

# How to Watch for Christ's Return

End Times (Part 8)

Mark 13:32-37 (Mt.24:32-35, Lk.21:29-33) 12/11/2021

*Jesus told us to keep watch for his coming, but what does that mean?*

*Were you keeping watch yesterday?*

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**Mark 13:32** “But concerning that day or hour, no one knows. Not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33** Keep watch! Stay alert! You do not know when that time will come. **34** It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and tells the one at the door to stay awake. **35** "Therefore stay awake because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back-- whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn--**36** lest he come suddenly and find you sleeping.

**37** What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Stay awake!' "

## Introduction

The very last line in the Olivet Discourse in Mark is this:

**Mark 13:37** What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Keep watch!'

If you're not an expert on eschatology, and you don't really know what to make of all this complicated end times prophecy stuff, Jesus boils it all down and gives us the bottom line: Keep watch. That's the command Jesus repeats over and over in this closing paragraph. Verse 33: Keep watch! Stay alert! Verse 34: He tells the one at the door to keep watch, therefore keep watch. Verse 36: If he comes suddenly do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Keep watch!'" Have you been doing that? Yesterday—were you keeping watch for Christ's return? What does keeping watch mean? Are we supposed to go outside and check the eastern sky to see if Jesus is there every ten minutes? Or does keeping watch mean we're supposed to watch for the signs and try to figure out when it's about to happen?

## You Don't Know Therefore Watch

### You Don't Know

It definitely doesn't mean that, because his whole argument in this closing paragraph is that the whole reason why you need to keep watch is because you *can't* figure out the time.

### *But*

The first word in this paragraph (in the Greek) is “but.”<sup>1</sup>

**Mark 13:32** But concerning that day or hour, no one knows.

That “but” points us back to the previous paragraph, where he was talking about what we *can* know.

**28** Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. **29** Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. ... **32** But concerning that day or hour, no one knows.

You can know that's it's near, but don't take that the wrong way. Don't think I'm talking about nearness in time because no one can know that. That's the force of the word, “but.” You can and should know that Jesus' coming is near in the sense of being close by, right at the door, looming, ready to burst upon on us, close enough to be a factor in your decision making. But don't think you can know when it's near *in time*. That part's not for us to know.

The parable of the fig tree (that says when you see the leaves come out then you know summer is near)—that parable is for comfort, not calculation. The point isn't that we should keep an eye out for the signs so that we can get an idea of when it will happen. It's simply to say that just as sure as there are

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<sup>1</sup> Greek *de*. The English translations either translate this word “now” or leave it out altogether. But the most natural translation of *de* is as an adversative, which makes the most sense in the context.

leaves in the springtime, we can be reassured that the progression of human history is moving to its conclusion. Just as surely as April showers bring May flowers, just as surely as spring gives way to summer, so human history will progress from “all these things” that Jesus described to the coming of Christ and the consummation of history.

### ***Strong Statement***

So be reassured *that* it’s going to happen, but don’t think you can figure out when. And it’s so important to Jesus that we get this, listen to how strongly he makes the point.

**32 But concerning that day or hour, no one knows. Not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**

That is a really strong statement—not even Jesus knew. Jesus knew everything in the Olivet Discourse—all that end times information, how everything is going to happen, he knew all about judgment day and how that’s going to go down, all those details, but he didn’t know this one bit of information? That is the most top-secret information in the universe. It’s classified even above the security clearance level of the Son of God!

### ***Can’t Make This Up***

That’s a really strong way to make the point that no one knows the day or hour. It almost seems a little *too* strong. If Jesus is God, how could he not know something? There have been a lot of Christians who see this as a problem passage because they’re afraid it hurts our case when we want to prove the deity of Christ.

