

November 17, 2024

Matthew 24:3-44 ESV

3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” 4 And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. 9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 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. 15 “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. 29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. 32 “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 34 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. 42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Scriptures for further study:

Daniel 7:13-14

John 16: 33

Matthew 28:18-20

Revelation 21:1-7



Following Jesus: Expectant Kingdom Living
Matthew 24:3-44

BIG IDEA: As we await the certain second coming of Jesus, we are called to live in the Kingdom of God by God's grace in an expectant way.

OUTLINE

1. The Disciples' Questions

2. Jesus' Answers

3. Living with Expectations

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Read Matthew 24:1-2. How do these verses help us interpret our passage (24: 3-44)?
2. What descriptions does Jesus use in verses 4-14 for the time between His 1st and 2nd Coming?
3. What two events does Jesus predict will occur in our passage?
4. How does verse 14 inform how we, as Christians, are to live?
5. What does this passage reveal about Jesus since He wanted His disciples to know about the upcoming fall of Jerusalem?
6. What does it look like to live every day expecting Jesus to return? How would that change how we are living now? What would we need to take away or add to our lives?

Praise to Jesus. Let us praise God this week for His sovereignty over every detail of our lives and of everything that comes to pass. Let us also praise Him for the reality that Jesus is returning to make all things new. Let us take time to worship God for His heart for us to be informed of His return.

Repentance through Jesus. Let us ask the Spirit to help us repent for how little the return of Christ affects our lives. May we confess when we have either ignored the blessed hope of Christ's return or allowed ourselves to get caught in speculation about when He will return.

Consecration for Jesus. May the Spirit guide and strengthen us to recenter our focus and live with such expectation of Christ's return that "Come, Lord Jesus!" is the cry of our hearts. Ask the Spirit to lead us to pursue Christ each day to bring Him glory and to live holy lives that point people to Him.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Matthew 24:1-25:46 can be summed up as the delay, return, and judgment of Messiah. These two chapters are often called the "Olivet Discourse" because Jesus "sat on the Mount of Olives" (24:3) when he spoke these words. It is the fifth of Jesus' five major discourses recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Addressed to his disciples, it is intended to give them a prophetic overview of the events to transpire in both the near and distant future.

-ESV Study Bible

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. This is a tough passage for adults to understand and apply to our lives; therefore, your children will struggle too. Talk with your children about how God does not intend to confuse us with His Word but to reveal who He is and who we are in Him.

2. Why would Jesus want His disciples to know that Jerusalem and even the sacred Temple would be destroyed? Why would He want His disciples to know of the struggles that will occur before His 2nd Coming? (He wanted to reassure them and wants to reassure us that nothing in life catches Him by surprise. He wanted them and wants us to be reminded that this was all a part of His plan.)

3. What does living “ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” mean? (This does not mean that we live in fear. Instead, it means living with hope that Jesus is making all things new. Believers should have a peace that surpasses all understanding. Therefore, living with the expectation that Jesus could return at any moment is meant to motivate us towards a pursuit of holiness and urgency to share the gospel.)

Scriptures for further study:

Matthew 28:18-20

1 John 4:18

FOR STUDENTS

1. Take a moment to read Matthew 23:37-39. Take note that this is the final time that Jesus was in the temple before His crucifixion. As he leaves, he prophesies of the impending destruction of this very temple (24:2). What do you think is the significance of this, and how do you think His disciples would have responded?
2. In verse 5, Jesus warns His disciples of those who would “come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ, and will mislead many.’” How can we apply this same warning that Christ gave His disciples about the false messiahs to our current context in the world today?
3. Jesus makes it very clear throughout Matthew 24 that although many things must happen before His return, nobody knows the “day or the hour” (24:36,42,44). Because we don’t know the day or the hour of His return, how should that change how we live? How should we respond to people who claim to know the exact time, or who try and predict “end times” events?
4. Do Jesus’ words in Matthew 24 bring about more hope or fear in your life? How can we begin to draw hope from the promise of Jesus’ return?

FOR SEEKERS AND NEW BELIEVERS

1. When Jesus refers to many who will “come in my name” (verse 4), he is not so much talking about people who will say they are associated with him as much as people who will falsely claim to have a Christ-like or ultimate kind of authority in our lives.

