

Without Warning

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- [0 : 0 0] If you will please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew. We will continue to look at chapter 24 of Matthew, Lord willing, finishing chapter 24 today.
- So if you will look with me there, Matthew 24. And we're looking today at verses 36 through 51.
- So we'll begin reading in verse 36. But concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.
- For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 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. Then two men will be in the field.
- [1 : 2 4] One will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken and one left. Therefore 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 left his house to be broken into.
- Therefore you also must be ready. For the Son of Man is coming in an hour you do not expect. Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has sent over his household to give them their food at the proper time?
- Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, he will send him over all his possessions.
- But if that wicked servant says to himself, My master is delayed and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him.
- [2 : 3 0] And an hour he does not know 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 together.
- Dear Heavenly Father, we again ask for your Spirit's help in the preaching of the Word today. That you would make clear your Word. And we thank you for the way you've been so gracious so far.
- And what has seemed difficult, but Lord, it has also been really clear as well. And we thank you for the way you've brought clarity to this passage. And we pray that you would continue to do so as we transition into this part of it.
- We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Now, I'm continuing to recount where we are. I know I've done this every week. But just to keep you focused on what we've been looking at and why we're at the point we are, what's going on in our passage.

So we've been working through the Gospel of Matthew. And in Matthew 24, we saw this discussion. Jesus says that the temple is going to be destroyed. We talked about how in 23, he had already talked about the sins of the religious leaders, the scribes and the Pharisees, and how judgment is going to come upon them.

[3 : 41] For the sins that they committed of killing the prophets. And we talked about how Jesus then would be that last prophet who would be put to death. That prophet greater than Moses who's put to death and who really ushers in and brings about the judgment upon them.

And so we look to this. And in particular, the pronouncement that Jesus says that the temple will be destroyed. And as Jesus pronounces this, the disciples begin to wonder, well, when's that going to happen?

How are we going to know when that's happened? So you may remember the disciples ask Jesus the question of when. That's really the question they're asking. When will this happen? But they also combine that. They say, when will the temple be destroyed?

They're also asking, this is back in verse 3. You see, tell us when will these things be and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? And the argument that I've posited all along has been that they're asking about two different things, whether they understand them to be two different things or not.

There may be ways in which they understood the destruction of the temple would mean the end of the age, the end of all time in Jesus' return. And so I've argued all along that Jesus is answering them and saying, no, these are in fact two different things.

[4 : 56] And so we've seen so far, Jesus has said, here is when the temple will be destroyed. And Jesus gives a number of signs. He gives some signs that mean, has nothing to do with the temple being destroyed, just how things are going to be until I return.

And he's given other signs that said, this will lead up to the destruction of the temple. And so he gave them clues to when it will happen. But their second question is, when will you return and what will be the sign of the end of the age?

And what I'm arguing is that we're now moving into Jesus' answer to the second question. So he's done answering the first question, about AD 70, the destruction of the temple, that's taken care of.

Now he's moving and answering the second question. When will he return and what will be the sign of the end of the age? So verses 4 through 35 that we've previously looked at in three sermons cover the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

And all that, as we saw in verse 34, will take place before this generation passes away, which we did the math. We said that fit with the idea of AD 70. And then starting at verse 36, we see a transition, Jesus answering the second question.

[6 : 10] Look at verse 36. But, so already we have some distinction being made, but concerning that day and hour. So I think Jesus, even with saying that day and hour, is making a distinction between this temple and this time that they're living in.

So this thing and then that thing. He's making a distinction between the near and the far. But that day that's farther off, I think he's making that distinction in verse 36. Unlike the destruction of the temple, and this is really the key here, no one will know when he will return and bring the end of the age because no sign will be given.

Now that is what I see presented in a sermon. This is my summary of my whole sermon right here. No sign is going to be given. He's not going to tell us. He's going to come in a time that's unexpected. And just to give you a heads up, I hope you'll come back anyway, but for at least the next two sermons, we're probably going to see the same thing.

Jesus gives multiple parables to kind of explain that. And in fact, in terms of what we've already spent time on, we spend a lot of time, three sermons now, looking at the first 35, 34 verses.

But Jesus himself, in teaching disciples, spends much more time talking about his future coming than he does AD 70.

[7 : 26] So he actually spends longer dealing with this. Verses 24, excuse me, chapter 24, verse 36, all the way to the end of chapter 25, verse 46. And in that period, he includes seven teachings of historical events or parables or illustrations.

Seven different ways he presents this, that we get the idea that he makes it clear. No sign is going to be given, but we need to be ready. So we're going to begin looking at those teachings today.

