

The Coming of the King



Matthew 24-28

Bible Studies for Ashfield Presbyterian Church
ashfieldpresbyterian.org.au

Matthew 24: Keep watch!

We all want to be safe and secure. Yet many things can threaten our security-losing our job, our income, our health, our loved ones. Our ability to handle these threats will depend on the source of our security. Matthew 24 focuses on the destruction of Jerusalem and the return of Christ. The true issue of Christ's return is not the "hows" or "whens" that fascinate us. Rather we must learn to live in the present in light of the future. We must learn the true source of our security.

1. What gives you a sense of security?
2. **Read Matthew 24:1-35.** Following Jesus' statement about the temple's destruction, the disciples ask two questions (v. 3). Look through chapter 24, briefly noting ways that Jesus answers these questions.

3. What might the disciples have said about the temple that prompted Jesus' response?

What did Jesus say about the temple?

4. Throughout history people have set dates for Christ's return and have been mistaken. What events might deceive the disciples into thinking the end is at hand (vv. 4-8)?
5. Before the end comes, what dangers will believers face, and how are we to handle them (vv. 9-14)?

Around 538 BC Daniel prophesied about an abomination that would cause desolation of the temple (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). In 167 BC Antiochus Epiphanes attacked Jerusalem and set up a pagan altar in the temple. Jesus spoke after this, and prophesied that the abomination that caused desolation spoken of through the prophet Daniel would stand in the holy place. Another event would come like the tragedy of 167 BC. He is probably thinking of Caesar Augustus who destroyed the temple in AD 70.

6. What occurs in the aftermath of this abomination (vv. 15-22)?
7. Who was to flee to the mountains?
8. How will we be able to distinguish false Christs from the true (vv. 23-31)?
9. When and how would "the sun 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"?
10. How will "the coming of the Son of Man be"?
11. Will the Son of Man come at an hour we expect?
12. What generation was to see all of these things?
13. **Read Matthew 24:36-51.** What is Jesus speaking about in these verses?
14. In what ways is Noah's flood like the second coming of Christ?
15. How does the parable of the thief (vv. 42-44) emphasise the importance of living in light of Christ's return?

The parable of the wise and wicked servants (45-51)?

16. What does it mean, practically, to be ready for Jesus' return if we don't know when he will come?

17. So is Jesus primarily talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, or about his return and judgment day? Both? Why?

18. Can you summarise the attitudes and actions followers of Jesus are to have in light of this chapter?

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26-27:

44:

19. Few of us have ever faced deadly peril for our faith. What types of pressure do you face for your faith in Christ?

20. In what ways do you have need of greater watchfulness and perseverance?

PRAYER POINTS:

Praise God for giving you an unfailing source of security.

Matthew 25: Be Ready!

Accountability can be uncomfortable and inconvenient. Our desires and preferences are subject to the demands of another. Most of us would prefer to do things our own way. A rule of thumb in management is that people don't do what you expect; they do what you inspect. Jesus is coming back to inspect our lives. He holds us accountable for how we conduct ourselves in his absence. In Matthew 25 he urges us to prepare for his coming.

1. Are you someone who gets to meetings early? Right on time? Ten minutes late? How does your punctuality at Bible study today illustrate this?

2. **Read Mt 25:1-13.** How does this parable relate to Mt 24?

3. In what ways were the ten girls alike?

Different?

4. What unexpected event takes place? With what embarrassing consequence? What then is the point of this parable (see also 24:42)?

5. What resources and responsibilities has Jesus given you? How can you handle them in a good and faithful manner?

6. Why is readiness so important in regard to the second coming?

7. **Read Mt 25:14-30.** Who does the master represent?

The journey?

The talents?

The servants?

8. A talent was a vast sum of money. In the parable of the talents, what were the master's expectations of his servants (vv. 14-30)?

9. Why did the servant with one talent hide it?

10. What was Jesus saying about the two servants who doubled their investment?

Have you ever observed that the more you used a talent, the more talents God gave you?

11. Why was the master so hard on the servant who hid his talent?

12. How well are you doing at making the most of the talents Jesus has given you? What would he say to you if he returned today?

13. As a home group, how can you help each other make the most of your talents for Jesus' sake?

14. **Read Mt 25:31-46.** Identify the King,

the sheep,

the goats

the "brothers" of the King (vv. 31-46).

15. Does this seem more like a parable or a prophecy? Is it significant how we categorise it?

16. List the six actions Jesus will use as the basis of judgment.

What kinds of acts are these?

