

# Matthew 24:43-51 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

**CLICK VERSE**

**To go directly to that verse**

**See Matthew 24 Commentary all on one page**

[Matthew 24:1 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:2 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:3 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:4 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:5 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:6 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:7 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:8 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:9 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:10 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:11 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:12 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:13 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:14 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:15 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:16 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:17 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:18 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:19 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:20 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:21 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:22 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:23 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:24 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:25 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:26 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:27 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:28 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:29 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:30 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:31 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:32 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:33 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:34 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:35 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:36 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:37 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:38 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:39 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:40 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:41 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:42 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:43 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:44 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:45 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:46 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:47 Commentary](#)  
[Matthew 24:48 Commentary](#)

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

## THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)

Click chart to enlarge

Matthew 24:43 "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.: ekeino de ginokete (2PPAI or 3PPAM) hoti ei edei (3SPLUPERFI) o oikodespotes poia phulake o kleptes erchetai (3SPMI) egregoresen (3SAAI) an kai ouk an eiasen (3SAAI) dioruchthenai (APN) ten oikian autou:

- **Head of the house:** Mt 20:11 Pr 7:19
- **had:** Lu 12:39 1Th 5:2-6 2Pe 3:10,11
- **would not:** Ex 22:2,3)

### JESUS WILL RETURN LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

**KJV** - But **know** this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

In this next section Jesus gives us a **parable** on the importance of readiness at all times.

Compare parallel passage in Luke 12:39-40:

But **be sure** (present imperative = introduces a truth to be treated as both obvious and emphatic) of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the **thief** was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into (they did so often by digging through the walls). You too, **be** (present imperative) ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

**MacArthur** comments - The element of surprise associated with a thief's clandestine arrival fits the point of the unexpectedness of the Lord's return.

Scripture uses the figure of a **thief** in other eschatological passages:

1Thessalonians 5:2-note For you yourselves know full well that the **Day of the Lord will come just like (simile) a thief** in the night.

2Peter 3:10-note But the **Day of the Lord** will come **like (simile) a thief**, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Rev 3:3-note 'So **remember** (present imperative) what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come **like a thief**, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

**Donald Grey Barnhouse** - Coming as a thief always denotes an unexpected coming in judgment because a thief comes to rob and destroy. Christ is never said to come for His church as a thief. "The first phase of the Lord's coming is as a bridegroom and the second phase is as a thief. He does not come upon His bride as a thief and He does not come upon the apostates and unregenerate world as a bridegroom."

**Tony Garland** - Christians are to watch: (1) for Christ; (2) themselves lest they drift; (3) others lest false brethren or teachers pervert what they have received. Here the emphasis is upon watching for Christ (Mt. 24:42; 25:13; Mk 13:33, 35; Mark 13:37; Luke 12:36-40; 21:36; 1Cor. 1:7; 16:13; Php. 3:20; 1Th. 1:10; 5:6;

2Ti. 4:8; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; 2Pe. 3:12; Rev. 3:2-3; Rev. 16:15) ([note](#))

**Robert Thomas** - The city had been captured twice in its history, once in 549 B.C. by Cyrus of Persia and again in 195 B.C. by Antiochus the Great, while its inhabitants were indifferently resting in its supposed impregnability. Would Christians there allow the same to happen to them at the hands of one whom they had made their spiritual opponent? (Robert Thomas - Revelation 1-7. Moody Press).

**Hendricksen** - Common to all these passages is the idea of the suddenness and unexpectedness of the coming, and consequently the danger of unpreparedness on the part of those for whom that parousia has significance. (Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew)

**Be sure (Know this - KJV) (ginosko)** is a command (present imperative) which underlines the importance of what follows. "Be sure to understand what I am about to say" is the idea.

**That (hoti)** introduces a clause telling what should be known.

**Stuart Weber** - Now the head of the house, if he is informed, will be aware of the likelihood of being robbed, just as we know that Jesus is returning and that judgment will accompany his coming. But he does not know the time a robber might come, just as we do not know the time of Christ's return. So you also must be ready (Mt 24:44). (Holman New Testament Commentary)

**William Barclay** - To live without watchfulness invites disaster. A thief does not send a letter saying when he is going to burgle a house; his principal weapon in his nefarious undertakings is surprise; therefore a householder who has valuables in his house must maintain a constant guard. But to get this picture right, we must remember that the watching of the Christian for the coming of Christ is not that of terror-stricken fear and shivering apprehension; it is the watching of eager expectation for the coming of glory and joy. The spirit which leads to disaster is the spirit which says there is plenty of time. It is the comfortable delusion of the servant that he will have plenty of time to put things to rights before his master returns. ([Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Davies and Allison** - The likening of the eschatological end to an unexpected thief is unattested in ancient Jewish sources. (A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew)

THE LORD IS AT HAND. Philippians 4:5.

Therefore—

1. Be diligent, 2Peter 3:14
2. Be prayerful, Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36
3. Be patient, James 5:8
4. Be pure, 1John 3:3
5. Be watchful, Mark 13:36, 37
6. Be hopeful, Luke 21:28; Ro 8:19-23
7. Be ready, Matt. 24:44
8. Be comforted 1Th 4:18

--James Smith - Handfuls on Purpose

**Head of the house (3617)**(**oikodespotes** from **oikos** = a house + **despotes** = master) is the master of the house or the head of the family (householder). Jesus uses **oikodespotes** to refer to **Beelzebul** (related to Hebrew - Ba'al Zebub = "Lord of the Flies") (Mt 10:25). Refers to a landowner (Mt 13:27, 20:1, 11, 21:33). In Mk 14:14 Jesus refers to "the **owner of the house**" when He had sent His disciples out to secure the upper room for His last Passover (Mk 14:14, Lk 22:11).

**Liddell-Scott-Jones** - master or steward of a house, native ruler, opposed to a foreign emperor; Astrology - of a planet, owner of a domicile or otherwise predominant,

**Oikodespotes** (not in Septuagint) - 12x/12v - Matt. 10:25; 13:27, 52; 20:1, 11; 21:33; 24:43; Mk. 14:14; Lk. 12:39; 13:25; 14:21; 22:11. NAS Usage = head of a household(1), head of the house(4), head of the household(1), landowner(4), owner(1), owner of the house(1).

**At what time** (KJV = "in what watch") - A "night watch" was a period of several hours when somebody stood guard or in other words (in this context) "stayed awake." A thief comes at a time (or in the night watch) when he is least expected and the occupant is the

least alert.

**Time** (watch) (5438)([phulake](#)) "is used (a) with the meaning "a watch," actively, "a guarding," Luke 2:8, lit., "(keeping, **phulasso**) **watches**;" (b) of "the time during which guard was kept by night, a watch of the night," Mt 14:25; 24:43; Mk 6:48; Lk 12:38 Note: Among the Jews the night was divided into three "**watches**" (see, e.g., Ex 14:24; Jdg 7:19), and this continued on through Roman times. The Romans divided the night into four "**watches**;" this was recognized among the Jews (see Mk 13:35)." ([Vine](#))

**Watch** ([phulake](#)) = An ancient division of time (Ps 90:4; Ps 119:148; Lam 2:19; Mt 14:25). According to the later Jewish system, the night was divided into three watches (evening, midnight, and morning). The Greco-Roman system added a fourth (cockcrow) between midnight and morning (Mk 13:35). The fourth watch (Mt 14:25; Mk 6:48) designates the time just before dawn. ([Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

**Hendricksen** on **watch** - The fourth watch is from 3 to 6 A.M. (the first being from 6 to 9 P.M., the second from 9 P.M. to 12 midnight, and the third from midnight until 3 A.M.). (Ibid)

**Thief** (2812)([kleptes](#) from [klepto](#) = steal; English = kleptomaniac) is a stealer or thief who acts with stealth or subterfuge. In this illustration Jesus is like a thief only in the sense that His coming will be unexpected.

**J R Miller** on **thief** - Thieves do not send a notification of the hour when they will break into the house; they make their coming as stealthy as possible. They come when they will be the least expected and when the master of the house is least likely to be watching. If one would be prepared against them when they come—he must always be prepared. Christ will come as a thief in the night. That means that His coming will be without warning, without any token to indicate His approach. All efforts of wise men to compute the time and settle upon a year or a day when He will come—are useless, for Jesus Himself said, "Of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven!" (Devotional Hours with the Bible)

**Was coming** (2064) ([erchomai](#)) in the **present tense** depicts the thief as in the process of coming. Recall that [erchomai](#) is used repeatedly by Jesus in Matthew 24-25 to describe His Second Coming - Mt 24:30, Mt 24:42, Mt 24:44, cp Mt 24:46 = when the "master" (a picture of the Master, Jesus) "when he comes", Mt 25:31. **Parousia** is used 4x in Mt 24:3, 27, 37, 39.

The New Testament frequently compares the **Second Coming** to a **thief's** coming (Lk 12:35-40; 1Th 5:2; 2Pe 3:10; Rev 3:3; Rev 16:15), for the obvious reason that, as Jesus here points out, a **thief** never tries to rob a place where he knows he is expected, and certainly not at the exact time he is expected.

**He would have been on the alert** - He would have known the watch and would have been especially vigilant. But Jesus has made it clear that we cannot know **the day or the hour**, so continual vigilance is necessary. **Are you waiting and watching for His return today?** The newly born again pagan believers at Thessalonica were alert, waiting "for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come." (1Thes 1:10).

**William MacDonald** - A servant manifests his true character by how he behaves in view of his Master's return. (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**Would have been on the alert** (1127)([gregoreuo](#)) means he would have been watchful, even refraining from physical sleep. Jesus is warning against a spiritual somnolence that can creep in and cause the loss of a Spirit enable vigilance and sense of readiness.

**He would have been on the alert** (1127)([gregoreuo](#) from [egeiro](#) = to arise, arouse) means to be watchful or to refrain from physical sleep. Later [gregoreuo](#) came to be used in the moral sphere to call for one to be on the alert, vigilant and alertly watchful to avoid spiritual danger. **Gregoreuo** is used three times in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew (Mt 24:42, 43, 25:13) and three times in the version in Mark (Mk 13:34, 35, 37).

**Constable** - The point of this parable is that if a homeowner knows the general time when a thief will break in he will prepare accordingly. The signs of the times during the Tribulation that Jesus revealed (vv. 5-22) will enable believers to know the general time He will return. Consequently believers in the Tribulation should prepare themselves.

**Allowed** (1439)([eao](#)) means to let be, to permit, to allow, to let, not to hinder (Mt 24:43 Lk 4:41 Acts 14:16 Acts 27:32 Acts 28:4 1Co10:13)

**Robertson** on **broken into** - Dug through the tile roof or under the floor (dirt in the poorer houses). (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**Broken into** (1358)([diorhusso](#) from [dia](#) = through + [orusso](#) = to dig) speaks of a thief who gains entrance into a house by digging through a wall and thus breaks in or through (Mt 6:19, Mt 6:20, Mt 24:43, Lk 12:39 = all the uses in the NT). There are 4 uses in the Septuagint - Job 24:16 (describing an adulterer in Job 24:25 "in the dark they dig into houses"), Ezek 12:5, 7, 12 where it means to

literally dig a hole through a wall.

**Liddell-Scott-Jones** on diorhusso - dig through, having dug a trench across or along, metaphorically to undermine or ruin (Eccl 5:6). To worm out. To be shut up in a funeral vault.

**Moulton-Milligan** note the exact phrase as used in the Gospels is found in a secular Greek writing - ";because he broke into a house."

**Jesus may come at any time,  
so we must be ready all the time.**

**Phil Newton on thieves in the night** - Thieves are not accustomed to announcing the place, date, and time of their next heist! They operate by stealth, catching homeowners off guard, breaking in when least expected. It is rather curious that Jesus used such an illustration to help us think about His return. Several of the New Testament writers follow His lead and do the same (1Th 5:2 2Pe 3:10). If you knew that a thief had plans to rob your home at 1:00 AM on Tuesday, you would be ready: phone in hand, lights on, wide-eyed, pacing quietly from window to door, peaking through the blinds, listening to the sound of crunching leaves or breaking twigs near your house. But since you do not know if or when a thief might break in, you still make preparations. You keep your windows and doors locked. You add security measures to the perimeter of your home. You quickly check out any noisy disturbances during the night. You and I do this even though we may never be broken into by thieves. We prepare, just in case of a break-in. Jesus is telling us to prepare for something that is certain. He will return. We do not know the time or day. We cannot pinpoint a spot on a prophetic calendar to give us ease of mind about when He comes. He calls for us to be ready to meet Him at any time. "Be ready," because we do not know when Christ comes, and we do not want Him to return and find us unprepared. **Are you prepared to meet Jesus Christ? Do you regularly cultivate your spiritual life so that you are sensitive to anything that might dull you or weaken your passion for Christ? Since we do not know the day of Christ's return, then we must treat everyday as if this might be the day. What changes do you need to make in your spiritual life to live with that kind of mind?** Let us take action, for behold, He comes! ([Mt 24:36-44 When Will Christ Return?](#)) ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Alfred Plummer** - There are matters in which it suffices to watch by day; at night one may sleep. But the man whose house has been broken into and plundered in the night has to abandon that doctrine, and so must the Christian: comp. 1Th 5:4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3, 16:15. ([An exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew](#))

**Matthew 24:44** "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*. : dia touto kai humeis ginesthe (3PPMM) hetoimoi hoti e ou dokeite (2PPAI) hora o huios tou anthropou erchetai (3SPMI):

- Mt 25:10,13 Lu 12:40 Php 4:5 Jas 5:9 Rev 19:7

## **READY FOR OUR REDEEMER'S RETURN**

**For this reason** (on account of this) (dia touto) - On account of the fact of the uncertainty of the time of the return and the certainty of being caught unprepared if you do not stay on the alert.

**Must be** (1093)(**ginomai**) means to become, and in this context to become ready. Note that the verb **be** is in the **present imperative** which calls for continual attitude, something which is only possible as we continually depend on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit! Don't just grit your teeth and say "I'm going to stay ready!" You don't just need a little "help" or a little push to to speak. You need the Spirit to initiate in your heart a desire and give you the power to carry out the desire (cp Php 2:13-note). **Be** is in the **middle voice**, which is reflexive and indicates the subject initiates the action (enabled by the Spirit) and participates in the effects or results of the action.

Jesus gave a similar command in Luke 12:40 - You too, **be** (**present imperative**) ready (**hetoimos**); for (term of explanation = explains "Why?") the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

**John MacArthur** - The only way to avoid spiritual loss is to be ready at all times for Christ's return.

The best way to be ready is to **be born again!** Jesus declares...

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it

(Speaking of our spiritual death with Christ - Ro 6:2-11-note). For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed **when He comes in His glory**, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. (Lk 9:23-26, cp 2Ti 2:12,13-note)

In Matthew 25:13 Jesus warned "**Be on the alert** (gregoreuo in the **present imperative**) then, for you do not know the day nor the hour."

**Spurgeon** - Perhaps you can imagine how eagerly the householder watches when he expects thieves. Every little sound alarms him. He thinks he hears someone at the door; then he fancies it is someone at the window; but he is on the alert, with eye and ear and his whole being wide awake. So ought we to be, with regard to the coming of the Lord, as watchful as if we knew that Christ would come tonight; we do not know that he will come so soon, yet it may be so, "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

**Henry Morris** comments that "We are frequently urged to be ready always for the Lord's return. If we could predict the date of His coming, or if we knew certain other events must transpire first, then such continual readiness would be unnecessary (Hebrews 9:28; 1John 2:28)." And I would add in the intervening time we might tend to become spiritually lazy.

