



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF  
**THE END TIMES?**



MATTHEW 24

## **Sermon Overview**

In Matthew 24:36-51, Jesus contrasts the signs of His return as “birth pains,” and His return as a sudden event, “like a thief in the night.” He likewise calls believers to be faithful servants who are ready for His return.

## PART FOUR

Jesus contrasts between being able to “know” that the signs of His approach are labor pains, and the fact that no one knows exactly when He will return. Because we know His return is certain, but do not know when it is, we must always keep watch and be ready.

*<sup>36</sup> “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

*<sup>37</sup> As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*

*<sup>38</sup> 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;*

*<sup>39</sup> 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.*

*<sup>40</sup> Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.*

*<sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.*

*<sup>42</sup> “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*

*<sup>43</sup> 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.*

### **MATTHEW 24:36-51**

Jesus gives us three illustrations emphasizing the suddenness of His return: the days of Noah, the separation of believers and non-believers, and a thief coming in the night.

## **DAYS OF NOAH**

In the days of Noah there was an increase in population, bringing an increase in moral decadence. Likewise there was an increase in knowledge, contributing to wickedness and self-indulgence. Noah worked for 120 years building the ark, inviting all to come in and be saved. He was mocked until God shut the doors of the Ark, at which point it was too late.

In the same way, the time of salvation is now. When Christ returns, it will be too late.

## **BELIEVERS AND NON-BELIEVERS**

Nobody in all of Scripture speaks more about Hell than Jesus. Jesus teaches clearly against universalism, or the idea that everyone will go to Heaven. He makes it clear that there will be a sudden separation between believers and non-believers. The believers in the true Gospel will go to Heaven, the unbelievers will go to Hell. Being close to a believer is not enough to save, it is an individual act of the will.

## **THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT**

In the Middle East, theft is most often done at night, and quietly. Jesus likens His return to a thief in the night, an image echoed elsewhere in 2 Peter, and 1 Thessalonians. The thief comes to steal that which is most valuable. In this case: your soul. Those who have entrusted Jesus with their souls can rest easy, and the birth pains are motivations to live more for Christ.

## **TWO SERVANTS**

Jesus finished by contrasting between two servants, the faithful and unfaithful. The faithful servant is ready for the master's return, and faithfully serving and giving in the meantime. They are busy spiritually feeding each other the Word of God. The unfaithful servant is busy feeding themselves—attacking and criticizing others.

Christians should live like the faithful servant, being watchful and prepared for Christ's return.