In verses 36 through 41, we see Jesus teaching the idea, what I just said, that no one knows when that day will happen. Let me just read verse 36, but as I said, we're looking at through verse 41 right now.

But concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. So, to be clear, and I think Jesus makes this really clear from the offset, no one knows when he's going to return.

No person, he didn't specify, not even angels. So there's no human being, there's no angelic being, there's no spiritual power that knows this. He says, not even the Son.

[8 : 35] Now, this can be very difficult for us because we know of the Trinity. We know also that God, in Trinitarian form, is omniscient, knows all things, and obviously works all things out to his purposes.

That day is already set. There's a set time that God the Father knows, and Jesus is saying, not even the Son knows this. I think we have to understand that in Jesus being fully man and fully God, that there are times in his earthly ministry where he's not privy to the full understanding of the Godhead.

That somehow that's not given to him, or he restrains from using that ability to know. And I think he's speaking in terms of God incarnate, the Son, that he hasn't been given that day.

Now, there's a way in which the eternal Son is always known when that day will be. But I think he's specifying that. But the point is, outside the Godhead, who knows when Jesus is going to return? No one.

Okay, so in terms of application already, we could say, how does this then influence how we understand what people say today? Right? I've mentioned this before. Let me just make this application again.

[9 : 40] Harold Camping has now died. But you may remember he put up billboards. I think every year he'd come up with a new one and tell you what day it was going to be that year. And he got them all wrong.

I think there were at least seven predictions he made where he put billboards up and saying, Jesus is coming on this exact day. I remember, let's see, there was Y2K. Right? All the computers are going to crash.

The Lord's going to return. There's a sign. The Mayan calendar or whatever was one of the things I've heard people say. And then you have dispensational charts.

You have all these charts that are going to tell you you're looking for this sign and that sign. And when this happens and that happens, and I've told you already, every political election, this person's the Antichrist. Because we know that God was primarily concerned with America when he spoke of the eschatological realities.

No. But somehow we interpret the American president as a sign that Jesus is about to return. That's not a sign. So I could go on ad nauseum, but look, any sign that people have ever presented to say, here's a sign that Jesus is going to return.

[10 : 41] What I see Jesus saying here is, those are lies. These are false teachers that are saying these things. Don't believe them. Don't be misled. What does he tell us?

No one knows. Not even the sun. Not even the angels. It's going to be a surprise. The spiritual beings. Both positive and negative. Satan's going to be shot when it happens.

So also will the archangels. I mean, they're all going to be surprised when that day happens. They're not given that. They don't know. God has determined it, but no one's been given that knowledge.

So, does this mean that if we're just good scholars of the Bible, we'll figure it out? Right? Is Jesus saying, study your Bible and somehow you'll come up with some biblical code?

There's a code hidden here. There's secret numbers. No. What is Jesus saying? No one knows. You're going to get tired of this, aren't you? No one knows what Jesus is saying. So, every prediction has been wrong.

[11 : 41] And Jesus illustrates this by making a historical example. He teaches us from history by pointing back to the days of Noah as an example of God's judgment on wickedness.

And so, understand as well when Jesus returns that there's a correlation between Jesus' return and what happened in the days of Noah. And we'll look at that more as I move to the application in a little bit.

There's a New Testament passage that will help us, I think, understand that more clearly. But for now, just understand that Jesus is making a correlation between his return and the days of Noah. And when the days of Noah, the flood, obviously, was a great judgment of God upon the sins of the world.

I think also this is tied in with what we've already seen with destruction in the temple in AD 70. Destruction in the temple in AD 70 is an outpouring of God's wrath upon wicked people.

And so, too, that's a foretaste of things to come. They're not a one-to-one relationship. The signs for AD 70 aren't signs for the end. Jesus is making that clear.

[12 : 44] But it will be a time of judgment from God. In the days of Noah, the waters came suddenly, and those who were not prepared were drowned. And not a lot of information is given to us about this in the Bible.

It speaks of the waters under the earth being opened up, and there being rain falling from heaven. As far as we know, that may be the first rain that came from heaven. We're not really clear on that. Even the idea that the rainbow was given as a sign would also point to the idea that rain may not have fallen from heaven before.

But we know that there are springs and waters under the earth, and somehow God opens them up. And so there's water seeping up, and there's water coming down. And probably in a relatively short amount of time, a great flood came upon the earth.

And though Noah was there in building the ark, and in some way that was a warning for them, they didn't know what day was coming. And had they understood the reality of it, without question, had they understood the reality of it, every one of them would have got on that boat, I think.

