

Sermon Series: The Hard Sayings of Jesus
Sermon Title: When God Becomes the Thief
Sermon Text: Matthew 23:37-24:51

When will the end come? That is the million-dollar question! Many have made their predictions and all of them have been proven incorrect!

We shouldn't be surprised that those who have declared it in the past have been wrong, & that no one in the future will ever be proven correct either!

Because Jesus said, ***"concerning that day & hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."*** – Matthew 24:36

It will be like the days of Noah – ***"they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."*** – vs. 39

vs. 40-41 - ***"Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken & the other left."***

"But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into... Therefore you must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect!" – vs. 43-44

What more needs to be said about when Jesus' 2nd coming will be than this? But Jesus seems to say more in this private conversation with His disciples!

What He shares here comes as a response to questions they specifically ask Him about a controversial statement He made earlier about the temple.

That statement was, ***"Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."*** – vs. 2

What must've been going through their minds after a statement like that?

Their questions give us a hint into what they thought it meant. ***"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?"*** They tied 3 questions together, but should they be??

A careful reading of the text (Jesus' response), reveals several different, & possibly separate, things Jesus could have meant by His statement.

Jesus may be saying that there are 3 different answers, representing 3 different events, all wrapped up in this question(s) that they posed to Him!

- Jesus could have been talking about the end of the Old Testament age & the movement from what was old, to what is now new in His 1st coming. This change was about to happen with His next visit to Jerusalem!

"See your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'" – Matthew 23:38-39 Also consider **John 2:19**

- He also could have been referring to the actual physical destruction of the temple in Jerusalem that would take place in 70 AD.

Verses 4-21 – might be simply a description of what God's people will endure leading up to the destruction that came in that 1st century AD.

"Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." - Matthew 24:34

- Jesus could have also been hinting at His second coming without knowing, and disclosing, all the details.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man... and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." - vs. 29-30 How could this be applied to any other event?

Exactly what Jesus is trying to say to His disciples, and what His answers actually pertain to, are above my paygrade. But I'm not sure that this is what Jesus really wants His disciples, and us, to be concerned about here!

Maybe the point is not about the "when", "where", and "how" of these events, but about "who" will be saved, and "what" God's people will be found doing when these days come!

Remember the Noah analogy... Also consider what follows these verses:

- The parable of the "10 virgins"
- The parable of the "Talents"
- The distinction, & separation, of the sheep/goats at the final judgment.

Could it be that Jesus is simply redirecting the questions of the disciples to what is of greater importance? Are we ever asking the wrong questions?

Could it also be that since Jesus Himself didn't know the day and the hour, that it's not as important for us to know as we think it is?

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