

# Masterwork of the Messiah

## Expositional Study Of Matthew's Gospel

*Watch Out & Work Out*

*Matthew 24:36-51*

Written By

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**L**ike most spiritual people, the disciples were extremely curious about when the Messiah's kingdom would come to earth, as promised in the covenants of the Old Testament, and what the signs of its arrival would be (Matthew 24:3). Ostensibly, their query was well-founded because Christ fulfilled the messianic role perfectly.

- Royal Davidic bloodline? Check.
- Preceded by an Elijah-type? Check.
- Power over the Devil and his minions? Check.
- Biblical and theological teaching like no one had ever heard before? Check.
- Sovereign control over the elements of the earth? Check.
- Able to give heal any disease at will? Check.
- Possession of the divine Shekinah glory of God Almighty? Check. They had seen it on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17).
- Sinless, perfectly holy nature? Check.

No wonder the disciples posed the question they did. Collectively, they excitedly expected the magnificent Davidic Empire, with the divine Messiah at its helm (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 2; 89; Isaiah

2; 9; Jeremiah 30-31), to appear imminently, resulting in the annihilation of Roman power and all earthly powers arrayed against God.

Christ's response to their two questions, as we have said, addressed the second question in intricate detail, while leaving the first question answered in a skeletal, open-ended fashion. Our Lord primarily wanted His followers to be able to clearly identify the major signs indicating that the seven year tribulation, which would usher in the kingdom, in order to give them hope and tenacity in such a wicked, wild, wearisome time. Hence, He waxed eloquent regarding those signs (Matthew 24:4-35), and by so doing He informed the disciples that the time of His arrival as the messianic king would be delayed.

Having concluded this time of prophetic instruction, Jesus turned to the most important matter had hand:

## What Does The Messiah Expect From His People Prior To His Parousia? (Matthew 24:36-51)

Two things:

### Keep Your Eyes Peeled (Matthew 24:36-43)

What should you be on the lookout for as a believer? Jesus explains in the ensuing verses:

<sup>36</sup> But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Let's analyze these instructive verses.

The opening contrastive word "but" (δὲ) tells us up front that we aren't supposed to be consumed with knowing the signs of Christ's Parousia. "That day," in Greek finds an article positioned before the word day, isolating it as an unusual day. Grammatically, this is the par excellence use of the article (the), denoting that while there are many days, there will only be one day like this day.<sup>1</sup> This day will be unique and distinct from all others days because it will be the actual revelation of the Messiah from glory once all the signs are fulfilled. Concerning this day, which will be preceded by identifiable signs, Jesus teaches us it is futile to make a study of the signs your main life focus because no man, no angel, not even He himself knows the exact day and hour when the Parousia will occur.

How can Jesus not know something since He is God and God, by definition, is omniscience? Good question. John 1, verses 1 and 14 clearly underscore the divinity of Jesus; however, Paul informs us in Philippians 2 that Jesus chose in His incarnation to willingly park some of His divine attributes unless the situation demanded it. Here's Paul's teaching on the intriguing subject:

<sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996): 222-224. This usage differs from the monadic use of the article insofar as latter usage speaks of something in which there is only one in existence, viz., the sun and the moon (Mark 13:24).

grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

“Emptied” comes from the Greek *keno* (ἐκένωσεν as used in the passage) and from this we get the doctrine called the kenosis. Some wrongly conclude this means Christ divested Himself of some of His divine attributes; however, this is erroneous outright because to do so would contradict and compromise His divine person. If you are divine, you are always divine.

Pragmatically, Christ merely limited His use of divine attributes, and this is readily seen in the New Testament historical accounts. In John 3:13, He clearly knew what Nicodemus was thinking in his mind before it was articulated, thereby underscoring His omniscience in this unique instance. In other episodes, He evidenced divine omnipotence in rebuking the wind during a storm, in giving sight to the blind, and in raising the dead; however, attributes like this were not used on a continual basis. He experienced fatigue (John 4:6), He required sleep (Matthew 8:24), He needed water (John 19:28) and so forth. Hence, as the God-man, Jesus didn't (and couldn't) surrender divine attributes but He did voluntarily restrict their independent use, as John Walvoord points out, in keeping with the His purpose of living among men and their limitations.<sup>2</sup> Applying these observations to Matthew 24:36, Jesus, then, is obviously speaking as a man so he can identify with man's basic limitations.

