

# Bible Studies for Life: April 24

*Stand Strong to the End • Matthew 24:1-14*

*By Lee Faler*



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Christian radio entrepreneur Harold Camping prophesied in 2011 that the world would end on May 21. I was very anxious that day, not because I believed Camping was right but because it was my wedding day! I remember praying, “Lord I’m ready for Jesus to return, but for Jordan’s sake can we wait until after the wedding?”

Well, Camping was wrong. The world did not end on May 21, 2011, and my wife and I will celebrate eleven years of marriage this May.

Camping’s actions did reveal that people were worried about the end of the world, and since then those feelings have only intensified. Just think about all that has happened in our world over the last decade, and especially over the last two years! As Christians we do not fear the end of the world, because we know the end is only the beginning of eternity with Christ!

With that in mind, for the next six weeks we will be studying Matthew chapters 24 and 25. As we study these chapters together let’s remember that the purpose of these chapters is

not to fuel debate or dissension within the body of Christ, but to ignite worship, devotion, and obedience to Christ to spread His glory, and Gospel to the ends of the earth!

In our Scripture passage this week, the disciples are mesmerized by the beauty of Herod's temple in Jerusalem. They were mostly country boys and the temple was very impressive. Some of its stones weighed 200,000 pounds!

Jesus then correctly prophesies the destruction of the temple (70 AD), and the disciples begin to ask Jesus about the details concerning His coming and the end of the age. It's in this context that Jesus charges His disciples – and us – to stand strong to the end.

Why would Jesus have us stand strong? Why is there such a priority on endurance in this passage? I believe there are two reasons:

**– The days leading up to the end of the world will be difficult beyond all comparison.** Jesus warned the disciples that false teachers would come in His name, but their intentions to lead them away would reveal they were ravenous wolves dressed in sheep's clothes (Matthew 7:15 ESV). This is only reiterated by Jesus when He said in verse 11 that "many false prophets will arise."

We don't have to look far to see the parallel in our world today. In a world where there is a shortage of everything from building materials to vehicles, there is certainly no shortage of false teachers! Jesus promised the disciples they would hear of wars and rumors of wars, and that nation would rise against nation (24:6-7). This would not signify the end, but only the beginning of things to come.

**– In the words of the famed Oxiclean salesman Billy Mays in the TV commercials, "But wait, there's more!"** Jesus informs the disciples that not only would false teachers be prevalent and wars imminent, the disciples could expect tribulation,

persecution, and even martyrdom.

This is probably not the glamorous lifestyle that James and John envisioned in chapter 20. Can you imagine what the disciples were thinking at this point? They were expecting a time of peace and prosperity from Jesus, and now He's promising that they would be hated by all nations because they belonged to Him (24:9).

They were likely shocked, but that should not have been the case because Jesus had made similar promises to them in chapter 10. The need for endurance would be great because the days would be overwhelmingly dark before the light would dawn.

Yet these dark days would only serve to advance the Gospel! Look at verse 14: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (ESV). This reminds us that God always has the upper hand! False teachers, wars, division, natural disasters, and martyrdom will only be used by God to advance the Gospel!

What a comfort to the disciples and to us, that what man means for evil God uses for good (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28). Through Christ we can endure in the midst of false teaching and wars. Like a team rowing their way to victory, let's keep our eyes on Christ our commander and stand strong until the end!

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