

Until He Comes Again!

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[0:00] I've got to get used to that now. It's kind of weird. Okay. Take your Bibles, if you would please. Go to Matthew chapter 24.

Matthew chapter 24. Um, we're actually going to do a rehash, a recap of what we looked at eight weeks ago.

The last time we met was eight weeks ago. I guess it was week nine. And I thought for us to get back into the groove, it'd be good for us to just kind of do a recap, repeat, and we'll kind of look at some main aspects of this chapter.

Because, um, excuse me, because just the weight of the section that we're looking at in chapters 24 and 25. I'll bring that up in just a moment.

Kind of the overview. But let me first, if I could, read Matthew chapter 24. The first 35 verses. We did that about eight weeks ago.

[1:22] Uh, I'll read the first 35 verses. And then we'll jump in. Do I have it up here? Yeah. Matthew chapter 24, starting in verse 1.

And Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when his disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to him. And answering, he said to them, Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another which will not be torn down. And he was sitting on the Mount of Olives. The disciples came to him privately saying, Tell us, when will these things be?

And what is the sign of your coming and the end of the age? And answering, Jesus said to them, See that no one misleads you. Verse 5. For many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ. And will mislead many. And you'll be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you're not frightened. For it must take place, but it's not yet the end.

[2:24] For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation.

Will kill you and you'll be hated by all nations on account of my name. And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

And because lawlessness is increased, the love of people will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations.

And then the end shall come. 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.

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things that are out in his house. And let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak.

[3:29] But woe to those who are with child and those who nurse babes in those days. But pray that your flight may not be in the winter on the Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.

And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days shall be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, Behold, here is the Christ, or there, do not believe.

For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I've told you in advance. If therefore they say to you, Behold, he's in the wilderness.

Don't go there. Behold, he's in the inner rooms. Don't believe. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.

Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.

[4:40] And the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn.

And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together his elect from four winds from one end of the heavens to the other.

Now, learn the parable from the fig tree. Verse 32. When his branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer's near.

Even so, in the same way you also, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near. At the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall not pass away. Fali Ravwahangi.

[5:47] Sorry, Fali, if you're watching. I butchered your last name. He wrote an article in the Africa Gospel Coalition. He titled it, Five Habits in Isolation.

I'm sorry. Five Habits Christians in Isolation Can Cultivate. Five Habits Christians in Isolation Can Cultivate. Number four was this.

Keep looking forward. Listen to what Fali says. Quote, There is an attentiveness or alertness, a diligence, that is evident in the life of someone who expectantly waits for the return of the Lord.

Titus 2.13. We will watch and pray if we truly look forward to Christ's return. Matthew 26.41. Faith is marked by prayerful waiting.

Luke 18.8. Our hope is not in the doctors finding a cure for COVID-19, nor is our hope in life, quote, going back to the normal, end quote, though these are honorable thoughts.

[6:59] Our hope is ultimately in the return of Jesus Christ. For he will right every wrong and abolish sin along with its effects once and for all.

We fear when we forget how the story ends. End quote. I'll give you another quote later on in the service from this article that Fali wrote.

a great way to look at things in our world, or at least the way we as Christians should see things. So we're doing a recap for us as we look at Matthew's gospel, the driving force of Matthew's gospel, bow down and worship Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel.

And we do that until he comes because when he comes, then we'll just do that automatically. Until he comes again.

Amid the tragedies, miseries, falsities, apostasy, and infidelity and all the storms and difficulties of this life, we have the surety that our King will faithfully come again and gather us to Himself.

[8:22] We have that confidence. We have that confidence. this virus is not the end of the world. It's not.

But amid all these things that are happening in our world, we have the assurance that our King will faithfully come again and gather us to Himself. The fact that we know what God will do in the future should deeply affect our lives now.

Alert. Fidelity. Faithful. Fruitful. Service. Mission.

Love for Christ. For others. us as Jesus' disciples will face perilous pains.

We'll face Messiah pretenders, wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, apostasy, many false prophets. Yet Jesus called us, them, us, not to be misled, to realize the end is not yet, and to persevere as His disciples and to persevere in mission.

