

Matthew 24

Do you remember the turn of the millennium, specifically the phenomenon known as Y2K?

- As the year 1999 drew to a close, a widespread concern emerged that computer systems around the world would fail when the date rolled over to 2000, potentially causing chaos in everything from banking to power grids. People braced themselves, some making extensive preparations: stocking up on food, water, and fuel, withdrawing cash, and even fearing widespread societal collapse. While the anticipated technological meltdown largely fizzled out, the Y2K scare vividly demonstrated humanity's instinct to prepare for an expected, even if uncertain, future event.
- This illustrates a profound truth for us as followers of Jesus. Just as people prepared, some with great diligence, for a date-change event they weren't entirely sure about, ***how much more should we prepare for the certain and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ?*** While the world focused on potential computer glitches, our focus, as believers, is on spiritual readiness for the day when Christ will appear in power and glory, not in uncertainty, but in absolute fulfillment of His Word (1 Thessalonians 5:2; Revelation 22:7).
- Our call is not to physical hoarding, but to spiritual vigilance, faithful living, and a readiness of heart for His imminent return.

Matthew 24:36-39 - ³⁶ "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Title: Alert: Jesus is Coming Back

How do you organize your life around something that is absolutely certain but absolutely unpredictable?"

Let's set the stage...Matthew 24 is what is often called the "Olivet Discourse"

- Jesus is speaking with His disciples – During the last week of Jesus' life –
- Tuesday of Passion Week – Jesus kicks things off with a statement...

Matthew 24:1-2 - Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, ***not one stone shall be left here upon another***, that shall not be thrown down."

Matthew 24:3 - ³ Now 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?"

That's the Million Dollar Question: ***When will these things be? Will you give us a sign of the end of the age?***

The Temple was the Center of Jewish Worship – Place God's Glory Resided!

- If someone came in here and told us that our place of worship would soon be destroyed, we would want to know when...

Jesus gives makes Two Prophetic Statements – Think of them as bookends.

Bookend 1 (Mt. 22:2): The Destruction of Jerusalem - (A.D. 70)

- This represents the immediate, historical fulfillment of some of Jesus' prophecies, particularly concerning the Temple and the city's downfall (Matthew 24:1-2, 15-20). It served as a tangible sign and a warning, and as a type or foreshadowing of future judgment.

Bookend 2: The Second Coming of Christ – Mt. 24:29-31

- This is the ultimate, glorious, and unmistakable fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, marking the end of the age and the establishment of His eternal kingdom (Matthew 24:29-31). This is the definitive future event toward which all the preceding signs point.

In Between the two...Wars, Famines, False Prophets, Persecution, etc.

- These are the ongoing "signs of the times" or "birth pains" that stretch across the entire church age, ***intensifying*** as the second coming approaches (Matthew 24:4-14). They are not necessarily signs of the imminent return, but rather indicators that we are living in the time between the two advents of Christ.

What is clear is that Jesus is coming back!

- We don't know when, but we know He will
- He said in John 14 – I go to prepare a place for you and I will come again.
- Revelation 22:20 – Jesus said, Behold I come quickly
- ***We, wholeheartedly believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth;*** the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness.
 - Those who have repented of sin, believed in Jesus and called upon Him as Lord and Savior will spend eternity in heaven –
 - Those who have not repented of sin will spend eternity in hell a place of everlasting punishment.

We Believe Jesus will return and every eye will see him-Set up Millennial Reign

- We also believe that before that, Jesus will return in the clouds to rapture believers
 - Paul talks about that in ***1 Thess 4:16-17*** - For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up (*where we get the idea of rapture*) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
 - Some believe the Rapture kicks off the 7 Years of Tribulation – Pre-Tribulation Rapture – This is my belief. Some believe the rapture takes place half way through the Tribulation – Known as Mid-Tribulation

We cannot be certain of when He is coming, but we can know for sure that He is Coming!

