

Matthew 24 Explained

Introduction

Matthew 24 is a well-known chapter about end times, but it's difficult to explain because one or two sections are not exactly chronological. On the contrary, they happen at the same time. ([illustration below](#)) Please keep reading and I will explain how you can tell.

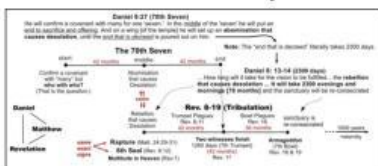
Most of Matthew 24 is chronological, until you get to verses 29-31, the rapture, which post-tribs call the second-coming. Actually, it can be proven that the events of verses 29-31 are not the 'end', as post-tribs believe, because the signs in the sun, moon, and stars match the 6th Seal, in Revelation 6. Simply put, many things in Revelation come *after* the 6th Seal so Matthew 24:29-31 can't be describing the end. On the contrary, it's describing the rapture, when Jesus will appear in the sky and Christians will be transformed and meet Him in the air. (1 Thess 4:17) The second-coming, in Revelation 19, is far different from Matthew 24:29-31.

Brief explanation from Revelation

In general, the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls, in Revelation, must be 'sequential' (as they are written), not overlapped as post-tribs do because that contradicts certain verses and omits things, which is forbidden in Revelation 22:19. (There is a catastrophic warning.) A thorough discussion of the contradictions are discussed on the "[proof of rapture](#)" page.

Once understood that the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls are sequential, 'pre-tribulation' is proven (as opposed to mid-trib or pre-wrath) by realizing that Seals 1-5 are in the past. I give a simple and logical explanation of the Seals, on the [Seals page](#), which contains two 70-year periods for proof, which God obviously embedded so people would believe the truth, after He revealed the meaning of the Seals. Basically, the Seals fill a 2000-year gap, since Jesus was resurrected (Seal 1), by giving prophecies about the Jews (Seals 2-4). We are currently in Seal 5, which is basically a waiting period before the rapture (Seal 6). Since nothing is left to happen before the rapture (at least in Revelation) but there's plenty that *must* happen afterwards, then 'pre-tribulation' by-definition is proven. Note: My timeline of Revelation is different from previous pre-tribs and/or mid-tribs because they fail to explain Seals 1-5 to be in the past. Contradictions to their theory or timeline are also explained on the [proof of rapture](#) page.

Chart of 70th Seven offset with 2300 days



click to enlarge

Further proof from Daniel 12

So, if the rapture in Matthew 24:29-31 is not chronological, then when does it happen? It happens immediately after the 'abomination that causes desolation', which causes an unprecedented distress, as described in verses 15-21. You can tell that the rapture happens, at that time, by comparing Daniel 12:1.

Matthew 24:21 [after the abomination]

21 For then there will be **great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now**-and never to be equaled again.

Daniel 12:1 [referring back to the abomination in Daniel 11:31]

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a **time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then**. But at that time your people-everyone whose name is found written in the book-will be delivered.

Clearly, the distress in Matthew 24:21 is caused by the events surrounding the abomination (verse 15), for which Jesus advises people in Judea to immediately flee to the mountains. Daniel 12:1 clearly talks about the same *unequaled distress* and says that *some people*, whose names are found written in the book, will be delivered at that time. In Daniel 12:1, Gabriel is talking about Daniel's people (the Jews) but he's clearly referring to the Christians among them who accepted Jesus as their Messiah (savior) because that's the only way they could get their name in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. Therefore, the Christian rapture happens at the same time as the distress caused by the abomination that causes desolation.

[Proof of Rapture](#)
(simplest explanation yet)

Difference between the 'tribulation and 'great tribulation'

After Christians are raptured and proceed to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb, everyone else will remain to endure the Trumpet and Bowl plagues, which is the so-called "tribulation." Yet, that's different from the "great tribulation", which is the 2000-year period of Seals 1-6 because: (1) The great tribulation is 'past tense', in Rev 7:14, which is between Seals 6 and 7. Plus, (2) the only time a person could get their name in the *Lamb's Book of Life* is between the resurrection (Seal 1) and the rapture (Seal 6). Thus, it makes sense for the multitude of Christians from every nation (Rev 7:9) to come out of the "great tribulation" (Seals 1-6). (Explained in more detail on the 'proof of rapture' page.)

