

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Commission: A Study of Matthew 21–28

STUDY ELEVEN

Here He Comes, Ready or Not

Matthew 24:29–25:46

The thought of Christ's return gives great comfort to those who anticipate it. Finally, we will be able to see the One in whom we have believed. We will know Him just as He has always known us.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

As Jesus continued His sermon on the Mount of Olives—the *Olivet Discourse* about the end times—He reached the highpoint of His teaching.

“And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens.”
(Matthew 24:30)

Everything Jesus had taught so far led up to His glorious coming again, and everything He was about to teach flowed from this revelation. The first half of His discourse listed the *signs of His return*; now, in the second half, Jesus' focus shifts to *how we're to live in light of His return*.

The next time Jesus entered Jerusalem He would offer Himself as the Lamb of God to die for the sins of the world. But at this moment, as He sat on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem, Jesus' focus went beyond His first advent to His second advent, when He would appear not as a suffering servant, but as conquering King to judge and reign.

As twilight shadows lengthened over the city, Jesus could see the dawn of a glorious new age in God's redemptive plan. How could He pass along this vision to His followers? How could He best prepare them as they await the glory of His return? Let's discover the answers as we overview the remainder of Jesus' Olivet Discourse.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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Matthew 24:29–25:46



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Waiting is an essential component of faith. Because we trust God, we wait for Him, and as we wait, our faith grows deeper. Are you in a season of waiting? Prepare your heart for Jesus' words on staying faithful and keeping alert by letting the words of the psalmist guide your time of prayer:

*“Wait patiently for the LORD.
Be brave and courageous.
Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.” (Psalm 27:14)*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

According to the “Timeline of Future Events” chart in our previous *Searching the Scriptures* study, the second coming of Christ will occur at the end of the seven-year tribulation after the “abomination of desolation” with all its terrors (Matthew 24:15 NASB). Christ will have already raptured His church—including all believers living and dead in our present age. So, the primary recipients of Jesus' teaching will be those who believe in Jesus *after* the rapture who must endure the persecutions of the tribulation.

While Jesus' words apply directly to believers in the tribulation, they still ring true for us today. Our first step in this *Searching the Scriptures* study is to observe what Jesus said in Matthew 24:29–25:46, and then we can construct timeless principles that apply to believers in any age.¹



Observation: Encouragement for End Times

We can divide the second half of Jesus' discourse into five sections. Answer the questions under each of the following headings as you read and summarize the passages.



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The Coming of Christ with Power and Glory—Matthew 24:29–31

Describe what will happen on earth and in the heavens when Christ returns, according to *Matthew 24:29–31*.

The Certainty of Christ's Coming—Matthew 24:32–34

What guarantee did Christ give that His prophecy will be fulfilled, according to *Matthew 24:32–34*?

The Suddenness of Christ's Coming—Matthew 24:36–44

How did Jesus describe the sudden and unexpected nature of His coming, according to *Matthew 24:36–44*?
With what two commands in *24:42–44* did He sum up this section?



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How to Keep Watch and Be Ready—Matthew 24:45–25:30

In this lengthy section, Jesus told three parables to illustrate *how* to “keep watch” and “be ready”—the parable of the good and evil servants, the parable of the ten bridesmaids, and the parable of the talents.

How does the parable of the good and evil servants in *Matthew 24:45–51* illustrate the need to be responsible?

How does the parable of the ten bridesmaids in *25:1–13* illustrate the need to be wise?

How does the parable of the talents in *25:14–30* illustrate the need to be faithful?



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The Separation of the Sheep and Goats—Matthew 25:31–46

Jesus concluded His Olivet Discourse with a scene of Christ's judgment at the end of the tribulation to determine who will enter His kingdom. How does Jesus' teaching about the separation of the sheep and goats in [Matthew 25:31–46](#) describe the true righteousness of those who follow Christ?

The issue in eternity will be what did you do in your life with Christ? Did you trust Him as your Savior, or did you reject Him? If you trusted Him, you will stand before the Lord confident that the blood of Christ has opened the door of heaven for you by His grace.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Principles for End-Times Living

A biblical principle is a truth from God's Word that applies to all people at all times. Below are seven biblical principles that Pastor Chuck Swindoll observed in Jesus' Olivet Discourse and the supporting verses.

