

THE REJECTED KING

From Rejection to Glorification

Matthew 24

INTRODUCTION: As we have journeyed through Matthew, whether you have read a chapter a day with us or whether you have just focused on the portion of Matthew I have preached from the past four Sundays, we have seen two pictures of Jesus.

1. **Matthew has presented Jesus as the King**, ... the King of the Jews but more than that – the King of all mankind, the King of the earth, the King of Kings.
2. **But Matthew has also shown us that Jesus was a King rejected by many.** It is fair to say that He was a king rejected by most.
 - Rejected by Herod the Great who himself wanted the position and power of being King of the Jews.
 - Rejected by many would-be disciples because Jesus showed them the cost of following Him.
 - Rejected by King Herod's son named Antipas because he wanted to live his life pursuing pleasure in all the wrong ways.
 - Last week we even saw Peter, Jesus' closest earthly friend, reject Jesus' plan for the salvation of the world. Thankfully, we also got to see Peter's repentance and faith, but not so for any of the others.

But folks, the thing about Jesus is that rejection did not set Him back.

- Jesus did not need nor desire to win a popularity contest.
- He had no need to build consensus in a group.
- He was perfectly able and perfectly willing to stand alone.
- Rejection did not cause the Lord to question His purpose – He came to seek and to save those who are lost.
- **Rejection** by few or by many **did not deter Him in His purpose or mission**. He came to this earth as the King born to die. He would give His life as a ransom for many.

There was only one impact that rejection made upon Jesus. It saddened Him.

- It did not slow Him down.
- It did not change what He did.
- **But the rejection by people made Jesus sad because of what was going to happen to those who rejected Him.**

You see, Jesus told people that this present age of sin and unrighteousness would come to an end. God would set things right. A new age of justice and righteousness would be ushered in to last for all eternity.

Jesus called this “the end of the age.” Do you remember when Jesus told His disciples not to try to destroy the followers of Satan right now because sometimes we are not discerning enough to tell the difference between the righteous and the unrighteous?

Jesus said, Matthew 13:49–50 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

In Matthew 24, where we find our text today, Jesus speaks more extensively about this end of the age than at any other point in His ministry. He tells us three things. And my friend if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you are going to see these things happen!

I. JESUS IS COMING BACK IN GREAT GLORY!

Matthew 24:29–30 29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

- A. **Jesus warned that right before He returns there is going to be a period of tribulation that encompasses the whole earth.** The prophet Daniel told us that God set the stopwatch on this period at seven years. The whole seven years will be horrible, with great portions of the population dying from famine, disease, and God-sent disasters.
- B. But both Daniel and Jesus said that in the middle of this terrible seven years, everything will get worse – orders of magnitude worse! Jesus described it in this same chapter.

Matthew 24:21 For then **there will be great tribulation**, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The Bible tells us that during that time of Great Tribulation

- The devil, Satan, that serpent of old, will no longer be allowed to even make intermittent visits to heaven to accuse believers of their sin, but he will be cast down to earth with all his demonic followers.
- He will possess a man whose heart is so utterly wicked and whose disposition is so totally set against God Almighty that he is called in Scripture the antichrist. The devil will control and empower this man who personifies evil, and who will do his wicked worst to oppose the things of God and be a plague and a curse to the people of God, both Christians and Jews.
- In addition, demons who have been imprisoned in the abyss since they sinned grievously in the days of Noah before the flood, will be released upon the earth to inflict such pain upon people they attack that the people will desire to die, but not be able to commit suicide. Perhaps the sting of these demonic creatures will immobilize their victims so that they must simply lie down for five months in excruciating pain.

- There will be seasons during that three and one half years when the sun begins to burn with greater intensity, scorching people and setting random fires. The heat is so great that people blaspheme God. When God does turn down the power of the sun, He will bring it for a time all the way to darkness, and unimaginable cold encompasses the planet to such a degree that it brings with it indescribable pain.

My friend, some of you think that I speak of fantasy or with imaginative exaggeration. But you would not think that is you knew the Bible. If you knew God's Word

- like some of you know players and stats of your favorite team,
- or the actors and plots of your favorite movies or TV shows, ...

Or if some of you teens knew this book like you know some of those games in which you invest untold hours of your life, ...

you would know that what I am telling you is straight out of Holy Scripture, and I have not dared to embellish it at all.

In fact, you would also know that I have not told the half of it.

If I were to inform you of every plague, disaster, tragedy, catastrophe, sorrow, and grief that the Bible says will occur during those seven years of tribulation, I would need three to four times the length of time I am going to take for this entire sermon.

No wonder, Jesus said that there has never been anything like this to happen in the history of the earth before this time of tribulation begins.

But, my friend, I have told you all of this bad about the tribulation Jesus said is coming to tell you the good, the wonderful, the marvelous news that

Matthew 24:29–30 29 **Immediately after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

God allowed the apostle John to see a vision of Jesus coming back from heaven to this earth in power and great glory. He said,

- King Jesus would descend from heaven on a great white horse. For all of you animal lovers, that means horses in heaven, and they can fly!
- And all the believers from across the ages who have died and gone to heaven will come back following the King, and they will be riding white heavenly, flying horses.
- The King of Kings and Lord of Lords will not come in the humble flesh which adorned Him while He lived upon this earth, but in His glorified resurrection body that glows with the brilliant light of the glory of God.
- The saints following Him will be in their resurrection bodies as well, and no one will have any fear as they descend for battle against the antichrist and the armies of the earth that have followed him to their doom.