Matthew 24: 22-28

So, if the rapture in Matthew 24:29-31 happens during the distress caused by the abomination, in Matthew 24:15-21, then what does Matthew 24:22-28 refer to? That's easy because there are two groups in Matthew 24, just like there are two groups in Revelation 7, and they must match. I've already mentioned the multitude of Christians, from Rev 7:9, who arrive in heaven for the Wedding Supper of the Lamb, but there are also 144,000 Jews who are 'sealed' by God, in Rev 7:1-8, but stay on earth. That's who Matthew 24:22-28 is talking about.

The 144,000 Jews, in Matthew 24:22-28, stay on earth because they didn't accept Jesus as their Messiah. Thus, they must endure the Trumpet plagues, which take place while the two witnesses are prophesying in Jerusalem for 1260 days (Rev 8-11). During that time, the antichrist will become powerful and finally invade Israel, killing the two witnesses. Then, the false prophet will enact the 'mark of the beast' (Rev 13) for which the 144,000 Jews are martyred for not accepting it (Rev 14). That happens before the Bowl plagues (Rev 16), which explains why Jesus said, "*If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect [144,000 Jews] those days will be shortened.*" (Matthew 24:22) In other words, everyone else, including Jews, must endure throughout the Bowl plagues, without receiving the 'mark of the beast', which will be virtually impossible because God will send a "powerful delusion" so "all" who remain will be deceived by the miraculous signs of the false prophet, and thus be "condemned." (2 Thess 2:9-11) However, the 144,000 Jews, who are sealed by God, in Revelation 7, will *not* be fooled by the false prophet's miraculous signs. (Matthew 24:24)

Thus, the 144,000 Jews are martyred in Revelation 14, but their "souls" are resurrected in Revelation 20:4-6, and they become 'priests' for Christ during the 1000-years. Note: There's a long-standing *rumor* that everyone who is martyred during the tribulation (Trumpets and Bowls) is accepted into heaven, but that must be a misconception. Revelation 14 is clearly referring to the 144,000 Jews (verses 1 & 3) who are warned not to take the 'mark of the beast' (verses 9-13) so they are martyred and their blood flows into a river (verses 19-20). Revelation 20:4-6 clearly says that those beheaded will become 'priests' but why would any gentile who missed the rapture become a priest? They wouldn't. Yet, it makes sense for the 144,000 Jews because they were God's chosen people.

Therefore, the only people with Jesus, during the 1000-years, who will subsequently live forever, will be the raptured Christians and the 144,000 Jews, who are the same two groups in both Revelation 7 and Matthew 24:15-31.

Conclusion

When you think about it, Jesus just gave a relatively vague explanation of end times in Matthew 24 because: (1) the disciples didn't even fully understand the crucifixion and resurrection yet, and (2) Jesus knew that a more complete explanation would come later in Revelation. In other words, Revelation is clearly the more detailed account of end times so the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls should be kept sequential and used to interpret Matthew 24, instead of the other way around. Post-tribs want to keep Matthew 24 sequential and over-lap the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls, which inevitably omits things in Revelation.

Don't be deceived by post-tribs because omitting things from Revelation is forbidden. Plus, they re-arrange things and try to convince people that the antichrist and mark of the beast (Rev 13) comes before the rapture (Rev 6 and 7). That could cause some people not to be ready because they are waiting on those clear signs, but the real signs are more subtle.

Of course, everyone should be ready for Jesus, everyday, because no one is guaranteed tomorrow, but especially be ready now, because the [abomination](#) and rapture are very near.

Full text of Matthew 24:15-31, divided into proper sections -with comments

I think one difficulty that people have had with interpreting Matthew 24:15-31 is where they divide the verses to indicate that one thought is ending and another is beginning. I think it is clear that the "great distress", in verse 21, is caused by the events surrounding the abomination, which will happen very quickly.

Matthew 24: 15-21

15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the **abomination that causes desolation**,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel -let the reader understand- 16 then let those who are in Judea **flee to the mountains**. 17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be **great distress**, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now-and never to be equaled again.

Note:
These sections are parallel,
not sequential.

Then, Jesus explains to the **Jews**, particularly the 144,000 'elect' (Rev 7) about the perils that they will face during the Trumpet plagues, including the false prophet (Rev 13).

