Matthew Ch24v1-51 - The King's Return

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0:00] Hey So Matthew's Gospel chapter 24 if you need a Bible there's plenty there as you came in coming through the door please feel free to go and get one if you need it we're going to read right the way up to verse 35 and in case you have missed the theme of this morning it's all about the Lord's return and this is what we come to in Matthew chapter 24 it's a difficult section so we're going to read it and we are then going to pray and ask for the Lord's help so follow along with me as we hear God's word to us verse 1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings do you see all these things he asked truly I tell you not one stone here will be left on another everyone will be thrown down as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives the disciples came to him privately tell us they said when will this happen and what will be the sign of your coming at the end of the age

Jesus answered watch out that no one deceives you for many will come in my name claiming I'm the Messiah and will deceive many you will hear of wars and rumors of wars but see to it that none of you are alarmed such things must happen but the end is still to come nation will rise against nation the kingdom against kingdom there will be famines and earthquakes in various places all these are the beginning of birth pains then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death and you will be hated by all nations because of me at that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other false prophets will appear and deceive many people because of the increase of wickedness the love of most will grow cold but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come so when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation spoken of through the prophet
Daniel let the reader understand then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains let no one on the house top go down to take anything out of the house let no one in the field go back to get their cloak how dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the sabbath for then there will be great distress unequaled from the beginning of the world until now and never to be equaled again if those days had not been cut short no one would survive but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened at that time if anyone says to you look here is the messiah or no there he is do not believe it do not believe it for false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive if possible even the elect see i have told you in advance so if anyone tells you there he is out in the desert or do not go out or here he is in the inner rooms do not believe it for as lightning that comes from the east is visible in the west so will be the coming of the son of man wherever there is a carcass there the vultures will gather immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light the stars will fall from the sky the heavenly bodies will be shaken then will appear the sign of the son of man in heaven and then all peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory and he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of the heavens to the other now learn this lesson from the fig tree as soon as its twigs become tender and its leaves come out you know that summer is near even so when you see all these things you know that it is near right at the door truly I tell you this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away well let's keep our bibles open and let's pray our father god each one of us has come today with many things on our minds about the coming week and the future and we pray that your word would give us a vision today of the future to come that would give us a perspective on life that fills us with hope and confidence giving us the sure and certain hope that christ is coming father would we be ready