- In fact, the saints will not even have to lift a sword or pull a trigger in battle, for the Everlasting Son of God will speak a word from His mouth and it will go forth with such power that like the most powerful laser you can imagine will cut the soldiers in half who have gathered against the Lord of Glory, coming back to claim the world He created.
- And in what may be the shortest battle in all of history, the army gathered to fight against the returning Messiah will be slain, the antichrist who so plagued the world during the years of tribulation, accompanied by his assistant the false prophet, will be captured and thrown alive into the Lake of fire, burning with brimstone.
- And then the devil, called the dragon and Satan, will be bound with a chain forged in heaven and cast into the abyss in the center of the earth and locked within its fiery walls for a thousand years.
- And the King, the King of Kings, once rejected, now glorified, will take His throne!
- And all of those people who had put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Those from Old Testament days who trusted by faith in the coming Messiah
 - Those who went against the conventional wisdom of the day when Jesus walked upon the earth and believed in Him as Lord and Savior
 - Those who after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended back into heaven, put their faith in the resurrected Christ and continued to live for Him
 - Those across the years like us, who never got to see Jesus with their eyes, but who believed the testimony of the Word of God and responded to the conviction of the Holy Spirit as He spoke to our hearts and declared Jesus to be the Lord, Master, and Savior of our lives
 - And those who during those terrible years of tribulation repented of their sins and trusted in Christ and then paid for their commitment as martyrs at the hands of the antichrist and his henchmen ...

All of them will be there around the throne, having been given their assignments to rule and reign with Christ over His kingdom on earth for the next thousand years, and after that for eternity. And on that day, every living thing will exalt the Christ, the Son of Man, the Son of God, who has come back to the earth in great glory.

The words of the prophet Zechariah shall be fulfilled

Zechariah 14:8–9 8 And in that day it shall be— *That* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, ... 9 And **the LORD shall be King over all the earth**. ...

JESUS IS COMING BACK IN GREAT GLORY!

The second thing Jesus told us in Matthew 24

II. YOU WILL KNOW THE END OF THE AGE IS APPROACHING WHEN YOU SEE THIS SIGN!

What is the sign?

Matthew 24:32–34 32 “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near.

33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!

34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

The sign is the sign of the budding fig tree.

A. What does the budding fig tree mean?

- **Every place that the fig tree is used figuratively in Scripture, it always pictures Israel.**
- Israel ceased to be a nation in 70 A.D. when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.
- But the prophets foretold the re-establishment of the nation.
- The budding of the fig tree refers to the re-establishment of Israel as a nation.
- **This happened May 14, 1948.**
- **Some from the generation alive in 1948 will see the end of the age when Jesus comes back in glory!**
- If some of them see it, many more of us who are younger will still be alive when it happens!

There is a third thing Jesus told us here. Wow! Matthew 24 is a pretty important chapter isn't it?

III. BETWEEN THE BUDDING OF THE FIG TREE (1948) AND THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS, ALL BELIEVERS WILL GO BODILY TO HEAVEN.

Matthew 24:40–41 40 Then two *men* will be in the field: **one will be taken and the other left**. 41 Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: **one will be taken and the other left**.

The Holy Spirit explains this event, which Bible students call the rapture, in greater detail in

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And **the dead in Christ will rise first**. 17 Then **we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Here is what we know:

- Somewhere between May 1948 and Jesus' second coming in glory

- The Lord will come down in the air and call the body of every believer to rise and meet Him in the air.
- When He does, the bodies of every believer since Jesus' resurrection will be transformed into a resurrection, glorified body like Jesus' resurrection body and will come out of the graves, or the sea, or the ashes, and meet Jesus in the air.
- After they are resurrected, all of us believers in Christ, will instantaneously be given our glorified, resurrection bodies; and we will rise to meet Jesus in the air as well.
- We will remain then with Jesus in heaven, living in our resurrection bodies until we return with Him when He comes in glory at the end of the age!

Hallelujah!!! Praise God!!!! Could somebody get excited with me???

It makes me want to sing.

**O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise His name forevermore
For endless days we will sing Your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God**

**He shall return in robes of white
The blazing sun shall pierce the night
And I will rise among the saints
My gaze transfixed on Jesus' face**

**O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise His name forevermore
For endless days we will sing Your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God**

Now don't walk out to go home. We're not finished. I won't be long, but I have to tell you what Jesus said after He told us these three things.

CONCLUSION: He said, "WATCH!" He said, "BE READY!"

Matthew 24:42, 44 42 **Watch therefore**, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ... 44 Therefore **you also be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

A. Why do we need to watch?

Because there could be 120 years between the rebirth of Israel and the rapture and we don't know where in there it will happen. Nearly 70 years has already passed. It could happen any time!

We need to be watching! But most of all, we need to be ready!

B. How can we be ready?

1. Be certain of your salvation. The saved rise to meet the Lord in the air. The lost enter the terrible time of tribulation.

2. Get done now what needs to be done before you are raptured.
 - Be sure every lost person in your family has received your witness.
 - Be sure every friend, every business associate has heard the gospel from you.
3. Be doing what you want to be found doing when Jesus comes.
 - I want to be found a faithful husband and a good father.
 - I want to be found faithful in Christ's church.
 - I want to be found to be a faithful steward of what God has entrusted to me.
 - I want to be a found to be a diligent student of Scripture who rightly handles the Word of Truth.
 - I want to be found to be an Acts 1:8 Christian and pastor.
 - I want to be found to be a servant of the Lord my God.

However it is that you want to be found when Christ appears in the air and calls us to rise to meet Him, you better be doing it, because there will be no time to change when the trumpet sounds and the voice of the archangel calls.