Matthew 24: 22-25

22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. 23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform **great signs and miracles** to deceive even the elect-if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.

After that, you can tell that Jesus ends that discussion and begins to focus back on His coming. He's basically telling them not to look for a messiah on earth because the next time He appears will be in the clouds and it will be unmistakable.

Matthew 24: 26-28

26 "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

This section describes the **Christian** rapture (gathering) but it's immediately after the distress caused by the abomination, not the Trumpet plagues or false prophet. Notice that the signs match the 6th Seal (Rev 6:12) but no earthquake is mentioned. However, I think that the earthquake causes a tsunami, which is why Jesus tells them to flee to the mountains when the abomination is set up. Therefore, the distress caused by the abomination in verse 21 is linked to the 6th Seal earthquake and thus the signs here.

Matthew 24: 29-31

29 "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 bodies will be shaken.'

30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will **gather his elect** from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Matthew 24: 15-21 – “flee to the mountains” - a tsunami is coming.

As I indicated above, I think Jesus' instructions to flee to the mountains is a prophecy that the earthquake of the 6th Seal will occur in the Mediterranean Sea and cause a **tsunami**. That would also explain Luke's account of Jesus' coming: *"There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. On the earth, nations will be in **anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea**. Men will faint from terror, **apprehensive of what is coming on the world**, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time, they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."* (Luke 21:25) There is also confirmation in Amos 8. (below)

No one can predict an earthquake, but once it happens, a tsunami can be detected, which will give people some time to be anguished, perplexed, and apprehensive because they will know the wave is coming but they will have no power to stop it. Therefore, all they can do is flee to the mountains and Jesus' prophecy will come true, whether they know the abomination was set up or not. Plus, Gabriel said, *"the end will come like a flood"* (Dan 9:26), which I always took to mean "quick", but the tsunami could give it a literal meaning too.

Historically, researchers have found that **Israel has been hit by 11 tsunamis** so they agree that it's just a matter of time before it happens again. The government has even devised an early warning system and **placed signs on the coast** so people will know *how* to flee to the mountains. Some analysts have predicted that a 6-meter tsunami would be the worst-case scenario but the **tsunami that hit Indonesia**, in 2004, was 30-meters so scientists may get perplexed and anguished because of their gross miscalculation.

Physically, there are two major fault lines in the Mediterranean that could be responsible for the past tsunamis and could send another in that direction. One is SE of Cyprus and the other is **SE of Sicily**. Both run SW-NE, which would send a tsunami towards Israel.

Confirmation of the Tsunami in Amos 8

A person needs only to read Amos 8 to see that the rapture will be a day of reckoning for the Jews. At that time, God calls them "ripe fruit" and chastises them for their greed and lack of compassion for the poor and needy of the land. Sure, God will protect and save at least 144,000, as noted in Revelation 7, but it will be a terrible time for the rest.