[9:48] So here are chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew, a large section of teaching that Jesus gives. It's answering the disciples' question and it's a huge teaching section.

And yet, even in the midst of this, the majority of this, of chapters 24 and 25, is set to the appeals from Jesus to us as His disciples to stay alert, to be trustworthy and compassionate.

To put it a different way, there's two parts to this. The what? Jesus returning and everything. And the so what? So because Jesus is returning, how do we respond to this?

And so today, we'll look at the what. I'll give you little bits and pieces of the so what, but really, because Jesus gives little bits and pieces of the so what, but really, the main aspect of these first 35 verses of chapter 24 is the what.

Alert, fidelity, faithful, love for Christ. You'll see that so what coming up. Jesus predicted the temple's destruction of 70 AD, which is an initial fulfillment of what's ultimately going to be fulfilled at the end of the world at His return.

[11 : 13] So we take the view of initial fulfillment and then fuller, ultimate fulfillment. Initial fulfillment in 70 AD, yet ultimate fulfillment is yet to happen.

Kind of another way to put it is the near and the far fulfillment. Near fulfillment and far fulfillment. So I'm not a preterist. Everything in 70 AD happened in, everything here in Matthew 24 happened in 70 AD.

No, no, I'm not a preterist. Nor am I a futurist that nothing in Matthew 24 has happened at all. I'm not either one. We see initial fulfillment and fuller fulfillment because the temple destroyed anticipates a worldwide destruction.

But it's urgent. He's coming. So are you going to come to Him? Are you going to trust Christ? Are you going to take this seriously and the urgency of the call that you would take seriously the call that Jesus gives to you that you would repent, that you would trust Christ, that you would come to Him, that you would embrace Jesus to be your Savior and Lord?

[12 : 24] So notice, if you would, the first three verses of this, we'll do a short little recap here. He comes out of the temple of Jesus in verse 1 and the disciples are pointing out the beautiful buildings of the temple, which it was.

Herod's temple was beautiful. In verse 2, though, Jesus responds, not one stone here shall be left upon another which shall not be torn down. And that truly happened in 70 AD.

He's sitting on the Mount of Olives and His disciples, they asked Him a two-part question. When will these things be and what is the sign of your coming, which in their thinking would be His coming is the end of the age.

And then, verses 4 through 35, again, Jesus gives the what's and actually even the when, but it's vague because Jesus is not so concerned about trying to figure out when it's gonna happen.

He's more concerned about how we live and waiting expectantly for Him to come. So, let's begin this, I got, I think, three different parts to this.

[13 : 28] Number one, the beginning birth pains. I know it's pangs, but I'm using pains, P-A-I-N-S. Beginning birth pains, known as first falsities, false messiahs, verse 4, answering, He said, see that no one misleads you.

Why? For many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ and will mislead many. Don't be misled. Deception will happen by these false messiahs and unfortunately many people will believe them.

Falsities, false messiahs, tragedies, verses 6 through 8. And you'll be hearing of wars and wars of wars. See that you're not frightened for it must take place, but the end is not yet.

For, verse 7, nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. Various places will be famines, earthquakes, aggression, natural disasters, which is going to bring about disease and sickness as well.

Yet these things do not signify the end. Our first inclination as we see these things happen is like, oh, this is the end times. No, it's not.

[14 : 41] Jesus says, here in verse 8, but all these things are the beginning of birth pains. The beginning of the birth pains, the first stages of tragedies to come upon the world.

For those of you women who have been pregnant and you're about to have birth, kind of using this illustration. The beginnings of it, the Braxton Hicks that are contracting the stomach, the baby's starting to get ready for you to deliver the baby.

So it's just the beginning of the, but you're not having the baby, well, unless you're my wife who was, yeah, no baby comes fast. You know what I'm saying? Get me to the other right now.

Gee, good thing Jamie didn't come out in the elevator. But so, this is the idea, it's just the beginning of these birth pains, these falsies, these tragedies.

So while the world freaks out in a panic, we remain calm and steadfast in our Lord. So don't be surprised by these things.

