

Matthew 24:36-44: But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating & drinking, marrying & giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ & they were unaware until the flood came & swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken & one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken & one left. ⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake & would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Intro: In Matthew 24, Jesus is lovingly warning His sheep of God's future judgment in the destruction of God's temple & God's future judgment in the return of Christ at the end of the age. Jesus' main concern in this chapter is to teach His disciples how to live faithful lives & continue to trust & obey Him during these times of great judgment & destruction. Faithfulness is what Jesus wants! And it's what we want! **Last time:** Know Christ & His Word, trust & obey Him, & you will be ready for the return of the King. Jesus' focus now turns primarily to His final return at the end of the age: the return of the King! And He wants His people to be ready! This is love!

Jesus is coming back when no one expects Him, so stay awake & be ready by continuing to trust & obey Him.

1. No One Except The Father Knows When Jesus Will Return

Matthew 24:36: But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

a. Notice the contrast from the previous verses: Matt 24:33-36: So also, when you see all these things, **you know** that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁴ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³⁶ But concerning that day & hour **no one knows**, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

I've been arguing that the destruction of Jerusalem & the leveling of the temple is a historical prefigurement or foreshadowing of what is to take place on a grander scale with regard to the Jesus' second coming & the end of the age. In Matt 24 there is a dual fulfillment, one right before & at 70 AD, & one at the final return of Christ. The prefigurement or foreshadowing has signs so people will know when it's going to happen & they can flee! But there will be no signs & warnings for Jesus' final coming at the end of the age!

Matt 24:37-44: As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating & drinking, marrying & giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ & they were unaware until the flood came & swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken & one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken & one left. ⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake & would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

b. Only the Father knows that day, not the angels in heaven or even the Son: Jesus did not know the day when He would return. Jesus clearly states that He does not know the time of His return (v. 36). So His words in **Matt 24:34:** "Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." could not possibly include His return because He does not know the time of His return!(Also see **V. 6:** but the end is not yet.)

c. A false claim: "We don't know the day or hour, but we can know the week, month, year, season!":
Acts 1:6-7: they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority." (Paul in 1 Thess. 5)

d. Jesus knows everything: Jesus is God. So Jesus was & is omniscient: He slept, ate, got tired, had a body, learned

- **Matthew 17:27:** go to the sea & cast a hook & take the first fish that comes up, & when you open its mouth you will find a shekel.

- **Mark 2:8:** (Scribes – Forgiving sin) And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts?”

- **Mark 11:2:** Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat.

- **John 6:64:** Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, & who it was who would betray him

e. How can Jesus not know the day of His return & know everything at the same time? Jesus is both God & man! As God, with respect to His divine nature, He does know the time of His return because He knows everything! But as a man, with respect to His human nature, His Father so willed that He not know that day.

Mike Riccardi: Functional kenotic Christology teaches not that Christ surrendered the attributes themselves, but limited them in some sense, or just curtailed their use/function during His humiliation. This is serious Christological error. The kenosis of Phil 2:7 is not a surrender, a divestiture, a limitation, or a laying aside of any aspect of the Son’s divine existence. Instead, it is a taking – an assumption of a distinct essence (a human one) by means of which such limitations can be experienced. The text doesn’t say He emptied Himself of something, but that He emptied Himself. That is, He nullified Himself (Rom 4:14) or made Himself of no reputation (Phil 2:7, KJV) by taking on the form of a slave, i.e., assuming a human nature. So, any construal of the incarnation as a “net negative,” where the Son ceases to be or to do something proper to His divine existence, is a species of the kenotic error. To say something like, “Christ limited the use of His omniscience in His incarnation,” is to deny what cannot be denied (His true deity) in order to affirm what must be affirmed (His true humanity). It is impossible for God to limit His Godness, because part of what it means to be God is to be infinite, unlimitable. The Son did not restrict or limit or dial back His infinity so He could fit Himself into finite humanity; He assumed finite humanity into personal union with His infinite deity, & subsisted in two whole, perfect, & distinct natures right alongside one another. So, we must say of the incarnate Son, He is infinite according to His deity, & at the very same time He is finite according to His humanity. It would be wrong to say the Son “limited His infinity during His incarnation.” For the same reason, it is wrong to say the Son limited His omniscience in His incarnation. God cannot limit His omniscience, because omniscience is essential to the infinite perfections of being God. If a person is not omniscient, he may be many things, but he is not God. So, the Son did not restrict or limit or dial back His omniscience so He could fit Himself into ignorant humanity; He assumed finite ignorance into personal union with His infinite omniscience, & subsisted in two whole, perfect, & distinct natures right alongside one another. In other words, because Jesus is truly & fully God & truly & fully man, Scripture makes statements about Him (the whole person) that are true only because of one or the other nature. That doesn’t mean that an opposite statement isn’t true according to the other nature. Sometimes you get them right next to each other: Acts 20:28 speaks of the “blood” of “God.” But God is a spirit & has no blood. There, Paul [asserts] attributes of deity (God) & attributes of humanity (blood) to the same person (Jesus) according to His distinct natures. So, in John 16:30 He is said to know all things (omniscience), & in Mark 13:32 [Matt 24:36] He is said to be ignorant of the time of His return. Those aren’t contradictory; John affirms something that is proper to His deity, & Mark [& Matt] affirms something that is proper to His humanity. It is wrong (& a species of kenoticism) to say that one of those things (omniscience or ignorance) must be limited or curtailed in order to say that the other one is genuine. So, we have to say that Jesus [asserted] ignorance of Himself according to the properties of His human nature. Note, not “the human nature was ignorant,” but the one person, Jesus, could be spoken of as ignorant by virtue of the finitude of His human mind. But because He was subsisting in the divine nature at the very same time, it can also be said that He did know the time of His return according to the properties of His divine nature, by virtue of the infinity of His divine mind. It’s counterintuitive, but it’s not contradictory. It’s the miracle of the hypostatic union. He can know, & be ignorant of, the same fact at the same time, because He knows it according to the divine nature, & He doesn’t know it according to the human nature. Calvin agrees & puts it this way: “There would be no impropriety in saying that Christ, who knew all things, was ignorant of something in respect of His perception as a man” (Com on Mt 24:36). Gregory of

