

MATTHEW

Chapter 24

Signs of the End of the Age

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” ³ 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 and of the end of the age?” ⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains. 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. ¹⁵ “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. ¹⁹ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰ Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. ²³ At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. ²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time. ²⁶ “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹ “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, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’³⁰ “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.³¹ 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.³² “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.³³ Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it^d is near, right at the door.³⁴ I tell you the truth, this generation^e will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

24:1–25:46 The Olivet discourse, the fifth and last of the great discourses in Matthew’s Gospel (see notes on 5:1–7:29; Mk 13:1–37). (CSB)

24:1 Best explained by Mark 13:1 “As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!” AND NOTES FROM TLSB – “Huge stone blocks, some measuring 37 ft. long, 18 feet wide, and 12 feet high, and decorated with gold, and were used to build Herod’s temple, one of the most impressive man-made structures of the ancient world. (TLSB)

24:2 *not one stone ... left.* Fulfilled literally in A.D. 70, when the Romans under Titus completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple buildings. Stones were even pried apart to collect the gold leaf that melted from the roof when the temple was set on fire. (CSB)

Given the scale and splendor of the Jerusalem temple, Jesus’ prediction is all the more astounding. Yet it unflinchingly came to pass, under the Roman general Titus, c 40 years later. (TLSB)

stone. See note on Mk 13:1. (CSB)

thrown down. Excavations in 1968 uncovered large numbers of these stones, toppled from the walls by the invaders. (CSB)

24:1–2 In response to His disciples’ admiring comments about the temple, Jesus predicts its destruction. The things of this world do not endure. All earthly splendor will be forgotten on the Last Day. Understanding the provisional nature of material things leads us to place our highest hopes in the Lord and what He has in store for us in the new heavens and new earth. • You alone are our life and hope, O Lord. Help us to set our hearts and affections on You, for in the end everything else will give way. Amen. (TLSB)

24:3 *Mount of Olives.* A ridge a little more than a mile long, beyond the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem and rising about 200 feet above the city (see note on Mk 11:1). (CSB)

Just east of the temple, on the opposite bank of the Kidron Valley. (TLSB)

This hill would scarcely have been so called if its groves had not been outstandingly luxuriant in comparison with the surrounding land and the olives not of economic importance for the city. Oil was probably the only export of Jerusalem. Gethsemane, which was located on the Mt of Olives, means an oil or perfume press. (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus – Joachim Jeremias – page 7)

privately. Jesus taught publicly on many occasions (e.g., 5:1–7:29; 13:1–52). At other times, He revealed things only to His disciples. (TLSB)

when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? Jesus deals with these questions but does not distinguish them sharply. However, it appears that the description of the end of the age is discussed in vv. 4–14, the destruction of Jerusalem in vv. 15–22 (see Lk 21:20) and Christ’s coming in vv. 23–31. (CSB)

WHEN – First of the two questions concerns the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; vv 15–22 hold Jesus’ answer. (TLSB)

WHAT – Second question involves the end times. Jesus describes the end of the age in vv 4–14 and speaks of His second coming in vv 21–31. (TLSB)

24:4 Significantly, the first statement about the end times is a warning against deception. See p. 307 of TLSB. Cf v. 36, where Jesus teaches that no one can know or calculate when the Last Day will come. (TLSB)

24:5 COME IN MY NAME – False christs had begun to appear even before Jesus came. Gamaliel says, “some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be some be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too killed, and all his followers were scattered” (Acts 5:36,37). (PBC)

Since that time such false prophets have continued to appear in a steady stream. In our own country, in comparatively recent times, we have seen Sun Myung Moon, a cult leader from Korea; Jim Jones, whose followers committed mass suicide at Jonestown in Guyana; and David Koresh, whose followers perished in flames at Waco, Texas. (PBC)

I am the Christ. History has seen many examples of messianic pretenders. Cf Ac 5:35–40. (TLSB)

24:6-7 Because geopolitical conflicts and natural disasters are common, they cannot be used to determine the date of the end of the world. The frequency of

such signs reminds us that we always need to be prepared for Jesus' return. (TLSB)

24:8 *birth pains*. The rabbis spoke of "birth pains," i.e., sufferings, that would precede the coming of the Messiah. (CSB)