I would suggest that passages like this greatly *help* our case. Verses like this make it easier for me to believe the Bible, not harder, because it shows how trustworthy the Bible is. If Christianity were a made up religion—just 12 guys trying to convince the world that a random guy was almighty God—there wouldn’t be verses like this in the Bible. If the Dan Brown novels are true and the Bible is just a book that the church cobbled together hundreds of years after Jesus’ time to prop up their religion, there wouldn’t be verses like this. The presence of verses like this in the Bible are a great comfort to me and a strong argument for the truthfulness of the Bible writers.

### ***Jesus’ Human Nature***

As for the problem of Jesus not knowing something, that’s not a problem at all when you realize that Jesus is omniscient in his divine nature, but not in his human nature. That’s true of numerous attributes of God. In his divine nature Jesus is omnipotent—all powerful. But in his human nature when he walked this earth, his strength was limited. I doubt Jesus could bench 300 lb. when he was three. In his divine nature, Jesus is omnipresent. In his human nature, he was in one place at a time, so if he wanted to be in Galilee, he had to travel there. In his divine nature, he never sleeps. In his human nature, he slept every night. And in his divine nature he knew everything, but in his human nature, Luke 2:52 says Jesus grew in wisdom and stature. He learned things.

### **Not For Humanity**

So it’s no problem to say Jesus didn’t know this one thing. The more important question is why. Why did God the Father withhold this information from Jesus?

**Acts 1:7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."**

It’s not for us to know. Who is “us”? Us humans. Some information is for humans and other information isn’t.

## **Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong to Yahweh our God, but the things revealed belong to us.**

There are plenty of things that would do us a whole lot more harm than good if we knew about them. And the timing of the Second Coming is one of them. God knows that giving us a clear roadmap of the future would hinder our faith, rather than help our faith. God wants the human race to function in a certain way, and we would not function in that way if we knew the timing of the end. So why can't Jesus know? Because he's the ultimate human—the representative of the whole human race. And so to put a huge exclamation point on the fact that this information doesn't belong in human hands, it's not even given the ultimate, perfect human. That's how utterly inappropriate it would be for the human race to know the time.

### ***Angels***

What about angels? Why don't they know? Angels are messengers—that's what the word, "angel" means. Their main role is to carry messages from God to man, and so it's not fitting for them to know either. God has put such a lockdown on this information that it's not allowed to leave heaven under any circumstances.

### ***Be Like Jesus***

This verse should be a wake-up call to the prophecy gurus who work so hard to pin down the timing of the Second Coming. Why would we do that? We don't want to be like Jesus? If Jesus didn't know, and my greatest desire is to be just like him, then I definitely don't want to know when the Second Coming will be. If someone found out and wanted to tell me, I would go running away with my hands over my ears. Why? Because I want to be like Jesus, and he didn't know the day or hour.

### **Day or Hour**

Let's take a look at this phrase "day or hour." The prophets frequently referred to the day of the Lord as "the day" or "that day."<sup>2</sup> So when Jesus says, "But concerning the day, no one knows," that would naturally be taken to refer to the day of the Lord. The time of the final judgment, the resurrection, the culmination of history—that whole time period of the day of the Lord. No one knows when that day will come.

### ***Hour***

Then he also adds the word, "hour." Then in v.33 he uses the word "time" (*kairos*—season or era). We can't know the general time period when the day of the Lord will be, and we don't know the specific moment of his coming.

### **Therefore Watch**

We don't know any of that, which leaves us with only one option: constant readiness.

**32 But concerning that day or hour, no one knows. Not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Keep watch! Stay alert! You do not know when that time will come.**

The reason he makes such a point about our ignorance of the time is so that we will keep watch.

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<sup>2</sup> Examples: Amos 8:3, 9, 13; 9:11; Micah 4:6; 5:10; 7:12; Zephaniah 1:9-10; 3:11,16; Joel 3:18; Zechariah 9:16.