What Christ's words highlight is the need for His saints not to get all wrapped up in attempting to isolate the timing of His coming. That is God's secret and it is applicable to the Rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) and to His Second Coming. Both divinely ordained events are bathed in chronological mystery while possessing a high degree of immanency, which by its very nature, speaks of something which can occur at any moment because nothing else need occur.<sup>3</sup> Those, then, who are call caught up in the Blood Moon mania, need to take a step or two back from the eschatological edge. Based on the cosmic fact we will experience a tetrad, or four, lunar eclipses within the next two years, doesn't mean, as proposed by Mark Blitz in a television interview<sup>4</sup>, that the Second Coming of Jesus will occur in 2015. Such reasoning flies in the face of what Jesus just said in Matthew 24:36. Additionally, said erroneous viewpoint doesn't leave enough time for the seven year Tribulation to unfold as prophesied by Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27) and Jesus (Matthew 24). Jesus specifically tells us not to

<sup>2</sup> John Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969): 144.

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent discussion on this topic and a definitive defense of the Rapture, cf. Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord, Come!* (New Jersey: The Friends Of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> Dr. David Reagan in an article titled *The Blood Moon Mania* ([http://www.lamblion.com/articles/articles\\_signs15.php](http://www.lamblion.com/articles/articles_signs15.php)) insightfully states: ( ) It appears that after Mark Biltz appeared on the Prophecy in the News television broadcast in early 2008, he received a lot of flack for indicating that the Lord might return on the date of the last blood moon of 2015 (September 28). Also, people pointed out that the Tribulation, lasting 7 years, had to happen first. Biltz replied to these objections on his website by stating that there was room for the Tribulation, if it started in the Fall of 2008, because counting forward from that date would place the Lord's return in the Fall of 2015 at the end of the 2014- 2015 tetrad. When the Fall of 2008 passed without the Tribulation beginning, Biltz pulled the article from his website. See: Stuart Robbins, "Exposing Pseudo-Astronomy," [podcast.sjrdesign.net/shownotes\\_o85.php](http://podcast.sjrdesign.net/shownotes_o85.php). You can find the date-setting statement that Biltz removed from his website in an article titled, "MarkBiltz?" [www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id=37884&forum=36](http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=37884&forum=36).

get embroiled in study and discussions about the timing of His arrival because nobody can figure out when it will occur.

The unpredictable nature of the Second Coming is likened by Jesus unto the divine flood judgment in Noah's day:

<sup>37</sup> For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

Hold it right there. Interesting, Jesus just verified the historicity of Noah and the world-wide flood, an event also substantiated by Moses (Genesis 10:1, 32; 11:10) and Peter (2 Peter 2:5). While it is not our purpose in this study to validate the Noahic flood, I would direct you to two helpful books: John Whitcomb, *The Word That Perished*, and if you can find this next one it's worth a read, Alfred Rehwinkel, *The Flood In Light Of The Bible, Geology, And Archaeology*. You might also like to go to the following web site for Christian scientific and theological analysis of The Flood: <https://answersingenesis.org/the-flood>.

For 120 years, Noah preached righteousness, holiness, and judgment to a materialistic, hedonistic, false religion loving generation (2 Peter 2:5), and for all those years the entire culture rejected his negative, intolerant, unloving message. For 120 years, Noah built the boat to deliver the faithful from the imminent coming wrath of God against man's morally and spiritually degenerate behavior (Genesis 6:5). For 120 years, Noah knew that divine judgment was coming but he never knew the day or the hour. All he knew is he needed to preach and prepare.

