

⇒ "Wake up, because salvation is almost here!"

 Salvation is ours when we trust Jesus and openly declare that he is our Lord (master) – Romans 10:9-10. But salvation will <u>not</u> be complete until Jesus returns.

And do this [= love for others], understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. Romans 13:11-12a (NIV)

- The people in this young church were still learning what it means to "follow Jesus." They needed to "wake up" to the urgency of forsaking sin (vs. 12b-14) and living a life of love (vs. 8-10; love is also defined in Romans 12).
- We don't need to debate whether these people were saved or unsaved. Their response to this command would prove which it was... just as it will for us.

⇒ "If you don't wake up, you won't be ready for Jesus' return!"

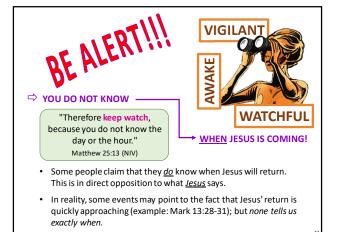
This is a scathing rebuke to a spiritually *dead* church. Many – perhaps most – were unsaved. Only those who repent and have victory over this sin will be saved (vs. 4-6).
 know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are

dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, 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. Revelation 3:1b-3 (NIV)

• As we saw, when looking at resurrection-related *facts*, there are blessings for those who wake up and stay that way!

"Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed." Revelation 16:15 (NIV)



⇒ JESUS SAYS, "BE ALERT!"

 In these passages, when Jesus described <u>end-time events</u>, part of what he said *also* referrs to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. (That event would be a "picture" of the even greater catastrophe that will occur at Jesus' return.)

CONTEXT of these passages:

- Jesus warns the people that he would not return until they were willing to welcome him "in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:34-39; Jesus guotes Psalm 118:26).
- Jesus tells the apostles that the temple would be destroyed (Matthew 24:1-2; Mark 13:1-3; Luke 21:5-6).
- The apostles ask when these things would take place, and when he would return. (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7).
- Occasionally, Luke will have a greater focus on the AD 70 event; the others tend to have a greater focus on the end times.
- When Jesus answers, he is speaking to the *apostles*; but he claims that <u>what he is saying applies to *everyone*</u> (Mark 13:37).

In MATTHEW: "Have the right priority!" "Therefore..." – What is it there for? "Therefore stay alert, ...' WHY should we be alert? Matthew 24:42a (NET) "Therefore stay alert, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. There are several reasons given in Matthew 24 and 25. The reason closest in the context is this: But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have been For just like the days of Noah were, so the coming of the alert and would not have let his house be broken into. Son of Man will be. Therefore you also must be ready, because the Son of Man For in those days before the flood, people were eating will come at an hour when you do not expect him." and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the Matthew 24:42-44 (NET); also in Matthew 25:13. day Noah entered the ark. And they knew nothing until the flood came and took them all away. It will be the • There may be "reminders" that Jesus is coming soon (Matthew same at the coming of the Son of Man. 24:32-34 may be one such example); but the specific time is Matthew 24:37-39 (NET) something that nobody on earth knows. [Even Jesus, as a human, did not know when (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32).] • It wasn't that they weren't warned. Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5); and they ignored what he said. • This leaves us with only two choices: 1) Be ready (watchful, prepared, alert, etc.), or 2) Be caught by surprise (NOT ready). At a different time, Jesus described this "end time situation" in In MARK: "Be ready!" a similar way, but also included Sodom and its destruction.

• Mark's emphasis is similar to Matthew's, but he gives different examples to illustrate the need to keep watch.

"Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

"Therefore keep watch 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. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

Mark 13:33-37 (NIV)

 Jesus used a variety of illustrations. Matthew, Mark and Luke each included words and illustrations what were most fitting for the audiences they wrote to. Here, Mark uses 3 different words to emphasize the need to be ready!

In LUKE: "Don't get distracted!"

"Watch out! Don't let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, they were drinking, they were

marrying, they were being given in marriage—right up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, people were eating,

drinking, buying, selling, planting, building; but on the day Lot went

out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and

destroyed them all.

It will be the same on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

Luke 17:26-30 (NET)

★ Jesus does not focus on the wicked violence that these people did,

but on its "starting point": their preoccupation with "day-to-day

activities. Their "God-focus" was crowded out by the "normal"

activities of life! <u>This</u> is what a "not-ready" person is like!