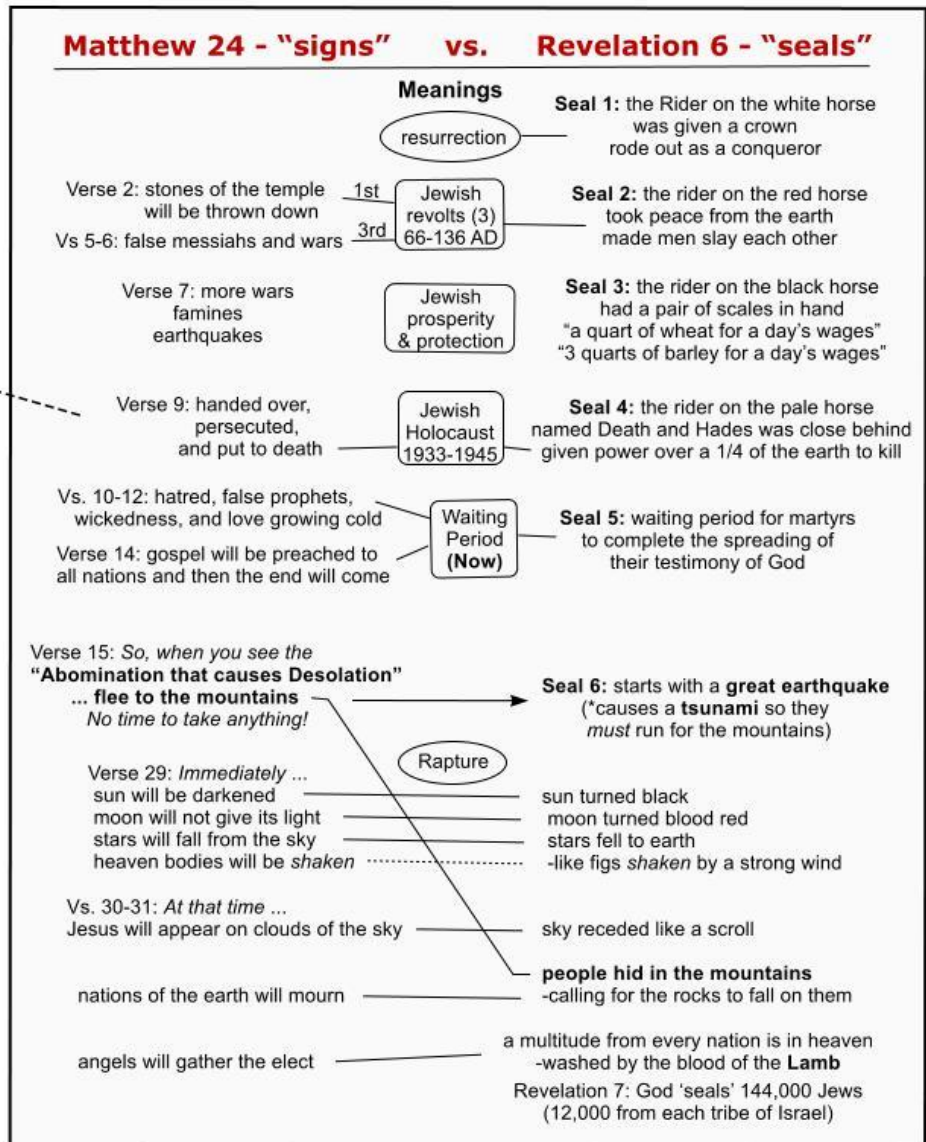
Amos 8: 7-10

"The LORD has sworn by the Pride of Jacob: "I will never forget anything they have done. Will not the **land tremble** for this, and all who live in it mourn? **The whole land will rise like the Nile; it will be stirred up and then sink like the river of Egypt.** 9 In that day, declares the Sovereign LORD, **"I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.** 10 I will turn your religious feasts into mourning and all your singing into weeping.

The above passage is describing the rapture, which is *not good* for the "Pride of Jacob." The *"land will tremble"* because there's an earthquake in the 6th Seal (Rev 6:12), which is also the rapture (or gathering) in Matthew 24:29-31. The land will *"rise like the Nile"* because that same earthquake will cause a giant tsunami, which will *'stir things up'*, before *'sinking'* (receding) again. While that is happening, the sun will be *"darkened in broad daylight"*, which is the same as the signs in Matthew 24:29 and the 6th Seal. Amos 8 is the perfect conformation that the earthquake at the rapture (6th Seal) will cause a tsunami in Israel, which is why Jesus told them to *"flee to the mountains"*, when the abomination is set up. (Matt 24:15)

Chart comparing Matthew 24:1-31 to the Seals in Revelation 6

Not only do the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, in Matthew 24:29-31, match the 6th Seal, but *all* the verses in Matthew 24 chronologically match *all* the Seals. Here is a brief chart.



Q & A:
Why does verse 9 say, "hated because of me?"

Following WWII and the Holocaust, which was the *first* part of verse 9, the Jews were *hated* because they got their nation back and possessed part of Palestine. Of course, that was helped immensely by the vote in the UN, which was dominated by the West (Christians). Therefore, the Jews are hated because of Jesus (so to speak).

Note: That's why America is called the "great satan", by Iran, and Israel is just called the "little satan".

Matthew 24:28 – “Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.”

I think this strange statement could have two meanings: both symbolic and literal. First, it could be like an ancient proverb, meaning that there will be definite signs that point to Jesus' coming, long before the actual event, even though the exact day cannot be predicted. I mean, when you see a group of vultures circling in the distance, you know for sure that there's some kind of carcass in that area, even though you can't see it or know the exact location.