**J R Miller on ready** - What is it to be ready for the coming of Christ? For one thing, it is to be at peace with God, reconciled to Him, saved. In a sense, death is a coming of Christ to individuals, for it ends their probation and ushers them into the presence of God. What is it to be prepared for death? No one is prepared, who has not accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, finding forgiveness of sins and new life and love in Him. Nothing could be more terrible than the sudden coming of death to one whose sins are not forgiven, and who is thus unprepared to meet his God. But forgiveness is not the only thing in preparation for death. One's work should be **well done**. There is a story of man who had wasted his life and who at last, near the end, found peace in believing. A friend said to him, "Are you afraid to die?" He answered, "No, I am not *afraid* to die; but I am *ashamed* to die." He meant that while his salvation was assured in Christ, he was ashamed to go home, having wasted all his years and having done nothing for the honor of his Master. **We should do our best possible work every day—that we should never be ashamed to have Christ come** (Ibid)

**Rob Morgan** - Military experts work day and night to keep America's armed forces at a high state of readiness. How about you? Are you living in the State of Readiness? Sixteen times in the Bible we find the phrase, Be ready. It first occurs in Exodus 19, when the children of Israel were to "be ready" for the Lord's descent onto Mount Sinai... If the Boy Scout motto is "**Be Prepared**," the Christian's motto is "**Be Ready**." We can never take a break from our Christianity nor relax our spiritual vigilance. Be ready to share, to give, to preach, to work. Most of all, be ready for Christ's return. It might be today! (Nelson's Annual Preacher's Sourcebook - 2007)

**W H Griffith Thomas** summarizes "the sevenfold readiness depicted in the New Testament:

Ready to preach (Ro 1:15).

Ready to give an answer (1Pe 3:15).

Ready to distribute (1Ti 6:18).

Ready to every good work (Titus 3:1).

Ready to be offered (2Ti 4:6).

Ready to die (Acts 7:59).

Ready for the coming (Mt 24:44).

And it is all summed up in—

Readiness of mind (Acts 17:11).

Readiness of will (2Co 7:11).

-- The Christian Life and How to Live It

**BE READY - Vance Havner** - Be ye also ready... Matthew 24:44.

Not only ready for His coming or ready to die but **ready for anything—ready** to give an answer for the hope within us (1Peter 3:15), **ready** to preach the Gospel (Romans 1:15). The Christian should live in a state of constant readiness to live or die, to spend or be spent. **Ready** to die and therefore **ready** to live. **Ready** to live and therefore **ready** to die. Paul had only two days on his calendar, "*Today*" and "*That day*." The Christian who is right and rich and radiant is **ready**, come what may! (**Ed**: Indeed, come

Lord Jesus!)... The New Testament Christians were not only **ready**, they were expectant, hilariously anticipating the Lord's return. And we are bidden not only to prepare but to look for our Lord. (All the Days)

### Ready

Ready to speak, ready to warn,  
Ready o'er souls to yearn,  
Ready in life, ready in death,  
Ready for His return.

Ready to go, ready to stay,  
Ready my place to fill,  
Ready for service, lowly or great,  
Ready to do His will.  
—Charles Tillman (1903)

**Ready** (prepared) ([2092](#))(**hetoimos** from **heteos** = fitness) means to be prepared, ready. In secular Greek "The clear meaning of this word group is preparation both in the active sense of 'making ready' and in the passive sense of 'readiness', 'ability' or 'resolution'" (TDNT).

**It is useless to set the day and hour for Christ's coming.  
It is folly to neglect it.**

- A T Robertson

**For** (gar) is a **term of explanation** explaining why we must continually be in a state of preparedness. Why? Jesus is coming when we do not expect! "It is because they do not know the time of the return that they must live in a state of constant preparedness." (Leon Morris - The Gospel according to Matthew)

**Adrian Rogers** once said "Jesus Christ is coming this afternoon, perhaps. You say, "I don't think He is coming this afternoon." You don't? Well, good, that's the best sign that He might, "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 24:44). Do you get the point? I mean, to be honest, I really don't expect Him this afternoon, either—I mean to be very, very honest. But, you see, that is what our Lord is saying: "In such a time as you think He's not coming, that's when He's coming"—a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And, we are to be living in anticipation of the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are to be looking, looking, looking for His coming... Look for His coming... Labor for His coming... Live for His Coming." (How to Stay Together When the World Comes Apart)

Jesus gives 4 admonitions in the Olivet Discourse regarding the fact that the time of His coming cannot be known: (1) Mt 24:36 = of that day and hour no one knows; (2) Mt 24:42 = "**you do not know** which day your Lord is coming." (3) Mt 24:44 = "the Son of Man is coming at an hour you **do not expect**." (4) Mt 25:13 " you **do not know** the day nor the hour." Date setting is absolutely forbidden! Living expectantly is absolutely expedient!

**Vance Havner** commenting on Mt 24:44 observed that "A generation ago (**Ed**: This would have been in the late 1800's as he was born in 1901), "*Prepare to meet thy GOD*" was a favorite text of evangelistic preachers. Today over the country at large it has been granted an extended leave of absence. The reason is not hard to find. In many quarters: GOD is no longer regarded as a personal being - hell is a byword. Heaven is a joke about St. Peter with a bunch of keys - and the judgment day is a medieval superstition. Men no longer believe that they are hastening on to the Great Accounting. But, for all that, there is still a Judge and a judgment and an inflexible standard of righteousness that must be met." (Road to Revival)

**The Son of Man is coming** - Jesus leaves not doubt about this great doctrine. His disciples can reckon His return as an absolute certainty. But then He goes on to warn that the time of His return is not certain.

**NET** note on **an hour when you do not think** - Jesus made clear that his coming could not be timed, and suggested it would take some time - so long, in fact, that some will not be looking for him any longer (at an hour when you do not expect him).

John Blanchard - Everybody will be surprised—but nobody will be in any doubt that He has come.

The point is that the Return of Christ will not only be at an unknown hour, but when it is not expected! This highlights the need for continual readiness for every child of God!

Great God, what do I see and hear!

The end of things created:

The Judge of mankind doth appear  
On clouds of glory seated;  
The trumpet sounds, the graves restore  
The dead which they contained before:  
Prepare, my soul, to meet him!

**Weber** adds that "If we are taken by surprise, it is not because God is out to trick us but because of our own apathetic self-deception or negligence." (Ibid)

**John Trapp** - **Suetonius** tells us that it was a piece of Julius Caesar's policy never to fore-acquaint his soldiers of any set time of removal or onset, that he might ever have them in readiness to draw forth whithersoever he would.

**Sean O'Connell** - To "stay awake" or to "be ready" is more than the attitude of attentiveness. It is also the actions of attentiveness. We are to wait expectantly as we work expectantly. Toward the end of John Calvin's life, when his friends wanted him to work less for the sake of his declining health, he would often reply to them, "Would you have my Master find me idle?"... the illustration of Noah and the flood. Jesus gives the story from the perspective of those who were judged-"the careless (or clueless)." But if you see (and of course we know) that story from Noah's perspective, we know that Noah worked and worked and worked on that big box of a boat. What a picture of expectancy! He had both the attitude (he had to have had it) and the actions of attentiveness. He thought, Judgment is coming. I believe God's word. I'd better do what he says. I better get to work. (Matthew Commentary-Preaching the Word)

**More from Rev. Kinde** - My mother has recently experienced the reality of an unexpected thief. She had been out on her daily rounds and sensed that she should break her normal routine and return home for some reason. As she walked up to the front door she noticed that the door knob was smashed. She walked around the side of the condo and saw in the window a man stacking things by the door. She turned to the neighbors, called the police, and began to write down the license plate number of the strange pick-up truck. The man walked out of the house and saw Mom's car in the drive and kept walking to his pick-up truck lowered the tailgate so as to hide his license plate and drove off. Jesus' return will be as unexpected as a thief standing at your door when you return home. Are you ready? (Nelson's Annual Preacher's Sourcebook - 2007)

## SECOND COMING QUOTES

Has not our Lord Jesus carried up our flesh into heaven and shall He not return? We know that He shall return. —John Knox

I ardently hope that amidst all these internal dissensions on earth Jesus Christ will hasten the day of His coming. —Martin Luther

The Spirit in the heart of the true believer says with earnest desire, Come, Lord Jesus. —John Wesley

We must hunger after Christ until the dawning of that great day when our Lord will fully manifest the glory of His kingdom. —John Calvin

Many times when I go to bed at night I think to myself that before I awaken Christ may come. —Billy Graham

The coming again of Jesus Christ and the end of the age occupies some 1,845 Scriptural verses. —John Wesley White

We are not just looking for something to happen, we are looking for Someone to come! And when these things begin to come to pass, we are not to drop our heads in discouragement or shake our heads in despair, but rather lift up our heads in delight. —Vance Havner

Their eschatology saved them from utter despair.—W. R. Estep about the Anabaptists during intense persecution

The primitive church thought more about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ than about death or about heaven. The early Christians were looking not for a **cleft** in the ground called a grave but for a **cleavage** in the sky called Glory. They were watching not for the **undertaker** but for the **uppertaker**. - Alexander Maclaren

I hope that the day is near at hand when the advent of the great God will appear, for all things everywhere are boiling, burning, moving, falling, sinking, groaning. - Martin Luther

Pastor Horatius Bonar lived in the glow of Christ's coming. As he would conclude his day's ministry, he would draw the curtains of his window and utter as he looked upward, "Perhaps tonight, Lord!" In the morning, as he awoke and looked out on the dawn of a new



day, he would pray, looking up into the sky, "Perhaps today, Lord!" - George Sweeting

He that rose from the clods we expect from the clouds. -Thomas Adams

When it comes to belief in the Lord's return there are two kinds of Christians—gazers and goers. - Anon.

He who loves the coming of the Lord is not he who affirms it is far off, nor is it he who says it is near. It is he who, whether it be far or near, awaits it with sincere faith, stead-fast hope and fervent love. -

Augustine

That day lies hid that every day we be on the watch. - Augustine

It is a bad sign when people start discussing eschatology instead of preparing for the coming of Christ. - John Blanchard

Many people will be surprised when Jesus comes again—but nobody will be mistaken. - John Blanchard

The certainty of the Second Coming of Christ should touch and tincture every part of our daily behavior. - John Blanchard

The Christ who rose from the earth and now reigns over earth will one day return to the earth. - John Blanchard

When Christ returns, the second advent will no longer be a subject for discussion. - John Blanchard

Christ keeps the minds of believers in a state of suspense until the last day. - John Calvin

In the first advent God veiled his divinity to prove the faithful; in the second advent he will manifest his glory to reward their faith. - Chrysostom

The only remedy for all this mass of misery is the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why do we not plead for it every time we hear the clock strike? - Anthony Ashley Cooper

As Christians, we should not be exitists, looking for our going, but adventists, looking for his coming. - William Freel

The subject of the second coming of Christ has never been popular to any but the true believer. - Billy Graham

Christ hath told us he will come, but not when, that we might never put off our clothes, or put out the candle. - William Gurnall

Oh, the joy to see thee reigning,  
Thee, my own beloved Lord!  
Every tongue thy name confessing,  
Worship, honour, glory, blessing,  
  
Brought to thee with glad accord—  
Thee, my Master and my Friend,  
Vindicated and enthroned,  
Unto earth's remotest end  
Glorified, adored and owned!  
Frances Ridley Havergal

Christ will come when he pleases, to show his sovereignty, and will not let us know when, to teach us our duty. - Matthew Henry

When Jesus comes there will be instant job satisfaction for us. - David N. Jones

If this is not an intergral part of the faith once given to the saints, I do not know what is. - C. S. Lewis

Precisely because we cannot predict the moment, we must be ready at all moments. - C. S. Lewis

The primitive church thought a great deal more about the coming of Christ than about death, and thought a great deal more about his coming than about heaven. - Alexander MacLaren

I never preach a sermon without thinking that possibly the Lord may come before I preach another. - D. L. Moody

Christ is coming to the earth, in such form at least as shall fulfil his purposes of mercy to his friends and justice to his foes. - Thomas V. Moore

I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that perhaps he may interrupt my work and begin his own. I am not looking for death, I am looking for him. - G. Campbell Morgan

There is such a danger of our being so occupied with the things that are to come more than with him who is to come. - Andrew Murray

Millions of graves are dug every year, but it is inspiring to think that one generation of Christians will cheat the undertaker. - J. C. Pollock

Oh, that Christ would make long strides! Oh, that he would fold up the heavens as a cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way!  
- Samuel Rutherford

In all our thoughts about Christ, let us never forget his second advent. - J. C. Ryle

There shall be no time for parting words or a change of mind when the Lord appears. - J. C. Ryle

Uncertainty about the date of the Lord's return is calculated to keep believers in an attitude of constant expectation and to preserve them from despondency. - J. C. Ryle

When Christ comes again, the remains of ignorance shall be rolled away. - J. C. Ryle

If I knew that our Lord would come this evening, I should preach just as I mean to preach; and if I knew he would come during this sermon, I would go on preaching until he did. -

C. H. Spurgeon

Oh, that the Lord would come! He is coming! He is on the road and traveling quickly. The sound of his approach should be as music to our hearts! - C. H. Spurgeon

The fact that Jesus Christ is to come again is not a reason for star-gazing, but for working in the power of the Holy Ghost. - C. H. Spurgeon

Since he may come any day, it is well to be ready every day. - J. Hudson Taylor

He who came in humility and shame will return in spectacular magnificence. - John R. W. Stott

The imminent return of our Lord is the great Bible argument for a pure, unselfish, devoted, unworldly, active life of service. - R. A. Torrey

This is pinned as a badge to the sleeve of every true believer—that he looks for and longs for Christ's coming to judgment. -John Trapp

The Christian hope is not a matter for tickling our minds, but for changing our minds and influencing society. - Stephen Travis

I am daily waiting for the coming of the Son of God. - George Whitefield

The brightness of Christ's advent will reveal the true character of those things which were previously hidden by darkness. - Geoffrey B. Wilson

(Most but not all of the quotes are from John Blanchard's **excellent resource** *The Complete Gathered Gold: A Treasury of Quotations for Christians* - available digitally in Logos.com and Wordsearch.com)

**See also Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming**

### THE KING IS COMING!

[Read Ira Sankey's story behind the hymn](#)

Rejoice! Rejoice! our King is coming!  
And the time will not be long,  
Until we hail the radiant dawning,  
And lift up the glad new song.

*Refrain*

*Oh, wondrous day! oh, glorious morning,  
When the Son of Man shall come!  
May we with lamps all trimmed and burning  
Gladly welcome His return!*

Rejoice! Rejoice! our King is coming!  
And the time will not be long,  
Until we hail the radiant dawning,  
And lift up the glad new song.

Refrain

With joy we wait our King's returning  
From His heavenly mansions fair;  
And with ten thousand saints appearing  
We shall meet Him in the air.

Refrain

Oh, may we never weary, watching,  
Never lay our armor down  
Until He come, and with rejoicing  
Give to each the promised crown.