Why did the culture reject Noah's message? Genesis 6:5 gives us part of the answer:

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

All mankind loved wickedness, *ra* (רָע) in Hebrew, a word used to describe any and all forms of sin:

The range of activity associated with *ra'a* begins with rejection of God (Isa 1:4; 9:17; Jer 7:26; 16:12), particularly in the practice of idolatry (1 Kgs 14:9; 16:25; II Kigs 21:11; Jer 25:6) and once the destruction of the holy place (Ps 74:3). Abuse of people and exploitation of their property is common. This includes causing physical pain (Num 16:15; Ps 22:16), harsh slavery in Egypt (Ex 5:22-23; Num 20:15; Deut 26:6), dishonesty (Gen 31:7; 44:5; Deut 15:9), demand for immoral relations (Gen 19:7; Jud 19:23), verbal abuse (Ps. 27:20, and efforts to kill (1 Sam 25:34; 26:21; Jer. 38:9).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason Archer, Bruce Waltke, *Theological Wordbook Of The Old Testament*, Vol. II (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980): 854. Cf. also The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon: 949. S<sup>7451, 7462, 7465, 7473</sup> TWOT<sup>2185, 2186, 2191c, 2192</sup> GK<sup>8273, 8286, 8287, 8288, 8289</sup> <sup>310</sup> **n.f. evil, misery, distress, injury**;—abs. רַע Gn 26:29 +; cstr. רַעַת 6:5 +; sf. רַעַתִּי ψ 35:4 +; רַעַתְּךָ 1 K 2:44 +; רַעַתְּכִי Je 11:15 (text dub.); רַעַתְּכֶם 1 S 12:17, etc.; pl. רַעוֹת Dt 31:17 +; רַעוֹת Je 44:9 Ex 23:2; sf. רַעוֹתֵיכֶם 1 S 10:19 +, etc.;—**1. evil, misery, distress:** פָּחַד רַעַת Pr 1:33, (ה)רַעַת Ez 7:5<sup>0</sup>; c. עַל Is 47:11 (read בָּאָה for בָּא), Je 5:12 + 5 times; c. אֵל Je 2:3; 51:60; הִבִּיא רַעַתְּךָ Je 4:6 1 K 21:29; + אֵל 2 S 17:14 + 8 times K Je; + עַל 1 K 9:9 = 2 Ch 7:22, Je 19:3 + 6 times Je + 8 times; + אֵל et על Je 19:15; 36:31; יוֹם רַעַת 17:17, 18 + 5 times; יְמֵי הַרַעַת Ec 12:1 (i.e., spring days, fatal to old people, Wetzst in De<sup>Koh. 447</sup>); רַעוֹת evils Dt 31:17<sup>0</sup>, 21 (JE), 32:23 (poem), ψ 34:20; 40:13; 88:4; יַעַת רַעַת Am 5:13 Je 2:27, 28 + 5 times; רַעַתְּךָ Nu 11:15 (JE) Ob 13 Est 8:6; רַעַתְּךָ Je 44:17 ψ 90:15 Pr 22:3 = 27:12; יַפּוֹל בְּרַעַתְּךָ 17:20; 28:14;

With God's holiness challenged by man's immorally cancerous behavior, He had to move to judge it and to preserve the righteous. Don't think for a moment He has changed, regardless of what culture says. He still abhors the very sins we are now codifying, marketing, embracing, tolerating, and enjoying as a Christless culture, and He will, as Jesus states, come again and judge mankind ... but this next time it will be definitive and highly personal from a divine perspective.

Another reason the culture dismissed Noah's message is because they were distracted not just by license but by life.

<sup>38</sup> For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

They were consumed with the ordinary pursuits of life, all at the expense of the extra-ordinary: divine deliverance and life. Yes, despite clear, concise, perpetual warnings of the coming catastrophic watery divine judgment, everyone outside of Noah's family, blew him off ... really, they probably laughed him off as a crazy, demented old man. Further, I'm sure they mocked and taunted him and his family as they sat quietly in the ark they had built for seven days prior to the first rainfall (Genesis 7:7-11). I'm sure when it started raining for forty straight days, as the water level reached their ankles, then their knees, then their waists and so on they sang a different tune, but then it was too late to be delivered. The suddenness of the judgment when it finally broke out caught them totally by surprise and left them completely defenseless against God's wrath against their unbounded, insatiable love of sin in all of its forms.

