"BE READY FOR TAKE-OFF"

Matthew 24:42 - 25:13
1/13/2019

INTRODUCTION: Verse 42

***Be ready for Christ's return!**
(Only those who are ready will be Raptured!)

Readiness involves: Watchfulness
Faithfulness
Preparedness

I. **BE <u>WATCHFUL</u>** (like an <u>alert</u> <u>householder</u>) 24:43-44
(Don't be caught off guard as if a <u>thief</u> broke into your home)

II. **BE <u>FAITHFUL</u>** (like the faithful and wise <u>servant</u>) 24:45-51
(Don't be caught giving in to the pressures of the <u>world</u>)

III. **BE <u>PREPARED</u>** (like the five wise <u>virgins</u>) 25:1-12
(Don't be caught without <u>oil</u> in your lamp)

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ILLUS: The tragedy of a plane not ready for take-off.

The flight of flights is yet to come and millions are not ready for take-off!

V. 42

"Watch therefore" - Jesus draws a practical concluding application to His previous teaching about His coming (READ v. 36-41).

"Watch" - Has 2 main ideas:

1) Being spiritually alert (not blind or in the dark)
(Acts 20:31; I Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2; I Thes. 5:6, 10; *"vigilant"* - I Pet. 5:8)

2) Being spiritually awake (not sleeping)
(Mt. 24:43; 26:38, 40, 41)

"Ye know not what hour" - Although one living in the Great Tribulation can know that His coming is getting close (v. 32-33), one cannot pinpoint the specific *"day and hour"* (v. 36).

Mark's Gospel tells us that no one knows the specific point of time Jesus will return (Mark 13:35-37 - *"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."*

The days of Tribulation will be *"cut short"* for the *"elect's sake"* (v. 22); however, no one knows exactly how much they are "cut short."

"The generation living during the Tribulation is specifically told they will not know the exact time of Jesus' appearing, but they are informed in detail as to what signs immediately preceding it will be." (MacArthur, p. 77).

***Be ready for Christ's return!**
(Only those who are ready will be Raptured!)

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I. **BE WATCHFUL** (like an alert householder) 24:43-44
(Don't be caught off guard as if a thief broke into your home)

V. 43

"The goodman of the house" - The house master; the head of the home; the homeowner (i.e. the one in charge of the home).

(implicit truth: The husband is responsible for the protection of his family - both physically and spiritually.)

"Watch" - (*phulake*) More time than a specific *"hour" (hora* - v. 44).

"Among the Jews the night was divided into 3 watches (Ex. 14:24; Jud. 7:19) [each of four-hour segments from 6:00 at night till 6:00 in the morning] and this continued on through Roman times. The Romans divided the night into four watches [3 hour guard duty]. This was recognized by the Jews (Mark 13:35)." (Vine, p. 200).

The Lord's point is this: If the head of the home had known the general time period in which the thief would come, he would have been ready at the specific hour he came.

"Thief" - A common expression in describing the Lord's return (Lk. 12:35-40; I Thes. 5:2; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3, 16:15).

Although the unsaved world will be caught by surprise (like a *"thief"*) at the Lord's return (I Th. 5:2), true believers will not (I Th. 5:4 - *"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."*)

(SEE: I Th. 4:16 - 5:9)

V. 44

"Be ye also ready" - You too must be ready. Just as it would be advantageous for a homeowner to be ready for the thief and to make preparations for his eventual coming, you must also be ready for Christ's coming.

Some people are more "security conscious" for their homes, than they are for their souls! Many are more worried about their homes being broken into than where they will spend eternity. Many people fear losing their material goods more than losing their souls for ever!

Don't fear him who can wreck your possessions, as much as you fear Him who has the power to confine you to hell forever!

"In such an hour as ye think not" - Christ will come at a time when the world will not expect Him. They will be *"eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage*" (v. 38). It will be life as normal for the unsuspecting world.

