

WATCH THEREFORE : MATTHEW 24.

Brother A Rudolph.

This time we will have our concluding message with Brother Arvin Rudolph from Matthew 24. May we give him our undivided attention. We will ask him to lead us in a closing prayer and then we will have a closing song.

Do we practice the Sermon on the Mount?

I certainly appreciated Brother David's challenge to us this evening and want to thank him for bringing that powerful message to us.

Our text verses are taken from Matthew 24.

I would just like to give the setting of these verses a bit before we read them. Turning back to chapter 23 we find that Jesus pronounced many woes upon the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and iniquity declaring that their house would become desolate. We have that at the conclusion of [Matthew 23:38](#): "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

I understand the word to desolate means abandoned, deserted become an utter waste. Right after saying this as they were departing Jesus disciples come to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. Notice the first two verses chapter 24:

[Matthew 24:1-2](#)

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. [2] And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

The disciples pointed out this massive great building, majestic building to Jesus as if Jesus never saw it before but we know full well that He did, He had been at this place before and he saw these buildings but apparently they wanted Jesus to consider how massive these great stones were that we used in the building of this temple. They wanted him to notice how structurally sound this particular building actually was. Had Jesus perhaps forgotten this great stone structure when He

said that some day their house would lay desolate, it would lay in ruins. They were thinking: Surely not Lord. But Jesus reaffirms that someday that every stone of this building would be thrown down and scattered, not one stone left upon another. Then the disciples soberly asked when shall these things be? ([Matt.24:3](#)) and while you're at it they asked Him what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the world?

Perhaps they were thinking of how to prepare themselves for this, we are this evening, we surely want to prepare for that Great Day of Judgment, the end of the world, the day we sometimes referred to as the last day.

That is the context of the verses that we have before us this evening. I think I'm going to read from verse 35 through 44:

[Matthew 24:35-44](#)

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

[36] But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. [37] But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. [38] For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, [39] And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. [40] Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. [41] Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (and here we have our text verses) [42] Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. [43] But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. [44] Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

If you want our title for these verses this evening I have titled them: Watch for the Lord's Return.

Jesus says here: Watch, watch therefore.

We are not going to be talking about this destruction of Jerusalem or the destruction of the temple except that just as surely as Jesus has said that every massive stone of this great temple would be thrown down and it happened, it happened, and so Christ will return again and heaven and earth will pass away it will happen even as Jesus said.

The disciples asked for signs of Jesus coming, people today are asking for signs, and while Jesus said some signs will proceed and indicate His coming we think that the surest proof of His coming is that He said: I am coming again. Look at the concluding words of verse 44: The Son of man cometh.

How do we know that Christ will come again? like He said He will come again, that is fact.

We can turn to second Peter three ([2 Peter 3](#)) and read the chapter there but I'm not going to do that, but Peter right there in second Peter three says that in the last days there is going to be scoffers. There is going to be people who laugh and mock at the idea of Christ coming back and of there being an end of the world, and we find people doing that today. They walk after their own lusts just like Peter said they would, they are not godly, they do not walk with Christ, they don't love God, they love themselves and they live for themselves and they pursue gratifying their lusts and they laugh saying: What about this idea of Christ coming, there being a judgment, it is not happening, everything continues as it did for millions of years; they tell us and leaving the connotation that the world is going to last for a long time yet. People are saying that.

But Peter says that they are ignorant of two things and one of the things that they are ignorant of is what happened in Noah's day. Jesus makes reference to that here in the verses that we read ([Matt.24:33-38](#)) and Peter restates it he says: They are ignorant of the flood that occurred in Noah's day.

For years by the word of God there was a balance of water in the earth just the right amount to sustain life as the earth was in the water and out of the water, but in Noah's day by the word of the Lord there was a devastating flood, things did not continue as they did in the be-

ginning, the earth was overflowed with water and the earth perished. The earth did not and will not continue as it always did.

The second thing that the scoffers are ignorant of is God's perspective of time and God's mercy that the Great Judgment hasn't taken place yet. A hundred years is a long time from our perspective, something doesn't happen for a hundred years people will say it never will happen, some people think it's something doesn't happen in five minutes it wont happen, we have that perspective of life sometimes. But a thousand years Peter says is only like one day to God, (2 Peter 3) He doesn't have the perspective of time like we do. Just because God has suffered or allowed the earth to exist for a few thousand years doesn't prove that it will always be and that there will never be a judgment.

Just consider that if we are alive today we have the opportunity to be saved and get ready for the

Judgment, prepare to meet thy God! God wants us to be saved.

