

Matthew 24:1–5

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website, churchofgodbig sandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Oct. 9, 2021.

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—At a Bible study on Wednesday, Oct. 6, I began a series covering Matthew 24. The first study was about Matthew 24:1-5. Following are some of the ideas mentioned in that Bible study.

While at the temple, the Son of God told His disciples that the temple would be toppled (Matthew 24:1-2).

They asked some questions

In Matthew 24:3, the disciples came to the Son of God privately and asked three questions.

- When will these things happen?
- What will be the sign of Your coming?
- What will be the sign of the end of the age?

Two ways to watch

Bible students occasionally argue about the concept of “watching” mentioned in Matthew 24. From my perspective, there are two main themes about watching that are mentioned in Matthew 24.

- Watching means noticing world events.
- Watching means focusing upon our personal behavior.

Both approaches fall within the scope of the Greek word used in Matthew 24 to describe “watch.”

According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the Greek word (*gregoreo*) is a verb meaning “to keep watch” and “be on guard.”

Personal behavior

Notice the context in Matthew 24 about watching personal behavior.

- Matthew 24:42-44 describes watching because a person does not know when a thief will come.
- Matthew 24:45-47 describes a person being rewarded for his good behavior.
- Matthew 24:48-51 describes a person facing consequences for his bad behavior.

Noticing world events

Notice the context in Matthew 24 about noticing world events. Asking “when” involves watching world events.

- Matthew 24:3 quotes the disciples asking, “When will these things be?”
- Matthew 24:15 quotes the Son of God saying, “When you see . . .” before He gives them instructions.
- Matthew 24:32 quotes the Son of God telling them to watch conditions to know what time it is.
- Matthew 24:33 quotes the Son of God saying, “When you see all these things, know that it is near—at the door.”

Watching is not the problem

Obviously, watching world events is not the problem. So what is the problem?

Matthew 24:36—“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”

The problem rests with presumptuous proclaimers and insecure hearers.

Presumptuous proclaimers

Why do people insist upon announcing the day and hour (or even the year) of something they do not know?

Presumptuousness?

Arrogance?

Seeking to control the flock?

Seek to merchandise the flock?

Prediction addiction often affects presumptuous proclaimers.

Insecure hearers

Why do people insist upon listening to people announcing the day and hour (or even the year) of something the proclaimers do not know?

Insecurity?

Gullibility?

Being a sucker?

Prediction addiction often affects insecure hearers.

Let no one deceive you

The Son of God began His instruction with advice to avoid deception.

Matthew 24:5-6—"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 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."

Please notice two ways to view the statement "I am the Christ."

Claiming to be Christ

The Bible warns about some people who actually claim that they themselves are Christ.

- Matthew 24:24
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

(For the record, I have not personally met anyone who claims to be Christ.)

Acknowledging Christ

The Bible warns about many people who will acknowledge the role of the Son of God—without truly representing the truth that He taught.

Matthew 7:21-23—"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

False brethren

Notice two examples of false brethren among the Body of Christ. Notice that one group wants to use the beautiful law as a weapon of bondage, and the other group wants to use grace as a means to eliminate consequences.

Galatians 2:4—"And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage)."

Jude 4—"For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

False apostles

2 Corinthians 11:13-14—"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light."

Revelation 2:2—"And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars."

False prophets

Matthew 7:15, 20—"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves . . . Therefore by their fruits you will [ultimately] know them."

Matthew 24:11—"Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many."

False teachers

1 Timothy 6:3-5—“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.”

2 Peter 2:1-3—“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”