distant future thousands of years later (Matthew 24:34).

† Understanding this chapter requires remembering the covenant setting. The temple, sacrifices, priesthood, and city were all about to be judged because Israel rejected the Messiah (Matthew 23:37-38).

† Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 record the same Olivet Discourse. Each writer preserves the same warning from Jesus about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Luke provides additional clarity by explaining that the abomination of desolation refers to Jerusalem being surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20).

### **Matthew 24:1**

Jesus left the temple, and as He was walking away His disciples pointed out the impressive temple buildings to Him.

† The disciples were still impressed by the physical glory of the temple, but Jesus was about to reveal that the entire structure was doomed (Matthew 23:38).

† Josephus later recorded that the temple was completely destroyed by the Roman army in AD 70, exactly as Jesus warned.

### **Matthew 24:2**

Jesus answered and told them that not one stone of the temple would remain on another, everything would be torn down.

† This prophecy was fulfilled when the Roman army under Titus destroyed Jerusalem and dismantled the temple in AD 70.

† Josephus describes the destruction in detail, confirming that the temple complex was leveled.

### **Matthew 24:3**

Later Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, and the disciples asked Him privately when these things would happen, and what sign would mark His coming and the end of the age.

† The question concerned the destruction Jesus had just predicted.

† The end of the age refers to the end of the Old Covenant age centered around the temple system (Hebrews 8:13).

#### **Matthew 24:4**

Jesus warned them to make sure no one deceived them.

† False teachers and false messiahs were already appearing during the first century.

† Josephus records multiple men claiming prophetic authority before the war with Rome.

#### **Matthew 24:5**

Many would come claiming authority in His name and would deceive many people.

† First century history records several messianic claimants who led revolts or movements.

† These false leaders contributed to the chaos that eventually led to Jerusalem's destruction.

#### **Matthew 24:6**

They would hear of wars and rumors of wars, but they were not to panic because these things had to happen, but the end had not yet come.

† The Roman world experienced constant conflict during this period.

† Jesus made it clear these events were signs leading up to the coming judgment.

#### **Matthew 24:7**

Nations would rise against nations, kingdoms against kingdoms, and there would be famines and earthquakes in various places.

† Historical records confirm earthquakes in places such as Laodicea and Pompeii during the first century.

† Acts also records a major famine during the reign of Claudius (Acts 11:28).

### **Matthew 24:8**

All these events were only the beginning of birth pains.

† These signs indicated the approaching judgment but were not the final event.

† The language reflects the growing turmoil leading up to the Jewish war.

### **Matthew 24:9**

Believers would be persecuted, hated, and even killed because of their loyalty to Christ.

† The book of Acts and early church history record severe persecution during this time.

† Nero's persecution in the 60s AD fits this description.

### **Matthew 24:10**

Many would stumble, betray one another, and hate one another.

† The internal divisions among Jews and among believers became severe during the war years.

† Josephus describes intense betrayal and violence within Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 24:11**

Many false prophets would appear and deceive many people.

† Several prophetic figures arose in the first century claiming divine guidance.

† Their teachings often misled the people during the crisis.

### **Matthew 24:12**

Because lawlessness increased, the love of many would grow cold.

† Social collapse and violence intensified in Jerusalem before

its fall.

† Josephus described widespread cruelty and moral breakdown.

### **Matthew 24:13**

The one who endured until the end would be saved.

† Endurance meant surviving the coming tribulation surrounding Jerusalem's destruction.

† Faithful believers escaped the city before the siege.

### **Matthew 24:14**

The gospel of the kingdom would be preached in the whole world before the end came.

† The apostles testified that the gospel had already spread throughout the Roman world (Colossians 1:23).

† Paul also confirmed that the gospel had been made known to all the nations (Romans 16:26).

† This shows the prophecy was fulfilled within the first century.

### **Matthew 24:15**

When they saw the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, they were to understand that the crisis had arrived.

† This refers to the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem.