Here in [Matthew 25](#) Jesus assures us that He will come and He says that I will likely come when you are not expecting me. I will come when you are thinking I wont come, in fact I will likely come in the very hour that you are thinking I will not come. Jesus knew something about human nature didn't He? Yes Jesus knew about human nature, He understands how we put things off and we think things won't happen. Did you ever wake up in the morning with plans for the day swimming around in your head, you had many things that you want to do and you feel energetic and you think you are going to get them all done today and so you hurry into your day hoping to accomplish them all. Maybe in the back to your mind you are thinking about Christ coming but maybe you push that aside and you are thinking surely Christ wont come today? We are more likely to think Christ won't come today when our plans are not very noble and we hope that Christ will not come today, at least not right now. We assume that Christ won't come today when we are putting off something important, some decision that we know we should be making and we procrastinate and we put it off saying: I know I should do this and I will do at some time but not now. Doing this are we assuming that Christ won't come for a

while yet if there is something that we know we should do before He comes.

None of us this evening wants to be known as a scoffer, we don't want that reputation, we are not scoffers we are believers. How believing are we? Maybe we don't openly scoff with words but yet we think like scoffers think that Christ will not come today, He will not come for a while yet. Where as Christ says we should be prepared to expect Him any day, be prepared for Him.

Then He goes on to say if the home owner knows that at 11 o'clock tonight the thief will come to ransack his house we can be sure that he will be sitting up, he will be ready, he will be at home, he will have the lights on and he will be dressed and he will be prepared to meet the thief at the door. He doesn't want, he wont permit his house to be broken up. ([Matt 24:43](#)) But since the home owner doesn't know when the thief will come so many homeowners are troubled and worried and they install security systems and they buy insurances and they do many things to protect themselves, they want to be ready for that thief when he comes.

Now if people are so concerned about the thief taking a few dollars from the why aren't they concerned about the Lord coming ho has the power to cast the soul into hell? Jesus says in Luke 12 verses four and five

([Luke 12:4-5](#)) “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.” Murder is the worst thing that can happen to you but then he goes on to say:

verse “[5] But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

We are to fear him because hell is torment forever, it is not just a few dollars. We want to be prepared for Jesus coming.

Backing up to verses [Matthew 24: 36 to 39](#) again Jesus says that no one knows the day or the hour when he returns to judge the world, even the angels don't know this. So we want to be prepared. To some that last day will be a day of rejoicing. When the Saints meet Christ their

Saviour face-to-face that will be a time of rejoicing and we anticipate that time and in anticipating that time the Saints are saying Lord come quickly; that is quite the opposite of saying the Lord wont come for a long time yet for thousands or millions of years yet, that is not words of the Saints but of being the Saints anticipating our Lord's return we say: Even so Lord come quickly. ([Revelation 22:20](#))

But for many people that last day will be hell and torment and it is for that reason that Jesus said watch, so that that it will not catch us unprepared, unaware and unprepared to meet Jesus.

Now there is something interesting to me here in [verse 39](#) it says that in Noah's day they knew not until the flood came. What didn't they know? I would like to think about that a little bit, they knew not until the flood came and took them all away. Didn't they know that a storm of judgment is brewing, that judgment was coming? Didn't they know that the flood waters were imminent upon them? Well maybe they didn't know but we think that they could have known, Noah was building an ark and that was something that no one before him ever did, that should have caught their attention that something was about to happen that hadn't happened before. Noah was doing some things and Noah was perhaps saying some things that should have made them aware of coming judgment, aware of a flood, but they were too involved. We understand that they were too involved in the eating and their drinking, too involved in lust for living and marriage and divorce and remarriage, marrying and giving in marriage I think has that idea that they were too involved, too busy in that to hear Noah and to think about the implications of a flood. They knew not, they did not consider their end or death until the flood came and took them all away. ([Gen.6](#))

What else didn't they know? It appears that they didn't know that their carnal lifestyle, their indulging, their gratifying fleshly appetites, their assuming their own pleasure and comforts, in assuming that they were most important they were not aware that that would bring God's judgment upon them. Didn't they know the difference between right and wrong, sin and righteousness and that God judges sin? Didn't they know? And then we think that they could have known because Peter says in [second Peter 2:5](#): Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Now

I'm not sure how much Noah said, we know that he was doing some things building an ark and apparently in that Peter says that he was a preacher of righteousness I think he was saying some things too, his manner of living in declared some things and Noah apparently said some things, he was preaching righteousness through right living, a personal example of right living.

So they in with Noah could have sought to find grace in the eyes of God but again they were too involved in their sinful lifestyles and pursuing sin and gratifying themselves to think about or to learn about grace until it was too late. They didn't know grace until the flood came and took them all away.