Refrain

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### Vance Havner - PROPHETIC DOCTRINE AND PRACTICAL DUTY

Throughout the Word of God one thing stands out crystal clear in this matter of prophecy: wherever the Holy Spirit sets forth some great prophetic truth, He joins it every time with a practical exhortation as to what we are to do about it.

The first truth that grows out of all this is, of course, **the necessity for preparation.**

"Prepare to meet thy God." "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt. 24:44).

I heard a minister tell how he as a boy tried hard to weigh one hundred pounds. He could weigh ninety-five and ninety-six but he could not reach the coveted hundred mark. One day he stepped on the scales and, to his astonishment, went way over the mark. He gave a yell of triumph, but just then he heard a chuckle behind him and looked around to discover that his older brother had put a big foot on the scales.

I know something better than that. God had a mark that I could not reach, but my Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, did not merely add His weight to mine; He put Himself in my place and God reckons me righteous in Him, because as a convicted sinner I received Him as my Saviour and rest in His finished work and perfect righteousness.

**So it is He Who is coming Who prepares me for His coming.  
In the Christ Who came I am ready for the Christ Who will come.**

(Van Havner Notebook - Quotations)

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TODAY IN THE WORD - Mt 24:44 - In 1831, Baptist preacher William Miller declared that Jesus would return between 1843 and 1844. Thousands of people from a variety of denominations gathered around Miller in eager expectation of "The Blessed Hope." With the date finally set at October 22, 1844, over 100,000 people stayed up all night waiting for Christ to return. As the morning of October 23 dawned, hope was exchanged for disillusionment. The date became known as the Great Disappointment.

Is this what Jesus meant in His repeated exhortations to watchfulness? In our readings for today and tomorrow, we'll see that Jesus explained how we should respond to His prophecies about the end of the age.

After Jesus left the temple, He predicted that this glorious structure—the heart of the worship of God—would be destroyed (Mt 24:2). The disciples understandably wanted more information. In response to their questions of what and when, though, Jesus warned them not to be deceived by false teaching. They needed to stand firm (Mt 24:13). He told them that great hardship lay ahead, and yet hope was also present: the gospel will be preached in the whole world, and they have the unfailing word of Jesus that He will return (Mt 24:14, 30).

Jesus then clarified that the point of this warning is not to determine the timing of His return; rather, He provided this information so that the disciples could be watchful and prepared. Indeed, Jesus was calling them to wait. This waiting is only possible in light of

hope—if Jesus' word is not sure and if He is not returning, then we should all act like the wicked servant (Mt 24:49). But Jesus assured us that the Master will return, and the fate of the hypocrites will come to those who are not prepared.

Jesus knew that waiting can be a challenging assignment. So He instructed His followers to guard against deception and remain watchful even in the face of persecution, because we have the hope of His coming in glory.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Our impatient society doesn't value the discipline of waiting. We prefer to multitask, be sleep-deprived, and fill our appointment books in order to feel busy and therefore important. Jesus' words in this chapter can help reorient us to the ultimate priorities of believers: seeing our lives in light of the reality and hope that He is coming again. As we'll see tomorrow, this waiting watchfulness is not passive, but it does require us to live with a different sense of time than does the rest of the world. (Moody Bible)

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**Ivor Powell's Outline** for Matthew 24 is interesting:

I. Be Warned... "Not Yet." (Mt 24:1-13)

II. Be Wise... "Listen." (Mt 24:14-28)

III. Be Watchful... "Look." (Mt 24:29-35)

IV. Be Waiting... "Any Moment." (Mt 24:36-44)

V. Be Workers... "Constantly." (Mt 24:45-51)

(Matthew Commentary)

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**Readiness** - One of the earliest kings of England was called Ethelred the Unready! What an interesting name. We wonder if some of his relatives are still around. We wonder if some of his descendants are members of our churches.

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**Vance Havner - Prepared Places for Prepared People** - "I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2. "Be ye also ready." Matthew 24:44.

Even in this present world there is always "room at the top," and the man who prepares himself will find a place prepared. There are never enough to go around and there are vacancies always for the man who can really do the job.

In the service of God the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few, and the eyes of the Lord run to and fro looking for a man with a heart perfect toward Him. Samuel prepared himself and God made ready for Samuel. There is a place ready for you if you are ready for the place.

And there is a place hereafter for those who make ready. There is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven. But it is reserved for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. God not only prepares the place, He prepares His people for the place.

"Lord, prepare me for what Thou art preparing for me."

--Day by Day

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**Robert Neighbour** - An Admonition on "Therefore be ye also ready: for in each an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

Peter, following the Day of Pentecost, cried, "Repent, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

Surely, if our Lord is coming and if His coming is near, it behooves every one of us to be robed and ready.

We do not only want to be raptured with the saints, but we want to reign with the Lord (see 2Ti 2:12).

Granting that all redeemed ones will be caught up and changed, yet, who will think for a moment that those caught up and changed will necessarily reign?

The matter of reigning with Christ upon this earth, is a matter of rewards.

Our position in the millennial earth Kingdom of Christ depends upon our mode of living, our manner of serving, and our fidelity to the faith, down here.

Our authority over earth's cities, when the Lord returns, depends on how we "occupy" while the Lord has gone on His far journey (see Luke 19:1, 27).

Let us give all diligence to add to our faith those blessed graces of Christian living, for "so shall an abundant entrance be administered unto us, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 1:11),

Let us not be satisfied merely to be caught up, but let us press on to reign with honor and a full reward in the Kingdom of our Lord.

"Sure I must fight, if I would reign,  
Increase my courage, Lord;  
"I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by Thy Word."

---

**Well Prepared** - You also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. —Matthew 24:44 -

The idea of always being prepared makes me think of the man who lived next door to us when I was growing up. When Mr. Nienhuis came home, he never failed to back his car into the garage. That seemed unusual to me until my mother explained that Nels was a volunteer fireman. If he got a call, he had to be ready to race to the fire station. He backed in so he could leave quickly when he had to report for duty.

To be well prepared is important in so much of life. "If I had 8 hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend 6 sharpening my axe," said Abraham Lincoln. We prepare for a career by studying. We buy insurance in case of a car accident or a house fire. We even prepare for the end of life by making a will to provide for loved ones.

The Bible tells us we must prepare ourselves spiritually as well. We do that by putting on spiritual armor to protect ourselves from spiritual attack (Eph. 6:10-20); by preparing our minds for holy living (1Pe 1:13); by making sure we're always prepared to answer questions about the reason for the hope we possess (1Pe 3:15); and by ensuring that we are ready for the promised return of Jesus (Matt. 24:44).

How well prepared are you for what lies ahead? Unsure? Ask the Lord for His help and guidance.

When I awake at early morn  
To meet the coming day,  
I want to be prepared to take  
Whatever comes my way. —Simmons

Spiritual victory comes only  
to those who are prepared for battle.

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**Fire Mountain** - Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. —Matthew 24:44 - Rising 2,900 meters (9,600 ft.) above the rainforest in Indonesia's southern Java, Mount Merapi (the Fire Mountain) is one of the world's most dangerous volcanoes.

As the Fire Mountain showed signs of renewed activity, authorities tried to evacuate local residents. Then, on May 13, 2006, Merapi spewed a gray plume of sulfurous smoke that resembled a flock of sheep leaving the crater. Amazingly, villagers ignored the signs and returned to tending their livestock, apparently forgetting that in 1994 Merapi had killed 60 people. It's our human tendency to ignore signs.

When Jesus left the temple at Jerusalem for the last time, His disciples asked what would signal His return to earth (Matt. 24:3). He told them many things to watch for, but warned that people would still be unprepared.

The apostle Peter told us that in the last days scoffers would say of Jesus' return: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2Peter 3:4).

Scoffers are with us today, just as Peter warned. Are you among them? Or are you ready for the Lord Jesus to return? Ignoring

these signs is even more dangerous than living in the shadow of the Fire Mountain. By: [C. P. Hia](#)

To ignore the Bible  
is to invite disaster.

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**Endtime Events - Be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. —Matthew 24:44 -

In 1947, scientists created the Doomsday Clock to symbolically show how close they believe the world is to a nuclear holocaust. In 1953, after the US tested a hydrogen bomb, the hands were set at 2 minutes before midnight. Since then they have been pushed back and forth 13 times. The clock's safest setting was in 1991, after the US and Russia signed an arms-reduction treaty. The time was then set at 17 minutes before midnight. But in May 1999, after India and Pakistan set off nuclear blasts, the hands were advanced to 11:51.

God has a "clock" too. Over the centuries, prophecy buffs have tried to "set the hands" by predicting the "midnight hour" of Christ's return. But their date-settings have failed and left many people disillusioned. Conflicting views of the precise order of events and the nearness of His coming have diverted many from our Lord's primary reason for speaking about these events. He didn't want prophecy to become a divisive battleground, but a unifying truth for believers.

When Jesus spoke of His return, it was to remind us to "be ready" (Matthew 24:44). We are to be faithfully serving Him (Mt 24:45) by faithfully serving the needs of others. Let's leave the hands of God's clock in His hands. By: [Dennis J. DeHaan](#)

The Christ I love is coming soon,  
It may be morning, night, or noon;  
My lamps are lit, I'll watch and pray;  
It may be today, it may be today. —Bixler  
(c) 1950 Singspiration, Inc.

Christ is coming—  
perhaps today!

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**Are You Ready?** - When Jesus promised His disciples that He would one day return to earth, He said He would come at a time they did not expect (Matthew 24:44). Therefore, people today who set dates for Christ's second coming are really wasting their time. Jesus never told His followers how to calculate the day of His return. Rather, He emphasized that our main priority is to make sure we're ready for Him, and that we are occupied in His service when He comes (Mt 24:45-46).

A woman who lived by this teaching was shopping in a small country store. Several young people were just standing around doing nothing. Knowing she was a Christian, they began ridiculing her. "We hear you're expecting Jesus to come back," they jeered. "That's right," she replied brightly. "Do you really believe He's coming?" they asked. "Absolutely," she answered. They said, "Well, you'd better hurry home and get ready. He might be on the way!" Facing them, she said, "I don't have to get ready—I keep ready!"

Are you ready for the arrival of God's Son? Will you be glad to see Jesus when He returns? If not, get ready now. Without delay, turn away from your sin and trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Then keep ready by walking in His will every day. By: [Joanie Yoder](#)

The Christ I love is coming soon,  
It may be morning, night, or noon;  
My lamps are lit, I'll watch and pray;  
It may be today, it may be today. —Bixler

Jesus may come at any time,  
so we must be ready all the time.

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**Perhaps Today** - You also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. —Matthew 24:44

A year ago, I read an article saying that millions of TV sets in the United States would stop working today unless they were able to receive digital signals. Notices appeared in electronics stores, and the government even offered a free \$40 coupon toward the purchase of a converter box.

I suspect that most people took the necessary steps to make sure their TV set would work when they turned it on today. We usually respond well to warnings tied to specific dates, but often fail to prepare for an event that will come "some day."

When the disciples asked Jesus about the date of His return (Matt. 24:3), He told them that only God the Father knows: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Mt 24:36). Then He urged them to be prepared so that they would not be taken by surprise. "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt 24:44).

We don't know when Jesus will return; He may come at any time. Dr. M. R. De Haan, founder of RBC Ministries, kept a two-word motto in his office:

"Perhaps Today"

When we make our daily plans, are we aware that Christ may return? Are we prepared to meet Him? By: [David C. McCasland](#)

The darkness deepens! Yes, but dawn is nearer!  
The Lord from heaven may soon be on His way;  
The "blessed hope" in these dark days grows dearer,  
Our Savior Christ will come—perhaps today! —Smith

If Christ comes today,  
will you be ready to meet Him?

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**An Ordinary Day** - Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. —Matthew 24:42 -

While exploring a museum exhibit titled "A Day in Pompeii," I was struck by the repeated theme that August 24, ad 79 began as an ordinary day. People were going about their daily business in homes, markets, and at the port of this prosperous Roman town of 20,000 people. At 8 a.m., a series of small emissions were seen coming from nearby Mount Vesuvius, followed by a violent eruption in the afternoon. In less than 24 hours, Pompeii and many of its people lay buried under a thick layer of volcanic ash. Unexpected.

Jesus told His followers that He would return on a day when people were going about their business, sharing meals, and having weddings, with no idea of what was about to happen. "As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:37).

The Lord's purpose was to urge the disciples to be watchful and prepared: "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt 24:44).

What surprising joy it would be to welcome our Savior on this ordinary day! By: [David C. McCasland](#)

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**Dirty Dishes** - Abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. —1 John 2:28 -

When I was a boy, my father often traveled to other cities to speak at churches and Bible conferences. Sometimes my mother would accompany him, leaving my brother and me alone for a few days. We enjoyed being independent, but we detested doing the dishes.

I remember the time we tried to put off that dreaded chore as long as possible by stacking all the dirty plates, glasses, and silverware

in the oven after each meal. At the end of the week, there was hardly any room left. Then, on the evening before Mom and Dad were to return, we rolled up our sleeves and cleaned up the whole mess. It took hours! How ashamed we would have been if our parents had come back earlier than we expected.

Because we don't know exactly when Christ will return (Matthew 24:36,42,44), we must not get lazy in our Christian walk. The expectancy of His any-moment appearance should help us to be "faithful and wise" servants (Mt 24:45) and to live in a way that "we may have confidence and not be ashamed" when He comes (1 John 2:28).

Yes, Christ will come again, just as He promised. Perhaps today! Do you have any "dirty dishes"? Now is the time to get ready. By: [Richard DeHaan](#)

Faithful and true would He find us here  
If He should come today?  
Watching in gladness and not in fear,  
If He should come today. —Morris

Live today as if Christ is coming back today.

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**Matthew 24:45 "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?: Tis ara estin (3SPAI) o pistos doulos kai phronimos on katestesen (3SAAI) o kurios epi tes oiketeias autou tou dounai (AAN) autois ten trophen en kairo:**

- **Is the faithful:** Lu 12:41-43 Lk 16:10-12 Lk 19:17 Ac 20:28 1Co 4:1,2 1Ti 1:12 2Ti 2:2 Heb 3:5 1Pe 4:10,11 Rev 2:13
- **to give them:** Mt 13:52 25:35-40 Ezek 34:2 John 21:15-17 1Co 3:1,2 Eph 4:11-13 1Pe 5:1-3

## THE FAITHFUL AND SENSIBLE SLAVE

The emphasis in the preceding illustrations (Mt 24:37-44) has been on maintaining a state of alertness regarding Christ's return at an unknown day and hour. Now Jesus shifts the emphasis so that in Mt 24:45-47 He focuses on the importance of how we are to live in light of His imminent return. Now He describes "mean time" living or how we are to live faithfully and sensibly as we wait for His return.

Remember that **readiness** (Mt 24:44) will always promote **faithfulness** (Mt 24:45)!

**Henry Alford** on **Mt 24:45-47** - Our Lord had given this parabolic exhortation before, Luke 12:42-46. Many of these His last sayings in public are solemn repetitions of, and references to, things already said by Him.