My desire today is not to answer the questions of ***when*** (or even speculate) but to ***ask...***

- Are you absolutely certain of where your life will be in eternity?
- On a Scale of 1 to 10, how certain are you that you would spend eternity with Jesus
- If we are seeing all of these signs of the Second Coming ... right now ... Rapture happens 7 years previous, how should that change our lives today?
- Jesus gives a parable – If you knew a thief was coming to your house tonight, what would you do? Leave town, stay in a motel, call the Police? Watch Home Alone for Ideas

We confidently watch

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

This verse demands a vigilant awareness that is rooted in assurance, not anxiety.

- As Followers of Jesus, we are called to be alert and discerning, recognizing the signs of the times, but our watching is filled with confidence because we know our ultimate hope is secure in Christ.
- Jesus said in **Matthew 24:42** - ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.
- Our confidence stems from the promise that for believers, His return is a glorious culmination, not a fearful judgment (Titus 2:13). We watch with the blessed hope of our redemption drawing near.

Matthew 24:29-31 - "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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 His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Romans 13:11-14 - And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

Titus 2:11-14 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

We confidently watch

- **Stay spiritually alert** - recognizing the spiritual climate of the world, seeing the signs Jesus described—the wars, famines, false prophets, and lawlessness (Matthew 24:4-14)—not as a cause for panic, but as confirmation that God's Word is true and His plan is unfolding.

We patiently wait

- **This is waiting with endurance and steadfast hope – We do not know the day nor hour...**
- It is not passive. It is not idleness or anxiety, but an active, faith-filled perseverance.
- It means continuing to live faithfully, serving God, loving our neighbors, and sharing the Gospel, even when His return seems delayed.
- James put it this way... "James 5:7-8 - Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
- We should continue our diligent work, trusting in God's perfect timing and refusing to grow weary in doing good.

As it was in the days of Noah

Matthew 24:37-39 - But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

The Days of Noah were marked by Depravity - Great wickedness

Genesis 6:5 - Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

The Days of Noah were marked by Distraction - Business

Matthew 24:37-39 - But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were ***eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage***, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Just as people in Noah's day were caught up in their everyday lives

- Eating, drinking, marrying—Normal stuff – Living as if Judgement would never come even though Noah was building an ark in their neighborhood.
- They failed to perceive the coming judgment, so too will it be when the Son of Man comes.

It won't just be a time of great wickedness...

- but also a time when many are simply too engrossed in their own affairs, too comfortable in their routines, and too distracted by worldly pursuits to be spiritually awake and ready for Christ's glorious appearing.
- The normalcy of life can become a profound distraction from eternal realities.

We have a Living Hope

I Peter 1:3³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a ***living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*** from the

dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

A Living Hope – Not hope I get the promotion, pass the test, my team wins

- We have a “**living hope**”-It’s living because **Jesus is alive!**
- It’s the fuel to keep moving forward when times get tough. It brings enthusiasm for the future. And, sometimes, it even supplies enough reason to live.

Hope is defined as a desire for some future good with the expectation of obtaining it.

- **Hope** is always an expectation of something good as well as descriptive of something for which we must wait.

The Apostle Paul begins in 1 Corinthians 15 by firmly establishing the historical reality and supreme importance of Jesus' bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

- Without Christ's resurrection, our faith is futile, and we are still in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17). But, because He **was raised from the dead**, this becomes the unshakeable guarantee for our own future.
- Paul then proclaims, "1 Corinthians 15:20 - But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- Jesus' resurrection is the "**firstfruits**", meaning He is the initial harvest, the promise and pattern of a greater harvest to come. Just as the first crop gathered assures the rest of the harvest, so Christ's resurrection guarantees the future resurrection of all who belong to Him.

This future resurrection, where "this mortal shall put on immortality," is directly linked to the **Second Coming of Jesus Christ**.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 - Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

1 Corinthians 15:55-56 - ⁵⁵ "O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:58 - ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

So, the connection is profound:

- **Because Jesus was raised from the dead**, He conquered death and became the prototype for our own resurrection.
- **At His Second Coming**, those who belong to Him, both the dead and the living, will experience this miraculous, instantaneous transformation.

- Our perishable, mortal bodies will be glorified, becoming **imperishable and immortal**, perfectly suited for eternity with Him.

