

Theme: Jesus calls believers to be alert as we await His final return, not by looking for supposed signs but rather by maintaining a vibrant relationship with Him and His people.

I. Intro - New Year Predictions

- A. The annual attempt to predict the future just happened!
- B. They are almost always wrong!
- C. Christians have often tried to predict how close we are to Jesus' return - and also have been wrong!
- D. What does Jesus teach us about being alert as we await His return?

II. The Context: The Destruction of the Temple

- A. The disciples asked when the destruction of the Temple
As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"² "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately,⁴ "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" Mark 13:1-4
 1. Jesus predicted the Temple would be destroyed (v2)
 2. The disciples asked when this would happen and what signs would precede it.
 3. Jesus answered this question and gave many signs in Mark 13:5-31
 4. Jesus specifically stated that everything up to v30 would happen during "this generation" and He gives a solemn oath of the authority of His prediction of the destruction of the Temple.

I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.
³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Mark 13:30-31

5. Everything Jesus predicted happened during that generation, culminating with the destruction of the Temple in August of 70 AD.

- B. The Word of God is true and will come to pass! It would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away and cease to exist than for one syllable of God's Word to fail to come to pass!

III. A Shift To Jesus' Final Return

- A. Jesus changes the topic in v32
"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Mark 13:32

"But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Mark 13:32
 1. Jesus' strong statement in vv30-31 about everything being fulfilled in that generation indicates the close of the answer.
 2. Jesus begins a new section with "but concerning"
 - a. The NIV 1984 leaves this untranslated but the ESV (and the NIV 2011, KJV, and many others) include it.
 - b. The Greek phrase Περὶ δὲ usually indicates a shift of topic - "but concerning a different topic".
 3. A change is also indicated by using "That day" to refer to a Day that is much further away than the near-term events in THIS generation.

4. Furthermore, while there were many specific signs given in Mark 13:1-31 about the end of the Old Covenant and the destruction of the Temple, as we will see the stress in vv32-37 is a lack of any discernible signs!
5. Finally, in Matthew, the Olivet Discourse continues with a number of parables not included in Mark (or Luke) which illustrate the same point as contained in Mark 13:32-37.
6. Thus, it appears that in Mark 13:32-37 Jesus shifts from speaking about the destruction of the Old Covenant Temple to talk about His final return - and how we should leave in light of that day!

B. The timing of the final return of Christ - no one knows!

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

1. NO ONE knows about that day - not even the angels or the Son of God Himself!
2. In After Hours will speak about why Jesus says even He does not know the date.
3. The focus here is clear - NO ONE knows when Jesus will return except the Father!
4. This emphasis continues throughout this passage
No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 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 the one at the door to keep watch. 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.
Mark 13:32-35

- a. Jesus says we will not know - 3 times!
- b. He reinforces this by saying only the Father knows - not even the angels or Jesus Himself know!
- c. He concludes by saying we have no idea when it will happen - evening, midnight, rooster crow, dawn - WE WILL NOT KNOW!
- d. Notice He does not give signs that might indicate His return is near - in sharp contrast to Mark 13:1-31!
- e. They KNEW the temple would be destroyed within a single generation (40 years) but we will NOT know!
- f. He told them when Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman army the time was at hand - but no such sign is given now. The emphatic point is we WILL NOT KNOW!

C. The call - be on guard!

Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 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 the one at the door to keep watch. 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. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’” Mark 13:33-37

1. The call is to be alert/keep watch - 5 times!
2. The word used for all these (except the first time) is a form of the Greek word γρηγορέω which means to stay awake, to be constantly ready!
3. The idea is not watching for signs (for there are none) but rather not being lulled to sleep but rather staying awake and alert, always ready for the return of Jesus!

4. This is why Jesus says don't be found "sleeping" - this is the opposite of what we are called to do!
5. You can see this idea in other NT texts
Then he returned to his disciples and found them **sleeping**. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you **asleep**? Could you not **keep watch** for one hour? ³⁸**Watch** and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Mark 14:37-38
 - a. Jesus told the disciples to watch - but they slept!
 - b. Because they did not 'watch' they gave in to temptation and abandoned Jesus!

So then, let us not be like others, who are **asleep**, but let us be **alert** and self-controlled. ¹ Thessalonians 5:6

Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not **wake up**, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. Revelation 3:2-3

 - a. The same word γρηγορέω is here translated as 'alert' and "wake up!" - it is the opposite of sleep!
 - b. Jesus' call to 'watch' is a call to be alert, to never be lulled to sleep by Satan, sin, and the world, but to always live in light of His certain return!
6. This command is not just for the disciples but for all believers in all ages - everyone!
What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!" Mark 13:37

IV. Applying the Word - How To Be Alert In 2025

- A. We stay alert through consistent time in prayer
Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. Colossians 4:2
 1. God calls believers to prayer as part of being alert
 2. I am to devote myself to prayer "being watchful in it"
 3. Like the disciples in Gethsemane, if we are not staying alert through prayer, when the time of testing comes we will fold like a house of cards!
- B. We stay alert through consistent time in Scripture
So **be on your guard!** Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. ³² "Now **I commit you to God and to the word of his grace**, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:31-32
 1. Paul is warning the church about false teachers who try to lure them from the truth - they must be alert!
 2. To protect them Paul commits them to the Word of God's grace - the Scripture!
 3. Far too many believers have intricate knowledge of sport stats, the stock market, the plots of TV shows, the latest political news, or a list of conspiracy theories but have little knowledge of the Word of God.
 4. If I do not saturate myself with the Word of God, reading and meditating on it every day, I become an easy target for the lies of the enemy and will not be prepared for Jesus' return!

C. We stay alert through present faith-filled obedience

Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not **wake up**, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. ⁴ Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not **soiled their clothes**. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. Revelation 3:2-4

1. This church had been alive and awake but was now falling asleep and in danger of dying!
2. They had fallen asleep by soiling their clothes - compromising through sinful behavior.
3. Satan, sin, and the world constantly attempt to lure us into compromising by rejecting holiness and embracing sin.
4. We must be alert against this siren call to compromise so that we can resist and walk in holiness.

D. We stay alert through unity with the Church

Be self-controlled and **alert**. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that **your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings**. 1 Peter 5:8-9

1. We must be alert against Satan and his desire to devour us!
2. We resist him because we know this warfare is common for all believers in all times and places!
3. The lion captures the animal that gets isolated from the herd - and Satan traps believers who do not stay in vibrant fellowship in a local church!

E. Which area is the Spirit calling me to focus on this year?

1. Consistency in prayer?
2. Consistency in the Word?
3. Persistence in obedience and resisting sin?
4. Consistent unity with the Church?
5. What PRACTICAL steps will I take to grow here?

F. Our Eschatological Table

1. This Table gives us strength “until He comes”
2. Come and be strengthened!

Be Alert!

Mark 13:32-37
January 12, 2025
Communion
1 Peter 5:8-10

Teaching keywords: Eschatology; second coming

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 1 Peter 5:8-10

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
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