**Alfred Plummer** - The second illustration is more complete than the first. It gives the blessedness of the watchful servant as well as the dreadful fate of the one who dares to treat uncertainty about the time of the Master's return as equivalent to certainty that He will not return soon. And it is more complete in another way. The householder could not be certain that the thief would come at all; he had to be on his guard against an attack that was only probable. The servant was certain that the Master would return; the only doubt was as to the time: and that is just the case with the Christian. ([Ibid](#))

**Morris** says that by asking **who is the... slave** "is a way of inviting his hearers to reflect on their own state of readiness. ([Ibid](#))

**Hendriksen** - The very word **"then"** indicates the connection with the immediately preceding; as if to say, "such readiness implies faithfulness."... When, along with many other interpreters, I call this story-illustration a parable, I do so with the qualification that again and again reality as it were rises to the surface, so that it is not always easy to see exactly where figurative language makes way for plain statement of fact. So masterfully and inextricably are the two interwoven. ([Ibid](#))

This question **"who then"** is based on the previous admonition to watch and be ready in Mt 24:42-44. Lk 24:45-51 teaches lessons of faithfulness in service to the Lord in light of His imminent return. In short, the Lord commends faithfulness and availability. Paul echoes this principle declaring "In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy." (1Cor 4:2)

**Beloved, is this not a question every servant of Jesus should daily ponder = Would He find me a faithful and sensible slave if He were to return today?**



**Phil Newton** introduces his sermon on Mt 24:45-51 asking "But what do we do as we wait for Jesus Christ's return? Some believers, according to various Christian scholars, donned white robes, sold all that they owned, and waited on the mountaintop to be the first to wing their way to the returning Christ. Rather than engage the world with the gospel or exercise themselves in spiritual disciplines, they passively waited, having given up on life. As Ben Witherington III notes about Thessalonica, "Eschatological fervency had led to lethargy on the part of some" [New Testament History, 273]. Like students that start packing their books up an hour before the closing bell rings, these mistaken Christians fervently believed in the imminence of Christ's return, so much so that they folded the tent, packed their bags, and waited on the curb for the chariots of fire to swing low and take them up! Their fervency certainly was admirable but their lethargy, not! Waiting in the vocabulary of our Lord had nothing to do with passivity or lethargy or laziness or non-involvement. Waiting calls for devotion and service. The next several paragraphs in our Lord's discourse on last things focuses on the appropriate disposition and action while waiting for Christ's return. He tells us **to be alert** since we don't know the time of His return; **to be ready** for the suddenness of His coming so that we're not caught unprepared; and **to be faithful** in serving as a devoted slave would serve his master. It's this last action-**faithful service**-that we find pictured in our text. What is so clear about all of this is that being a Christian is not merely a state of being or a passive claim. **Many in our day tend to think that as long as they claim to be Christians then all is well.** But what Jesus shows us is much different from such a claim. Genuine Christian faith is always evidenced by faithfulness in the things Christ has entrusted to us. *Faithful service must occupy us until Jesus comes again* What will Jesus find you doing when He returns? That question begs our consideration as we investigate our text." ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#)) (Emphasis added)

A parallel passage in Mark reads (actually Mark's passage is a better parallel with Mt 25:15ff, cp Luke 12:36-38):

It is like a man (a figure of Jesus) away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to **stay on the alert (gregoreuo)**. "Therefore, **be on the alert (gregoreuo)** in the **present imperative** which calls for a daily lifestyle of alertness, only possibly as we daily surrender to the enabling power of the Spirit!—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—36 in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. "What I say to you I say to all, **Be on the alert! (gregoreuo in the present imperative)**" (Mk 13:34-37)

**Comment:** Jesus repeats **gregoreuo** three times! I wonder why He does so! Do you think it is because our hearts are prone to wander, to leave the God we love (cp Rev 2:4-5)? Clearly Jesus is emphasizing our great, continual need for **WATCHFULNESS!** It is also interesting that Jesus refers to the doorkeeper in light of the fact that He has just stated "He is near, [right] at the door!" (Mt 24:33) Gundry says **gregoreuo** speaks of "readiness (which) requires staying awake, a figure of speech for alertful recognition of the events that will indicate the nearness of the Son of Man's coming, the events that will begin with the abomination of desolation (Mk 13:14, Mt 24:15)."

**Faithful** (trustworthy)([4103](#))(**pistos** from **peitho** = to persuade - induce one by words to believe, have confidence) describes someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises and is applied to God, humans, His Word, etc In this present passage the sense is that of one who is trustworthy or dependable.

The English dictionary defines **trustworthy** as able to be relied on as honest or truthful or able to be relied on to do or provide what is needed or right. **Faithful** describes someone who is, dependable, reliable and consistent. **Faithful** describes one who adheres firmly and devotedly to another. **Faithful** implies long-continued and steadfast fidelity to Whomever one is bound (in this case we are bound to Jesus - we are His slave or *doulos*). **Do those definitions of faithful describe my walk with my Lord Jesus Christ?**

**Alexander Maclaren** said that "Faithfulness in a narrower sphere leads to a wider... the most slenderly endowed Christian has some crumb of the bread of life intrusted [sic] to him to dispense" [Expositions of Holy Scripture, vol. 7, 172, 170].

**Derek Prince** - Faithfulness in this life leads to promotion in the next life. This is a solemn thought. The way we conduct ourselves in this world will determine what we will be for eternity. There is no substitute for faithfulness. (Prophetic guide to the end times: facing the future without fear)

**Chrysostom** said "Faithfulness in *little* things is a *big* thing."

**Oswald Chambers** - The only way to wait for the Second Coming is to watch that you do what you should do, so that when he comes is a matter of indifference. It is the attitude of a child, certain that God knows what he is about. When the Lord does come, it will be as natural as breathing. God never does anything hysterical, and He never produces hysterics.

As someone has well said "God has no larger field for the man who is not faithfully doing his work where he is."

**Vance Havner** once said "Christians do not have to live; they have only to be faithful to Jesus Christ, not *only until* death but *unto* death if necessary."

**J I Packer** - Faithfulness is our business; fruitfulness is an issue that we must be content to leave with God.

**Alan Redpath** rightly said that "Reverent fear of God is the key to faithfulness in any situation." And I would add nothing stimulates a "reverent fear" like an attitude of expectancy of His return! (cp 1Jn 3:2, 3).

The prince of preachers **C H Spurgeon** once said "I know of nothing which I would choose to have as the subject of my ambition for life than to be kept faithful to my God till death."

And **William Still** wisely reminds us "It is impossible to be faithful to Jesus Christ and not incur the opposition of the world."

**Ivor Powell** - Every wise and appreciative Master found joy in rewarding deserving servants. Thus did Jesus teach that no man can outgive God. What is conscientiously done for Him, not only supplies immediate pleasure; it also guarantees that when God assesses the value of Christian service, His rewards will be dispensed among faithful servants (see 1 Corinthians 3:11-15) (Matthew Commentary)

**Sensible** (wise, prudent) (5429)(**phronimos** from **phroneo** = think, have a mindset related to phren = diaphragm, regarded by ancients as seat of mental and spiritual activity, came to mean mind or understanding) is an adjective which describes one who is thoughtful, sagacious or discreet. It describes the quality of one's thinking which is the result of insight and stands in opposition to **moros** which means foolish. The idea is that there is understanding combined with wisdom and insight.

Notice that 5 of the 14 NT uses of **phronimos** are found in Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Mt 10:16; 24:45; 25:2, 4, 8,9). The two uses in Luke are parallel passages that refer to stewards (Lk. 12:42, 16:8). So here Jesus uses **phronimos** in a positive sense to refer to a servant who is skillful in managing his master's household.

The English dictionary defines **sensible** as having, using, or showing good sense or sound judgment. A **sensible** person is prudent, wise in practical affairs and conducting oneself with care and thought for the future. As Spurgeon said "**Now** is the watchword of the wise!"

**Henry Alford** - Prudence (sensible) in a servant can be only the consequence of faithfulness to his master. [Greek Testament Critical Exegetical Commentary](#))

**J R Miller** speaks about the relationship between **watching** and **doing** - Doing how? Doing his work with fidelity. The watching that Christ wants—is not sitting at the window and looking out to see Him approach—but diligence in all duty. If a man went away, leaving a servant in charge of a certain work, fixing no time for his return—what should the servant do? Stand in the door, gazing down the road, watching to get the first glimpse of the master's return? No, that is not the kind of watching that would please his master. The way to be ready for Christ's coming, is not to sit down in idleness to wait and watch for His appearance—but to keep at one's work with unceasing diligence, so that when He comes—He may not find us in the midst of unfinished tasks, away behind with our work. **There can be no better rule in life—than to make every day of life complete, to finish everything each night before retiring, so that if we should never come back to our work again, nothing would suffer.** A Christian woman was told by her physician that she could not live a great while, and that she might die any hour. She did not, however, drop her work and shut herself away to prepare for death. She went on with all her usual duties, only with more earnestness and greater diligence, knowing now that the time must be short. Some people would suppose that in a case like this, one should give up all active work and spend the short and uncertain time in praying and reading the Bible; but this Christian woman's way was the better way. Long before she had made her peace with God, and all her life had lived in readiness for eternity. When the warning came that the time was growing short, she was not flustered. Thus far she had done her duty as well as she could—and all she had to do now was the work of the few remaining days and hours. This she did with love and faith, and with diligence, and when the Master came—she quietly went away home with Him. (Devotional Hours with the Bible)

**John Riddle** - Notice the expressions, 'his lord (master)', Mt 24:45-46, 'my lord (master)', Mt 24:48, and 'the lord (master) of that servant', Mt 24:50. But there is an important difference; only the 'faithful and wise servant' recognized his lordship in practice. We too must beware: 'And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?', Luke 6:46. (Day by Day: Moments with the Master)

**Master** (Mt 24:45, 46, 48, 50) (2962)(**kurios** is from **kuros** = authority) refers to one having legal power, one who controls his own property (owner, lord, master - Mk 12:9), one who has authority over other persons (Lk 12:43) and of course most importantly a personal title of Jesus Christ (Jn 20:18). In this parabolic illustration the "Master" is Jesus Christ. **Kurios** is used 19 times in 16 verses in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew (Mt 24:42, 45, 46, 48, 50; 25:11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 37, 44) Mt 24:42, Mt 25:37, 44 refer specifically to Jesus as **Kurios** or Lord.

**Newton** - Jesus Christ is the master in this story. He has already set forth His kingship throughout the teaching in Matthew's Gospel, so it is not difficult at all to see Him as the Master or Lord of all. Some would consider the master's house to be the church,

comprised with both faithful and evil servants. While from an external or visible sense, that certainly is the case, it seems better to consider the master's house as the world. The return of Jesus Christ—one subject of His discourse, insists on the universal knowledge of His return. The powers of the heavens are shaken, every eye sees Him, and the angels gather the elect from across the earth (24:29-31). All of the earth is affected by the return of Jesus Christ because He is the Master/Lord of all. ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Hendriksen on slave** - Some (Lenski) are of the opinion that Jesus was thinking especially of his disciples, considered as office-bearers, and so, by extension, of all ministers and pastors of the churches to be organized during the entire new dispensation. But we cannot be certain about this. After all, the duty of faithfulness applies not only to leaders but also to followers. Doing the will of the Master and caring for those in need, whether this need be material, spiritual, or both, is certainly the task assigned to all. (Ibid)

**Slave (1401)**(*doulos* from *deō* = to bind) was an individual bound to another in servitude and conveys the idea of the slave's close, binding ties with his master, belonging to him, obligated to and desiring to do his will and in a permanent relation of servitude. In sum, the will of the *doulos* is consumed in the will of the master. Recall that over one third of the Roman Empire was considered enslaved and thus Jesus' choice of this imagery makes good sense (and certainly was not offensive as it might be to modern ears!)

**Ivor Powell on slave** - A bond slave was one who by his own volition chose to remain in the service of his master, even when at the year of liberation, he might have become a free man. To be a bond slave meant devotion both to the master and the work. The man was not working to obtain money; he worked because he loved his lord. He found happiness in his work and in the pleasure seen on the master's face. This was the type of service Jesus expected from His disciples. They were not to remain ordinary laborers; they were to be bond slaves, utterly trustworthy, and unceasingly active. (Matthew Commentary)

**Newton** - We are slaves of Jesus Christ. If that language offends you, then consider the greatness and majesty of Jesus Christ the Lord. Those who realize that He is the eternal God, infinite in holiness, righteousness, and justice, purer than the driven snow, omnipotent in His rule, omniscient in His decrees, with no beginning and no end of days, the Creator and Ruler of the universe—those who realize this gladly own the title of slaves of Jesus Christ! As master, He is ever just in dealing with His slaves. We realize that we do not deserve to be slaves to such a worthy and good Master. We've known the reach of His mercy, the tenderness of His love, the embrace of His grace, and the satisfaction of His promises through the gospel... The "**faithful and sensible slave**" serves the master regardless of the delay in returning. He's not like the lazy workers that keep an eye out for the boss so that they can feign work but slough off the rest of the time. He is "**faithful**" to his master. His love and devotion to Jesus Christ motivate him to service. He is "**sensible**" as one that thinks about his master and the privileges that belong to him as a servant of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Being "**sensible**," he serves conscientiously, realizing that everything he does reflects devotion to Christ. Head and heart lean toward Christ in the faithful servant. Is that the disposition of your heart and the direction of your life? There's no place for laziness and lethargy among Christians. Jesus Christ has called each of us to serve. He pictures it for us in this little parable. ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Put in charge (2525)**(*kathistemi* from *katã* = down + *histēmi* = to set or stand) means literally "to stand or set down". Most of the NT uses of *kathistemi* are figurative as in the present passage and refer to "setting someone down in office" or appointing or assigning a person to a position of authority. To put in charge or to appoint one to administer an office. To set in an elevated position.

Jesus places emphasis on doing one's task at the proper time. In context (Mt 24:42-44) recall that He is admonishing the reader to keep Christ's imminent return in mind so that we might be judged faithful and wise when He does return.

**Newton** - Christ parcels out particular areas of service for each believer. In this case, the master put his slave in charge of his household. **(1) Every Christian has similar, general areas of service that all are to embrace.** We are called to be lights shining in the darkness and to be ambassadors for Christ in this dark world (Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15-16; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). That is the call of Christian witness. It's something that all of us share. We may do it in different ways and through different means; but it is part-and-parcel of our Christian faith. We are also called to be people of prayer. We told to pray instead of worry, and to even pray without ceasing. We are called upon to pray for the furtherance of the gospel in the world and to pray for God's provisions in the varied needs that we face (Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 4:2-4; 1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18-20). That is the call of Christian prayer. We are also called to give with generosity and holy hilarity in order to meet pressing needs and to support the ongoing work of the gospel in the world (Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 8-9; Phil. 4:15-20). That is the call of Christian giving. We are also called to join in fellowship with one another as Christians. We are to serve one another, bear one another's burdens, forgive each other, encourage one another, and accept one another for Christ's sake (Rom. 12:9-13; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:27; Heb. 10:28; Rom. 15:7). That is the call to Christian fellowship. Everyone can be involved and must be involved in each of these areas of Christian service. We're not going to be "cookie-cutters" at this point. We're going to approach these areas of service in different ways. But the important thing is that we engage regularly in witness, prayer, giving, and fellowship. **(2) Every Christian is given particular, special areas of responsibility to serve Jesus Christ.** We cannot add to Christ's worth or wealth or stature by our service. We serve because of love for Him and the desire to be

a "faithful and sensible slave." The master put his slave "in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time." That was special, particular service that would have differed from others. Someone else the master would have put in charge of the fields or the looms or the children. But this slave he singled out for feeding his household. What has Jesus Christ given you to do in His name? It may be to teach and care for children or to organize acts of mercy or to care for the poor or to go to a foreign mission field or to plant churches or to show hospitality for others or to help with worship by using musical gifts or to take care of little details that allows the church to function smoothly. Areas of service generally run along the lines of the spiritual gifts imparted graciously by the Holy Spirit. His gifts are not for self-consumption but for generous, selfless service toward others in the name of Christ. ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Proper time** (2540)(**kairos**) means a point of time, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology. It means a moment which is especially appropriate or proper.