Right? This one hope of salvation. Judgment's coming, and there's one hope of salvation. And so too, this points us to the reality of Jesus Christ that we'll look at later. But God is saying here, just like in the days of Noah, when Jesus returns, there's not going to be a sign of it.

[14 : 04] It's going to come suddenly. Even though there's been warning. Even though God's people have been sending the message of the gospel out into the world, yet it has been rejected because people think it's not going to happen. And if they had only known, they would have gone to Christ.

But when that day comes, it will be too late for them. So life, and this is the point that Jesus is making here in the passage, is that life continued up until the flood normally.

Normal life just continued as it was. Up until the very moment of judgment. We see that in 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.

I don't think he's speaking of anything wrong or some sensual realities here. I think he's just saying life kept going like normal. There were weddings scheduled for the day of the flood.

They didn't know it was coming. There were weddings scheduled for the day after the flood. They'd already bought food that they were going to prepare for the next day. And then the flood came. Everything was continuing as normal. No one thought anything of it until the flood came.

[15 : 09] And then it was too late. And they were unaware. Verse 39. They were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away. So will be the coming of the Son of Man.

So again, are people going to know that it's going to be this day or that day? No. Up until that moment, we're all going to be unaware. We will all be surprised when that day comes.

Even though we may expect it. Even though we know that Jesus is returning. That specific day, no one knows. And so this comparison of the days of Noah, it's saying that's what the days will be like when Jesus returns.

And then if you look at verses 40 and 41, 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. Now I think the important teaching here is to say that when Jesus returns, it will bring a quick and final separation.

There will be a separation being made in the people of the earth. Between those who belong to the Lord and those who do not. When we move on toward the end of chapter 25, it speaks about when Jesus returns will be the day of judgment.

[16 : 23] And I've said this in prior sermons as we look through this. There's no intermediate period. Jesus doesn't return a second time and then return a third time. Right? There's no speak in the Bible of a third return of Jesus.

When Jesus returns, there will be a separation being made. And then there will be the judgment. And we could even look there. Verse 32 of chapter 25.

Let me start with verse 31. When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate people one from another.

As a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. So what's being spoken of in verses 41 through 42, I think, is that separation.

When Jesus returns, there will be a final separation made. There will be some who will be seen as sheep. Who will be covered by the blood of the Lamb. Who will belong to the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

[17 : 23] And there will be those who are not. Who will be judged. Think also that the flood brought final separation.

Right? There was separation made between those who were God's people and those who were not. In those days, we're talking about there were eight people who were saved. And the rest were not. But so too, you understand that what's being communicated, the teaching we can gather from this is one, there's going to be a mixed nature in the world until Jesus is returned.

Now, this is actually quite important in terms of eschatological views. And I know we, I feel I've done really well. This is the fourth sermon. I haven't mentioned any eschatological position so far.

So I feel like I've done really well avoiding doing that. Today, I think I'm going to for the first time. What we see in this passage is that some will be ready and some will not be ready when Jesus returns.

There will be a separation made between the people and the earth. I see this position in the teaching of this passage as opposed to the position of postmillennialism.

[18 : 34] Postmillennialism teaches that basically the gospel is advancing to the ends of the earth, which we wholly agree with. And as the gospel advances, more and more the world is going to become Christian.

And things will keep getting better and better until one day the whole world will be Christianized and Jesus will come back and reign on a fully Christian world that has been established through the gospel. That sounds beautiful.

It sounds great. Those of you who know me know that I'm probably not that optimistic anyway. But my optimism is that the gospel will advance to the ends of the earth.

I think God's word is clear that there will be people from every tribe, tongue, and nation who will sing God's praises in heaven. And so I believe in the advance of the gospel. But what I see being taught here is that up until the very end, there will be a mixed nature in the world.

There will always be those who oppose the gospel. That there's not going to come a day until Jesus returns and judges the world and creates a new earth, a new heaven.

[19 : 33] There will not be a time in this earth that we'll ever all be Christians. That shouldn't discourage us. We should still take the gospel forward and know the gospel is going to advance.

But what we see is if Jesus returns and some are taken and some are not, then there has to be some people who weren't. It just makes sense to me. Sorry. But so I think it addresses that position here and doesn't leave me very hopeful of that kind of hopeful position.

I think there will be a mixed nature in the world until Jesus returns. Now, much has been made of this passage as well as speaking of in terms of the rapture and which would be a more, I'll say another name, a more dispensational premillennial position.

