

Motley Crew – March 23, 2011

Matthew 24:42-51

The Questions

Matthew 24:42-51

1. What kind of watching is this?
2. Why?
3. Will anyone ever figure it out?
4. How many watches of the night were there?
5. Do you see a word to pastors here?
6. So what do we do?
7. Dr. Lenski says verse 49 is an example of pastors who act like popes. What do you think?
8. How do we handle verse 51?

All citations from the Holy Bible are from the New International Version, used with permission.

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Some Suggested Answers

We had a visitor, Diane Dixon.

We had wonderful discussion about Jerry Paulson's life and faith and contributions to so many, regardless of race or status.

Joan brought cheesecake so that the pastor was not so bummed out by all the delicious *chocolate*, which he had given up during Lent out of his love of Our Lord.

We began with prayer.

Where We Are.

This is late Tuesday afternoon of Holy Week. Our Lord has spent the day teaching, and He and His disciples have left the Temple for the last time. They have crossed over the Kidron Valley and on to the Mount of Olives, where Our Lord is responding to an observation made by the disciples.

In Matt. 24:1-2, we read "Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." The disciples then asked for the signs of those last times.

In the context of that conversation, Our Lord said:

37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 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; 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.

The account of Noah, and the wickedness of the human race, is found in Genesis 6:

5 The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

9 This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. 10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to

Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

So, in the time of Noah, the people were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," without any thought of the Lord God, and they were filled with great wickedness.

Matthew 24:42-51

42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 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. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

45 "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? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' 49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50 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. 51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1. What kind of watching is this?

Verse 42: "Therefore keep watch ... "

Durative tense = constantly keep your eyes open, "namely to see the signs that presage the Parousia, to remember the promised final day, and ever, ever to be ready for it." *Lenski*, p. 956.

To watch for Christ's coming, is to maintain that temper of mind which we would be willing that our Lord should find us in. We know we have but a little time to live, we cannot know that we have a long time to live; much less do we know the time fixed for the judgment. Our Lord's coming will be happy to those that shall be found ready, but very dreadful to those that are not. If a man, professing to be the servant of Christ, be an unbeliever, covetous, ambitious, or a lover of pleasure, he will be cut off. Those who choose the world for their portion in this life, will have hell for their portion in the other life. May our Lord, when he cometh, pronounce us blessed, and present us to the Father, washed in his blood, purified by his Spirit, and fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. [Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

2. Why?

Because you do not know the day your Lord will come.

If a man knew the hour, or "about the hour," when a robber would come, he would be ready for him. So you know not the exact hour, but you know it is near, when the Son of man will come. He will come suddenly, as a thief comes, without giving previous warning, [1 Thessalonians 5:2](#); [2 Peter 3:10](#); [Revelation 3:3](#); [Revelation 16:15](#). [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

3. Will anyone ever figure it out?

No. I thought Lenski's comments on page 956 about when you least expect it were good.

“For despite all our watching no one will ever figure out the day. In fact, when we ourselves think that on *this* day he will not come, *that* may be the very day that he comes.” *Lenski*, p. 956.

4. How many watches of the night were there?

Clark's Commentary says, “The Jews divided the night into three watches, which began at what we call six o'clock in the evening, and consisted each of four hours. The Romans taught them afterwards to divide it into four watches of three hours each; and to divide the day and night into twelve hours each; wherein different guards of soldiers were appointed to watch. At the proclaiming of each watch the psalmist appears to have risen and performed some act of devotion.” See generally [Clarke's Commentary on the Bible](#)

Speaking of timing, there is also [Psalm 119:164](#) (“Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws.”), which formed the basis of the canonical hours. Beth noted the hourly prayers the monks prayed and that we have in the hymnal to that end Matins, Vespers, Compline, etc. The Wikipedia article on the [Liturgy of the Hours](#) had this description:

By the end of the fifth century, the Liturgy of the Hours was composed of seven offices, of which [Compline](#) seems to be the last to appear, since the fourth-century [Apostolic Constitutions](#) VIII, iv, 34 do not mention it in the exhortation: "Offer up your prayers in the morning, at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, the evening, and at cock-crowing."

