

How to Prepare for Jesus' Return

Matthew 24:32-51 - NCBC, July 11, 2021

Main Point: **Faithfully live for King Jesus while you wait for His second coming.**

- Confidently believe Jesus will return just as He promised (32-36)
 - His warnings are clear (32-33)
 - His words are certain (34-35)
 - His waiting is ordained (36)
- Soberly realize Jesus will bring sudden judgment (37-41)
 - His coming will be interruptive (37-38)
 - His coming will be sudden (39)
 - His coming will be divisive (40-41)
- Carefully plan to meet Jesus at an unexpected time (42-44)
 - Wake up from sin's slumber and worship God (1 Th 1:9-10)
 - Watch and pray for His return (1 Peter 4:7)
 - Walk in love towards His people (1 Peter 4:8-9)
 - Work and witness for His glory (1 Peter 4:10-11)
- Wisely serve Jesus who determines your eternal destiny (45-51)
 - The faithful servant will be forever blessed (45-47)
 - The wicked servant will be forever cursed (48-51)

Application: **Are you living for Jesus' return?**

Opening Announcements:

- **All Men and Boys are invited to our Men's Breakfast** this coming Saturday morning at 8am in the Family Center. Come enjoy a hearty breakfast and sound biblical teaching on what it means to be a man.

<<When Christ our Life Appears>>



Are you longing for your faith to turn to sight? What a day that will be when Christ our Life appears!! Amen.

Please continue your worship now by opening your Bible to **Matthew chapter 24.**



Today we are focusing on **verses 32-51 of Matthew 24.**

If you need a Bible, simply raise your hand and we will gladly give you one.

Let's quickly review where we are in Matthew's Gospel:

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW				
1-3 Presentation of the King				
4-7 Proclamation of the King <i>Sermon on the Mount (5-7)</i>	8-10 Power of the King <i>Sending out the 12 Apostles (10)</i>	11-13 Rejection of the King <i>Kingdom Parables (13)</i>	14-20 Priorities of the King <i>Topsy-Turvy Values (18)</i>	21-25 Progress of the King <i>Olivet Discourse (24-25)</i>
Kingdom offered to Israel		Kingdom offered to all Nations		
26-28 Passion & Proof of the King				

Remember the body of Matthew's gospel is organized into 5 topical sections. Each section begins highlighting significant *works* which prove that Jesus is in fact the Messiah. Then each section concludes with red-letters... *words* from Jesus Himself... that help us behold King Jesus as the long-promised Messiah in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.

Therefore **chapters 24-25** close this 5th and final section of the body of Matthew's gospel. We call these two chapters the "Olivet Discourse" because Jesus gives this sermon to His disciples from the Mount of Olives, as they overlook Jerusalem's majestic temple.

The Olivet Discourse contains Jesus' teaching about the end times. Jesus is preparing His disciples for what will happen at the end of time right before He returns to this earth to judge the wicked and set up His earthly kingdom.

Jesus obviously cared about eschatology, or "End Times Doctrine." So let me ask you this: How important should the doctrine of the end times be to Christians today?

Studying **Matthew 24** has been a great reminder for me that the second coming of Jesus is not optional or unimportant. Jesus' return to this earth is in fact a core essential doctrine of the Christian faith! You can't be a Christian if you do not believe that Jesus is coming back to this earth!

Because if there is no second coming of Christ, there will be no judgment of the wicked and no eternal reward for the believer. If there is no second coming of Christ, the believer has no living hope, and the Scriptures are full of lies.

So while there is room for some mystery and debate around some details of end times doctrine... may we never disregard or dismiss this core doctrine of the Christian faith! Jesus' second coming is the yearning hope for every believer!

So please stand now to give your full attention to the public reading of God's Word, as we listen to Jesus teaching His disciples how to prepare for His second coming.

I'm reading from the English Standard Version, from **Matthew 24, verse 32:**

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.

45 “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 48 But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him

and at an hour he does not know 51 and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

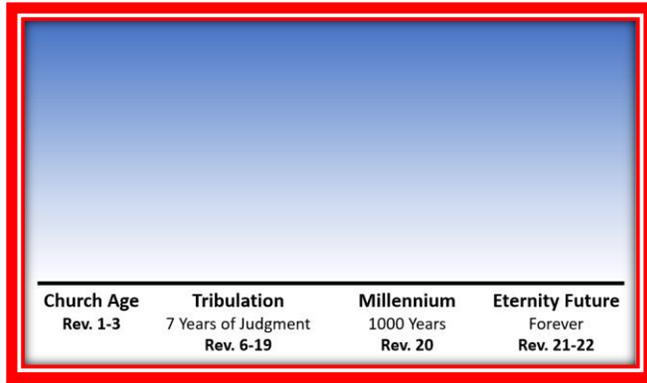


Let's pray.

The first half of **Matthew 24** introduces the labor pains, signs, and judgments that will happen before Jesus comes to establish His earthly kingdom. And when you compare **Matthew 24** with the Old Testament prophets¹ and the New Testament apostles,² we get a cohesive picture of God's timetable for the end of time.

¹ Especially Daniel and Zechariah

² Especially Paul's 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Peter's 2 Peter, and John's



For example, the last book of the Bible, **Revelation**, presents a timeline of last things that corresponds to Jesus' teaching.

Revelation begins with letters to churches, which refers to the church age we are still living in today.