[15 : 49] A woman who's about to give birth, she's not surprised, she knows. It's just the beginning. Falsities, tragedies, and notice these next four miseries, apostasies, trickery's infidelity.

Try to get the E type thing, you know, preachers do stuff like that so you remember it, right? Nine through twelve. Verse nine, then they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you.

You'll be hated by all nations on account of my name. Disciples of Jesus will face tribulation, murder, and universal hatred all because they follow Jesus. All because you're a follower of Jesus. And this difficult kind of pressure will cause many to stumble. Notice verse 10, at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another.

Cause many people to stumble and turn on their brethren. They'll be betrayers. False prophets will trick and mislead people away from the truth.

[17:02] Notice verse 11, many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. And because lawlessness increase, the love of most people will grow cold.

In other words, people's love for Christ and each other will grow cold. Misery, apostasy, trickery, infidelity, these will be difficult days indeed.

Notice, he says, because lawlessness is increased, so there's an increase of evil both outside the church and even inside the church.

Because the love of people for Christ, for each other, they'll become cold. They won't want to be around each other.

They won't want anything to do with this Christianity thing that they once said that they love Christ. That's why it's called for us to have a hot love for Jesus.

[18:18] So falsities, tragedies, miseries, apostasies, trickeries, infidelity. But notice here in verses 13 and 14, Jesus puts something here in the middle, firm fidelity to Christ and the mission, verse 13, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

Firm fidelity to the gospel, to Christ, to our Lord and to his mission, we'll see that in verse 14, amid all these horrifying tragedies and trickeries and infidelity, true disciples of Jesus will endure to the end and will be saved.

Because it's not about your declaration of being a Christian now, it's not about you having a good beginning as a Christian, what about now? Now where you add with Christ, now are you trusting Jesus?

How are you responding now to the Lord? And notice verse 14, in this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations and then the end shall come.

With this perseverance comes this proclamation of the gospel kingdom to the whole world, a testimony to all the nations, to the great fact of Jesus' person and work.

[19:37] He's the son of God and he died on behalf of sinners as a substitute for sinners. So these authentic followers of Christ are called to fidelity and perseverance in their obedience to Jesus.

Notice even the contrast with the lawlessness. God sustains us and God keeps his faithful ones. He will. He will. Also want you to notice there's no mention of the church being raptured away.

There's no hint of the church being taken out of this. If you couple this with Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians and the trumpet sound, in short, I believe we will go through this tribulation.

In other words, I'm what's called a post-tribulationist. But wherever you're at with that, notice just right here in the middle, Jesus is trying to give a call even to being faithful to the gospel, to Christ and to his mission.

So you have the beginning of the birth pains and then you have number two, perilous birth pains. You ladies having a baby just start really getting stronger.

[20:55] It's like, oh, okay, let's go. You got to take me to the hospital now, honey. What, what, what am I supposed to do? Three o'clock in the morning. What? Okay. Okay. Jim, yes.

Take me to the hospital. Okay. Just kind of out of it, right? She's with it. I'm not with it. So perilous birth pains, verses 15 through 28.

Notice first what happens. The abomination, verse 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 what he's talking about.

Well, the temple will be desecrated. And the phrase, abomination of desolation, alludes to what happens in Daniel chapter 11.

Daniel read Daniel. That was cool. Daniel read Daniel. Daniel. Hi, Daniel. And earlier, Daniel chapter 7, the abomination of desolation alludes to Daniel chapter 11.

[22:02] And it's linked or it happened in 167 B.C. with Antiochus Epiphanes who set up a pagan idol in the temple.

He sacrificed a pig and was blasphemous. So now, about 28, 29, 30, 31 A.D., Jesus predicted a future desecration which happened in 70 A.D.

with the Romans. You would not have a Gentile walk into the temple. That would be blasphemous. And it will happen again in the future.

So, what does that mean? The temple needs to be rebuilt. So, I believe that a temple needs to be rebuilt in Israel, in Jerusalem for this to take place.