† Luke explains the same event clearly: when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies then recognize that her desolation is near (Luke 21:20).

### **Matthew 24:16**

Those in Judea were to flee to the mountains.

† Early Christian sources report that believers fled to Pella before the siege.

† This escape preserved the early church.

### **Matthew 24:17**

Anyone on the housetop was not to delay by going back inside.

† The warning emphasized urgency.

† Once the Roman siege began escape would become impossible.

### **Matthew 24:18**

Anyone in the field was not to return to retrieve belongings.

† The focus was immediate survival.

† The danger was imminent.

### **Matthew 24:19**

Pregnant women and nursing mothers would face extreme difficulty during that time.

† The siege conditions created terrible suffering for families.

† Josephus records severe famine inside the city.

### **Matthew 24:20**

They were to pray their escape would not happen in winter or on the Sabbath.

† Travel restrictions and harsh weather would make fleeing harder.

† The warning was practical and urgent.

### **Matthew 24:21**

There would be great tribulation unlike anything that had happened before.

† The Jewish war and the destruction of Jerusalem were catastrophic.

† Josephus described unimaginable suffering and death.

### **Matthew 24:22**

If those days were not shortened no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect they were limited.

† The Roman campaign ended sooner than expected.

† This allowed believers to survive the conflict.

### **Matthew 24:23**

If anyone claimed the Messiah had appeared somewhere else they were not to believe it.

† False messianic claims continued during the war.

† Jesus warned believers not to be misled.

### **Matthew 24:24**

False messiahs and prophets would perform impressive signs to deceive people.

† Many leaders used claims of miracles to gather followers.

† The deception was powerful during that time.

### **Matthew 24:25**

Jesus reminded them He had warned them ahead of time.

† The disciples were given advance knowledge.

† This preparation helped them recognize the signs.

### **Matthew 24:26**

They were not to chase rumors of secret appearances of the Messiah.

† The coming judgment would not be hidden.

† It would be visible through the historical events unfolding.

### **Matthew 24:27**

His coming would be like lightning flashing across the sky.

† This describes the sudden and unmistakable nature of the judgment.

† Prophetic language often used cosmic imagery for national judgment.

### **Matthew 24:28**

Where the corpse is, vultures gather.

† This symbolized the Roman armies gathering around doomed Jerusalem.

† Roman standards even used eagle imagery.

### **Matthew 24:29**

Immediately after that tribulation the sun, moon, and stars would appear darkened.

† Prophets often used cosmic language to describe the fall of

nations (Isaiah 13:10).

† The imagery describes covenant collapse, not literal astronomical destruction.

### **Matthew 24:30**

The sign of the Son of Man would appear in heaven, and the tribes of the land would mourn.

† This refers to Christ's vindication and judgment against Jerusalem.

† The mourning reflects Israel recognizing the judgment they rejected.

### **Matthew 24:31**

He would gather His elect with a great trumpet.

† This describes the global gathering of believers through the gospel.

† The church expanded rapidly after Jerusalem's fall.

### **Matthew 24:32**

The fig tree illustrates recognizing the season.

† Just as budding leaves signal summer, the signs would reveal the approaching judgment.

† The disciples were expected to understand the timing.

### **Matthew 24:33**

When they saw these things happening they would know the event was near.

† The warning was directed to the first century audience.

† They would witness the signs themselves.

### **Matthew 24:34**

This generation would not pass away until all these things took place.

† Jesus placed the fulfillment squarely within the lifetime of His audience.

† The same judgment was already announced earlier when



Jesus said all these things will come upon this generation (Matthew 23:36).

† Jerusalem fell about forty years later exactly as predicted.

### **Matthew 24:35**

Heaven and earth would pass away, but His words would not pass away.

† Heaven and earth here refers to the covenant world of Israel.

† The temple system disappeared, but Christ's words remained true.

### **Matthew 24:36**

No one knew the exact day or hour of the event.

† The timing was within that generation but the precise moment was unknown.

† The warning required constant readiness.