Then **Revelation chapters 6-19** describe 7 years of God's judgment on the world, called the Tribulation. This tribulation period begins with 7 seal judgments.³ Folded into the 7th seal is 7 trumpet judgments.⁴ And folded into the 7th trumpet judgment is 7 bowls of God's wrath.⁵ In other words, this 7 years of Tribulation will be a time when God's wrath is being sequentially poured out on the earth in an ever-increasing intensity that all culminates,

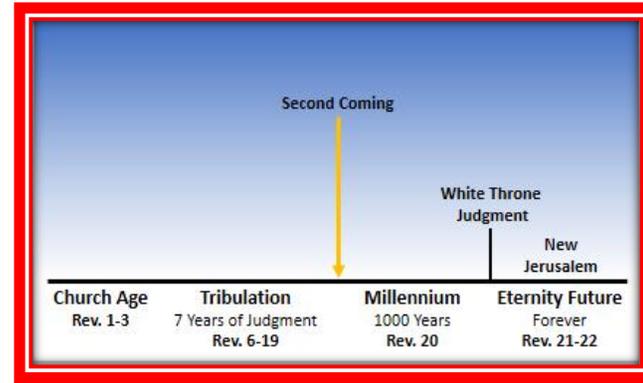
³ Revelation 6:1-17; 8:1

⁴ Revelation 8:1-11:19

⁵ Revelation 15:1, 7-8; 16:1-21

⁶ Matthew 24:30-31; Revelation 19:11-21

⁷ Revelation 20:11-15

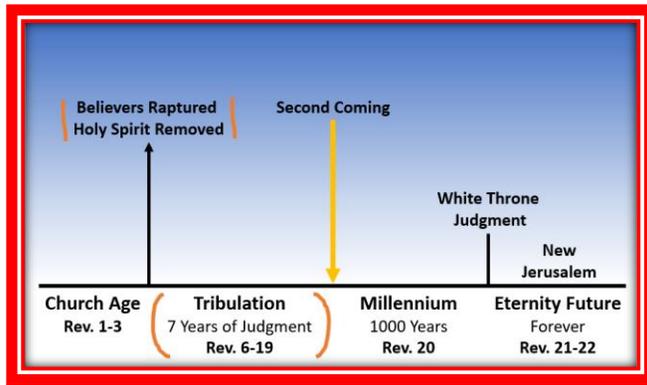


in the second coming of Jesus to earth.

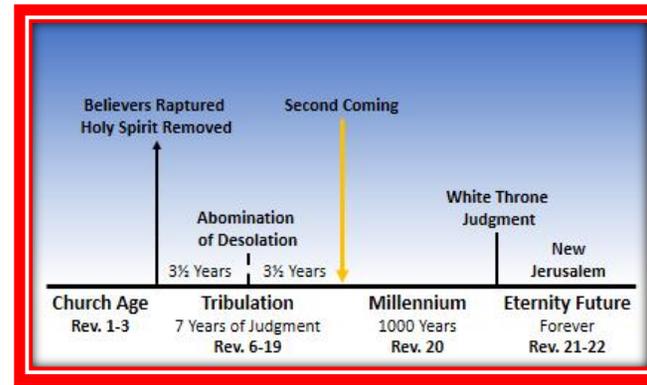
After Jesus returns,⁶ **Revelation 20** describes how He will reign in righteousness for 1,000 years on earth. Then there will be the White Throne Judgment⁷ which determines the eternal destiny for every person, so that God and His people can enter into the eternal future of the New Jerusalem described in **Revelation 21-22**.

So now listen carefully, because what Jesus is teaching in **Matthew 24** is referring to what happens *before* His return, during the 7 years of tribulation.⁸

⁸ This time period is also referred to as the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12, 13:6-9; Joel 1:15, 2:1-31, 3:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:2), or the 70th week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), or the time of Jacob's distress (Jeremiah 30:7), or the time or day of trouble (Deuteronomy 4:30; Daniel 12:1; Zephaniah 1:15).



Remember,⁹ the Olivet Discourse refers mostly to this Tribulation Period¹⁰ after the church-age believers have been raptured¹¹ and the Holy Spirit has been removed¹² from the earth.



For example, **Matthew 24:15** refers directly to Daniel's¹³ Abomination of Desolation that happens at the mid-point of the Tribulation period.¹⁴

Therefore Jesus' earthly kingdom must wait for His second coming that will take place *after* all these signs and judgments.

And this helps us better understand what is meant by the phrase, Christ's return, or the second coming of Jesus.

⁹ C.f. The sermon titled "The End is Coming" from June 20, 2021 at New Castle Bible Church. The following reasons are given in that message for concluding that the Olivet Discourse finds its fulfillment in the Tribulation Period, rather than in our present church age: 1) Jesus' uses "the end" in verses 6, 13, and 14 as His answer to the disciples' question about the "end of the age" in verse 3. 2) Biblically, "labor pains" are a technical designation for the eschatological "Day of the Lord." 3) The "labor pains" listed in Matthew 24 closely parallel the seal judgments in Revelation 6. 4) Daniel's "abomination of desolation" clearly referenced in Matthew 24:15 occurs in the middle of the Tribulation period. Daniel's prophecy specifies a set time period of 3½ years between setting up a statue in place of regular sacrifice in the temple and the coming of Christ. And never yet in history has an image came to life and beckoned men to worship it (Revelation 13:14-15). Therefore, Matthew 24:15 refers to something that has future

fulfillment in the Tribulation period, not something from history or the present day. And 5) the clear Jewish audience, (note the references to Judea, Sabbath, and prophets) without any mention of the church, implies a future fulfillment after the church has been raptured.

