

Watch

Have you ever noticed how many people say we aren't supposed to be concerned with when Jesus may be coming back? They say we are just supposed to abide. They say we are not supposed to be trying to find that sort of thing out. They say don't dig and search. However, the Word of God says to study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. II Timothy 2:15 What about seek and you will find? (Matt:7:7 & Jeremiah 29:13)

Matt: 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

hour / be ready

Matt: 25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.

day nor hour new moon

Mark 13:33 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

COMMAND

A Thief In The Night

1 Thessalonians 5:1-10

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren,
you have no need that I should write to you.
For you yourselves know perfectly that
the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.
For when they say, "Peace and safety!"
then sudden destruction comes upon them,
as labor pains upon a pregnant woman.
And they shall not escape.
But you, brethren, are not in darkness,
so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.
You are all sons of light and sons of the day.
We are not of the night nor of darkness.
Therefore let us not sleep, as others do,
but let us watch and be sober.
For those who sleep, sleep at night,
and those who get drunk are drunk at night.
But let us who are of the day be sober,
putting on the breastplate of faith and love,
and as a helmet the hope of salvation.
For God did not appoint us to wrath,
but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep,
we should live together with Him.

The day of Lord will come like a thief in the night. But a thief in our human understanding may not be a good example or analogy to represent or symbolize this awesome day of the Lord! Simply because the thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. But Jesus has come that we may have life, and that we may have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Who then is this thief in the night?

"A thief in the night" is a Hebrew idiom. It does not refer to a criminal thief that will come in the middle of the night, take us by surprise and steal our belongings or kill us. He is someone who has a high calling and an honorable task to fulfill!

Psalm 134:1

Behold, bless the LORD,
All you servants of the LORD,
Who by night stand in the house of the LORD!



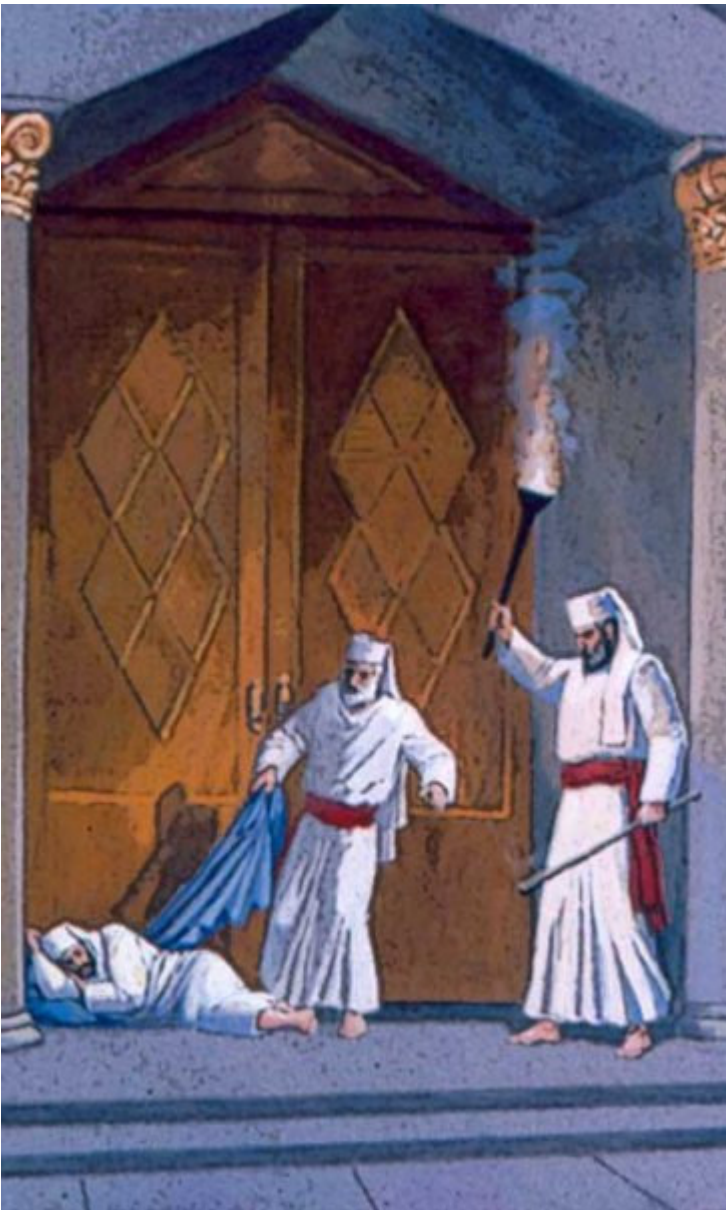
****Priest stood watch in the temple, the night was divided into 3 watches****