For whom are they done now and ultimately (40)?

How do they benefit the doer?

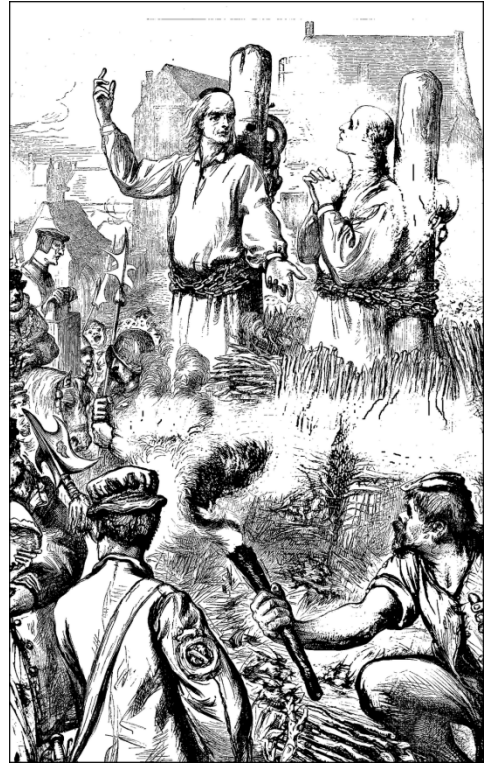
17. How are those who don't do the acts and those who do them similar? Different?

18. According to Jesus' teaching in this chapter, what should we be doing until he returns?

PRAYER POINTS:

Matthew 26 Courage in the face of death

On the drizzly day of October 16, 1555, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, two influential English reformers, were tied to the stake and bundles of sticks were piled at their feet. The crowd strained to hear what the two men were saying. Would they recant or would they persist in dying as heretics? As the executioner pushed a torch into the wood, Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Suffering and temptation reveal the quality of our discipleship. Nowhere is this more evident than in Matthew 26, as we move into the climax of the book.



1. Have you ever been tempted to stop following Christ? Explain.
 2. **Read Matthew 26:1-16.** Why was Passover an appropriate time for the events of verses 1-5 to unfold?
 3. How do verses 1-16 set the stage for Jesus' betrayal and death?
 4. Why was fragrant oil poured on Jesus at the house of Simon? What is significant about the setting for the woman's gift?
 5. What would be repeated as long as the "gospel is preached in the whole world"?
- What does he mean "in memory of her"? Is the emphasis on the woman, or on Jesus?
6. Read John 12:4-6. What might Judas' motivation have been to betray Jesus (26:14-15) after the episode with the perfume?
 7. **Read Matthew 26:17-35.** In verses 17-30 Jesus celebrates the Passover with his disciples. What elements were used in the institution of the Lord's Supper? Why? (You may like to read about the Feast of Unleavened Bread from Exod 12:1-30).

8. Why do you think Jesus was secretive about the arrangements for the Passover meal?

9. Should Christians understand and celebrate the Passover? Why/ why not?

10. When would Christ drink of the fruit of the vine again with His disciples?

What does this mean for us today?

11. How is this occasion both ominous and hopeful? Do you think the hymn that was sung was joyful or sad?

12. **Read Matthew 26:36-75.** What insights can we gain about Jesus during his time in Gethsemane (vv. 36-45)?

13. Why was Jesus "sorrowful and troubled"?

14. What did Christ request from His Father?

Did the Father answer His prayer?

15. Why do you think Jesus remained silent during the first part of his trial (vv. 57-63)?

What action from the high priest forced Him to speak?

What can we learn from this?

16. When have you been confronted with the weakness of your commitment to the Lord?

17. Both Jesus and the disciples faced temptation in this chapter. How can Jesus' example and the disciples' failures help us withstand temptation and testing?

PRAYER POINTS:

Ask God to give you the courage to claim allegiance to Christ.

Matthew 27:1-31: Guilt & Innocence

1. When have you felt as though God were absent when you needed him?
2. **Read Matthew 27:1-31.** Where is God in these verses?
3. After the religious leaders hand Jesus over to Pilate, Judas feels remorse (vv. 1-5). How is remorse different from repentance?

What is the attitude of the Jewish leaders?

4. What did the chief priests do with the silver pieces? Why?
5. Both Peter and Judas caved in under pressure, yet history remembers them very differently. Why?
6. Why did the chief priests and elders take Christ to Pontius Pilate the governor? What power did he have that they did not?
7. Jesus stands before Pilate in verses 11-26. How and why does Pilate seek to avoid sentencing Jesus?