II. **BE <u>FAITHFUL</u>** (like the faithful and wise <u>servant</u>) 24:45-51
(Don't be caught giving in to the pressures of the <u>world</u>)

V. 45

"Faithful" = <u>full of faith</u>, which produces reliability, consistency, persistence in one's life.

"Servant" - a devoted bond slave

"Give them meat" - The ministers of Christianity do not dispense steak, pork chops, filet mignon, and chicken cutlets; rather, the *"meat"* of God's Word.

Just as Jesus told Peter to *"feed my sheep"* (Jn. 21:16, 17), so ministers (servants) of Christ are expected to feed God's people (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2) *"in season and out of season"* (II Tim. 4:2).

"His Lord hath made ruler" - It is the Lord who calls a man into ministry (Acts 20:28; cp. *"rule"* Heb. 13:7).

V. 46

"Doing" - The Lord expects us to be faithful to doing His will right up until he returns (no matter how much pressure comes upon us to quit and divert our lives to the pursuit of pleasure or mere existence).

"Occupy till I come" is our Lord's command (Lk. 19:13).

"Every believer has been giving a divine stewardship and responsibility in the work of Christ on earth, and in that stewardship he is to be faithful and sensible. His life, breath, energy, talents, spiritual gifts, and every other good thing he has are trusts from God to be used in His service and to His glory." (MacArthur, p. 78).

V. 47

Those who are faithful (even to the point of death) will have great authority and privilege in the Kingdom to come (SEE: Mt. 25:21, 23) as we live and reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:4, 6).

V. 48

The word ***"servant"*** does not necessarily imply that he was saved. The Lord gave this parable not merely to the saved but *"to all"* (Lk. 12:41).

"Evil servant" - Not the same *"faithful and wise servant"* Jesus just described. This servant is morally *"wicked."* He *"serves"* Christ but not from sincere motives (but like Judas Iscariot; like Balaam - II Pet. 2:15; like Diotrephes - III Jn. 9 . . . they serve with false motives: for gain, attention, or fame.

"My Lord delayeth His coming" - spiritually procrastination: Illustration by William Barclay (SEE: MacArthur, p. 80).

Why does Jesus delay His coming? Answer: He wants more people to be saved. The "fullness of the Gentiles" must come in (Rom. 11:25).

II Peter 3:8-10a - *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..."*

V. 15 - *"The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation"*

"My lord delayeth his coming" - He's not coming for a long time. Perhaps this man is impatient because he lacks the one virtue that gives patience, and that is faith (James 1:3). His impatience is no doubt due to the tribulations he is facing (cp. Rom. 5:3) and he can't stand it any longer!

V. 49

Out of frustration and anger, he begins to beat his ***"fellow-servants"*** (those he once served with). He succumbs to the pressures of the Antichrist-ruled world and becomes a traitor who turns against his fellow-preachers. He defects from the faith; he becomes offended (SEE: Mt. 24:10), and he departs from the faith *"giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils"* (II Tim. 4:1).

This false servant (this *"hireling"* - Jn. 10:12, 13) abandons God's sheep and begins to associate with the devil's crowd (the heathen, the pagans). He now eats (fellowships) with them and joins them in their abominable practices. To such people God warned: *"For it had been better for them not tot have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing int he mire."* (II Peter 2:21-22).

"Drink with the drunken" - In an attempt to dull his senses to the misery he finds himself in, he turns to alcohol (as an aesthetic to cover up the tough times and as an escape to get out from the pressures). [Note: We should never turn to mind-altering drugs or alcohol to escape the unpleasant reality we find ourselves in. But turn to God -- whose spirit can give us victory (Eph. 5:18)]

Just as drinking and driving don't mix - drinking and "flying" (up - in the Rapture) don't mix! (no one goes to be with Christ who is a drunkard! cp. I Cor. 6:10; I Th. 5:7).

V. 50

"The Lord of that servant" - the Lord Jesus is "Lord of lords." (Rev. 17:14; 19:16) He is Lord over pagan lords; therefore he is Lord over pagan servants as well.

