

# Matthew 24:37-42 Commentary

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Apostle Matthew

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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 24:37 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah hosper gar ai hemerai tou Noe houtos estai (3SFMI) e parousia tou huiou tou anthropou:**

- Ge 6:1-7:24 Job 22:15-17 Lu 17:26,27 Heb 11:7 1Pe 3:20,21 2Pe 2:5 3:6

### JUST LIKE THE DAYS OF NOAH

**Young's Literal** - and as the days of Noah -- so shall be also the presence of the Son of Man.

**Davies and Allison** - As it was in the **beginning**, so shall it be in the **end** (A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew)

Note that up to this point in the Olivet Discourse the **Gospel of Mark** has closely paralleled the version in **Matthew**, but now the parallel ends for Mark has no mention of **the days of Noah**. Here is Mark's version of the remainder of the Olivet Discourse:

Mark 13:33+ "Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is. (cp Mt 24:42, 43) 34 "It is like a man, 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. 35 "Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, or in the morning-- 36 lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 "And what I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'" (cp Mt 25:13)

Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse (Lk 21:5-38+) does not mention **the days of Noah**, but in an earlier discourse does mention **the days of Noah** ([see discussion below](#)). Instead Luke's discourse ends with these words:

Luke 21:33+ "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. 34 "Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap; 35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. 36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

**For** (gar) (**term of explanation**) explains the implication of the uncertainty of the return of the Son.

**William Barclay** says Mt 24:37-39 tells "us that that time will come with shattering suddenness on those who are immersed in material things. In the old story Noah prepared himself in the calm weather for the flood which was to come, and when it came he was ready. But the rest of mankind were lost in their eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage, and were caught completely unawares, and were therefore swept away. These verses are a **warning never to become so immersed in time that we forgot eternity**, never to let our concern with worldly affairs, however necessary, completely distract us from remembering that there is a God, that the issues of life and death are in his hands, and that whenever his call comes, at morning, at midday, or at evening, it must find us ready." ([Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) (Bolding added)

**Just like** - This is a **term of comparison**, where Jesus compares the timing of His **parousia** with the days of Noah. The primary

message just as the ancient world was unprepared for the coming flood, so too unbelievers will be prepared for Jesus' return. It is notable that just as the ancient world was judged, so too the future world will be judged when Christ returns. In the days of Noah pursuit of a worldliness dominated the world. Jesus is saying it will be just the same when he returns. On the other hand the message for believers is to adopt the motto of the Boy Scouts of America - [BE PREPARED!](#)

**Weber** - Those who heeded Jesus' warnings and watched for the signs would be saved (**Ed**: Presuming they were genuine believers of course). Those who ignored them would find sudden judgment coming upon them before they could realize what was happening or why. Notice that this verse has nothing to do with the rapture of the church. The ones taken are not the believers but the unbelievers, as was true in Noah's day. (Holman New Testament Commentary)

Note that Mark's version of the Olivet Discourse (Mk 13:1-37) does not have the comparison of the Second Coming and **the days of Noah** (Mt 24:37-41).

**Thomas Ice** notes that "The word order in the original language reads as follows: "For just as the days of Noah, in this way is the coming of the Son of Man." The intensive particle "**just as**" ([hosper](#)) is a "marker of similarity between events and states." When combined with the demonstrative adverb "in this way" ([houtos](#)), Christ is saying that the days of Noah were exactly the same as will be the time of Christ's return.

As **Stanley Toussaint** says "The likeness is seen in the suddenness of the coming of the judgment and the unpreparedness of the world for it."

**Daniel Harrington** adds that "The point of the comparison between the days of Noah and the coming of the Son of Man is the unexpectedness of the crisis....So unexpected was the flood that people did not recognize it until it had already come upon them." (Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew -Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991, p. 342)

**A T Robertson** - Jesus had used this same imagery before to the Pharisees (Luke 17:26-30). In Noah's day there was plenty of warning, but utter unpreparedness. Most people are either indifferent about the second coming or have fanciful schemes or programs about it. Few are really eager and expectant and leave to God the time and the plans. (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**Coming** ([3952](#))(**parousia**) is a combination of two Greek words para = with, alongside + ousia = being (ousia is the participial form of the verb eimi = to be) which together literally mean to be alongside. Parousia then literally means a being beside or a presence. The word denotes both an arrival and a consequent presence with.

**Son** ([huios](#)) **of Man** - Jesus frequently used the title Son of Man of Himself in the Gospels (84x/80v). Clearly this title places emphasis on Jesus' humanity. He was is fully God and fully Man and He will return as fully God and fully Man, albeit a forever glorified Man.

**Henry Morris on days of Noah** - In this passage and in Luke 17:26,27, Jesus confirms the historicity of the universal Flood, as well as the record of Noah and the ark. Hebrews 11:7, and 2 Peter 2:5 and 2 Peter 3:6 likewise confirm it. (Defender's Study Bible)

**Keener** - Jewish tradition emphasized the evils of Noah's generation in much fuller detail than the Bible had. (The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament)

**Criswell** - Noah's day was characterized by preoccupation with trivial matters and neglect of spiritual concerns. Oblivious to the judgment of God, the inhabitants of the earth were caught unprepared by the Flood. Such a state of unpreparedness will exist when Jesus returns. (Believer's Study Bible)

**Ryrie** - The days of Noah were times of carousing and unpreparedness, as they will be at the Second Coming. The flood removed the wicked (cf. Luke 17:27). Christ will do the same at His return. (Study Bible)

**Alfred Plummer** sounds a sobering word - The end is certain, but the time of it is uncertain. What effect will this combination of certainty and uncertainty have upon mankind? The condition of things will be analogous ([hosper](#)) to that before the Deluge. Mankind generally will be wholly given up to material enjoyment; and this has always been so. The certainty of death does not give seriousness to life, so long as the time of death is uncertain and possibly distant. Even the prospect of death within a comparatively short time does not always detach people from the cares and pleasures of this world. The special point of the analogy is not that the generation that was swept away by the Flood was exceptionally wicked (**Ed**: Although of course they were! Ge 6:5); none of the occupations mentioned are sinful; but that it was so absorbed in its worldly pursuits that it paid no attention to solemn warnings. Instead of saying: "It is certain to come; therefore we must make preparation and be always on the watch," they said: "No one knows when it will come; therefore there is no need to trouble oneself about it yet. Other matters are much more urgent." ([An exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew](#))

## "The Waters Prevailed" - James Smith (Ge 7:18, Mt 24:37-39)

The waters of judgment shall ultimately prevail against all ungodliness. See here an example of—

1. The waters prevailing over their unbelief.
2. The waters prevailing over all their indifference.
3. The waters prevailing over all their pleasures.
4. The waters prevailing over all their efforts to save themselves.

