

# “Ready or Not...”

## Luke 12:35-40

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### I. Introduction

#### A. While Jesus was teaching a massive crowd

1. He dropped a bombshell
2. Talked of an event that would rock the world
  - a. It would occur in a split second
  - b. It would surpass anything that had ever happened
3. It's when Jesus finally returns to take us to our real home
  - a. Believers have been yearning for this event for 2000 years
  - b. And we're getting closer every day
4. Jesus summed it up with a statement in Luke 12:35-40

*(40) You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

#### B. Wow...That raises some questions

1. *Who is “The Son of Man?”*
  - a. Jesus' favorite term for himself
  - b. The title used in Daniel 7:13-14

*(13) In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.*

*(14) He was given authority, glory and sovereign power...*

- c. So Jesus is “the Son of Man”

**2. Then, what does he mean by “he will come”**

- a. Wasn't he right there with them?
- b. Speaking of when Jesus comes again to take believers to heaven
- c. An event referred to as “The “Rapture”
- d. More later

**3. When will it happen?**

- a. Great question
- b. *“He will come at an hour when you don't expect him”*
- c. That didn't help much...or did it?

**4. What should we be doing while we wait?**

- a. *“you also must be ready” (v. 40)*
- b. What do you think it means?
- c. What are you doing to make sure you're ready?
- d. What will happen if you're not ready?

## **II. Text....Luke 12:35-40**

### **A. The Wait for His Return (vs. 35-38)**

*(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.*

- 1. A rich guy goes to a wedding
  - a. Tells his servants, “I don't know when I'll return”
  - b. Weddings could last a day...or seven days.
  - c. Nobody really knew in advance

2. His servants were to be ready at all times for his return
  - a. It might be at an odd time
    1. The middle of the night
  - b. Like parents with kids out at night
    1. Can't sleep
3. Better be dressed and ready to let him in the door (v. 35)

***(35) Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning***

- a. The flowing robes
  - b. Girding their loins
  - c. Ready to go
4. Better have the lamps lit (v. 35)

***(35) Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning***

- a. No stumbling around in the dark
5. Ready to open the door and let him in
  6. The faithful will receive a special gift

***(37) It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. (38) It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.***

- a. They expect to serve him....he'll serve them
7. Picture of Jesus' return for us
    - a. Jesus will come and minister to us
    - b. Matthew 24:44

***(44) Blessed is that servant whom his master finds so doing when He comes***

**B. The Preparation for His Return (vs. 39-40)**

***(39) But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.***

1. The stock and trade of a thief is surprise...when you least expect it
2. An illustration of how Jesus will return for us

***(40) You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.***

3. An event spoken of often in your Bibles
4. Will be a surprise....like a thief in the night
  - a. I Thessalonians 5:1-2

***(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.***

1. "The Day of the Lord"
2. All associated with his return
  - b. II Peter 3:10

***(10) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief***

- c. Revelation 16:15

***(15) Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.***

- d. Revelation 3:3

***(3) Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.***

5. Then why do so many try to set a date?
  - a. Good question!
6. Here's why:
  - a. It would appear that the Rapture will occur shortly before a time called the Tribulation

- b. The events of the Tribulation require certain specifics to be in place
  - 1. Israel in the land
  - 2. The coalition of nations that attack Israel
  - 3. The desperation of the world
  - 4. The desire to rebuild the Temple
  - 5. The Antichrist
- 7. The pieces have really fallen in place the past 100 years
  - a. Jesus said that when we see these things begin to occur, his return is not far off
- 8. But we still don't know when he will return for us

### **III. 10 Things we do know about his return**

#### ***1. Jesus will return like a thief in the night***

- a. It'll be at a time when we don't expect it

#### ***2. We're getting closer each and every day***

- a. Romans 13:11

***(11) And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.***

- b. I don't know when
- c. But I do know we're one week closer than we were last Sunday

#### ***3. Right now Jesus is preparing a place for us in Heaven***

- a. As Jesus was preparing to return to heaven
- b. John 14:1-2

***(1) Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.***

- c. Jesus is preparing a place for you in heaven

#### ***4. Jesus promised to return for us and take us there***

- a. John 14:3-4

***(3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.***

- b. This event is commonly called “the Rapture”
- c. This is different than his “Second Coming”
  1. The Rapture will occur prior to the 7 years of Tribulation
  2. The Second Coming will occur at the conclusion of the 7 years of tribulation
    - a. We’ll return with Jesus