Birth pains typically become more frequent and intense as the time of delivery approaches. So also it will be in the end times. The severity and frequency of cataclysmic events will increase. (TLSB)

24:9 *they*. Jesus does not identify those who will persecute His followers. In every generation, of course, there are some who oppose Jesus' cause and so seek to harm His Church. (TLSB)

all nations. All peoples. Accordingly, one should not interpret this oracle in exclusively political terms. (TLSB)

24:11 *false prophets*. Just as an abundance of messianic pretenders have appeared over the centuries, so also many false prophets and subverters of sound doctrine will appear. (TLSB)

24:12 Doctrinal corruption always produces a deterioration of morality and ethics. (TLSB)

2 Timothy 4:2-3, "²Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear."

Many false prophets in the OT began prophesying peace and victory in order to gain favor of Israel's leadership (1 Ki 22:12; Jer 6:13-15; Ezk 13:1-16). Jeremiah repeatedly described the activities of these false prophets (chs 23; 26-28). (TLSB p. 307)

24:13 Amid His dire predictions about things continually worsening, Jesus offers a word of encouragement: those remaining faithful will be saved. "This does not mean that faith lays hold of righteousness and salvation only in the beginning then resigns its office to works as though they had to sustain faith, the righteousness received, and salvation. It means that the promise, not only of receiving, but also of retaining righteousness and salvation, is firm and sure to us. St. Paul (Romans 5:2) ascribes to faith only not only the entrance to grace, but says that we stand in grace and boast of future glory. In other words, he credits the beginning, middle, and end to faith alone" (FC SD IV 34). (TLSB)

1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can

bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

24:14 The world will have the chance to hear the Gospel before Jesus returns in glory. This is not only a testimony to God’s all-encompassing grace but also to Jesus’ universal lordship and role as judge. (TLSB)

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

1 Timothy 2:4, “(God) who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

Ezekiel 18:23, “Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?”

24:1–14 Jesus prophesies about things leading up to the end of the world. Today, stories of military conflicts, political intrigues, and natural disasters continue to fill the news. All this should remind us of the nearness of the end of this age. In that we may rejoice! Though the world is indeed increasingly evil and hostile to God, Christians are ever nearer the great day of Christ’s return. • Keep us faithful in a world spinning out of control, Lord Jesus, that in the end, we may receive the salvation You are even now preparing for us. Amen. (TLSB)

24:15 *the abomination that causes desolation.* † The detestable thing causing the desolation of the holy place. The primary reference in Daniel (see NIV text note for references) was to 168 B.C., when Antiochus Epiphanes erected a pagan altar to Zeus on the sacred altar in the temple of Jerusalem. Jesus now warns his disciples that a similar desecration will precede the fall of Jerusalem. Some see the fulfillment of this warning in the attempt of the Roman emperor Caligula (A.D. 37–41) to have set up in the temple at Jerusalem a statue of himself (as deified)—an order that fortunately was never carried out. A nearer reference is the presence of pagan armies surrounding Jerusalem as foretoking “that its desolation is near” (Lk 21:20). Roman emperors, who claimed for themselves divine honors, are to be God’s instrument in turning the splendor of the temple into a desolate state (cf. 23:38). (CSB)

let the reader understand. Matthew provides an editorial comment to underline the significance of the temple’s destruction. (TLSB)

24:16 *the mountains.* † The Transjordan mountains, where Pella was located. Christians in Jerusalem fled to that area during the Roman siege shortly before A.D. 70. (CSB)

Many Christian residents of Judea fled on the eve of the revolt that brought Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70. (TLSB)

24:17-19 Jesus warns that the inhabitants of Judea will be extremely rushed when they are forced to flee the attacking Roman legions (this began in AD 67). There will not be even time for gathering a few prized possessions or grabbing a coat. (TLSB)

24:20 *or on the Sabbath.* Matthew alone includes this because he was writing to Jews, who were forbidden to travel more than about half a mile on the Sabbath. (CSB)

24:21 *great distress, unequaled.*† Josephus, the Jewish historian who was there, describes the destruction of Jerusalem in almost identical language. (CSB)

The days leading up to Jerusalem's destruction would be unprecedented in the intensity of suffering and would require extraordinary means of survival. (TLSB)

