

End of the world prophecies

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[0 : 00] Well, end-of-the-world prophecies are popular again for various reasons, but mostly because of what's going on in Europe and Russia and possibility of nuclear warfare and all of that.

But there's been many end-of-the-world prophecies over the ages, right from Nostradamus, the Mayan calendar. Remember back in 2012, there were a lot of people who said, oh, the world's ending because the Mayan calendar comes to an end.

Maybe it's just because they ran out of space. I don't know. But I write to people like 54-year-old Dorothy Martin in 1954. Let me tell you her story.

She claimed she was receiving communications from aliens from the planet Clarion, warning her that a supreme being would cleanse the earth on December 21, 1954.

And she actually gathered a number of followers, surprisingly, and they called themselves the Seekers. And she told the Seekers that a flying saucer would come for the true believers to save them from destruction.

[0 : 59] The Seekers had to show their faith by leaving their jobs and giving away their money and possessions in anticipation of their rapture. And on the eve of December 21, the Seekers gathered in the appointed place and removed all metallic objects from their bodies to keep being incinerated from the UFO.

Fortunately, though, when after several hours the flying saucer failed to arrive and destroy the earth, Martin received, conveniently, another message from Clarion, claiming that the Supreme Being was so impressed by the Seekers show of faith that it decided to postpone the apocalypse. Good for us. And there's been, there's been, these, these end of the world prophecies are really popular because we all want to be ready. We all want to know what's going to happen. And in Christian circles, there are also a lot of end of the world apocalyptic prophecies, which are based on passages in Scripture.

Mark 13 is one of those passages. It's one of those passages that people use to forward all of these apocalyptic predictions about how the world is going to end and how to be ready for it.

It's, it's, Mark 13, this difficult passage provides fuel for a lot of those end of days prophecies that you'll hear of and are popularized in book series such as the Left Behind series.

[2 : 18] I don't know if you're familiar with them where, now they're novels, but Tim LaHaye, I think, is also trying to present his apocalyptic view of how Russia and Israel are going to have this war.

And then, you know, all the other nations are getting involved in the nuclear holocaust and all that kind of stuff, which, as you can imagine, as I said, is quite popular again today. And as we read Mark 13, it's very easy to read it as this end of days prophecy with, with things like in verse 14, when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be.

It sounds like that cryptic, apocalyptic language. And verse 24, after the tribulation, that's the word that's used, the tribulation, the sun will be darkened, the moon not yet its light.

It sounds very apocalyptic, stars falling from the sky. This must be talking about the end of time, right? Mark 13. Well, what I hope we're going to see this morning is it's not.

It's talking about an event that happened in history already. That is in our past, not in our future. That happened in the lifetime of the disciples Jesus was talking to.

[3 : 29] And he says that after he says all this stuff, he says in verse 30, have a look at it. Truly, I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things take place. And so Jesus, all of the things that he's talking about here already happened in the generation of his first disciples.

It's not some apocalyptic prophecy that we're reading about in Mark 13. Now, that might sound quite disappointing. You might go, oh, you know, that's what I came for. I'm not sure people actually even know what passage we're preaching before they come to church.

But maybe you came here expecting to hear about the apocalypse. And it is much more exciting, isn't it, to read about the apocalypse rather than read about what happened in history. But don't go home just yet.

Because what we'll discover as well in studying this passage is what it teaches us about what happened in the past, in the first century, actually tells us more about how to be ready for our future than any end times prophecy can.

And so let's have a look and see what Jesus is telling his disciples and what it meant to them, the original readers, and then how it applies to us today. So one of the reasons that people read this chapter as an end of days apocalyptic prophecy is because of the language that is used.

[4 : 46] The language Jesus uses does sound very apocalyptic. Look at verse 24 again. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not shed its light.

The stars will be falling from the sky and the powers in the heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. So this tribulation Jesus talks about in verse 24, it might be a different word in your Bible.

But that word tribulation, that's what the word means, this time of suffering, is for many Christians, it's a end of days word.

And it's considered to be some end time event before the arrival of Christ, you know, before he wraps up everything. And history is, our age is ended, this tribulation is going to happen.

Maybe you've heard preachers talk about the tribulation that's coming. But if we read this in its context and we understand where we are in Mark and what Jesus is talking about, he's not talking about something that's coming in the future.