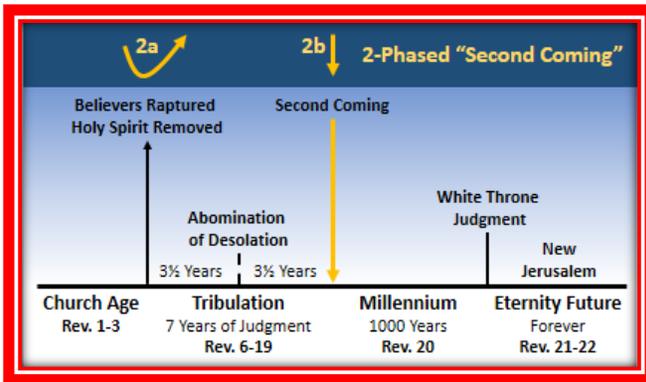
¹⁰ Only Matthew 24:1-3 and Luke 21:12-24 look directly to 1st century fulfillment (i.e. Rome's destruction in AD 70). The rest of the Olivet Discourse finds its fulfillment in the Tribulation Period thereby calling all who will hear to prepare themselves for the coming return of Christ!

¹¹ 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:14-18; 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Timothy 4:8

¹² 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7

¹³ Daniel 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11

¹⁴ Daniel 9:27s Revelation 13:5, 14-15



Because, from our perspective during this church age, the second coming of Christ has two phases to it, separated by 7 years in-between.

The first phase of the second coming is the rapture; the second phase is when Christ actually returns to earth.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 describe how believers will be raptured, or caught up, to meet the Lord in the air, to always be with the Lord. This is the first phase of Christ's second coming. But this is not the full expression of the second coming. For the second coming isn't fully realized until Jesus returns to the earth to establish His 1,000-year Millennial Reign.

Recognizing both phases of Jesus' second coming helps church-age Christians connect with the call to prepare for Jesus' return in **Matthew 24 and 25**. For although believers will not experience God's wrath during the Tribulation period, we still must prepare for Christ's second coming as experienced in the rapture which occurs prior to the Tribulation period.

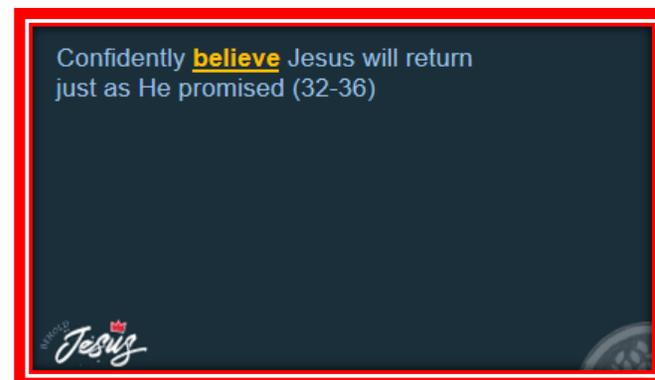
So then our main point from **verses 32-51** of **Matthew 24** is directly relevant for every person:



You must faithfully live for King Jesus while you wait for His second coming.

If you believe that Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension has given you eternal life with Him forever, ...and I pray that you do...then you will experience the second coming of Christ in the rapture. And today's Scripture reveals 4 ways to faithfully live for Jesus while we wait for His second coming.

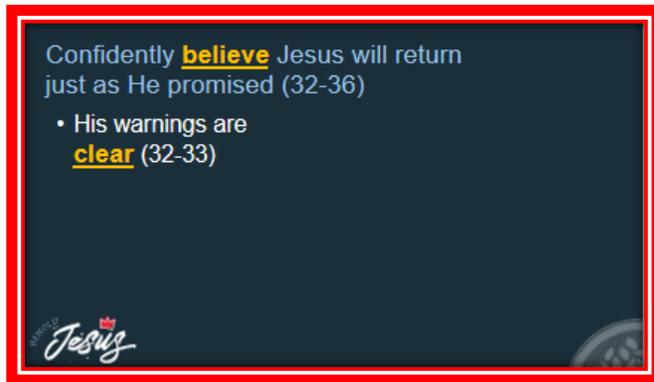
First, in **verses 32-36** we must,



Confidently believe Jesus will return just as He promised.

Although it's been almost 2,000 years since Jesus promised to return, you must not disregard His promise.¹⁵ Instead you must confidently believe that Jesus will return just as He said He would.

First, you can believe Jesus is still coming back since,



His warnings are clear.

Verse 32 uses the illustration of the fig tree. In Israel, the fig tree provided a visible sign that summer was near. Unlike the other trees in the land, the fig tree lost its leaves over the winter, and its branches would only become soft and begin sprouting leaves in late spring right before summer began.

So for the Jewish people, the fig tree was similar to our Cottonwood trees in Illinois. You know summer is about to begin when you see cottonwood seeds blowing around like snow!

What's Jesus' point?

Verse 33 – when you see all these signs and labor pains that are found in the earlier part of this chapter – when you see the seal judgments, the false prophets, and the abomination of desolation... you can know that it's about time for Jesus to return!

Translation, His warnings are clear. You won't be able to miss the signs if you are looking for them. The closer we get to His return, the more obvious it will be that Jesus is coming back.