### **Matthew 24:37**

The coming would resemble the days of Noah.

† People would be living normal lives until sudden judgment arrived.

† The siege of Jerusalem caught many unprepared.

### **Matthew 24:38**

People were eating and drinking and living normally until the flood came.

† Life continued as usual before disaster struck.

† The same pattern occurred before Jerusalem's fall.

### **Matthew 24:39**

They did not understand until judgment arrived.

† Many ignored the warnings.

† The destruction proved the prophecy true.

### **Matthew 24:40**

Two men would be in the field, one taken and one left.

† The language reflects judgment and separation during the

crisis.

† Many were taken by the Roman forces.

### **Matthew 24:41**

Two women grinding grain, one taken and one left.

† The judgment affected ordinary daily life.

† The separation was sudden.

### **Matthew 24:42**

They were to stay alert because they did not know the hour.

† The warning emphasized readiness.

† Believers had to remain watchful.

### **Matthew 24:43**

If a homeowner knew when a thief was coming he would stay awake.

† The unexpected timing required vigilance.

† The same principle applied to the coming judgment.

### **Matthew 24:44**

They also had to be ready because the Son of Man would come at an unexpected moment.

† Readiness meant faithfulness to Christ.

† The judgment would arrive suddenly.

### **Matthew 24:45**

The faithful servant carries out his responsibilities.

† Faithful believers continued serving Christ despite persecution.

† Their reward was preservation and vindication.

### **Matthew 24:46**

Blessed is the servant found doing his duty.

† Faithfulness during crisis demonstrated true discipleship.

† Many believers endured persecution faithfully.

### **Matthew 24:47**

The faithful servant would be placed over greater

responsibilities.

† This reflects the growth and authority of the church after the old system ended.

† Christ's kingdom expanded.

### **Matthew 24:48**

The wicked servant assumes the master will delay.

† Many ignored Christ's warnings.

† Their complacency led to disaster.

### **Matthew 24:49**

He mistreats others and lives carelessly.

† This reflects the corruption of leaders in Jerusalem before the war.

† Their abuse and violence were widely recorded.

### **Matthew 24:50**

The master returns unexpectedly.

† Judgment arrives when people least expect it.

† Jerusalem's fall came suddenly and decisively.

### **Matthew 24:51**

The wicked servant is judged severely.

† This symbolizes the fate of unfaithful leaders and unbelieving Israel.

† The destruction of the city confirmed the warning.

### **Historical References**

† Josephus recorded the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 in *The Jewish War*.

† Eusebius reported that Christians fled Jerusalem before the siege and escaped to Pella.

† Epiphanius also confirmed that the church left Jerusalem before the war and settled in Pella.

† Tacitus described the Roman campaign that devastated Judea and destroyed the city.

† Clement of Alexandria recorded that the gospel spread rapidly throughout the Roman world before Jerusalem's fall.

### **How It Applies To Us Today**

† Jesus proved that His words are completely reliable because everything He predicted happened exactly as He said (Matthew 24:35).

† The chapter reminds us that God's judgments in history are real and serious.

† It also reminds us that Christ reigns now and His kingdom continues to grow.

† Believers today are called to remain faithful and alert just as the early disciples were.

† Jesus showed that biblical prophecy was not written to confuse believers but to warn real people about real events that were about to happen. When we read prophecy in its proper time context it becomes clear and consistent (Matthew 24:34).

† The destruction of Jerusalem proved that Christ truly reigns as King. The same leaders who rejected Him were judged within their own generation exactly as He said (Matthew 26:64).

† The chapter reminds us that trusting Christ's words is more reliable than trusting popular religious traditions. Many teachers today still move these prophecies into the future even though history already confirms their fulfillment (John 16:33).

† Matthew 24 also reminds believers that the kingdom of Christ did not end in AD 70, it continued to expand. The fall of the temple removed the old system and cleared the way for the gospel to spread freely throughout the nations (Hebrews 12:28).

