

**Matthew 24:3–14,
30–31, 36–44**

Matthew 24:42

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.” **Matthew 24:42**

BIBLICAL PASSAGE

MEMORY VERSE

It’s happening—war in Iraq, war in Afghanistan, terrorist attacks, fear of wars escalating, fear of possible new wars and more terrorist attacks, rising unrest in the Middle East, nuclear arms developing in troubling nations, global warming, earthquakes and tsunamis, and the list goes on, and on, and Jack Bauer can’t stop them all. Are these signs of the times? Probably—and every generation since Jesus walked the earth has had them. So why do we allow televangelists to get us all worked up by lining up all the events and predicting that the end is near?

Read the passages from Matthew listed above. Jesus mentioned that when we see the above events begin to occur that in fact, these will show the signs of the times. But, He also said that these were “the beginning of birth pains” (v. 8). The truth is, nobody knows exactly when Jesus will come back. Some seem to think that they have it all timed, mapped out, and decoded. But if this is true,

then it defies Jesus’ own words, stating that “. . . only the Father” knows when He will return (v. 36).

Jesus wanted His followers to focus on readiness. He outlined that our purpose was to get the message out. He indicated that when the message had reached “to all nations . . . then the end would come” (v. 14). Our purpose is not in making lame predictions on His return, but to 1) Always be ready because He will come when we do not expect Him; and 2) Fulfill the purpose of going into all the world and making disciples.

This is such an awesome reason to live in this day! We are part of a great missional movement in today’s world. Young people grasp it like never before and respond to God’s call. It is what we are all about as His people—then the end will come.

FAMILY DEVOTION TIME

Connect . . .

First, the family places slips of paper in an envelope that ask things such as: **What do you do to get ready for school each day (from the time your feet hit the floor until you run out the door)? What do you do to get ready for work (from floor to door)? What do you do to get ready to go to church? What do you do to get ready for . . . (you fill in the blank)?** Make sure there is at least one question for each family member. Then, the family passes the envelope around and lets everyone take a question. Family members may trade if the question does not apply to them.

Explore . . .

First, family members share in reading Matthew 24:3–14, 30–31, and 36–44. Then, family members answer *True* or *False* to: **1) In these verses, Jesus emphasized the time in which He would return; 2) Jesus said that the gospel would be preached to all nations and then the end would come; 3) Jesus said that He along with the Father knew when He would return; 4) Jesus emphasized that we needed to be ready over and above knowing when He would return.** (Answers: F, T, F, T) Say: **Jesus wanted His followers to know that readiness was more important than when He would return. Part of being ready involved helping others to get ready by sharing the message.**

Transform . . .

Family members discuss: **How are you getting ready for Christ’s return? How do you maintain readiness? How are you preparing others to be ready for Christ’s return?**

Pray that your family members will ALL be ready for Christ’s return.