Truly, I say to you, in verse 34, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Now it seems best to connect "this generation" to the "when" of **verse 33**.¹⁶ Jesus is teaching that the generation who sees all of "these things" that happen during the Tribulation Period will be the same generation that experiences His second coming.¹⁷

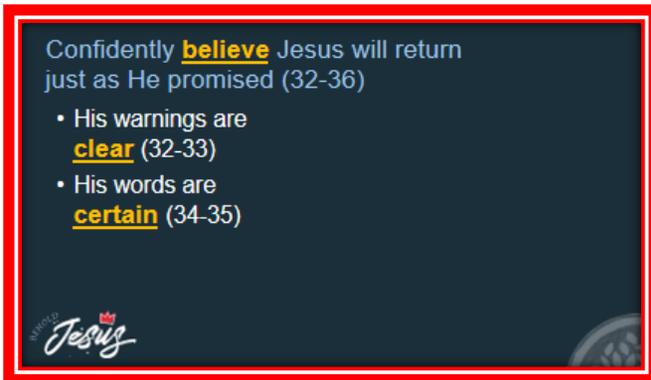
How can Jesus say this with such confidence?

¹⁵ 2 Peter 3:4

¹⁶ In other words, Jesus was not promising to return before the 12 disciples died. After all, He explicitly told Peter in John 21:18-19 that Peter would

be put to death.

¹⁷ C.f. Luke 21:31-32



Because His words are certain.

Look at **verse 35**,

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Christian – your suffering may be long...and it may seem as if evil is winning ...but you can confidently believe that Jesus will come back just as He promised, because His words never fail.¹⁸

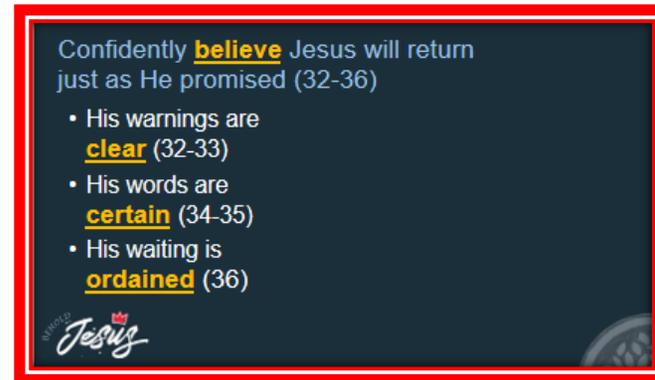
Orion and the Rocky Mountains will perish before one promise of God is ever broken. His words are certain loved ones!

Yes, His people have been waiting a long time for His return, but His delay is due to His patience,¹⁹ not broken promises.

¹⁸ Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25

¹⁹ 2 Peter 3:8-9

²⁰ What a glorious revelation of the voluntary humbling of our Lord to self-limit His divine omniscience by adding full humanity to His very nature.



You must understand His waiting is ordained or controlled. It is the Lord of History, not any human decision or catastrophe, that determines when time shall be no more!

Verse 36 says that no one knows the exact day or hour of the second coming... not even the angels or Jesus Himself!²⁰ Only God the Father determines when the fullness of the Gentiles is complete,²¹ and then Jesus will be sent to collect His bride.

So no human being – not even the perfect man Jesus Himself – knows the timing of the second coming. We must not set dates, nor listen to those who do!

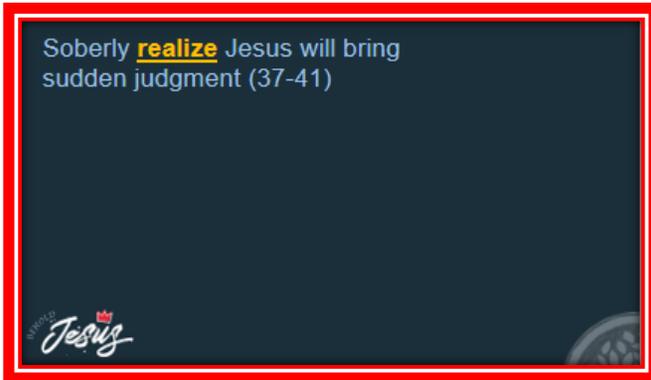
Instead we must confidently believe God will keep His promise, and Jesus will return just exactly as the Scriptures promised.

This is the first way to faithfully live for Jesus while we wait: we believe Jesus is truly coming back as He said.

It's a mind-blowing mystery for sure...we'd never believe it if the Scriptures didn't teach it! C.f. Philippians 2:6-8

²¹ Luke 21:24; Romans 11:25

Second, living for our coming King means that we,



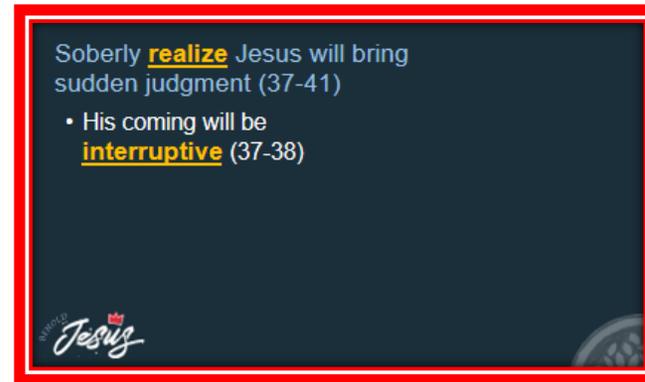
Soberly realize Jesus will bring sudden judgment.

In **verse 37**, Jesus now compares His second coming with the horrific judgment of the worldwide flood in the days of Noah.

Look at **verse 38**,

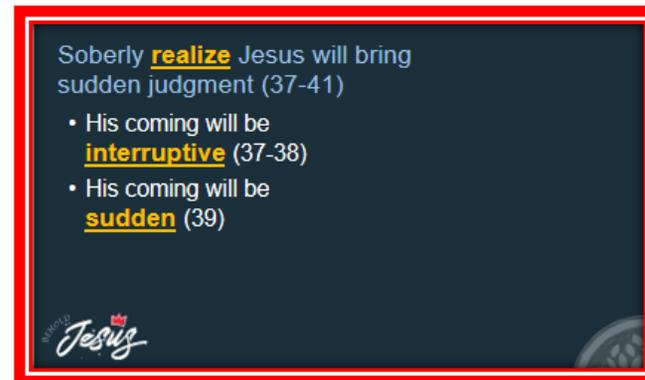
For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

So soberly realize,



His coming will be interruptive.