What I would say is that let me read God's word and then try to answer what's happening with the separation here. 1 Thessalonians 4, 13 through 18. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus God will bring with them those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by word from the Lord that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

[20 : 50] So if I pause there, I'll say to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. If you're a Christian and you die, your spirit is instantly in the presence of the Lord, but not bodily. And so what's being told, my understanding of this 1 Thessalonians 4 passage is when Jesus returns, the spirits of all those who have ever throughout all history trusted the Lord and have died will return with them when he returns.

And then it says, For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

The bodies, apart from the spirit, will rise up from the ground. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore, encourage one another with these words. And so in 1 Thessalonians, my understanding of what's going to happen when Jesus returns is Jesus comes with the spirits. The bodies are raised, they're reunited with the spirits, and the bodies glorified.

And so too all of us who are still here on the earth when Jesus returns will meet Jesus in the air and our bodies will be glorified instantly. And so is this speaking of that separation?

[22 : 00] Well, it may be that some are taken and some are left. But understand as well what we just read in chapter 25 of the final judgment speaks of a separation as well.

And it doesn't put any time in between. So I just want to be clear with that. The time in between would be the dispensational premillennial position. There are some who teach that Jesus returns, he takes Christians off the earth, and then he tortures unbelievers for seven years until he returns a second time.

Some of that is they believe he's giving a chance for them to repent. Others think there's no chance for repentance. It's just an earthly punishment. What I see in God's word denies that. So now here I've denied two theological positions.

What I see, what's being said is that God will, it may be that he's taking them off the earth to meet him in the air, but instantaneously will come also the judgment. When Jesus returns, there's not a seven-year gap.

There's no gap. When Jesus returns, there will be the judgment. And so he's calling them up, and the glorification may be the first step, and God's seated on his throne judging the earth. But the next step is also that those who are still left will be judged and be separated as well.

[23 : 10] So the separation may speak of the 1 Thessalonians 4 passage, that they'll meet him in the air. It may be speaking of the great white throne judgment, but either way we interpret it, they're going to be instantaneous.

They're going to happen at the same time. When Jesus returns, it will be the judgment. It will be the final separation. There will be no chance for repentance after that. If there were a chance, then every parable we're going to look at in chapter 25 is pointless.

Even think about what we're about to look at, of being prepared for the thief who comes in the night. If someone robs your house in the middle of the night, do you get a chance to do it all over again?

No. It's gone. It's over. The thief comes, and it settles things. So, too, we see what we're going to look at next is the parable of the ten virgins.

And some are prepared for Jesus' return, and some aren't. And the ones who aren't, they go and they try to get ready, but it's too late. It's what is communicated. And I think that is the message that Jesus is trying to say to us, is that when he returns, it will be too late.

[24 : 13] And yet no one knows the day. So what are we to do? You better be ready for that day, is the message that's communicated over and over again in the rest of the Olivet Discourse. So speaking of that separation, Matthew Henry writes, those of the same age, place, capacity, employment, and condition in the world, grinding in the same mill, those of the same family, nay, those that were joined in the same bond of marriage, were one effectually called, the other passed by, and left in the gall of bitterness.

This is that division, that separating fire, which Christ came to send. which, what he's referring to, and I think is an appropriate passage to look at, Luke 12, 51 through 53, Jesus' own words.

In Luke 12, Jesus said, Do you think that I've come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on, in one house, there will be five divided, three against two, and two against three.

They will be divided, father against son, and son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. So, Jesus' own words was, he came to bring division.

And I think that separation is finally realized, finally realized. It's known here in this earth. We know it, don't we? There are probably some of you who know in your own family that maybe you've trusted the Lord, and maybe you have family members that haven't.

[25 : 41] We've known marriages that have been broken because of this, where an unbeliever didn't want to stay married to a believer. We've known that kind of separation within marriages. We've seen it with children. We've seen it with family members, coworkers.

We understand that, but it finally is realized when Jesus comes, it will be settled. There will be no chance for that, for any further union. So, those who are not called to the Lord will not remain on the earth, but will face God's judgment and cast him to hell, which is exactly what is said in this passage, verses 50 and 51.

The master, that servant, will come on a day when he does not expect him, and an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and put him with the hypocrites. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You guys know that when it's said in that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The place that's spoken of is hell. That is the one that's referred to. And so, what's being said here? When Jesus returns, there will be a separation. Some servants will have obeyed him. Other servants will not have. And those who have not will be.

It says cut up and cast into hell. And so, the message, again, that's being communicated to us is summarized in verse 44.

[26 : 57] Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming in an hour you do not expect. And so, again, the message that I see communicated here is the end will come without warning and at an unexpected hour.