Such, says Jesus, is how it will be with His Second Coming. Despite witnessing cosmic judgments, as detailed in the signs of Matthew 24 and those of Revelation 6 through 19, despite hearing the bold witness of the 144,000 Jewish Christians, despite hearing the witness and seeing the miraculous action of the two divinely appointed witnesses (Revelation 11:1-14), they will still consume themselves with the checking out the next best restaurant on *Dives, Diners and Drive-Ins*, they'll live for the next *Budweiser* tail-gate party at the Redskins game, they'll be focused on wedding shows like *Say Yes To The Dress*, they get engrossed in NY Times top best sellers like *Gone Girl*, they'll impatiently wait for the next frat party, they'll spend all their time and money preparing for the Sandal's Resort vacation, they'll... well ... you fill in the blank. They

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בְּרָעָהּ Je 44:29 (J) Pr 14:32; 24:16 Ne 1:3 1 Ch 7:23 ψ 107:26; ברעותיכם 141:5; רָעָה עַל נַחֵם Ex 32:12, 14 (J) Je 8:6 + 6 times; c. אָל 2 S 24:16 Je 26:3, 13, 19; 42:10. **2.** *evil, injury, wrong:* עָשָׂה רָעָהָ 2 S 12:18 Je 26:19; 41:11; c. עָם Gn 26:29 (J) Ju 15:3 2 S 13:16; c. אָת Ju 11:27; c. ל 1 S 6:9 1 K 2:44 + 4 times; c. אָל Je 44:7; obj. of vbs. חָשַׁב Gn 50:20 (E) Je 36:3; 48:2 + 7 times; חָרַשׁוּ 1 S 23:9 Pr 3:29; הָשִׁיב Gn 50:15 (E) Ju 9:56, 57 + 4 times; גָּמְלוּ Gn 50:17 (E) 1 S 24:18 (17) Is 3:9 Pr 3:30; בָּקַשׁ Nu 35:23 (P) 1 S 24:10 (9); 25:26 + 4 times; שָׁלַם Gn 44:4 (J) Je 18:20; 51:24 ψ 35:12; 38:21; לָרָעָה *for harm* Gn 31:52 Ex 23:2 (E) Dt 29:20 Ju 2:15 2 S 18:32 Je 21:10 + 8 times Je, Am 9:4 Zc 1:15 Pr 6:18 Ec 5:12; בְּרָעָתָהּ 2 S 16:8 *in thy mischief*; בְּרָעָהּ Ex 32:12 (J) *for mischief*; רָבָה רָעָהּ Ec 2:21; חִלָּה רָעָהּ Ec 5:12, 15. **3.** *ethical evil*, 1 S 12:17, 19; 24:12; 26:18 Is 47:10 Je 2:19 + 13 times Je, + 18 times, + foll.: רָעָהּ (ה) עָשָׂה Gn 39:9 Dt 31:18 (J) + 5 times + Je 18:10 (Kt, but Qr רָעָה); רָעָהּ Ec 8:11; אָהַב רָעָהּ Mi 3:2 (Kt); שׁוּב מָרְעָהּ Je 18:8; 23:14; 44:5; מִי בָעַר רָעָהּ מִי Ju 20:13 (v II רָע 36); מִפְּנֵי רָעָהּ Je 7:12; 44:3; מִפְּנֵי רָעָהּ רָעָהּ רָעָהּ Ho 10:15; בָּגַדְלָהּ רָעָהּ Je 11:17; אָנְשֵׁי רָעָהּ Pr 24:1.

will be, in a word, distracted ... and then God's judgment will break out upon them, leaving them no room for repentance. Don't you know they will be shocked and surprised?