Nazianzus says, “We are to understand the ignorance in the most reverent sense, by attributing it to the manhood, & not to the Godhead” (Or. 30.15). To [assert] ignorance of Jesus [as] deity would be “irreverent,” undermining worship by making Him a debilitated god.

f. Jesus is God: In the Old Testament, we are told the LORD of hosts will come in glory on that day:

Isaiah 28:5: In that day the LORD of hosts will be a crown of glory, & a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people - In the New Testament, we are told the LORD Jesus Christ will come in glory on that day:

Matthew 24:36, 39; 25:31: But concerning that day and hour no one knows . . . and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man . . . When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. **[Are you ready? GOSPEL!]**

2. As Were The Days Of Noah, So Will Be The Coming Of The Son Of Man

Matthew 24:37-39: As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating & drinking, marrying & giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ & they were unaware until the flood came & swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

When Jesus comes back, life will be going on with all the normal, regular activities people do: eating, drinking, marriage. Just like in the days of Noah, the wicked kept doing what they were doing until judgment! **Noah obeyed!**

Jesus is coming back when no one expects Him, so stay awake & be ready by continuing to trust & obey Him.

3. When Jesus Returns, Some Will Be Taken And Some Will Be Left

Matthew 24:40-41: Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken & one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken & one left.

- **V. 39:** they were unaware until the flood came & swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
- **V. 31:** And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

D. A. Carson: It is neither clear nor particularly important whether “taken” means “taken in judgment” or “taken to be gathered with the elect.” [There’s going to be a sharp, distinct separation between the righteous & the wicked]

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4. Therefore, Stay Awake And Be Ready For The Return Of The King

Matthew 24:42-44: Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake & would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

a. Stay awake does not mean literally stay awake & never go to sleep in your bed: Matthew 25:1-13: Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps & went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, & five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, **they all became drowsy & slept.** ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷ Then all those virgins rose & trimmed their lamps. ⁸ & the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us & for you, go rather to the dealers & buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ & while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, & those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, & the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹² But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

b. What does staying awake & being ready mean?

- 1) Keep believing & following Jesus (treasure Him above all – be eagerly waiting for Him!)
- 2) Keep repenting of sin
- 3) Keep pursuing obedience to all that Jesus has commanded & obedience to all of God's Word
- 4) Keep seeing that no one leads you astray – like false christs & false teachers & false prophets
- 5) Keep trusting God in all manner of trials & tribulations
- 6) Keep enduring to the end
- 7) Keep pursuing the true Gospel in the face of great signs & wonders meant to deceive you
- 8) Keep doing all of this in the fellowship of a faithful local church [Fathers: You're responsible for your family]

c. What are some signs that you are spiritually sleepy (Kevin DeYoung):

- 1) A weakening vigilance in fighting against sin: You're tired of fighting; You're tempted to give up; You used to hate sin, but now you are finding it more & more appealing & you tolerate it more. You make small compromises.
- 2) A less frequent conviction about sin: You don't feel as convicted about sin as you used to. When is the last time you went before the Lord & confessed a specific sin. When is the last time you went up to a person & confessed a specific sin? When is the last time you heard a sermon or read your Bible & felt convicted about sin?
- 3) You don't fear God the way you once did: Your relationship with God is cold – you've left your first love.
- 4) A growing cynicism about the power of God: Nothing ever changes; God can't do anything; God doesn't do that anymore; If you hear people rejoice in God's mercy – you think that would never happen to me. You don't pray.
- 5) Increasing doubt in the promises of God: You no longer believe them. You don't trust God anymore.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11:** Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, & they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake & be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, & those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith & love, & for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another & build one another up, just as you are doing.

- **2 Peter 3:9-14:** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, & then the heavens will pass away with a roar, & the heavenly bodies will be burned up & dissolved, & the earth & the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness & godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, & the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens & a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, & at peace.