We urgently work (Platt, *Exalting Jesus*, Mt. 24)

We have a responsibility to not only watch and wait, but to diligently work!

Matthew 24:42-47 - Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ⁴⁵ "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

Our anticipation of Christ's return should propel us into diligent service and obedience.

- Jesus' parables often illustrate this, such as the
 - **Parable of the Talents**, where servants are entrusted with resources to invest and grow until their master returns (Matthew 25:14-30).
 - We are commissioned to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20),
 - to be salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16), and to care for one another.
 - **The "urgency" comes from the understanding that our time for service on earth is limited, and the work of the Kingdom is paramount before His return (John 9:4).**

Once Jesus returns, it will be too late to rethink your life and your priorities. His judgment will be irreversible, and there will be no second chance to repent. The stories Jesus tells in the remainder of chapters 24–25 illustrate this point.

- There are **servants** who are not ready when their **master** returns, so they are cast out into darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (24:45-51).
- **Bridesmaids** (called "**virgins**") are **locked out of a marriage** feast, and the door is shut, never to open for them (25:1-13).
- Notice that **punishment** for such individuals is described as **everlasting**, as there is absolutely no hint here or anywhere else in the Bible that there will be a second chance for anyone to be saved on the day of Christ's return. (Platt, *Exalting Jesus: Mt KL 6155*)

In Light of the Sure Return of Christ, we must

Obey the Great Commandment – Love God & Love People

Fulfill the Great Commission – Make Disciples of All Nations.

- It is in all Four Gospel and the Book of Acts

TFBC Vision – Bring Hope and Renewal to Every Person & Every Place – Relentless Pursuit of God's Design

To Reach Everybody everywhere, you've got to start with somebody somewhere

- Who is your FRANs

Acts 1:7-8 - And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

I've told this story before, but I bears repeating...

- When I was a young teenager, my mom and dad would leave to run errands. Usually, they would give us some things to do before they returned.
- I always asked what all they needed to do, so I could figure out how long they would be gone
- I would calculate the time it took to get where they were going, how many errands, and how long each would take.
- I would then try to figure out how long it would take me to get all my jobs done...That's when I would start...

Next Step:

For believers: "If you've drifted spiritually, recommit to Christ this week."

- Everything we do is tied into obeying the Great Command & Fulfilling the Great Commission
- If Christ might return in five years, would your calendar look different? Your priorities?
- Being ready for Christ's return means being right with the Lord and right with others. Is there a relationship you need to repair this week?

For the lost: "If you've never trusted Christ, He offers you forgiveness and eternal life.

- In a moment, we will have a hymn of invitation - We invite you to walk down front. We would love to have a conversation about repenting of sin, believing in Jesus and calling on his name for salvation!
- Tab in Front of you - Reach out - Connect with us

Notes:

In conservative evangelical thought, the "glorious appearing" described in Matthew 24:30-31 is unequivocally understood to refer to the **Second Coming of Jesus Christ**, which indeed ushers in His millennial reign. It is distinct from what is commonly referred to as the rapture of the church.

Here's why this distinction is made:

1. **Nature of the Event:** Matthew 24:30 describes a highly visible, global event: "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" (ESV). This is a public, undeniable return of Christ to the earth. The rapture, on the other hand, particularly in the prevalent pre-tribulational view within evangelicalism, is often described as a sudden, secret event where believers are "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The world will be left to wonder what happened, whereas in Matthew 24, "all the tribes of the earth will mourn" because they *see* Him coming in judgment and power.
2. **Timing:** Matthew 24 places this event *after* a period of "great tribulation" (Matthew 24:29). The rapture, in the pre-tribulational understanding, occurs *before* this period of tribulation. Therefore, the sequence of events described in Matthew 24 aligns with the post-tribulational return of Christ to earth, not a pre-tribulational removal of the church.
3. **Purpose:** The Second Coming, as described here, is for judgment, the defeat of His enemies, and the establishment of His earthly kingdom—His millennial reign (Revelation 19:11-20:6). The gathering of "his elect from the four winds" (Matthew 24:31, ESV) at this time is understood as the gathering of believers, both living and resurrected, to enter into this kingdom with Him.