Secondly, the statement could be a prophecy about earthly conditions after He appears in the sky "like lightning" (v.27) and gathers the Christians to heaven. I mean, our souls will be transformed and receive a new body so the old body could be left behind and appear dead. People could literally be finding and disposing of dead bodies for weeks, thus adding to the severe distress of that time. Some bodies could be left in remote areas, such as camping spots, so they might not be found until the vultures literally start to circle, thus fulfilling the prophecy.

I must say that I've had at least one e-mailer who disagreed with the second theory because he was under the impression that our whole bodies would be transformed, rather than just our souls. Yet, we are going to meet those who have passed away, already, so some of their natural bodies will be decayed. Plus, our natural bodies have an age attached to them, some old - some young, but our new bodies will not be restricted by age. Paul discusses the matter in **1 Cor 15: 35-54**, where he uses the example of a seed and says, "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies." (v. 36) He goes on to say, "The body that is sown perishable, it is raised imperishable. ... It is sown a natural body, it is raised a **spiritual body**." (vs. 42-44) In contrast, Paul also says, "we will not all sleep" (v. 51), which means "die", but I'm not saying that we will *actually* die, not even for a second, but that our old bodies will *appear* dead, after our souls or spirits have been "changed in the twinkling of an eye" (v. 52) and left them. I encourage everyone to read the whole passage and decide for yourself, but personally; if I'm in heaven, I don't care what happens to my old flesh and bones.

Matthew 24: 32-51 (3 prophecies)

The rest of Matthew 24 contains 3 parables (or prophecies) that *start* in chronological order but eventually take place at the same time, which is the situation now, during end times.

1. The fig tree (Matthew 24: 32-35)

I've always heard that the fig tree represented Israel and I have no reason to doubt that. The example of the fig tree's 'leaves coming out' is referring to Israel becoming a nation in 1948 (following WWII), which fulfilled God's prophecy in Jeremiah 16:14-15. When Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened", He is speaking of the rapture in the previous passage (Matt 24:29-31) and the fact that the "WWII generation" will not pass away until it happens. Granted, that generation is getting *old* but they haven't passed away *yet* and they *won't* until the rapture happens because it's getting close.

2. Marrying and giving in Marriage / Day and hour unknown (Matthew 24: 36-44)

Gay marriage

As I pointed out on the [gay-marriage page](#), Jesus' prophecy about "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" is referring to 'celebrations about gay marriage' because it has finally become 'accepted', or at least 'legal', in many Western countries. The prophecy *started* being fulfilled in 2000, when the first gay-marriage was legalized in Amsterdam, and it has been gaining momentum ever since.

Randomness and 'Surprise' of the Rapture

The next two verses talk about 'two men in the field' and 'two women at the hand-mill', where one is taken and the other left, but I don't think that's necessarily talking about gays and lesbians. I think it's just addressing the suddenness and surprise of the rapture. After all, most people don't follow the news, especially as it relates to Biblical signs. In fact, most people don't even know what the real signs are because Daniel 11, which contains the most accurate signs, leading to the 'abomination', which Jesus said to watch for, was 'sealed until the time of the end'. The fact is: most people are still using an incorrect interpretation of Daniel 11.

Day and Hour Unknown

Jesus starts the whole passage by saying, "No one knows about the day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Then, He proceeds with various signs and advice. First of all, the statement is in 'present tense', not 'future tense', which indicates that Jesus didn't know, at that moment, but does that mean that He still doesn't know? I don't know.

Secondly, even if Jesus doesn't know the exact 'day or hour', there are plenty of indications, in the Bible, that there will be 'signs'. Jesus said, "Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and sky. How is it that you do not know how to interpret this present time?" (Luke 12:56) Of course, Jesus was talking about *His* present time but there are definitely 'signs' to be interpreted for 'end times' and the rapture also. The biggest sign that Jesus said to watch for is the 'abomination', from the Book of Daniel, but a person must decipher all the other verses around that event to fully understand it. As a result, there's an abundance of 'signs' that point to our present time. Paul said, "But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief." (1 Thess 5:4) In other words, people generally may not know the 'day or hour', but not every Christian will be surprised because the signs will be available to be interpreted.