24:22 *the elect.* The people of God. (CSB)

Jesus characterizes the days leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem as horrible and long. God's special love and concern for His people moves Him to lessen the severity of what befalls the land in AD 66-70. He graciously rescues His people in the midst of suffering. Cf. Gen 18:22-33. (TLSB)

24:23-24 When things turn desperate, people instinctively recognize the need for a spiritual answer. Under such wretched conditions, it is no wonder that false teachers would attract so many followers. God's people, however, will not fall for charlatans. The power of God's Spirit helps believers in Jesus to remain true. (TLSB)

24:25 The fact that Jesus is able to predict things even before they happen helps demonstrate the truth of His Word. (TLSB)

24:26 Yet another warning against false christs is that Jesus will return from heaven on the clouds of the sky, according to Acts 1:11. Any other claims should be rejected. (TLSB)

24:27 When the sun breaks the horizon, its light comes so fast it seems instantaneous. When Christ returns in glory, He will suddenly appear in the heavens (cf. v. 30; 26:64). (TLSB)

24:28 *there the vultures will gather.* The coming of Christ will be as obvious as the gathering of vultures around a carcass (see note on Lk 17:37, where the saying is used in a slightly different sense). (CSB)

False teachers will swoop down on the confused and suffering people just as vultures unfailingly spot carrion and gather around it. (TLSB)

24:15–28 While prophesying concerning Jerusalem’s destruction, Jesus again warns His disciples against being deceived by false messiahs. During crises, people instinctively seek spiritual aid. In such times, God’s people are tempted to join those fleeing to charlatans and the false hopes they offer. Christ’s return in glory will be unmistakable. In an instant, He will raise the dead, transform believers into His likeness, and so effect our final deliverance. • You have revealed to us the manner of Your return, O Lord. Therefore, keep us watchful for You so we do not follow those who seek to deceive us. Amen. (TLSB)

24:29 *tribulation*. Used broadly for the troubles described in vv 5–28, some of which were fulfilled in AD 70; others will be fulfilled just before Christ returns. The character of the prophecy warns us against trying to calculate the exact time of Jesus’ return. (TLSB)

Sun will be darkened... What Jesus is describing are not just natural events, such as eclipses or meteors falling into the atmosphere, but the dissolution of the universe when he returns on the Last Day. (PBC)

24:30 *Son of Man*. See note on Mk 8:31. (CSB)

Cf Daniel 7:1-4, where the final enthronement of Christ is depicted as occurring before all people. See p. 2098 TLSB)

mourn. Those who opposed the Messiah will mourn their actions, esp those who pierced Him (Rv 1:7). (TLSB)

24:31 ANGELS – Matthew frequently portrays angels as assisting the Lord on Judgment Day (e.g., 13:39-41, 49; 16:27; 25:31). (TLSB)

WILL GATHER – Christians are drawn together to separate them from the unbelievers. (TLSB)

FOUR WINDS – The directions of the compass, “ends of the earth.” Jesus will send His angels to gather all believers, regardless of where they are. (TLSB)

24:29–31 Jesus describes the manner (though not the exact time) of His second coming. He will come in glory on the clouds of heaven as your Savior. Rejoice! For all Christians will unfailingly be gathered to reunite with their fellow believers and enter the Lord’s presence. • “O Jesus Christ, do not delay, But hasten our salvation; ... Come, mighty judge, and set us free From death and ev’ry evil.” Amen. (*LSB* 508:7) (TLSB)

24:32 ALL THESE THINGS – Jesus refers not only to His prediction about Jerusalem’s destruction (vv 15-22) but also to the others signs that will accompany the end of the world and His return. (TLSB)

AT THE DOOR – Jesus is the one standing at the gate, ready to appear suddenly in glory. (TLSB)

Revelation 3:20, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

24:34 *this generation*. See NIV text note; see also note on Mk 13:30. (CSB)

Repeatedly rebuked by Jesus for rejecting Him and the prophets, demanding signs, and otherwise failing to recognize the coming of the messianic kingdom (11:16; 12:41-42; 23:36; cf 16:4; 17:17). Accordingly, this passage is best taken as a prediction that there will always be a “generation” that rejects the Gospel, demands signs, and dismisses the inevitability of judgment. (TLSB)

