

WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT!

MATTHEW 24:27-51

JEWISH EXPECTATION OF THE KINGDOM

Based on Daniel 9 and Zechariah 9, **three steps to restoration** expected:

What God promised:

- 1) **Restoration to land**
- 2) **Coming of Messiah**
- 3) **Blessing for Israel**

Messianic expectation was high—everyone was expecting Messiah.

Those who took Daniel's time table seriously knew the 69 weeks were coming to an end!

Jews had a problem:

- Israel returned to land
- Messiah didn't come
- No blessing

Jewish Christians had a problem:

- Israel returned
- Messiah came
- No blessing

What happened to God's plan for Israel? Had God forgotten?

Messiah came as promised

Jesus demonstrates that He is their Messiah:

Evidence is sufficient for anyone who wants to know the truth.

Israel rejects their Messiah

The Messiah rejects Israel; institutes new program—the church.

He proclaims judgment against that evil generation

Prophecy fulfilled in A.D. 70. Rome destroys Jerusalem

BUT--God isn't through with Israel!

Christ will return at end of the age and fulfill His promise to another generation that genuinely seeks His arrival and receives Him.

MESSIANIC PRESENTATION AND REJECTION 19-25

Formal Presentation 19-21:17

Formal Rejection 21:18-22:46

Formal Response 23-25

PROCLAMATION OF JUDGMENT ON THAT GENERATION 23

Lament concerning desolation of Jerusalem **23:37-39**

This was not the way He wanted it to be.

He loves them and wants to care for them but they're unwilling.

Therefore God must judge them.

Judgment announced in 24-25 is continuation of Matt. 23.

PREDICTION OF COMING JUDGMENT (the tribulation) 24-25:46

He announces what's ahead for that generation which rejected Him.

He doesn't want them unprepared for the unfolding of God's plan

WARNING OF IMMINENT JUDGMENT 24:1-3

The disciples come out of the temple admiring its great beauty.

Jesus announces this beautiful new temple will be destroyed!

Not one stone will be left standing on another.

They ask **two questions**:

When will this happen?

What will be the sign of the end of the age (your coming)?

Answers reversed:

24:4-31-The signs 24:32-51-The time

What are the signs to watch for?

Answers apply to immediate judgment on that generation in A.D. 70.

Ultimately apply to final judgment during tribulation, preceding our Lord's coming.

WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF THE END OF THE AGE?

3 SIGNS OF HIS RETURN 24:4-31

1. Tribulation 24:4-26

Description of first half 4-8

Time begins with international turmoil

False Christs 4-5

Political conflicts 6-7a

Natural disasters 7b

"Beginning of birth pains" -the beginning; 8

-NOT the end!

Description of second half 9-14

Bad conditions get worse!

Hard times intensify, concluding with persecution 9

Natural consequences of affliction follow:

Many abandon the faith 10

False prophets deceive many 11

Many grow cold 12

Faithful are delivered 13

Good news: the king is coming! preached everywhere 14a

THEN the end comes! 14b

Warning to flee 15-21

Sign to flee: an abominable thing which causes desolation.

Fulfills Daniel's prophecy.

Antichrist breaks covenant mid-trib and persecutes God's people.

Exact fulfillment not clear now; it'll be apparent to those living.

When they see that sign, they should escape to the hills, for

Following warning comes period of unequalled persecution

Limitation of length 22

Suffering will be so intense that no one could survive.

if God did not intervene supernaturally to end the period, but . . .

God intervenes to end the affliction.

Appearance of false Christs 23-26

[2nd sign of His coming and of the end of the age:

Sign has to do with *THE WAY* He comes—it's not what people claim! It's a ...]

2. Visible Sign of Christ's coming 24:27-30

Jesus warns His followers not to chase after these “citings!”

His coming won't be like that.

When He comes, it will be apparent to all, like lightning in the sky.

Like lightning which shines in the sky is visible on a dark night (27), God will turn down the lights and the sky will be darkened as never before (29)—His sign will be visible everywhere as He appears in all His glory (27, 30).

This will happen *AFTER* the distress of those days (29a)—this comes after the tribulation—already described as a time of unequalled affliction!

