



Kingdom Preparation

Ready for the End Part 2

Matthew 24:15-28

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.desiringgod.org/interviews/popular-blunders-about-christs-return>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-is-the-abomination-of-desolation/>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/who-is-the-man-of-lawlessness>

Sermon Outline:

Matthew 24:15-28

1. Flee Persecution. Vv. 15-20
2. Pray for Protection. Vv. 20-22
3. Resist Speculation. Vv. 23-28

Matthew 24:15-28

the elect those days will be cut short.

Perilous Times

- 15 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),
- 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.
- 17 Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house.
- 18 Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.
- 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!
- 20 But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.
- 21 For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.
- 22 Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of

- 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him.
- 24 For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.
- 25 Behold, I have told you in advance.
- 26 So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them.
- 27 For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.
- 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 24:15-28.

INTRODUCTION

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

- 1. When you hear people talk about the end times or the return of Christ, what is your typical internal reaction? (e.g., anxiety, excitement, confusion, skepticism?) Why do you think people are so easily fascinated by end-times predictions, often more than they are by daily discipleship?**
- 2. How do you balance the tension between living responsibly for today (job, family, future planning) while maintaining an active anticipation of Jesus' return?**

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

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

I. Flee Persecution. Vv. 15-20

- 3. Jesus gives very urgent instructions to flee when certain signs appear. In a culture that often equates faith with staying and fighting, why is fleeing from persecution sometimes the wisest, most obedient response for a believer?**

- 4. What aspects of this passage seem to indicate that there will be both an "immediate" fulfillment and a future fulfillment? If parts of this prophecy were fulfilled historically in 70 AD, how does seeing God's past faithfulness in the midst of historical judgment help us trust Him with the future trials and tribulation?**

II. Pray for Protection. Vv. 20-22

- 5. What does it look like practically to "guard our hearts" against being caught off guard by cultural shifts or hostility toward the gospel today? How do we distinguish between suffering for the sake of the gospel (which we should endure) and needlessly exposing ourselves to danger?**

6. What are some aspects of this prophecy that have clearly not yet been fulfilled and are awaiting a future fulfillment? When we see hostility toward Christian values rising, how can we keep our prayers focused on protection and trust rather than slipping into fear and panic?

7. Jesus mentions that the days will be cut short for the sake of the elect (i.e. believers, v. 22). How does knowing that God allows believers to experience trials and tribulation, but also sovereignly limits the duration and intensity of our trials change the way you pray when you are suffering?

8. If intense trials and cultural brokenness are actually fulfillments of God's Word, how can we reframe our perspective to view hard times as signs of God's unfolding victory rather than His absence? What does a sober-minded and serious prayer life look like, and how does that differ from just being stressed about the state of the world?

III. Resist Speculation. Vv. 23-28

9. Jesus warns that false christs and false prophets will perform great signs to lead people astray (v. 24). What are some subtle false messiahs or false hopes in our modern culture that try to promise us safety, peace, or ultimate rescue?

10. Speculation about the exact date or exact manner of Christ's return can become a major distraction. How can an unbalanced fascination in end-times charts and timelines become a hinderance to living a gospel-centered life right now?

11. Jesus says His ultimate return will be as visible and undeniable as lightning flashing across the sky (v. 27). How does this truth protect us from being duped by secret groups, conspiracy theories, or exclusive "revelations" about the end times?

12. If Jesus' main goal in this passage isn't to give us a secret calendar, but to make us ready to endure, what is one practical area of your spiritual life that needs strengthening so you can stand firm until He returns?

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Matt. 24:15–31 “Great Tribulation” and the Coming of the Son of Man. Jesus moves from the general characteristics of this age to describe the “great tribulation” (vv. 15–28) that will precede the coming of the Son of Man (vv. 29–31).

Matt. 24:15 Daniel 9:27 tells of the abomination of desolation. Several times in Jewish history it was thought that this prophecy was being fulfilled—most notably during the days of the Maccabees when Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king, ordered that an altar to the Greek god Zeus be constructed in the temple (167 B.C.). He also decreed that swine and other unclean animals were to be sacrificed there, that the Sabbath was to be profaned, and that circumcision was to be abolished. But Jesus clarifies that the complete fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy will be found in (1) the Roman destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 and (2) the image of the Antichrist being set up in the last days (cf. 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:14).

Matt. 24:16 flee to the mountains. The ancient church historian Eusebius reports that, during the Jewish revolt (A.D. 67), Jesus’ warning was fulfilled when Christians fled to the mountains of Pella (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5.3).

Matt. 24:17 on the housetop not go down. There will be no time to gather provisions.

Matt. 24:20 not . . . in winter or on a Sabbath. They should pray that the harshest conditions and most revered traditions not be a hindrance to fleeing.

Matt. 24:21 great tribulation. The time of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was horrible, but the vision Jesus paints will have an even more horrific fulfillment in the future (see note on 24:1–25:46).

Matt. 24:22 if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. Some suggest this means that, if God’s wrath were to continue unchecked against the wickedness of humanity, no one would survive the eventual destruction. Others see in this a reference to a cutting short of either the seventieth “seven” (week) of Dan. 9:27 or the 42 months of Rev. 11:2. It is evident that the reference is not to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, since the unprecedented destruction described in Matt. 24:21 did not take place in 70. The elect includes all those who follow Christ during this period (cf. vv. 24, 31).

Matt. 24:24 signs and wonders. Supernatural signs and miracles will have the appearance of coming from God but that will actually be the work of

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Satan and his evil forces. (On testing false prophets, see notes on 7:15–20; 9:34; 1 John 4:1.)

Matt. 24:26–27 Look, he is in the wilderness . . . Look, he is in the inner rooms. The Messiah will not come secretly to a select group and stay hidden from public view. Rather, he will appear like a flash of lightning—sudden and visible to all.

Matt. 24:28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. It seems best not to “over-interpret” this striking proverbial expression. It probably means simply that, just as people from far away can see vultures circling high in the air, Christ’s return in judgment will be visible and predictable. A similar view is that the vultures suggest the widespread death that will accompany the return of Christ to judge those who have rejected his kingdom. In either case, it will be impossible for people not to see and recognize the return of Christ.