



BIBLICAL TRAINING CENTER

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End Time Chronology from Jesus in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21)

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(1) How does Matthew 24 fit into our on-going study?

The view we've been teaching (Premillennialism) says there will be a **literal world leader** (antichrist) who is able to establish **peace treaty in the Middle East** between **Israel and her neighbors** for 7 years (Dan. 9:24-27). In the middle of the 7 years he walks into **the temple** in Jerusalem, takes away the **sacrifices** (Dan. 12:11), and declares himself to be God (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:3-4). He forces everybody to worship him (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:15) and requires them to **have a mark** in order to **buy or sell anything** anywhere in the world (Rev. 13:16).

Matthew 24 helps us see that Jesus' taught the above scenario too. **Jesus mentions all of the following**: the existence of the nation of Israel, the temple in Jerusalem, the antichrist, tribulation, the second coming (and possibly rapture).

The Temple to Be Destroyed

24 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said to them, "**Do you not see all these things? [the Jerusalem temple] Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**"

The Disciples' Two Questions

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, **when will these things be? [temple being destroyed] And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"**

The Tribulation

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "**Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass,**

but the end is not yet. ⁷ For **nation will rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be **famines**, pestilences, and **earthquakes** in various places. ⁸ All these *are the beginning* of sorrows.

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to **tribulation** and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then **many false prophets** will rise up and **deceive many**. ¹² And because **lawlessness will abound**, the **love of many will grow cold**. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

(2) How does Jesus describe the end times?

Some believe all of the following are general signs of his second coming:

- Deception (v. 4)
- False messiahs (v. 4)
- **Great wars (nation vs. nation)** (v. 6,7)
- Famines (v. 7)
- Diseases & pestilences (v. 7)
- **Earthquakes** (v.7)
- Tribulation, persecution and martyrdom for believers (v. 9-10)
- **False prophets & apostasy** (v. 11)
- **Lack of morality & love** (v. 12)
- Preaching of Gospel

(3) Haven’t some of these been happening since Jesus’ day!?

Are we sure Jesus is describing the end times? Because Christians have always been **persecuted** (v. 9); there have been many **false prophets** throughout church history (22); there have been many **wars, famines, diseases** (v. 7). **So how are these signs of the end times?**

View #1: Jesus is describing the entire church age.

v.8: “All these are **the beginning** of sorrows.”

The first view is that Jesus is not saying these are specific signs only of the end times, but a **general description of the entire church age**. It’s as if he’s saying, “Don’t let these things alarm you. They will continue to happen right up until the end!”

View #2: Jesus is describing the entire church age – but these will INCREASE IN INTENSITY as the end approaches.

John Walvoord: "Taken as a whole, the opening section, ending with Matthew 24:14, itemizes general signs, events, and situations which **mark the progress of the age, and, with growing intensity, indicate that the end of the age is approaching.**"ⁱⁱⁱ

(4) Is there any evidence wars have increased in intensity?

"Matt. 24:6 And you will hear of **wars and rumors of wars**... For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

Some point to **WWI & WWII** as fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy.

"**World War I** ... or the **War to End All Wars**, was a global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July **1914** to 11 November **1918**. More than **70 million military personnel**, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilized in **one of the largest wars in history**... **It was one of the deadliest conflicts in history** ... the war drew in all the world's economic great powers..."ⁱⁱⁱⁱ

"**World War II** ... was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945... It involved the **vast majority of the world's countries**—including **all of the great powers**—eventually forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis. It was the **most widespread war in history**, and directly involved more than 100 million people from over 30 countries... World War II was the **deadliest conflict in human history**, marked by 50 million to 85 million fatalities... It included massacres, the deliberate genocide of the Holocaust, strategic bombing, **starvation, disease** and the first use of nuclear weapons in history."

	WW1^{iv}	WW2^v
People Involved	65 million	690 million
Deaths	19 million	72 million
Countries Involved	32 countries	61 countries

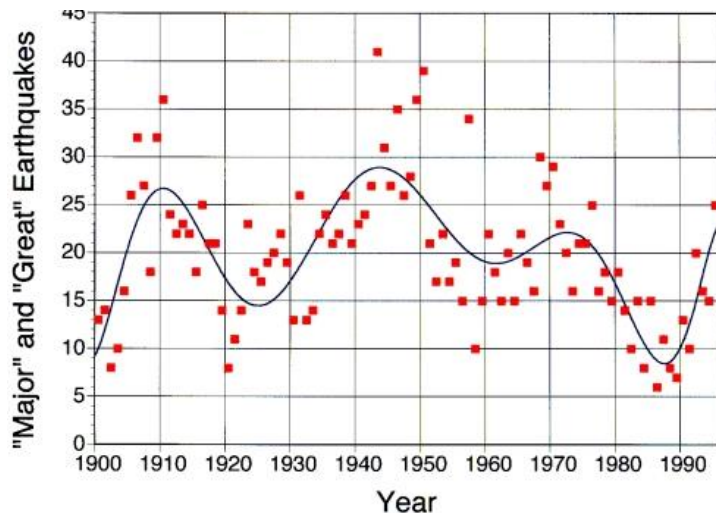
In my opinion, it's easy to see why people think Jesus was referring to WW1 & WW2.