I must stop and ask a couple of probing personal questions. First, for the believer: Are you being faithful to proclaim the full gospel message to our godless culture? Are you willing to present the bad news and the good news of the gospel to those who will, most likely, find you to be a cultural anomaly, and maybe even a nuisance? Will you be faithful to preach divine judgment and forgiveness even if you only ever impact your family in your lifetime? Second, for the non-believer: Are you so distracted by the stuff of life you are missing the Savior of life? If so, today, then, is the day of your salvation. Jesus awaits your next step of faith toward Him.

When Jesus suddenly appears unexpectedly at the end of the Tribulation, it will be a time of either blessing or curse, of life or death, and of judgment or kingdom life. Here is how He puts it:

<sup>40</sup> Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.

<sup>41</sup> Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

This has nothing contextually to do with the Rapture of the Church and everything to do with populating the messianic, Davidic kingdom. You will either be prepared for His arrival, by knowing Him as your personal Lord and Savior, or you will be unprepared, spiritually speaking. You will either be His child, or the child of the Adversary. You will either know His holiness (1 Corinthians 1:30), or you will be dead in your sins (Romans 6:23). For those who are prepared, meaning they had a faith relationship with the Messiah, they will walk into the Davidic kingdom, while those who were not spiritually prepared will be sent to eternal judgment. The angels, as we read in verse 31, undoubtedly, will play a major part in this time of proper discriminatory separation ... and it will occur with complete surprise and suddenness.

All of this leads me to ask you another personal question: Are you currently ready for the day, the hour, the minute that God comes for you?

As Christ-followers, what does the imminent appearance of Christ mean in our day prior to the Second Coming? It means the same thing it will for these future believers as denoted by Jesus:

<sup>42</sup> Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

The conjunction “therefore” (οὖν ) indicate Christ is now concluding this facet of this argument by applying it to His followers. How are we to live in light of His arrival? The present tense imperative “be on the alert”<sup>6</sup> underscores a couple of motifs: One, it is a command to be on

<sup>6</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature*: 208. γρηγορέω (on this new formation in H. Gk. fr. ἐγρήγορα, the pf. of ἐγείρω [Herm. Wr.; Achilles Tat. 4, 17, 3; Cyril of Scyth. p. 80, 19; Phryn. 118 Lob.], found also PSI 1413, 9; LXX; PsSol 3:2; JosAs 10:2; Jos., Ant. 11, 47; TestBenj 10:1 [Thackeray 263; Helbing 82; 84] s. B-D-F §73; Nägeli 44; Mlt-H. 386; PKatz, Philo's Bible 160) fut. γρηγορήσω Jer 38:28; 1 aor. ἐγρηγόρησα.

① to stay awake, **be watchful** (Herm. Wr. 11, 21b; 1 Macc 12:27; 2 Esdr 17:3) Mt 24:43; 26:38, 40; Mk 13:34; 14:34, 37; Lk 12:37, 39 v.l.

② to be in constant readiness **be on the alert** (fig. ext. of 1; cp. Bar 2:9 al.; cp. our 'keep one's eyes open') Mt 24:42; 25:13; 26:41; Mk 13:35, 37; 14:38; Ac 20:31; 1 Cor 16:13; 1 Th 5:6; 1 Pt 5:8; Rv 3:2f; 16:15; IPol 1:3. ὑπὲρ τῆς

watch looking for the Messiah. It is not optional. We all have guard duty, as it were.<sup>7</sup> It is not optional. It is not reserved for pastor and/or elders. Every believer is under divine mandate to be watchful for Christ's appearance. Two, the present nature of the imperative mood denotes its perpetual application to our daily lives. We should always live, moment by moment, with the concept of His sudden arrival. We should be thinking about Him. We should be giving thought to how things will change with His appearance. We should be looking for Him for this will breed hope in our lives as we see Noahic times around us.