--Handfuls on Purpose

**D A Carson** - not only is the hour of the end a secret preserved by the Father for himself alone, but when the judgment falls it will be unexpected, sudden, and irreversible. That is the point Jesus is making when he draws a comparison with the sudden onset of the deluge: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Mt 24:37). The point is not that the people at the end of the ages will be as wicked as people were in the days of Noah. That may or may not be true, but it is not what Jesus says. Jesus draws attention to the sheer normality of life in Noah's day before the Flood: "People were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark" (Mt 24:38). The Flood took them by surprise, and utterly destroyed them. "That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Mt 24:39). Two men or two women will be laboring together in some joint task, and the judgment will snatch one away and leave the other (Mt 24:40-41). The end of the age will be sudden and unexpected. (For the love of God: a daily companion for discovering the riches of God's Word. Volume 1)

**Sean O'Connell** - This theme of unexpectedness is what Jesus emphasizes in Mt 24:37-51, and he does so with four illustrations—the flood, the working men and women, the thief in the night, and the two servants or two types of servants. (If preachers ever needed a proof-text for the validity of illustrations, here it is). The point of Jesus' many illustrations on unexpectedness is to rouse unbelievers and believers to expectancy—that is, to stay awake (Mt 24:42, 43) or to be ready (Mt 24:44) or, put differently and more completely, to be wise... People are so busy working ("grinding at the mill") and/or entertaining themselves ("eating and drinking" or perhaps better "winning and dining" or "gorging and guzzling") that they think preachers like me who preach "repent, judgment is coming" are as crazy as an old man building an ark in the middle of the desert for 120 years (Genesis 6:13, 14; cf. 2 Peter 2:5). (Matthew Commentary—Preaching the Word)

**Ivor Powell** - The situation in the days of Noah was (1) Sinful; (2) Serious; (3) Sudden; (4) Sad. The people perished in the waters of the flood because they had rejected the preaching of the wise old ship-builder. (Matthew Commentary)

**Matthew 24:38** "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark: os gar esan (3PIAI) en tais hemerais ekeinai tais pro tou kataklusmou trogontes (PAPMPN) kai pinontes (PAPMPN) gamountes (PAPMPN) kai gamizontes (PAPMPN) achri es hemeras eiselthen (3SAI) Noe eis ten kiboton:

- **they:** Ge 6:2 1Sa 25:36-38 30:16,17 Isa 22:12-14 Eze 16:49,50 Am 6:3-6 Lu 12:19,45 14:18-20 17:26-28 21:34 Ro 13:13,14 1Co 7:29-31

## APATHY OF THE ANTEDILUVIAN AGE

**For (gar)** is a **term of explanation** which introduces Jesus' explanation of how the days of Noah were when the flood came.

**For as in those days which were before the flood** - How were those days? They were characterized by godlessness and rampant sinfulness ("evil continually" = Ge 6:5, 6). Sinful, materialistic, hypocritical, godless mankind has always been willfully blind to God and His Word of Truth, no matter how compelling that truth may be. And when God's truth exposes the world's wickedness, they make every effort to oppose and condemn it (cp "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" Ro 1:18). Noah "preached" righteousness (2Pe 2:5) for 120 years (Ge 6:3) yet without the slightest impact except his own immediate family! The result was that the entire human race was unprepared for the coming judgment, just as all unbelieving earth dwellers will be unprepared for the Second Coming of the Judge of all the earth (2Ti 4:1, James 5:9 "Behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.").

**Warren Wiersbe** - What kept the people from listening to Noah's message and obeying? The common interests of life—eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage. They lost the best by living for the good. It is a dangerous thing to get so absorbed in the pursuits of life that we forget Jesus is coming. (The Bible exposition commentary)

**As** - Term of comparison of **those days** before the global flood preview what it will be like in **those days** before Messiah's return.

**Flood** is **kataklusmos** which gives us our English word **cataclysm**, a large-scale and violent event in the natural world, a sudden violent upheaval. One English dictionary lists these synonyms for cataclysm: disaster, catastrophe, calamity, tragedy, devastation, holocaust, ruin, ruination, upheaval, convulsion, apocalypse, act of God.

**Flood** (2627) (**kataklusmos** from **kata** = intensifies meaning + **kludon** = dashing or surging wave, a surge, a violent agitation of the sea from **kluzo** = to billow, dash over) is a noun that refers to an inundation, a deluge (as Noah's deluge - Mt 24:38,39, Lk 17:27, 2Pe 2:5). Most of the uses in NT and Septuagint refer to the Genesis flood (exceptions - Ps 32:6, Da 9:26, Nah 1:8).

The related verb **katakluzo** means to surge over completely, to inundate (cover with a flood, figuratively to overwhelm), to deluge, to overflow or to submerge.

**Kataklusmos** in the NT - 4x in 4v - Mt 24:38, 39; Luke 17:27; 2Pe 2:5 - As noted all refer to the flood in Genesis in Noah's day.

**Kataklusmos** - 16x in 15v in the Septuagint, most describing the Genesis flood - Gen 6:17; 7:6,7, 10, 17; 9:11, 15, 28; 10:1, 32; 11:10; Ps 29:10; 32:6; Dan 9:26; Nah 1:8;

**Hendriksen** notes that "when the soul becomes entirely wrapped up in them, so that matters such as these become ends in themselves, and spiritual tasks are neglected, they are no longer a blessing but have become a curse. They have become evidences of gross materialism, false security, and often cold selfishness. The men of Noah's day did not in time recover their senses. They failed to realize their perilous situation until it was too late. Suddenly the cataclysm—the word used in the original—came. For them it was indeed a "washing down," which is the basic meaning of the word. The flood carried or swept them all away. Similarly sudden and disastrous for the wicked shall be the "coming" (see on verse 27) of the Son of man. For the latter concept see on 8:20, pp. 403-407. The nature of the punishment that awaits the unprepared on that day is described in 25:46." (BORROW [Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew](#))

**Eating** (5176) (**trogo**) is not the common word for eating (**phago** the alternative form of **esthio**) but a word that speaks of eating things like fruits and nuts which require crunching with the teeth. So the idea is to gnaw, to bite, to crunch, to chew (as one would raw vegetables or fruits.) This verb which primarily signifies chewing, "lays stress upon the process of eating. It is more intensive than phago" (Vine) The imperfect tense here pictures their chewing as an ongoing activity (chewing and chewing, more interested in their temporal food than their eternal fate)!

Mt 24:38 is the only use in Matthew and all other uses are by John. Four are figurative uses in the context of Jesus' description of Himself as the "Bread of life" in which He says men must "eat" His flesh (Jn 6:54, 56, 57, 58). One use describes Judas "who eats" His bread and then lifted up his heel against Jesus (Jn 13:18). Trogo is not found in the Septuagint.

**Liddell-Scott-Jones** on **trogo** - gnaw, nibble, munch, esp. of herbivorous animals, as mules, rarely of dogs; of human beings in disease, of men, eat vegetables or fruit, of dessert, eat fruits, as figs, almonds, etc., of small fish as hors-d'oeuvres, later, simply eat,

**Henry Morris** on **giving in marriage**. "Giving in marriage" could also be understood as "getting out of marriage." In any case, the unconcern of the world just before it was to be destroyed by the Flood will be characteristic of the world just before the coming of the Son of Man. Many other characteristics of Noah's day (immorality, demon possession, widespread corruption and violence, universal rebellion against God and His will) are being repeated in our day.

## UNTIL THAT DAY: THE DAY NOAH ENTERED THE ARK

**Until the day that Noah entered the ark** - **Until** (expression of time) marks the point in time when the flood came and eating and marriage ceased. It marked the "point of no return" for it was at that time God's judgment fell suddenly and swiftly on the sinful world and they were all destroyed.

As noted earlier in Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse he did not mention **the days of Noah**, but in an earlier discourse on the Kingdom of God (Luke 17:26-37+) Jesus did describe the days preceding His return as similar to **the days of Noah**. However in this earlier discourse Jesus also added a comparison to **the days of Lot** (a description not found in Matthew 24 or Mark 13. This additional description is highlighted in **bold**). This is a description of all who are unprepared to meet the King of kings when He returns and inaugurates His Millennial Kingdom.