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for his return and may we be attentive to your word so that we will live well as we wait so be our teacher by your holy spirit and help us all we pray in jesus name amen well there we are in matthew's gospel it's tuesday evening three days before jesus will be crucified and put to death and knowing what lies ahead jesus wants his disciples and us to know that he has authority over all things no matter how bad things are going to get jesus wants us to know that we can face the future with absolute confidence and hope the king will return just as jesus came once so jesus is going to come again three things jesus teaches us about his return in this chapter believe the word of the king's return wait in hope for the king's return and invest your life in the king's return so three simple things believe the word wait in hope and invest your life so first believe the word of the king's return in this text in this chapter jesus has made two very clear promises one that the temple is going to be destroyed and the second that the lord is going to return and these two promises are not separate from each other rather the first promise paves the way for the second promise in other words the temple being destroyed is a sign that the king is going to come have a look with me in verse one jesus left the temple we remember previously back in chapter 21 he had gone to the temple it's now tuesday and he's gone to the temple again and they're now leaving it so jesus left the temple and was walking away with his disciples and they came up to him to call his attention to the building hey jesus look at the size of this temple it was stunning and elaborate it was an architect's dream walking along its perimeter on the outer walls you couldn't help but be impressed some of the stones along the bottom all cut by hand were 40 feet long 12 feet high and 12 feet deep the white marble columns at the entrance and the roof overlaid with gold it was a magnificent building we can imagine jesus and the disciples as they were walking around gazing up at these high walls impressed verse 2 do you see all these things do you see this magnificent building jesus said truly i tell you not one stone here will be left on another every one will be thrown down pardon
excuse me yes you heard correctly the temple will be destroyed now the significance of that is somebody announcing in the news today that in a number of years time the white house is just going to be completely obliterated or leinster house in a few years time is just going to be floored to the ground well clearly this had bothered the disciples so that evening verse 3 as jesus was sitting on the mount of olives so this is an area outside the city on a hill an olive grove where jesus would go over the course of that week and they could look from there down onto the city and especially over this magnificent temple as jesus was sitting on the mount of olives the disciples came to him privately tell us they said when will this happen when is this temple going to be destroyed and what will be the sign of your coming at the end of the age it seems the disciples have been trying to work things out for themselves jesus if if this temple is going to be destroyed does that mean that when that happened it's going to be the end of the age the end of this world and the end of history as we know it is that what you're trying to tell us well let's see what jesus has to say first the destruction of the temple jesus is very clear he says there's going to be certain signs that are going to happen that will tell us the temple will be destroyed verse 5 he says there will be false messiahs verse 6 there will be wars and nations against nation in verse 7 there's going to be famine and earthquakes verse 8 all these are the beginning of birth pains these are all signs he says of a more terrible event to come the destruction of the temple in fact the disciples as they listen he says you will feel it personally verse 9 he says there will be persecution and some of the disciples will be put to death verse 10 people will turn from the faith verse 12 wickedness will increase and all while this is going on verse 14 the good news will continue to be declared and end of verse 14 then the end will come these are the things you can expect to happen and then the end will come then the temple is going to be destroyed verse 15 so when you see standing in the holy place talking about the temple when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation bit of a tongue twister that one well it's a quote from the prophet
[14:48] Daniel who hundreds of years before spoke of a foreign enemy one who is going to come in the future and destroy the temple and overtake Jerusalem Jesus says when you see that happen the abomination that causes desolation spoken of through the prophet of Daniel let the reader understand in other words if you don't believe my words now you will certainly believe my words then mark my words the temple will be destroyed and when it does happen there will be terrible suffering verse 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains escape get out as fast as you can don't wait to pack your bags or bring your favourite belongings run for it verse 21 for then there will be great distress terrible suffering unequals from the beginning of the world until now and never to be equaled again so Jesus promises that the temple will be destroyed but he also makes a second promise the promise of the coming

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Lord verse 23 at that time at the time the temple is being destroyed if anyone says to you look over there here's the Messiah or no no no over there don't believe it verse 26 so if anyone tells you there he is he's out in the desert quickly go out to him or no he's in the inner rooms whether he's inside or outside don't believe it for as lightning that comes from the east is visible from the west so will be the coming of the son of man Jesus is crystal clear the king will return Jesus' favourite name for himself the son of man a person of absolute power and authority who will return to establish his eternal kingdom so we have two clear promises the temple will be destroyed and the king will return but how do they relate to each other well the promise of the word
Jesus is connecting these two great events the first event foreshadows the second event the destruction of the temple is the sign that the king will return when it's destroyed you will know that the lord is going to come you see about 40 years after Jesus spoke these very words to his disciples all that he said came to pass you can look it up in your history books in AD 66 the Jews rebelled against their Roman masters they went on the offensive and in response the emperor Titus went in with his armies and his response was devastating they overtook Jerusalem in AD 70 they came in and put a siege around the temple where all the rebels had holed up his army broke through the walls the temple was set on fire and all the valuable items were ransacked and by the time the armies had finished all that remained of the temple was the foundation on which it was built it was completely leveled just as
Jesus has said read your history and you will see that what Jesus said verse 2 truly I tell you not one stone will here be left on another everyone will be thrown down and those who didn't flee to the surrounding mountains like they were warned were butchered to death over those four years of battle and in those remaining few weeks historians say that at least one million people were killed Jesus' words were yet again true verse 21 he said there will be great distress a terrible suffering unequaled from the beginning of the world until now never to be equaled again so Jesus is making it clear to his disciples when all this happens when these terrible events come to pass that will be the sign to you that you know the king is going to return verse 34 truly I tell you this generation will certainly not pass until all these things have happened all this stuff to the temple the invading army that's going to come heaven and earth will pass away everything else may be destroyed but my words will never pass away what Jesus says is true we can trust his words if Jesus says it will happen it will happen no doubts well we sit at a time two thousand years since
Jesus spoke those words and a little more since the temple was destroyed today you can go to that very site and there is no temple the only wall that's left is one of the big outer walls surrounding the temple courts called the western wall the wailing wall you may have seen pictures of it you go there today and you will see Jews very devout praying wailing crying longing for everything to be restored but there is no temple never forget its significance of what Jesus had said Jesus said the temple would be destroyed and so we can believe his word that the king will return of course people spend their days don't they trying to predict when that will be
[22:19] I mean we've had a plethora of it in recent years oh the pandemic across the world the lord must be coming get ready Russia has invaded Ukraine oh the lord is coming get ready maybe he is maybe he will next week well we're not to get caught up with signs and times and catastrophic events or climate change and trying to figure out when it's all going to happen look at verse 36 but about that day the day of the lord's return or hour no one knows not even the angels in heaven nor the son but only the father so don't bother turning on your televisions to the god channel and listening to all these wonderful predictions of when christ is coming none of them know if the angels don't know the son doesn't know well i certainly don't know and neither do you the important thing is not when he is coming but that he is coming his words are true we can trust his words so first believe the word of the king's return the next couple of points that we're going to look at are a little shorter we're not going to be as long second wait in hope for the king's return so we don't know the time of the king's return but when it does happen it will be unmistakable rather than a secret event known by a few it will be public and seen by all look at verse 27 with me for as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west you know on the rare occasions even when we have lightning it can be miles away but people way in the opposite direction still see it so it will be with the coming of the son of man verse 28 wherever there is a carcass there the vultures will gather now that's a bit of a tough one