3. The faithful and wise servant (Matthew 24: 45-51)

Prophecy about one person

While continuing to speak about His return, Jesus said, "Who then is the faithful and wise **servant**, whom the master has put in charge of the **servants** in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that **servant** whose master finds him doing so **when he returns**." (Matthew 24:45-46) This is obviously a prophecy about one particular 'servant', during end times, because it goes from **singular**, to **plural**, and back to **singular**, in the span of two verses, and refers to the Master returning. In that context, the 'food' is obviously not regular food but 'information', meant to be delivered to the other servants, at the proper time (before Jesus' return). If done so properly, Jesus makes another promise: "I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions." (Matt 24:47) Mathematically speaking, it's impossible for multiple servants, in general, to be put in charge of 'all' the possessions. In that case, it would say 'them', not 'him'.

Anonymity and 'Proven' Information

I don't think it's any accident that the prophecy begins with the question 'who' because I think it indicates that the servant will be *anonymous*, at least to the greater public. Anonymity assures that the proper credit goes to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rather than the servant.

The 'food' obviously comes from God's Word but it must be unique in some way for the servant to be distinguishable from everyone else. Plus, Moses said that the only way to tell if a message was from God or not was to wait and see if it came true. If it didn't, then the message wasn't from God. (Deut 18:21-22 paraphrased) Thus, God's messages from scripture must contain some kind of proof. Well, there's at least three unique interpretations, on this website, of important scriptures, which provide their own abundant proof, which no one can dispute, so I feel certain that they're from God.

1. The [Seals](#) provide a logical interpretation of Revelation, which fills an earlier 2000-year gap and straightens out Revelation's timeline so no manipulations are necessary and no contradictions are present. Proof is provided because the Seal's timeline contains two 70-year periods, one in Seal 2 (Jewish revolts 66-136 AD) and the other between Seals 3 & 4 (1* Jewish establishment in 1878 and declaration of statehood in 1948), which is too much of a coincidence not to be from God.

2. Daniel 11 provides a *continuous* timeline of empires in the Middle East, from Daniel's time until present, which is *proven* because they're [still taking place](#). It's the only interpretation that places the abomination (verse 31) in the future, where it belongs, and shows that events are still approaching it, just as Jesus said they would. I don't like to toot my own horn but this is a big discovery because Daniel 11 was the only chapter in the Bible that was specifically 'sealed until the time of the end'. Therefore, it's logical that its true meaning be discovered *now* rather than centuries ago. Scholars should know the importance of Daniel 11. More proof is ongoing in the news but the [historical verses](#) clearly show that this interpretation is far better than [previous interpretations](#), which have huge gaps.

3. The [meaning of 666](#) and the calculation of man's number as "37" is *proven* by God's unique timeline, containing major historical events in Islam and the Church, separated by multiples of 37-years. I mean, what are the odds of Muhammad's vision in 610, which started Islam, being exactly 37x37 years from Iran's revolution in 1979, which started the final empire in Daniel 11? Astronomical. Plus, the birth of the 12 Imam, Osman's vision, and the great schism are also on that *same* timeline, a fact and feat which could only be orchestrated by God. More proof is ongoing because 2016 is also on that timeline, a year when the 6th president of Iran will turn 60 years old, and mayhem is running rabid around the world. Clearly, the meaning of 666 is God's timeline of 37's.

I'm not trying to boast; I'm just trying to point out that this website, as primitive as it may seem, provides the 'food' that fulfills the prophecy of the faithful and wise servant. I've been told by a couple of naysayers that everything wouldn't be discovered by one person but that's generally how God does it, in the Bible, when He's sending a message. Besides, I'm not saying that I've discovered everything there is to know; I'm just relaying the facts that the Holy Spirit has directed me to find. Plus, it's not like I'm conjuring anything new, either; I'm just interpreting what is *already* in the Bible. The 'faithful and wise servant' is just another prophecy that is being fulfilled by God.

I can't say much else but why would an anonymous person claim to be the faithful and wise servant, which comes with enormous responsibility and no recognition or reward, on earth, unless they were pretty sure about it? Personally, I don't like responsibility but it's not in my blood to quit on God, which He undoubtedly knew ahead of time. To clarify, I would never quit seeking knowledge, because knowledge is better than silver and gold (Proverbs 2), but there's nothing fun and fabulous about updating this website, to try and tell others, but I feel a responsibility to do so.