26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man (Jesus is responding to the Pharisees query "as to when the Kingdom of God was coming" Lk 17:20): 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed (apollumi

= not annihilation but eternal ruin - a key word of this section!) them all. **28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed (apollumi) them all. 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed (apokalupto). 31 "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. 32 "Remember (present imperative) Lot's wife. ("Lot's wife was destroyed on the very threshold of deliverance. Her attachment to Sodom was so powerful that she delayed and looked back; she was overwhelmed by oncoming judgment, just before reaching the place of safety - Ge 19:26." - MacArthur Study Bible) 33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose (apollumi) it, and whoever loses (apollumi) his life will preserve it. (A paradoxical principle repeatedly emphasized by Jesus = Mt 10:39, 16:25, Mk 8:35, Lk 9:24, 17:33, Jn 12:25) 34 "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. 36 "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left." 37 And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered." (Luke 17:26-37+)**

**John MacArthur** assigns this description to the days of **Daniel's Seventieth Week** writing that "During the time of tribulation (Mt 24:21, 29; Rev. 7:14) immediately preceding His return, life will be much like it was immediately before two significant Old Testament judgments. **The days of Noah** and **the days of Lot** were marked first of all by indifference. **The days of Noah** and **Lot** were also two of the most wretched, vile, evil periods in human history. Wickedness was rampant. In Noah's day "the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and... every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Ge 6:5). It was a time of widespread demonic activity, as demon-possessed men ravaged women (Ge 6:2). Sodom in Lot's day was also marked by sexual perversion, so much so that the city's name came to refer to homosexual sin. So vile were its inhabitants that they attempted to rape the two angels sent to rescue Lot and his family from Sodom's imminent judgment (Ge 19:4-11). **The days of the Tribulation under divine judgment leading up to the Lord's return will also be a time of unprecedented wickedness.** Satan's puppet, the Antichrist, will rule the world. Some of the most wicked, vile, and perverted demons, who had been incarcerated in the abyss (the bottomless pit), will be released to run amuck over the earth (Rev. 9:1-11). Most significantly the Holy Spirit, who heretofore had restrained evil, will no longer do so, allowing wickedness to reach its maximum level (2Th 2:6-7). As will be the case on the day that the Son of Man is revealed, devastating judgment came suddenly and inescapably in **the days of Noah and Lot.** (MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

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#### Vance Havner - "And Knew Not"

Jesus tells us that before the Flood people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, selling, planting, building, "and knew not until the flood came" (Matt. 24:38-39). We are told that so shall it be when Jesus returns. Despite modern sophistication the primary characteristics of that generation will be ignorance—"they knew not."

Of the activities mentioned here not one is evil in itself, but when practiced without God all are worldly. This generation is utterly oblivious to the Word and will of God. Most people don't know that Jesus may come at any time and many probably wouldn't care if they did know. Preachers used to preach about selected sins and call them worldly, but those sins were only marks of the lifestyle of the times. Worse than certain popular sins is the awful ignorance of a generation that knows not the thing most worth knowing. Break into a conversation today and ask people if they are expecting Jesus to come back. That will bring a look that takes you for a nut! Indeed, most church members grow strangely silent and change the subject.

We have split the atom and have walked on the moon, and we quail at the possibility of nuclear disaster, but something greater still is not deemed worthy of discussion. After listing all the technical achievements of this generation will it be written at the end of their chapter, "They knew not"? (Don't Miss Your Miracle)

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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!

Perhaps today!

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**Matthew 24:39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be: kai ouk egnosan (3PAAI) eos elthen (3SAAI) o kataklusmos kai eren (3SAAI) apantas houtos estai (3SFMI) kai e parousia tou huiou tou anthropou**

- Mt 13:13-15 Jdg 20:34 Pr 23:35 24:12 29:7 Isa 42:25 44:18,19 Lu 19:44 Joh 3:20 Ac 13:41 Ro 1:28 2Pe 3:5)

## JUST LIKE THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

**They did not understand** - They will understand but only after the cataclysm (kataklusmos) has occurred... too late! Like the people of Noah's day, the generation of the Tribulation will be warned and warned and warned again. (Rev 14:6 could not be a clearer warning). Some of them will have been warned many times before the Tribulation, while the church is still on earth proclaiming the Gospel, but during the Tribulation those who have not received the love of the truth so as to be saved shall be sent a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false (the lie) (2Th 2:10,11,12).

**Not** - The negative particle "ou" signifies absolute negation. The [antediluvian](#) world did not have a clue the flood was coming, despite the fact that Noah had been building an ark which should have given them a visual clue!

**Understand** (1097)([ginosko](#)) means to acquire information through some modality, as through sense perception. Ginosko involves experiential knowledge, not merely the accumulation of known facts. The lost world would have had "experiential" knowledge if they had heeded Noah's "proclamation" for Noah was a **preacher of righteousness** (2Pe 2:5-note) for 120 years! (Ge 6:3) The godless earth dwellers refused to take to heart what he was doing and saying.

**Phil Newton on they did not understand** - They did not know that they were in a flood until they were in the flood! But that is how cataclysmic events happen. They just take place, most often without warning, and strike with sudden destruction. The [tsunami](#) of December 26th in the Indian Ocean region found people going about life as normal: eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, talking and sleeping, laughing and crying, walking and running. The point Jesus makes is His return will come in a time when people are focused on temporal issues. They think of the mundane things of life while ignoring the warnings of God as well as His promises through the Gospel (cp 2Pe 3). While there may be persecution of Christians and opposition to the gospel, most of humanity will be going about business as usual when Christ comes on the clouds with power and great glory (Mt 24:30). ([Mt 24:36-44 When Will Christ Return?](#))

**Peter** describes the last days apathy regarding the return of the Son

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. (2Peter 3:3-6)

**Until the flood came** - Then they understood, but then it was too little, too late.

**Took them all away** (142)([airo](#)) literally refers to lifting or carrying something up or away (in this case the entire race except for Noah and his family). Luke 17:27 helps us understand "took them all away" for Jesus declared that "the flood came and **destroyed** (apollumi) them all." This description does not fit with the Rapture, for those who are lifted up will not be destroyed but safe forever!.

**William MacDonald** - Though warned that a flood was coming, they lived as if they were flood-proof. When it came, they were unprepared, outside the only place of safety. That is just the way it will be when Christ returns. Only those who are in Christ, the ark of safety, will be delivered. (Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments)

## AS IN THE DAY OF THE DELUGE SO ALSO IN THE DAY OF CHRIST

**Henry Morris on so will** - The coming of the Son of Man will be worldwide in extent and effect, as was the Flood.

**Criswell** - The context of the passage would seem to indicate that the judgment of Christ's return and **not** the rapture of the church is in view. The "**one taken**" (Mt 24:40, 41) is taken in judgment; the one remaining is blessed to enter with the Lord into kingdom blessings. Indeed, the rapture of believers (1Th 4:13-18), it would seem, is not discussed in Matthew 24-25.

As discussed, some writers interpret Jesus' comparison of the last days with **the days of Noah** and **those taken** as believers who are raptured and **those left** as unbelievers who will be judged. However if one reads the Luke version of those who are taken, Jesus says "the flood came and **destroyed** them all." (Lk 17:27). Jesus goes on to further emphasize the danger of destruction by comparing the last days to **the days of Lot** (Lk 17:28, 29). In view of this clear teaching, it is surprising to see a number of writers interpret those **taken** as those who are **saved** rather than as those who will be **destroyed**!

