

# He's Coming

by Richard E. Bieber

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being ready for the return of Christ, living by the whole gospel, and making sure that the grace we receive shows up in the way we live.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 24:4-40, Romans 13:11, Revelation 22:12

**Topics:** "End Times", "Second Coming"

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## Description

Richard E. Bieber delves into the prophecy of the coming of the Son of man, drawing parallels between the days of Noah and the present age, emphasizing the signs of the end times and the destruction of the Temple as a significant event. He highlights the relevance of Jesus' teachings in Matthew 24 to the current global conflicts and turmoil, stressing the importance of being prepared for the unexpected return of Christ and the end of the age of grace.

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## Transcript

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man."

(Matthew 24:36-39)

The coming of the Son of man.

What is he talking about?

It all began when the disciples pointed out the magnificent Temple buildings.

"Aren't they gorgeous, Lord!"

"Could heaven be any more beautiful than this temple?"

"You see these temple buildings?" says Jesus.

"There's not going to be left one stone upon another  
that will not be thrown down."

They were shocked. How could anything ever happen to this Temple?

How could God let anything happen to this Temple?

"When will this be? What will be the sign of your coming  
and of the end of the age?"

The disciples understood that when this temple falls, it's got to be the beginning  
of the end and Jesus obliged them by teaching them about the end in Matthew 24 and 25.

Less than four decades later it happened.

The Temple was destroyed by the Roman armies.

Was that the beginning of the end?

Twenty centuries have passed and life still goes on.

And yet, if you read Matthew 24 - and then turn on the news,  
if your heart is at all sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit,  
you discover that Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24 is as relevant  
for this hour as when he first spoke the words.

You begin to understand that the destruction of that temple indeed  
marked the beginning of a time of turmoil  
for Jerusalem,

for Israel,

for the world, that continues to this day.

Babylon has long been forgotten.

Rome has lost its luster.

But Jerusalem is right now in the center of a global conflict.

And in the center of Jerusalem's woes is that Temple Mount.

As far as Jesus was concerned,  
the destruction of the Temple was inevitable.  
It had become a temple, not to God, but to mammon.  
That's why he turned over the tables of the money changers and drove  
out the animal merchants. God was on the sidelines.  
Money was on the throne in that temple.  
So the Roman armies came and fulfilled Christ's prophecy and tore  
down the Temple. They weren't nice guys either.  
They were brutal.  
Many people died.  
And all that death and destruction marked the end of a period of order which  
Jerusalem will never see again until the day it says,  
"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."  
But the destruction of the Temple was more than that.  
It was a sign that  
all temples to mammon,  
all temples that ignore the One who comes in the name of the Lord  
are coming down sooner or later.  
And each time one of these temples to mammon comes down,  
it's a reminder that no man,  
no nation,  
no army,  
no terrorist network,  
no financial institution,  
not even Satan is in control of what's happening  
on this earth.  
God is.

Behind all the confusion is the hand of God,

for those who have eyes to see.

"Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginnings of the sufferings." (Matthew 24:4b-8)

The sufferings don't seem so bad so long as they're somewhere else

- Afghanistan
- The Balkans
- the West bank
- Jerusalem.
- Africa

But now our temples to mammon have been hit

as a sign that our sufferings have begun.

And Matthew 24 speaks directly to us  
preparing us for an event we say we believe  
every Sunday in the creed.

But do we?

Do we really expect the Lord Jesus to come back at any time?

It's all so vague and far away.

Now the Bible Prophecy buffs have it down to a science.

They pull out their charts and graphs  
and explain about the Rapture,  
the Tribulation,

the Thousand Year Reign,  
the Great White Throne Judgment.

But Jesus never gave us maps, or graphs, or charts.

All he gave us was a warning,

"Be ready for the Son of man is coming at an hour you  
do not expect."

"Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and the  
other one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill;  
one is taken and one is left." (Matthew 24:40-41)

He's not talking about the Rapture.

He's talking about the angels of God gathering out of his kingdom all causes  
of sin and all evil doers. See Matthew 13.

"Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your  
Lord is coming. But know this, that if the householder  
had known in what part of the night the thief was coming,  
he would have watched and would not have let his house  
be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready; for  
the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Watch out for the Bible Prophecy expert who tells you it can't happen yet  
because the Man of Sin hasn't been revealed. Whenever you see another  
Temple of mammon coming down, take it as a wake up call.

In our mainline churches we don't talk about these things.

We talk about God's grace.

And it's true, we're living in the age of grace.

During this age, anybody who wants to  
can turn over a new leaf and put the past behind.

Right now Jesus' blood avails for all. It will wash away any sin.

Any mean,

ugly,

shameful thing you've done

can be washed away in that blood if you bring it to him.

That blood can dissolve any chain that holds you in bondage.

Right now anybody who comes to this fountain of living water

can drink new life from God.

If you want life come and get it.

But here's the point we're missing:

The age of grace has a time limit.

It comes to an end.

The scary thing about the return of Christ is that at his return, the age of grace

is over. All accounts will be settled.

All wrongs will be righted.

All debts will be paid.

All secrets will be revealed.

That's why he says, "Be ready."

He says it again and again and again.

What's he telling me to do when he says, "Be ready"?

He's telling me to wake up and

stay focused on the things that count

and clear away the clutter.

He's telling me to live as if today is the final day.

Or as Paul puts it:

"Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full

time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is

nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night

is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." (Romans 13:11-14)

In other words...

Make sure that the grace you receive as you eat this bread and drink this wine shows up in the way you live.

Make sure that the forgiveness and peace God pours into your life as you bow in repentance before him, flows out of you as forbearance toward the people who have wronged you.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Make sure that the faith you confess here in the safety of this church doesn't die on your lips as you go out that door.

Make sure you're walking the walk not just thinking about it.

The events of this present hour are urging us to live by the whole gospel, not just part of it.

The whole gospel of Christ has to do with not only the past, not only with the present, but also with the future.

The same Jesus who died on the cross to drain away our guilt and rose on the third day to bring us new life.

The same Christ who floods this room right now with his Spirit

is going to do exactly what he said he would do.

He's coming back.

And when he comes,

nobody will wonder who he is.

Everybody will know.

Even the most hardened atheist.

Even the most arrogant skeptic will suddenly know!

Our job is to walk with him now

in such a way that wherever we happen to be at the hour of his return,

on this side of death or the other,

we may be ready.

"Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every

one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first

and the last, the beginning and the end." (Revelation 22:12-13)

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