

**Lesson 174**

**TEXT** Luke 12:35-48

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to explain that we must be ready for the Lord's return or suffer the consequences. They will be able to describe what is required in order to be ready.

**KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER** Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. — Matthew 24:44

**KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH** Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning. — Mark 13:35

**ANSWER  
TITLE: I Want to Be Ready**  
**SEARCH  
TITLE: Watchful Servants**

**REFERENCE INFORMATION**

The coming of the Lord has been the hope of the righteous of all ages. We read that Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, foretold the coming of the Lord. He became a type of the saints who will be translated, for it is said of him, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Lest someone should think that he simply died a natural death, the writer of Hebrews plainly states that Enoch was translated.

The Rapture is set forth typically in the Old Testament. We understand that it is not the will of God for His Church to go through the terrible judgments that God will send on the earth during the period known as the Great Tribulation. One of the types that depicts this is the account of Noah. God told Noah of the coming judgment and what he must do to escape it. Just as the righteous were provided with a means of escape in Noah's day, so

God will spare the overcoming saints when His judgment is poured out on the earth in the last days.

There are other accounts in the Old Testament that are also typical of the Rapture. However in Isaiah 26:20-21 it is plainly indicated that the Lord is going to make a way of escape for His people when judgment is poured out on the earth.

In the New Testament, Jesus frequently spoke of His coming again, sometimes directly stating the fact, sometimes in parables. Usually He stressed the importance of being watchful. He told us that we would not know the day nor the hour, yet He gave many signs by which we would be aware that His coming is right at hand in our day. We cannot overemphasize the importance of being ready for that momentous event!

**YOUR OPENER**

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# Watchful Servants

**TEXT:** Luke 12:35-48

**KEY VERSE:** Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning. — Mark 13:35

## RESPONSES

1. You might wish to open your discussion by focusing briefly on how we are watchful in certain areas of our daily lives. For example, ask your students to explain the ways a person must be watchful while driving an automobile. Talk about the watchfulness that is required for being on time to work, keeping alert at the check-out counter in the store so that you are not charged too much or that you receive the right change, etc. Using these examples, draw a parallel to the importance of being watchful for our Lord's return.

2. The ones who were waiting were apparently eager and fully prepared. They were dressed and ready— their loins were girded about, and their lights were burning. This could be compared to having the porch light on when we know that guests will soon be approaching. When the Lord did arrive, those who were waiting opened the door for Him immediately. Your students should see there was no last-minute hurrying to do in order to have the preparations all made. They were anticipating His arrival. In this same manner the students, too, must be ready and anticipating Christ's coming again.

3. Your students will no doubt respond with ways they would try to protect themselves, and most certainly with the thought that they would be alert and watchful. After they have explored several ideas along this line, bring out that just as a thief does not announce his coming, so Christ will come without warning.

After Jesus fulfilled His mission on earth He went back to Heaven; but He is returning very soon to take His people unto Himself. The question is asked, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" (Malachi 3:2). One meaning of *abide* is "to face or to submit without shrinking." The verse does not mean that no one will be able to stand, for the Christians are preparing themselves, and we can all be ready. We can see from our text that an acceptable service must be rendered with watchfulness and prayer, that we may be ready at any moment for the Lord's return.

1. *To watch* is "the act or fact of keeping awake, especially to be attentive or vigilant." How does this word pertain to our lesson today?

2. In reading the first two verses of our text, how would you describe the attitude of the ones who were waiting? Which portions of these verses give you this indication?

3. According to our text, the coming of Christ will be as a thief. If you knew a thief was likely to come to your house, what measures would you take?

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## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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4. The Lord will return for those who look for Him, and for those who are ready. How can we be ready for His return?

5. How could a person show by his actions that in his heart he is saying, "My Lord delayeth his coming"?

6. One of the requirements for being ready for the Lord's return is that we be good stewards. Give a definition of stewardship. How does this relate to the Christian experience?

7. According to our text, what were the consequences suffered by the servants who had not been faithful in performing their duties and were not watching for their lord's return? What parallel can you draw between this and the fate of one who neglects his responsibilities as a Christian and fails to be watchful for Jesus' return?