24:35 Though the delay of Christ’s second coming might lead some to conclude that He will not appear, His promised return will indeed come to pass. Then, everything else will fail. In contrast, Jesus’ Word will stand forever vindicated (cf 2Pt 3:3–14). (TLSB)

24:32–35 Jesus again reminds us that there will be constant and unmistakable signs that the end is near. For those who reject Jesus and the Gospel, the reminder that He is standing at the gate is a threat of judgment and condemnation. However, believers in Christ may be encouraged when reminded that Jesus is near, for they know that this means their salvation is drawing near. • “O Thou Long-expected, weary Waits my anxious soul for Thee... O my Savior, O my Savior, When wilt Thou return to me?” Amen. (*TLH* 606:2) (TLSB)

The Day and Hour Unknown

³⁶ “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,^a but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That 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. ⁴⁵ “Who then is the faithful and wise servant,

whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

24:36 DAY AND HOUR – Jesus impresses upon His disciples the truth that the end may be projected to far into the future. (Ylvisaker)

Important interpretive key for everything Jesus says about the end times: no one can decipher the day (or even the year) of His return in glory. Flee from those who claim they can. (TLSB)

nor the Son. See note on Mk 13:32. (CSB)

“Christ according to His human nature› ... knows some things and is ignorant of others” (FC SD VIII 74). (TLSB)

Having just asserted His divinity in the previous verse, Jesus now asserts His humanity. (PBC)

Human and earthly conditions, however, involve ignorance on our part regarding the exact hour, in order that hope and expectancy may at all time be living and real. (Ylvisaker)

Here is material for careful pondering, above all for those that make it a practice to predict the exact date of Christ's coming to judgment, as many sects have been in the habit of doing since the beginning of the Christian Church, but especially since the year 1000 A. D. Neither men nor angels have a knowledge of the exact season and time, day and hour, when the Day of Judgment will break upon the world, not even Jesus according to His humanity, in the lowliness of His human nature only, Mark 13, 32. It is a secret which is hidden in the councils of God the Father. The Son of God, according to His humanity, has renounced the right to this knowledge for the sake of men, lest they inquire after the day and the hour and give themselves over to a false security. (Kretzmann)

24:37-39 Noah's preaching and building of the ark were clear warnings that God was preparing to judge wickedness by sending a flood. Still, people were unprepared when the flood came. So it will also be at the end of time. (TLSB)

24:37 AS IT WAS– Busyness is not just a modern day problem. People at Noah’s time were busy with their daily routines and totally forgot about God. People in every period of time will be indifferent to Christ and the Gospel. – The emphasis is not how wicked the world was in the days of Noah before the flood but on their indifference. They were caught up in the regular routine of eating, drinking, marrying, things not evil in themselves. Their apathy to the warnings of Noah and the huge boat he was building led to the fact that they “knew nothing” (V. 39) until they were carried away in the flood. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 1)

The difference between the Flood and the Last Day is that God used water the first time, but He will use fire at the end. (PBC)

The period prior to the coming of Christ will resemble conditions at the time of the Flood when the ark was built. Even as men in that day lived in unthinking security, buried themselves in worldly cares, and failed to heed the signs of the times, so it shall be among the masses even now; moral laxity and gross materialism are spreading like wildfire. (Ylvisaker)

But so much is sure: there will be a repetition of the confident carelessness which characterized the days before the Flood. (Kretzmann)

24:38 As the time of Christ's coming to Judgment draws near, there will be a continuous round of feasting and pleasure-seeking, without in any way regarding the gravity of the situation. Note: The Lord's words, "marrying and giving in marriage," are not meant to discountenance the holy estate of matrimony, but they throw a spotlight upon conditions of the present time. (Kretzmann)

Eating, drinking, and marrying are not inherently evil. The people in Noah’s generation were not condemned for doing these things, but rather for their cavalier disregard of God and His prophets. (TLSB)

24:39 KNEW NOTHING – It certainly was not because they had not been warned. First of all, God gave them 120 years of grace between the time when He determined to send the Flood and the day when it actually started raining (Genesis 6:3). Then the construction of the ark must have attracted some attention. People must have wondered why Noah was building such a big boat, especially when he did not live anywhere near a body of water that was big enough to float it. It was a natural conversation starter. We know that Noah was “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5). It is typical of God to warn people before He pours out His wrath upon them. It is typical of us to ignore the warning and be caught by surprise when His judgment descends. That is why, from our point of view, the Last Day will come like a thief. (PBC)

