

Matthew Volume 4 - The Visual Bible (*Matthew 24:1-28:20*)

"Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:4-8, 10-14 NIV

There are lots of people today who preach different things about the end times. How can we know what is real? Jesus tells us to not be fooled *"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. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."* Matthew 24:25-27 NIV When Jesus returns all the world will see His coming. He will light the sky from the east to the west.

A woman came to Jesus with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on His head as He was reclining at the table. When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor." Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to Me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have Me." Matthew 26:7-11 NIV Mary wanted to show her love for Jesus. What gifts can we give to Jesus?

At the time of Jesus' arrest He said to the crowd, *"Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest Me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled."* Then all the disciples deserted him and fled." Matthew 26:55-56 NIV Jesus told His disciples He would be arrested. They all believed that they would be brave and stand with Him. When the time came they ran. After Pentecost, the gift of God's Holy Spirit made them brave. Are you afraid of something? Ask God to take away your fears.

In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked Him. "He saved others," they said, "but He can't save Himself! Let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue Him now if He wants Him, for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" In the same way the robbers who were crucified with Him also heaped insults on Him." Matthew 27:41-44 NIV Once again people tried to make Jesus prove Himself by doing what they wanted. Jesus knew that He came to die. He even prayed that God would forgive them because they didn't know what they were doing. Has someone caused you pain? Have you hurt someone? Ask God to help you forgive.

"There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said." Matthew 28:2-6 NIV When the angel of the Lord appeared the guards were so scared that they shook and became like dead men. Jesus was no longer in the tomb. He had risen from the dead. The joy of that Easter morning was like nothing that anyone had ever seen. While the guards and chief priests made up excuses how the disciples stole His body away, Jesus appeared to His disciples showing them that was alive. Thank Him for what He has done for you.

Dear Lord, You have given us more than life itself. Through Your death and resurrection You have given us eternal life. Take away our sins and failures. Fill us with Your joy and strength. Wash away the doubts and fears and discouragements of the past. Show us how to joyfully live for You. Let our lives make a difference in all we do and say. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.