The second coming of Jesus will interrupt daily normalcy. Even though the signs of God's impending judgment will be obvious, people will persist in their daily routines ... eating lunch, enjoying company, getting married... all until one day when their routines will be interrupted, and life will instantaneously and eternally be turned upside down.



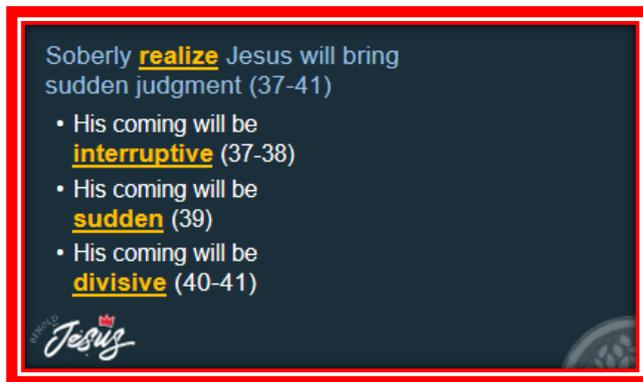
His coming will be sudden. Just like Noah's flood.

Of course Noah had announced the flood and warned the people for years that judgment was coming. But Noah's

generation had never seen rain before.²² Noah seemed like a crazy 600-year old religious fanatic to his generation.²³

So they were totally caught by surprise when God's promises actually came true, and the entire world was destroyed by God's wrath.

Friends, you must soberly realize that His coming brings sudden judgment.



Verses 40-41 teach His coming will be divisive.

Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

When Jesus comes back, it won't matter where you are, or what you are doing. All people from every tribe, tongue, and nation will be immediately and suddenly divided into two groups. Those who disobey God, just like during Noah's flood, will be swept away in God's

judgment. While those who love God's appearing, will be eternally saved and forever with the Lord.

Now, if you write in your Bible, circle both words "taken" in **verses 40 and 41**, and the word "swept away" in **verse 39**.

Historically, many Christians have taught that **Matthew 24:40-41** is referring to the church's rapture. That those "taken" were raptured, and those "left behind" entered the tribulation period.

However, I believe the context suggests the opposite. Remember, the Olivet Discourse is not referring to the church age, but to the Tribulation period. So the "one taken" is parallel to those in **verse 39** who were "swept away" in the flood of God's judgment. And the ones who are left are the righteous ones who come out of the Tribulation and enter immediately into Christ's earthly kingdom.

So here's the point: you prepare for Jesus' return by soberly realizing He will come to eternally divide the righteous from the unrighteous.

Are you ready for Jesus to come again?

Verses 42-44 go on now to urge us to,

²² Genesis 2:6

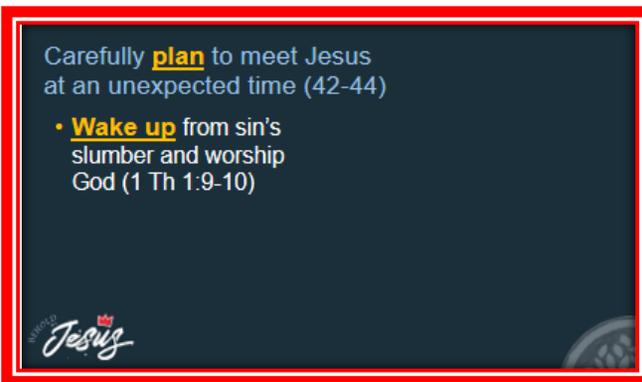
²³ Genesis 7:6



Carefully plan to meet Jesus at an unexpected time.

*Therefore, Jesus teaches in **verse 42**, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 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. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

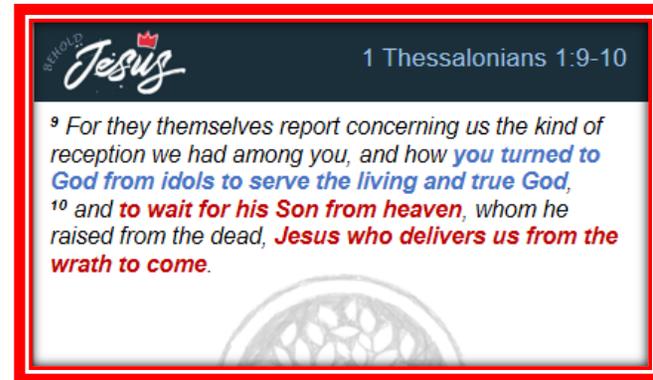
Accept that you don't know when the end will come. But act on what you do know...for Jesus urges you to *stay awake and be ready!*



In other words, Wake up from sin's slumber and worship God.

You must not be lulled to sleep by the accumulation of earthly riches or the approval of this world. Wake up! Your eternal destiny is at stake! This is far more consequential than any earthly promotion or relationship. Your eternal joy is worth far more than any sacrifice Christ may require of you.

Wake up and...



