

Week of May 6, 2012
Jesus Is Coming Again

Passage Outline:

1. See the End Game (Rev. 22:12-14)
2. See that You Are Ready (Matt. 24:39b-44)
3. See that You Are Faithful (Matt. 24:9-14; Rev. 7:9)

What's This About?

We will study the return of Jesus and how we are to be faithful and ready for it.

How Will This Impact Your Life?

It will encourage you to anticipate the return of Jesus.

1. See the End Game - Revelation 22:12-14

Revelation 22:12-14

¹²"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

- A. Do you know what the word "end-game" means? It is the final result of what we want to accomplish. Jesus gives us His "end-game" in our text.
- B. Jesus is coming and quickly. How could Jesus have said He was coming quickly when so many years have gone by without His return?
 - i. First, time is irrelevant to God. With the Lord a thousand years is only like a day (2 Peter 3:8).
 - ii. Second, when He does return it will be a sudden appearance, unfortunately unexpected by many.

If you have not already done so, please read the article "*He's Coming Again*" contained in the preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed it, additional copies are on the back table.

- C. Many doubt Jesus' return, unconcerned they are unprepared for it. They have never trusted Christ to forgive and save them from their sin, and should dread His coming.
- D. We have not such dread because Jesus' return brings His reward. The Greek word for *reward* could also mean "wages," meaning Jesus will give people what they have earned by how they have lived. This is NOT to mean we are saved by being good, but by being saved, Jesus does expect us to produce good works. We saw this a couple of weeks ago when we talked about bearing fruit.
- E. Therefore, we are not saved by our works, but we are judged by them.
- F. Jesus revealed that He was the Alpha and the Omega. These were the First and the Last letters of the Greek alphabet, the Beginning and the End. These titles set Jesus apart from all human beings. He was before them and will be after them. He transcends time and space.

If you have not already done so, please read the articles "*Alpha and Omega*" and "*John's Use of Alpha and Omega*" contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed it, additional copies are

on the back table.

- G. The end result for those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb is two great privileges:
- They have the right to the tree of life; What Adam and Even choose to avoid, we will be granted full access and having eaten, will live forever in Heaven.
 - They may enter the city by the gates; Since Jesus is the gate and we enter by Him, we have access to the eternal kingdom of Heaven.

“We Must Appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ” - 2 Corinthians 5:10

How does knowing we all will stand before Jesus at the end of time, having eternal life because of faith in Jesus Christ and being judged for how we lived our lives while on earth make you feel? What difference could this truth make on how you live now? Check mark all that applies.

Excited; Anxious; Peaceful; Afraid; Committed;
 Terrified; Dedicated; Something else? _____

2. See that You Are Ready - Matthew 24:39b-44

Matthew 24:39b-44

^{39b} ...[This] is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

- A. People spend precious time today trying to determine when Jesus will return, but Scripture's emphasis is not on knowing the time but being ready for His return. In fact, Jesus said nobody knows the day or hour of His return "except the Father" (Matt. 24:36).
- B. To describe His return, Jesus divided people into two groups—the prepared and the unprepared.
- Two men working in the field: one person was prepared and other not. Note: this is not a teaching of the "rapture." Being left here means missing out on the Kingdom of Heaven, not being left here on earth.
 - Two women ... grinding at the mill. Being involved in ordinary tasks during the day, Christ's return separated the saved from the lost, the prepared from the unprepared.
- C. But how does a person prepare for the return of Jesus?
- Keeping watch: Unlike the multitudes in the day of the flood, Noah listened to God and kept watch for what God would be sending.
 - Preparing each day for what's coming. Noah did more than just keeping watch. Noah worked diligently to prepare for the flood.
- D. Jesus concluded this section with the statement that "the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." Therefore, we should be ready at all times.

What if the End of the World Came Tomorrow?

If the end of the world came tomorrow, what would you do today? Check mark all that apply and indicate why you would do that?

___ “Party Hardy” – eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow ... well you know?

Why? _____

___ Spend your time doing what you had originally planned on doing today?

Why? _____

___ Spend your time reading the Bible and Praying the whole day?

Why? _____

3. See that You Are Faithful - Matthew 24:9-14 and Revelation 7:9

Matthew 24:9-14

⁹ "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ 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.

Revelation 7:9

⁹ After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

- A. Jesus did not promise our life would be “a stroll in a rose garden.” In fact, Jesus seems to indicate that as the world continues, the difficulty for Christians will increase.
 - i. You will be “*handed over*” implying both the capture and judgment of death.
 - ii. You will be “*hated by all nations because of Me*” implying that people will do more than just laugh at us but that it would boil up even in outward hatred.
- B. Many will turn away from the faith. Not every church member is really a child of God, as John would warn later in his letter (1 John 2:19). History is filled with those who once confessed faith but their faith proved to be artificial because it did not endure to the end.
- C. False prophets will rise up and deceive many. Those who desire to remain faithful to the Lord must distinguish between those who speak the truth of God and those who deliver their own, supposedly godly message.
- D. How can you distinguish between the two? We must:
 - i. Know that just quoting the Bible is not a high enough standard to distinguish true prophets and false prophets.

- ii. Ask, does the prophet have a living relationship with Jesus?
- iii. Ask, is the prophet motivated by God’s call rather than greed or selfish gain?
- E. Wickedness will increase in the world. Oh, wow, can it get worse?
- F. And because of that, the temptation for Christians to grow weary instead of faithful will be great. The old adage, *If you can’t beat them join them*, reflects the temptation for many to give up the fight (1 Timothy 6:12).
- G. Why is it so important that Christians remain faithful to the end? The good news of the kingdom, that Jesus came to die for the sins of the world, needs to be proclaimed to the whole world. God left us here to proclaim that message of Jesus’ love and forgiveness. There are still over 6,000 people groups who have not heard the Gospel to this day.
- H. Be warned: Those who measure the progress of the gospel to determine the date of the end miss the point. The point is that Christians must faithfully spread this message to all nations. Reaching people is more important than determining dates for the return of Christ.
- I. Are you prepared to share that message? Pastor Jim will be leading a training on the “Seven Styles of Faith Sharing” on Saturday, May 12th from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm. Please register for this training on the bulletin board in the Lobby of the Church. Cost for the training including snacks and lunch is \$10.
- J. Will we make it? John says “YES we will!” Standing before the throne of God in the Kingdom of Heaven will be a multitude of people “that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language.” You and I will be part of that number.
- K. We will be wearing those “white robes” purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Planning for the Future?

In the picture below you will see a little flashlight aiming from left to right. Draw in the beams of that flashlight to indicate how far into the future you tend to think as you make decisions and plans about your life today.



**Reaches
out to...**

I can barely get 3-5 years Retirement My Eternal Home
past tomorrow in Heaven

Biblical Truths in Focus

1. Jesus Christ is coming again, whether people are prepared or not.
2. Anticipating the return of Christ can help us live more confidently in the present.
3. We should not spend our energy calculating the time of His return but staying ready for it.
4. In spite of many sources of opposition, we must remain faithful to Christ.
5. By remaining faithful to Christ, we continue our witness to the world.
6. John’s glimpse into the future assures us that the nations will be reached with the gospel.