

Just before the End!

#3047 0402 23A

Jesus told us what to observe *Just before the End!* His disciples had asked Him ^{Matthew 24:3} “*When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*” He first replied ⁴ “*Take heed that no man deceive you.*”

He went on that *many* would be deceived by religious-looking people—*Just before the End!* military conflicts and wars everywhere; nations attacking each other; ⁷ “*And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.*” He said not to be troubled—yet ⁶ “*For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*”

His return will be sudden, so He warned ^{Matthew 24:36} “*Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*” Let us suppose that we *knew* the day and the hour of His return—say tomorrow at 3:00 p.m.—*what* would we be doing and *how* would we prepare for that moment—that is the question.

After restoring a man’s sight, Jesus said ^{John 9:4} “*I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.* ⁵ *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*” The end that is coming is closer than ever, we must *ask* and *reply* honestly—Are we ready? Are we looking for His return with anticipation and confidence?

We would surely want to be in a good mood and have a Christ-like attitude toward everyone. We would make it a point to tell our family and children how much we *love* them, and how much

we *appreciate* them being in our life. We would be *sure* that repentance of sins and confession to God took place that morning.

We do *not* know the time or date because no one knows exactly *when* Jesus will return for His followers. It is a *reminder* that we should *wear* a smile and *have* a good attitude every day toward everyone and everything until He returns.

The Bible says much about the imminent return of Christ. There are 250 chapters in the New Testament, and Christ’s return is mentioned 318 times in those chapters. 1 in every 25 verses mentions His return.

Jesus spoke *often* of this ^{Mark 8:38} “*Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*” Previously He said ³⁶ “*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ³⁷ Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*” Being ready to greet Him is the *only* important thing!

We *are* ready when we are *trusting* God and following His Son in faithful obedience to New Testament teaching and example. ^{1 Peter 2:21} “*And it is to this you were called; because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you an example so that you should follow in His steps.*” We are *called* and have been *invited* to follow His example in meeting things scripturally.

Jesus is counting on us to *accept* His example, and by His Holy Spirit within, make it *our* example to those in our home, at work, at school, and wherever we interact with others. He is counting on us—saying ^{John 14:2} “*I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also*”—as you continue to *read* and *heed* my words of instruction.

There are tee shirts that say: *Jesus is Returning*; or *The end is near!* Many scoffers mock and say it will not happen. But the *Bible* says it will ^{2 Peter 3:9} “*The Lord is not slow in fulfilling His promise, in the sense in which some men speak of slowness. But He bears patiently with you, His desire being that no one should perish but that all should come to repentance.*”

When God reveals a wrong attitude in our heart, or He shows us that an interest we have is not spiritually helpful, we are *glad* that He is patient; that He is *waiting* for us to repent; and that He is *working* in us to get us ready. Only *God* knows *when* the last person on earth will repent and turn back to Him for the *saving* of their soul.

When the last person *believes* and *receives* Jesus into their heart, the Rapture could take place. If anyone will place real faith in the atoning Blood of Jesus and trust on God’s divine power to heal them—being sincere in living a *new life* from that moment—they will be among those who are caught up to meet Jesus in the air.

^{2 Peter 3:10} “*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*”

All those things that had our *interest*; all those activities on which we spent so much *time*, and in which we poured so much of our *energy*—all burned up! They were of no eternal value, and only took our time away from more important things—being *ready* by being *faithful!*

If we really believed that Jesus could return suddenly in a moment, it would *impact* our life in *more* than a small way. If it does *not* impact our life, or does *not* change our behavior; if it does not affect our way of treating people, then we must *not* really *believe* what Jesus said: ^{Matthew 24:27} “*For just as the lightning flashes in the east and is seen*

to the very west, so will be the Coming of the Son of Man.”

Any service message on the End Times or the Rapture usually generates much interest—we want to learn about Armageddon; the Antichrist; the Second Coming; and anything connected to those events. It is good to be interested in such topics, but if we are just interested about names, dates, places, and events, we miss the point of Revelation.

The reason to study Bible *prophecy* is to be ready for a Bible *event*—it should be the focus of the study! Knowing prophecy prompts us to live a godly life of faith in God. Jesus had strong words for the legalistic scribes and Pharisees Matthew 23:24 “Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.”

Knowing of these times, we should really want to be ready. Matthew 24:37 “For as it was in the time of Noah, so it will be at the Coming of the Son of Man. 38 At that time, before the Deluge, men were busy eating and drinking, taking wives or giving them, up to the very day when Noah entered the Ark, 39 nor did they realise any danger till the Deluge came and swept them all away; so will it be at the Coming of the Son of Man.”

If we really want to be ready for something that happens suddenly—[the world is taken by surprise—but all *believers* taken to Heaven]—we might be a little more careful about what we *say* to people; how we *treat* them; what *attitudes* we keep; and what *decisions* we make concerning entertainment; online time; and what we get interested in. We would think about *how* we spend our *money* and *what* we spend our *time* doing—making every moment count!

The suddenness of the event should *prompt* us to stay in God’s will and not stray outside of it.

Matthew 24:40 “Then will two men be in the open country: one will be taken away, and one left behind. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken away, and one left behind. 42 Be on the alert therefore, for you do not know the day on which your Lord is coming.”

These words speak to us today—we are surely in the days just before the return of Jesus. Matthew 24:43 “But of this be assured, that if the master of the house had known the hour at which the robber was coming, he would have kept awake, and not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready; for it is at a time when you do not expect Him that the Son of Man will come.”

If these days are *Just before the End*, how should we be living? What attitudes should we have? What decisions should we be making?—those questions need answers. Whenever we see ‘*therefore*’ in the Bible, we must find out ‘*what it is there for!*’ Jesus concluded 44 “Therefore you also must be ready; for it is at a time when you do not expect Him that the Son of Man will come.”

Simon was not clear on the issue and asked Luke 12:41 “‘Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?’ 42 And the Lord said, ‘Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.’”

These servants did not know the *time* or *day* or *hour* when their master was returning; and because of this, they were to be on the *watch* for Him; they were to be *alert* and *ready* to answer the door when He returned. We also must be watchful and living a life of a believer in Christ—shining the light of His Truth on a constant basis.

Just before the *end*, we should take the words of Jesus seriously—Luke 12:35 “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36 like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.” Are we ready and waiting—or indifferent and unconcerned?

Luke 12:38 “And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.” To be dressed and ready for service; To be prepared with our lamp of faith still burning; To be standing at the door ready to let Jesus in—we must be *living* His Truth; *Meeting* people right and making all decisions according to the *instructions* of Jesus—who said we should be Matthew 28:20 “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

To be *waiting* for the Master is to be *trusting* Him for everything—asking God to enable us to have a *scriptural* attitude toward all people; treating others as *we* want to be treated; and showing *divine love* toward everyone—Luke 12:43 “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”



www.fcgchurch.org

*Be on our free mailing list—contact:

PO Box 24283
Philadelphia, PA 19120
info@fcgchurch.org

#3047 0402 23A