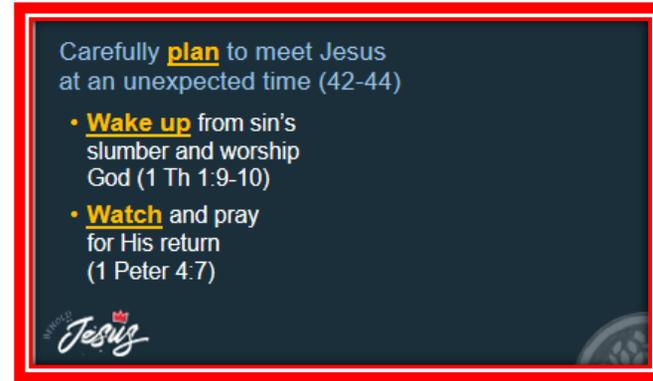
Turn to God from your idols to serve the living and true God, and wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised

from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come!²⁴

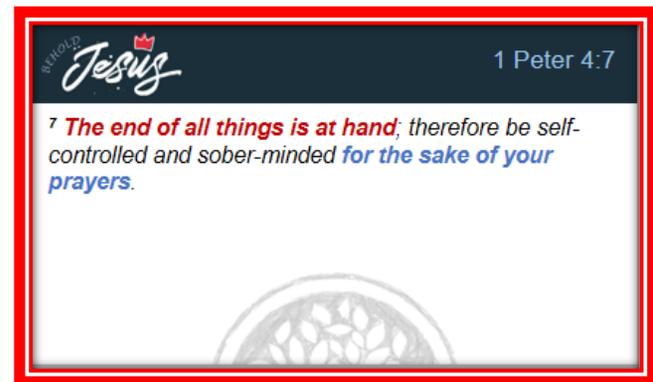
Dear friends... we are nearer to Jesus' return than we've ever been before. Yet today is the day of salvation. So turn from worshipping false gods, repent, and believe on Jesus, so you may be prepared to meet Him at an unexpected time!

Now there's several New Testament Scriptures that teach us how to plan to meet Jesus. Peter must have really been listening during the Olivet Discourse, because in both **1 Peter** and **2 Peter** he explains more what Jesus meant by this illustration of the Day of the Lord coming like an unexpected thief.

I really wish we had time to look at **2 Peter chapter 3**... it's a fascinating commentary on Jesus' words here...but we only have the time to just quickly review **1 Peter 4** where we observe three ways for Christians to live while they wait for Christ's return.²⁵



First, in **1 Peter chapter 4 verse 7**, Peter urges waiting Christians to Watch and pray for His return.



1 Peter 4:7 says, *The end of all things is at hand... that's second coming language... therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.*

In other words, fully use your mind to live in alignment with reality. When you're living for Jesus' return, you're not whipped into a frenzy with charts, news articles, or debates about the identity of the beast in Revelation.²⁶

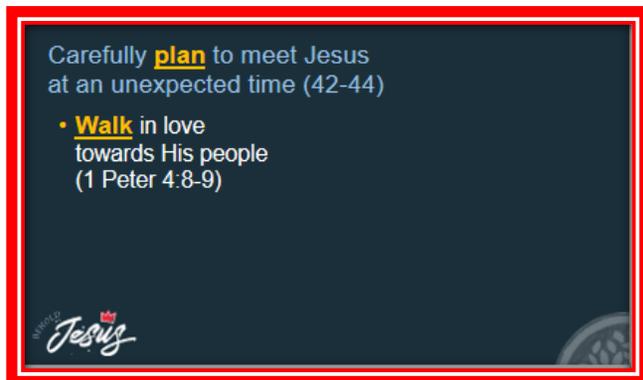
²⁴ 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

²⁵ For further study, please see the sermon entitled "The Expectant Church" preached at NCBC on September 9, 2018 on 1 Peter 4:7-11.

²⁶ Not to say there's never a place for some discussions about these things, but these favorite pastimes of many who love biblical prophecy in this present age simply miss the biblical emphasis and purposes of God's

Warren Wiersbe well says, “The test of our commitment to the doctrine of Christ’s return is not our ability to draw charts or discern signs, but our thinking and praying.”²⁷

So you must watch and pray and then also,



Walk in love towards God’s people.

Since *the end of all things is at hand*,



revelation (and sometimes even go directly against God’s warnings in Matthew 25:13; c.f. Acts 1:6-7).

²⁷ Wiersbe, 1 Peter Commentary

Christians must *keep loving one another earnestly, ... and show hospitality to one another without grumbling.*

If you’re looking for Jesus to return, you will *keep loving earnestly* – stretching and straining – exerting maximum effort – to sacrifice for the eternal good of your other brothers and sisters.

The reward of coming glory is strong enough to motivate sacrificial hospitality to strangers,²⁸ inviting into your life those who will never be able to repay you.²⁹ For you are expecting Christ to return soon – and therefore you aren’t living for your own comfort and security – but for your Master’s glory!

And finally Peter exhorts us to,

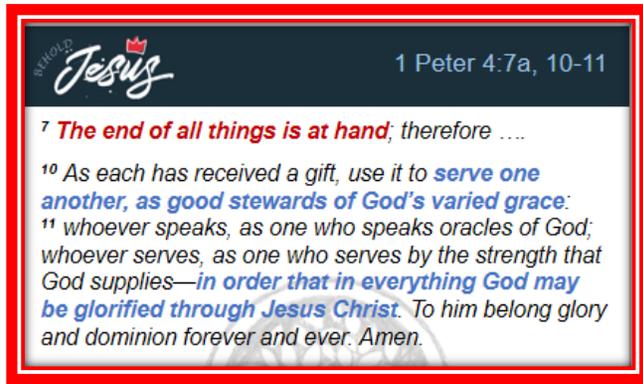


Work and witness for His glory. This is how we stay alert and ready for His return.

