



Matthew 24:32-51

GET READY!

A third century Roman clergyman calculated that Jesus would return in AD 500 based on the dimensions of Noah's Ark. Christ did not return. On January 1, 1000, many Christians in Europe predicted the end of the world.

As the year approached, Christian armies traveled to some of the pagan countries in Northern Europe in order to make converts, by force if necessary, before Christ returned. Christ did not return... Pope Innocent III took the number 618 (the year Islam was founded) and added the number 666 (the number of the beast) to get 1284 as the year of Christ's final judgment. Christ did not return. On February 14, 1835, Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Latter Day Saints, announced that Jesus would return within 56 years... Christ did not return. William Miller predicted that the second coming would occur on October 22, 1844. Christ did not return. In 1874, Charles Taze Russell, from which came the Jehovah's Witnesses, predicted the rapture in 1910, followed by the end of the world and Christ's return in 1914. Christ did not return... In 1988, Edgar Whisenant wrote the book 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Is in 1988. Christ did not return... One final example, Harold Camping predicted the end of the world. He advertised on 55 radio stations and on 6000 billboards, "Judgment Day Is Coming! May 21, 2011. The Bible guarantees it!" Christ did not return... Those false claims are no laughing matter, for those who made such empty claims brought Christ and Christianity into disrepute. Those who made them were either ignorant of or disobedient to Jesus' clearest sentence in the often unclear Olivet Discourse, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" (v. 36). Jesus is saying clearly, "Only God knows."
—Douglas O'Donnell

In the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25), Jesus addresses the two big questions of His Jewish disciples: *When will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?*" (24:3)

In 24:4-31, Jesus describes the future tribulation, prophesied in the OT as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) or the "day of the Lord" (Is. 2:12-21; 13:6-10; 34:1-8; Joel 3:1-16; Amos 5:18; Zech. 14:1-3, 12-15).



In 24:32-25:30, Jesus uses seven illustrations or parables to teach His disciples how to live in light of His coming.

BE _____! (24:32-35)



1. **The fig tree** tells us when summer is near.
2. **This generation** shall not pass until all these things are fulfilled.

Is this the generation living during Jesus' day? (cf. 23:36)
Is this the Jewish people as a whole, as a surviving ethnicity?
Is this the future generation at the time of the tribulation?

3. **Jesus' words** are more certain than the _____ rising tomorrow!

Most scholars have noted that the Olivet Discourse is the most difficult portion of the Gospels to interpret.
—Douglas J. Moo

This discourse is so significant that the way a person interprets it will impact his understanding of the rest of the prophecy passages in the Bible.
—Thomas Ice

The purpose of prophecy is not to entertain the curious but to encourage the consecrated.
—Warren Wiersbe

*The simple and most reasonable interpretation is that **this generation** refers to the people living at the end time who will view those signs.*
—John MacArthur, Jr.

Jesus' words will outlast heaven and earth. If we value things on the basis of how long they will last, nothing has greater value than the Word of God.
—Robert L. Deffinbaugh

BE _____! (24:36-41)

1. _____ knows the timing of that Day except God the Father.
2. _____ in the regular course of life will indicate that the Day of the Lord is about to occur (cf. Luke 17:26-30).
3. _____ will be left behind on that Day.

Is Matthew 24:36-41 referring to the rapture of the church?

- “Now concerning” (24:36) indicates a change in subject.
- “That day” refers to the Day of the Lord which begins with the tribulation (1 Th. 5:1-11). The rapture precedes this event (1 Th. 4:13-18).
- There are no signs before the rapture of the church. It is imminent.
- Life will be going on as normal before this event (contra 24:21).
- Paul alludes to the rapture as a “thief in the night” (1 Th. 4:15-5:7).
- “Taken” (24:40) is a different Greek word than “took away” (24:39).
- “Left” (24:40-41) is a Greek word which often means “abandoned.”
- Like Noah and Lot, God delivers His people from His wrath to come.

BE _____! (24:42-44)

- The Son of Man will come like a _____ in the night (1 Th. 5:2).
- We are always to be _____ and _____ (cf. Rom. 8:19-23; 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20-21; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 3:12).

BE _____! (24:45-51)

God calls us to be faithful and wise servants in light of His return:

- I am to _____ my life to the Lord.
- I am to _____ and care for others.
- I am to walk in _____.
- I am to live with _____ in mind.
- I am to do what God has called me to do (cf. 1 Peter 4:7-11).

Are you ready? Have you received Christ as Savior? Are you yielded to Him?

Coming. Greek, *parousia*. From *para* “with” and *eimi* “being.” It denotes both the *arrival* and the ongoing *presence with*. “Where it is used prophetically, *parousia* refers to a period beginning with the descent of the Lord from Heaven into the air, 1 Th. 4:16-17, and ending with His revelation and manifestation to the world.”

—C. F. Hogg & W. E. Vine

What Jesus could have done because He was divine did not predetermine what He did do as also a man. The incarnation did not lessen His divine powers, but it did limit His use of them.

—Robert H. Gundry

After 24:36, Jesus looks at the events of Daniel’s 70th week as a whole and how the beginning of that week will catch everyone by surprise.

—Robert L. Thomas

The crime indicated by Jesus in 24:38 is not gross sin; it is secular indifference. The evil here is immersion in the everyday without any thought for the Last Day.

—Frederick Dale Bruner

Taken. Greek, *paralambano*, “to take to one’s self, to receive.”

Left. Greek, *aphiemi*, “to send away, divorce, give up, abandon.”

Millions of graves are dug every year, but it is inspiring to think that one generation of Christians will cheat the undertaker.

—J. C. Pollock

Faithfulness in little things is a big thing.

—Chrysostom (AD 347-407)

Faithfulness is our business; fruitfulness is an issue that we must be content to leave with God.

—J. I. Packer