

## Matthew 24:29-51 – Concluding Admonitions

### Verses 29-31

To better understand this next section from [Matthew 24](#), we need to consider the context to which Jesus is referring. Of course, if we back up to verses twenty-three through 26, we'll quickly discover that Jesus is referring to the end of the seven years of tribulation. At this point in human history, things are very bad, and as Jesus stated previously, people are experiencing things that has never been heard of or seen. The deceit of Satan has taken its full effect on the world and people will wonder if there is any relief in sight. Verse 27 lets us know there will be no doubt of Jesus' return. His return will be as quick as lightning and as powerful too. I mentioned verse twenty-eight last week but rushed through it because of time. Jesus is perhaps referring to what will later be revealed to John and recorded for us in [Revelation 19:17-19](#)

*17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.*

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), [Re 19:17–19](#)

What follows in verses 29-31 is what will "immediately" precede this Armageddon event.

We are not told what "the sign of the Son of man in heaven" is, but the people on earth at that time will recognize it. According to the words of Jesus found here and coupled with Paul's teaching from 1 Thessalonians, how will Jesus come for the church? Read [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#) - *17 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.*

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), [1 Th 4:17](#). When Jesus comes for the church, He will come in the air and His people will be caught up to meet Him in the air. But our Lord's second coming at the end of the Tribulation will be a great public event, with every eye seeing Him ([Rev. 1:7](#)).

I have often wondered at what time the nation of Israel turns to Jesus during the tribulation. The answer is found here in verse thirty-one. They will finally see and recognize Jesus for who He is. This event will have special meaning for Israel. Jesus will return at that hour when Israel is about to be defeated by the Gentile armies ([Zech. 12](#)). He will rescue His people, and they will see Him and recognize that He is their Messiah ([Zech. 12:9–14](#)). There will be a national repentance, national cleansing, and national restoration under the gracious leadership of their Messiah.

We must not confuse the trumpet of [Matthew 24:31](#) with the "trump of God" mentioned in [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#). "His elect" in [Matthew 24:31](#) refers to people on earth, Jews and Gentiles, who have trusted Christ and been saved. In the Old Testament, Israel's movements were

announced by trumpet signals ([Num. 10](#); [Joel 2:1ff](#)). Israel has been a scattered people for many centuries. The angels will gather Israel with trumpets just as the priests did in Old Testament times ([Lev. 23:23–25](#)).

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 89.

### **Verses 32-35**

What is Jesus doing in these last few sections of chapter 24? He is giving them some practical examples they would be familiar with in an effort to prepare them for His return. Many scholars consider these three examples: the fig tree, Noah, and the thief in the night as admonitions.

The historicity of the Bible confirms that **the fig tree** symbolizes Israel. The budding of the trees indicates that summer is near. The beginning of these signs indicates that the Lord's coming is near. The generation alive on earth at that time will see these events take place.

What are we to take from this lesson of the fig tree?

Our generation sees a foreshadowing of these signs. We do not look for signs as such; we look for the Saviour ([Phil. 3:20](#)).

*20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), [Php 3:20](#).

Jesus can come for His church at any time.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 89–90.

### **Verses 36-41**

The precise moment of the Lord's return cannot be calculated by anyone. When the Lord spoke these words, that information was said to be known by only the Father. But the period before His coming will be like the time in **the days of Noah**. People then were enjoying the normal pursuits of life, with no awareness of imminent judgment. Life continued normally for the people of Noah's day for they were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage. But the Flood came and took them all away. It was sudden and they were unprepared.

As it was in Noah's day, so it will be before the glorious coming of the Lord. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Analogous to Noah's day, the individuals who will be "taken" are the wicked whom the Lord will take away in judgment (cf. [Luke 17:37](#)). The individuals "left" are believers who will be privileged to be on the earth to populate the kingdom of Jesus Christ in physical bodies. As the wicked were taken away in judgment and Noah was left on the earth, so the wicked will be judged and removed when Christ returns, and the righteous will be left behind to become His subjects in the kingdom.

Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "[Matthew](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 79.

## Verses 42-44

People have always speculated as to the day of Christ's return. If you ask me, as a Christian, it's a big waste of time. Why worry or speculate about something only God knows?

The Lord encouraged His disciples to keep watch (grēgoreite, the word rendered "be alert" in [1 Thes. 5:6](#)), because they could not know on what day the Lord would come (cf. [Matt. 25:13](#)). The limits of the Tribulation period are known to God, for the Seventieth Week of Daniel will have a definite starting time and a definite ending time. But the people living then will only know in generalities the limits of the time. Therefore, watchfulness is important. If a person knows the approximate time a **thief** may come to break into his house, he takes precautions and prepares accordingly. Likewise, believers in the Tribulation, who will be looking forward to the coming of the Lord of glory, should be alert. They will know generally, from the signs of the end, when He will return, but they will not know the exact time.

Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "[Matthew](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 79.

## Verses 45-51

What is our role while we wait?

We must not be surprised that our Lord suddenly changed from discussing His return as it relates to Israel to His return as it relates to the church.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 90–91.

**Evil and Faithful Slaves** This parable examined the perils of long-term responsibility. All followers of Jesus have been put "in charge" as faithful slaves. The words "a while" (24:48; cf. 25:5, 19) gave the key to understanding the message Jesus was trying to get across in this section. Jesus was preparing his disciples for what would turn out to be a long absence. Jesus expected his followers to live according to the law of love (cf. 22:37–39; 25:31–46) and always be ready no matter how long he might wait to return.

Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, The Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 420.