What else didn't they know? Well I think we can simply sum it up like this: they didn't know God, they forgot God, they didn't worship God, they didn't even think about God, God wasn't real to them. Instead of God in their mentality the human being was real, that is known today as humanism, that is true of many "ism's" Sometimes we have all these ism's and we ask ourselves what is all these ism's about but ism's are finally about what is real. To a person who is engulfed in materialism to him material is real to him in his life. To those who are involved in to what we referred to as humanism they are, they're God is the human being, the human being is real in their life.

What is real in our life? Well God should be real in our life, we want God is to be real in our life.

What a sad commentary on so many people that they didn't know God until the flood came and took them all away and how many people today wont know God until they are taken away and they lift up their eyes in hell.

We want to know this evening that the Lord is coming, we want to be acquainted with God, to know God's grace and to know God for real in our life so that God's record doesn't state concerning us: He or she didn't know, they knew not; but it rather says: He or she knew God, they knew Jesus Christ, they were prepared for Christ's coming so that that Day of Judgment doesn't come and catch us unprepared.

Watch, that is what Jesus said, watch. If the home owner knows the thief is coming he will be watching. We know the Lord is coming so we can be watching.

Seems to watch means to be awake and be alert. I want to just look at a few things in the Bible that God says we should be awake to, several from the Old Testament and then a few from the New. I would like to go back to Isaiah. Isaiah is sometimes referred to as the gospel of the Old Testament, we will take a few thoughts from the book of Isaiah.

The first one [Isaiah 26:19](#) I am simply pulling this verse from this chapter.

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

Now that verse alone is quite obscure I admit that, that phrase that I am pulling from this verse is Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust. That is one there is something in this chapter that God is calling us to awake to, what is it? Well I see a call in this chapter, if we had the time to read through this chapter I am sure we can all see it, a call for humanity to awake to God. I will just point out a few things here.

I see this as calling people in this chapter to be conscious or aware of the fact that God is sovereign and to see Him working in the earth, He is bringing salvation, He is giving life to people, He is giving life to those who had died. Some are being convicted of sin and are being saved, they are being quickened, and they are being made a life into Jesus Christ putting it in New Testament terms. God is at work, God is doing something, God is building His Church. Be awake to God is what we see here. Observe His working. Actually this chapter in Isaiah, 26, is a hymn of praise, I will just move back to verse one it says:

[Isaiah 26:1-2](#)

“In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. [2] Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.” and so on.

The focus of this chapter is that God is a reality and God is at work, He is doing something, we are to wake up to Him.

Well some people are waking up to God and others are not awake to God and that is evident here too in verses eight through to 11, that becomes apparent.

I like verse 20, I'm going to move down to verse 20 where God says:

[Isaiah 26:20](#)

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

Now we are to close, I see here a call to just simply close ourselves in to God until the judgment passes over: Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee. What does that remind you of, what is significant about this God inviting us to come in, to draw near Him. Jesus says: When you pray you do this, you enter into your closet and you shut the door (Matthew 6:5) When we enter entered our closets we shut the door, there is a sense in which we exclude everyone and everything it is just God and us and we can pray and communion with God, we put the world on the outside, all our troubles on the outside, we can hide ourselves in God's presence and be with God and it will only be a little moment until those trials, those indignations are overpast and Jesus comes for us. Awake to God. That was our first point.

Now we come to the second in Isaiah 52 verses one and two. Here we find again the word awake, awake, like verily verily, there is a duplicate here, awake and be sure to be awake.

[Isaiah 52:1-2](#)

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. [2] Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.”

We understand that chapter 52 and chapter 53 is a prophecy concerning Jesus and it is a message of hope to a people that is being held captive, it is a message of God's love and deliverance, it runs through this

chapter and runs through the next one, it is a message of redemption. Verse three:

[Isaiah 52:3](#)

“For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.”

I am going to call this one God's call to awake to the gospel message of Jesus the Saviour of the world.

The shepherd's were people that were awake at night the child was born, the shepherds were out there watching, they were watching their sheep, many people were sleeping but the shepherds were awake and suddenly there was with the angels, they saw angels, they were out there with the sheep and suddenly there were angels about them, the glory of the Lord was there in a way that they never saw it before. And the angels said: Behold we bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people for unto you is a born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord ([Luke 2:11](#)) and the shepherds believed what they heard, they were awake and they believed. The shepherds went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and found the babe, the Saviour lying in a manger and when they saw it they made it known abroad.

Isaiah asked the question in [Isaiah 53:1](#): “Who hath believed our report?”

Who has believed or will believe? That is a pertinent question, who is awake to the gospel, the Saviour to deliver us from sin's prison and to give us eternal life, who will hear the message, who will believe the message? We believe that this is a part of watching, Christ wants us to be awake and that we would be awake to Christ and the message of the gospel.