#### [When It's All Been Said and Done](#)

When It's All Been Said and Done  
There is just one thing that matters.  
Did I do my best to live for Truth?  
Did I live my life for You?  
When It's All Been Said and Done  
All my treasures will mean nothing.  
Only what I've done for love's reward,  
Will stand the test of time.

**Look for Christ's return,  
and you'll live for Christ's glory.**

#### **Related Resources:**

- Redeem the Time
- [Redeem the Time \(blog\)](#)
- Ephesians 5:16 Commentary

**Matthew 24:46 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes: makarios o doulos ekeinos on elthon (AAPMSN) o kurios autou euresei (3SFAI) houtos poiounta (PAPMSA):**

- Mt 25:34 Lk 12:37,43 Php 1:21-23 2Ti 4:6-8 2Pe 1:13-15 Rev 2:19 Rev 16:15

### **FAITHFUL SLAVES BLESSED AT MASTER'S RETURN**

**Blessed** (3107)(**makarios** from root **makar**, but others say from mak = large or lengthy) means to be *happy*, but not in the usual sense of happiness based on positive circumstances. From the Biblical perspective **makarios** describes the person who is free from daily cares and worries because his every breath and circumstance is in the hands of His Maker Who gives him such an assurance (such a "blessing"). One who is blessed is spiritually satisfied independent of the circumstances, not because of self-sufficiency but because of God's provision of sovereign grace.

**Jesus** describes a most incredible blessing He will bestow on His faithful slaves -

"**Blessed** are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them." (Lk 12:37)

**Do you understand what Jesus is saying?** This remarkable statement pictures Christ, at His return, ministering as a servant to believers! Unthinkable! Amazing grace indeed!

**J C Ryle** remarked "This is perhaps one of the most wonderful promises made to believers in the New Testament. It must probably be interpreted figuratively. It means that there is no limit to the honor and glory which the Lord Jesus will bestow on those who are ready to meet Him at His Second Coming." (Luke Commentary)

**Jesus** referred to other **blessings** promised to those who lived life in light of His coming:

Matthew 25:34 "Then (**When is "then?"** In context = when He returns = Mt 25:31) the King will say to those

on His right, 'Come, you who are **blessed** of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Luke 12:43 "**Blessed** is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

**Paul** alludes to the blessing which Jesus describes writing that

"in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2Ti 4:8-note)

**This begs the question dearly beloved, "Do you love His appearing?"** The idea of course is not that you are infatuated with the Second Coming per se but that you so "**love**" it that you "**live**" in the **light** of that truth. You **long** to see your Bridegroom. You cannot wait for Him to "sweep you off of your feet!"

**No doctrine is more closely linked to practical daily living  
than that of the Lord's return.**

**Slave** (1401)(**doulos**) see above. In this section Jesus depicts 2 slaves and 2 "rewards." Neither good deeds nor bad deeds will go unrewarded!

**Master** (owner)(2962)(**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power) primarily conveys the sense of the supreme one, the one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. Most of the NT uses refer to Jesus.

**Finds** (2147)(**heurisko**) means to find after searching and thus to discover. Source of our word **Eureka**".

**Hendriksen** says **so doing** "so doing" shows that the proper attitude on the part of the one who awaits the master's return is active service in the interest of those whom the master has entrusted to him. When the figure is interpreted, this means that the proper spirit in which believers should eagerly await as Savior the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil 3:20) is not the feverish nervousness of certain Thessalonians (2Th. 2:1, 2; 3:6-12), nor the nauseating lukewarmness of the Laodiceans (Rev 3:14-22), but the active faithfulness of the Smyrniots (Rev 2:8-11). (Ibid)

**Doing** (performing) (4160)(**poieo**) refers here to the idea of to carrying out, bringing about or accomplishing something.

"Making the most of today is the best way to be ready for tomorrow."

**When he comes** (**erchomai**) - Here of course a picture of Jesus' **parousia**.

Paul's calendar had only two days—'today' and 'that day'.

God says 'today'; the devil says 'tomorrow'. (Basil)

Today is God's time. Tonight your soul may be required. Set your watch with heaven and not the faulty timepieces of earth. (Vance Havner)

**Alfred Plummer** reminds us that "It is wise to cherish the hope (Ed: Not a "hope so" but a "hope sure.") that, in spite of past delay, He will now come soon (Rev 22:20-note). If that hope is allowed to perish, it will soon be supplanted by the hope that He will not come soon, or even by the wish that He may not come at all." (Ibid)

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**Are You Ready?** - Two unusual things happened as I was sitting in a restaurant having my usual breakfast of a bagel and coffee. First I read an article on the front page of the newspaper. It quoted a certain Christian author who theorized that Christ would call millions of Christians to heaven before sundown that particular day.

A few minutes later, a friend walked up, sat down, and began to tell me that his life had been dramatically changed. He said that for the first time in his life he was ready to meet the Lord. This was good news, since we had often discussed his unwillingness to live in a manner consistent with his claim to be a Christian.

He said he had decided that it was all or nothing. He had an amazing peace, and now he was also concerned about others. When I asked him what had happened, he told me he had read the book I had been reading about in the newspaper. He said he finally realized that whether Christ came on that day or another day, he would have to stand before the Lord eventually.

To claim that Christ will come today may result in a false alarm. But to believe that Christ may come today and that we will have to answer to Him will motivate us to live for Him. By: [Mart DeHaan](#)

Are you ready?

When we live with expectancy,  
Awaiting Christ's return,  
Our diligent obedience  
Becomes our main concern. —Sper

Plan as if Christ's return is many years away;  
live as if He will come today!

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**Good News Or Bad?** - Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. —Luke 12:37 -

A teacher tells her young students, "Class, I'm going down the hall to the school office for a few minutes. I don't expect to be away long. I'm sure there won't be any trouble. I'm trusting you to work on your assignments while I'm gone."

Fifteen minutes pass, then 20, then 40. Suddenly the teacher returns. Dennis has just thrown an eraser at Carol, who is doing her math. Steven is standing on the teacher's desk making faces. The students carrying out the teacher's instructions are delighted at the teacher's return, but Dennis and Steven wish she hadn't come back at all.

Jesus is coming back! That stands as both a warning and a promise throughout the New Testament, as in today's reading from Luke 12. It's good news or bad, depending on who hears it.

In church we sing songs like "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus." When we partake of the Lord's Supper, we "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1Corinthians 11:26). On Sunday morning, the second coming of Christ sounds like great news. But during the rest of the week, are we as ready for His return?

Jesus is coming back! It may be soon. It will be sudden. Is that good news or bad? It's up to you. By: [Haddon W. Robinson](#)

When Jesus comes to reward His servants,  
Whether it be noon or night,  
Faithful to Him will He find us watching,  
With our lamps all trimmed and bright? —Crosby

Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.  
—Matthew 24:42

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**Matthew 24:47 "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions: amen lego (1SPAI) humin hoti epi pasin tois huparchousin (PAPNPD) autou katastesei (3SFAI) auton:**

- **That:** Mt 25:21,23 Da 12:3 Lu 12:37,44, Lk 19:17 Lk22:29,30 Jn 12:26 2Ti 2:12 1Pe 5:4 Rev 3:21 21:7)

### **FAITHFUL SLAVES REWARDED WITH GREATER RESPONSIBILITY**

While everything Jesus says is noteworthy, whenever Jesus begins a sentence with "truly" or "amen" we should be especially alert to what He is going to say. In this context He is alluding to rewards. It is amazing enough grace that He saves us, but that He also rewards us is "crazy grace!"

**Present faithfulness  
will bring future promotion.**

**Spurgeon** - There are rewards for faithful service; — not of debt, but of grace; — not according to the law, but according to the

discipline of the house of God. Oh, that we may be such faithful servants that our Lord may make us rulers over all that he has!

**Billy Graham** - If God has given you more than your neighbors, dedicate it to Christ, and realize that you are only a steward of that which God has given you—some day you will have to give an account for every penny you spent.

**Truly I say to you** - "I solemnly assure you" - "For Amen I say to you."

**Amen** says "What I say is true and trustworthy."

**Truly** (Amen, Verily = "In very truth") (281)(**amen**) is a transliteration of the Hebrew noun **amen** into Latin, into English and into many other languages, so that it is essentially a word recognized by almost all modern cultures. In fact **amen** has been called the best-known word in human speech. To say "Amen" confirms a statement by someone else. However in Jesus' teachings (Himself the ultimate "Amen" = Rev 3:14), **amen** speaks of His supreme authority and conveys the sense of what follows is an important and trustworthy statement, so listen closely!

### **Readiness Will Be Rewarded**

**Put in charge** (2525)(**kathistemi** from **katã** = down + **hístēmi** = to set or stand) means literally "to stand or set down". Most of the NT uses of **kathistemi** are figurative as in the present passage and refer to "setting someone down in office" or appointing or assigning a person to a position of authority. To put in charge or to appoint one to administer an office. To set in an elevated position.

**Of all his possessions** - Not some but all!

**John Riddle** - The Lord's figure is timeless in application. He refers to the **requirements** of the servant; he is 'faithful and wise': to the **responsibility** of the servant; he is made 'ruler over all his household': to the **reliability** of the servant; when the lord returns, he finds the servant 'so doing': to the **reward** of the servant; he is made ruler over 'all his goods'. Here, then, is a servant in complete submission to an appreciative lord. The 'Lord of all' is no less appreciative of faithful service, as is clear in His call to serve, and by His assured compensation: 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour', John 12:26. (Day by Day: Moments with the Master)

**Hendriksen** - Jesus Himself at His glorious coming shall bestow upon all His faithful ones a high degree of glory and honor. Cf. Mt 25:21, 23, 34-40; Luke 19:17, 19. Does not Christ's promise also imply the assignment of certain specific tasks in the life hereafter, each task a matter of pure delight and satisfaction, and each in harmony with the individuality of the person for whom it is marked out? (Ibid)

The principle Jesus teaches is that the reward of **faithfulness** to one's **responsibility** is to be entrusted with **greater responsibility**:

Matthew 25:21, 23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.'... 23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

1Tim 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Rev 2:26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;

Rev 3:21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

**Scofield** on **rewards** - God, in the NT Scriptures, offers to the lost, salvation; and for the faithful service of the saved, He offers rewards. The passages are easily distinguished by remembering that salvation is invariably spoken of as a free gift (e.g. Jn 4:10; Ro 6:23; Eph 2:8-9), whereas rewards are earned by works (Mt 10:42; Luke 19:17; 1Cor 9:24 - 25; 2Ti 4:7-8; Rev 2:10; 22:12). A further distinction is that salvation is a present possession (Luke 7:50; Jn 3:36; 5:24; 6:47), whereas rewards are a future attainment, to be given at the rapture (2Ti 4:8; Rev 22:12).

**Robert Moffatt** - We shall have all eternity in which to celebrate our victories, but we have only one short hour before the sunset in which to win them.

**Matthew 24:48 "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' ean de eipe (3SAAS) o kakos doulos ekeinos en te kardia autou chronizei (3SPAI) mou o kurios:**

- **if:** Mt 18:32 Mt 25:26 Lu 19:22
- **Says:** Dt 9:4 Dt 15:9 2Ki 5:26 Isa 32:6 Mk 7:21 Lu 12:45 Jn 13:2 Ac 5:3 Ac 8:22
- **My:** Eccl 8:11 Eze 12:22,27 2Pe 3:3-5)

## **DANGER OF MISINTERPRETING MASTER'S DELAY**

**KJV** - But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

**But (de)** is a **term of contrast** - the other side of the picture! In contrast to the faithful and sensible slave, Jesus now exposes the evil slave's heart!

**J R Miller** - While there is reward for the servant who is *faithful*, there is punishment for the evil servant who *fails* in his duty. Judgment will come upon him suddenly. (Ibid)

**Evil** (bad) ([2556](#))(**kakos**) is a word which basically denotes a lack of something so that it is "bad" or "not as it ought to be." **Kakos** means not meeting accepted standards of behavior, and thus worthless or inferior. **Kakos** then speaks of lack of goodness, of a bad nature.

### **Empty professions are shown by evil conduct!**

**William MacDonald** - The evil servant represents a nominal (in name only) believer whose behavior is not affected by the prospect of his Master's soon return. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Sean O'Connell** on the **evil slave** - This man is harsh and godless because he believes in cheap grace: he thinks God is not looking and Jesus is not coming when he is sinning. We all know people like this outside the church. But this man seems to be inside the church. (That's the convicting twist of this parable.) Notice that he is called a "servant," he has "fellow servants," and he calls Jesus "my master." He is a professing believer-that is how we would say it. He might even be a churchgoer. He might even be a church-doer-he works on various committees, helps serve Communion, and smiles when you come through the front door. (Matthew Commentary-Preaching the Word)

**Phil Newton** writes that "The **master** puts his **slave** in charge of the household's physical needs, and then leaves without pinpointing the date of his return. Even the **evil slave** (Mt 24:48) acknowledged his master though he refused to comply with the master's desires. Jesus calls him, "**the master of that slave**," (Mt 24:50) so that we see very clearly the implication: Jesus Christ is Lord and Master of every person, even of those who refuse to bow to His Lordship over their lives. The uniqueness of the Christian is that he confesses Jesus Christ to be Lord and in that confession submits to the authority of Christ as Lord. He bows to Christ as Lord before judgment forces unwilling confession (Phil 2:9-11-note). **John MacArthur** expresses this clearly: "*Jesus is teaching that every person in the world holds his life, possessions, and abilities in trust from God, whether or not he acknowledges that trust or even acknowledges God. He will therefore be held accountable by his Creator for how he uses what he has been given!*" [MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Matthew 24-28, 79]. ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis = **ALL** will be held accountable!)

**Slave** ([1401](#))(**doulos**) see above.

A good, faithful, loyal slave will be found willingly waiting and humbly heeding the Commander's orders to **'Occupy** (aorist imperative) till I come." (Lk 19:13KJV).

**Newton** on **says in his heart** - The wise man, centuries before, said, "For as he thinks within himself, so he is" (Pr 23:7). Jesus warned concerning the religious hypocrites of Israel, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me" (Matt. 15:8). The evil slave had a little talk with himself. He had no trouble convincing himself of what he thought-that's characteristic of this kind of heart. He believed what he wanted to believe rather than what the master had spoken as truth. ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Hendriksen** on **says in his heart** - He is saying something "**in his heart**," that is, to himself. Now what a man says to himself is often even more important than what he says openly. See Pr. 23:7; Mt. 9:3, 21; Lk 12:17; 15:17-19. But within the secret precincts of his own being this particular man is conversing wickedly, irresponsibly. We are reminded of 1Peter 3:20; 2Peter 3:4. He is saying, "A



long, long time is going to elapse before the master returns. In the meantime let me have some worldly fun." (Ibid)

**John Calvin** said "The wicked have the seeds of hell in their own hearts."

**Heart (2588)(kardia)** does not refer to the physical organ but is always used figuratively in Scripture to refer to the seat and center of human life. The **heart** is the center of the personality, and controls the intellect, emotions, and will. No outward obedience is of the slightest value unless the heart turns to God. And Jesus taught that "out of the **heart** come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man." (Mt 15:19, 20, Mk 7:21-23).