Finally, without getting to ahead of ourselves, by keeping His imminent arrival before us on a daily basis it will put us in a position to accomplish several goals. One, it will cause us to change our behavior for the better. Dr. Scott Hafemann says it well in his commentary on 2 Corinthians: "The goal and consequence of eschatology is ethics!"<sup>8</sup> (I love that exclamation point!) Put differently, good eschatology leads to good living, and good living leads to a radical impact and transformation of our Noahic society. Regardless of your theological position, whether you are pre-, mid-, or post-tribulational, whether you are Dispensational in your eschatology or Covenant and Amillennial, this message, from our Lord, must resonate with us as kingdom members. We are called to be salt and light prior to His arrival, not be professionals in understanding every twist and turn of eschatology, or in being static in our understanding of the end times because what we do doesn't really matter in light of what Jesus will do. On the contrary, we are called to watch and watching leads, as we shall see in the next point, to walking ... walking like an ambassador of Christ in a hostile country.

In order to drive home the utter need for us to keep our eyes peeled for His glorious arrival, Jesus adds this short parable:

<sup>43</sup> But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have

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ζωῆς *be vigilant for your life* D 16:1. Of alertness in prayer γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ (=προσευχῇ) *be wide awake about it* Col 4:2

③ to remain fully alive, **be alive** (opp. to be dead, fig. ext. of 1) γ. and καθεύδω, *be alive* and *be dead* 1 Th 5:10 (this opposition develops in association w. the popular consolatory motif of death as a sleep, s. καθεύδω 3). S. ἐγρηγορέω.—DELG s.v. ἐγείρω. M-M.

<sup>7</sup> What happened to Romans guards who slept on duty? Here's the answer: <http://spartacus-educational.com/ROMArmy.htm>

The Roman Army

(2) Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire* (c. 110 BC) If the Roman soldier is found guilty (of falling asleep on duty), he is punished by fustuarium. This is carried out as follows. The tribune takes a cudgel and lightly touches the condemned man with it, whereupon all the soldiers fall upon him with clubs and stones, and usually kill him... If large groups desert their posts under extreme pressure, the officers reject the idea of beating to death or executing all who are guilty, but the solution they adopt is as effective as it is terrifying. The tribune calls the legion on parade... he chooses by lot... about a tenth of those who have shown themselves guilty of cowardice. Those on whom the lot has fallen are clubbed to death.

<sup>8</sup> Scott J. Haffemann, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000):218.

allowed his house to be broken into.<sup>44</sup> For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*.

Think about a burglar and a homeowner, Jesus says. If you knew when he was going to show up, you'd wait for him, right? But since you don't know when he's coming, you must be constantly vigilant. So it is with Christ's coming, even for those in the Tribulation period. With all those divinely ordained and ordered cosmic and earthly judgments, despite some time parameters as to what happens when, despite the fact the world, at large, will manufacture, I'm sure, all kinds of educated arguments to keep from facing the nature of these judgments, believers live each day as if this were the day of Christ's Parousia. Such is certainly applicable to us in the Church Age.

Are you ready for Christ's appearance? Will you be happy to see Him? Are you speaking up and out for Him as you should? You know you do that every time you present the gospel, when you defend sound doctrine, when you de-bunk cultural myths and reasoning, even when you vote, as we will all do in November, for candidates who uphold Judeo-Christian concepts and doctrines.

As I have said, there are two truths we need to adhere to in light of Christ's Parousia, and the second is a logical outcropping of the first.

### Keep Your Hands Filled (Matthew 24:44-51)

Filled with what? Doing good works for Jesus, or dressing your eschatology in overalls. Listen to Jesus develop this thought with a second pithy parable:

<sup>45</sup> Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? <sup>46</sup> Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. <sup>47</sup> Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

We have here a contrast between two servants, or two types of people: the good servant versus the bad servant, or the one who obeyed His Master and took care of His masters business and the one who took care of his own business while His master was away for an extended period.