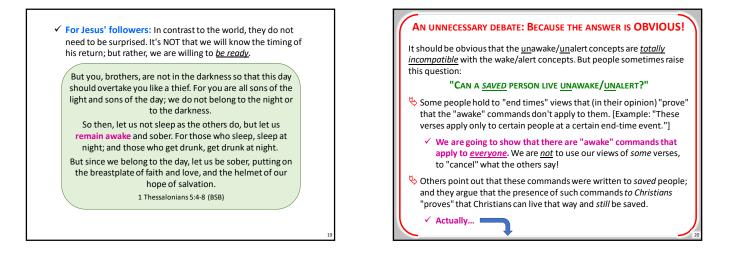
Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:34-36 (NLT)

- The "worries of this life" are not necessarily *sinful* things. They are the things that preoccupy one's attention and crowd out "seeking first the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:25-34).
- These "worries" are also mentioned in "The Parable of the Sower" (i.e., the farmer who was planting seeds). The third type of "soil" seemed good at first, but *it never produced anything fruitful*. (Unsaved "church-goers" fall into this category.)
- This is the type of person who treasures <u>other things</u> more than the Kingdom of God. Their heart is somewhere else (Luke 12:34).

⇒ PAUL SAYS, "BE ALERT!"

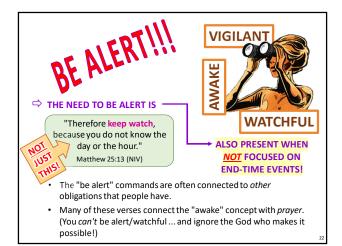
- In this passage, Paul is describing how the <u>end-times events</u> should bring us <u>encouragement</u>.
- CONTEXT: Paul tells the Thessalonians that both dead and living Christians will have a part in Jesus' return (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). He also says (as did Jesus) that we do not know the exact timing of his return. But when it does happen, there will be two responses:
 - ✓ For the world: Jesus' return will be sudden and unexpected (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3).

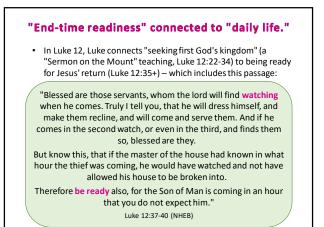
You know very well that the day when the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief who comes at night. People will say, "We have peace and we are safe." At that time destruction will come to them quickly, like the pains of a woman giving birth. And those people will not escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 (ERV)

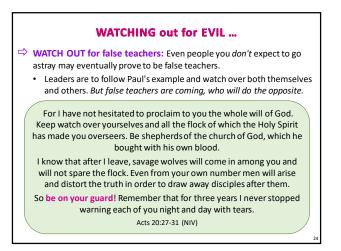


THESE VERSES WERE WRITTEN TO <u>CHURCHES</u> – which means <u>aroups of people</u>.

- This included: 1. Spiritually mature Christians.
 - 2. "New-born" Christians, who were still learning what it meant to "follow Jesus."
 - 3. Fakes including the "wolves" that Paul
 - warns against (Acts 20:27-31)
- An "unawake" life is *totally incompatible* with following Jesus.
- Yet saved people (in this present life) have <u>not</u> reached 100% perfection (as Paul says in Philippians 3:12-13). So we shouldn't be surprised if we (or people we know) sometimes fail to be "awake."
- Yet the Holy Spirit <u>is</u> in saved people, and the Spirit <u>does</u> change them. So being "unawake" <u>cannot</u> be a <u>chosen way of life</u>!
- Ultimately the response people have to these instructions and warnings will show which category they belong in. Do they pursue being "awake" (even if inconsistently), or do they choose to remain "unawake"? It's the difference between "saved" and "unsaved."







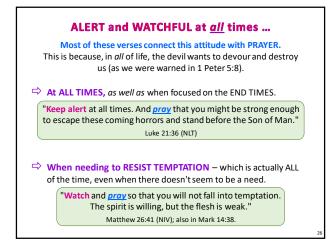
WATCH OUT for the devil: If we don't want "devoured," we need to resist him. CONTEXT: This will also require:

- Trusting God and an attitude of humility (vs. 6-7); an awareness that he cares for us (v. 7) and will ultimately strengthen us (vs. 10-11).
- Standing firm in the faith (v. 9) and exercising self-control (v.8).
- An awareness that we aren't the *only* ones who experience trials. It happens to Christians everywhere (v. 9).

Be sober-minded and alert. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in your faith and in the knowledge that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore you, secure you, strengthen you, and establish you. To Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:8-11 (BSB)





THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THESE OPPOSITE CONCEPTS	The "unawake" concepts:	The "awake" concepts:
	Darkness; fruitless deeds of darkness; asleep; harm to neighbor; slumber; night; gratifying sinful desires; dead; about to die; incomplete deeds; Jesus coming like a thief; clothes soiled; naked and exposed.	Fruit of the light; waking up; light; Christ shining on you; love; armor of light; daytime; behaving decently; clothed with Jesus Christ; alive; repentance and obedience; dressed in white; name not blotted from the book of life; staying awake.
	The "unalert" concepts:	The "alert" concepts:
	Unprepared for his return; caught off-guard; preoccupied with "normal life" activities; not strong against temptation; in darkness; drunk; belonging to the darkness; asleep; devoured by the devil.	Alert; praying; sober-minded; belonging to the light and the day; having the armor of God; trust and humility; self-control; standing firm in the faith; trials, yet strengthened by God's power; courage; love for others; a thankful heart.



Credits

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