**My master is not coming for a long time** - Jesus focuses on the wrong attitude of the evil slave. **Beware** when you lose a sense of the imminent return of Christ! It will likely be shortly followed by a heart attitude of apathy which devolves to a heart which compromises with worldliness and ultimately degrades to spiritual lethargy. It is dangerous to think that Christ cannot return until certain signs have been fulfilled. On the other hand, expectant and watchful readiness for His return is a great incentive to godly living and active witnessing.

**A T Robertson on my master is not coming for a long time** - That is the temptation and to give way to indulge in fleshly appetites or to pride of superior intellect... Scoffers will be asking where is the promise of the coming of Christ (2Pe 3:4). They will forget that God's clock is not like our clock and that a day with the Lord may be a thousand years or a thousand years as one day (2Pe 3:8). (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**John MacArthur** applies this section noting that "Unbelievers, represented by the **evil slave**, will also be held responsible for what they do with their stewardship from God. During the end time, some unbelievers will remain openly sinful and rebellious against God, caring nothing for His truth or His mercy. Others will be aware of their lost condition and of their need of a Savior but will put off believing, thinking they will have time after fulfilling their own selfish interests but before He comes in judgment. They will say by their lives if not by their words, **My master is not coming for a long time**. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

**Ryrie** - The evil servant's belief (that the master would not return soon) affected his conduct toward others (as is always true).

**Alexander Maclaren on My master is not coming for a long time** - This portrait presupposes that a long period will elapse before Christ comes. The secret thought of the evil servant is the thought of a time far down the ages from the moment of our Lord's speaking. It would take centuries for such a temper to be developed in the Church. What is the temper? A secret dismissal of the anticipation of the Lord's return, and that not merely because He has been long in coming, but as thinking that He has broken His word, and has not come when He said that He would. This unspoken dimming over of the expectation and unconfessed doubt of the firmness of the promise, is the natural product of the long time of apparent delay which the Church has had to encounter. It will cloud and depress the religion of later ages, unless there be constant effort to resist the tendency and to keep awake. The first generations were all aflame with the glad hope '**Maranatha**'—'**The Lord is at hand!**' Their successors gradually lost that keenness of expectation, and at most cried, 'Will not He come soon?' Their successors saw the starry hope through thickening mists of years; and now it scarcely shines for many, or at least is but a dim point, when it should blaze as a sun. ([Matthew 24:42-51 Watching for the King](#))

Recall that about 1 in every 20-25 NT passages refers directly or indirectly to the Lord's return, indicating that the Spirit wants to emblazon this truth on our hearts that it might rightly direct our thoughts, words and actions!

**Master** (owner)([2962](#))(**kurios**) see above.

Derek Prince asks "What is the feature of this evil servant? He says, "My master is delaying his coming." In other words, he has lost the vision of the imminent reality of the Lord's return. In churches where the coming of the Lord Jesus is not proclaimed as a reality, the standards of holiness will never be like those of the New Testament. Jesus' return is an essential truth to produce holiness in God's people." (Ibid)

**Not coming (5549)(chronizo)** means be late, to delay, to tarry, to linger, or to fail to come for a long time. The other sense is to continue in a state or place, to stay for a long time (Zacharias "**delay** in the Temple" = Lk 1:21).

Jesus used this verb to describe the bridegroom (ultimately a picture of Himself) '**delaying**' (Mt 25:5).

Jesus also used chronizo in Lk 12:45 "My master **will be a long time** in coming."

The writer of Hebrews uses chronizo as he issues a strong warning "for yet in a little while, He Who is coming (Messiah) will come, and He **will not delay**. (Heb 10:37)

**Chronizo** in **NAS** usage = is not coming for a long time(1), delay(2), delaying(1), will be a long time(2).

**Chronizo** - 5x/5v - Mt. 24:48; 25:5; Lk. 1:21; 12:45; Heb. 10:37

**Chronizo** - 15v in Septuagint - Ge 32:4; 34:19; Ex 32:1 (= the people saw that Moses **delayed** to come down from the mountain.); Dt. 4:25; 23:21 (= When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not **delay** to pay it, cp Eccl 5:4); Jdg 5:28; 2Sa 20:5; Ps. 40:17; 70:5 (= "Do not **delay**" requesting God's intervention); Pr. 31:21; Eccl. 5:4; Isa. 13:22; 51:14; Dan 9:19; Hab 2:3 (= "Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not **delay**.");

#### Liddell-Scott-Jones Definition of Chronizo

1. intransitive, spend time,
2. last, continue,
3. persevere in doing,
4. take time, tarry, linger,
5. of ailments, to be or become chronic
6. of wine, to be or become old, to have age

#### II Passive,

1. to be prolonged or delayed,
2. grow up,
3. to be located in time, made temporal,

The epistles of **John** and **Peter** encourage us to keep a healthy attitude of anticipation regarding the return of our Lord:

1John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

2Peter 3:11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

2Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

**Solomon** warns "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil." (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

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**Stephen Olford** - "My master is delaying his coming." —Matthew 24:48 - It is one of the Devil's greatest achievements to perpetrate this falsehood. For falsehood it is. The Scriptures declare "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise [of His coming], as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish" (2Peter 3:9). The apostle says, "The time is short" (1Cor. 7:29). The Lord Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming quickly" (Rev. 3:11). Nevertheless, there are those who are controlled by their own lusts and by the Devil, who say, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as... from the beginning" (2Peter 3:4). The apostle replies that these people are willingly ignorant of the Word of God.

**O Lord, make Your coming a living reality in my life; that the Hope may purify my heart even as You are pure.**(According to Your Word)

**Matthew 24:49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards;: kai archetai (3SAMS) tuptein (PAN) tous sundoulous autou esthie (3SPAS) de kai pine meta ton methuonton (PAPMPG):**

- **Beat:** Isa 66:5 2Co 11:20 1Pe 5:3 3Jn 1:9,10 Rev 13:7 Rev 16:6 Rev 17:6
- **And:** Mt 7:15 1Sa 2:13-16,29 Isa 56:12 Eze 34:3 Mic 3:5 Ro 16:18 Php 3:19 Titus 1:11,12 2Pe 2:13,14 Jude 1:12

### **MASTER'S DELAY ENERGIZES EVIL ENDEAVORS**

In Mt 24:48 the evil slave lost a fear of his master returning at any moment. This mindset now shows itself in his actions. There is a practical application because the way a man or woman thinks in the heart, determines how they will behave. How are you thinking

about the Lord's return? Are you living with a sense that it would be today? Or are you becoming lax in your lifestyle because you feel like it will be a long delay? Peter exhorts his readers who are being tried with various afflictions writing "if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in (reverential) fear (not dread) during the time of your stay upon earth." (1Pe 1:17)

**Begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards** - Remember that the way we *behave* says far more about what we *believe* than do our words. In other words, our *lives* speak louder than our *lips*! In the present case this slave's *conduct* belied his *confession*. *Profession* of Christ without *possession* of Christ is the most deadly and dangerous of all deceptions for it will destine one to destruction! As Jesus taught "you will know them by their fruits." (Mt 7:20)

**J R Miller** - There are several things said here about this unfaithful servant. He is unbelieving. The delay of his lord leads him to conclude that he is not going to return at all. His unbelief leads him to abuse his position—he becomes tyrannical and despotic in his treatment of those placed under his care. Then his own habits become unworthy; we find him eating and drinking with drunken men. These are characteristics of those who reject Christ through unbelief and become unfaithful. (Devotional Hours with the Bible)

**Alexander Maclaren** - He was an 'evil' servant who said so in his heart. He was evil because he said it, and he said it because he was evil; for the yielding to sin and the withdrawal of love from Jesus dim the desire for His coming, and make the whisper that He delays, a hope; while, on the other hand, the hope that He delays helps to open the sluices, and let sin flood the life. So an outburst of cruel masterfulness and of riotous sensuality is the consequence of the dimmed expectation. There would have been no usurpation of authority over Christ's heritage... if that hope had not become faint. If professing Christians lived with the great white throne and the heavens and earth fleeing away before Him that sits on it (Rev 20:11), ever burning before their inward eye, how could they wallow amid the mire of animal indulgence? ([Matthew 24:42-51 Watching for the King](#))

**Phil Newton** - The one who fails to take seriously the revelation of God in the gospel inevitably pursues assorted paths of sinful behavior. In this case, it showed up in relationships and personal indulgences: he began "**to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards.**" The way he treats others exposes a heart that is corrupted with self-centeredness. He has an idol within the depths of the heart—a shrine to himself in which he thinks that the world revolves around his desires and that other people exist to give him wicked pleasures. So he can hurt and betray others, and justify every action. He can indulge his lusts, and consider it his right in this world. Jesus calls him "**that evil slave.**" His wicked behavior finally shows what was long hidden in his heart. He failed to see that he, along with every other person in the world, must answer to the Master. ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Eat and drink with drunkards** - **Eat** and **drink** are both in the present tense. This is not an occasional lapse but is his habitual behavior! In essence he carouses (participates in drunken revel, dissolute behavior), but his carousing will come to crashing cessation at Christ's coming!

**MacArthur** comments that "The evil activities Jesus then mentions, the beating of **fellow slaves** and eating and drinking **with drunkards**, are not meant to characterize every unbeliever during the Tribulation. But those activities reflect the attitude many of them will have. Because they think the Lord will not come for a long time, they will feel free to indulge themselves in whatever sins and pleasures they desire." (Ibid)

**Thomas Ice** - This parable provides an instance in which what one thinks about the future will impact their behavior in the present. The servant who has a proper future orientation thinks that his master could return at any time. This is an important reason why he acts responsibly in the present. On the other hand, the servant who says, "my master is not coming for a long time," acts irresponsibly. Therefore, it is very important what one thinks about the future since it impacts present behavior. ([Matthew 24:45-51 The Sensible Servant](#))

**John** describes the purifying power of looking for the Master:

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope (to be like Him when we see Him) fixed on Him **purifies** himself, just as He is pure. (1Jn 3:2-3+)

**Jesus** repeats this in Luke 12:45-48+

"But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. 47 "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

**Matthew 24:50 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: echei (3SFAI) o kurios tou doulou ekeinou en hemera e ou prosdoka (3SPAI) kai en hora e ou ginoskei (3SPAI):**

- **Will come:** Mt 24:42-44 Pr 29:1 1Th 5:2,3 Rev 3:3

## MASTER'S RETURN UNEXPECTED

**KJV** - The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

**Master** (owner)([2962](#))(kurios) see above.

**Slave** ([1401](#))(doulos) see above.

**MacArthur** writes that to these evil slaves "the **master** will not come as Savior and King to bless and to reward but will come as Judge and Executioner to condemn and to destroy. He will **cut** the unbelieving slave **in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites** in eternal fire (Mt 24:51). (Ibid)

**Newton on day... hour** - The use of a Hebraism paralleling day and hour emphasizes the certainty of Christ's return and the equal certainty that it is not on our timetable. The Master will return and with His return will be a reckoning. Each of the stories that Jesus tells of the Ten Virgins and the Parable of the Talents presses home this point. Christ comes back to judge and separate the righteous from the unrighteous, the wise from the foolish. His first coming bears witness to Jesus Christ coming as Savior and Redeemer. His return assures us that He comes to judge as Lord and King. None will escape His judgment. Though men cry out to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb," there will be no hiding (Rev. 6:16). He surprises the presumptuous when He returns. "The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him." The careless and wanton display of sin in our day reveals presumption. Men presume that God is not God. Or if there is a God, He is at least nothing more than a big teddy bear that will do nothing about our sin. Can't you see the picture painted by our text? The slave tells himself that the master will be long delayed in returning, that he has plenty of time to live it up! Then he plays the big-shot, beating other slaves when they don't do what he tells them and spending his time with wild living. Like "Sharkey" in the 3rd volume of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy, he presumes that the rule of the king will not come to him, so he abuses others and ruins people's lives and pursues his own desires. But the day of reckoning comes! ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Expect** ([4328](#))(prosdokao from prōs = towards - adds the idea of "mental direction" to the already existing meaning of the verb + dokáo = look for denoting direction of one's mind toward something) means literally to look forward toward, to wait for, to look for, to anticipate. It means to give thought to something that is in the future and the context indicates whether one does this looking/waiting in a hopeful sense, with a longing, with fear (wait with anxiety, live in suspense), or in a neutral (or indifferent) state of mind. It describes the attitude saints should have as anticipating, waiting with watchfulness, being in expectation.

John uses prosdokao writing "And as Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him." Clearly the context is His earthly life, but read the words applying them to His future return. Interesting! **This begs a simple application question** - Would I welcome His return today because I had been looking for it with a sense of longing? Interesting!

Prosdokao: 16x in 15v - Mt 11:3; 24:50; Lk 1:21; 3:15; 7:19, 20; 8:40; 12:46; Acts 3:5; 10:24; 27:33; 28:6; 2Pe 3:12, 13, 14:

**Know** ([1097](#))(ginosko) refers to experiential knowledge, not merely the accumulation of known facts.

**Morris** - Jesus is underlining the truth that delay does not mean cancellation. (Ibid)

**Sean O'Connell** - The most neglected theme in the modern church is the theme of judgment. The second most neglected theme is the theme that the church shall be judged: "judgment [will] ... begin [with] the household of God" (1 Peter 4:17). The third most neglected theme is the theme that the individual Christian shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account for what he has done (16:27; cf. Romans 14:12). Other than a few short lines in a few verses, the emphasis Jesus gives in our text to his second coming is not that of salvation but of judgment. Before Jesus goes to the cross (to take on the judgment of God on our behalf) in chapters 26, 27, he first judges the world and the church in chapters 23, 24, and 25. Judgment is not a dirty word. It's not a bad word. It's not an old covenant word. It's a holy word. It's a good word. It's a new covenant word. It's a word from Jesus, the loving Lord of the universe. If your father or mother told you, "The stove is hot, don't touch it, you'll get burned," that's a warning that comes from love. If your Savior told you, "Unbelief and evil behavior is harmful, don't touch, you'll be damned," that's a warning that comes from love. The godless guru and the sentimental swami speak only of love but know nothing about love. If judgment is a

reality, then love warns of judgment. And here the Lord of love warns his church, especially those spiritually asleep within it, that "the wicked will not stand in the judgment" (Psalm 1:5). They will be cut to pieces (Mt 24:51, a graphic image of divine retribution) and assigned a place ("hell," as Jesus calls it elsewhere) where "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." That is another graphic image, this time an image of regret-"I knew better"-and sorrow and perhaps rage toward God. (Ibid)

**Matthew 24:51 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: kai dichotomesei (3SFAI) auton kai to meros autou meta ton hupokriton thesei (3SFAI) ekei estai (3SFMI) o klauthmos kai o brugmos ton odonton:**

- **Assign:** Job 20:29 Isa 33:14 Lk 12:46
- **There:** Mt 8:12 Mt 22:13 Mt 25:30 Lk 13:28)

## **MASTER'S PUNISHMENT AT THE PAROUSIA**

**Phillips paraphrase** says the masters servant "will punish him severely and send him off to share the penalty of the unfaithful - to his bitter sorrow and regret!"