So, in evangelical understanding, Matthew 24:30-31 paints a clear picture of the glorious, visible, and triumphant return of Jesus Christ to reign on earth, initiating His millennial kingdom, and is separate from the rapture event where believers are taken to be with the Lord prior to this final visible return.

From Daily Discipleship Guide:

Matthew 24:44 reminds us to live in a continuous state of readiness for Jesus's return. Practically, this means cultivating a lifestyle of faithfulness—being deliberate about how we use our time, relationships, and resources. Readiness also involves guarding against spiritual complacency and distractions that pull us away from Christ. Ultimately, it involves living in light of eternity and making choices that reflect our hope in His return and our desire to be found faithful when He comes.

1. First, Jesus predicted the Temple's complete destruction, fulfilled by the Roman siege in A.D. 70, including the "abomination of desolation" (Matthew 24:1-2, 15-21).
2. Second, He describes signs preceding His glorious return at the end of the age: false Christs, wars, famines, persecution, and a period of great tribulation and cosmic disturbances (Matthew 24:4-14, 23-29). Then, He will appear visibly "on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" to gather His elect (Matthew 24:30-31, ESV).

Jesus stresses that no one knows the exact time of His return (Matthew 24:36), urging believers to remain watchful and prepared through faithful living and diligent service (Matthew 24:42-44). Thus, Matthew 24 is understood as a prophetic discourse with both an immediate fulfillment (Temple destruction) and a future one (Christ's return), calling all believers to live with an eternal perspective.

- **False Christs and False Prophets:** Many will come claiming to be Christ or deceiving people (Matthew 24:4-5, 23-24).
- **Wars and Rumors of Wars:** Nations will rise against nations (Matthew 24:6-7).
- **Famines and Earthquakes:** These will occur in various places (Matthew 24:7).
- **Persecution of Believers:** His followers will be hated and put to death (Matthew 24:9-10).
- **Lawlessness and Cold Love:** Iniquity will increase, and the love of many will grow cold (Matthew 24:12).
- **The Gospel Preached Globally:** The good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed to all nations (Matthew 24:14).
- **The Abomination of Desolation:** A specific desecrating event (Matthew 24:15).
- **Great Tribulation:** A time of suffering unprecedented in history (Matthew 24:21).
- **Cosmic Disturbances:** The sun, moon, and stars will be affected (Matthew 24:29).
- **His Visible Return:** The Son of Man will appear in heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30).

He is primarily addressing two major events that are closely intertwined in His prophecy: the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and His second coming.

1. First, a significant portion of Matthew 24 refers to the impending destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, which was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Roman armies besieged and destroyed the city and its sacred sanctuary (Matthew 24:1-2, 15-21). Jesus' disciples had pointed out the magnificent temple buildings, and He declared that "not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2, ESV). He warned them about the "abomination of desolation" (Matthew 24:15, ESV), a reference that many evangelical scholars believe pointed to the Roman legions surrounding Jerusalem and eventually desecrating the temple. He instructed His followers to flee when they saw these signs (Matthew 24:16-20).
2. Second, Jesus shifts His focus to His future return at the end of the age. He describes various signs that will precede His glorious second coming, including false Christs and prophets, wars, famines, earthquakes, and the persecution of believers (Matthew 24:4-14, 23-28). He speaks of a time of great tribulation followed by cosmic disturbances (Matthew 24:29). Then, He clearly describes His return: "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. 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" (Matthew 24:30-31, ESV).

Jesus also emphasizes that no one knows the exact day or hour of His return, only the Father (Matthew 24:36).

- Therefore, believers are called to be watchful and prepared, living faithfully in anticipation of His coming (Matthew 24:42-44). The parables that follow in Matthew 24 and 25 further illustrate this need for constant readiness and diligent service.
- In summary, Matthew 24 is understood by evangelical Christians as a prophetic discourse with both a near fulfillment (the destruction of Jerusalem) and a far fulfillment (the second coming of Christ), calling believers in every age to live with an eternal perspective and faithful obedience.