

**"How to Live in the End Times"**

9-10-06

9 &amp; 10:45 a.m.

Mark 13:32-37

*Morning of Praise and Worship***OPEN** to Mark 13:32 (**PAGE** 1578)**INTRODUCTION**

I once had a professor who designed his class in a way that forced us to stay alert and do our daily assignments.

First, he gave us a very clear list of readings and other assignments that were to be completed before each class session.

Then, knowing the average student's tendency to do as little as possible and to cram at the last minute for tests, he told us to be ready for quizzes... they would definitely be coming, but, we wouldn't know when.

Each quiz would cover the material that was assigned for that day... but some days we would have a quiz and other days we wouldn't.

And then, in the over-all grading for the course, the quizzes counted heavily.

The result: we were forced to stay alert, to do our work daily, and to know it well enough that we could do well on the pop quizzes.

Even with knowing that, sometimes students were prepared and other times they weren't.

**What we're reading today has a similar feel.** Jesus tells us to remain alert to the signs of His return, and to live day-to-day in a way that insures we'll be ready to meet Him whenever He returns.

**READ** Mark 13:32-37

There's a pattern that emerges in this passage:

v. 33: **Be on guard!** (*blepo*; look at; 'keep your eyes wide open!')

**Be alert!** (*agrupneo*: to be sleepless)

v. 34: **keep watch** (*gregoreuo*: to keep awake)

v. 35: **keep watch** (*gregoreuo*: to keep awake)

v. 36: **do not let him find you sleeping.** (*katheudo*: to lie down to rest)

v. 37: **Watch!** (*gregoreuo*: to keep awake)

These words are synonyms: there are four different words, but they all come at the same idea from different angles.

As we move through the passage, we see that these calls to alertness and to not be caught by surprise fall into two key ideas:

**I. Be alert to the signs of Jesus' coming**

**II. Faithfully stay at the work He has given you to do**

Let's go verse-by-verse through this passage, and watch for the emphasis of these two points:

Mark 13:32 **"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**

We really don't know! We've been given **signs** so that we know the **season**, but we don't know any more than that.

**1. False Christs** (v. 5-6)

**2. Earthquakes and Famines** (v. 8b)

**3. Persecution of Christians** (v. 9, 11-13)

**4. The Gospel Will be Proclaimed to All Nations** (v. 10)

**5. The Anti-Christ Appears in the Temple** (v. 14-20)

**6. The Anti-Christ Performs False Signs and Wonders**  
(v. 21-22)

**7. Disturbances in the Heavens** (v. 24-25)

v. 32: **"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**

"When Jesus says that He does not know this does *not deny His deity...* It is *a mark of His true humanity.*

When He became a human being, Jesus voluntarily accepted this limitation.

This also means that whenever someone predicts Jesus' return, they are wrong. Don't believe them! Don't follow them!

v. 33: **Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.**

**Be on guard!** (*keep your eyes wide open!*)

**Be alert!** (*keep yourself awake!*)

**You do not know when that time will come.**

Now, we read the story Jesus told so that the disciples could understand just what he meant, in a day-to-day kind of way:

v. 34: **"It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells (lit. commands) the one at the door to keep watch."**

The master / owner, assigns his servants to carry on the work of the household during his absence, and he assigned each servant his specific work.

The only specific task named here is that of the **doorkeeper**.

The **doorkeeper** was the one who guarded the outer gate, thus controlling all access to the entire house.

"**Watch**" is his standing duty. Be awake and watchful.

Then Jesus applies this illustration to his disciples and us:

v. 35: "**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.**"

So, from v. 34 and 35, we see that for all of us there is a double emphasis / a double duty:

1. to do our **assigned tasks** and,
2. to **keep watch** (everyone's shared work)

It appears one servant had the daytime duty of keeping watch as the other servants did their daytime work, but throughout the night hours, everyone shared the duty, in four shorter shifts.

Everyone was to do the task assigned by the master AND keep watch.

"**The evening** was 6-9 P.M.; the **midnight** watch was 9 P.M. till midnight; **when the rooster crows** was the third watch (midnight till 3 A.M.); and **dawn** was 3-6 A.M. (BKC)

v. 36: "**If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.**"

"**suddenly**" does not speak of speed but the unexpectedness of the return. If the suddenness catches some not doing their work or not keeping watch, the fault lies with those who have grown lazy.

Do not let yourself give into spiritual sleep, growing unresponsive to the certainty of His return.

v. 37: **What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"**

Jesus commanded the duty of watchfulness upon His followers in every age and generation.

Please note that the Lord told us to **watch** for Him, not just "wait."

Let me tell you a story that illustrates the difference between **watching** and waiting:

### **ILLUSTRATION**

After days at sea, the skipper of a fishing boat was bringing his craft back home.

As the boat neared the shore, the men gazed eagerly toward the dock, where a group of their loved ones were **watching** for them.

The skipper, looking through his binoculars, identified some of the women, saying, "Bill, I see your Mary, and Tom, I see Margaret, and David, I see your Anne."

One man was very anxious because his wife was not there. He left the boat with a heavy heart and trudged up the hill, where he saw a light in his cottage.

As he opened the door, his wife ran to meet him, saying, "I have been **waiting** for you!"

In his disappointment, he replied, "Yes, but the other men's wives were **watching** for them."

### **CONCLUSION**

Are you simply waiting, or are you **watching**?

### **I. Be alert to the signs of Jesus' coming**

**II. Faithfully stay at the work He has given you to do**

"Father in Heaven, light a fire of anticipation in my heart. I give myself to You fully and without holding back. Show me the work You have for me to do, and help me to carefully watch for the signs of Jesus' soon return. Amen!"