## *Pop Quiz*

In school, there are two kinds of tests: pop quizzes and scheduled exams. The purpose of a pop quiz is to reveal what the students actually know. Scheduled exams don't do that because students just cram the night before. It all goes into their short term memory, they take the test, and an hour later it's all forgotten. Scheduled exams tell you nothing about what the student is actually learning and they're a total waste of everyone's time. Only pop quizzes reveal what the students have actually learned. If I were a professor, I would tell my students on the first day of class, "No one knows the day or hour of the final exam. It will be a pop quiz. If you want to pass this class, you just have to know the material so you're ready for the test at any moment."

The Second Coming will be a pop quiz, not a scheduled exam because Jesus wants to come back and catch us doing what we normally do, not the contrived "readiness" we would come up with if we knew when it was going to happen.

This is the point of eschatology. God did not give us end times prophecy so we would sit around and argue over the order of events. Nor did he give it so we would throw up our hands and say, "The prophecy stuff is way too complicated, I'm just going to leave eschatology to the experts." Neither one of those is the right response. The right response is to study prophecy and say, "Wow, I need to keep watch."

## **Stay Busy**

But we still haven't answered the question of what that means. How does one go about keeping watch? Jesus answers that question with a parable.

### **34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work.**

The Church waiting for the Second Coming is like a household of slaves who have been put in charge of the house, each one with a specific job to do. That's how Jesus describes what keeping watch looks like. So watching is working. When Jesus says, "Keep watch," he doesn't mean monitor the newspapers for stories about the Mideast and match them up with verses in Ezekiel. He doesn't mean create a giant chart that shows the sequence of end times events. He doesn't mean play pin the tail on the Antichrist. He doesn't mean check the eastern sky every 10 minutes. He means do your job in the household of God. Watching is working. Roll up your sleeves and do your part.

And don't be fooled by how short this little parable is. Mark distills it for us, but in Matthew's account we learn that Jesus went on for a whole other chapter about this point, teaching all about this work we're supposed to be doing.

## **In Charge**

But Mark just says we each have our task and we need to do the work because Jesus left this world and put us in charge.

### **34 ... He leaves his house and puts his slaves in charge.**

Who's in charge? The slaves. Isn't that amazing? The inmates are running the asylum. Christ has committed the care of his kingdom, the glory of His name, the growth of his cause, and the accomplishment of all his work in the world to us.

## **Not Optional**

Never think of ministry as "volunteerism." When you think of volunteering for some cause, you can do it if you want, you don't have to, and if you do volunteer, you're kind of going above and beyond.

Our work in the household of God is not like that. It's required. It's required even more than showing up to your job is required.

And all our excuses ("I'm not really qualified" or "I offered to help at church but no one called me back" or "I flamed out of ministry" or "I'm burned out")—none of that is going to fly when the Master returns and you have to give an account for whether you did your work while he was gone. Every one of us needs to find a way to use our gifts and abilities to contribute to the work of the household of God.

Remember, who has the authority? The slaves. Raise your hand if you're a slave of Christ. Then you have the authority to serve in his household. If they won't give you a position with a title, fine. But don't think that means you can sit around doing nothing. Find a way to use your gifts to edify the saints.

When he returns, and you stand before him, he's not going to ask you anything about what your pastor or other ministry leaders did or didn't do. He'll ask about what you did. He'll ask you about seeds you did or didn't plant—seeds he wanted to see bearing fruit 100 years after you died. Maybe teaching a little kid some truth in God's Word and that kid goes on to get married and raise a godly family whose grandkids have some huge impact on the kingdom of God. Or a comment that you make to a friend that encourages them and years later they make that same comment to someone else and it results in that person glorifying God instead of committing suicide. Or an example that you set that other people at church saw and felt convicted and repented of some sinful attitude they had about ministry. Don't just think of your little church or your little fellowship group. Think about the generations to come. What kind of condition will Jesus find his Church in when he comes back? Roll up your sleeves and do your part in making the household of God what Christ wants it to be when he returns.