Another we turn to is Joel chapter 1 verse five we find the word awake again:

[Joel 1:5](#)

“Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.”

What is happening here in this verse? This wake-up call is addressed to drunkards and I am thinking it includes all who are obsessed with sinful living. For drunkards each new day for them is another day for another drink of sin and God through Joel is declaring this is going to stop.

We should be awake to the reality of God's judgment upon sin. We should not only wake-up to the reality of there being a judgment but we should cried to the Lord in genuine repentance asking for mercy that that day and that that day will be a day of destruction to us if we are not awake. Verses 14 and 15;

[Joel 1:14-15](#)

Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord, [15] Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

“Consider the day of the Lord” that is a phrase that we find throughout this book, the book of Joel, the day of the Lord is Joel's call to the people of this day and ours, the day of the Lord the Day of Judgment is upon us and we should awake to the reality of God's judgment upon sin.

Well there are the things that we could point out in this book but we want to continue on to our next one which we find in first Corinthians chapter 15 verse 34 here is a call to awake to righteousness;

[1 Cor. 15:34](#)

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

I am going to call this: Awake to righteous living, sin not.

After Peter confirms in second Peter three that Christ is coming and that this earth will be on fire and be dissolved he concludes with a promise of receiving a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness and he says

[2 Peter 3:14](#)

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for (that you are awake to) such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

Awake to righteousness so that we are prepared to live in a world of righteousness. We understand that heaven is going to be a world of righteousness, are we preparing ourselves to live in that world where all is righteous, awake to righteousness. Now works, our deeds will either condemn us or will verify our faith when the Lord comes.

The next one we are considering is found in Ephesians 5. I will read verses 14 through 18 here:

[Ephes. 5:14-18](#)

“Wherefore he saith, Awake (another call here to be awake) thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. [15] See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, [16] Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. [17] Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. [18] And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; “

I am simply going to call this, the call of this passage seems to be: Awake to the revelation of God's will. Understand what the will of the Lord is, is the words that we find in verse 17. And other way we might say it is to awake to the Spirit of God. We each need to be awake to the Spirit of God in our life, be filled with the Spirit. We have that here in verse 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; “

And so we need to be sensitive to God's will and God's Spirit, that is another aspect of watching. Jesus said it like this: He that has ears to hear let him hear. And hearing Jesus involves being sensitive to God's will and His Spirit, meditating on His Word and discerning what God wants and obeying. We have those verses in the Bible: Grieve not the spirit. ([Eph.4:30](#)) Another one is: Quench not the Spirit. ([1Thes.5:19](#)) We grieve God's Spirit when we don't listen.

Parents how do your children grieve you? Do they grieve you when they don't listen to you, when they don't listen to what you are telling them and we grieve God the same way when we failed to listen to Him and then finally we don't listen long enough and we quench God's Spirit. So the call here is to be awake to God's will and to be sensitive to His Spirit that is an essential part of watching for the Lord's return.

Another one is found in Romans 13

[Romans 13:11-14](#)

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. [12] The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. [13] Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. [14] But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

I am going to call this one: Awake to faithful living.

High time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. Awake to the possibilities of more devotedness to God. Awake to the possibilities of greater carefulness in our practice. Do we practice to do we really practice the Sermon on the Mount? How well do we practice it? We should be awake to greater possibilities of doing that. And it was a concern of Jesus when the Lord returns when He comes again will He find faith on the earth? We want to say yes to that concern. We wanted to yes for us and our families. And here is how to maintain faith it is to be awake to faithful living and the growing devotedness to God and walk carefully and watch each step that we take and each thing that we allow. That is what we are to do, Jesus said to: Watch ye therefore for you know not what hour your Lord doth come. ([Matthew 24:24](#))

If we are watching we are on alert and what are we alert to again what are we awake to, we are awake to God, we are awake to the message of the gospel, we are awake to the reality of judgment, we are awake to righteous living, we are awake to God's spirit directing us and we are awake to faithful living.

If we are watching in these areas one day we shall see Jesus coming in the clouds of glory and we shall meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ([1Thes.4:17](#))

Let us kneel for prayer.

Our Father in heaven we are thankful for the inspiration that we find in the Word and for the privilege to be here to be gathered with the Saints in this part of that vineyard to look at the scripture again and to gather food for thought there and as we leave this place we pray that we might continue to meditate on the things that we have heard so that we don't let them slip and so that they become a continual inspiration to us as we move into tomorrow and next week until Jesus comes for us.

We do look for our Lord's return and we do ask that the Lord would come quickly and receive us unto Himself that we might share with Him in the glories of heaven but until that day comes help us to live faithfully here to fulfill our duties and responsibilities here and to communicate the gospel to a world that does not know Jesus Christ.

May we live for His return, we pray in Jesus name. Amen