

the unknown hour

THE BEGINNING OF THE END :THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, PART 10 · MATTHEW 24:36-51 · MAY 1, 2022 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." (Matthew 24:42)

The Unknown Hour of Jesus' Coming (24:36-41)

The nature of Jesus' "coming" (parousia)

The timing is unknown

It will catch people unaware:

- Like in Noah's day
- Like those interrupted in their work

Disciples Keep Watch and Are Ready (24:42-44)

Like a homeowner burglarized didn't know

We do not know

How to live in light of the unknown appearing:

- Keep watch
- Be ready

A Parable About Watchful Readiness (24:45-51)

What sort of servant is faithful and wise?

There is one who does what he has been commissioned to do

There is another who fails in his commission and misuses others

The timing is unknown so be watchful, ready, and faithful

Since there will be an end and Christ will return, how should we live?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are you most looking forward to with the coming of summer?
2. We continue our series, "The Beginning of the End," this week by looking at the second part of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24, giving attention to verses 36-51. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word, and then read that passage aloud.
3. *Background: Most biblical scholars agree there is a shift in Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24 from the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem to his "coming" or "return" (Greek: parousia) at the end of human history. For the purposes of this study, we assume that shift begins in verse 36.*
4. What does Jesus' say about the timing of His coming and who knows it in verses 36-41?
5. Jesus offers two illustrations about the suddenness and unexpected nature of His coming. What are those illustrations?
6. Given this explicit teaching of Jesus, why do you think so many people spend so much time trying to figure out "when" Jesus' will return?
7. In verses 42-44, what does Jesus call His disciples to do in light of the unknown timing of His return?
8. What illustration does Jesus offer in verse 43 to illuminate what He is talking about?
9. What do you think it looks like to be watchful and ready for Jesus' return?
10. The parable in verses 45-51 gives a picture of readiness. How would you say this parable illustrates Jesus' teaching in verse 42-44?
11. What is one thing you learned or sense God is speaking to you through this study of Matthew 24? If you're in a small group, share that with one another. If you are on your own, write it down and share it with someone this week. Conclude your study in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize Matthew 24:42 or 44.
- Consider watching the Bible Project video, "The Day of the Lord": bibleproject.com/explore/video/day-of-the-lord/.
- For further insight into the Parousia, consider reading "The Parousia: Getting our Terms Right" by Walter Riggans in Themelios 21, 1: thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/the-parousia-getting-our-terms-right/.