

## Watch! Be Ready!

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It is precisely because we do not know how long we have remaining to us in this life that we should live it with deliberate care.

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*“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matt. 24:42-44).*



Chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew record the last teaching of Jesus to His disciples prior to the Last Supper. He first foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, which would be preceded by various signs (24:1-33) and would occur within their lifetimes (v. 34). Then He described His second coming (starting with “heaven and earth will pass away,” v. 35), an event that will come without warning to those who are alive to see it. He used two images to illustrate the sudden, unexpected nature of His coming: The flood that came upon Noah’s generation (v. 37-39), and the stealthy strike of the thief who robs a house at night (v. 43).

There is some disagreement among commentators over which segments of these chapters cover which events, but we will not

concern ourselves with that here. Our attention instead is drawn to the practical message that screams from both chapters: Watch! Be ready! Don’t let these events catch you by surprise!

One of Satan’s most effective strategies is to convince us that we have plenty of time to prepare for the end. Yes, I need to straighten up my life and change my ways—but I’m young and want to enjoy life while I can. Yes, I really should devote more of my time and resources to helping others—but first I have so much that I need to do to advance my career and feather my nest. Preparing my life to meet God in judgment can wait a little longer.

And a little longer . . . and a little longer . . . until suddenly the end comes and we are snatched away. We may not live to witness the Second Coming, but death serves the same practical purpose. It’s the absolute end of our time on earth, of our opportunity to do *what we always knew we needed to do*. Like the foolish virgins who delayed in preparing their lamps, then got shut out of the wedding (25:1-13), we will put off doing the more important things until that day when our lives come to a sudden end and we lose everything, including our souls. We were not prepared!

So what does that preparation consist of? Two things: First, we must *set our priorities correctly*. My time and resources in life are limited. I cannot do everything I would like to do, so some things must be left undone. What are the important things that *must* be done and the not-so-important things that can wait? Until we make a serious effort to prioritize the infinite options before us and concentrate on the most important priorities first, we will squander much of our time on trivia, and reach the end with empty hands.

Second, we must *attack life with a sense of urgency*. We do not know the number of days that remain to us in this life—but *we do* know that it’s a frighteningly small number. What do we want to accomplish in that brief window of time that remains to us? The only way it will be accomplished is to get busy and work like there’s no tomorrow. Because there may not be a tomorrow.

My time on earth will come to end someday—but I do not know the day. I must therefore watch and be ready!

— David King