

“For this reason you must also be ready” (Matt. 24:44)

- Jesus’ teaching in Matt. 24 and 25 was given to four apostles (Mk. 13:3-5). All direct warnings in this section apply to the church.
- Matt. 24:7-31 is an overview of the entire end time of tribulation with details on some events in Israel.
- Matt. 24:32 - 25:30 – parables, lessons and warnings for the church.
- Matt. 24:37-44 describes the manner of the Lord’s “presence” at the end of the age. Three phases of events in Noah’s days: 1) People were carrying out normal activities of life. 2) Noah entered the ark. 3) The flood came in judgment upon the whole world. Jesus applied this picture to His coming when one would be taken and one left. Like Noah, one would escape the scene of judgment (taken); one would be left on the earth. Based on this picture Jesus warns His disciples in verses 42-44.
- Verses 42-44 warn us to be on the alert and always ready for Jesus’ coming at an unknown time, or we may suffer a loss like the head of the house in v. 43.
- Only two passages promise believers escape from the coming period of great tribulation on the earth. Lk. 21:34-36. Rev. 3:10. Escape is possible, but conditional. Escape is based upon victorious living with some measure of maturity.
- Consider the principle of the harvest with first fruits and a later general harvest (Lev. 23:10-22). Harvesting is based upon maturity (Mk. 4:26-29). The harvest is at the end of the age (Matt. 13:30, 39). The firstfruits ripen and are harvested early, but the general harvest is later. See Rev. 14:1-17. The firstfruits (overcomers) in Rev. 14:1-5 are: symbolically pure (v. 4 - not literally men or virgins only, as there is no defilement in marriage; Heb. 13:4); obedient (v.4), truthful (v. 5). They are purchased from the earth and from among men (v. 4-5, like Matt. 24:40-41). Then, after the scenes of judgment and tribulation (verses 6-13) comes the harvest of the remaining crop of wheat (14-16). The rapture in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 describes this final general harvest when the Lord comes openly on the clouds in glory after the tribulation period (Matt.24:29-31).