This is why Jesus calls it the abomination. It's why He says that the reader understand. It's why we believe this was an initial fulfillment and then there's a future fulfillment taking place in the future.

This is a key sign to what will happen next.

[23:19] Because Antichrist will come, the beast. Or 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, the man of lawlessness. So, I want you to understand historical desolations anticipate a later future eschatological desolation.

Historical desolations with the place 167, 70 A.D. anticipates future eschatological desolations will happen in the future.

It's happened before and it's going to happen again. The abomination, the notice, now the tribulation, verse 16, then, that those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, whom is on the house tell him not go down and get the things out of his house.

Verse 18, one is in the field not turned back to get his cloak. Both of those who are with child and those who nurse babes in those days pray that your flight may not be in the winter or on the Sabbath.

So he's saying all these things. Disciples flee to the mountains for safety because the siege of Jerusalem would take place. Now by the way, Christians literally did this in 70 AD. Not enough time to go inside to get your supplies.

[24:38] Get out now. It'd be hard for women who are pregnant or nursing to be able to flee. Hopefully it's not going to be praised on the winter on the Sabbath. Why?

Verse 21, 4. Then there will be a great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now nor ever shall.

What's next is the great tribulation. It would begin then. So when you see this abomination of desolation that's a key sign that the great tribulation is about to take place.

nothing is like it ever or ever shall again be like it. A major atrocity will come upon the whole world truly horrible times after the temple will be desolated.

And yet notice the small promise that Jesus gives here in verse 22. those days have been cut short no life would have been saved but for the sake of his chosen ones the elect those days shall be cut short.

[26:00] Yet God loves and cares for his people. He'd show it by cutting short those days for them and would be ready to deliver them.

Yes we go through it but he's going to be gracious to us even in the midst of these horrible times.

So you have the abomination again underneath the perilous birth pains the abomination the tribulation and then now a third aspect of this of the perilous birth pains major deception notice a major deception first through false miracles verses 23 to 25 therefore if they say to you behold here's the Christ or there don't believe for false Christ and false prophets will rise and will show great signs and wonders to mislead if possible even the elect false false messiahs and prophets would increase as a way to mislead if it was possible even the elect these miraculous signs that they would do would look so real and so good that in hard times some would be tempted to listen miraculous signs miracles and they were posted on YouTube so you could see it and watch it it's not a farce even though most of the things you see today are a farce these things are going to look so good so that the vulnerable will be tempted to listen and notice what Jesus does here in verse 25 behold

I've told you in advance look he's saying remember make a note he says I'm warning you persevere be strong this major deception will come through false miracles but also through false claims he says verses 26 to 28 therefore if they say to you behold he's in the wilderness don't go he's in the inner rooms don't believe they'll say Christ is in a secret place or some obscure place I know Jesus he's right there at Walmart he has the little sign up I know that's him it has to be no look at what he says verse 27 for just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west so shall the coming of the son of man be his coming will be open and public unmistakably clear like lightning flashing across the sky everyone sees lightning flash

I mean especially at night you're looking at night whoa did you see that whoa yeah I saw something flash holy cow don't need to be told where the lightning is lights up the sky and then Jesus gives this like weird odd like you read and you go what type of pithy statement verse 28 wherever the corpse is there the vultures will gather think of it this way the corpse stands for the signs Jesus just mentioned that's the corpse and then the vulture stands for his coming so the corpse is the signs the vultures is coming when a corpse is on the ground the vultures circle and then they come that's the idea so you have beginning birth pains perilous birth pains and then finally birth Jesus comes here comes the baby verse 29 look at what Jesus says but immediately after the tribulation of those days those important words doesn't come later doesn't come immediately after that great tribulation these specific signs will precede