1. The delay until Christ's second coming will be lengthy, so wait patiently ([Matthew 24:30](#); [25:5, 19](#)).
2. Christ's return will be unexpected and sudden, so don't cling to this world ([24:37–39, 42–44, 50](#)).
3. God's judgment will be irreversible, so take God seriously ([25:29–30, 46](#)).
4. The truth about each person's life will be revealed, so avoid hypocrisy ([25:10–12](#)).
5. Each person must stand alone, so be ready to give an account ([24:40–41](#)).
6. The future of the faithful will be joyful, so rest in His promise ([24:31, 46–47; 25:34–36](#)).
7. The destiny of the lost will be dreadful, so tell others about Jesus ([24:51; 25:30, 46](#)).



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Based on your observations of Jesus' teaching, what principles can you add to Pastor Chuck's list?

Before we apply these principles to daily living, let's correlate Jesus' teaching about His second coming with what Peter wrote about skeptics in his second epistle.

Some people fight against the thought of Christ's return. They are skeptical to the core.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Skeptics Will Scoff at Christ's Coming

Peter warned believers who faithfully keep watch for Christ's coming that skeptics will chide them, saying, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again?" (2 Peter 3:4).

According to [2 Peter 3:8–9](#), what encouragement did Peter give us to not give up hope, despite the Lord's lengthy delay? What is the Lord's reason for delaying?



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What did Peter say the Lord will do when He returns, according to *2 Peter 3:10–13*?

How should we live in the meantime (*3:14*)?

God will not forget your work as you minister for Christ. One day, when the curtain closes and the earth passes away, He will reward you for your faithfulness.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: How We Can Live Confidently Today

Like the disciples, we want to know when the end will come because our hearts yearn for the Lord to fill the world with His righteousness. Teachers who claim to be able to read current events as if they were the hands on an end times clock may dazzle us with their insights. Yet Christ told us to be wary of date-setters. No one knows when He will come, not even the angels.



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While we wait, He urged us to carry on His ministry like responsible servants, prepare for Him like wise bridesmaids, and make good use of our gifts like faithful stewards. What are some ways you can apply Christ's instructions on how to "keep watch" and "be ready?"

Review Pastor Chuck's principles and the ones you wrote. What one action point can you draw from these principles to apply today?

Perhaps you know skeptics who ridicule the thought of Christ's return. Deep down, they long for the same confidence about the future that you have as a follower of Christ. Don't be shy about your hope in Jesus. As you close this study, ask the Lord for courage to share your faith as you wait patiently for His return. Someday, He will come for His own; we can be certain of that fact. Today may be the day . . . come, Lord Jesus! Come!



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I pray for those who do not know You and live without hope. Thank You for Your desire that no one be destroyed in the coming judgment and for everyone, particularly my lost friends and family members, to be saved. Help me have the boldness to share my hope in You and give me the energy and strength to carry on Your Son's ministry until He returns. In His name I pray, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Learn more about Pastor Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* method on the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](https://www.insight.org/how-to-study-the-bible-for-yourself)" at [insight.org](https://www.insight.org).

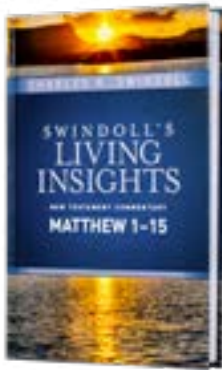


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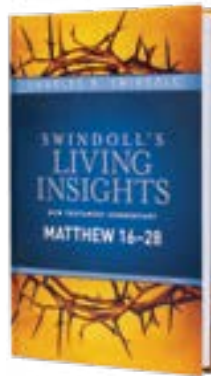
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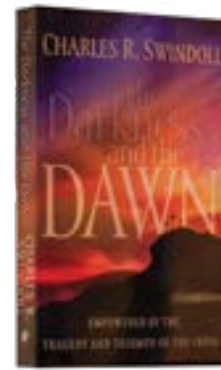
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2021 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.