**John Walvoord** adds that "Because this event (**Ed**: Jesus' comparison with the days of Noah) is somewhat similar to the Rapture in that **some are taken and some are left**, posttribulationists almost universally cite this verse as proof that the Rapture will occur as a part of the second coming of Christ after the Tribulation. However, a careful reading of the passage yields exactly the opposite result. At the Rapture of the church, those taken are those who are saved, and those who are left are left to go through the awful period, including the Great Tribulation. Here the situation is just in reverse. Those who are taken are taken in judgment, and those who are left are left to enter the millennial kingdom. In spite of the obvious fact that the illustration has to be reversed in order to make an application to the Rapture, posttribulationists sometimes point out that the Greek word **airo**, used to express "**took them all away**" (Mt 24:39), is a different word (Gr., **paralambano**) than used in Mt 24:40 and in Mt 24:41, "**will be taken**." Though admitting that in Mt 24:39 at the time of the Flood those taken were taken in judgment, they claim the change in wording justifies reading the Rapture into Mt 24:41-42. However, this conclusion is not only contrary to the text of Matthew 24 but does not take into consideration Luke 17 in its description of the Second Coming where Jesus said, "I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left" (Lk 17:34-35). In Luke, however, the question is asked by the disciples, "Where, Lord?" (Lk 17:37) In reply, Jesus said, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather" (Lk 17:37). In other words, the ones taken are obviously put to death in judgment in contrast to what will happen at the Rapture when the one taken is taken to heaven. There is no scriptural basis for reading the Rapture into Matthew 24. The occasion is entirely different. At the Rapture, the church, composed of those who are saved, is taken to heaven. At the second coming of Christ, the saved remain on earth, and the unsaved are taken away in judgment at the beginning of the millennial kingdom. The very word (**airo**) used to describe those taken away in Matthew 24:40-41 is used of Christ being taken away to the cross, obviously being taken in judgment as used here (cf. John 19:16NIV, "So the soldiers took charge of Jesus"). The conclusion for those living at the time of the Second Coming is similar to that of the time of Noah, "**Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come**" (Matt. 24:42). Though the passage is talking about the Second Coming of Christ and not the period preceding the Rapture, obviously, if those living in the period before the Second Coming, who are able to see signs of the Second Coming indicating its approach, should be watching, how much more should those waiting for the Rapture, which has no signs, live in constant expectation of the imminent return of Jesus for His church. (Borrow [Every Prophecy of the Bible- Clear Explanations for Uncertain Times](#))

**Ivor Powell** - Disciples ought to be constantly vigilant. The Savior was aware of a truth enshrined in the ancient proverb: "A stitch in time saves nine."

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**Spurgeon's Morning and Evening** on Matthew 24:39 -- Universal was the doom, neither rich nor poor escaped: the learned and the illiterate, the admired and the abhorred, the religious and the profane, the old and the young, all sank in one common ruin. Some had doubtless ridiculed the patriarch—where now their merry jests? Others had threatened him for his zeal which they counted madness—where now their boastings and hard speeches? The critic who judged the old man's work is drowned in the same sea which covers his sneering companions. Those who spoke patronizingly of the good man's fidelity to his convictions, but shared not in them, have sunk to rise no more, and the workers who for pay helped to build the wondrous ark, are all lost also. The flood swept them all away, and made no single exception. Even so, out of Christ, final destruction is sure to every man of woman born; no rank, possession, or character, shall suffice to save a single soul who has not believed in the Lord Jesus. My soul, behold this wide-spread judgment and tremble at it.

How marvelous the general apathy! they were all eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, till the awful morning dawned. There was not one wise man upon earth out of the ark. Folly duped the whole race, folly as to self-preservation—the most foolish of all follies. Folly in doubting the most true God—the most malignant of fooleries. Strange, my soul, is it not? All men are negligent of their souls till grace gives them reason, then they leave their madness and act like rational beings, but not till then.

All, blessed be God, were safe in the ark, no ruin entered there. From the huge elephant down to the tiny mouse all were safe. The timid hare was equally secure with the courageous lion, the helpless cony as safe as the laborious ox. All are safe in Jesus. My soul,



art thou in him?

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**J C Ryle** - The second personal coming of Christ will be as different as possible from the first. He came the first time as "a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering" (Isaiah 53:3): He was born in the manger of Bethlehem, in lowliness and humiliation; He took the very nature of a servant, and was despised and not esteemed; He was betrayed into the hands of wicked men, condemned by an unjust judgment, mocked, flogged, crowned with thorns and at last crucified between two thieves. He will come the second time as the King of all the earth, with royal majesty: the princes and great men of this world will themselves stand before his throne to receive an eternal sentence: before Him every mouth shall be silenced, and every knee bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

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#### **Vance Havner**

- The world does not know its peril (Matt. 24:39).
- The Church does not know its need (Rev. 3:17).
- Christians do not know their Lord (John 14:9).
- Sinners do not know the Saviour (John 4:10).

#### **Vance Havner - God's Cure for Ignorance**

I would not have you ignorant... Romans 11:25; 1Corinthians 10:1; 2Corinthians 1:8; 1Thessalonians 4:13; 2Peter 3:8.

The outstanding characteristic of this intellectual age, believe it or not, is ignorance. We do err, not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God (Mt. 22:29).

The world does not know its peril, like those of Noah's day who ate and drank, married and gave in marriage and knew not (Mt. 24:39). The church does not know its need. It is like Laodicea, that boasted it was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing and knew not that it was wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (Rev. 3:17). The sinner does not know the Saviour. Jesus said to the woman at Jacob's well, "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink... " (Jn. 4:10).

And Christians do not know the Lord. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me, Philip?" was our Lord's pointed question to His dull disciple (Jn. 14:9). We know Him so poorly, we are so ignorant of the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.

Ignorance unbounded! And the cure is to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (Jn. 17:3). (Day by Day)

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#### **James Smith - THE LAST DAYS.** Matthew 24:37-39.

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be." Then, according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, Noah was a real person, the flood was a great fact, and the second Coming of Christ as the Son of Man will be an unfailing certainty. What the state and conditions of the world will be when He comes is here clearly revealed, "As the days of Noah were, so shall the Coming of the Son of Man be." Nothing could be more simple than this.

**I. As there was great and growing wickedness in the days of Noah, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.** The world did not go on growing better and better up till the days of Noah. No, but it grew worse and worse, till God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Ge 6:5). So shall it be when the Son of Man comes. "As in the days of Sodom" (Luke 17:29, 30). In the last days, "Perilous times" (2Ti 3:1); "Not endure sound doctrine" (2Ti 4:3); "Damnable heresies" (2Peter 2:1); "Strong delusion" (2Th. 2:11); "Scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3); "Many departing from the faith."

**II. As there was faithful warning in the days of Noah, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.** Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2Peter 2:5). For a hundred and twenty years, while the Ark was a preparing, "he condemned the world" (Heb. 11:7). Every board put in the Ark was a note of warning that judgment was coming. So shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be. There never was a time in the history of the Church when the "Coming of Christ" was so generally believed and so clearly preached as now. The cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" (Mt. 25:6) is being heard by the waiting virgins.