(5) Is there any evidence earthquakes have increased in intensity?

Matthew 24:7–8 "...And there will be famines, pestilences, and **earthquakes** in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

We should be careful with this one! Some Christians look for evidence of increase in earthquakes as a sign we are approaching the end. However, **we have not actually seen an increase in earthquakes** since we first started measuring earthquakes with **standardized and calibrated seismographs** (installed in San Jose in 1897). Instead, there appears to be a consistent 30-year cycle (consistent with "birth-pangs").

Global earthquakes with magnitude 7.0 or greater in 20th century:^{vi}



Note: The Bible does mention **5 severe earthquakes** occurring during the **Tribulation**: (1) Rev. 6:12-15; (2) Rev. 8:5; (3) Rev. 11:3; (4) Rev. 11:19; (5) Rev. 16:18-20.

(6) Is there any evidence false prophets or messiahs have increased in intensity?

Matthew 24:4-5 "...Take heed that no one deceives you. For **many will come in My name**, saying, **'I am the Christ,'** and will deceive many." Also v. 11: "Then **many false prophets** will rise up and deceive many."

Here is a list of people who have **claimed to be Jesus in his second coming**.^{vii} Notice the majority are after the 18th century.

Person Claiming to be Jesus	Date	Person Claiming to be Jesus	Date
1. Simon Magus	early 1st century	18. Sun Myung Moon	1920–2012
2. Dositheos the Samaritan	mid-1st century	19. Yahweh ben Yahweh	1935–2007
3. Tanchelm of Antwerp	c. 1110	20. Laszlo Toth	1940–2012
4. Ann Lee	1736–1784	21. Wayne Bent	1941-
5. Bernhard Müller	c. 1799–1834	22. Iesu Matayoshi	1944-
6. John Nichols Thom	1799–1838	23. Jung Myung Seok	1945-
7. Arnold Potter	1804–1872	24. Claude Vorilhon	1946-
8. Hong Xiuquan	1814–1864	25. José Luis de Jesús	1946–2013
9. Mirza Husayn 'Bahá'u'lláh	1817–1864	26. Inri Cristo	1948-
10. Jacobina Mentz Maurer	1842–1874	27. Apollo Quiboloy	1950-
11. William W. Davies	1833–1906	28. David Icke	1952-
12. Cyrus Reed Teed	1839	29. Brian David Mitchell	1953-
13. Abd-ru-shin	1875	30. David Koresh	1959–1993
14. Father George Baker	c. 1880 – 1965	31. Maria Devi Christos	1960-
15. André Matsoua	1899–1942	32. Sergey Torop	1961-
16. Samael Aun Weor	1917–1977	33. Alan John Miller	1962-
17. Ahn Sahng-hong	1918–1985	34. David Shayler	1965-

Many also point to the **rapid growth of cults** and **false teaching** (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, strong Word of Faith teachers, etc.) beginning with the **19th century**.

(7) Is there any evidence of love growing cold (lack of morality)?

Matthew 24:12 --- "And because **lawlessness will abound**, the **love** of many will **grow cold**."

This verse combined with others like 2 Timothy 3 suggest that **the church of the last days will be characterized by a lack of morality**:

2 Tim 3:1-5 --- "...in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For **men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money**, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, **lovers of pleasure** rather than lovers of God, 5 **having a form of godliness but denying its power**. And from such people turn away! [this is why he's probably speaking of the church]"

People agree that **we're experiencing a rapid erosion of morals in the church** today. Here's an excerpt from a recent paper I wrote titled "Does Character Matter Anymore in Ministry?" (Full paper is here if curious: callup.org/character)

"Something is very wrong with the 21st century church: there is a **lapse of morals within her walls today** and every denomination seems to be affected... **Ministry scandal** has seemingly become the **hallmark of our day**. **Some now say today's church is worldlier than the world**.^{viii} Each month brings a **fresh round of fallen pastors**. In a recent survey of 1,000 protestant pastors, half said they know a fellow peer who should step down from the pulpit while their church investigates misconduct.^{ix} Historically the church has long faced scandals but today's church seems to be **facing a moral epidemic**.^x"

The Tribulation (Cont'd)

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the '**abomination of desolation**,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ "then let those who are in Judea **flee to the mountains**. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be **great tribulation**, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

(8) Who is "the abomination of desolation?"