### *No Supervision?*

It's really amazing when you think about how the Church has obeyed Jesus' words here. He said, "I'm leaving—you guys are in charge while I'm gone." How does that usually turn out when the boss does that? What would happen in your company if the boss left, and there was no direct supervision? How long would that business even last? Jesus did that, he been gone 2000 years. He reigns from heaven, but in the earthly, physical realm, who's in charge? There's no president of the Church. There's no congress or ruling body over the worldwide church. Who's in charge? Millions of Christians just doing their individual tasks. Angels might expect to check in and find the household in total disarray by now. But instead, the household of God is probably the most efficiently run world-wide organization in the world. Millions of Christ's servants are busy at work, accomplishing astonishing things. And now it's our turn to take that baton and keep that work going.

## **Stay Awake**

So that's the first part of what we're supposed to do—work. Watching is working. Then Jesus modifies the parable to focus on a second aspect.

**34 It's like a man going away. He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. 35 Therefore keep watch.**

In the first part of the parable we each have our unique task in the household. But now he switches the picture up a bit so now we're all that guy at the door.

**34 ... He tells the one at the door to keep watch. 35 Therefore (all of you) keep watch.**

That's the second part of what we're supposed to do—keep watch (or literally, stay awake). What does it mean to keep watch and be ready for Christ's return? The first part is to be working, the second part is to be awake. Be working and be awake.

## Don't Fall Asleep

### *Blepo*

This concept of staying awake is repeated all through this paragraph. The first is back in v.33.

#### **33 Keep watch! Stay alert!**

The first one is our word, *blepo*—remember that word? That's that term Mark has been using all through his gospel to refer to spiritual insight. To *blepo* is to see reality through the lens of Biblical truth. And it's a big theme in this chapter. This is the fifth time in the Olivet Discourse Jesus has told us to *blepo*. When it comes to the end times, use spiritual insight.

Earlier in the discourse, he told us to use spiritual insight to avoid premature alarm. Don't freak out when you see the beginning of pains. Now he uses the same word to warn us in the other direction—don't be apathetic either. Spiritual insight will keep you from panic about the end times, and it will also keep you from being nonchalant about the end times.

So what is the middle ground between panic and apathy? That's where the second word comes in.

#### **33 Keep watch (*blepo*)! Stay alert!** (Literally, "stay awake")<sup>3</sup>

He repeats that 4 times in this paragraph.

#### **33 Stay awake!**

**34 ... He tells the one at the door to stay awake. 35 "Therefore stay awake... 36 lest he come suddenly and find you sleeping."**<sup>4</sup>

#### **37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Stay awake!' "**

So what does it look like to be ready for Christ's return? What does it mean to keep watch? Two things: be working and be awake. Don't fall asleep.

### *Sleep*

The dictionary defines sleep as, "a state of inactivity with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to events taking place." Inactivity, lack of conscious awareness, lack of responsiveness. Put that in the spiritual world and you know what Jesus means by sleep.

People in the world are like that. They seem active—running around, driving here and there, building skyscrapers, going to work, busy, busy, busy. Spiritually, they're dead asleep—absolutely oblivious to the entire spiritual realm.

And that's a danger for us too. Our tendency, as we wait for Christ's return, will be to become inactive in his kingdom, to lack conscious awareness of the spiritual realm, and become unresponsive to spiritual realities around us. The never-ending lullaby of this world constantly threatens to put us to sleep.

And when that happens—when you lose your conscious awareness of the spiritual realm, all you can see is earthly things. You look at a plate of food on the table and all you see is a plate of food. When you're awake, you look at that plate of food and see a gesture of God's love and you respond with joy and gratitude. Or you might see the enemy trying to use it to tempt you. You look at it with spiritual insight and you see the will of God in relationship to that food.

When you're spiritually asleep and you meet someone, you just see a body. When you're awake, you see an eternal soul.

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<sup>3</sup> This is not the same word used in vv.34,35,37, but it is a synonym.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, "lest he come suddenly and find you sleeping." Jesus seems to be picking up the sentence from the beginning of v.35. "Therefore stay awake ... lest he come suddenly and find you sleeping." Everything in between is a parenthesis.