[5 : 49] He's, well, not to us. He's talking about what's going to happen when Jerusalem is destroyed. And we know that's what he's talking about because of back in verse 2, we saw last week, the disciples asked him, well, they looked at the temple in Jerusalem and they were adoring it.

And he said, no, well, the temple is going to be destroyed. Not one of these stones will be left on another. That's verse 2. And then they asked, well, what's going to happen? How will we know when this is going to happen? And this, Mark 13, is his answer to that question.

So he's talking about the tribulation that the Jews will experience when Jerusalem is destroyed. And that happened 40 years later in AD 70.

Now, AD 70 is a very important date in the history of God's people. And I think it's largely been lost in history.

I don't think anybody here has learned about AD 70 in their history class at school. They don't teach you about what happened in AD 70. They'll teach you about Napoleon and Hitler and, you know, maybe Henry VIII and all that stuff.

[7 : 00] But AD 70 seems to be too far back. But let me tell you, let me make up for that by giving you a little history lesson of what happened in AD 70. Because when we understand that, then we start to understand what Jesus is talking about here.

In AD 70, there was a rebellion. The zealots in Jerusalem rebelled. They saw their opportunity to rebel against their overlords, the Romans. And the Romans were the superpower at the time.

They had the most, the greatest army, the best technology. And they decided to come and this thorn in their side that was Jerusalem for many decades, they decided to teach a lesson.

And so they came to crush Jerusalem with a huge amount of armies. They besieged it. They cut off all its food and water. Terrible things happened. And eventually 1.1 million Jews were killed through the siege or at the hands of the Romans.

Now, 1.1 million, we think, well, you know, worse stuff has happened since then. But if you put that relative to the population of the world at that time, that would equate to about a genocide of about 26 million people today.

[8 : 09] It was huge. It was earth shattering. It was a huge historical catastrophe. And even more of a catastrophe for the Jews than the people who were killed, was that their temple was destroyed.

This was the beating heart of the nation. It was the center of God's plans up until that point in history for His people.

And the temple to be destroyed changed history completely. And that's why many, even Christians in the first century, referred to that event in AD 70 as the end of the age.

Because it was the end of the Old Testament age of Israel in God's plans. And it was the beginning of a new age for this world. The age of the Gentiles where God shifted His focus of His work to the nations.

As we've been going through Mark, Jesus has been alluding to and hinting at this age coming to a close that He's in, and the beginning of this new age that we're living in today.

[9:09] So AD 70, it started, of course, this beginning of the new age started with Jesus and His death and resurrection and ascension. But AD 70 was the final close of the old age.

So it's a very important historical event we need to know about. But look how Jesus goes on to describe it again from verse 24. The sun will be darkened and the moon will not shed its light. The stars will be falling from the sky and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds. Okay, now, surely this is not talking about just what happened at AD 70, is it?

Well, yes, it is. This is still talking about what happened in Jerusalem 40 years after Jesus said these words. History actually reports that there was some weird stuff that happened around that time in Jerusalem.

There was astronomical events. There were earthquakes. There were even visions of armies in the clouds. And we've got historical reports of this. And so there were signs.

[10:16] And often God in history, and we've seen in the Old Testament, He shows these supernatural visions of things that act as a window for what's happening behind the scenes.

God often reminds people that when historical events happen, He is doing something behind the scenes. He's there, and it's part of His plans. And so there were these strange events around AD 70, we know from history.

But more importantly, the language Jesus uses here of these stars, the sun being darkened, the stars falling, the Son of Man coming in the clouds, this is language that has already been used in the Old Testament many times to describe what happens when God judges nations in history.

Let me give you some examples. So Isaiah 13. You can turn there, or you can just listen. Isaiah 13 from verse 9.

This is talking about the destruction of Babylon. Now do you know who Babylon was? Well, Babylon was an ancient, massive empire. In its day, it was like the Roman Empire.

[11:25] And God used Babylon to punish His people Israel for their sins and their idolatry and send them into exile. But then, after He used Babylon to invade and take away Israel in exile, He turned around and punished Babylon for punishing His people.

God does that, and He can, because He's God. He can use one nation to judge another nation and then judge that first nation that He used. And He's totally just to do that.

And here He's talking about His judgment of Babylon. And listen to the language He uses, Isaiah 13. Look, the day of the Lord is coming. This is from verse 9. Sorry, Isaiah 13 verse 9.

Look, the day of the Lord is coming with cruel rage and burning anger to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners. Indeed, the stars of the sky and its constellations will not give their light.

The sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shine. And then, verse 13. Therefore, I will make the heavens tremble and the earth will shake from its foundation at the wrath of the Lord of armies on the day of His burning anger.

[12:38] So this sounds like apocalyptic end of day's language, but it's actually talking about something God did in history when He judged the nation of Babylon. When the Persians came and took it over.

In fact, He mentions the Medes later on as the instrument that He's going to use in verse 17. So this is not talking about something in the future for us. It's talking about something that happened in history.

Page on to Isaiah 19 and you'll see similar language around how God judges Egypt. So He judged Egypt kind of in the centuries before Christ, sort of 400 BC onwards.

But before that, He warned them. And Isaiah 19 verse 1. A pronouncement concerning Egypt. Look, the Lord rides on a swift cloud.

He is coming to Egypt. Egypt's idols will tremble before Him and Egypt will lose heart. I will provoke Egyptians against Egyptians. Verse 4. I will hand Egypt over to harsh masters.

[13 : 44] All of this happened. There were civil wars. There were these Greek leaders who came to rule over, very harshly rule over the people of Egypt. All this happened just as it said.

But it uses this language of God coming on the clouds. Did you notice that? When God judges a nation in history, the language that's used is the earth shaking, especially the stars falling. Because the stars in the ancient world represented the powers that ruled the world. And so when God came and disrupted human politics and took out these large, powerful nations, they would describe it as the stars falling from sky.

The powers were being dethroned. And He comes and He rides on the clouds when He does that. But it's talking about His acts in history and His involvement in history in the taking down of nations. Which reminds us that the world and its nations are under God's rule. He's not far away. And they always have been. Throughout history, the politics we see, the history we read about, the secular history, is all under the rule of God.

[14 : 52] And He's more involved in it than we tend to think. He's not just involved in the history of Israel. He's involved in the history of all nations. Executing things in accordance with His will.

And that's what Jesus is talking about here in Mark 13. When He talks about that exact same language. The moon being dark and the sun not giving its light. The stars being shaken. And Him coming in the clouds.

But there's two differences between when that happened in the Old Testament and what's happening now, Jesus says, what's going to happen for the Jews. The first difference is that in the Old Testament, this stuff happened to God's enemies and the enemies of Israel.

Babylon, Egypt. But here it's happening to the Jews. It's happening to Israel. Because in rejecting God's Son, their King, after many chances to repent and to follow Him.

We've seen throughout Mark. Jesus has shown Himself in powerful signs and miracles. They've had many chances to admit, this is our King. We must listen to Him.

[16 : 07] And they've refused. They've rebelled against their own King. And so after many chances, Israel and Jerusalem are now considered God's enemies. That's what Jesus has been declaring here in Mark.

That they are now, they've moved from being God's friends, being God's people, to being God's enemies. And that is a very scary thing. To move from God being on your side to God being against you.

It's chilling. That's what Jesus is talking about here. But the second difference, I wonder if you noticed, is that in the Old Testament, when those enemy nations were judged in history, it was God, Yahweh, the Lord, riding on the clouds, the God of Israel, to bring judgment.

But who is it now in Mark 13? It's Jesus Himself. The Son of Man will come in the clouds to bring judgment to Jerusalem.

If you page in Mark forward one or two pages from where we are, we're going to cover this in a few weeks' time. It's the trial of Jesus. He's been arrested.

[17 : 19] He's about to face trial and be crucified. And at the trial, He is quiet. Led like a lamb to the slaughter. He did not open His mouth.

He's silent. He doesn't defend Himself. He gives no defense. He doesn't get a lawyer. He stands trial quietly, except at one point where He looks up and He says something quite profound.

We see it in Mark 14, 60 to 64. Let me read that. You can follow along. Then the high priest stood up before them all and questioned Jesus.

Don't you have an answer to what these men are testifying against you? But He kept silent and did not answer. Again, the high priest questioned Him. Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?

And this is the point where Jesus said something. I am, said Jesus. Then the high priest tore his robes and said, why do we still need witnesses?

[18 : 23] You have heard the blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned Him as deserving death. You will see, Jesus said. You will see what this is going to do.

You will see when I come back on the clouds. In judgment of the city that killed Him. In judgment of the city who should have recognized their king and yet rebelled against Him and killed Him.

He is coming back within their lifetimes to deal out justice to them. And it is not like they were not warned. He warned him here.