Many believe **the antichrist** is the specific answer to the question of "what will the sign of your coming be?" (v. 3). Jesus himself says **he's referring to Daniel's prophesy** from **Daniel 9:24-27**.

REPEATING: The view we've been teaching (Premillennialism) says there will be a **literal world leader** (antichrist) who is able to establish **peace treaty in the Middle East** between **Israel and her neighbors** for 7 years (Dan. 9:24-27). **In the middle of the 7 years he walks into the temple in Jerusalem, takes away the sacrifices (Dan. 12:11), and declares himself to be God (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:3-4).** He forces everybody to worship him (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:15) and requires them to **have a mark** in order to **buy or sell anything** anywhere in the world (Rev. 13:16).

This is the point in the timeline above where the antichrist goes into the temple and declares himself to be God. It's at this point that the Jewish people **will realize that antichrist is not the real messiah**. God then **opens their eyes** and the **nation is finally saved** fulfilling Romans 11:26: "and so all Israel shall be saved" (see all of Rom. 11:11-32). In their salvation **war breaks out against them** and they are **forced into hiding** (Rev. 12:1-6). This is the rest of what Jesus was referring to.

The Tribulation (Cont'd)

²³ "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe *it*. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.

²⁶ "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*.

The Second Coming

²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸ For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

²⁹ "Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Parable of the Fig Tree

³² "Now learn this parable from the **fig tree**: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. ³³ So you also, **when you see all these things**, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation** will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

(9) What's the significance of the fig tree illustration?

Some think the "fig tree" represents Israel. They argue that elsewhere in the Bible it clearly represents Israel. For example, **Jesus cursed the fig tree** in Matt. 21:19-22, and this seems to be symbolic of the unbelief of the nation of Israel. The cursing is also right before the Olivet

Discourse and the disciples may have naturally thought Jesus was referring back to that. It's also mentioned in Luke 13:6-9 (parable of barren fig tree) and **seems to refer to Israel** there too.

Matthew 24:32,34: "Now learn this **parable from the fig tree** (i.e., when Israel comes back to life)... I say to you, **this generation** will by no means pass away till all these things take place"

The argument is that **the generation which sees Israel come back to life will not pass away** until the tribulation and occurs. Israel became a nation again on **May 14, 1948**. Following this thinking, in our lifetime people have set the following dates for the rapture:

Argument for 1981:

- Nation of Israel became a nation again in 1948.
- A generation in the Bible is 40 years (Numbers 32:13; people had to wander for 40 years in the desert until that generation died off.)
- $1948 + 40 = 1988$
- Subtract 7 years for Tribulation
- **$1988 - 7 = \text{rapture in 1981}$**

Argument for 2000:

- Israel wasn't in control of Jerusalem until 1967 (Six Day War)
- A generation in the Bible is 40 years (Numbers 32:13)
- $1967 + 40 = 2007$
- Subtract 7 years for Tribulation
- **$2007 - 7 = \text{rapture in 2000}$**

Clearly first two were wrong! Many people were turned off by rapture date setting or even worse Christianity.

Argument for 2041:

- Nation of Israel became a nation again in 1948.
- A generation in the Bible is **100 years** (Genesis 15:13-16: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years... But in the fourth generation they shall return here...")
- $1948 + 100 = 2048$
- Subtract 7 years for Tribulation
- **$2048 - 7 = \text{rapture in 2041}$** (right around time of estimated singularity!)

Illustration of the Days of Noah

³⁶ "But of that **day and hour no one knows**, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷ **But as the days of Noah were**, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all

away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. [rapture?] ⁴¹ Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² **Watch therefore**, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming **at an hour you do not expect**.