I'll tell you what I think it means that where there is a dead animal way way up in the sky you see the circling vultures and people from miles around can all see what is going on and what is

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happening so it will be with the coming of the son of man everybody will see in fact when the king returns there will be a cosmic upheaval look at the quote in verse 29 the sun will be darkened the moon will not give its light so whether you're alive at the time of the sun or whether you're in an area of the world where the moon is out the stars will fall from the sky and the heavenly bodies will be shaken the return of Jesus will be unmistakable all will see and all will know wherever you live on the planet and with his coming there are three glorious things we can look forward to first justice will be done verse 30 then will appear the sign of the son of man in heaven and then all the peoples of the earth all the nations will mourn when they see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory remember what we looked at just last week when Jesus entered into Jerusalem do you remember how he came on a donkey gentle and humbly but when Jesus comes again he's going to be riding on the clouds of heaven in power and in great glory first he came to serve and to save now he's going to come to rule and to judge no wonder verse 30 the nations will be mourning for there will be no more hiding all will be revealed and everything will be exposed what do you think about that well that's good news because justice will be done think of all the injustices that have taken place in the history of the world where the innocent suffer and the guilty escape the invading armies the corrupt politicians where children are trafficked and women enslaved the rich and the powerful stealing and abusing the violent and greedy crushing and killing all has been seen and not one of it will ever be forgotten every penny that has been robbed every hurtful thought every evil deed has all been recorded by God and one day every human being that has ever lived in the history of this world will stand before the supreme king every evil will be punished and every wrong put right nothing and no one will escape the pure justice of God but before we move on this also means that we too will receive justice because every one of us gathered here today will have to give an account to the king for our every thought word and deed how are you going to stand before the king what would it be like to have my life all my secret deepest thoughts all exposed by God all revealed you see all who have rejected
Jesus as king will face the king's judgment and if you are here today and you are one who is rejecting and refuse to submit to him now today not a moment later is the time to repent and ask for his forgiveness please please make sure you are ready to meet the king so justice will be done second all God's people will be gathered in verse 31 Ralph referred to this earlier from revelation and he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his elect his believers his followers from the four winds from north south east and west they will all be gathered from one end of the heavens to the other from one end of the earth to the other what a welcome it's going to be picture the scene we looked at one angel in revelation here it says all the angels will be blowing their trumpets imagine the noise thousands and thousands upon angels each blowing their trumpet god's very own welcoming party and all who have submitted their life to king jesus will be gathered in just as the king will bring his judgment on those who reject him so the king will bring his salvation to those who accept him i love the moment before a match starts and the players run fired up out of the tunnel onto the pitch and the crowd stand and applaud and cheer shouting well let's get ready for the welcome of all welcomes one day jesus will return and we will run into the eternal kingdom greeted by cheering and shouting in the celebration of angels embraced by the king of kings this is the guaranteed promise of jesus just as he came to save you and to die for you he will come again and he will bring you home he will not forget you or leave you you will be gathered in so justice done gathered in and joy to come verse 32 now learn this lesson from the fig tree do you have any fig trees in your garden well there's a lesson as soon as its twigs become tender and its leaves come out you know that summer is near have a look around your garden nature is a wonderful teacher just as the plants begin to leaf and begin to bud so we know that summer is coming well says
Jesus this is what life is like and what the kingdom to come will be presently he says it's as if we are living through winter life is filled with hurts and pains but we look forward to joy every trial and struggle every crushing hurt every anxious pain are all signs that a greater glory awaits winter is here right now but summer is coming we see the horrors of war and its devastating effects but summer is coming we watch as families are broken and homes destroyed but summer is coming we hurt as children are maimed and their innocence lost but summer is coming we struggle with our broken promises and disappointments but summer is coming we battle with our own sin and our failing and our falling but summer is coming we live with regret we fight our fears but summer is coming we face sickness and sorrow we struggle through pain but can we say it summer is coming we say goodbye to loved ones we long for better days but summer is coming as we wait for the