Psalm 90:4 1000 years as yesterday o a watch in the night.

In the Temple of God, a priest was posted every night on duty to ensure the last sacrifice for the current day was completely consumed. He also had to guard the fire on the altar so that it was kept burning throughout the night ready for the next morning's sacrifice. The fire was not supposed to go out for any reasons.

Somehow the priest on duty would become tired and sleepy about halfway through the night. If the last sacrifice was consumed and the flames were still burning, he might catch some moments to rest and nap while waiting. He would wake up every now and then to fuel the flames by adding woods and fanning before going back to the sleeping mode again. This happened throughout the night till the rising of the sun.

However it was highly possible for this priest on duty to fall asleep totally, failing to perform his responsibilities of tending to the fire. And the fire went off.



Here the thief in the night would come. Sometimes during the night watches, the High Priest would enter the Temple very quietly like a thief to check and ensure the priest on duty was fulfilling his duties. He might be accompanied by his faithful assistant.

Firstly the High Priest and his assistant would check the fire to see whether the flames were still alive. If necessary, they would add some woods and fan the flames. If the priest on duty was sleeping, the High Priest

would take an ember of coal from the fire and sneak quietly around the sleeping priest. He would then place the burning coal on the garment of the sleeping priest.

When his clothes were on fire, the priest would wake up. He would have no choice but to rip them off and run home, naked and ashamed. One thing for sure, he would never fall asleep while on duty again.

These white priestly garments were made of 100% cotton. When soiled, they were torn into strips and used as wicks for the menorah or swaddling clothes for infants.

Thus the thief in the night is the High Priest coming to check whether the priest on duty is carrying out his responsibilities faithfully and doing his work properly. Those who sleep will be punished, but those who keep watch and stay awake will be rewarded.

Revelation 16:15

Behold, I am coming as a thief.

Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments,
lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

We are all children of the light and of the day. We don't belong to darkness and night.

Thus let us be on our guard, and not fall asleep like the others. Let us stay alert and be sober.

Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. But let us who live in the light and be sober, putting on the armour of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the hope of our salvation.

For God has chosen to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out His anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when He returns, we can live with Him forever.

When Jesus, our High Priest comes as a thief in the night, will be ready to meet Him? The flame and zeal in our hearts will it be burning brightly? Will our priestly garments be white and unburned? Let us not be found naked and ashamed!

Rev. 1:6 Kings & Priests unto God

Not sleeping for us it to be spiritually awake.

Rev. 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. **If therefore thou shalt not watch**, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Luke 12:37 Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

He will serve them!!!

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

I Peter 4:7 End of all things at hand, be sober (responsible) and watch & pray

Remember Jesus got onto the Pharisees for knowing how to discern the weather and not knowing the signs of the times. Matt: 16:1-4

*****To the church Jesus is not coming back as a surprise. We have God living inside of us and the Holy Spirit tells us of things to come. John 16:13***

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret
Unto His servants the prophets.

1. He gave Noah advance notice of when the flood would be.
2. He told Abraham how long the Israelites would be in Egypt.
3. He told Jeremiah how long the Babylonian exile would be.
4. He told Daniel exactly when the Messiah would come the first time.