#### ***\*Ten reasons why the church will not go through the tribulation***

#### ***5. We’ll receive rewards when Jesus returns***

- a. Revelation 22:12

***(12) Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.***

- b. This includes the promise of a new body
  1. Your soul imprisoned in a dying body of flesh and blood
- c. Glorified bodies
  1. Philippians 3:20-21

***(20) But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.***

2. What is his glorified body like?
  - a. Yours will be like his!

#### ***6. Jesus could return for us at any time...including today***

a. Luke 12:40

***(40) You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.***

b. Only God the Father knows when

1. Acts 1:6-7

***(6) So when they met together, they asked Jesus, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (7) He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.”***

2. Mark 13:32-33

***(32) No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (33) Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.***

c. We are to be on guard and alert at all times

## ***7. His coming will trigger the “Day of the Lord”***

a. His other “unfinished business”

1. Seven years of tribulation

2. Culminated with the “the second coming”

3. Followed by a time called the “millennium”

4. The Great White Throne of Judgment

5. The new Heaven and New Earth

b. Will address the details later in Luke

c. We’re seeing clues that these are drawing near

1. As we watch Israel and the other nations

d. The Rapture appears to be the trigger event

## ***8. We are to wait with both anticipation...and patience***

a. *There will be skeptics*

1. II Peter 3:3-4

***(3) First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. (4) They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”***

***b. God doesn't operate on our schedule***

1. II Peter 3:8-10

***(8) But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. (9) The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (10) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.***

***c. It hasn't happened yet***

1. The Preterists

- a. Means “A person whose chief interest is in the past.”
- b. Preterism is a view of prophecy that says it's already been fulfilled
- c. “realized eschatology”
- d. Teach that the book of Revelation was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the Roman General Titus came and destroyed Jerusalem and all of Israel
- e. They say “that” was the return of Jesus
- f. Makes Revelation a history book and not a look at things to come
- g. Means we're currently “*living in the maps*”

2. Addressed as wrong by Paul in II Timothy 2:16-18

***(16) Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. (17) Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, (18) who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.***

***9. We should be carefully preparing for his return***

- a. Don't get caught with a life filled with sin***

## 1. Hebrews 12:1

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

## 2. Which sin just keeps getting you?

- a. Take an inventory of your life
- b. What needs to go?

## 3. Tolerating sin will hinder your effectiveness for God

- a. Some of you are trying to run with boots on!
  - 1. Moving forward—but slowly
  - 2. Others passing you by
- b. Because you cling to one specific sin
  - 1. You refuse to let go of it
  - 2. You love your sin more than your Savior

## 4. Today is the day to “throw it off”

- a. “throw it off!”
  - 1. At the start of the race
  - 2. Not at the end
  - 3. Don’t carry it for 50 years!
- b. Ask Jesus for help
- c. You’ve already proven you can’t do it alone

## 5. Satan uses it to cause you to feel worthless

***b. Don’t get caught watching from the sidelines***

- 1. Get in the game!

2. America's coddled Christians
  - a. The purpose of the church is not to entertain spectators
  - b. It's not about trying to provide elaborate buildings
  - c. It's not about providing programs that scratch every itch
3. It's about preaching the truth...even when it's uncomfortable
4. It's about getting in the game and serving until it hurts
5. It's about being "doers...and not just hearers"
6. Faith in Jesus Christ demands a life of action
  - a. I John 3:18

***(18) dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.***

7. Serving is the greatest...and it's exhausting
8. No time for retirement for those of you getting older
  - a. You can't afford to waste time in the fourth quarter

*When you look back at life, you'll have more regrets over what you didn't do than what you did.*

***c. Don't get caught in an embarrassing situation***

1. Getting caught in a compromised situation
2. Caught by your parents...or wife
3. Think about how you would feel if Jesus came at that time

***d. Don't get caught without a Savior***

1. Don't get "left behind"
2. Romans 3:23

***(23) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God***

4. Romans 6:23

*(23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

5. John 3:16-18

*(16) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

## **10. The Rapture is a message of comfort...not judgment**

a. The problem in Thessalonica

1. I Thessalonians 4:13-17

*(13) Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. (14) We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. (15) According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of "God and the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

*(18) Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

b. You don't need to fear his coming

c. Life will not end...only a transition

*For the Christian, death doesn't end with a period or a question mark. It ends with a comma.*

d. What a glorious day that will be!

e. I Corinthians 15:51-54

*(51) Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—(52) in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (53) For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. (54) When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."*

f. "One day the trumpet will sound for his coming...One day the skies with his glories will shine"