**III. As they were overtaken with sudden and universal surprise in the days of Noah, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.** "They knew not until the flood came and took them all away" (v. 39). They were marrying and giving in marriage until Noah entered the Ark and the Lord had shut the door. They believed not the testimony of Noah. The habits and sins of society

remained unchanged and unrepented. So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. When He comes shall He find faith in the earth? He shall come suddenly. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:27). Who shall stand when He appeareth?

**IV. As all who entered the Ark in the days of Noah were saved, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.** The Lord said, "Come thou and all thy house into the Ark" (Gen. 7:1). Noah and his family obeyed the call; then "the Lord shut him in"—"kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1:5). So shall it be when the Son of Man cometh. "Caught up... to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). All who are now in the kingdom of God's dear Son shall be taken away before the judgment of God falls upon the disobedient and the unbelieving. "They that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). Just as Lot was taken out of Sodom before the deluge of fire came. He that hath this hope purifieth himself.

**V. As all outside the Ark were visited with judgment in the days of Noah, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.** "The flood came and swept them all away" (v. 39). The Ark, as a means of salvation, was beyond their reach whenever the door was shut. Their day of opportunity was now gone. So shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be. Selah—pause and think. "Tribulation and anguish" (Ro 2:9); "Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" will be the portion of every Christ rejecter when He comes. Those who have not on the wedding garment when the King comes will be cast forth into outer darkness. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh." (Handfuls on Purpose)

**Matthew 24:40 "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left tote duo esontai (3PFMI) en to agro eis paralambanetai (3SPPI) kai eis aphietai (3SPPI)**

- **one:** 2Ch 33:12-24 Lk 17:34-37 Lk 23:39-43 1Co 4:7 2Pe 2:5,7-9)

**ONE TAKEN  
ONE LEFT!**

**Then (tote)** - When? In the days preceding the coming of the Son of Man.

As has been alluded to above, even as there are two successive verses discussing fates of two parties, so too there are two ways in which the two verses are interpreted - some interpret this as the Rapture and others interpret this as the Second Coming, the event which Jesus has just described in the preceding context (Mt 24:30,32). And so if context is king in interpretation (which it is), the context favors the interpretation of Mt 24:40, 41 as a description of the Second Coming. Lk 17:34-36 is a parallel passage and is also in the close context of the Second Coming (Lk 17:30).

**Reginald Showers** for example writes "Jesus was not referring to the Rapture of the church in Matthew 24. When that event takes place, all the saved will be removed from the earth to meet Christ in the air, and all the unsaved will be left on the earth. Thus, the Rapture will occur in reverse of the order of things in the days of Noah and, therefore, the reverse of the order at Jesus' coming immediately after the Great Tribulation." (Borrow [Maranatha -- Our Lord, Come!- A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church - excellent resource](#))

**Thomas Constable** notes that "Some interpreters have made a case for this being a reference to the Rapture because Jesus used two different words for **"take"** in the context. In Mt 24:39 the Greek verb is **airo** whereas in Mt 24:40, 41 He used **paralambano**. The argument is that **paralambano** is a word that describes Jesus taking His own to Himself. However it also occurs in a bad sense (Mt 4:5, 8; Jn 19:16)." ([Matthew 24 - Expository Notes](#))

**Charles Ryrie** - The ones **taken** will be taken to judgment and death. The ones **left** will be left to enter the blessings of the millennial kingdom. (Ryrie study Bible: New American Standard Bible)

**Two men in the field** - They may be fathers and son, brothers, lifelong friends, but they will soon be separated! Why? Because one has through grace placed their faith in Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation, and the other one has rejected Christ's offer of salvation. This division will not be a temporary but a permanent eternal separation! And when does this forever separation transpire? When Jesus returns at a time unknown to both parties. One is spiritually alive and prepared, while the other is spiritually dead and bankrupt.

**One will be taken** - Although **paralambano** means to take to one's self and to seize for one's own possession, and is usually used in a good sense (eg Jn 14:3), in Mt 24:40 the context is not good so that this is clearly not a proof text to support the Rapture of the saints as some commentators state! The **one... taken** will be taken to judgment and eternal punishment (Second Death). The **one... left** will enter into the blessings of the **Millennial Kingdom**. When Noah entered the ark who was left on the earth after the flood?

The believers were the only ones to survive the flood (the ones not taken) Only those in the ark were safe, which is a beautiful metaphor for believers today who are IN CHRIST, eternally secure "in the Ark" so to speak!

**Stuart Weber on one taken... one left** - "Everyone needs to heed these warnings." One of each pair was prepared because he or she knew Jesus' teachings, had watched for the signs, and had remained obedient. The other in each pair was unprepared, because he or she had either been ignorant of Jesus' teaching or else simply ignored them and not lived according to the righteous standards of the king and his kingdom. Such people were taken from the scene when the king returned to rule. Jesus' point was: be prepared. His arrival will be sudden and unpredictable. (Holman New Testament Commentary)

**Noah was one left.** Why? Was it because Noah was so good? Of course not. Moses records "Then the LORD said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household; for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time." (Ge 7:1, Heb 11:7-note = This passage clearly shows how genuine faith is not static but is dynamic and results in obedience. Obedience does not save anyone but it demonstrates that one is genuinely saved. Beloved, if you say you are saved, that you walked an aisle 30 years ago but you having living like the devil ever since, then there is a great likelihood that you will not be on the ark with Noah. You need to repent and confess Jesus as Lord and be born again by His Spirit! Ro 10:9, 10-note, John 3:3-5, Titus 3:5, 6-note, Eph 2:8,9-note)

#### **Related studies on faith and obedience:**

- Relationship of faith and obedience - Covenant
- Obedience of faith - Ro 1:5, 16:25
- James 2:14-26 Comments on Faith and Works

**Hendriksen** - It is clear that once this final day arrives, every opportunity still to be saved is gone forever. The door is shut... (Hendriksen's note on Mt 25:10 =) Certain passages of Scripture are filled with pathos, with a deep feeling of tragedy. Think, for example, of 2Sa 18:33, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom...." So also the "never agains" at the close of the six lines of Rev 18:21-23a. And so here also: when the bridegroom comes, those who are ready enter. The others never get in, for when they arrive they discover that **the door is shut**. (**Ed:** Just like it was in Noah's day - and who shut the door? God shut the door! Woe!) Cf. Luke 13:25. (BORROW [Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew](#))

**Blomberg on taken** - "taken" in Mt 24:40-41 (though a different verb in the Greek) parallels "took" of v. 39 and suggests that those taken away are taken for eternal judgment (not "raptured"), while those left behind remain with Christ. (The New American Commentary)

#### **Related Resource -**

- Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming

**Will be taken** (3880) (**paralambano** from **para** = beside + **lambano** = appropriate, receive) means to receive alongside or to take to oneself (into close association). There are two basic ideas - to take or to receive. In this context clearly the meaning is to take with one in order to carry away. Some uses of paralambano are in a positive context (see note on Jn 14:3 below) whereas others are in a negative context (Mt 4:5, 8; Jn 19:16).

Jesus uses this verb in His description of the **Rapture** in John 14:3 promising the disciples that "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and **receive** (paralambano) you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Notice the taking conveys a sense of close fellowship and agreement associated with the receiving to Himself. Although **NAS** translates it as "**will be taken**" it is actually in the **present tense** (see Mt 24:41 note below by Gundry) so pictures them as in the process of being taken, a vivid description! The passive voice underlines this "taking" will not be of their strength nor of the choice but is from an external source (i.e., God's angels - Mt 13:39, 40, 41, 49).