- **Revelation 3:3:** Remember, then, what you received & heard. Keep it, & repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, & you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

James Edwards: "Watch!" [stay awake] is the final & most important word of the Olivet discourse. The point of Mark 13 [Matt 24] is not so much to inform as to admonish; not to provide knowledge of [mysterious; secret] matters but to instill obedience in believers. "What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!" "To everyone" designates a wider audience than the Twelve. This is the word of Jesus to the Twelve, the word of Mark [& Matt] to his readers, & the word of the Spirit to believers in every age. The End is unknown & will come suddenly: live in constant readiness.

- **Isaiah 2:11:** The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, & the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, & the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

- **2 Timothy 4:8:** Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, & not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

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Jesus Always Stayed Awake; And Made Earth Quake; When He Died To Break; And Crush The Snake; Then Rose New Life To Make; And His People Take; All For Love's Sake; So Now For Him Alone We Ache!

We've fallen asleep
Sin has won
Death has come
The Devil has triumphed
But he didn't know that One would come Who would never fall asleep!
His name is Jesus, and He always stayed awake!

We've fallen asleep
Adam and Eve slept in the garden and ate the forbidden fruit
Nakedness became shameful
They tried to hide from God
They blamed everyone but themselves
We became totally depraved
The creation was all cursed
But it was cursed in hope of the Last Adam Who would never fall asleep!
His name is Jesus, and He always stayed awake!

We've fallen asleep
Noah got drunk
Abraham lied about his wife and had sex with Hagar
Jacob was a lying, deceiver
Judah was a whore-monger
David was a murderous adulterer
Israel committed adultery on her wedding night by making a golden calf
The whole history of Israel is one of rebellion and disobedience to God
But don't you know that the only true Israelite Who has ever crossed the horizon of this world never fell asleep!
His name is Jesus, and He always stayed awake!

We've fallen asleep
John the Baptist came preaching to try and wake us up
But the Pharisees kept sleeping and missed their own Messiah
The disciples couldn't stay awake in the Garden of Gethsemane
And they all fled and left Jesus alone in His greatest time of need
Judas kept sleeping and betrayed his only Savior
Peter kept sleeping and denied the Way, the Truth, and the Life
Pilate kept sleeping and unjustly condemned the Righteous One
Israel kept sinning and killed their own Messiah
But True Israel never fell asleep though He'd weep, suffer deep, die for His sheep, of evil make a clean sweep, then up from the grave He'd leap to all His people keep with a grace that's far from cheap!
And His name is Jesus, and He always stayed awake!

We've fallen asleep
But Jesus came to bear in His body on that tree all the sins that have resulted from our sleepiness

He stayed awake when He had no food for forty days
He stayed awake when Satan was tempting
He stayed awake when the Pharisees tried to kill Him
He stayed awake when Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied Him, and all His disciples left Him alone
He stayed awake when they spit on Him, beat Him, stripped Him naked, made fun of Him, and put a crown of thorns on His head – Oh He stayed awake! He stayed awake for His Father's glory! And He stayed awake for You!
He stayed awake when they nailed His hands and feet to that tree!
He stayed awake when He was all alone and naked and thirsting and dying and suffering on that cross!
He stayed awake!
He stayed awake when the Father crushed Him with the wrath, judgment, and curse that we deserve!
He stayed awake and cried: “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?!”
He stayed awake. He stayed awake for you because He loves you. And then He died.
His name is Jesus, and He always stayed awake!

We've fallen asleep
But He has awakened from the dead! He is risen! He is risen indeed!
He's alive to wake you up! And wake you up forever!
And He lives awake forevermore to save all those who would turn from sin and trust in Him!
So that now we can fall asleep no more!
Because His name is Jesus, and He always stayed awake!

Now we stay awake!
We believe in Him!
We trust in Him!
We delight in Him!
We treasure Him!
We follow Him!
We turn from sin and fight sin!
We die to self!
We seek to live faithfully and do whatever He calls us to do!
We seek to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded!
We are enabled and empowered by His Spirit to obey all that He has commanded us for the glory of God!
We are being conformed into the image of Christ day by day for the glory of our King!
And even now He stays awake and prays and intercedes for us according to the will of God!
Because His name is Jesus, and He always stayed awake!

Christ Jesus Comes When None Will Know
Except The Father Who'll Bestow
His Grace And Mercy Down Below
Food And Drink And Marriage Though
Christ Comes To Judge, They're Taken Low
And Swept Away In Judgment Woe
So Now Be Ready, You Must Know
That God's Great Love In Christ He'd Show
When Jesus Died To Take God's Woe

Then Rose Alive, God's Mercies Flow
He Made Your Sins As White As Snow
By Faith Alone, No Works You Owe
In Christ You're Sanctified And Grow
And To The Lost You Love And Go
To Share The Gospel, His Word Sow
For He's Your Joy, Makes You Glow
He Comes To Conquer Every Foe
He Shall Return You Certain Know!