



Date: _____

Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Jesus Now Series, Lesson 52

Lesson Title: Last Day—Jesus Returns as Judge

Take Home Point: Jesus will return. Be ready!

Warm-Up:

As I sit in the airport writing this, I need to watch the clock. My flight is scheduled to leave at a certain time, and the airline intends to stick to its schedule. So I know the time and place of my departure, and I am ready. But what would happen if I drove around town, stopped to shop, read the paper, and walked up to the gate a few minutes after the aircraft was gone? Do you think the agent would listen to my excuses or demands? "It was such a nice day to drive around; I thought you would understand that." "What do you mean, you won't turn the aircraft around to get me? I am an important person." "I deserve to be on that airplane." "I didn't think a few minutes would make a difference." "You people are so intolerant. I had important business to conduct." Not likely. Nothing is going to change the fact that I missed the flight. I am not going.

Read: Matthew 24-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Peter 3:7-13

Observation (What happened?):

How is Jesus Christ going to return to earth?

According to Peter, how are we to live in light of the Lord's imminent return?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think conditions will be so terrible just prior to his return?

What did Jesus mean in Matthew 25:29 that those who have will be given more, and that those who don't have will lose what they had?

Insight:

One word really stands out as you read Matthew 24 and 25. The word "will" is used a total of 68 times in the New International Version as Jesus tells his disciples about the future. Our Savior and future Judge didn't say things "might" occur or "could" happen. He didn't give any indication that his words were hyperbole, nor that they were not to be taken literally. Jesus was serious and plain-spoken about what will happen in the times before he returns. There will be calamity, natural disaster, and human tragedy. He will return just as he left, coming to judge the living and the dead. Those who followed him will be rewarded; those who did not, will not. But the point of his words is not the calamity or tragedy or horrible times. All that is background to 24:42 – "keep watch." Since we do not know, live as though this moment is your last. Live for eternity. Because Jesus will return.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What are you doing to be ready for Christ's return? How are you living a holy and godly life?

Pray for the children in your small group to resist the subtle temptations of Satan to live in this world without regard for being ready to meet Jesus at any time.