So, we're going to get no final warning. Heads up. Jesus is coming tomorrow. Settle your accounts. It's too late at that point. When we know Jesus is returning is when he returns.

And we won't get a second chance after that. So, what is the application of this? Well, I see Jesus actually giving the application in verses 42 through 51.

And the application is that we're to be faithful while we wait. So, faithfulness while we wait. Because the return of the Lord will come at an unexpected hour, we're called to always be ready for his return.

Look at verse 42. Therefore, stay awake. So, alertness, be awake. For you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. I thought about there are times where, you know, mom may leave the house and she's gone for a while and she kind of tells you where she's going.

[28 : 14] Maybe she's going grocery shopping. You know, it usually takes about an hour and a half. And she says to the kids, unload the dishwasher while I'm gone. And the inevitable tendency, some of you are way more holy than maybe I was or maybe even am now when my wife leaves the house.

But there's always that tendency to know she's going to be gone an hour and a half. An hour and a half, it takes about five minutes, let's say, to unload the dishwasher if we're generous. And so, we know we have about an hour and 25 before we need to start unloading the dishwasher, right?

And so, we postpone it. We do this. We do that. We lollygag. Lollygag is maybe a southern term. We lollygag. We fool around. And then, at the one hour and 25 minute mark, our little alarm goes off on our phone.

And we go try to unload the dishwasher only for her to come back in an hour and 26 minutes and catch us in the process. Why hasn't this been done? I gave you this task and it hasn't been done.

You had an hour and a half to get it done. It doesn't take that long. And we postponed it. But, because we thought we knew when it was happening, we thought we could put it off to the very last minute and then sell accounts. And I think that's really part of what's being communicated in this.

[29 : 20] Jesus is saying, because you don't know, you must always be ready. Your faithfulness doesn't begin at the hour and 25 minute mark. As Christians, we're to remain faithful to the Lord every minute of every day.

This isn't something we do as a part-time job. We are Christians foremost. We are servants of the Lord. And we're to be faithful servants every day, every minute of our lives to be faithful servants.

And so there is a principle, I think, being taught here where he says, he's the master of the house and we're his servants. And notice as well that the servants aren't merely Christians, are they?

Because he says there's that wicked servant who gets cast into hell. And so, because God is our sovereign Lord who's created this world, we are all made in one way or another to serve the Lord.

We exist for his glory. And we're all going to be held accountable for how we've been faithful in what God's made us for, what God's called us to.

[30 : 28] And so we see again in verse 45 that we're to be faithful and wise. 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? And so there's duties required here.

There's ways that we live out our faithfulness to the Lord, the way we serve him and feed those who are in need of food and take care of those in need of care. Okay. Again, though, I think I see in verse 48 more indication that Jesus isn't confounding the two, the destruction of the temple and his return.

Look at verse 48. But that wicked servant, but if that wicked servant says to himself, my master is delayed. And so here's the servant who's looking at things and saying, my master's running late.

I've got a little bit more time to do what I want to do. Or, as we'll see in a little bit, even the conclusion of many is because Jesus has not returned, Jesus will not return.

And so when the master's running late, we tend to think, oh, we've got more time. Maybe he's not coming back at all. He's going to leave us in charge of it. But, again, I see Jesus already making some mention of there will be people who will come to the conclusion that Jesus' return is delayed.

[31 : 47] If that return is in AD 70, that's not really a delay at all. It would happen during that generation. That generation, speaking of the destruction of the temple, but because it will take longer than that, people are going to think, well, where's Jesus at?

I thought he was coming back. He seems delayed. I think it's important that we understand that God is not delayed. Jesus' return is not delayed because God sets that time.

And God views time differently than us, and we'll see that in a minute. But the delay will lead some to scoff. So we see verses 48 and 49. But if that wicked servant says to himself, my master is delayed and begins to beat his fellow servants and eat and drink with drunkards.

Now, when I read this, I kind of thought of Lord of the Flies. You guys remember Lord of the Flies? I just realized I can't spoil the story for those maybe kids who haven't read it yet. So Lord of the Flies, you know, there's these school children.

They land on this island only to learn that there are no adults who are left there to supervise them. And things go to chaos pretty quickly. And I kind of feel like we see something similar happening here.

[32 : 55] There's a delay. Where's the master of the house? He's not around. All right, I'm going to beat my fellow servants. I'm going to do what I want to. I'm going to eat his food. I'm going to drink his food. I'm going to hang out with all the drunkards. He can't stop me.