When you're asleep, you look at the Bible and see a book with a bunch of verses in it. When you're awake, you see the heart of God. You see perfect truth that will revive your soul and give joy to your heart and light to your eyes and you're drawn to it like a baby to its mother's breast.

When you're asleep, you come to church and all you see is a building, a bunch of people, some singing, and a guy up front talking. When you're awake, you see the household of God, the pillar and foundation of the truth, the temple of the Holy Spirit. You see a holy priesthood offering pleasing sacrifices. You see the manifold wisdom of God being made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. You see the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God with thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, and the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

When you're asleep, you watch the news and all you see is crooked politicians, lying reporters, and a whole lot of crime, injustice, and chaos. When you're awake, you see ripe figs that prove harvest time is right at the door and the judgment will come just as sure as summer follows spring.

And what happens when we drift off to sleep? Luke describes spiritual sleep in the parallel account.

**Luke 21:34 ... your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.**

When you start looking at life through only natural eyes instead of spiritual eyes, over time it begins to weight your heart down. The spiritual part of you gets sluggish and lethargic, and then the anxieties of life start to control how you think and feel and they dictate your actions so when judgment day springs like a trap, you're not ready for it because you're living in sin.

Paul gives his commentary of this part of the Olivet Discourse in Romans 13 and 1 Thessalonians 5, where he uses the same language Jesus uses here.

**Romans 13:11 And do this, understanding the time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your sleep.**

What does waking up look like?

**12 ... So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.**

When you nod off to the spiritual world and look at life through merely physical eyes, the result will always be that your flesh will gain control of your life and drive you into all kinds of sin. And one of the sins he mentions is dissension. That would include arguing and fighting over end times prophecy. When Jesus comes back, I think he will find some people who are prophecy experts and who talk about end times prophecy every day and who will be in an argument about the end times right when Jesus comes, but who will be dead asleep.

### ***Not Being Ready***

And for people like that, Jesus' coming will be like the coming of a thief breaking into their house.

**Matthew 24:43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.**

Jesus will come at a time you don't expect him. But if you're awake, that won't be a problem. It's only a problem for the people who are asleep.

**1 Thessalonians 5:1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should**



**surprise you like a thief. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us stay awake and be self-controlled.**

If you stay awake, his coming will be a good surprise instead of a bad surprise. Then he goes on to say this:

**7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.**

Falling asleep and getting drunk are things people normally do at night—why? The reason people generally don't do a lot of heavy drinking in the morning and the reason they don't sleep during the day is because they have to go to work. You can do those things at night because nothing's going on at night. There's not a big consequence if you're asleep or a little tipsy at night. But in the daytime you need to be awake and alert and functional. You need to be ready for work.

So Jesus says, "Stay awake." And he repeats it over and over because the world is constantly slipping us its sleeping pills. Everything around us threatens to lull us to sleep.

Three demons apprentices were speaking with the Devil. #1 said "I'll tell them there is no God." "It won't work—they know better." #2 "I'll tell them there is no hell." "It won't work—they won't fall for that." #3 "I'll tell them there is no hurry." "Yes. That will work."

Never make an important decision right after you've been watching a lot of TV. You're likely to be dead asleep spiritually. Just like you don't operate heavy machinery when you're on sleeping pills, don't make any big decisions at a time when you haven't been thinking from a spiritual perspective for a while. You're likely to look at things the way natural people look at things.

## **The Hour**

Go back to that phrase in v.32—no one knows the day *or the hour*. Anytime you see the word, "hour" in the book of Mark and it's not used literally, it always carries the idea of a time of trial—the hour of testing. We already saw that in the Olivet Discourse.

**Mark 13:11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you in that hour.**

The hour of trial.

**Mark 14:35 Going a little farther, [Jesus] fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.**

**Mark 14:41 ... Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come.**

That's not talking about the next 60 minutes—it's talking about the whole crucifixion ordeal. His hour of trial. John uses this word to refer to the whole great tribulation.