An eighth hour, [Prime](#), was added by [Benedict of Nursia](#) in the sixth century. These eight hours are known by the following names:

- [Matins](#) (during the night, at midnight with some), sometimes referred to as [Vigils](#) or [Nocturns](#), or in monastic usage the Night Office; in the Breviary of Paul VI it has been replaced by the [Office of Readings](#)
- [Lauds](#) or Dawn Prayer (at Dawn, or 3 a.m.)
- [Prime](#) or Early Morning Prayer (First Hour = approximately 6 a.m.)
- [Terce](#) or Mid-Morning Prayer (Third Hour = approximately 9 a.m.)
- [Sext](#) or Midday Prayer (Sixth Hour = approximately 12 p.m.)
- [None](#) or Mid-Afternoon Prayer (Ninth Hour = approximately 3 p.m.)
- [Vespers](#) or Evening Prayer ("at the lighting of the lamps", generally at 6 p.m.)
- [Compline](#) or Night Prayer (before retiring, generally at 9 p.m.)

After Vatican II, the number of hours were reduced to five. In other Christian traditions, there are between two and four “hours” of prayer: Morning (“Matins”), Noon, Evening (“Vespers”), and at the retiring for the night (“Compline”).

There is additional background in the Wikipedia article [Canonical Hours](#).

5. Do you see a word to pastors here?

Verse 45: ““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?”

Verse 45 has implications but it appears to apply to all believers.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant - All should live in the same expectation of the coming of Christ, which a servant has with respect to the return of his master, who, in departing for a season, left the management of his affairs to him; and of which management he is to give an exact account on his master's return.

Here is an abstract of the duties of a minister of Christ.

1. He is appointed, not by himself, but by the vocation and mission of his Master.
2. He must look on himself, not as the master of the family, but as the servant.
3. He must be scrupulously faithful and exact in fulfilling the commands of his Master.
4. His fidelity must be ever accompanied by wisdom and prudence.
5. He must give the domestics - the sacred family, their food; and this food must be such as to afford them true nourishment. And
6. This must be done in its season. There are certain portions of the bread of life which lose their effect by being administered out of proper season, or to improper persons. [Clarke's Commentary on the Bible](#)

6. So what do we do?

Our job – our calling – right up until the Lord appears.

7. Dr. Lenski says verse 49 is an example of pastors who act like popes. What do you think?

Verse 49 “and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.”

Dr. Lenski wrote concerning verse 49 (pp. 959-960):

Since his lord is gone he casts off restraint and reveals the inner baseness of his nature which has only been hidden hitherto. Instead of attending to the other slaves, he now lords it over them as the tyrant that he is. He is a sample of those ministers in the church who act like popes. Instead of doing the work graciously entrusted to him, he gives reign to the lower passions which he has had to hide while his lord was present. He now carouses, eats, and drinks in company with base fellows like himself. Now he is a sample of the ministers who are self-seekers, who also indulge their flesh, even its basest side, when they think they can do so with safety.

Seems like a low view of popes.

And, of course, this is hardly an appropriate description of all of the popes who have served the Church over the centuries. In the last 50 years, we have seen several deeply spiritual men, committed to Christ, who have served the Catholic Church. However, it does describe a group of popes who served in the Middle Ages and who appeared to live not as servants of Christ Jesus but as secular princes. Christ will be the Judge, of them and us.

But, and if that evil servant - Here are three characters of a bad minister.

1. He has little or no faith in the speedy coming of Christ, either to punish for wickedness, or to pardon and sanctify those who believe. It may be, he does not outwardly profess this, but he says it in his heart, and God searches his heart, and knows that he professes to teach what he does not believe.
2. He governs with an absolute dominion, oppressing his colleagues and doing violence to the followers of Christ. And shall begin to smite, etc.
3. He leads an irregular life does not love the company of the children of God, but eats and drinks with the drunkards, preferring the tables of the great and the rich, whose god is their belly, and thus feeds himself without fear.

Great God! save thine inheritance from being ravaged by such wolves! [Clarke's Commentary on the Bible](#)

8. How do we handle verse 51?

Verse 51: "He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Hell is a real and horrible place and we don't want anyone to go there.

And shall cut him asunder. An ancient method of punishment which was practiced among the Israelites. See 1Sa 15:33 2Sa 12:31. The idea here is that very severe punishment shall be inflicted upon him, while *weeping and gnashing of teeth* would indicate a life of intense suffering. Indeed both these expressions must be regarded as metaphors, indicating nothing more clearly than a terrible and certain punishment. [People's New Testament](#)

"Shall cut him asunder" – the older translation – refers to a punishment that involves cutting the person literally in half as a punishment for a crime (usually murder), according to several commentators. This would be similar to the practice of "drawing and quartering."