And the idea, the connection even with the Lord of the Flies to me is that there will be those people who think I've got no supervision. I've got no one to answer to but myself. Remember we saw this even in Romans, the idea that, remember we said there are no atheists.

Everyone knows that there's a God but they suppress the truth and unrighteousness. The reality is we want to believe there's no God so we can keep on sinning the ways we want to sin. And I don't have to answer to anybody. I'm my own boss.

And so this happens with a servant. And the illustration for us is that because Jesus hasn't returned there will be scoffers who will come and say he's not real.

There is no master of the house. There's no one I have to answer to. He's not coming back or maybe even he's not coming back in my lifetime. So I've got until the moment of my death to sort things out.

[33 : 58] I can live however I want to as long as I get things right before I die. Let me pause for a second and say again I see this as contradicting the post-millennial position.

If everyone's going to be a faithful servant then why would Jesus warn us about that wicked servant when he returns? But the reality is that because Jesus' return is delayed wickedness will increase among those who reject the gospel.

Again the gospel is going to advance to the ends of the earth and yet wickedness on the earth will still increase even though there's ways in which Christians help suppress sin. There's ways in which passing good laws can help suppress sin.

The influence of Christians on society helps slow down the decay but the decay is real I think. Things are getting worse there will continue to be those who think because he's delayed and the longer he's delayed the more they think we can get away with doing whatever we want to and so they live however they want to in wickedness but the reality that Jesus is communicating is when Jesus returns it's the end.

There's no chance for returning there will be no time for repentance after his return. Those who are not ready that wicked servant will be cast into hell when he returns. Now what I want to do is something a little different.

[35 : 26] I felt like I've just tried to say here's Jesus' application from this passage. You need to be ready. You need to be a faithful servant. I want to look at one more application. I think this is Peter's interpretation of what Jesus taught in the Olivet Discourse.

So if you will turn with me to 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 1 this is now the second letter that I'm writing to you beloved.

In both of them I'm stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles. Knowing this first of all that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing following their own sinful desires.

They will say where's the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. For they deliberately overlooked this fact that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

So what's Peter referring to? The flood. He's saying there are people who are arguing that this is just like things have always been. There's been no change in history. Jesus isn't coming back.

[37 : 09] Nothing's changed. Things just keep going the way they've always gone. And he says no. They neglect this one fact. That though the worlds were created with water they were destroyed by water already.

And so judgment has already come upon the world. The times of Noah ought to be a warning. And again I see him looking back to what Jesus said about that in our text that we just looked at. And then verse 7.

But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire. being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact beloved that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise. As some count slowness. And let's be fair all of us probably struggle with this. Jesus hasn't returned yet two thousand years what's taken so long?

By every means that we might reckon things two thousand years seem slow right? When we don't live but a hundred if we're lucky two thousand years seems like a mighty long time for us.

[38 : 13] But he isn't slow as some count slowness but is patient toward you not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

Again think of our passage. And then the heavens will pass away with a roar and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn but according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

So first we see in verse 3 and following that scoffers will follow their own sinful desires. Scoffers will come because he's delayed as they view it because it's been a while they're going to come scoffing and following their own sinful desires.

And because of his delay we see in verse 4 of this passage that they're going to deny that he will return at all. They will say where's the promise of his coming? He's promised it but he hasn't done it has he?

[39 : 33] Can you really trust his promise is really the conclusion I think that's being presented. And as I've said already they forget the fact that God's done this already before through the flood. And so he's faithful and can be trusted in his word.

His word never fails. In fact that's what we just saw Jesus say in verse 35 of this past excuse me back in Matthew 24. Heaven and earth may pass away but my word remains.

And Jesus' return will bring the destruction of the world by fire and the destruction of the ungodly in hell. We see that in 2 Peter 3 7 and in verse 10 he repeats it twice.

And so when Jesus returns what will happen? I mean we've got a whole slew of things that we've seen. When Jesus returns there will be a final separation there will be a judgment between Christians and unbelievers the sheep and the goats they'll be cast into different places and when he returns the earth will be dissolved and the heavens is all by fire so unlike the flood with water it will be with fire but like the flood the earth will be destroyed but this time the earth itself will be destroyed and there'll be a new earth created and there'll be new skies created in which God people will dwell with him forever and so we see there at the end but according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells and so there will be a day in which God will reign his people and they'll all be believers but it won't be in time it'll be after this world consumed it'll be in the new earth and the new heaven we see as well in verses 8-9 that God's timetable is different than our timetable again I see here a great delay is implied