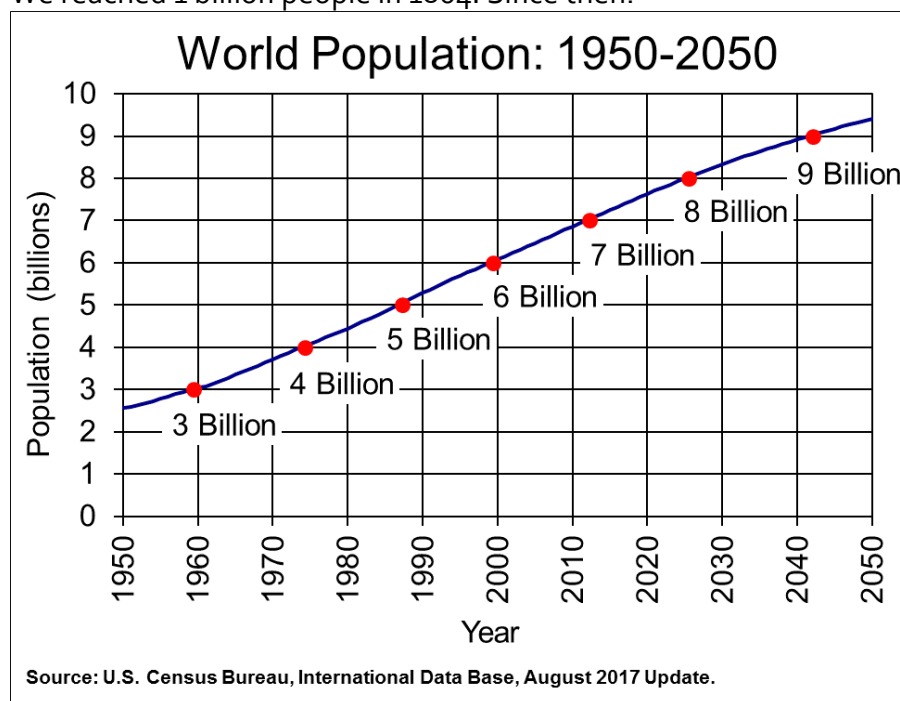
(10) Is there any significance to the mention of Noah's day?

The obvious reason Jesus mentioned it is because **people in Noah's day were unprepared**. They rejected Noah's preaching that **a flood was coming** (judgment) and they needed to **get onto the Ark** to be saved (Gen. 6-9; 2 Pet. 2:5).

Others see **more parallels** between Noah's day at our day—and they point to this as **further evidence** we are living in the last days.

- **Population explosion.** Matt. 24:37 --- "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." Some believe the population could have been very high since **pre-flood lifespans** were reportedly longer (Gen. 5). People have calculated that the pre-Flood world population could have anywhere from **3 billion to 10 billion**.

We reached 1 billion people in 1804. Since then: ^{xi}



Think about this: when my dad was born (1946) there were 2.3 billion people. Today there are 7.5 billion!

- **Increase in evil & violence** -- Genesis 6:5 "Then the LORD saw that the **wickedness of man was great** in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only **evil continually**."

- **UFOs (demonic activity)** – Gen. 6:1-2. Some people think one reason for the flood was because **demons were mating with humans** in an attempt to corrupt gene pool of promised messiah. These hold that aliens are either demons or offspring of human/demon relations. They point to modern increase in UFO sightings.

Illustration of the Two Servants

⁴⁵ "Who then is a **faithful and wise servant**, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' ⁴⁹ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(11) What's the practical take-away?

Be wise & discerning. Matthew 24:4 – "Take heed that no one deceives you." (2 Thess. 2:11)

Be faithful. Matthew 24:45-47 -- "Who then is a **faithful** and wise **servant**, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods."

Be prepared. Jesus goes next into **Parable of Ten Virgins**; only those virgins who were **prepared got to enter in!** "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." (Matt. 25:11-13)

ⁱ "What does it mean that there will be wars and rumors of wars before the end times?," Got Questions, <https://www.gotquestions.org/wars-and-rumors-of-war.html>(accessed November 4, 2017).

ⁱⁱ John F. Walvoord, Matthew: *Thy Kingdom Come* (Galaxie Software, 2007), 184.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wikipedia, s.v. "World War I," accessed November 4, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I.

^{iv} "World War I Statistics," Statistics Brain, accessed November 4, 2017, <http://www.statisticbrain.com/world-war-i-statistics/>.

^v "World War II Statistics," Statistics Brain, accessed November 4, 2017, <http://www.statisticbrain.com/world-war-ii-statistics/>.

^{vi} Steven A. Austin, "Twentieth Century Earthquakes - Confronting an Urban Legend," Institute for Creation Research, accessed November 4, 2017, <http://www.icr.org/article/twentieth-century-earthquakes-confronting-urban-le/>.

^{vii} Wikipedia, s.v. "List of people claimed to be Jesus," accessed November 4, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_people_claimed_to_be_Jesus.

^{viii} Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 45.

^{ix} According to data from a telephone survey released by Nashville-based LifeWay Research in Emily McFarlan Miller, "Can Pastors Make a Comeback After Scandal?," *The Gazette*, May 15, 2016, accessed November 21, 2016, <http://gazette.com/can-pastors-make-a-comeback-after-scandal/article/1575987>.

^x The Church's first scandal is mentioned in Acts 5:1-11 (Ananias and Sapphira).

^{xi} "World Population: 1950-2050," United States Census Bureau, accessed November 4, 2017, https://www.census.gov/population/international/data/worldpop/graph_population.php.