THAT IS HOW IT WILL BE – Like in Noah’s time people to the end will indifferent to the coming of the end of the world and be caught up in the routines

that keep them busy or that they enjoy. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 1)

“Tell the people that God is real. Tell them that they should have faith in Him. Tell them that the Gospel is true, that Jesus Christ died to save them from their sins. But tell them that there is no hurry. (Sr. devil giving advice to Jr. Devil in Screwtape Letters by C. S. Lewis) - A veteran pastor once observed, “the devil is happiest when the leaders of the church keep going to meetings that often deal with mundane matters. This keeps them from reading and sharing the good news of Christ.”

For instead of understanding the holiness of the wedded estate, and seeking and entering into it in the fear of the Lord, people in our days have only the gratification of their lusts in mind. The sanctity of the marriage vow has been relegated to the rubbish heap, and while the majority of so-called Christian people do not yet openly profess free love, a great many come dangerously near sanctioning and practicing it. For them, as for the people in the time of Noah, the Day of Judgment will truly be a cataclysm, bringing them sudden, terrible punishment. For the guilty cannot escape, even if he be associated outwardly with the innocent, with the believer. (Kretzmann)

24:40-41 Emphasizes the suddenness and finality of the separation that will occur on the Last Day. (TLSB)

Of two men working together, as partners, in the field or elsewhere, one will be accepted, the other will be left and thus rejected. Of two women busy with their housework, attending to the duties that fall to their lot, one will be accepted as a believer, the other will be rejected as an unbeliever. Christ here, in a single vivid flash, shows the routine of Oriental life — the men in the field, the women in the kitchen. When the grain was cut, threshed, and winnowed, there were no mills to which it could be taken for grinding. This process had to be done in each home, and the labor of doing it fell to the women of the household. Grain was reduced to flour either by rubbing or by pounding. The process of rubbing or grinding was accomplished either by a flat, saddle-shaped stone over which another was rubbed, or by crushing between two stones, the top one of which was revolved somewhat as a modern millstone. It required two women, as Jesus said, to grind at such a mill — one to feed it, while the other manipulated the rubbing stone. The upper stone was apparently rotated by twisting the wrist. It could thus be turned half-way round and then back again. (Kretzmann)

24:40 WILL BE TAKEN – paralambanetai – This is often used to mean accepted or preserved. Since the text speaks of the final coming of Jesus these verses do not support the “Left Behind” theory as written of by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. – Taken is often used to mean accepted, preserved. It could be applied to being taken by the angels who gather the elect at the return of Christ (24:31). On the other hand it could be applied to the angels pulling out the weed

that are bundled up and put in the fire (13:30-40). It is a strange stretching of the text to apply it to the rapture by which the faithful are taken away to spare them hardship before the end of the world. This entire text speaks of the return of Jesus at the end of the world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 1)

The Lord shall come suddenly, and at His advent there shall be an eternal separation among men, irrespective of rank or station on this earth. To think that it will be during the day because the activities are day time events is a mistake. The activities described are figurative and therefore do not fit in any time of the day. (Ylvisaker)

24:42 The sudden nature of Christ's return requires that His people remain ever vigilant. (TLSB)

Keep watch – Gragoreite – This is like a watch where a guard is posted and implies that he or she stay awake and be alert. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 1)

Therefore: Since the exact time is unknown and since faithfulness is required, watch, be on your guard, do not even for a day, an hour, a moment, relax your vigilance. (Kretzmann)

24:43 MASTER OF THE HOUSE – Though Jesus is plainly the master of the house in the parable that follows (vv 45–51), here that character represents those called to watch for His second coming. (TLSB)

THIEF – A thief always tries to pick the most unexpected time to break into a house. So we, like the owner of a house, need to always be ready. – This is the second example of being ready, overcome the apathy of the days of Noah, and be prepared for the thief rather than be lulled into a false sense of security. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 1)

Just as a thief comes when least expected, so also Jesus' appearing will catch people sleeping. (TLSB)