**Meyer** - The use of the **present tense** here pictures what is future as though it were already taking place. (Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2)

In a related passage **Jesus** prophesied

So it will be at the end of the age (which terminates in the end of the Great Tribulation); the angels shall come forth, and **take out** the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt 13:49-50)

**Comment:** The verb **take out** is **aphorizo** which means to set one apart for some purpose. It is used of the final separation of the righteous from the wicked. **Aphorizo** speaks of the separation of Jesus' disciples from the world (Lk 6:22) and of the setting apart of His apostles for special functions (Acts 13:2).

When Jesus returns at the Second Coming (Mt 25:31) there will be a judgment resulting in a separation:

And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He **will separate** them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. (Mt 25:32)

**Peter** describes this separation of Noah from all the rest of the world and of Lot from the ungodly in Sodom. Both of these divine rescues emphasize that God will rescue all the godly and punish all the ungodly.

And did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; (2Pe 2:5)

And if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8(for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), 9then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,(2Pe 2:7-9)

**One will be left** - Those **left** on earth are believers who have survived the **Great Tribulation** and will enter the **Millennial Kingdom** in order to populate the earth.

**Meyer** on **will be left** - It is tantamount to saying: *away! thou art not accepted*.

**Will be left** (863)(**aphiemi** from **apo** = prefix implies separation + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and refers to total detachment, total separation, from a previous location or condition. In secular Greek **aphiemi** was used to indicate the sending away of an object or a person. Although **NAS** translates it as "**will be left**" it is actually in the **present tense** (see Mt 24:41 note below by Gundry).

**The uncertainty of the timing of the Second Coming  
should stimulate all Christ followers to be ready at all times.**

**Matthew 24:41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left duo alethousai (PAPFPN) en to mulo mia paralambanetai (3SPPI) kai mia aphietai (3SPPI):**

- **Grinding:** Ex 11:5 Isa 47:2

**Two women** - As with the two men, these women might be mother-daughter, sisters (even twins), life long friends, but their ties will forever be broken when Christ returns. As described below this ancient mill was operated by two women, so their juxtaposition is even closer than two men in a field (see Shaw's note below).

**Constable** on **two women** - Typically two women—often sisters, a mother and a daughter, or two servants—sat opposite each other turning the small hand mill between them. ([Ibid](#))

**Mill** is **mulon** that "was a hand-mill composed of two stones."

**Freeman** - The hand mill was commonly two circular stones used to grind grain. Usually, it was worked by two women. One woman fed the grain at the center, and the other guided the products into little piles. The grain to be ground was fed into the central hole in the upper stone and it gradually worked down between the stones. As the grain was reduced to flour, it flew out from between the stones onto a cloth or skin placed underneath the mill. To make fine flour, it was reground and sifted. The stone was made of basalt and was about a foot and a half in diameter and two to four inches thick. (Manners & customs of the Bible)

- [Mill - Kitto's Picture of 2 Women Grinding](#)
- [Mill - Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Mill - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)

**Vincent** on **mill** - The ordinary hand-mill with a handle fixed near the edge of the upper stone, which is turned by two women.

**Will be taken** (3880) (**paralambano**) - For discussion of this verb see Mt 24:41. See Gundry's note below on use of the **present tense**.

**Will be left** (863)(**aphiemi**) - For discussion of this verb see Mt 24:41. See Gundry's note below on use of the **present tense**.

**Robert Gundry** adds that "The two instances (**Ed**: Mt 24:40 and Mt 24:41) each of the **present tense** in "is taken along" and "is left"

are preceded by the future tense in **"will be in a field"** and **"will be grinding."** So Jesus uses the **present tense** to emphasize the certainty of being taken along and being left. They're as good as happening right now. The **taking away** of people by the flood favors that being taken along has to do with judgment at the Son of Man's coming (compare the separation of the wicked out from among the righteous in the parables of the tares and foul fish [Mt 13:30, 40-42, 49-50]). Then **being left** means being spared from judgment. The accent doesn't rest on the separation of people in proximity so much as on the occurrence of this separation during the round of daily activities and therefore unexpectedly—unless you're watching. (Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-Verse Explanations with a Literal Translation)

**Stuart Weber** on Mt 24:39-41 - With this statement, Jesus completed the prophetic portion of the Olivet Discourse. He then moved into the preparation part of his teaching to help people get ready for these future events by living correctly in the present. (Holman New Testament Commentary)

**David Turner** - The language of separation found in Mt 24:40-42 has received extensive discussion among evangelicals who adopt the futurist interpretation. Those who hold the theory of a pretribulational rapture of the church, distinct from Jesus' coming after the unparalleled tribulation of Mt 24:29, debate whether Mt 24:40-42 speaks of the rapture taking believers from the earth and leaving unbelievers (Walvoord 1985). There are two major difficulties. First, Jesus' language does not approximate a distinction between a pretribulational rapture and a posttribulational coming of Jesus to the earth, as Paul arguably does (cf. 1Th. 4:13-18; 2Th 1:6-10). Second, the language of one being taken and another being left is ambiguous. During Noah's flood those taken were swept away by the water, and those who were left were protected by the ark (Mt. 24:38-39). This is consistent with Jesus' interpretation of the gathering and burning of the tares in Mt 13:41-42. But Mt 24:31 describes the gathering of God's elect, not those about to be condemned. This is consistent with John's imagery of the wheat gathered into the barn in Mt. 3:12. One must conclude that there is no pattern in Matthew's use of this language. Further, preoccupation with this question is a diversion from the point of the passage: alert expectation of Jesus' coming (Carson 1984: 509). In cases such as this, exegesis may degenerate into a pedantry that ironically distracts disciples from the teaching of the passage. Exegetical debate must not distract from obedience. (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)

**Matthew 24:42 "Therefore **be on the alert**, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming gregoreite (2PPAM) oun hoti ouk oidate (2PRAI) poia hemera o kurios humon erchetai (3SPMI):**

- **Be on the alert:** Mt 25:13 26:38-41 Mk 13:33-37 Lu 12:35-40 21:36 Ro 13:11 1Co 16:13 1Th 5:6 1Pe 4:7 5:8 Rev 3:2,3 16:15)(**for:** Mt 24:36,44 Mk 13:33

## **A COMMAND TO NOT FALL ASLEEP SPIRITUALLY**

**ESV** Therefore, **stay awake**, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

**NET** "Therefore **stay alert**, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

**NIV** "Therefore **keep watch**, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

**Therefore** (oun) is a **term of conclusion** which begs the question "What and or why is Jesus drawing this conclusion?" In view of the fact that His return will be sudden and unpredictable. In view of the fact that His return will bring about an irrevocable, eternal separation, He wants His hearers to **be on the alert** for that day. And clearly the only way to truly be prepared for His return is to receive Him as Lord and Savior!