He warned the high priest. He has been warning them for chapters in Mark. But they have already been warned hundreds of years before that. In Psalm 2. That was read by Michiel for us earlier. Did you hear what it said? I am going to read some verses from it again. Psalm 2 is a warning that you do not mess with the Son of God. You do not mess with His Anointed One. Listen to what it says.

[19 : 22] Psalm 2 from verse 10. So now kings, be wise. Receive instruction, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with reverential awe and rejoice with trembling.

Pay homage to the Son. Or kiss the Son in some translations. Now that's not sort of kiss like, I love you, kiss, you know. It's what kings who were conquered used to do.

They used to kneel down and pay homage to and, you know, kiss the ring of. And that's the way they showed that we are your servants. You have conquered us. And this is saying, kiss or pay homage to the Son or He will be angry.

This is talking about the Son of God. Psalm 2 verse 12. Pay homage to the Son or He will be angry and you will perish in your rebellion. And that's exactly what happened to Jerusalem.

Forty years after they killed their king. Because he rose again and he ascended to the right hand of God. Exactly like Psalm 2 warned. And it goes on to say, for his anger may ignite at any moment.

[20 : 28] So do you see the importance of this historical event in AD 70, which we don't know much about because we don't know it in history. But it's what Jesus is talking about here in Mark 13.

Is a fulfillment of Psalm 2. What happens when you do not honor the Son of God? It's not going to go well. And God doesn't give an empty threat.

Psalm 2 is not an empty threat. He's threatening the nations of what will happen and the peoples what will happen if they ignore or do not pay homage to the Son of God.

Okay, so there's your history lesson. Why is that important for us today? You know, maybe you came here to hear about cool, exciting, apocalyptic stuff.

But you hear this history lesson instead. What relevance does that have for us today, everything that we've seen? Well, I think it issues a major challenge for how we each look at Jesus in our lives.

[21 : 31] Doesn't it? If we can see that this is what was going on. This is what Jesus was talking about. It changes how we consider Jesus. It would do us all well to remember that the Jesus we pray to is the same Jesus who raised up Roman armies and laid waste to cities and deals out rightful wrath on those who oppose him.

That should give us a healthy dose of fear when we approach Jesus, shouldn't it? It should expand our minds to understand just who this Jesus is. C.S. Lewis, famous Christian author of many books and of many novels as well, including the Narnia fantasy series for kids.

Well, not just for kids, for grown-ups as well. If you haven't read it, you should read Narnia. But C.S. Lewis got this idea of seeing Jesus rightly. So if you're not familiar with the Narnia stories, it's an allegory really of the Christian message in fantasy world.

And there's this lion called Aslan who represents Jesus. And these children who represent us meet Aslan.

And they're preparing to meet Aslan for the first time. And I want to read you the scene. Excuse the voices if they come. It's just by nature as a father reading stories to my children.

[23 : 05] But Lucy is here asking Mr. and Mrs. Beaver about meeting Aslan, the lion who represents Jesus. And she says, Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.

Oh, that you will, dearie, no mistake, said Mrs. Beaver. If there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly. Then he isn't safe, said Lucy.

Safe, said Mr. Beaver. Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the king, I tell you.

Jesus is not safe. Jesus is not harmless. But he's good. Psalm 2 verse 12.

Pay homage to the son or he will be angry and you will perish in your rebellion for his anger may ignite at any moment. Jesus is not safe, brothers and sisters. But he is good.

[24 : 11] Psalm 2 ends. All who take refuge in him are happy. But that warns us. That if you reject Jesus or if you just make light of Jesus and treat him as some, you know, spiritual coach.

You need to realize who you're rejecting. You need to realize who you're sidelining in your life.

Because what happened at AD 17, what Jesus is saying here in Mark 13 shows us what happens eventually to all who reject or make light of their rightful heavenly king and ruler.

Who they should bow down and pay homage to. And that's the first thing that this historical event shows us. It warns us not to take Jesus lightly in our lives.

But it also shows us something else about Jesus that I think the modern church forgets. And that he, it shows us that he is actively involved in history.

He was there. Even though he had ascended to heaven. To the place of rule. He was there. In the clouds. In a very real way. At AD 70.

[25 : 23] When Jerusalem was judged. He was doing stuff. You know, he was on the Damascus road. When Paul was happily trotting away and Jesus appears. He wasn't up in heaven doing different stuff.

He was involved in the world and he still is. We need to realize that. But then we've got to ask ourselves, well, what is he doing? It doesn't look like that.

