

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

# Responding to the Thief in the Night

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Matthew 24:36-51

**<sup>1</sup> Responding to the thief in the Night is the title to this next message. Matthew, chapter 24, verses 36-51 will help us to respond appropriately. <sup>2</sup>**

**“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.” <sup>1 3</sup>**

**“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch”**

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 24:36-41.

**and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.** <sup>2</sup> <sub>4</sub>

**“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.** <sup>3</sup> <sub>5</sub>

**The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and**

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 24:42-44.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 24:45-49.

**gnashing of teeth.** <sup>4</sup>

**It seems obvious to me that the Second Coming of our Lord and the Rapture will happen together. No one knows when these things will happen.** <sup>6</sup>

**How would the Lord Jesus want you to respond to the thief in the night? This first section tells us to . . .** <sup>7</sup>

## **I. Be Watchful: You Could Be Left! - v37-42**

**Notice verses 37 through 42, As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. “Therefore keep watch, because you do not**

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 24:50-51.

**know on what day your Lord will come.**

**Be watchful: you could be left behind. 8**

**What happened to people who were not watchful? 9**

**People heard Noah's preaching but ignored or ridiculed it.**

**. . . if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness . . . <sup>5</sup> 10**

**God speaks through His word. It's important that you listen. Romans, chapter 10, verse 17 says, Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.**

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**There are dire consequences for not doing that. Second Thessalonians, chapter 1, verses 7 and 8, . . . and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.**

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<sup>5</sup> | Peter 2:5.

**He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** <sup>12</sup>

Then in verse 38, **they had plenty of time!** For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark ... <sup>13</sup>

It took 120 years to build the ark but people ignored the signs; the preaching and the ark! <sup>14</sup>

The flood came unexpectedly! <sup>6</sup> <sup>15</sup> You have the grace period of your lifetime to make your commitment to the Lord Jesus. That's your grace period! <sup>16</sup> First Peter tells us only eight were saved! <sup>7</sup> <sup>17</sup>

**What will happen when the Lord returns?** <sup>18</sup>

People will be conducting the affairs of their lives

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 24:39 - . . . and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

<sup>7</sup> I Peter 3:20 - . . . who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water . . .

pretty much without God in the picture. <sup>8</sup> <sub>19</sub> The rapture will take men from their employment and leave others behind. It will take women from household duties and leave others behind. <sup>9</sup>

**You certainly wouldn't want to be left behind!** <sub>20</sub>

Again, how would the Lord Jesus want you to respond to the thief in the night? This second section tells us to . . .

## **II. Be Prepared: You Could Be Taken! - v43-44**

**Be prepared: you could be taken!**

Notice verses 43 and 44, **But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come**

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 24:38 - For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark . . .

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 24:40-41 - Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

at an hour when you do not expect him. <sup>21</sup>

**What happens to sleepy landlords?** <sup>22</sup>

He was careless, not preparing for burglars! <sup>23</sup> First Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 2, . . . **for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.** <sup>24</sup>

**How do you handle burglars?** <sup>25</sup>

You make it difficult for them by installing an alarm. Right? A church I know of in Phoenix, Arizona, has an alarm that goes off at the local police station. A store I used to work in had an alarm that would trigger if a mouse in the store was detected. <sup>26</sup>

You need to arm yourself spiritually. <sup>27</sup>

First Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 8 says, **But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.** <sup>28</sup> You need to **save yourselves**



**from this corrupt generation!** <sup>10</sup> <sub>29</sub>

**Will you be asleep spiritually when the Lord comes?** <sub>30</sub>

**In John, chapter 14, verse 6, the Lord says He is the only way to God! <sup>11</sup> A good moral life just won't do it! Attending a church regularly just won't do it if you haven't committed yourself to the Lord.** <sub>31</sub>

**Again, how would the Lord Jesus want you to respond to the thief in the night? This final section tells us to ...**

### **III. Be Faithful - v45-51**

**Be faithful.** <sub>32</sub>

**Verses 45 through 47 says, Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of**

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<sup>10</sup> Acts 2:40 - With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

<sup>11</sup> John 14:6 - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

**all his possessions.**

**Being a Christian means remaining faithful!**

We have all been given some responsibility in the body of Christ; your natural ability and your spiritual gift. Faithfulness is developing and using those gifts for Him. <sup>33</sup> First Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 2 says, **Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.** <sup>34</sup>

Now, notice verses 48 through 51. **But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Putting off a decision for the Lord until later is risky business!** <sup>35</sup>

The Lord told a parable about a farmer who had a

good crop one year. He decided to build bigger barns to store his bumper crop so he would have enough to retire comfortably for many years. He dreamed of taking life easy and just enjoying a leisure life. The Lord implied that he was completely self centered, not thinking about anyone except himself.

Unfortunately for him, he died before he could get his dream life started. The Lord's final statement was, This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God! <sup>12</sup>

**The Lord could come any day - any hour!** <sup>36</sup>

The big question is not "When will Lord Jesus come again"? But, "Will I be ready when He does come"?

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<sup>12</sup> Luke 12:16-21 - And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." ' "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

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