Obviously leaving us clueless now would violate God's own established pattern as revealed in His Word!

We are friends and friends know intimate things. John 15:14-15

What kind of bride would we be if we weren't even looking for the Groom?

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.— rapture!

***If you are looking not looking for Him, He is not coming for you.**

II Peter 3:12 Looking for the coming of the day of God

Luke 21:28 And when these things (verses 25-28) begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. – this is a **command**

(earthquakes, tsunami's, mud slides, islam, Russia, Crimea, Hamas, all countries against Israel – don't want her to defend herself and even want to take away her right to exist as a nation)

*****For these and many other reasons, is it any wonder that millions believe the return of Christ is so near? Polls show that even non-believers think the world is at such a point. This is the most exciting time in all history to be alive!*****

Luke 21:34 Don't let your hearts be loaded down with the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Matt: 13:22 Don't let the cares & riches of this life choke out the Word

I've heard that Jesus is coming back all my life. It could be another hundred years. That is scoffing and mocking. II Peter 3:3-4

If we relax our attitude and get tired of watching and praying then we could be like the servant in Matt: 24:45-51

We are to be watchmen on the wall and blow the trumpet to warn others

Ezekiel 33:1-5 / Isaiah 56:10-12 BARK!!!!

WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE WATCHMEN!!!

The following is from Jim Bramlett:

CBN.com – It is mind-boggling to think that our generation alone is uniquely standing on the precipice of time and where no generation has ever stood. We are living in the days spoken of by the ancient prophets.

These prophets spoke of the Israelites being gathered back into their own land, in passages such as Ezekiel 37:21:

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land.

This began in 1948. The “dry bones” of Ezekiel 37 have come alive.

As also prophesied, we are seeing the world turn against Israel.

On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations” (Zechariah 12:3).

The catalyst for this is oil, or petro-dollars, causing the world to sell out tiny, democratic Israel to despotic Muslim nations for purposes of greed.

These signs are historically unprecedented. Only this generation has seen them. But there are many other biblical signs, such as: increased violence worldwide (as in the days of Noah), increased apostasy, increased cults and false religions and false prophets, increased natural disasters such as frequency of earthquakes, and more.

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But When is He Coming?

Just the question -- when? -- causes some Christians to cringe, protest, or even scoff! They quickly point out that Jesus said,

But of that day and hour knoweth no man (Matthew 24:36 KJV).

Some believers criticize other believers who are seeking God’s clues, either from the Scriptures or by personal revelation. It is interesting that it was apparently by personal revelation, not Scripture, that many people knew the exact day of Elijah's rapture (2 Kings 2)! Are there types in the Old Testament? Do God’s principles repeat themselves?

******Some claim we should focus only on the Great Commission and evangelism and not be concerned when the Lord will return. However, the Bible repeatedly tells us to “watch” for the signs, so not doing so would be disobedient. Also, those who are watching and expecting**

Jesus' soon return are probably the most zealous group of witnesses for the gospel among all Christians. ****

The doubters may mention Paul's words that the day of the Lord will come like "a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). But many believers have so misunderstood these verses that they are oblivious to the times, not watching for the Lord as He commanded, and are often absorbed by the cares of this world and their own agendas.

As to Matthew 24:36, some scholars point out that Jesus' words here are in the present tense, addressed to His hearers at the time, and not to those alive at the end of the age when Daniel's vision would be unsealed (Daniel 12:9). This would be similar to Matthew 16:20:

Then he warned His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.

As evidence, many other Scriptures reveal to us that God will reveal at least the approximate time. (Even if the "day and hour" restriction is literally valid today, it may be because the Earth is in 24 time zones and always in two different days.)

Jesus also said, "but my Father only" knows, which pins the statement to His hearers at the time, when Jesus was still on the earth, because surely there are now no secrets in the Trinity between the Father and the glorified Son, who are truly One.