**Our eschatology  
Should affect  
Our ethics!**

**Mark's** version has

Therefore, **be on the alert** (**gregoreuo** [English name "Gregory" = the watchful and vigilant one!] in the **present imperative**)—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—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 13:35-37)

**Davies and Allison** - Given ignorance of the parousia's date, leisurely repentance is foolish. Fear of being caught off guard should motivate one to watch. (Ibid)

**David Turner** - There will be no leisure for repentance. (Cornerstone biblical commentary, Vol 11: Matthew and Mark)

**A T Robertson** - **Keep awake**, be on the watch "therefore" because of the uncertainty of the time of the second coming. Jesus gives a half dozen parables to enforce the point of this exhortation (the Porter, the Master of the House, the Faithful Servant and the Evil Servants, the Ten Virgins, the Talents, the Sheep and the Goats). Matthew does not give the Parable of the Porter (Mark 13:35-37). (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**Gundry** explains that "**Therefore** bases the command to stay awake on the already stated impossibility of knowing the day and hour of the Son of Man's coming. The consequent redundancy of "**because you don't know at what particular day your Lord is coming**" adds further emphasis on that impossibility." (Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-Verse Explanations with a Literal Translation)

The parallel passage in Mark in contrast to Mt 24:42 has **two commands** calling for spiritual alertness, in fact using 2 verbs that are not used in the Matthew passage:

**Take heed** (blepo in the present imperative = enabled by the Spirit make this your lifestyle!), **keep on the alert** (agrupneo in the present imperative); for you do not know when the appointed time (of His coming) will come. (Mk 13:33)

**Gundry** - To **stay awake** means to keep watching for the events that will signal the nearness of the Son of Man's coming. (Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-Verse Explanations with a Literal Translation)

**Hendriksen** says **be on the alert** means "To be (constantly) on the alert or watchful a Greek word... which... means to live a sanctified life, in the consciousness of the coming judgment day. Spiritual and moral circumspection and forethought are required; preparedness is necessary. The watchful person has his loins girded and his lamps burning (Luke 12:35). It is in that condition that he looks forward to the coming of the Bridegroom... Note that Jesus refers to himself as "**your Lord**." So glorious, powerful, and clothed with authority and majesty is He; also, so condescending, so closely united with those whom He is pleased to call His own, and who are loyal to Him. Cf. Isa. 57:15. Let them therefore persevere in being vigilant. (BORROW [Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew](#))

**William MacDonald** - The Son of Man will come when least expected by the masses. Therefore, **His people should be on the tiptoes of expectancy**. (Ibid) (Bolding added)

**Warren Wiersbe** - We "watch" when we stay alert and remind ourselves that our Lord may come at any time. When in your heart you delay His coming (v. 48), you start to lose your effectiveness and witness. Keep watching and working! (With the Word Bible Commentary)

**J R Miller** - The great lesson Jesus taught His disciples was in the word "Watch!" which sounds in every-recurring strokes in His discourse like a great bell. Questions as to when or how are discouraged—but they are always to watch. We must be always watching—watching ourselves—lest we do wrong; watching our Guide—that we may follow Him closely and carefully; watching our duty—that we may always know it and do it; watching for danger—for on every hand danger lurks. It is not a safe world to live in—that is, it is not safe unless we watch, and unless we are in divine keeping. Satan is so vigilant, his approaches are so insidious and stealthy, and sin is so alluring and deceptive, that only sleepless vigilance can insure our safety.

In this passage, however, the watching is for the coming of Christ, for which we are commanded to be always in readiness. He will surely come, and His coming will be sudden and unannounced. There will be a great final coming of Christ—but really He is always coming. The only way, therefore, to be prepared for Him at any most sudden moment, is to be ready all the time. If there is one hour when we relax our vigilance and cease to watch, that may be the hour when He will come.

There is an old legend of a man who waited a thousand years before the gates of paradise, watching for them to open, that he might enter in. At last, yielding to weariness, he slept for just one hour. And during that hour—the gates opened for a few moments and closed again. Thus by being off his guard a little while, he missed his opportunity. The coming of Christ will be so sudden that no preparation can be made for it after He appears. We must learn to live so that there will not be a moment, day or night, when we would be afraid or ashamed to have Him come into our house or place of business and find us as we are. **There is no day which may not be our last. Therefore, we should keep our work done up to the moment, finishing it every evening as if we were never to come back to it anymore.** (Devotional Hours with the Bible)

**Be on the alert** ([1127](#))(gregoreuo) means to be watchful or to refrain from physical sleep. In the present context the idea is figurative, speaking of avoidance of spiritual stupor if you will. This calls for one to be spiritually alert, to be in a state of vigilance, and to be ready to respond to danger, emergency or opportunity.

**Paul** like a commanding general issued **four** "staccato like" commands to the saints at Corinth to **Be on the alert** (gregoreuo in



the **present imperative**), **stand firm** (present imperative) in the faith, **act like men** (present imperative), **be strong** (present imperative).

**Gregoreuo** is used by **Jesus** three times in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew (Mt 24:42, 43, 25:13) and three times in Mark's version of the Olivet Discourse (Mk 13:34, 35, 37).

**Be on the alert** is in the **present imperative** which calls for a lifestyle of alertness! Make it the habit of your life to continually keep awake, refrain from sleeping (spiritually speaking). But remember that this heart attitude is not a matter of "self-effort!" The only way to obey this command is by daily dependence on the Holy Spirit Who continually directs our gaze to Jesus and excites in our hearts an eagerness and anticipation of seeing Him face to face. Stay wide-awake watching for Jesus.

The New Testament writers repeatedly call all disciples of Jesus to be in an attitude of readiness for His return!

Luke 12:37 Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find **on the alert** (Young's Literal = "still watching" = **gregoreuo**) 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.

1Thessalonians 5:2; 6 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like **thief in the night**... so then (**term of conclusion**) let us not sleep as others do, but **let us be alert** (**gregoreuo**) and sober.

Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I am coming **like a thief**. Blessed is the one who **stays awake** (**gregoreuo**) and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame."

**For** (because) (**hoti**) is a **term of explanation** - Here Jesus gives the rationale for His command to remain spiritually alert.

**You** - He is referring in the parable to the "head of the house" (Mt 24:43).

**How does one stay "watchful"?** Paul says "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." (Col 4:2-note, cp Mt 26:41 below) Clearly if we are speaking to God through our Great High Priest, we are much more likely to be prepared to see Him face to face! John alludes to this same heart attitude writing

And now, little children, **abide** (present imperative = commands us to continually abide in Jesus - **only** possible by continual dependence on the Spirit) in Him, so that (**term of purpose**) when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." (1Jn 2:28-note)

**Why do we need to "keep awake"?** (1Pe 5:8 Acts 20:31 Mt 25:13 Mt 26:41)

We have an Satanic enemy - **Be of sober spirit** (aorist imperative = conveys a sense of urgency = "Just do it!" enabled by the Spirit!), **be on the alert** (aorist imperative = conveys a sense of urgency = "Just do it!" enabled by the Spirit!). Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8-note)

We have an internal enemy (flesh) - **"Keep watching** (present imperative = commands continual attention - only possible by continual dependence on the Spirit) and **praying** (present imperative = commands continual attention - only possible by continual dependence on the Spirit), that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41-note)

**What's the reward for maintaining vigilance until He returns?** Jesus says "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... "And be sure 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." (Lk 12:37,39)

**Spurgeon** - That he will come, is certain. That his coming may be at any moment, is equally sure; and, therefore, we ought to be always ready for his appearing.

**You do not know** (ou eido) - This is the reason for the command to be alert. Jesus uses the negative particle "ou" which can be paraphrased "you absolutely do not know!" One of the reasons we are not to know the day of Christ return is so that we might conduct ourselves daily as if it might be today! What (Who) you are looking for will determine what (Who) you are living for! Instead of speculating on Christ's return, start living for Christ's return, whenever it is.