8. Referring to our key verse, when will the Master return?

**Thought provoker:** Are you ready for the Lord's return if He should come at this moment?

4. Allow time for your students to discuss this question, concluding that this state of readiness involves a performance of those duties known to each individual as God's will for his life. Ask your class if they think that being ready is an active or a passive state of being. Help them see that constant watchfulness and performance of the duties God has given them does require action on their part.

5. Your students should bring out that if a person has neglected salvation or has a careless or indifferent attitude toward the things of God, it would be apparent that he did not feel the Lord's return was imminent. Help the class see that one's attitude foretells actions. If men and women become intoxicated with the cares of life, the Lord's return will come upon them unexpectedly.

6. Your students' thoughts should bring out that stewardship has to do with the duties of one in a position of supervision. Relative to the Christian experience, a steward is one who has been a recipient of God's grace, and so has a responsibility to give an account to God for that which has been entrusted to him. See 1 Corinthians 4:1 and 1 Peter 4:10. Ask your students to discuss some of the attributes of a good steward. Some possibilities would be: honesty (Romans 12:17), accountability (Romans 14:12), faithfulness (1 Corinthians 4:2).

7. One servant was cut in sunder (cut off) and appointed his portion with the unbelievers; another was beaten with many stripes. The one who neglects in this day to make preparation for the Lord's return will be punished according to his misdeeds. All are going to be judged —the sinner for his sins, the servants of God for their faithfulness. But the consequences will be commensurate with the privileges given and how the requirements of those privileges were met.

8. We do not know the time of the Lord's return. Use this factual statement as a springboard to wrap up your lesson. Jesus said over and over again that the time of His return is not known, nor will it be pre-announced. But He has given ample signs to tell of His imminent coming. In a circle response, it might be interesting to rehearse briefly some of the signs we see around us that point to the nearness of this great event.

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

In the parable, what reward was offered to the servant whom the Lord found watching?

What punishment was meted out to the servant whom the Lord found not watching?

What are some of the rewards we will receive if we are watching and ready for Christ's second coming?

What punishment will we receive if we are not ready for Christ's second coming?

Why did Jesus tell His disciples to be watchful?

How do you think Jesus' command to His disciples to be watchful affected the disciples' lives?

What could happen if the following people did not have a watchful attitude?

- Lifeguard
- Air Traffic Controller
- Hunter
- Soldier on Guard Duty
- Christian

In our ANSWER story, what was the first question Carl asked his grandparents? Why is this an important question for us to consider too? How did his grandparents' answers affect Carl?

## THINGS TO DO

Interview a fireman, asking why he must always be prepared when the alarm goes off. Take notes, or tape the interview, and play it back as an opener or conclusion to the lesson. Types of questions: How can you be prepared to move quickly when the alarm goes off? What sort of preparation goes into your equipment and vehicles? Has there ever been a time when someone at the station wasn't prepared? Conclude by stating that firemen must always be prepared because they never know when a fire will occur. Christians also have to be ready for something important—Jesus' return to earth.

After studying about the need for preparedness, have the students write a letter to the servant who was unprepared, explaining why it is necessary for him to watch for

his lord. Ask them to consider what they can say to make the servant watch for his master. Give them five minutes to write their letters, and then share the letters with the class.

Tell the class that next Sunday, if they bring their Bibles and say the key verse, you'll have gifts for them. There may be some who will come unprepared. Give the gifts to those who have earned them and use this example to explain the necessity for being prepared and watching for the Lord's coming. Help students to realize you can give them another chance to earn a gift, but there will be no second chance for those who aren't prepared for the Lord's coming. (If all your students are prepared, build on the fact of how wonderful it will be for all of them to be ready for the Lord's coming.)

## Answers for ANSWER

### Are You Ready?

We know for sure that Jesus will return. Are you ready? Look up Mark 13:35 and 36 in your Bible. Write those verses on the lines below. Some of the lines have numbers below them. Match them with the numbered boxes at the bottom of the page and write the correct letter in each box. Do what the words tell you and you can make sure you will be ready!

Verse 35: *Watch ye therefore for ye know not when the master of the house cometh at even or at midnight or at the cockcrowing or in the morning.*

Verse 36: *Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping*

We must always . . .

W	A	T	C	H		
1	2	3	4	5		
A	N	D	P	R	A	Y
6	7	8	9	10	11	12