Also, in context, He seems to be speaking of heaven and earth passing away (v. 35), not other end-time events. In addition, Jesus said,

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee (Revelation 3:3).

He is obviously saying that to the one who watches, He will not come as a thief and that person will know the hour! (Hour -- Greek hora -- Strong's 5610; various meanings, including, "any definite time, point of time, moment.")

God's Promises of Revelation

It is clear that Jesus will not come as a "thief in the night" for watchful believers, because in the very same passage, verse 4, Paul tells us,

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.

If we are trusting in Christ and looking for His coming, Paul said that even the very day does not have to surprise us!

Also, Jesus exhorted, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief" (Revelation 3:3, KJV), obviously saying He will come as a thief only to those not watching! It is obvious that for those watching, He will NOT come as a thief.

Jesus rebuked those who did not understand the signs of the times in His day:

O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times (Matthew 16:3).

Of the end of the age, Jesus said,

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28).

He said we would know when it is near!

God said, "Surely the sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing it to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7, NIV). God said "nothing," and He did not exclude Christ's return. I take Him at His word.

God not only knows the end from the beginning, He tells us that He makes it known!

*****I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. (Isaiah 46:10).*****

He has already made it known! I personally believe it has been hidden in His Word all along, to be unlocked in His timing. There is nothing wrong with seeking! No doubt, it pleases God.

God said,

I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee (Isaiah 48:5, KJV).

Jesus said the Holy Spirit "will teach you all things" (John 14:26). He said "all things." Did Jesus make a mistake, forgetting to exclude when He will return? I don't think so.

Friends confide in one another. Abraham was called God's "friend" (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23).

And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do (Genesis 18:17).

Now, because of Jesus' atonement, we are called friends of God:

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends (Jesus, John 15:15).

The Bible also says that Jesus was crucified so that the blessing of Abraham, part of which was friendship with God, would come upon the Gentiles -- us (Galatians 3:14).

*****Ecclesiastes 1:9 says:**

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun (NIV).

Many Bible students believe that ancient events and dating in the Bible are shadows and clues that foretell the coming of the Lord, even the timing. An example is the six days of creation, seen as 6,000 years of man's dominion over the earth, before the return of the Lord and the seventh, or Sabbath Millennium of peace, with Christ ruling in Jerusalem. According to scholars, we are now at the end of 6,000 years since Adam.***

*****Remember God created the earth in 6 DAYS and rested on the 7th. / 6000 YEARS MAN'S DOMINION & 1000 CHRIST RETURN & RULE AND REIGN.*****

There are other such passages. God clearly promised that we would know at least approximately when Christ will return, and even "the day" will not surprise us, as the Holy Spirit reveals through Paul!

In addition, there is ample precedent for God revealing specific times in advance.

- He gave Noah advance notice of when the flood would be (Genesis 6,7).
- He told Abraham how long the Israelites would be in Egypt (Genesis 15:13).
- As mentioned, He revealed to many the very day of Elijah's rapture (2 Kings 2).
- He told Jeremiah how long the Babylonian exile would be (Jeremiah 29:10).
- He told Daniel exactly when Messiah would come the first time (Daniel 9:25-26).

Some, including the brilliant Sir Isaac Newton, believe this same passage holds the key to the timing of His return.

There is evidence that the Bible reveals the exact number of years of "the times of the Gentiles" and the exact span of time to Israel's rebirth in 1948 and the recapture of Jerusalem in 1967.

Obviously, leaving us clueless now would violate God's own established pattern as revealed in His Word!

Also obviously, we are not left clueless. There are many signs. Let us remain watchful and ready, and be found doing the Master's work.

Even if God tells us the very day and even the hour there will be many that will procrastinate in coming to Him. We should never put off coming to Him because we do not know how long we have. Only God knows the number of our days. Today is the day of salvation.

****Revelation 22:20 Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, Come Lord Jesus. --- We should have our lives in such a state that we pray this prayer!!****