Two ways to understand the reference to the vultures.

Some consider it parallel to God's invitation to the vultures in Rev. 19:17-19; they are invited to come clean up after His coming and judgment on earth.

Another possibility is that His coming is compared to the vultures gathering around a carcass. A common saying: “Where there's a carcass, there are vultures!” (28).

In the same way, when Jesus comes, people will take note and be drawn from everywhere to be where He is!

Either way, Jesus is describing our Lord's coming to judge the earth and establish His kingdom—this isn't a reference to Jesus' coming to gather His church!

3. Regathering of Israel 24:31

Angels gather His people from wherever they've been scattered when they fled from the abomination.

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN? 24:32-51

Two answers:

Although His coming will be apparent to all, the time won't be announced in advance.

2 DECLARATIONS CONCERNING THE TIME OF HIS COMING:

1. Lesson from the fig tree 24:32-35

Tender twigs and leaves on a fig tree
demonstrate that summer is near.

The fulfillment of the signs
demonstrates that Jesus' coming is near.

THE GENERATION THAT SEES THE SIGNS
WILL SEE HIS COMING!

2. Three lessons about keeping watch 24:36-51

2nd declaration concerning time of Jesus' coming warns us to be watching for His return.

Three situations illustrate the need for being prepared.

Lesson from Noah's days 36-41

Noah's times show danger of not watching.

**People paid no attention until judgment came;
then it was too late.**

It'll be like that for people who aren't watching for Jesus' return.

**People pay no attention until Jesus appears;
then it'll be too late!**

Lesson from the thief 42-44

Thief doesn't rob people who are watching him.

Thief causes harm to people who ignore him.

Jesus will not harm people who are watching for Him.

He only harms people who ignore Him!

Those expecting Jesus suffer no harm from His coming.

Damage comes to those who pay no attention to Him.

Lesson from the servant 45-51

A servant whose master has gone away for a long time will be faithful as long as he believes that his master may return soon.

A servant becomes careless and unfaithful when he forgets about the master and fails to be concerned about his coming.

Jesus' followers ought to be aware of His plan and eagerly expecting His return.

In that way they will be faithful to Him and ready for Him when He comes.

They should be active, caring for His affairs until He comes again.

Max Lucado: "If you lose your faith, you will probably do so gradually. In tiny increments you will get spiritually sloppy. You will let a few days slip by without consulting your compass. Your sails will go untrimmed. Your rigging will go unprepared. And worst of all, you will forget to anchor your boat. And, before you know it, you'll be bouncing from wave to wave in stormy seas." [Revise in terms of household => spiritual life– The servant doesn't begin with total disregard for the master. He becomes that way gradually, in small increments. As time goes by the servant gets increasingly sloppy, as it seems increasingly less likely that the master will come back today–first he lets the dust accumulate for a couple of days–then he lets the cobwebs gather–eventually he begins to use his funds to buy things for himself! He begins to think HE's the boss–and he mistreats the other servants!]

**JESUS WILL COME AGAIN
WHEN THE WORLD LEAST EXPECTS IT!**

HOW SHOULD WE ACT IN THE LIGHT OF THIS PASSAGE?

Jesus is talking about His glorious second coming– to rule over His kingdom–NOT the gathering of the saints to meet Him in the air.

Jesus is talking about His coming to judge the earth–those taken, like people in Noah’s day, are taken away in judgment.

The description of the scene and the related warnings are totally different.

Paul tells us that He is talking about the coming of our Lord to gather us to Himself.

It’s the same verb for coming.

But the scene and the purpose are different.

Nevertheless, the instruction for God’s people is still appropriate.

Parables concerning readiness–*What does this passage say to us today?*

Be ready!

Just as they should be living with a view to His coming to judge the earth, we should be living with a view to His coming to gather the saints to be with Him forever.

We should be living expectantly, evaluating our circumstances in the light of this blessed hope!

Don’t look at life, or world events, through the eyes of the world!

We ought to be alert to what God is doing and be prepared to participate in it.

The people of Noah's day, like the victim of the thief paid no attention to God and what He wanted them to see.

The servant forgot about the master and his coming.

We should see life from the perspective of God’s plan.