This servant did not have Christ as his personal Lord, but nonetheless is accountable to him.

Jesus is <u>Lord</u> over you whether or not you know Him, trust Him, and live for Him.

One day every tongue will confess His Lordship (Phil. 2:11).

"Looketh not for him. . . not aware of" - Christ will come back so suddenly (v. 27), and so unexpectedly (since this man's senses were dulled by drink) that he will not be ready. He is a lost man who will get no second chance to believe and be saved. He had great opportunity to be saved and blew it. He was given much but was unfaithful (Lk. 12:47-48). The Lord he did not expect to return is now suddenly upon him in judgment.

V. 51

"Cut him asunder" - to cut in two pieces (speaking of severe judgment) He will be physically destroyed when Christ returns (II Th. 1:8 - *"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.")*

"Appoint him his portion" - Assign him his place (of doom). He will be sentenced along with the *"hypocrites."* Why? Because he himself was a hypocrite (whose true character was eventually manifested - vv. 48-49).

He played the part of a servant only so long. [Note: In countries where Christianity is outlawed, you don't find people claiming to be Christians if they are not. When the pressures of the Tribulation come, the masks will come of; the church will be purged of pretenders.].

Why did Matthew record this word *"hypocrites"* rather than *"unbelievers"* (Luke 12:46)?

Answer: To show us the character and practice of this false servant (who no doubt did many wonderful things in the name of Christ - Mt. 7:22-23).

"The hypocrite's hope shall perish" (Job 8:13).

"Weeping and gnashing of teeth" - Describes the remorse and agonies of the darkness of hell (Mt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30).

"Weeping" - speaks of <u>sorrow</u> (emotional suffering and torment)

"Gnashing of teeth" - speaks of <u>pain</u> (physical suffering and torment)

Jesus said to the suffering church of Smyrna: *"...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"* (Rev. 2:10).

III. **BE <u>PREPARED</u>** (like the five wise <u>virgins</u>)25:1-12
(Don't be caught without <u>oil</u> in your lamp)

V. 1

"The kingdom of heaven" - The Kingdom which comes from Heaven, and the Kingdom which belongs to the God of Heaven -- hence, *"Kingdom of God"* (Jn. 3:3).

"Ten virgins" - <u>prospective</u> brides; <u>possible candidates</u> to be part of the bride of Christ. (some view the *"virgins"* as representing the "bridesmaids" rather than the "bride" herself. The reasons is that they don't want in any way to view this parable as referring to the Rapture of the Church. However, in light of the context it can refer to no other event (cp. 24:31, 36-41; 25:10).

"The Bridegroom" - a clear reference to <u>Jesus Christ</u>.

A Jewish marriage consisted of 3 parts:

1) <u>Selection</u> of a bride (father of groom and bride make a contract)

2) <u>Betrothal</u> period (vows; then preparations)

3) <u>Wedding</u> (procession, feast, consummation

(See: MacArthur, p. 84)

v. 3

"No oil" - What good is a lamp without oil? Note: The outside of the lamp is worthless without oil on the inside to give it light.

V. 4

Note: In Rev. 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1 - Christ's 7 churches are called *"lampstands"* (light-holders), and the seven-fold manifestation of the Holy Spirit (7 spirits - Rev. 1:4, 3:1) are evidently the light of those lampstands.

V. 5

"While the Bridegroom tarried" - While Christ delayed His coming.

"They all slumbered and slept" - They all "got drowsy and began to sleep" (NASV).

Perhaps, for the *"wise"* it was a sleep of security (they had peace that their Lord would not come and leave them). For the *"foolish"* it was a sleep of false security (they thought they were ready, when in fact they were not; a faulty self-confidence).

"The delay of the bridegroom was a standard feature of Jewish weddings" (Craig L. Bloomberg, Interpreting the Parables, p. 194).