When I read the newspapers, when I look at the news, it doesn't look like Jesus is here and involved. So what is he doing? How is he involved? And what is he, you know, what is he directing all things to do?

Well, it tells us again in Mark 13, he goes on to tell his disciples what he will be doing. After the destruction of Jerusalem and even before the destruction of Jerusalem.

And he says this in Mark 13 verse 27. Have a look. He will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds.

[26 : 24] From the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. He will send out his angels and gather his elect. But we need to realize this is not referring to something that's going to happen in the future.

In the context that Jesus says it, this is referring to something that is happening now in our age. It tells us what Jesus' focus is in this age right now.

That he is directing all things that happen in this world for one purpose. And that is to call his elect. To gather his elect out of all the nations.

As his church proclaims the gospel that he's commanded it to proclaim. The gospel of his death, his resurrection and his ascension.

And as we, the church, Christians, share that message. He gathers his elect. When people hear it and those he has chosen respond in faith and repentance.

[27 : 31] And that will happen as we do the simple task. And yet the scary task. Because the world doesn't want us to. Of sharing this gospel message. We don't do it in our own power.

We do our job. But in doing that, Jesus is actively involved in history to gather his elect. And he's directing all things for that purpose.

And I don't know about you. But that gives me great confidence as I share the gospel. As a Christian. Because I know when I share the message of Jesus with someone else.

If they are one of his elect. He will gather them through my simple gospel message. He will cause them to believe it. In faith and repentance. It's not through me being fancy or skilled in presenting it. But simply because he is doing that in history. Through the simple gospel message. He is gathering his elect. Our efforts when we share the gospel. Simply with someone else.

[28 : 28] Our efforts are underwritten. By Christ's heavenly authority. Doesn't that give you confidence? As you share the gospel. As you know. As I preach. I've always held this.

In my mind. That. Especially when I preach. You know. To non-Christians. Not in a church context. Maybe at a funeral. Or. At various other occasions. That I've been asked to talk at.

I know. In that crowd. That is listening to me. There are some of God's elect. I don't know who they are. But I know. That. This message will meet. With the Holy Spirit.

And they will respond to it. And I might never even see that. But I know. That through the work I'm doing. And. We know as disciples. Through our involvement in the church. Simple as it may seem.

Jesus is. Gathering his elect from all the nations. And that is his main focus. In this age. He is involved in history. For that one purpose. And so that needs to be our main focus.

[29 : 28] Doesn't it? If that is. The main focus. Of the son of God. The ruler of the nations. The king of heaven and earth. We shouldn't think that like. We can be involved.

Or focus more on other things. When that's his main focus. That needs to be our main focus. If we call ourselves his people. But especially. Because of what happened in Jerusalem.

In AD 70. And what it tells us. About the future. Because. Jesus goes on. To tell us not.

Not only that. That historical event. Tells us something about our present. What's happening now. And what Jesus is doing. But it tells us something about our future. And how to be ready. For when he comes back.

Because the judgment. On rebellious Jerusalem. In AD 70. Serves to anticipate. And give us a picture. Of the judgment.

[30 : 23] On a rebellious world. That's going to happen. To all cities in the future. And that's why. From verse 32. In your Bibles. I think Jesus. No longer is talking.

Just about. Jerusalem. In AD 70. But he's talking. About how to prepare. For the ultimate day. In the future.

That it points to. Let me read from verse 32 to 37. Now concerning that day. Or hour. No one knows. Neither the angels in heaven. Nor the sun. But only the father.

Watch. Be alert. For you don't know. When the time is coming. It is like a man. On a journey. Who left his house. Gave authority. To his servants. Gave each one his work. And commanded the doorkeeper.

To be alert. Therefore be alert. Since you don't know. When the master of the house. Is coming. Whether in the evening. Or at midnight. Or at the crowing of the rooster.

[31 : 19] Or early in the morning. Otherwise. When he comes suddenly. He might find you sleeping. And what I say to you. I say to everyone. Be alert.

Keep. Watch. Be on guard. Literally. Now I haven't spent time in the military. But I know from people who have. That nobody likes guard duty.

It's the. It's the worst duty. Well besides kind of cleaning the toilets. Or whatever. But of normal military duties. Guard duty is the worst. Because it's easy just to drift off. To. You know.

It's hard to maintain concentration. For all those hours. Throughout the watch. Very easy to drift off. With Jesus is using that picture here. And he's saying. In waiting for his ultimate return.