Jesus' return the sun will be darkened the moon will not give it's light the stars will fall from the heavens and the powers of the heavens will be shaken these are Old Testament passages references you find these things in Daniel's book Isaiah Joel Zechariah Haggai Ezekiel these are apocalyptic images they indicate his appearance notice verse 30 and then the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of the heavens with power and great glory the sign the sign that is the son of man will come with power and great glory and everyone will see him everyone will see him Jesus says here and all the tribes of the earth will mourn which is also quoted by John in John the book of Revelation chapter 1 this either means repentance or despair or maybe it's both he will gloriously come on the clouds and the nations will grieve because they'll see him it'll be very clear notice what he says here in verse 31 he will send forth his angels the great trumpet a trumpet will sound and as [32:00] Paul says the dead in Christ will rise first first that's the chapter 4 then the others will come afterwards our Lord will come and gather his elect from all the nations the angels will come from the four winds from one end of the heavens to the other means the north the south the east the west throughout the whole earth this will happen so all the persecution all the tragedy all the hatred all the killings all the sickness all the disease it all comes to an end for God's people the angels will come and rescue us from our peril there's no reason of fear because our king will come for us come and take us home and the appearance of our king means deliverance for us God's people so these things mean these things mean terror to those who are faithless terror to those who do not respond to

Christ terror to those who are not followers of Jesus terror to those who are not his disciples but for us who love Christ for us who follow Jesus for us who are Christians for us who believe in him and his resurrection and have embraced him as savior and lord for us it's comfort comfort to the faithful and then notice what Jesus does here in verse 32 to 35 now learn the lesson see know trust see learn the parable from the fig tree when its branches are already tender and puts forth its leaves you know that summer is near Jesus coming is near and it will definitely happen trees have begun to bud and blossom spring is here summer is coming it's already hot like summer the bearing of fruit it's here it's around the corner for some trees are already bearing the fruit so Jesus says verse 33 in the same way you also when you see all these things what are all these things these preliminary signs that anticipate his return as a fig tree budding as a sure sign that summer's near in the same way also all these things are reliable indicators that

Jesus coming is near he's near at the door he's right there and notice Jesus has not given us a time period he just kind of doesn't really he doesn't care about that look at these signs I've given you vague as they are things you need to be watching out for see no verse 34 shall I say to you this generation will not pass away till all these things take place what does he mean by this generation Jesus contemporaries of course they will be the ones who would see the signs that indicate his coming which includes the destruction of the temple in 70 AD remember it's about 28 29 30 31 AD right now so about 40 years later the temple is going to be destroyed which points to what will happen in the future see no trust that's what

Jesus says in verse 34 excuse me verse 35 heaven and earth will pass away but my word shall not pass away the promise of his coming is completely and totally reliable his words are God's words eternal and authoritative he has spoken we can trust with total dependence his words are God's words because Jesus is God the eternal son of God he is eternal therefore he has all authority his words are scripture we can trust his word and trust what he said so here's that recap of these first 35 verses the what so to speak got a little bit of the so what but the what of his coming so may we not allow the events that are taking place in our world create fear may we not allow these events to

create such fear may we be vigilant to alertness fidelity faithfulness fruitfulness mission and loving Christ and others we can completely depend upon our

Lord I mean the fact that we know what God will do in the future should deeply affect our lives in that way alert fidelity faithful fruitful mission service loving each other loving Christ the virus is not the end of the world amid the tragedies miseries falsities apostasy infidelity all the storms and difficulties of life we have the surety that our king will faithfully come again and gather us to himself we have that confidence keep an eternal mindset we keep that eternal mindset brethren folly once again he says quote panic stirs when we forget that

[38:23] God is still on the throne psalm 115 verse 3 we fret when we live as if there were not an afterlife of abundant joy in his presence awaiting us look up and fix your gaze on the author and perfecter of your faith Hebrews 12:1 and 2 cultivate a habit of looking forward to Christ's return and then this point he ends it with this question how will others put their trust in our God if they see us dread the current state of affairs as much as they do how will others put their trust in our God if they see us dread the current state of affairs as much as they do let's pray father father we know we are we need to be good stewards we know our responsibility we don't want to be foolish and yet father we pray that we can have an eternal perspective it's hard when the media and

Facebook says otherwise and help us not to be flippant we don't want to be flippant we don't want to be careless we don't want to be for lack of for lack of better terms we don't want to be jerks but yet the other flip side of things on the flip end of things help us not to fear you're faithful and good you're faithful and true