

BE READY FOR HIS COMING

Matthew 24:36-51

I. BE PREPARED: (vs. 36)

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone (vs. 36)...The Lord's warning emphasizes the need to be prepared...because judgment will come at a time when people least expect it.

Jesus will come when He comes. Everything that Jesus has been talking about has given the disciples "*signs*"... "*birth pains*"...that will signal that His time of return is near.

- The *birth pains* (vs. 4-14).
- The *abomination of desolation* (vs. 15).
- The *need to flee because of the impending dangers* (vs. 16-28).
- The *catastrophic chaos of the universe* (vs. 29).
- And the supreme sign of *His own appearing on the clouds of heaven* (vs. 30).

But even with all these signs...the **day and hour** of Jesus' appearing will not be known...a truth He reiterates several times in this **Olivet Discourse** (Matthew 24:42, 44, 50; Matthew 25:13).

"Although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."
~Philippians 2:6-7

II. BE ALERT: (vs. 37-42)

For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah (vs. 37)...Jesus used the Flood to illustrate the point He was making about **the coming of the Son of Man**...namely, that the attitudes that prevailed during the **days of Noah** will characterize most people living during this time. They *will not be expecting* His coming...and they *will not care* about it.

Godless mankind is willfully blind to God's truth...no matter how compelling that truth may be. Rather than turning to God in *repentance*...they will *curse* Him (**Revelation 9:1-5**).

For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark (vs. 38)...While Noah built the ark, he also *preached* (**II Peter 2:5**)...but the people were just as *unconcerned about his message* as they were *about the ark* that he was *building*. They thought that both were *meaningless* and *absurd*. They went about their daily routine...it was business as usual.

And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be (vs. 39)...Noah worked on the ark and preached for *120 years* without having any impact on anyone outside his immediate family. The people were totally untouched by God's truth...**they did not understand**.

Flood...Gk. *kataklysmos*, means *deluge* or *washing away*. It's the term that we get the words *cataclysm*, *cataclysmic*, *catastrophic* from. Only after it was too late did the people of that generation **understand** their perilous destiny.

So will the coming of the Son of Man be...the same *attitude* and *response* will prevail before Jesus' return. Despite the *signs*, people will neither heed the *warnings* nor the *appeal* from God until the very moment Jesus appears to confront them in righteous judgment.

Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left (vs. 40-41)...This is the same separation of *believers* and *unbelievers* described in **chapter 25** with the separating of the *sheep* and *goats* (**Matthew 25:32-46**)...as well, as the separating of the *wheat* and *tares* (**Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**).

Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming (vs. 42)...

Be alert...Gk. *gregoreite*, is a **present imperative** indicating *a call for continual expectancy*. Even though believers have no cause for dread, they must still **be alert**. Even though they will be *redeemed* and are *secure*...they are still *exhorted* to **be on the alert**.

Peter declared...

"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for

judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly, and keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.”

~II Peter 2:4-9

III. BE READY: (vs. 43-44)

But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into (vs. 43)...

Be sure of this...an **indicative** stating a fact as a reminder. “As everyone knows...” In other words, *you know this...respond accordingly.*

If the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into...No thief would ever announce his intention of robbing a house...and no sane head of the house who knew in advance what time of the night the thief was coming would fail to be on the alert in order to prevent his house from being broken into.

The New Testament frequently compares the second coming to a *thief's* coming (Luke 12:35-40; I Thessalonians 5:2; II Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3; Revelation 16:15). For obvious reasons... that's why Jesus points out that a thief would never try to rob a place where he knows he's expected...and certainly not at the exact time he is expected.

For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will* (vs. 44)...Just as Noah and his family were ready...everyone should be ready for the return of Christ.

Ready...refers primarily to *being saved*...being *spiritually prepared* to meet Christ as **Lord** and **King** rather than as **Judge**.

Just as Jesus has just warned (vs. 37-42), everyone in the end time should be *expectant* and on *alert* for His appearing. And as He is about to mention in the following verses (vs. 45-51)...**faithfulness** to Him by those who are already saved is commanded.

For the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will...The Lord reemphasizes and proclaims emphatically the fact that *no one on earth will know exactly when He is coming*. He will come in total surprise to every human being on earth at that time...believers and unbelievers alike.

IV. BE FAITHFUL: (vs. 45-51)

Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? (vs. 45)...The coming of the Lord will be a test of His servants...who are *true* and *faithful* servants and who are *false* and *evil* servants. As the **master** in Jesus' story entrusted all his possessions to his servant, so God has entrusted the care of all things in this earth to His servants. The response of the servants reveal their *hearts* and *character*...it shows what they *truly believe* about Him.

Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions (vs. 46-47)...Jesus is obviously addressing believers...those who *know* Him as Savior and have *submitted* to Him as Lord...as **master**. The believer who is found faithful to the Lord in what he has been given will be **put in charge of all his possessions**...that which the Lord has entrusted to him.

- *Parable of the talents* (Matthew 25:14-30).
- *Parable of the ten minas* (Luke 19:11-26).

But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards (vs. 48-49)...

Evil slave...represents *unbelievers*.

My master is not coming for a long time...Because they believe the Lord will **not come for a long time**, they will feel free to indulge themselves in whatever sin and pleasure they desire.

The unbeliever doesn't acknowledge that what he has (*abilities, talents, possessions*, etc.), have been entrusted to him by God. But regardless of his acknowledging it or not, he will be held accountable by his Creator for what he has been given...and how it was used. (*Concerning possessions...Luke 12:15-34*).

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you’.”

~Luke 12:20

The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (vs. 50-51)...

Cut in pieces...Gk. *dichotomeo*, means to *cut into two parts*. It's used to describe the *preparation of an animal sacrifice (Exodus 29:17)*. To Jews it would have obviously carried the unmistakable idea of *destruction* and *death...as righteous judgment*.

Assign him a place with the hypocrites...This suggest that these unbelievers weren't **hypocrites**...those who *pretend to be religious*. Just like today, many people in the end times will be open and honest about their unbelief...even wearing such honesty as a badge of *intellectual* and *moral integrity*.

Unfortunately for those individuals...the *honest unbeliever* is just as lost as the **hypocrites** who pretend to have faith. They will all go to the same place.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth...a description of *hell*...a place where there will be *inconsolable grief* and *unremitting torment*.

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- The study points today summarize everything that we should learn from the passage that we have just studied. We are to **be prepared ...be alert...be ready...and be faithful**.
- **Jesus is coming again.** We *celebrate* His first coming...Christmas. We should *anticipate* His second coming.