To do to the world. What he did to Jerusalem. In AD 70. It's going to be easy. For his disciples even. To drift off. And to stop focusing.

[32 : 17] On what's important. And to focus on. Their own little lives rather. That's. That's what he means. That's what he's warning against. It's like. I saw.

I saw on Reddit. The other day. It just come to my mind now. You get Reddit. If you don't know what Reddit is. Just ignore me. It's. It's something on the internet. It's a social media.

And you get. These live videos. Sometimes people are playing music. Or something. And they show live. And people watch them. And they can be doing various things. One of. One of the live videos. As I was scrolling across. Was a guard.

In the Israeli military. At a guard post. Who was chatting to people. On Reddit. And you know. He wasn't doing his duty. He was concentrating. On his phone. And then someone actually asked him. You know. You know. This is streaming to. Potential. Terrorists. And kind of. Hezbollah. And. ISIS. And he. He stopped.

[33 : 14] Very suddenly. Streaming. The point is. That he was distracted. He was supposed to be doing guard duty. And he was distracted by his phone. Jesus is saying. The same thing can happen. Happen to his disciples today. We ought to keep watch.

And yet we. Get so distracted. By our phones. But by our lives. And by the. The other people in our lives. And all the things going on. That we. We can fall asleep. And so Jesus is warning against that here.

It's easy. For his disciples to drift off. And stop focusing on what's important. And it's easy for people. In the world. To think he'll never come. And so they can live their lives. However they want to.

But if AD 70. Tells us anything. It tells us that when he does come. It'll be too late. And if you're not ready. You'll be in serious trouble.

And so. If you're not yet a Christian. Then you need to take this warning. To heart. You will want to be ready. When Jesus returns.

[34 : 12] AD 17. What happened in history. Is a. Huge warning sign. For us to make sure we're ready. When he comes again. Verse 33. Watch.

Be alert. For you don't know. When the time is coming. And so you can't say. Well I'll sort that all out. When I'm older. One day. When I'm on my deathbed. Then I'll think about. Where I'm going next.

That's too late. Possibly. You don't know. When the day is coming. And so don't wait. Another day. To sort out. You and Jesus. And come to repentance.

And faith. And accept. What he did for his people. And become one of his people. But even if you are a Christian. We need to realize. This message is actually.

This message of being ready. And not falling asleep. Is first and foremost. To his disciples. A warning. Don't be found sleeping. When he comes back. What we call.

[35 : 08] Taking a break. From church service. You know. From Christian service. So busy with other things. This is really just a season. In my life. Where I've got to take a break. And I've got to focus on my career. Or sport.

Or my kids. Don't. You know. What if Jesus comes back. When you've taken a break. Don't be found sleeping. So busy with other things. There's a.

There's a reason. Jesus mentions. Four. Times. In the. In the night. When he says. You must be ready. Did you notice that? Verse. 35. Therefore.

Be alert. Since you don't know. When the master of the house is coming. Whether in the evening. Or at midnight. Or at the crowing of the rooster. Or early in the morning. Why mention. All four. Of these.

Periods. Well. Those are the four. Watchers. Of the night. For a Roman God. That there would be. They would divide the night. Up to four watches. And you would take one or two.

[36 : 02] Of those watches. And then you would go off duty. You wouldn't. You wouldn't be. On. On duty. For all four of them. So what Jesus is saying. Is that. Christians are never off duty.

But they are always. On their master's business. And so. In closing. I need to ask you. If you're a Christian. Are you. Are you.

On your master's business. Today. Are you. Involved. In what really. Matters. In this age. In history. Before. He comes back. The work. Of gathering.

The elect. The work. Of the church. The work. Of helping others. To prepare. For the day. Jesus. Comes back. Will he find you. Busy. With that work. When he returns. Or do you still.

Need to wake up. Let's pray. Lord. We do. Come before you. In reverence.

[36 : 58] And awe. As we've. Been given a picture. In your word. Of. Just who you are. The son of God. Who all people. Must. Pay reverence to.

We don't want to be. On the wrong side of you. And we thank you. That through your. Your death. On the cross. For your people. And your resurrection. You. Atone. And. And you save us. From our sins.

And you give us new life. But help us. To take you seriously. Lord. And help us. To be ready. For the day you return. And not to be found. Sleeping. But to be actively. Engaged. In the work.

You've given us. To do. In Jesus name. We pray. Amen.