It should be noted that while most expositors interpret these individuals as unbelievers who will be assigned to that place in hell, there are a few (Grant Richison) who see these as believers who will "lose their rewards." My view is that the context and the specific wording Jesus uses (e.g., see Jesus' other uses of **gnashing** - Mt 8:12, Mt 13:42, 50, 22:13, 25:30, Lk 13:28 - every other use is clearly in the context of eternal separation!) strongly favor that these are not believers but professors who were not genuine believers.

**Absolute evil  
calls for absolute judgment.**

--Os Guinness

One writer who I highly respect, Dr Warren Wiersbe, actually has both interpretations - (1) In 1992 he wrote "This language **suggests that loss of reward** will be a difficult experience." (Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament, 1992) (2) In 1996, he wrote "During the Tribulation, a division will take place: Some people **will perish in judgment** (be taken away), while others will remain to enter into the kingdom." (The Bible exposition commentary, 1996) I note the publishing dates and it seems as if Wiersbe changed his interpretation in the most recent publication. Interesting.

**Thomas Ice** - Christ was revealing that if people are unfaithful to the stewardship entrusted to them, and if they ignore the signs that will be given of the return of the Lord, they will be kept from the kingdom to be established at His coming.

**R T France** - the imagery of the parable indicates that it is here the fate of someone who was ostensibly an insider but has failed to fulfill his master's expectations. (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)

**Craig Blomberg** - The picture of the slave caught beating his fellow servants does not portray Christians caught in sin and suddenly damned. Instead, it pictures people who delay coming to terms with God in Christ for too long, so that they suddenly find, whether due to his return or due to their own deaths, that it is too late to repent. God has commanded all individuals to be good stewards of his creation (Gen 1:26-28) and therefore holds everyone accountable. Those who prove unfaithful stewards can anticipate eternal damnation (Mt 24:51). (The New American Commentary)

**God does not pay weekly,  
but he pays at the end.**

**Spurgeon** - He was a servant, you see; so this is a warning, not to the outside world, but to you who are inside the nominal church, and who profess to be servants of God; and it is especially a warning to those of us who are ministers of the gospel. Oh, that we may never begin to smite our fellow servants! Of course, we shall not do it with the fist, but we may do it with the tongue; and may we never be numbered with those who are living for the delights of the flesh! If so, see what must come to us.

The weight of Jesus' words of warning makes on one want to have a sign posted on the door of his office or house -

**"Test** (present imperative = continually!!!) yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** (present imperative = continually!!!) yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?" (2Cor 13:5-note)

**Ivor Powell** agrees writing that "Such a warning coming from the lips of Jesus should be sufficient to make every professing Christian examine the quality of his faith and conduct. Apathy is a cancer which destroys the soul."

**Cut ... in pieces** - As discussed below this Greek verb **dichotomeo** literally means to cut into two parts. While this could be interpreted literally (cp Da 2:5, 3:29, Heb 11:37 "sawn in two" - same idea but not dichotomeo), it is clear he is still alive after being cut in pieces (although this could be his soul in hell, which is in a sense "alive" forever). In either event, this verb clearly is intended to depict a severe degree of punishment in this life possibly but especially in the life to come! The evil slave *sowed* a beating but he will *reap* being "cut... in pieces!" As **John MacArthur** says "To Jews it would therefore carry the unmistakable idea of destruction and death." (Ibid)

## "DICHOTOMIZED!"

The evil slave sowed beating and will reap cutting! (cp Hos 8:7 " they sow the wind, And they reap the whirlwind.", Gal 6:7, 8note)

**Cut... in pieces** (saw asunder) (1371)(**dichotomeo** from **dícha** = separately + **tome** = to cut) means literally to cut in two, to cut in pieces and figuratively to punish with greatest severity. In the present context this verb is associated with a literal, eternal judgment. Schlier says that "Behind the term, which means to cleave, is the ancient penalty of cutting in two with the sword or saw." (TDNT)

**Dichotomeo** gives us our English word **dichotomy** which describes a division between two things that are or are represented as being opposed or entirely different. As **Phil Newton** says in Mt 24:51 we see that "the separation involves divine justice: separation from the promises in the gospel, relationship to God through Christ, and comfort in the Father's house. Jesus has already laid siege upon the hypocrites in Mt 23:1-39. Their place is one of extreme anguish and misery that never ends." ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Dichotomeo** is used in the literal sense in the Septuagint translation of Ex 29:17 (the only Lxx use) describing the preparation of an animal sacrifice ("**cut** the ram into its **pieces**"). To Jewish ears, Jesus' use of this word would clearly convey an unmistakable image of destruction and death!

There are only 2 NT uses of **dichotomeo** both in a similar context describing the punishment for an evil slave - Mt 24:51 and Lk 12:46.

**Moulton-Milligan** describe a secular use of **dichotomeo** - The word is found in a very touching sepulchral inscription from Lycaonia which on account of its simplicity and pathos may be given entire, "Gordianus to my sweetest wife Gaiana, sweetest beyond honey, who lived with me honorably for a little time, and to my firstborn son Ambrosius, who **cut** me **off** from living through many years. For as soon as he had fulfilled fifty days he followed his sainted mother. But I shall come down to you when I have fulfilled my appointed portion of life."

**Henry Alford** on **cut in pieces** - The expression here is perhaps not without a symbolical reference to that dreadful sundering of the conscience and practice which shall be the reflective torment of the condemned:—and by the mingling and confounding of which only is the anomalous life of the willful sinner made in this world tolerable. ([Greek Testament Critical Exegetical Commentary](#))

**John Walvoord** notes that "The implication of this passage is that belief in the second coming of Christ is linked to belief in the first coming of Christ. If one accepts what Christ was and did in His first coming, he will also accept what Christ will be and do at His second coming and, accordingly, will live in preparation." (Every Prophecy of the Bible)

A **hypocrite** is one who pretends to be other than he really is. **Does that describe your spiritual life?** Raising your hands singing lustily on Sunday and reaching for worldly lusts during the week? While Paul does not use the actual word hypocrite, nevertheless he gives us a good description of one describing those "holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power." (2Ti 3:5-note)

**Hendriksen** - A hypocrite he was indeed, for he had accepted and then betrayed the confidence which his master had placed in him. When he was appointed, he had done nothing to disabuse his superior of the idea, "This man will be a faithful and sensible household manager." Yet he had proved to be the very opposite. (Ibid)

**John MacArthur** makes an interesting observation regarding this section noting "The fact that such persons will be assigned along **with the hypocrites** suggests that they were not hypocrites. Just as today, many people in the end time will be open and honest about their unbelief, even wearing such honesty as a badge of intellectual and moral integrity. But honest unbelievers are just as lost as **hypocrites** who pretend to have faith. They will go to the same place as the religious phonies they feel superior to and despise." (Ibid)

**TOMORROW, TOMORROW  
I'LL LOVE YA TOMORROW**

## YOU'RE ONLY A DAY AWAY!

--from the musical Annie

**William Barclay** tells a story illustrating the danger of spiritual procrastination, neglecting the truth that Jesus might be only a day away!

There is a fable which tells of three apprentice devils who were coming to this earth to finish their apprenticeship. They were talking to Satan, the chief of the devils, about their plans to tempt and ruin men. The first said, "I will tell them there is no God." Satan said, "That will not delude many, for they know that there is a God." The second said, "I will tell men there is no hell." Satan answered, "You will deceive no one that way; men know even now that there is a hell for sin." The third said, "I will tell men there is no hurry." "Go," said Satan, "and you will ruin them by the thousand." The most dangerous of all delusions is that there is plenty of time. The most dangerous day in a man's life is when he learns that there is such a word as *tomorrow*. There are things which must not be put off, for no man knows if for him tomorrow will ever come. ([Matthew 24 Commentary - Daily Study Bible](#)) (Read also 2Cor 6:1-2)

**Comment:** "And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain- for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE **TIME** I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE **DAY** OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU"; behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE **TIME**," behold, **now** is "THE **DAY** OF SALVATION" (2Cor 6:1-2)

**Don't put off today  
what you cannot do tomorrow!  
Tomorrow may be one day too late!**

**Hypocrites** ([5273](#)) ( **hupokrites** from **hupō**<sup>3</sup> = under, indicating secrecy + **krino** = to judge) describes one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who assumes and speaks or acts under a feigned character. The primary meaning of this word in ancient Greek was "one who answers" and then, "a stage-actor"; it was a custom for Greek and Roman actors to speak in large masks with mechanical devices for augmenting the force of the voice; hence the word became used metaphorically of "a dissembler, a hypocrite." It is found only in the Synoptists, and always used by the Lord, fifteen times in Matthew. A hypocrite, one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who assumes and speaks or acts under a feigned character.

**David Turner** - Banishment with the hypocrites alludes to the most heinous sin in Matthew (cf. Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13, 23, 25, 27, 29). (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)

**Will Durant** - The actor - who is always a male - is not disdained as in Rome, but is much honored; he is exempt from military service, and is allowed safe passage through the lines in time of war. He is called hypocrites, but this word means answerer - i.e., to the chorus; only later will the actor's role as an impersonator lead to the use of the word as meaning hypocrite. (The Story of Civilization II, The Life of Greece, by Will Durant, page 380)

**In that place - What place?** In context this refers to hell.

**Christopher Morgan** asks "What does hell as destruction and death mean? Douglas Moo ably answers. Destruction and its related words in the New Testament "refer to the situation of a person or object that has lost the essence of its nature or function." Moo notes that destroy and destruction can refer to barren land (Ezek. 6:14; 14:16), to ointment that is poured out wastefully (Matt. 26:8; Mark 14:4), to wineskins with holes that no longer function (Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37), to a lost coin (Luke 15:9), or even to the entire world that "perished," that is, ceased to be an inhabited world, in the flood (2 Peter 3:6). Moo concludes, "In none of these cases do the objects cease to exist; they cease to be useful or to exist in their original, intended state."" (What Is Hell?)

**See also study of verb for destroy - apollumi**

## QUOTES RELATED TO HELL

Think lightly of hell and you will think lightly of the cross. - C. H. Spurgeon

The wicked in hell shall be always dying but never dead. - Thomas Watson

There are no agnostics in hell. - Geoffrey B. Wilson

On one occasion Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, the agnostic lecturer of the last century, was announced to give an address on hell. He declared he would prove conclusively that hell was a wild dream of some scheming

theologians who invented it to terrify credulous people. As he was launching into his subject, a half-drunken man arose in the audience and exclaimed, "Make it strong, Bob. There's a lot of us poor fellows depending on you. If you are wrong, we are all lost. So be sure you can prove it clear and plain." No amount of reasoning can nullify God's sure Word. He has spoken as plainly of a hell for the finally impenitent as of a heaven for those who are saved. - George Sweeting

God is ultimately unavoidable.

The safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. C. S. LEWIS, *The Screwtape Letters*

Let it be considered that if our lives be not a journey to heaven they will be a journey to hell. - Jonathan Edwards

He shall have hell as a debt who will not have heaven as a gift. - Anon.

The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions. A. W. Tozer

No one is redeemed except through unmerited mercy, and no one is condemned except through merited judgment. - Augustine

One of the horrors of hell is the undying memory of a misspent life—"Son, remember" (Luke 16:25).

It does not require a decision to go to hell.

Nothing has contributed more powerfully to wean me from all that held me down to earth than the thought, constantly dwelt upon, of death and of the last judgment. - Augustine

'Too late' is written on the gates of hell. - Anon.

'For ever' is the most solemn saying in the Bible. - J. C. Ryle

Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset: eternity to the godless is a night that has no sunrise. - Thomas Watson

Ever is a short word but it has no end. - Thomas Watson

"Totally without hope one cannot live." To live without hope is to cease to live. Hell is hopelessness. It is no accident that above the entrance to Dante's hell is the inscription: "Leave behind all hope, you who enter here." - Feodor Dostoevski

The wicked have a never-dying worm and the godly a never-fading crown. - Thomas Watson

I desire to have both heaven and hell ever in my eye, while I stand on this isthmus of life, between two boundless oceans. - John Wesley

The most awful fact in the world is the fact of hell and that some of our dearest relations and friends with whom we have lived, worked and worshipped will spend an eternity of anguish, away from God, eternally unforgiven, eternally doomed. - Isaac H. A. Ababio

To believe in heaven but not in hell is to declare that there were times when Jesus was telling the truth and times when he was lying. - John Blanchard

No man is entirely without inklings of judgment to come. - J. I. Packer

The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth are but ice in comparison of the fire of hell. - Thomas Brooks

Those who hated God here will hate him there; the morally careless in daily life will be morally careless still; the defiant will continue defiant, and the unclean will remain uncleansed and unrepentant. - J. A. Motyer

Eternal death is not the cessation of existence, but rather the loss of that life of fellowship with God which alone is worthy of the name. - D. Edmond Hiebert

Time shall be no more when judgment comes, and when time is no more change is impossible. - C. H. Spurgeon

A man who realizes in any measure the awful force of the words eternal hell won't shout about it, but will speak with all tenderness. - A. A. Hodge



Would you know what makes heaven heaven? It is communion with God. And would you know what makes hell hell? It is to be forsaken of God. - R. B. Kuiper

The safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without sign posts. - C. S. Lewis

There are no personal relationships in hell. - C. S. Lewis

If you are still unconverted, thank God that you are still not in hell. - Andrew Murray

You will be a believer some day. If you never believe on earth, you will believe in hell. - Brownlow North

An endless hell can no more be removed from the New Testament than an endless heaven can. - J. I. Packer

As surely as God is eternal, so surely is heaven an endless day without night and hell an endless night without day. - J. C. Ryle

The saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible and through the midst of warnings and invitations. - J. C. Ryle

I do not know if there is a more dreadful word in the English language than that word 'lost'. - C. H. Spurgeon

It will be hell to a man to have his own voluntary choice confirmed, and made unchangeable. - C. H. Spurgeon

#### Related Resources:

- Eternal Punishment - on site
- [Gehenna - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Gehenna - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Gehenna - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Gehenna - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Gehenna - The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#)
- [Gehenna - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)
- [Hell - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Hell - American Tract Society Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Hell - Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#)

**Scofield** has a summary on Judgments in Scripture noting that seven are invested with special significance. These are: (1) the judgment of the believer's sins in the cross of Christ (John 12:31); (2) the believer's self-judgment (1Cor 11:31); (3) the judgment of the believer's works (2Cor 5:10); (4) the judgment of the individual Gentiles at the return of Christ to the earth (Mt 25:32); (5) the judgment of Israel at the return of Christ to the earth (Ezek 20:37); (6) the judgment of angels after the 1000 years (Jude 6); and (7) the judgment of the wicked dead with which the history of the present earth ends. (Rev 20:12).

