



Kingdom Preparation

Ready for the End Part 1

Matthew 24:3-14

How to Prepare

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

<https://www.gotquestions.org/prophecy-double-dual-fulfillment.html>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/your-main-calling-in-the-end-times>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/sustained-by-sovereign-grace-how-to-endure-to-the-end>

Sermon Outline:

Matthew 24:3-14

1. Expect and Endure False Messiahs. Vv. 3-5
2. Expect and Endure Conflict and Brokenness. Vv. 6-8
3. Expect and Endure Persecution and Betrayal. Vv. 9-12
4. Expect and Endure Gospel Expansion. Vv. 13-14

Matthew 24:3-14

Signs of Christ's Return

3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

6 You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.

7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

8 But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

10 At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

11 Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

12 Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.

13 But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

14 This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 24:3-14.

INTRODUCTION

Here is a question or two to help introduce the topic and jump-start discussion.

- 1. If someone told you that Jesus was returning tomorrow at noon, how would you spend the next 24 hours? What if they told you He wouldn't return for another 500 years? Should the "when" change your "what"?**
- 2. How does not knowing the precise "when" help us focus on the "what"?**

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. Expect and Endure False Messiahs. Vv. 3-5

3. What did the disciples ask Jesus, and how did He answer them? What is the context from the verses immediately before this, and what does that tell us about the disciples' question and Jesus' answer?

4. In what way were there false messiahs before the fall of Jerusalem (Acts 5:36, 37, 21:38), and in what way are there false messiahs today? How will Jesus' prophecy be finally fulfilled before His return? What spiritual disciplines or habits can we develop to help us discern deception in our modern culture?

II. Expect and Endure Conflict and Brokenness. Vv. 6-8

5. What did Jesus mean when He said that global conflicts, economic crises, and natural disasters are "the beginning of birth pangs"? If those things are the baseline reality of a fallen world, and Christians are not to be frightened by them, how should that affect the way we process the news or talk about the future?

6. What is the difference between being genuinely grieved by the world's brokenness and being alarmed or panicked by it? How does faith in Christ and His Word help us strike that balance?

III. Expect and Endure Persecution and Betrayal. Vv. 9-12

7. In what way does Jesus prophesy both external and internal persecution? How was this fulfilled before and after the fall of Jerusalem in the early church, and how is it fulfilled in our time?

8. What are some ways the culture around us or internal betrayal tempts us to let our love grow cold, and what does it look like to endure to the end?

IV. Expect and Endure Gospel Expansion. Vv. 13-14

9. What does Jesus promise will happen to those who endure in the faith, and what does He promise will happen in the world before He comes? How do these promises give us the fuel we need to endure and advance the gospel?

10. Knowing that Jesus ties the timeline of His return to the global proclamation of the gospel, how should that shift our daily priorities from wondering when He will return to asking how we are actively participating in His mission right now? What are some practical ways we can endure in the faith and help expand the gospel to the nations?

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Matt. 24:1–25:46 The Delay, Return, and Judgment of Messiah. These two chapters are often called the “Olivet Discourse” because Jesus “sat on the Mount of Olives” (24:3) when he spoke these words. It is the fifth of Jesus’ five major discourses recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (see Introduction: Key Themes; Literary Features). Addressed to his disciples, it is intended to give them a prophetic overview of the events to transpire in both the near and distant future.

Matt. 24:1–14 The Beginning of Birth Pains. Jesus previews the general conditions of the earth, which in some sense characterize the entire age, before he returns: sufferings throughout the world (vv. 4–8), the suffering of his disciples (vv. 9–13), and the preaching of the gospel to all nations (v. 14).

Matt. 24:3 The disciples ask two questions: (1) when will these things be, and (2) what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? Jesus’ answer to these questions apparently intertwines prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and his second coming. The near event (the destruction of Jerusalem) serves as a symbol and foreshadowing of the more distant event (the second coming). The discourse can be divided into three parts: (1) a generally chronological description of events preceding Christ’s return (vv. 4–31); (2) lessons on watching, waiting, and being prepared for Christ’s return (24:36–25:30); and (3) a warning of judgment and a promise of reward at the time of Christ’s return (25:31–46). On the Mount of Olives, see notes on 21:1 and 24:1. Matthew’s version of this question, with explicit mention of the second coming, is more developed and detailed than the question in the parallel passages in Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7.

Matt. 24:5 saying, “I am the Christ.” Throughout the history of the church, and even today, many have made claims to messianic identity. Jesus’ disciples must be on their guard against such people.

Matt. 24:6–7 wars . . . famines and earthquakes. Such cataclysmic events will be a regular part of this age until the return of Jesus to redeem all of creation.

Matt. 24:8 Birth pains indicates that there will be a time of suffering prior to the messianic age (cf. Rom. 8:22–23). OT prophets use the metaphor to depict terrible suffering in general (cf. Isa. 13:8; 21:3; 42:14; Jer. 30:5–7; Hos. 13:13) as well as suffering that Israel will endure prior to her deliverance (cf. Isa. 26:17–19; 66:7–11; Jer. 22:23; Mic. 4:9–10).

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Matt. 24:11 false prophets. Deception both from the world and from within the church will be prevalent (1 John 2:18–27; 4:1–6). Disciples must “test the spirits” to determine whether or not they acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah (1 John 2:22; 4:2–3).

Matt. 24:13 end. Either the end of the persecution when the Son of Man returns (cf. 10:23), or the end of one’s life. will be saved. Not from physical death (cf. 24:21–22), but from divine wrath and human persecution, to experience the full blessing and peace of salvation when Jesus returns.

Matt. 24:14 One distinct indicator that will signify the nearness of Christ’s return is when the gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed throughout the whole world, that is, to all nations (plural of Gk. *ethnos*, “nation, people”), a task that began with Jesus’ command in 28:19.