The word servant here, *doulos* (δούλος) speaks contextually of one put in charge of His Master's household during his absence. In Luke this type of person is also called a steward, or an *oikonomos* (οἰκονόμος), denoting his responsibility to run the entire household as the head servant. With his Master's departure, the question always looms large: Will he fulfill his obligations well? Will he work to advance the Master's household? The good slave receives an affirmative answer upon the sudden arrival of his Master because he had faithfully executed all of his duties. That Master, in turn, expands that slave's responsibilities, demonstrating, as Jesus has taught elsewhere, if you are faithful over little, He will make you faithful over much (Luke 16:10-11). Christ's teaching here also dovetails nicely with His kingdom teaching in Luke 19:

<sup>12</sup> So He said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. <sup>13</sup> And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten <sup>1</sup>minas and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.' <sup>14</sup> "But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this

man to reign over us.' <sup>15</sup> "When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. <sup>16</sup> The first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' <sup>17</sup> And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.' <sup>18</sup> The second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' <sup>19</sup> "And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.' <sup>20</sup> "Another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; <sup>21</sup> for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.' <sup>22</sup> "He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow?

What did the nobleman, or the Master, require? That his servants would use their minas, where one mina represented three months of hard-earned pay, and take care of his estate and advance his business. Those who did were rewarded handsomely when the nobleman appeared. Those who had governed over a little were given the authority to govern over much. Again, when applied to the Davidic Empire which will be erected upon Christ's arrival, this all makes so much sense. Christ will be the King (Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:3-7; 11:1-10; 42:1-7; 49:1-7; Daniel 2:44; 7:15-28; Micah 4:1-8; Zephaniah 3:9-10, 18-19; Zechariah 9:10-15; 14:16-17), David will be His vice-regent (Isaiah 55:3-4; Jeremiah 30:9; 33:15, 17, 20-21; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Amos 9:11), subordinate rulers will be chosen (Jeremiah 30:21; Isaiah 32:1; Ezekiel 45:8-9), lesser authorities will reign as well (Luke 19:12-28; Isaiah 40:10; Zechariah 3:7), and judges will be established (Isaiah 1:26; Zechariah 3:7). The greater your watchfulness and obedience the greater your placement. Once more, we come face to face with the practicality of eschatology.

Are you the good servant? Are you fulfilling the tasks God has assigned you and/or placed before you? Are you using your gifts to advance His kingdom and built up His local church? Are you plugged in Christian service within this body? Are you leading and teaching if you have the gift? Are you, in a word, faithful? Indeed, entrance into heaven is not based on performance, but upon grace and faith (Ephesians 2:8-10). Entrance and placement in the kingdom is another matter.

The second slave represents the person who isn't convinced his Master will return any time soon, so he floats with his life, failing to get any viable, lasting work done. In addition, he quickly turns on those who are working hard for their Master:

<sup>48</sup> But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' <sup>49</sup> and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; <sup>50</sup> the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, <sup>51</sup> and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Who is this slave? Is it a believer? I don't think so. Why? Because every time Jesus employs the use of the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in Matthew it denotes unbelievers and eternal

punishment (Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13). In addition, Peter explicitly states that the mockers concerning Christ's failure to appear in the end times will be unbelievers:

<sup>3</sup> Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." <sup>5</sup> For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, <sup>6</sup> through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. <sup>7</sup> But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. <sup>8</sup> But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up (2 Peter 3).

These represent the majority of people, as in Noah's day, who mock the prospect of divine judgment, who laugh at believers for speaking of the wrath of God and need to repent, who wrap themselves so tightly in their love of science and logical, academic thinking they fail to embrace the truth that the same God who created the world, and who judged sin in Noah's day by turning the cosmos against man, will be the same God who will demolish their false view of uniformitarianism by bringing a final judgment at His next world-wide appearance. And since they worked against and not for Him, it will cost them not only entrance into His wonderful and magnificent Davidic Empire, but it will cost them heaven itself while leaving them with nothing short of eternal punishment.

Is this a snapshot of your life? If so, I'd dare say you still have time to reconsider and come to Jesus in faith before He comes in judgment.

If you are a Christ-follower right now, I think you know what you need to do, don't you? You need to ...

- Keep your eyes peeled ... because Jesus is coming, and
- Keep your hand filled ... because there is much work to do and He will reward you for your efforts in His behalf.

Anyone need to make a commitment right now either to follow Christ for the first time, or to re-commit yourself to being the best servant you can possibly be?

Additional lexical analysis of "ra," "ra'ah" (evil) from Logos Bible Software.