Peter's saying now remember Peter heard Jesus' words did Peter think that Jesus was going to come in 80-70 Peter tells them because it will seem like he's delayed people are going to say he's not coming at all and then he says for with God I'm sorry I was looking for the specific verse verses 8-9 do not overlook this one fact beloved that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day so understand first Peter's not giving an absolute here but just if we were to take it as absolute what's what's he saying in God's perspective two days have passed since Jesus was here and I think he's implying there might be a thousand or more years until Jesus returns there'll be this whole period in between where Jesus is on his throne reigning from heaven but has not yet returned to the earth and that delay may be a thousand years or more maybe more than two thousand years and it may cause people to scoff and delay it but that's not how

[42 : 39] God counts time God's not running late he's right on time even though we may count him as late and then he also teaches us why is that delay taking place what does he say he says my my paraphrase is God's not done saving sinners yet the delay is happening because he's allowing more time for more people to be saved to some extent I reckon that as well with the advance of the gospel to the end of the earth the gospel is going forth the kingdom of God is spreading to the very ends of the earth God's not done with that work yet God's not done saving sinners and so we have to be mindful to the fact that there has been any delay at all is because our God is a gracious and loving God he loves sinners he desires to see them brought into the kingdom and he's not done doing that yet but we also understand that by his own sovereign purposes there will be a day when he is done doing that when it will be too late when there will be no one else who will be saved and when that day comes that is the end of all history now that's the teaching even verse 15 we didn't read that 2

Peter 3 15 it says and count the patience of our Lord as salvation count the patience of the Lord as salvation there's not one of you in this room who doesn't know the patience of the Lord as salvation if you're a Christian because God could have come back earlier kidding Jesus could have returned in your lifetime before you were converted Jesus could have returned before your lifetime but every one of us who is saved know that God's patience means salvation for us and maybe for others in your family maybe for your children others that you love co-workers so we're to count it as salvation it's a demonstration of his love and his mercy and then as I said already Peter affirms that Jesus return will unexpectedly you're not going to be up ready for this it's going to come when we least expect it and then we get Peter's application which

I really think it's just Peter trying to explain what Jesus means by be ready be that faithful servant so what does he say well look at verse 11 since all these things are thus to be dissolved what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness so here's the application I told you I love it when God's word gives application I don't have to make this up on the fly this is it the world is going to be dissolved Jesus is going to return and what does that teach you well number one it teaches you to be holy and godly which again I think is Peter's interpretation of Jesus words to be ready what does it look like to be ready for Jesus return faithfulness and godliness or holiness and godliness is what Peter says I would even interpret both of those as our being found in Christ Jesus there are ways in which we're working by the spirits working in us to put to death sin and to be holy and to be godly but no one has any holiness or godliness apart from being found in

Christ Jesus and having his righteousness imputed to them we are godly because godliness has been given to us through the godhead through our union with Christ and so I think that's important so step one be found in Christ that's how you're going to be ready when Jesus returns but step two Christian is don't live like Jesus isn't returning strive always to be faithful live holy and godly lives knowing that Christ could return at any moment even the idea that all these things are to be dissolved what are you living for are we living first and foremost for this world no it's gone it's going to be burned up everything that you worked your whole life to save will be consumed by fire what will remain spiritual fruit for eternity the ways in holiness will last your bank account won't your house won't your car won't all those things will be dissolved so spend much more time investing in eternal realities that will bear fruit for eternity not just the things that will be burned or stolen or eaten by moth so holiness and godliness first secondly waiting this is verse 12 of 2

Peter 3 it says waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord so waiting includes not just watching but desiring his return Lord willing we'll see this some next week with the virgins who are waiting for the return of the master we get a picture of that joy they're eager for him to return and so just understand that it doesn't mean that Christians are sitting around thinking oh no I hope he 2nd Peter already in the evening I would refer you back to that sermon if you're curious or I can pass it on to you but what does it mean to hasten the coming of the Lord I'm not going to try to justify this I'm just to give my conclusion from when I studied and preached to this I think there are two ways we hasten the coming of the Lord we pray that Jesus will return soon we pray for his quick return first secondly we spread the gospel again though this isn't a sign for us to count or look for if the gospel is to reach to the furthest ends of the earth and there will be people saved from every tribe tongue and nation then one way we hasten the coming of the

