



NG Study Guide: Matt. 24:15-31 “The King’s Judgment” [6.25.17]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. **Leader note:** Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.

The Study

“Let not your hearts be troubled ...” Jesus offers these words of comfort, because our hearts are troubled. Life in this fallen world is overwhelming, and without Jesus physically present it seems more difficult. The last nine months have been a challenging season for me in ministry. And I know that many of us have experienced circumstances that cause us to worry, or be discouraged. Why should we not lose heart? Jesus said, because He has gone to prepare a place for us, and will return so that we can be with Him forever [Jn. 14:1-3].

Q1. What are some of the difficult struggles that you are dealing with in this season of life?

A. The Great Tribulation [15-28]

Jesus and His disciple are at the Mount of Olives days before the cross. The disciples ask, when will the temple be destroyed, what will be the sign of your return and the end of the age [i.e. When will you reign] [24:3]? Jesus’ Olivet Discourse records His answers [Matt. 24-25].

We need a righteous king to establish true justice, peace, righteousness, and love ...

The “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel [15] [Dan. 9:24-27] refers to sin so grievous that God will bring strong and swift judgment. In Daniel 9 there is a seven-year peace treaty between Israel and its enemies brokered by the Antichrist [AC]. The treaty will allow Israel to rebuild its Temple and the AC will be hailed as a great man of peace. This is the start of the Great Tribulation (the last seven years of this age where God brings His Judgment) [Dan.9:24-27, Ezek.42:20]. At the 3.5-year mark (Mid-Trib.) the AC forbids sacrifices and worship of God at the temple, and enters the Holy of Holies and demands to be worshiped as God [2Th. 2:3-4, Rev. 13]. This is *the abomination*. God’s people are to *understand* [15]: pay attention, and be prepared. Dan 12:1 describes this as the time of trouble as never before or since; and Jer. 30:7 calls it the “Time of Jacob’s Trouble.” Jesus referred to it as great tribulation [21]. Those in Judea, the southern portion of Israel, are to flee hastily. In Israel, people gather on flat roofs with a low wall and outside staircase. No time to go inside to grab stuff if you were on the roof or in the field [17-18]. This warning would apply to the siege of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple [AD 66-70, Lu.21:20]. During the siege, many Christians escaped to the mountains per Jesus’ warning. And the warning relates to the Great Tribulation. During the first 3.5 years, there is peace and the temple will be rebuilt, but when the AC commands to be worshiped God’s people must escape quickly. The exhortation to pray that you would not need to flee on Sabbath [20] would be an issue for Jews rather than the Church. But in Israel public transportation on Sabbath is very limited. An observant Jew would not walk more than a 1000 yards on the Sabbath, because of the rabbinical interpretation that walking a greater

distance constitutes “work” in violation of the Sabbath. Jesus called this a time of tribulation greater than any other in human history [21]. When we consider the atrocities of wars, genocide, famines, and diseases through the ages it is difficult to imagine how horrific God’s judgment of evil will be in the Great Tribulation. Unless the duration was limited (e.g. 3.5 years) nothing would survive [22]. Per Zechariah 13:8-9 only one-third of humanity survives. But because of God’s promise to save the elect they days are limited [22]. Here, the promise is likely referring to surviving Jews (and Gentiles) that will receive Christ during the Great Tribulation [Zech. 13-14, Is. 45:4, Rom. 11:28]. Don’t be deceived by false signs or false prophets or [2Th. 2:8-10, Rev.13:11-15] that declare that Christ has come privately [23-26]. An example includes the Jehovah’s Witnesses that declare that Jesus came privately to them in 1921. Jesus’ return will be very public, visible, and obvious to all, like lightning flashing across the sky [27]. The term translated “coming” is the Greek term *Parousia* that speaks of the power and authority of the king. Just like a gathering of vultures shows that there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate the end is near [28].

I thank God for Jesus’ First Coming, because through His sacrifice for my sin and His resurrection, I can experience forgiveness of my sin against God, and the hope of eternity with God. In a certain sense that would be good enough. But in another sense, it isn’t good enough. We need a righteous King. And before the end of this age, we will need one even more. When Christ returns, He will vanquish evil and rebellion against God. He will establish His reign on earth and usher in *true* justice, peace, righteousness and love [Rev. 20:1-6]. Those who are His will receive resurrected bodies perfectly suited to spend eternity with Him. They’ll be no more disease, decay, or death and, we will be free from temptation to sin.

Q2. How does the hope of Christ’s return provide comfort and encouragement to you in this season of your life?

B. The Second Coming [29-31] We need to be delivered from this world and be delivered to His.

Darkness [29] is a symbol of Judgment [Amos 8:9, Rev. 6:12]. Then the glorious light of Christ’s glory and power will be manifest and Christ will appear [30, Rev.19:11]. The clouds [30] are a reference to the manifest presence of God. There is the great sound of a trumpet that signals the angels to gather His elect from the four winds or four compass points [31]. The trumpet is blown to signal the gathering of God’s people [Zech. 9:14-15]. These “elect” are presumed to be those who came to faith in Christ during the Great Tribulation [Tribulation Saints] and are alive at His return. As we believe the Church is raptured prior to God’s judgment and thus delivered from His wrath [1Th.4:13-18, 5:9].

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen [Rev. 1:7].

There is comfort in knowing that He will come as promised and will deliver those who are His. And that He will make things right. And best of all that I will be with Him in Paradise. What makes heaven “heavenly” is Jesus’ presence with no sin to obstruct or obscure. And in my greatest struggles, Jesus (and the promise of His Coming) is my greatest hope and comfort. Not only will I be delivered from this world but I will be delivered to His.

Q3. Try to imagine a world with true love, justice, righteousness and peace. A world where Christ rules without any corruption of any sort. How does it make you feel?

C. What shall we do until His return?

1. Believe and receive Jesus [Jn. 14:1-6]

2. Be encouraged [Titus 2:13] Let not our hearts be troubled, but be encouraged by the hope of Him. *“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” [Titus 2:13]*

3. Be ready [1 Jn. 3:2-3] We want to be prepared by living our lives as set-apart for Jesus *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” [1Jn. 3:2-3].*

Q4. In light of Christ’s return what changes do you want to make to be better prepared?

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Visit nextdoor.com. It is a private social media site that connects neighbors who live near a local community park. It is a good tool to get to interact with your neighbors.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don’t force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn’t enough time to answer them all.
- 3. Feel free to use an icebreaker question or activity** to get to know one another better.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don’t hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.