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### A VIVID WARNING OF THE HORRORS OF HELL- WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH

**J R Miller** - The punishment of the unfaithful servant is vividly described. It is a fearful thing to live regardless (without paying attention to the present condition) of life's sacred trusts and solemn responsibilities. It is a terrible thing to die after having lived thus. We should compare these two pictures—the faithful and the unfaithful servant—and know positively which one of the two is our own portrait. (Ibid)

**MacArthur** - When He appears, the same resplendent glory and power (see Matt. 24:30) that will draw His own people to Him in loving gratitude will repel most unbelievers in hateful indignation. For the former it will be the time of final reception and redemption; for the latter it will be the time of final rejection and judgment. All unbelievers—those who completely reject the Lord and those who think one day they will trust in Him, those who are honest in their unbelief and those who are hypocritical in their faith—will suffer the same destiny of hell. In that place there will be **weeping...and the gnashing of teeth**, figures representing inconsolable grief and unremitting torment. The thrust of Jesus' warning is not simply to inform unbelievers about the horror of facing an eternal hell but to use that dreadful prospect as a motive for believing in Him in order to escape it. His appeal is to believe while there is opportunity, rather than foolishly wait for a supposedly more propitious time that might never come and might not be taken advantage of if it did come. (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

**Weeping and gnashing of teeth** - (Mt 8:12, 13:42, 50, 22:13, Mt 24:51, Luke 13:28) This is a description of the eternal agony unbelievers will experience in the Lake of Fire. Notice that in Luke 13:28 Jesus teaches that those being tormented by fire and

brimstone will also be tormented for they will be able to " see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God!" This is absolutely mind boggling and makes one want to fervently, frequently pray for the unsaved and preach the Gospel!

**Stanley Toussaint:** "Invariably throughout Matthew this phrase refers to the retribution of those who are judged before the millennial kingdom is established (Mt 8:12; Mt13:42, Mt 13:50; Mt 22:13; Mt 25:30)." (BORROW [Behold The King: A Study of Matthew](#) - Cyril Barber's review "*It is fair to say that Toussaint has produced a work that places all Bible-believing Christians in his debt*").

**Lawrence Richards** - This was why repentance and faith in Jesus are such urgent matters. Individuals who failed to turn to Him will be shut out of the future kingdom, where "there will be weeping ... and gnashing of teeth." (The 365 Day Devotional Commentary. Victor Books)

**Hendriksen on weeping** - As to this **weeping**: it is not here a shedding of tears because of true sorrow for the sins one has committed (Mt. 26:75; Mk 14:72; Lk 7:38; cf. 2Chr. 34:27), or for transgressions by means of which others have dishonored God (Ps 119:136; 2Cor 2:4; Phil. 3:18). Nor does it occur because of impending separation from dear ones (Acts 20:37, 38), or because of being the object of unjust treatment by other people (1Sa 1:7, 8). It is not a result of wounded pride because of not getting one's way (1Ki 21:5-7). The present weeping is not brought about by temporal calamity (Ge 27:38; Lam 1:16), by bereavement (Dt. 34:8; 2Sa 1:17 ff.; Mt 2:18), or by deep yearning and sympathy (Ge 21:16, 17; 43:30). As far as God's people are concerned, there will come a day when every tear will have been wiped away (Isa 65:19; Rev 7:17; 18:15, 19). **The tears of which Jesus speaks... are those of inconsolable, never-ending wretchedness, and utter, everlasting hopelessness.** The accompanying grinding or gnashing of teeth (cf. Mt 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28-note) denotes excruciating pain and frenzied anger. This grinding of teeth, too, will never come to an end or cease (Da 12:2; Mt. 3:12; 18:8; 25:46; Mk 9:43, 48; Lk 3:17; Jude 1:6, 7; and Rev. 14:9-11). (Ibid)

**Thomas Brooks** - Could every damned sinner weep a whole ocean, yet all those oceans together would never extinguish one spark of eternal fire.

**John Blanchard** - It is never true to say that something 'hurts like hell'; nothing hurts like hell... When that intensity of anguish is added to a greater grief than has ever consumed any human being on earth, this single description by Jesus of what it will mean to be in hell should make any sensible person tremble at even the possibility that this might be his or her experience beyond the grave. (Whatever Happened to Hell?)

**Christopher Morgan** on the **weeping** and **gnashing of teeth** - this suffering is conscious. If hell did not consist of conscious suffering, it would be hard to see how it could in any meaningful sense be worse than death, be worse than earthly suffering, be filled with weeping and gnashing of teeth, or be a place of misery. These images communicate that people in hell will be aware that they are suffering just punishment. (What Is Hell?)

**Weeping** ([2805](#)) (**klauthmos** from **klaio** = to weep or bewail) is a noun which describes a strong inner emotion which is evoked in weeping, crying, lamentation (cries of grief, the act of bewailing as an expression of sorrow). Klauthmos in the Lxx describes Joseph's weeping over his brothers (Ge 45:2, 46:29)

Someone made the sobering observation that "Hell is a place of *conscious* sorrow for the *unconscious* would not weep."

The Psalmist writes...

Psalm 112:10 The wicked will see it (Ps 112:9) and be vexed, He will gnash his teeth and melt away. The desire of the wicked will perish.

**Spurgeon comments:** The last verse sets forth very forcibly the contrast between the righteous and the ungodly, thus making the blessedness of the godly appear all the more remarkable. Usually we see [Ebal](#) and [Gerizim](#), the blessing and the curse, set the one over against the other, to invest both with the greater solemnity.

**The wicked shall see it** (Ps 112:9), **and be grieved.** The ungodly shall first see the example of the saints to their own condemnation, and shall at last behold the happiness of the godly and to the increase of their eternal misery. The child of wrath shall be obliged to witness the blessedness of the righteous, though the sight shall make him gnaw his own heart. He shall fret and fume, lament and wax angry, but he shall not be able to prevent it, for God's blessing is sure and effectual.

**Ed comment:** **Beloved do you understand what Spurgeon is saying the Psalmist is saying?** Clearly the lost in hell will see what they have lost! Oh my! What a horrible thought. Jesus echoes this incredible truth in Luke 13:28 saying ""There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out.")

**He shall gnash with his teeth.** Being very wrathful, and exceedingly envious, he would fain grind the

righteous between his teeth; but as he cannot do that, he grinds his teeth against each other.

**And melt away.** The heat of his passion shall melt him like wax, and the sun of God's providence shall dissolve him like snow, and at the last the fire of divine vengeance shall consume him as the fat of rams. How horrible must that life be which like the snail melts as it proceeds, leaving a slimy trail behind. Those who are grieved at goodness deserve to be worn away by such an abominable sorrow.

**The desire of the wicked shall perish.** He shall not achieve his purpose, he shall die a disappointed man. By wickedness he hoped to accomplish his purpose -- that very wickedness shall be his defeat. While the righteous shall endure for ever, and their memory shall be always green; the ungodly man and his name shall rot from off the face of the earth. He desired to be the founder of a family, and to be remembered as some great one: he shall pass away and his name shall die with him. How wide is the gulf which separates the righteous from the wicked (Lk 16:26), and how different are the portions which the Lord deals out to them (Lk 16:23,24). O for grace to be blessed of the Lord! This will make us praise him with our whole heart.

**Gnashing** (1030)(**brugmos**) describes striking, grinding or biting of teeth together. In the context of the NT uses **brugmos** is a manifestation or picture of the extreme anguish and utter despair of those consigned to eternal torment in hell. Moreover, it seems likely that this suffering is both emotional/spiritual and physical (involving bodily resurrection) (John 5:28-29).

**J S Lang** comments that Jesus' description of **weeping and gnashing of teeth** expresses "the agony of eternal torment... perhaps more than any images of **fire and brimstone**, the **weeping and gnashing of teeth** suggest pain, regret, and eternal sorrow of an earthly life wasted. (1,001 Things You Always Wanted to Know About Angels, Demons, and the Afterlife. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

**Brugmos** - 7x/7v - Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Lk. 13:28 and one use in the Septuagint - Pr 19:12 where "roaring of a lion" is translated "gnawing of a lion."

**Martin Luther** - The gnashing of teeth ... despair, when men see themselves abandoned by God.

**John Blanchard** - The phrase '**gnashing of teeth**' focuses on another emotion, as we can discover by looking at its use elsewhere in Scripture. At one point in his life, when he felt at the end of his tether, Job cried out, 'God assails me and tears me in his anger and **gnashes** (Ed: Lxx uses the related verb form = **brucho** = to grind, gnash teeth - used also in Act 7:54) his teeth at me' (Job 16:9). When Stephen was about to be stoned to death he accused his opponents of betraying and murdering Jesus, the righteous Son of God. Their response was predictable and passionate: 'When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him' (Acts 7:54). From these two examples we can see that 'gnashing of teeth' is a way of expressing anger. In hell, that anger will be more intense than any this world has ever seen. The wicked will be angry at the things which gave them pleasure on earth but now give them pain in hell; angry at the sins that wrecked their lives; angry at themselves for being who they are; angry at Satan and his helpers for producing the temptations which led them into sin; and, even while compelled to acknowledge his glory and goodness, angry at God for condemning them to this dreadful fate. (Whatever Happened to Hell?)

**Robert Morey** commenting on Jesus' description writes that "The rabbinic picture used by Christ of people "weeping and gnashing their teeth" in the excruciating pain caused by the fires of **Gehenna** cannot be ignored or downplayed (Mt13:42, 50). In Re 14:10-note, Re 14:11-note, we are explicitly told that they will be tormented by sulfuric fire...for all eternity...without rest day or night. The words of the Apostle could not be clearer or plainer. The text says "tormented," not annihilated. (BORROW [Death and the Afterlife](#))

**Steven Cole** says that Jesus' fearful description of hell should serve to remind all procrastinators that "Salvation requires our careful self-examination because of the horrible consequences of making a mistake. Weeping and gnashing of teeth doesn't sound like a fun experience, especially when it continues through all eternity! Think of it as an eternal root canal without anesthesia! These men had assumed that they would be included in the kingdom. They were Jews, not "filthy" Gentiles. They were related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But now they find themselves shut out and, of all things, those "dirty" Gentiles from east and west and north and south are inside, dining with the patriarchs and prophets! Contrary to popular modern views, hell will not be a wild party for all the wicked. And, contrary to most popular thinking, hell will not be just for the worst of the worst—the Hitlers of this world. These men were religious Jews who thought they were deserving of heaven. But they would not submit to Jesus and so they faced the horrible eternal consequence of being in that place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Because there will be many religious people in hell, all of us who attend church should examine ourselves to make sure that we are not cast into that place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. ([Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#))

**Teeth Provided!** - An old-fashioned, hell-and damnation preacher was scolding his congregation for their terrible misdeeds. "Remember what it says in the Bible," he thundered. "Jesus told us that for those who do evil there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 22:13] At this point the preacher saw a very old parishioner grinning up at him, unconcerned, toothless. He

accepted the challenge and pointed at the grinning gums, "Don't worry, James Lippincott. Teeth will be provided!" (Streiker, L. D. - Nelson's Big Book of Laughter)

**Hendricksen** comments that...

The weeping is that of inconsolable, never-ending wretchedness, and utter, everlasting hopelessness. The accompanying grinding or gnashing of teeth is that of frenzied anger, unmitigated rage. For this weeping and grinding of teeth there are three causes:

- a. They "see" (are made aware of the presence of) Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God; that is, the kingdom in its final consummation.
- b. They also take note of the fact that ever so many others, including (converted) Gentiles, from every region of the earth—east, west, north, and south—are participating in the Messianic banquet (cf. Mt 8:11,12).
- c. They themselves are "thrown out"; that is, not only was admission refused, but also they were forcefully expelled. (BORROW [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke. Baker Book](#))

**THOUGHT** - "The Lord's words in this passage should cause us to soberly ponder what we do with our lives on earth. The evidence that one is a true servant of Jesus Christ is found in how he or she responds to the duties which the Lord imposes upon him or her. Accordingly, how we live our lives in this life becomes the basis of reward and punishment in the next." (Zodhiates) Clearly works **do not save** us, but Paul teaches we are saved **for** (not by) good works, writing that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for** good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Eph 2:10). God's servants will be rewarded for their faithfulness and good works while hypocrites will be punished for their evil works and unfaithfulness.

**Phil Newton** concludes his thoughts on Jesus' parabolic illustration - Christ warns of what is to come so that we might find the solitary refuge in Him from this separation and judgment when He returns. Presume upon Christ and the gospel of grace, and you will discover one day your folly. But look to Him as the only refuge for sinners, trusting in His death to bear away God's judgment against you, and depending upon His righteousness before God, and the return of Christ takes on a completely different light. Rather than sorrow, there is joy; rather than hiding, there is welcoming; rather than anguish, there is eternal delight as you gaze upon the face of Him who died for you. Are you so living in relationship to Christ, that if He should come soon, He would find you alert, ready, and faithful? ([Alert, Ready, and Faithful](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** observes that cut in pieces, weeping and gnashing of teeth are "shadows a fearful retribution, which is not extinction, inasmuch as, in the next clause, we read that his portion—his lot, or that condition which belongs to him by virtue of his character—is with **'the hypocrites.'** He was one of them, because, while he said **my lord,**' he had ceased to love and obey, having ceased to desire and expect; and therefore whatever is their fate shall be his, even to the 'dividing asunder of soul and spirit,' and setting eternal discord among the thoughts and intents of the heart. That is not the punishment of unwatchfulness, but of what unwatchfulness leads to, if unawakened. Let these words of the King ring an alarm for us all, and rouse our sleepy souls to watch, as becomes the children of the day." ([Matthew 24:42-51 Watching for the King](#))

**Paul** sees the hour glass of time running low and exhorts the saints at Rome (notice the time sensitive words in **bold green**)...

And this do (Love = Ro 13:10), knowing the **time**, that it is **already** the **hour** for you to awaken from sleep; for **now** salvation is **nearer** to us than **when** we believed. The **night** is almost gone, and the **day** is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the **day**, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. (Romans 13:11-14-note)

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**J C Ryle** concludes his comments on Matthew 24 writing...

The last thing that demands our attention in these verses, is the practical duty of watchfulness in the prospect of Christ's second coming. "**WATCH**," says our Lord, "for you don't know in what hour your Lord comes." "**BE READY**, for in an hour that you don't expect, the Son of Man will come."

This is a point which our blessed Master frequently presses upon our notice. We hardly ever find Him dwelling on the second advent without adding an injunction to "watch." He knows the sleepiness of our nature. He knows how soon we forget the most solemn subjects in religion. He knows how unceasingly Satan labors to obscure the glorious doctrine of His coming again. He arms us with heart-searching exhortations to keep awake, if we would not be ruined for evermore. May we all have an ear to hear them.

True Christians ought to live like **WATCHMEN**. The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. They should strive to be always on their guard. They should behave like the sentinel of an army in an enemy's land.

They should resolve by God's grace not to sleep at their post. That text of Paul deserves many a thought--"let us not sleep, as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober." (1Th 5:6)

True Christians ought to live like **GOOD SERVANTS**, whose master is not at home. They should strive to be always ready for their master's return. They should never give way to the feeling, "my Lord is delaying his coming." They should seek to keep their hearts in such a frame, that whenever Christ appears, they may at once give Him a warm and loving reception. There is a vast depth in that saying, "Blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing so when he comes." We may well doubt whether we are true believers in Jesus, if we are not ready at any time to have our faith changed into sight.

Let us close the chapter with solemn feelings. The things we have just been reading call loudly for great searchings of heart. Let us seek to make sure that we are in Christ, and have an ark of safety when the day of wrath breaks on the world. Let us strive to live that we may be pronounced "blessed" at the last, and not cast off for evermore. Not least, let us dismiss from our minds the common idea that unfulfilled prophecy is a speculative and not a practical thing. If the things we have been considering are not practical, there is no such thing as practical religion at all. Well might John say, "Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3.) ([Matthew 24](#))