What is his overriding concern in this trial: identifying the Messiah? Listening to Jesus? Exchanging prisoners? Doing justice? Appeasing the crowd?

8. What advice did Pilate's wife give to him?

9. Is Pilate more concerned with satisfying the crowd, his wife, or his own conscience?

10. Why have the cheering crowds of Ch 21 turned on Jesus demanding his death?

11. Why did Pilate release Barabbas and deliver Christ to be crucified?

12. The soldiers viciously mock Jesus in verses 27-31. What does their mockery reveal about their knowledge of Jesus?

13. This chapter is filled with irony. People speak the truth even though they don't believe it, or don't realise the significance of their words. What is ironic about the comments and actions of the soldiers in v28-29?

14. What seems to be Satan's "triumph" is actually his defeat. Christ's "defeat" is actually his triumph. See Acts 2:23; 4:27-28. The reader is able to see the true situation more clearly than those in the story. God is at work despite appearances. How should this challenge our views about the way God works in our lives?

PRAYER POINTS:

Pray for protection so that you won't succumb to social pressure.

Matthew 27:32-66: Your Kingdom Come

1. What work was given to Simon of Cyrene? Why?

2. Why did the soldiers offer Christ sour wine mingled with gall to drink?

Why did Christ refuse this offering?

3. What is the official reason Jesus is crucified (37)?

What is ironic about this description?

What is the real reason (27:18)?

4. What did the soldiers do with the garments of Jesus? Why?

5. As Jesus hangs on the cross, he is repeatedly mocked and insulted (vv. 32-44). How do these insults reveal the spiritual choices these people have made?

What is ironic about their insults?

6. Where were the two thieves crucified in relation to Jesus?

The bitter cup of wine, and the location of the thieves reminds us of the request of James and John in 20:20-28. What did they request?

What event were they thinking about?

What event would REALLY begin Jesus' kingdom?

What was Jesus' answer?

How did he use it as an opportunity to teach about discipleship?

7. What caused Jesus to say, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" What does his cry, and the overshadowing darkness, reveal about his relationship to the Father during this torment?

8. Jesus quotes from Psalm 22. Read it, and identify points of similarity between David's experience and that of Jesus.

9. What else happened when Jesus died (51-54)?

10. What is the significance of the temple curtain being torn in two?

What did the curtain separate?

Why mention that it was torn from top to bottom?

11. What caused the centurion to exclaim that Jesus was surely the Son of God (54)?

12. What hints are there in these verses that Jesus' death is not the end?

13. Who was Joseph of Arimathea? What did he request of Pilate?

14. What did "the chief priests and Pharisees" request of Pilate? Why?

15. How do you explain the necessity of Jesus' death to a non-believer?

16. Is investigating the circumstances of Jesus' death for you more a dispassionate historical investigation, or an emotional experience? Why?

PRAYER POINTS:

Matthew 28 Come and see! Go and tell!

Victory requires proclamation! Once a battle has been won, it's time to spread the word. Matthew 28 focuses on the messengers of Jesus' resurrection—the angel tells the women, the women tell the disciples, the disciples tell the nations, even the guards tell the religious leaders. As Matthew concludes his Gospel, we are invited to join with those who throughout history have been witnesses and messengers of Jesus, the victorious resurrected Lord.

1. **Read Matthew 28.** God's control over the situation was not obvious in Ch 27. What tangible evidence is there in this chapter that God is in control?

2. The angel is the first messenger of the resurrection (vv. 2-7). What is the significance of his appearance and words?

What affect does he have on the guard?

3. Consider the mission of the women (vv. 1-9). How does it undergo a radical change?

4. How does Jesus refer to his disciples (10)?

What emotions might be behind the description?

5. The Roman guard and the Jewish leaders are confronted with a miracle. How do they respond, and why?

6. The disciples go to Galilee where they meet with Jesus. Describe the commission he gives to them and us (vv. 16-20).

7. What did they do when they saw the Lord?

8. What might the disciples have doubted about Jesus?

What keeps people today from believing that Jesus is the resurrected Lord?

9. How does Jesus equip them and future disciples to carry out his commission?

10. What is the number one priority for the disciples in Jesus' commission?

Do we need to adjust the things we do as a church in light of this emphasis?

11. As you conclude this study of Matthew, how can you be more involved in making disciples and fulfilling the Great Commission?

How can our church do this better?

12. How long will Jesus be with His disciples?

What comfort does this give you?

PRAYER POINTS:

Pray that God will help you to be faithful to this task.