Question: Who or what are some examples of this false kind of leader?

Question: How do times of difficulty or crisis lend themselves to the rise of such false leaders and to many people being susceptible to them?

2. If you are a new believer, you must (sadly) be careful even of other Christians who claim to know with unwarranted certainty about when and how end times events will occur.

Question: What reasons does Jesus give us in this passage (verses 6-8) for being cautious?

3. One thing that must happen before Jesus returns is that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all the nations (verse 14).

Question: What are some ways you can participate in seeing this exciting plan fulfilled?

4. Jesus describes the nature of his return, especially that it will be sudden and that it will involve a time of judgment.

Question: If Jesus came back today, do you believe you are prepared? How can we make sure that we are ready for his return?

Following Jesus: Finding Fulfillment and Faith in the One Who is Greater



*Raphael, School of Athens, 1509-1511, fresco
(Stanza della Segnatura, Palazzi Pontifici, Vatican)*

About the artwork.

What is the connection between an eighteen-by-twenty-five-foot wall decoration of ancient men in robes and the Gospel of Matthew?

Raphael, the rock star of the Renaissance, organized his painting of fifty-three of the most outstanding scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, poets, and artists of all time thematically into five groups. Each group contains a leader(s) and those following him/them. Matthew tells the good news of Jesus in a way that highlights the theme and invitation from Jesus to “follow me.” In addition, Matthew organizes his Gospel around five sermons: Kingdom Law, Kingdom Mission, Kingdom Nature, Kingdom Authority, and Kingdom Judgement.

Front and center in Raphael’s painting are the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Raphael placed Plato and Aristotle in the center to show that they represent the pinnacle of human philosophy. They were the “prophets” of their day. Plato pointing up and Aristotle pointing down. Matthew shows us that Jesus is the true and greater prophet who unites knowledge of heaven, truths known and experienced only through him, with earthly ephemeral realities that can be experienced and described empirically but understood through him.

Raphael chose a forum from ancient Rome as the setting. The architecture in the painting represents well the Roman arch, which was a symbol of victory. Matthew is known and loved by millions, though his life’s ambition was to follow Jesus. He told the good news that in Jesus Christ, we have victory and kingship because he is the greater son of David, the Messiah.

Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew.

Before he met Jesus, a Jewish man named Levi, who lived in Capernaum, worked in a booth collecting taxes for the Roman Empire. Because of his profession, Levi was the most hated man in town until Jesus walked by and said to him, "Follow me." About thirty years after Jesus was crucified and resurrected, Levi, whom Jesus renamed Matthew, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write down his version of Jesus's life, the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew presents Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, King, Prophet, Son of David, and Son of God. Jesus ushers in and establishes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the rule and reign of God here on earth. Jesus calls his citizens to embrace Him as king through faith, teaches them about this "new world order" as a prophet, and then calls them to follow Him as the redeemer by going out into the world to tell the nations. Because Jesus is King, he has all authority; as Prophet, what he says is true, and as Savior, only he can offer redemption.

Read or listen to Matthew's gospel. Look for King Jesus exerting his authority over the natural world through healing and the supernatural by casting out demons. Pay attention to what the crowds say about him. Listen to Prophet Jesus as he teaches, rebukes, and tells about who he is. See him as Savior life and the way to the coming Kingdom.

Each of the four gospels uniquely depicts the story of Jesus. The story is so vast that it takes four Holy Spirit-inspired men to attempt to capture it. Matthew organized his story around five of Jesus' discourses, teachings, and sermons. The sermon series walks through the discourses.

1st Matthew 5-7 Kingdom Law

2nd Matthew 10 Kingdom Mission

3rd Matthew 13 Kingdom Nature

4th Matthew 18 Kingdom Authority

5th Matthew 23-25 Kingdom Judgement

According to Pastor Bill, the big idea of Matthew's gospel is, "Come to Jesus and learn about the kingdom of God, then go into the world to advance His kingdom by following Him in faith." May you, like Matthew and countless others, come to Jesus, follow Him in faith, experience heart transformation, and advance His Kingdom in your home, work, neighborhood, and the world!