Matthew 25 – Three more ‘prophecies’ about end times

Introduction

Matthew 25 is a direct continuation of Matthew 24, which contains three more ‘parables’ or ‘prophecies’ about end times. They all illustrate something about God’s selection process, which may not be as clear cut as people think. For example, the foolish virgins obviously believed for a little while because they went out to wait for the bridegroom. Yet, when the time came, which was longer than expected, they were left behind because they really didn’t know Jesus. (Matthew 25:1-13) Likewise, the servant who was given one ‘talent’, according to his ability, ended up being thrown outside, into the darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth, because he buried his talent and didn’t at least present it to the bankers where it could gain interest. (Matthew 25:14-30) Likewise, the ‘goats’ were condemned to eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, because they weren’t kind to strangers and generous to the needy. (Matthew 25:31-46)

Faith requires Love, which requires Action and Change

Now, I’d be the first to say that salvation is a product of ‘faith’, and not works, but it also requires ‘love’ for Jesus and the Father, which sometimes takes action, as the *Parable of the Sheep and Goats* illustrate. Paul said, *"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."* (Gal 5:6) In other words, Christians who have faith, on the inside, will display it through love, on the outside. Jesus said, *"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."* (Matt 7:18-19) Jesus is talking about ‘fruit of the Spirit’, for which there are many (Galatians 5:13-26), but the greatest is ‘love’. (1 Corinthians 13) John said, *"Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."* (1 John 3:18) Jesus summed up the commandments by saying, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Mark 12:30-31) Therefore, a person is saved by faith alone, but in time, they must exhibit some fruit, such as love, which may take action, or they could get cut down and thrown into the fire. (see [parable Luke 13:6-9](#))

Another example would be a person who expresses their love for another person, with *words*, and even gets married, but then never takes any kind of action, afterwards, to *show* their love. They probably wouldn’t be married very long, at least not in America. In other words, it wouldn’t be right for a person to get married and then never talk to their spouse or try to find out more about them. Yet, that’s the way some people treat Jesus who get saved by reciting a few words, like a marriage ceremony, and then never pray or read their Bible to find out more about Jesus. Those people are like ‘seeds’ that fell on rock, who received the Word with joy, and believed when they heard it, but they developed no root so they fell away during testing. (Luke 8:13) That’s from the *Parable of the Seeds* but it’s very similar to the five foolish virgins who get left behind because they really don’t know Jesus. In other words, it only takes a *little* faith to be saved but in order to develop a ‘root’ and *maintain* that faith, a person needs to take some *action* and show some ‘love’ for Jesus.

Paul said, *"My brothers, you were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love."* (Gal 5:13) In other words, Christians are free from the Old Testament law but we are not free to indulge in sin. John said, *"No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him."* (1 John 3:6) Of course, Christians are not perfect and continue to struggle, after being saved, but a person with faith will feel remorse for committing sin and take steps to improve, which takes action and effort.

Paul told Timothy to *"train yourself to be godly"* (1 Tim 4:7), which would imply that it takes practice and determination like an athlete. Yet, a person can’t play by their own rules to suit their own desires because the Bible is the ultimate authority. Paul said, *"If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules."* (2 Tim 2:5) Therefore, every Christian should read the New Testament and find out what the real rules are because society is prone to twist them to suit their own sinful desires. Paul said, *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* (Rom. 12:2) A person’s ‘mind’ is the key to everything because it’s where the ‘soul’ is located: in the 90% of the brain that scientists think we don’t use, and it controls our actions. Training the mind and playing by the rules is how a person overcomes worldly desires, which shows love for God through obedience.

John said, *"This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world."* (1 John 5:3-4) Of course, not everyone who gets saved magically becomes perfect. Actually, none do. Training takes perseverance, because the world will keep putting obstacles in your path. God’s Spirit gives a person strength to rise above those obstacles. Yet, while in training, a person will occasionally trip and have to get back up and keep running. Just remember, it’s okay to finish the race with skinned knees, as long as you stay on the right path and finish. Jesus said, *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."* (Matthew 7:13-14)

I could go on-and-on but my point is that the parables in Matthew 25, and elsewhere in the Bible, show that there’s a little more to the selection process than just reciting a few words and then doing whatever you please. If that were the case, *many* would find the narrow gate. A person needs to renew their mind and at least *attempt* to obey God, not make up their *own rules* and *ignore* God. I’m not judging or condemning anyone; I’m just explaining what the Bible says because that’s the blueprint that everyone will be judged by, not how you compare with others in the world.