



Let No One Alarm You About that Day Matthew 24:36-51

Earlier this year, a South African pastor predicted earlier the “rapture” would occur on September 23-24. When that date passed, he stated that the “real” date would be October 7-8. According to South African media, he announced a third date- October 16-17.

Stories like this remind us how easy it is to misread Jesus’ words about his coming and the importance of hearing them as he intended.

This is the final message of the **Series**, and it might be helpful to see where we’ve come with what Jesus said about the end times:

Week 1: Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple, and for such a prediction to come true would validate Jesus' claims and be the end of the Old Covenant (Hebrews 7-10:18).

Week 2: Jesus speaks of events of the Jewish war leading up to the temple's destruction, which occurred and have been verified by history.

Week 3: The "abomination of desolation," which took place in the first century when the temple was desecrated by the Roman Titus.

Weeks 4-6: The "coming of the Son of Man," which speaks of God's visitation and the consequences of rejecting God. This Jesus said his contemporaries would see (26:63-66).

Today we'll see some final events that took place during the Jewish War, what Jesus said to his disciples about this, and why it's important for people who believe that Jesus will indeed come again.

We believe Jesus is coming again; however, what Jesus refers to here fits in with first-century events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem.

First: What Jesus compared these events to (Verses 36-41).

In the “popular view,” these verses refer to a secret rapture of the church. Here’s why the idea of a rapture doesn’t fit:

- Verse 38: Notice the contrast between the people of Noah’s day (“they”) and Noah himself.
- Verse 39: Once again, the people of Noah’s day (“they”) are being referred to as being unaware of the great flood coming. This in turn is likened to the coming of the Son of Man.
- Verses 40-41: With the Noah story as a backdrop, Jesus uses the language of being “taken” or being “left” because of His coming. In the Noah story, the ones “taken” or “swept away” were those outside the ark, taken in the flood, while those inside the ark were “left” upon the earth.

- This understanding is consistent with the use of being “taken” or “left” in the Hebrew Scriptures (OT), where “taken” describes being taken into exile or death, while being “left” refers to those who were not taken but remained in the land (2 Kings 25, Jeremiah 39 & 52).
- Here’s how the Roman historian Tacitus describes what took place:
“Old men and children, the worthless and the weak, were **left behind**; the able-bodied were **taken** for execution or slavery”
(Tacitus, Histories 5.12, emphasis mine).

Second: What Jesus commands to His disciples to do.

- Two related commands are given: “Stay awake!” and “Be ready!” (Verses 42 and 44).
- These disciples, who fell asleep in Gethsemane, must be prepared for the events that would take place within their generation.
- Just as the disciples needed to stay alert to the events in their time, so we must stay awake for the ultimate promise — His final coming!

- Here's what the disciples did (and what we can do) to "stay awake" and "ready:"
And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers. Acts 2:42, CSB
- Our readiness for Christ's final coming is being committed (regardless of motivation) to what the apostles were committed to!

Are you ready for Jesus' final coming by being a disciple of His? What commitment of the apostles do you need to focus on most? Will you take one simple, practical action step this week regarding this? Be ready- not by prediction, but by pursuing Jesus in community!