**ESV Study Bible** - Christians should not merely keep looking for the coming of the Son of Man. Instead they should be completing the work of the Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20), as well as being prepared and expectant, because the time of Christ's return is

unknown (Mt 24:36). On readiness for Christ's return; cf. 1Th 5:1-11; 1Pe 4:7; 2Pe 3:2-18.

**Phil Newton** on when Jesus will return - He will come again but the time is known only to God and not to man... At a time when everything seems normal. So far, nothing ominous has crossed the scene—just normal living. That is just the point that Christ makes. At a time when everything seems to be normal for most of humanity, Jesus Christ will return. You remember that the people around Noah continued living life the way they had always lived, in spite of the strange man building a huge ship nowhere near water. Noah preached, warning of God's judgment and calling for righteousness, but everyone just kept living normally—no anxiety, no concern for how the old man's ship would float, no thought of divine judgment. Even the terminology in the verse describes the casual munching of food and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage—just normal life... If we knew the date of Christ's return, you can count on the human tendency to coast in spiritual discipline to kick in gear. Procrastination would rule people's lives if they knew the date of Christ's return. So Christ does not pass along that data... Discovering the date of Christ's return is not our business. Our responsibility is to be personally prepared through perseverance and to help others prepare for Christ's return by faithfully proclaiming the gospel. The warnings Christ gives serve to arouse us from slumbering. In the same way that the blare of an emergency siren in the middle of the night startles us into alertness, the warnings that Christ and the other biblical writers give serve to sharpen our senses for action instead of spiritual slumber. ([Mt 24:36-44 When Will Christ Return?](#))

**Your Lord** - Clearly the implication is that believers are no longer their own but belong to the One Who purchased them with His blood (1Cor 6:19, 20, Rev 5:9). He will call us to account.

**Your Lord is coming** - This phrase recalls the Aramaic word **Maranatha** ([see discussion](#)) = "Our Lord, come!"

**Is coming** is not **parousia** but [erchomai](#) a verb which simply means to come from one place (in context from Heaven) to another (earth). Notice that [erchomai](#) is in the **present tense** which speaks of a process and signifies that His future coming is just as certain as an event that is currently in process!

[Erchomai](#) is used to refer to Jesus' future coming in Mt 10:23, Acts 1:11, 1Cor 4:5, 11:26, 2Th 1:10, Mt 16:27, 25:31, Mk 8:38, Lk 9:26, Mt 24:30, Mk 13:26, Lk 21:27. In John 14:18 Jesus told His disciples "I will not leave you as orphans; I will **come** ([erchomai](#)) to you." Some interpret this as a promise of His coming to His disciples after His resurrection whereas others see this as a reference to His coming in the form of the Spirit of Christ which occurred at Pentecost. A third less likely possibility is that Jesus was foretelling of His coming (to which He had alluded in Jn 14:3 which also uses [erchomai](#)) in the **parousia**.

**J Vernon McGee** - This is a great principle which is applicable to every age. You and I ought to live our lives in the light of the fact that we are to stand in the presence of Christ. Note that I didn't say in the light of the coming of Christ but in the light of the presence of Christ. Regardless of whether Christ comes an hundred years from today or a thousand years, you and I will stand in His presence. Whether you are saved or lost, you will stand in His presence. If you are saved, you will have to give Him an account of your life to see if you receive a reward. If you are lost, you will stand there to be judged. Therefore, every person should live his life in light of the fact that he is to stand in the presence of the Lord. This is the great emphasis in the Olivet Discourse. Therefore, it has applications to us, although the interpretation is specifically to folk living at the time of Christ's return as King. ([Matthew. 24 Commentary - Thru the Bible](#))

**David Turner** - The prospect of such unexpected events underlines the absolute necessity of alert expectancy of the return of Jesus. Ignorance as to the time of his return must not lead to ambivalence as to the fact of his return, which will cause a sudden separation between those who alertly expect it and those who do not (Mt 25:31-46). The NT as a whole makes much of the necessity of watchful preparation for Christ's return (1Cor 16:13; 1Thess 5:6; 1Pet 5:8; Rev 3:2-3; 16:15). There will be no leisure for repentance. (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 11: Matthew and Mark)

**D A Carson** - ("Therefore," Mt 24:42) faithful servants will always be ready. Obviously a homeowner in a dicey neighborhood doesn't know when a thief will turn up. Rather, he takes such precautions that he is always prepared. The point is not that Jesus' return at the end of the age is sneaky—like the approach of the thief—brutal, or exploitative. The point, rather, is that although the timing of his return cannot be predicted, he will come, and his people should be as prepared for it as the homeowner in the insecure neighborhood is prepared for the arrival of the thief (whose timing is equally unpredictable). "So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (Mt 24:44). What would you like to be doing, saying, thinking, or planning when Jesus comes again? What would you not like to be doing, saying, thinking, or planning when Jesus comes again? Jesus tells you always to "keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come" (Mt 24:42). (For the love of God: a daily companion for discovering the riches of God's Word. Volume 1)

**Adrian Rogers** - You need to get this out of your notebook and into your heart. Dear old Dr. Vance Havner told an illustration of a woman who was waiting at the train station for her fiancé to come. He was coming in on the train, and they were going to get married. She was there, waiting for the train, waiting for the train—looking, listening, longing. The old stationmaster was there also. He had all of the charts; he had all of the schedules. He knew about the facts of that train coming. But oh, he was not expecting like

she was, because her bridegroom was on that train. And, I want the spirit, not of the stationmaster; I want the spirit of that young lady. Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Lord Jesus!

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**John Henry Jowett - THE LORD IS AT HAND!** "Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." —Matthew 24:42-51.

**THEN let me always live as though my Lord were at the gate!** Let me arrange my affairs on the assumption that the next to lift the latch will be the King. When I am out with my friend, walking and talking, let me assume that just round the corner I may meet the Lord.

**And so let me practice meeting Him!** Said a mother to me one day concerning her long-absent boy: "I lay a place for him at every meal! His seat is always ready!" May I not do this for my Lord? May I not make a place for Him in all my affairs—my choices, my pleasures, my times of business, my season of rest? He may come just now; let His place be ready!

**If He delay, I must not become careless.** If He give me further liberty, I must not take liberties with it. Here is the golden principle, ever to live, ever to think, ever to work as though the Lord had already arrived. For indeed, He has, and when the veil is rent I shall find Him at my side. (My Daily Meditation for the Circling Year)

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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" (1 Corinthians 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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**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.

**To ignore the Bible is to invite disaster.**

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**False Predictions** - Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age? — Matthew 24:3

News that a solar eclipse would take place on July 22, 2009, brought an alarming prediction. It was predicted that the eclipse would sufficiently affect gravitational pull, causing tectonic plates to "pop a seam," resulting in a sizable earthquake and a subsequent devastating tsunami in Japan. The US Geological Survey responded that no scientists "have ever predicted a major earthquake. They do not know how, and they do not expect to know how, anytime in the foreseeable future."

There have also been many false predictions about the date of Christ's second coming—despite our Lord's emphatic words: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matt. 24:36). Christ told His followers that instead of trying to predict the date of His return, they should "watch" (Mt 24:42) and "be ready" (Mt 24:44).

Peter warned, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief." Then he added: "What kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives" (2 Peter 3:10-11 NIV).

Striving to live for God—that's what Jesus wants us to focus our energy on while we wait for that "blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

When someone says, "I can discern  
Exactly when Christ will return,"  
Don't be deceived or led astray—  
The Lord said we can't know the day. —Sper

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

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