V. 6

"A cry" - Perhaps this corresponds to the *"shout"* of the Rapture (I Th. 4:16; cp. Rev. 14:15). Or this cry could correspond to the final announcement of the Gospel to all nations (Mt. 24:14); nonetheless, a final wake-up call is given.

V. 7

"All those virgins arose" (lit. were raised up out of sleep). Some view this wake-up call as a "revival" to occur prior to the Rapture.

V. 8

"Our lamps are gone out" - Our lamps are being extinguished, ar being quenched. The wick of their lamp would light and ten go out because there was no oil to keep it burning.

"The foolish virgins, who had provided no oil, saw their dry wicked flicker for a few moments and then die. To insist that they had some oil but not enough contradicts 25:3. The failure to provide any oil at all displays their stupidity (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 974).

"It was not that they had been unaware of their lack of oil, but that they were not concerned enough about it to acquire it before the Bridegroom's arrival. Perhaps they thought they could quickly run down to the oil shop anytime they wanted and secure what they needed in plenty of time" (MacArthur, p. 90).

"Give us of your oil" - Note: No one can give salvation to any other; you cannot get to Heaven because your family or friends were saved. You are not going to be raptured hanging on to the coat strings of anyone. You will answer to God for yourself.

V. 9

No one can transfer part of his/her spiritual life to another.

"Go ye rather to them that sell" - This "selling" and "buying" without price, is without money (Is. 55:1 - *"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*)

Caution: Don't press or force every detail in a parable to have interpretive significance. In parables, look for the main point that is being emphasized rather than extracting specific interpretations from every detail.

"Examine (test) yourselves to see if you are in the faith" (II Cor. 13:5).

V. 10

"Ready" - <u>prepared</u>; the wise were all set to meet their bridegroom. Are you ready?

No doubt all ten virgins <u>looked</u> alike; they all had <u>lamps</u>, and they all wanted to be selected as the <u>bride</u>. However, they were not all <u>prepared</u>.

Five were saved and five were not. The <u>even</u> "proportion suggests that a large part (perhaps 50%) of the professing church does not belong to God."

They had the ***"oil"*** of preparedness which is the saving grace and light of the Holy Spirit within them.

Many commentators view the reference to "oil" as being symbolic of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Is. 61:1; cp. with Psalm 45:7; Heb. 1:9; Zech. 4).

No one gets into the wedding in Heaven without oil (the salvation of the Holy Spirit) nor without a wedding garment (the imputed righteousness of Christ) (Mt. 22:11-13).

"The door was shut" - no one else was permitted entrance (just as the Lord "shut" the door on thee ark (Gen. 7:16) allowing no one else to enter, one day the same will be true of His marriage).

Today is the day to enter by faith in Christ (Luke 13:24-25 - *"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are."*)

V. 11

"Lord, Lord, open to us" - a cry of desperation (Mt. 7:22-23 - *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*)

Some will see their need for the new birth, God's grace, redemption in Christ, salvation too late.

V. 12

"I know you not" - While Christ knew about them, He did not have a knowledge of them in the sense of a "relationship knowledge" (*oida*).

This same concept is also expressed by the word *ginosko* (I Cor. 8:3 - *"But if any man love God, the same is known of him"*; cp. Gal. 4:9; Mt. 7:23).

CONCLUSION:

V. 13

Jesus ends this unit of thought the same way He began (v. 42) with an admonition to be awake and alert as to His return.

The only way to be ready is to be born again. Only those who <u>believe</u> in Him will be raptured.

John 14:1-6

Are you ready for Christ's return?

> I Cor. 1:7 -*"So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"*
>
> Phil. 3:20 -"*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"*
>
> Heb. 10:24-25 -*"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*
>
> James 5:8 -*"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."*
>
> I Pet. 4:7 -*"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."*
>
> Rev. 22:20 -*"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*

Luke records Jesus (in the same context) as saying: *"Let your loins be girded about* (be dressed to go) *and your lights burning"* (Lk. 12:35).

HYMN: "Almost Persuaded"