

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Class: *"What Will the End of the World Be Like?"*

II. New Testament Passages

A. Matthew 24 and 25 (*continued*)

Verses 32-35: Jesus uses an example from nature to illustrate His point. Perhaps a fig tree was nearby and convenient for His illustration. The fig tree produced two crops each year. It became proverbial for the passing of the seasons. We have the sense to read the signs of nature around us and know what kind of weather is coming. Thus, as believers in Jesus, we should have the sanctified, Spirit-given, sense to read the signs of the times and realize that Jesus' coming will be soon.

v. 33: NIV "it"; ESV "He" (there is no pronoun or subject of the verb in the Greek original) "all these things"- This refers either to the events leading up to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 or to the deception and distress that Jesus has spoken of in verses 4-28.

v. 34: "generation"- What Jesus means by this word has given rise to much discussion and debate. The word can mean "those living at that time," "the Jewish race of people," "sinful humanity," "believers in Jesus," or "humanity" in general. Obviously the people living at Jesus' time would not be around to witness His second coming at the end of the world. Just as obviously, humanity itself will be around to see it, thus Jesus does not need to state that. Solutions to this include that Jesus means the people of His time will be around to witness the destruction of Jerusalem, or that the Jewish race will continue until the end of the world. "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" (Lutheran Study Bible, page 1637).

v. 35: Jesus provides a contrast between this temporary world and His enduring word. His promise to return will never lose its power.

Verses 36-41: "that day"- This is a way that Old Testament prophets referred to God's end time judgment. "nor the Son"- Jesus in His state of humiliation does not know the time of His return. What may be behind His words is the Jewish custom of weddings. Once legally married, the couple would not live together as husband and wife for a period of 9-12 months. This would give the community the assurance that this wedding was not forced by a pregnancy. It also would provide the groom time to build a suitable house for his wife. A "hot-to-trot" husband may have thrown up a few two-by-fours and said, "come on home, baby, let's get this marriage started!" But the one who made the final call on when the house was ready for a wife was the groom's father. If someone were to ask the groom as he was preparing a house for his bride, when the wedding would take place and he would bring her home, the groom would say, "I don't know, only my father knows."

v. 37: "days of Noah" Genesis 6:5 "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."

The point that Jesus is making is the evil of the people and the suddenness of their destruction despite Noah's preparation.

v. 38: None of the acts that Jesus describes are evil in themselves, but they were being done as part of wicked people's total disregard for God. "When the soul becomes entirely wrapped up in them, so that matters such as these become ends in themselves, and spiritual tasks are neglected, they are no longer a blessing but have become a curse. They have become evidences of gross materialism, false security and often cold selfishness" (Hendrickson, page 870). "Jesus was not implying that it was wrong for them to marry but merely indicating that they rushed toward the future recklessly, heedless of the impending judgment... People will go their happy-go-lucky ways until the day of judgment takes them by surprise, and with dreadful results" (Ridderbos, page 452).

vv. 40-41: "taken"= salvation (gathered by God's angels); "left"= (not behind) condemnation
The distinction between the believers and unbelievers, the righteous and the wicked will separate people otherwise joined in a close, earthly, working relationship.

Verses 42-44: v. 42: **Do what?** _____ **Why?** _____

v. 43: The image that Jesus uses here is that of a thief breaking into a house. Such a person never calls in advance to give a warning or make a reservation.

1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night...but you are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

Revelation 3:3 (Jesus to the church in Sardis) "But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you."

Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

v. 44: **Do what?** _____ **Why?** _____

"Since one does not know when the Son of Man will come, one must always make sure he is ready to meet his Lord. The duty of constant preparedness is sacred logic for all believers. Only fools are careless" (Ridderbos, page 454).

Verses 45-51: Jesus uses a familiar household image (parable) of a master being away from home for some time, leaving the care of people and property in the hands of a chief servant.

Who do the characters represent?

Master = _____; **faithful and wise servant** = _____;

fellow servants = _____; **drunkards** = _____

vv. 48-49: "The wicked servant's monstrous behavior flows from his sense that his master is not returning. This implies that Christians may slip into bad behavior in part because they begin to doubt or underestimate the importance of Jesus' second coming" (Lutheran Study Bible, page 1638). We will act contrary to the faith when we doubt that this faith will be fulfilled.

v. 51: What does Jesus describe here? _____

"Those who await the Lord's return in this manner will be richly rewarded, just like the wise and faithful servant. The master puts this servant in charge of all his possessions, and when He returns Jesus will likewise reward His disciples with great honor and power in the kingdom of heaven" (Ridderbos, page 455).