[48 : 25] Lord is by evangelizing the world by spreading the kingdom to the furthest ends of the world now again I don't want to say this is a sign but I do see some conditionality here that the patience of the Lord is for the gospel to spread quickly we want to see it advance so again we pray and we evangelize our ways that we hasten the coming of the Lord and then third application is we set our sights on so as we wait for the Lord the way we do this we do it in holiness and godliness we do this by hastening his return and longing for him to return and third we set our sights not on this world but on heavenly realities when Jesus returns and the heavens and earth are destroyed God will create them anew he'll make a new earth he'll make new skies and those that earth and those heavens that sky they will exist apart from the effects of sin and fallenness so everything we know in the world as glorious and as beautiful as this world is is affected by the fall there will come a day when there will be a new earth that will be unaffected by the fall our sin will have no influence on it we will be glorified we will tears mourning any of that no disease no weeds none of the brokenness and fallenness of this world as we know it even simple things that we take for granted like animals eating one another that's not necessary anymore there won't be any of that the line of the lamb will lay down again so

I'm going really far into this but you understand we're to long for that reality so we and again I don't see anywhere in here we're seeing Christ come back and then we're waiting around for Christ to come back a third time or a fourth time or fifth time when Christ returns it's the end and we're looking for that that's what we're longing for that's what we're waiting for we're eager to see Christ return that we might dwell with him eternally in the new earth just summarize a few last points as we close primary message here the distinction this whole thing is Jesus is teaching him no one knows when Christ will return he will return without warning we cannot know when and no sign will be given to help us guess when there's no help here we don't know and yet we also understand that day is determined that day is decided but it's also secret that

God has chosen in his wisdom not to reveal to anyone but himself secondly we're to eagerly await that day and seek to be prepared for it preparation includes faithfulness and holiness which makes me ask the question are you living each day as though you expect Christ to return that day do we really expect Christ to return in any moment are we living like we expect Christ to return at any moment the application of this passage to me is Jesus saying live every day as though you expect Christ to return that day a further a what would you be ashamed or embarrassed to be doing when Christ returns see sometimes I think we kind of imagine that God is not omniscient that he doesn't see all things and know all things and we imagine maybe we hide our sin from God but there's this moment in this parable where the master returns and he finds this servant this wicked servant beating the other servants and getting drunk

I just think do we view ourselves as servants before the Lord knowing that we're going to give an account and what would we be ashamed to be fine doing if it's something that we don't want Christ to find us doing when he returns don't do it see that's really easy like you have your flow chart would I be happy for Jesus to find me doing this yes do it would not be happy then no don't see this is so simple I know it's much more complicated battling sin but I mean the life of holiness I think this is what is being pointed to again it includes praying and evangelizing to hasten that day and includes longing for Jesus to be in his presence and longing for our eternal state thoroughly his return will bring judgment on all who are not ready as in the days of Noah as I've said already 70 AD I believe was a foretaste of that and doesn't even compare and you guys remember some of the things I read about that I've read to you or shared with you it was a horrific day and yet

Jesus' return will be far worse if you haven't trusted in him those who are not ready will be cast into hell eternally without any hope of repentance and yet couple that with the idea that his delay is for the sake of repentance and so Jesus' return isn't to give you a chance for repentance his delay is to give you a chance for repentance now is the day of repentance now is the day to trust in him and to be ready for his return the only reason it has been so long is because God is a God who's full of grace and mercy and love and what's remarkable is that people assume the very opposite his delay means he doesn't he's not really there he's not really going to do no it's because he's a good and gracious God but the question that really remains for us is are you ready for Christ's return have you trusted in Jesus Christ there is coming a great and final separation within households husband and wife father and child mother in law and daughter in law will be separated and the separation will come based on if you trusted in

[54 : 49] Jesus Christ and so are you ready for his return what Jesus is communicating is that he's not going to tell you in advance when he's coming he's coming without warning and when he comes it'll be too late to change your state now is the day of repentance and so I want to encourage all of you in this room if you haven't trust in Jesus Christ to put your trust in Jesus Christ I think that's what Jesus is communicating to us in this passage be ready for his return and likewise if you have trust in Jesus Christ to live as a faithful servant before him to be ready for his return so one way or the other we are to be ready to be prepared for Jesus his return and to live our lives expecting that it could come at any moment let's pray together dear heavenly father we do thank you for your word and the truths that are presented here we pray again that you would help us to understand this correctly that we would make sense of these passages especially as we move from a near prophecy to a further off prophecy that you would help us to clearly understand it and

Lord we pray that you would make everyone in this room to be ready for your return for the return of Christ that those who don't know you would put their faith and trust in you that they would be among those who would dwell with you forever and for those who have Lord that you would help us to by your spirits working in us to be godly and holy to be looking for and hastening the return of our Savior Lord we ask all these