1 Peter 4:10 says it this way,

²⁸ Hebrews 13:2

²⁹ Luke 14:13-14



As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace...³⁰

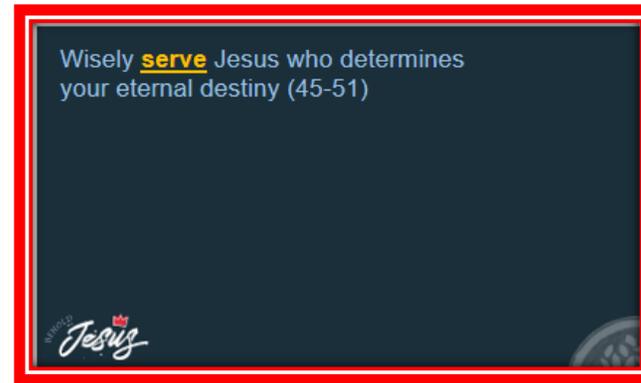
You plan to meet Jesus by busying yourself in His will, investing all that He has entrusted you for His greater praise and joy.

Again, Jesus' teaching should cause us to reflect,

Am I living for Jesus' return? Am I carefully planning to meet my Lord at an unexpected time?

So far, we've considered three ways to faithfully live for Jesus while we wait for His return: #1) We must confidently believe He is coming back just as He promised. #2) We must soberly realize His return will bring sudden judgment. #3) We must carefully plan to meet Him ready and alert, and now #4),

³⁰ For further study on these two rich verses, please see the sermon entitled, "The Expectant Church – Part 2" preached on NCBC on September 16, Page **14a** of 19



We must Wisely serve Jesus who determines our eternal destiny.

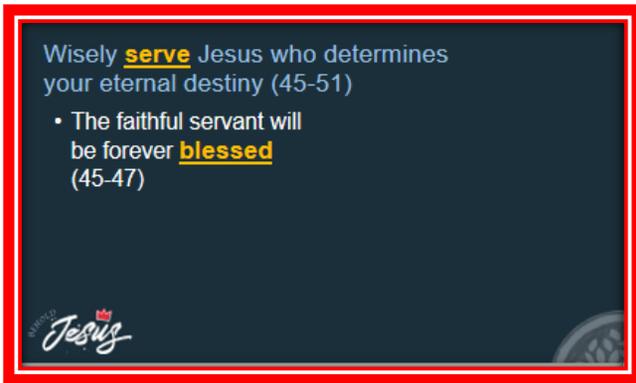
Here Jesus uses a story that contrasts a wise servant with a foolish servant.

Now it's important we realize both were servants in the Master's household. Both the wise and the wicked in this story were given responsibility to take care of the Master's family.

Both of these servants would have professed to love the Master. Both would have said they were living to serve the Master.

But in reality, what mattered was not their *talk* from their lips, but their *walk* from their lives. For the delayed return of the master only exposed their true condition of their heart.

2018 from 1 Peter 4:7-11.



In **verses 45-47**, we learn that **The faithful servant will be forever blessed**.

Here the master entrusts the wellbeing of his entire household to a servant while he goes away for an extended time. In the master's absence, this servant is responsible to feed and care for the master's family.

When the master finally returns in **verse 46**, and discovers that his household has been faithfully served, O how happy is that servant!

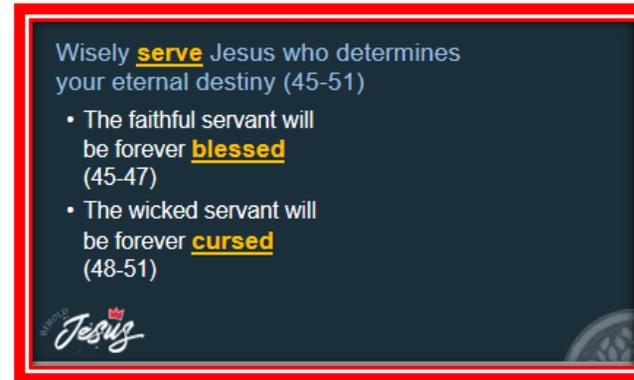
Verse 47 – *Truly I say to you, the master will set him over all his possessions.*

This is an extravagant reward beyond all expectation! The faithful servant is forever blessed ... promoted to the position of highest honor and authority...made to be the second in command only under the master himself!

And with this story, Jesus teaches that those who wisely serve as God's stewards, and actively pursue faithfulness to God's family, and seek to further His disciple-making

mission for all the nations on the earth... will be forever blessed upon Jesus' return! Such faithful disciples will eventually reign with Christ in His kingdom forever and ever!³¹ What a glorious destiny awaits the one who wisely serves God while waiting for Jesus' return!!

But then **verses 48-51** teach that,



The wicked servant will be forever cursed.

In **verse 48**, the wicked servant quickly makes his appointment over the master's family all about himself. He does not love the master or look forward to his return. Instead, once the master's prolonged delay removes any urgency of accountability from the servant's consciousness, **verse 49** describes how he oppresses others and selfishly indulges in excesses of food and drink.

The wicked servant is living for the moment – completely ignorant of the realities of **verse 50**. The master will return at an unexpected time. And when the master

³¹ Romans 8:17; Ephesians 1:1, 3, 2:6; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21,
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returns, it will be too late to rethink your life and your priorities. There will be no hope for repentance.

Instead, **verse 51** describes this servant's eternal punishment:

He will be cut in pieces and put with the hypocrites, and in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Loved ones, this is Jesus' language that describes eternal hell.³² Listen... there is absolutely no hint in the Bible that there will be a second chance for anyone to be saved on the day of Jesus' return.