Like a thief in the night His day is coming. The housefather, knowing that a thief is coming some time during the night, will far rather watch all night than take chances, with the result that his house is searched through, as if with his permission. (Kretzmann)

24:44 BE READY – ginesthe etoimoi – To be prepared. This reinforces the concept that Christ will come at a time when people will least expect him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 1)

Thus the believers of the last days cannot afford to take chances, there is too much at stake. A state of unremitting watchfulness is required of the followers of

Christ, in which they are aware every minute of the seriousness of the situation, one fact always standing out in their minds and being brought out in their lives: The Son of Man is coming, a stern and implacable Judge upon the unbelievers that left His warning unheeded, a merciful and kind Judge upon the believers that were always ready for His coming. (Kretzmann)

24:45-51 In this parable, the master represents Jesus; the servant in charge of feeding the others stands for Christian leaders; and the other slaves are the rest of the Christians. (TLSB)

24:45 If a master entrusts to one of his slaves, during his absence, the care of the entire household, the supervision of all the servants, such a slave will show that the trust has not been misplaced by being doubly faithful and judicious at such a time. (Kretzmann)

24:46 He will not become negligent and careless on account of some delay of his lord in returning, but will redouble his efforts every day, in order to be found worthy by the master. Such faithfulness will be rewarded by happiness and blessing upon the lord's return. (Kretzmann)

24:47 The slave will be given still more authority; he will be placed in charge of the entire estate. Even so the disciples of Christ, to whom He has entrusted His means of grace, will be undaunted by the taunts of the world and by the seeming delay of their Lord in returning: they will remain faithful in the discharge of their duties as Christians and not grow lax. (Kretzmann)

Those faithful to Jesus are promised that in heaven they will share with Him in ruling over all things (cf 2 Timothy 2:12; Rev. 22:5). (TLSB)

24:48-49 The wicked servant's monstrous behavior flows from his sense that his master is not returning. This implies that a Christian may slip into bad behavior in part because they begin to doubt or underestimate the importance of Jesus' second coming. (TLSB)

24:48 The opposite side of the picture: the servant that takes advantage of the supposed delay of his master. Frivolously, exultingly, he says in his heart: There is no danger, the master is tardy about coming. (Kretzmann)

24:49 The very remark proves that his work is mere eye-service. And this is borne out by his behavior: playing the tyrant in beating his fellow-slaves, especially such as are anxious to do their duty, indulging to excess in eating and drinking with such as are willing to join him in his debauch. (Kretzmann)

Following the logic of this parable, the evil servant not only associates with outside drunkards but also injures fellow brothers and sisters within the Christian community. (TLSB)

24:50-51 Here the unexpected arrival of the master brings the curse and punishment, an unmerciful thrashing and a condemnation to the lot of the hypocrites, the dungeon with a remorse of weeping and gnashing of teeth. The same doom awaits the false Christians that abuse the trust of their Lord Jesus Christ, delay true repentance, are unmerciful in their dealings with others, join with the children of the world in all the lusts and vices of the flesh, and try to console themselves with the thought: The Day of Judgment is not yet coming. While the Lord rewards the true believers with the fullness of His heavenly blessings and all the riches of the mansions above, the false servants will be doomed to everlasting torment in hell. And not without reason have commentators of all times made special application of this parable to the ministers of the Word, upon whom special responsibilities devolve. The greater the trust placed by God in any man, the more exact will be the reckoning. (Kretzmann)

24:51 This is a jolting conclusion which serves as a sobering reminder to all Christians that Jesus will not only call His disciples to account for their behavior but also severely punish their unfaithfulness. (TLSB)

hypocrites. Those who are finally excluded from the community. (TLSB)

weeping and gnashing of teeth. Describes hell as a place of torment and eternal regret (13:42, 50; 22:13; 25:30). (TLSB)

24:36-51 The suddenness of Christ's second coming, along with His promise that faithfulness will be richly rewarded, moves us to watch eagerly for Jesus. Sadly, many Christians today seem to have lost their expectation of Christ's imminent return. Countless sins and vices follow. Christians who are found faithful when called home will be unbelievably privileged: they will share in Christ's everlasting reign! • Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Come, save us from this dying world, and lead us into Your everlasting kingdom, where we shall reign with You. Amen. (TLSB)