

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

Jesus will return at the end of time, so preparations must be made.



TRANSFORMATION
for Adult LifeGroups

MATTHEW 24:36-51

FEBRUARY 14, 2018/FEBRUARY 18, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: MATTHEW 24:36-51 (NIV), "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. 42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. 45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' 49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. 51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

FIRST THOUGHTS

- Do you prepare for a trip with a lot of planning and preparation, or do you simply say, "Let's go!" in the spur of the moment? Explain.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

With the cross looming nearer, Jesus devoted Himself to instructing His disciples about the future. He warned them about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and about the end of time. The disciples would be persecuted because they followed Him. False messiahs would come on the scene in an attempt to deceive people (24:1-28).

One day, however, Jesus would come again. He shared a series of parables to help the disciples understand that His return would be unexpected. For that reason, they needed to be alert and prepared. They needed to be diligent in serving Him faithfully (24:29-51).

Jesus drove home the reality of His return with the parable of the ten virgins. The point of the parable was to underscore the dreadful outcome of refusing to prepare. He then told the parable of the talents. With this parable, Jesus urged believers to invest themselves in kingdom work until He came for them. He also described how He would render judgment on all people everywhere. He would judge people like a shepherd who separated sheep from goats. People would be separated according to their willingness to serve Him by caring for others in His name. Their willingness to meet the needs of hurting people reflected their relationship with Him (25:1-46).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

BE REMINDED

> Read Matthew 24:36-41

- How would you compare living in "the days of Noah" (v. 11) with Jesus' second coming?
- How does remembering the story of Noah help us focus on the second coming of Christ?
- How can we be ready for Jesus' return if we don't know when it will happen?
- How can we help others to be ready for His return?

TO DO LIST FOR A TRIP

Which side are you one?

| Wife | HUSBAND |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Decide to go on vacation-Pick vacation spots-Remind husband to take off work-Remind husband AGAIN to take off work-Internet Research on locations-Research hotel prices-Price airlines-Pick hotel-Make reservations-Book plane tickets if flying-Print directions if driving-Research Restaurants-Research "things to do"-Make dinner reservations-Buy attraction tickets-Budget Money for trip-Make arrangements for pets-Check weather for vacation-Lay out clothes-Run down to-do list-Straighten up house | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Pack Bag-Pack car-Ask wife if she's ready to go |


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BE ALERT

> Read Matthew 24:42-44

- What does the faithful slave reveal that we should be doing while we await the return of Jesus?

BE FAITHFUL

> Read Matthew 24:45-51

- What does the “wicked servant” (v. 48) reveal about the fate of those who reject Jesus?
- How would you respond to someone who asks how a loving God could send someone to hell?
- How is postponing a decision to accept Jesus the same as rejecting Jesus?

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

- God rewards and punishes people at the final judgment based on their stewardship of the tasks assigned to them.
- Faithful stewardship requires perseverance and consistency, for the end could come at any time.
- The time of the Lord’s absence is to be marked by unfaltering service.
- Those who postpone their responsibilities and do evil will discover that it is too late to correct their sinful ways.

Personal Challenge: Ask yourself whether you’re ready for Christ’s return if it were to happen today. If not, what steps should you take today to prepare yourself? Are there family members and friends who need to hear about your faith? Will you make the first move in sharing the gospel with them?

UPCOMING LESSONS

- Read Matthew 26:17-30
- What special days do you celebrate? How do you make that day a priority?
- Next week we will talk about the importance of celebrating and observing the Lord’s Supper.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

18th - Numbers 3-4; Acts 25 | **19th** - Numbers 5-6; Psalm 22; Acts 26 | **20th** - Numbers 7; Psalm 23; Acts 27 | **21st** - Numbers 8-9; Acts 28 | **22nd** - Numbers 10-11; Psalm 27; Mark 1 | **23rd** - Numbers 12-13; Psalm 90; Mark 2 | **24th** - Numbers 14-16; Mark 3