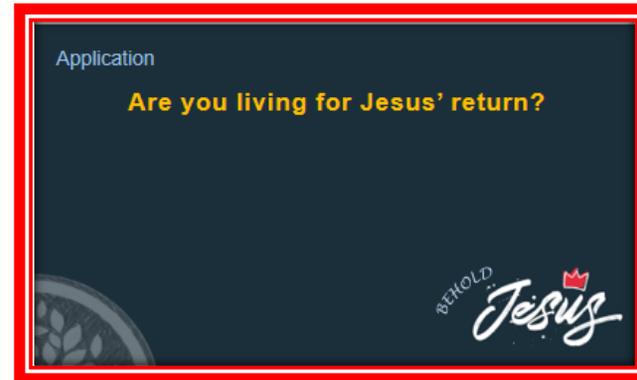
Jesus' second coming forever fixes the eternal destiny of every soul. The consequences of unfaithfulness are eternally serious. The stakes are high. Therefore, this passage urges all of us to,



Faithfully live for King Jesus while you wait for His second coming.

We do that by taking Jesus' return seriously, realizing the worldwide destruction of judgment that will accompany Jesus' return. Then we carefully plan to meet Jesus, and wisely serve His family and earthly mission as long as we live ... regardless of how delayed His return.

So how will you respond?



Are you living for Jesus' return?

As you review these four ways to prepare for Jesus' return, where is the Holy Spirit affirming you, or convicting you?

How would you live differently if you knew Jesus was coming back this afternoon?

³² Matthew 8:12; 22:13; Luke 13:28

Application

Are you living for Jesus' return?

- Do you love His appearing? (2 Timothy 4:8)
Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.



Do you love His appearing, like Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 4:8**? Are you even now looking and longing for Jesus to come and rapture you to Himself, and usher in the beginning of the end?

There is a great and undeserved reward for all who love the second coming of Jesus... for these are those who love God Himself!! So ask yourself, Do I really love God?

The only way you will come to love God is if you first understand how much He has loved you!³³ So fuel your love for Jesus' return by recounting gospel truths to your soul.... Remembering God's steadfast, covenant-keeping love for you through the finished work of Jesus' substitutionary death and resurrection.

Or perhaps,

Application

Are you living for Jesus' return?

- Do you love His appearing? (2 Timothy 4:8)
- Are you toying with sin? (1 John 3:2-3)
Beloved, ... we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.



Are you toying with sin?

Maybe you've assumed that you have another decade or two left in your life, so you're now content to toy with greed, or lust, or spiritual apathy? Have you forgotten that Christ could return for His church at any moment, and thereby find you negligent in your disciple-making mission?

Are you no longer fighting against sin, but instead flirting with sin?

Dear slave of Christ... everyone who hopes for Jesus' second coming *purifies himself, even as Christ is pure.*³⁴

God's Spirit wants to use this Olivet Discourse to remind you that Jesus is coming back, so you will not waste your earthly life on yourself, but instead live intentionally and eagerly for His return.

³³ 1 John 4:19
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³⁴ 1 John 3:2-3

Application

Are you living for Jesus' return?

- Do you love His appearing? (2 Timothy 4:8)
- Are you toying with sin? (1 John 3:3)
- How does Jesus' return motivate your greater faithfulness to Him today?



So how does Jesus' return motivate your greater faithfulness to Him today?

Pray that God will give you clarity to know His will, and the faith to repent and obey His word however He leads.



Matthew
24:32-51

How to Prepare
for Jesus' Return

For Jesus desires for every person here to be joyfully prepared for His return.

Let's pray.

*Our hope will be complete when Christ our life appears...
we're longing for that day when we'll see Christ our Savior...
faith will turn to sight when Christ our life appears!*

<< When Christ our Life Appears >>

>> VBS PLUG / PRAY / SERVE / PRAY!! <<

Let's pray our benediction together:



Benediction

*"Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O **King of the nations!** ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

Revelation 15:3b-4

Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Revelation 15:3b-4

Recommended Resources on How to Prepare for Jesus' Return:

- Genesis 6-8
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Romans 13:11-12
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
- 2 Timothy 4:8
- Titus 2:12-13
- Hebrews 10:37
- James 5:7-9
- 1 Peter 4:7-12
- 2 Peter 3:3-7, 8-10, 11-13
- 1 John 3:2-3
- Revelation 3:2-3; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20

- Dr. Vlach on The Olivet Discourse - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3yOW-Gc0Uw>

- *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, Paul Benware
- *Maranatha Our Lord, Come!*, Renald Showers
- *The Second Coming*, John MacArthur

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Review Matthew 24:32-35. Do you ever doubt that Jesus' second coming will actually happen? Which of God's promises do you cling to when you are tempted to believe that evil wins and Jesus is not coming back for you?
2. Review Matthew 24:36-41 and Genesis 6-8. What similarities can you find between the global flood and the second coming of Jesus?
3. Review Matthew 24:42-44. What does it practically look like to "stay awake" and "be ready" for Jesus' return? Consider 2 Peter 3:10-14 and 1 Peter 4:7-11 in your responses.
4. Review Matthew 24:45-51. Describe the difference between the faithful and the wicked servants. How would Jesus evaluate your service among His people if He were to return today?
5. Read 2 Timothy 4:8, 1 Peter 1:3-5, and 1 John 3:1-3. Why is Jesus' second coming an essential Christian doctrine? How does your belief in Jesus' second coming offer living hope? How is God calling you to greater faithfulness to Jesus from this sermon?