### **Q&A Appendix**

**Q:** Did Jesus say these events would happen in the future thousands of years later?

**A:** No. Jesus clearly said this generation would not pass away

until all these things took place (Matthew 24:34).

**Q:** Was the temple actually destroyed the way Jesus predicted?

**A:** Yes. The Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 exactly as Jesus warned (Matthew 24:2).

**Q:** Did the gospel really spread through the world before AD 70?

**A:** Yes. Paul wrote that the gospel had been proclaimed in all creation under heaven (Colossians 1:23), and that it had been made known to all the nations (Romans 16:26).

**Q:** If Matthew 24 was fulfilled in AD 70, what about the coming of the Son of Man?

**A:** The language comes from Daniel 7:13-14 and describes the Son of Man receiving authority and bringing judgment. Jesus applied this same language when speaking to the high priest about the coming judgment (Matthew 26:64).

**Q:** What does the phrase end of the age mean in Matthew 24:3?

**A:** The disciples were asking about the end of the temple age, not the end of the planet. The Greek word *aion* refers to an age or covenant era. Jesus had just declared judgment on the temple system (Matthew 23:38), and Hebrews later confirms that the Old Covenant was becoming obsolete and ready to disappear (Hebrews 8:13).

**Q:** What does the abomination of desolation refer to?

**A:** Jesus connected it to the moment Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies. Luke records the explanation directly: But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near (Luke 21:20). This occurred when the Roman armies surrounded the city before the destruction in AD 70.

**Q:** What does heaven and earth passing away mean in

Matthew 24:35?

**A:** In prophetic language heaven and earth often represent a covenant world or political order. The Old Covenant temple system was the center of Israel's world, and it passed away when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (Hebrews 12:26-28).

**Q:** Who are the elect gathered in Matthew 24:31?

**A:** The elect refers to believers being gathered into Christ's kingdom through the preaching of the gospel. The apostles were sent into the nations, and the church grew rapidly throughout the Roman world (Matthew 28:19, Colossians 1:23).

**Q:** Do Matthew 24:40-41 teach a rapture where believers are taken away?

**A:** No. In the context of Matthew 24 the ones taken are taken in judgment, not taken to heaven. Jesus compared it to the days of Noah where the wicked were taken away by the flood while Noah remained alive on the earth (Matthew 24:37-39). The same pattern appears here, the ones taken are those removed in judgment.

**Q:** How do we know the ones taken are the ones judged?

**A:** Jesus had just used the example of Noah. The flood came and took them all away (Matthew 24:39). The ones taken were the wicked who were judged. The righteous were the ones who remained alive. This shows that Matthew 24:40-41 is describing the removal of the wicked during the judgment on Jerusalem, not a future rapture.

**Q:** What does the statement Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather mean in Matthew 24:28?

**A:** The imagery points directly to the Roman armies that destroyed Jerusalem. Roman legions carried eagle standards as their military symbols. The Greek word translated vultures

can also refer to eagles. When Jesus said the birds would gather around the corpse, He was describing the Roman armies surrounding the doomed city. This matches the warning given in Luke 21:20 where Jesus said that when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies her desolation is near. The Roman eagle standards literally gathered around Jerusalem during the siege that ended in AD 70.

**Q:** What about the sun, moon, and stars being darkened in Matthew 24:29, doesn't that mean the end of the physical universe?

**A:** No. This language comes directly from Old Testament prophetic judgment imagery. The prophets regularly described the fall of nations using cosmic language. For example, Isaiah described the fall of Babylon by saying the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light, the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light (Isaiah 13:10). Ezekiel used the same imagery when describing the fall of Egypt (Ezekiel 32:7-8). Jesus was using the same prophetic language to describe the collapse of Jerusalem and the Old Covenant world in AD 70.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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**Source Index**

† Matthew 24:1-51, Luke 21:20, Matthew 23:36, Romans 16:26, Colossians 1:23

† Josephus, The Jewish War, Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Epiphanius, Panarion 29.7.7-8, Tacitus, Histories 5.13

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