

**WATCH AND BE READY!**  
**Matthew 24:42-44**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Do you believe that Christ could return any moment to receive His Church? If you are a believer in Christ your response to this question should be a resounding “YES!”
- B. Now I want to ask you a second question, “Do you live your life in constant expectation that Christ will return to take you to Himself?” At this point, many would have to bow their heads in shame, for they have failed to keep the Lord’s command to watch.

**II. WATCH FOR THE LORD -- Matthew 24:42, 43**

- A. **INTRODUCTION**: Our Lord in 24:36-41 has been speaking about the parousia of His coming-presence. He in context is referring to the first phase of the parousia which is the Rapture of the Church in which He will secretly snatch away the Church before the Tribulation period begins. This phase of His coming is imminent and unpredictable for “the day and the hour no man knows” (24:36). The time of the Rapture is known only to God. Therefore Christians are commanded to watch and be ready.
- B. “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” The Christian is to be constantly and continually looking for the coming of Christ. The Rapture can occur at any moment. Other parts of scripture tell the Christian to constantly wait (I Thess. 1:10) and to constantly look (I. Thess. 1:10) and to constantly look (Titus 2:13) for Christ’s coming.
- C. “But know this, that if the Goodman of the house (householder) had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered (allowed) his house to be broken up (into).” -- Christ uses the illustration or parable of a house owner. Notice carefully his argument. He says that if the householder had known when the thief was coming he would have watched and prevented the robbery. That is, if a man knows he is to be robbed at night, and knows the very hour in which it will take place, he will be ready for the burglar when he comes. **NOTE**: So Christ will come in the Rapture as a thief in the night. Since the Christian does not know when His Lord is coming he must be watching and ready at all times. **NOTE**: Does the Lord mean that the Christian should have one eye pointed towards the sky at all times? No. He means that the

Christian is to be ready at all times for the coming of Christ. The Christian is to anticipate the any moment return of Christ and to govern all his actions in light of Christ's return.

**ILLUSTRATION:** In a small country store in a southern state a Negro lady came to do her shopping. Two or three young men were standing around passing the time of day, and knowing that she was a Christian, they began to taunt her. "We hear you're expecting Jesus to come back," they said. "I sure am," she replied brightly. "Do you really believe he's coming?" they asked. "Sure as you're born," she answered. They said, "Well you'd better hurry home and get ready, he might be on the way!" She looked her tormentors straight in the eye and said, "I don't have to get ready," she said, "I keep ready!"

### **III. BE READY FOR THE LORD -- Matthew 24:44**

A. "Therefore be ye also ready:" -- When our Lord says "watch" He defines it by telling us to be constantly ready for His coming. What does it mean to watch and be ready?

1. To Anticipate And Love His Coming: One of the mysteries or paradoxes of the Christian life is that the true believer looks for the coming of Christ, yet all the while he is presently enjoying His spiritual presence and experiencing His power. The more the Christian loves Christ now, the more he longs for His coming. The hunger the Christian has to see Christ's face is directly proportionate to the present enjoyment he has of Christ's presence now. **NOTE:** If you cringe at the thought of Christ's coming or get frightened at the possibility of His return, you know little or nothing of His presence now. But if you love Christ right now you long for, anticipate and love the idea that He will return to receive you. If you do not long for the return of Christ, you are in trouble spiritually.
2. To Keep Busy Until He Comes: To be watching and ready implies that we are to "occupy until he comes ( Luke 19:13). What are we to do? We are to carry out spiritual works according to the Bible (John 8:31, 32). We are to 1) pray, 2) study, 3) witness, 4) give, 5) love and 6) work for Christ, for the time is coming when no man will be able to work. **NOTE:** Of course, we must carry out secular tasks but these must never take precedence over our spiritual responsibilities.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Poem by James Slater

Watching, watching, we are watching,  
In the hope that keeps us pure;  
That in trials and afflictions  
Gives us strength to still endure.  
Watching lest earth's vain attractions,

Would our glorious prospect dim;  
As in blest anticipation,  
We in patience wait for Him.

Praising, praising, and rejoicing,  
Since we shall His triumph share;  
We shall see Him, and be like Him,  
When we meet Him in the air.  
With our mortal bodies changed,  
In the “twinkling of an eye”,  
“Where oh Death, is now thy triumph?”  
Will be our victorious cry.

3. To Be Alert To Deceit: One thing the Lord has repeated over and over again in Matthew 24 is that believers are not to be deceived. Believers are not to swallow the philosophy of the world no matter how wonderful it may seem, for the world’s philosophy is shallow, phony and unreal. The Christian is to follow the teachings of His Lord, proving himself to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.
4. To Live A Holy Life: The imminent coming of Christ should challenge the child of God to Christ should challenge the child of God to a holy walk before God. Almost without exception, when the coming of the Lord is mentioned, it is followed by an exhortation to godliness and holy living on the part of the Christian. Prophecy is all about the coming of Christ. If prophecy does not make you more holy, godly and saintly, then you have missed the whole point of prophecy.

**ILLUSTRATION**: If a good friend comes into town unrepentantly and calls you to say that he will drop over for just a few minutes, this usually brings a state of crisis to a home. The woman, in anticipation of his coming, begins to sweep the floors, dust the furniture, pick up things off the floor. Often this is her reaction when the place is clean. The anticipation of a visitor spurs the desire a clean house. So the anticipation of the coming of Christ for us, stirs us to live a clean and holy life for Him.

- i. I John 3:2, 3
- ii. II Peter 3:10-12
- iii. Titus 2:11-14
- iv. I Timothy 6:11-16

**NOTE**: Are you living in daily expectancy of the return of your Lord? If not, then you are probably living a subnormal Christian life.

- B. “For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” -- Because Christ is coming at an unexpected hour, all Christians must be waiting, watching, looking and ready. Remember, Christians are not just looking for an event called the Rapture. Christians are actually looking for a person, Jesus Christ the Lord. For the Christian to be with Christ will crown it all.

**ILLUSTRATION**: Annie Johnson Flint

“It is not for a sign we are watching --  
For wonders above and below,  
The pouring of vials of judgment,  
The sounding of trumpets of woe;  
It is not for a Day we are looking,  
Not even the time yet to be  
When the earth shall be filled with God’s glory  
As the waters cover the sea;  
It is not for a king we are longing  
To make the world-kingdoms His own;  
It is not for a Judge who shall summon  
The nations of earth to His throne.

Not for these, though we know they are coming;  
For they are but adjuncts of Him,  
Before whom all glory is clouded,  
Besides whom all splendor grows dim.  
We wait for the Lord, our Beloved,  
Our Comforter, Master, and Friend,  
The substance of all that we hope for,  
Beginning of faith, and its end;  
We watch for our Savior and Bridegroom,  
Who loved us and made us His own;  
For Him we are looking and longing:  
For Jesus, and Jesus alone.”

**IV. CONCLUSION**

- A. You cannot watch and be ready for Christ if you do not know Him. The Bible says that you cannot know Christ until God brings you the new birth. The new birth comes your way when you trust Jesus Christ as your personal sin-bearer and make Him Lord of your life, inviting Him into your life to make you the kind of person He wants you to be.
- B. Have you made the wonderful discovery of knowing Christ personally? You can know Him if you will accept Him as Lord and Savior. Then you can begin to watch and be ready for the coming of Christ in the Rapture.