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king's return we are living through winter life under the curse suffering and struggles thorns and thistles but one day the king will come in glorious light and the icy winds of winter will be no more wait in hope look forward to his coming and when he comes justice will be done we will be gathered in and joy will be ours forever and ever and ever amen amen so third invest your life in the king's return you see it's not just a future event it impacts on how we live today that's [35:53] Jesus teaching to his disciple this is what we are waiting for the glory to come these things are yet to happen so here's how we should all live as we wait for the king very quickly three things we can all invest our life in as we wait in hope first watch out look at verse four watch out that no one deceives you for many will come in my name claiming I'm the Messiah and will deceive many false messiahs false prophets with a false message how are they going to deceive what will their message be well it will be something like this trust in Jesus and you will be healthy and wealthy forever believe in Jesus and you will have your best life now speak positive words and you will be healed no more sickness what has

Jesus been telling his disciples get ready for difficulties and hardships look at verse eight all these are the beginning of birth pains anyone who has had a baby knows that the beginning of birth pains those first contractions means the pain is only going to get worse yes the glory to come of the little baby will be there one day well in a few hours not a whole day I hope will eventually come but there will be pain Jesus saying this is what we have to get prepared for this is life no it's not all doom and gloom we have the promise of God's power and presence he is our father who cares and comforts he will give you grace for every trial and strength for believe the lie that this is our best life now it is not the best is yet to come watch out for deceiving lies second let's together stand firm with all the pressures of life and persecution and opposition verse 12 tells us there's going to be a greater wickedness the pulls to take us away from
God what are we to do verse 13 the one who stands firm to the end will be saved well how are we going to stand firm amidst all the pressures and the difficulties well what have we been thinking about believe the word of the king's return that's how you will stand firm wait in hope for the king's return that's how you remain rock solid remind yourself that justice will be done that you will be gathered in and joy is yet to come stand firm in the promises of God and third preach the gospel verse 14 this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come we're not to be trying to figure out how many nations are there how many have been reached but as we wait for the king get on with the business each one of us of sharing the good news you see we live in a community where people are without hope the best people can muster is to say we've come from nowhere we're going nowhere and life is all a chance in between how much greater a message have we got the good news of a coming king who has all history and all life in his hands a king with absolute power and supreme authority who will come and restore our broken lives and renew this disordered world once and for all a king who gave his life for you died for you and rose again from the grave defeating death so that we together might enjoy his kingdom forever good news for us to tell my friends winter is here but summer is coming let's pray lord god we we look we see the world around us we see our own lives in our own situations we fear of what's to come lift our gaze from what we can see to what we can't see and what you have promised an eternal glory to come father may each one of us be ready that not only would we be gathered and welcomed but that we would be ready to welcome you whenever that is father fill us with hope and confidence that we would watch out stand firm and that together we would preach the good news so that all might hear of your greatness and your glory in
Jesus name we pray amen do you want to sing I do we're going to sing when I fear my faithful fail cry

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