**Revelation 3:10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.**

So when Jesus says, "No one knows about that day or hour," he reminding us that the day of the Lord will also be the hour of trial. We need to stay awake so we're ready for the test. You have to be ready ahead of time, because if you're not ready when it begins, it will be too late.

Just one of example of that is walking by the Spirit. When those horrible days arrive, things will be so hard that in order to make it through without denying the faith, you're going to need the Holy Spirit to give you special strength. You're going to need him to bring spiritual truths to your mind right when you need them. You're going to need him to communicate to your soul the preciousness of Christ. You'll need him to move your heart to love the right things and hate the right things. You'll need all that, but if that hour of trial comes and you haven't been walking by the Spirit—you've drifted far from him, then you won't be ready.

## *The Hour of Testing*

And that goes not only for the final hour of testing, but all the hours of testing you're going to face in your life. Look again at v.35. Notice the four times he mentions.

**35 "Therefore stay awake because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.**

Why does he pick those four times?<sup>5</sup> It's a little strange that all 4 are during the night, since people back then didn't generally travel at night. So why does he mention evening, midnight, rooster crow, and dawn? Just turn one page in Mark and you'll read about all 4 of those. Start with evening.

**Mark 14:17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."**

Fast forward a few hours to the middle of that night. Jesus prays in the garden and has to reprimand the disciples five times for failure to stay awake (14:34, 37, 38, 40, 41). They didn't stay awake in the hour of testing in the middle of the night.

Next was the rooster crowing (Mk.14:72). Was that an hour of testing? Yeah, and Peter failed.

Then came Jesus' trial before Pilate. When did that happen?

**Mark 15:1 At dawn, ... they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.**

Evening, midnight, rooster crow, and dawn. Jesus warns the disciples to stay awake so they will be ready for that final hour of trial because it could come in the evening, middle of the night, when the rooster crows, or at dawn. Then the rest of the book shows the disciples failing to be ready for an hour of testing four times—in the evening, midnight, rooster crow, and dawn. You see what he's doing? Mark is showing us that we need to stay awake and be ready for that final hour of testing, and to do that we need to stay awake and be ready for all the hours of testing we're going to face between now and tomorrow. How do you know if you're prepared for the Second Coming? One way to tell is to see how you do in the hours of testing you face now.

## Conclusion

We're in the Christmas season. It's hard to think of a better example of something that you see completely different things depending on whether you are awake or asleep. Lights, cookies, and Santa Clause vs. the celebration of the incarnation of the Son of God. Between now and when we get together next Saturday, I would urge you to open the eyes of your spiritual perception as wide as you possibly can to the spiritual realm. Then when we have our party on the 18<sup>th</sup>, we can all share what spiritual realities we saw this week beyond what we've seen in previous years. Then after Christmas lets keep our eyes open and stay awake so that when the Master returns to his house, he finds us awake, alert, and working hard.

## Summary

The parable of the fig tree say we should know his coming is near, but that's not to say near in time. Concerning the time, no one knows. His coming will be like a pop quiz so he catches us in our real lives. Since we can't know the time, our only option is to keep watch, which involves two aspects: 1) do your work in his household, 2) stay awake (stay alert to the spiritual realm).

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<sup>5</sup> Commentators point out that this is yet another instance where Mark uses Roman, rather than Jewish timing. The Jews divided the night into 3 watches while the Romans had 4. Mark is writing to Gentiles, so it makes sense he would do that. But the significance of this is not to make a statement about Roman vs. Jewish time. What Mark goes on to show us about those four time markers in the following chapters is the point.

## Harmony

Matthew 24:36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

42 "Therefore stay awake, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. 45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' 49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. 51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mark 13:32 "But concerning that day or hour, no one knows. Not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Keep watch! Stay awake! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and tells the one at the door to stay awake. 35

"Therefore stay awake because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back-- whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn—

36 lest he comes suddenly and find you sleeping.

37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Stay awake!' "

Luke 21:

34 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

37 Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, 38 and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.