We closed with prayer.

Parallel Verses

Mark 13:32-37

The Day and Hour Unknown

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert[e]! 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 their 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!’”

Luke 12:42-46

42 The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? 43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46 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 unbelievers.

Luke 21:34-36

34 “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

For Additional Study

Online Resources

[Book of Concord in PDF Format](http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/TrigBOC.pdf), The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
<<http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/TrigBOC.pdf>> (2MB file)

These texts are in the public domain and may be copied and distributed freely. The source of these translations is *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

A number of important Lutheran texts can be found in the Belief and Practice section of the website of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=112>

John S. C. Abbott and Jacob Abbott, *Illustrated New Testament*
<http://www.studylight.org/com/ain/>

Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*
<http://www.studylight.org/com/bnn/>

Harold F. Buls
<http://www.pericope.org/buls-notes/index.html> and
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/wittenberg-bul.html>

Adapted from *Exegetical Notes, Series A, Festival Season Sundays, Gospel Texts*, by Harold H. Buls, Concordia Theological Seminary Press: Ft Wayne IN, 1980

The Adam Clarke Commentary
<http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/>

Burton Coffman, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*
<http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/>

John Darby, *Synopsis of the Bible*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/darby/matthew1.htm>

The Greek Interlinear Bible,

http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Greek_Index.htm

Based on NA26/27. A word-by-word translation of the Greek New Testament.

David Guzik, *Commentaries on the Bible*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/guz/>

The Geneva Study Bible

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/geneva/matthew1.htm>

John Gill, *Exposition of the Bible*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/gill/matthew1.htm>

Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Complete)

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/mh/matthew1.htm>

Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Concise)

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/mhc/matthew1.htm>

Jamieson, Faussett and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/jfb/matthew1.htm>

B.W. Johnson, *People's New Testament*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/johnson/matthew1.htm>

John Lightfoot, *Bible Commentary*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/light/matthew1.htm>

Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/mlg/>

J. W. McGarvey, *Original Commentary on Acts*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/oca/>

J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel* (also known as "Harmony Of the Four Gospels")

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/four/matthew1.htm>

Alexander Maclaren's commentaries on the books of the Bible (various titles)

<http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/m#a2330>

The NET Bible. <<http://bible.org/netbible/>> A completely new translation of the Bible with 60,932 translators' notes. It was completed by more than 25 scholars – experts in the original biblical languages – who worked directly from the best currently available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. Excellent notes, citing both the Greek and Hebrew, as needed. Greek and Hebrew fonts available without cost.

A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/rwp/>

C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Notes* (1917 Edition)

<http://www.studylight.org/com/srn/>

Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/tod/>

R.A. Torrey, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/tsk/>

W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*

<http://www.antioch.com.sg/bible/vines/>

John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/wesley/matthew1.htm>

Other Additional Resources:

<http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/SPLC/Motley%20Crew%20Research%20Resources.html>

Other Resources

Barker, Kenneth L., ed., *TNIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006)

Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. Readers Edition. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006)

Davies, Benjamin, ed., *Baker's Pocket Harmony of the Gospels* (Baker Book House, 1975). Formerly printed as *Harmony of the Four Gospels*.

Goodrick, Edward W. and John R. Kohlenberger III, eds., *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999). This is the second edition, originally published as the *Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance*. It was originally published as *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance*. It should be distinguished from *The NIV Complete Concordance* by the same authors.

Green, Jay P., ed., *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Vol. IV. Second Edition. (Hendrickson Publishers, 1985)

Halley, Henry H., *Halley's Bible Handbook*. New Revised Edition (24th Edition). (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965)

Hickie, W.J., *Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977). This is a reprint of an older edition, originally published by Macmillan, August. 1893. A contemporary review described this as "A handy little volume, compiled on sound principles from trustworthy authorities." The 1911 edition is available online and for download at http://openlibrary.org/b/OL17866849M/Greek-English_lexicon_to_the_New_Testament

Hoerber, Robert G., ed., *Concordia Self-Study Bible*. NIV (Great Rapids, Zondervan: 1973, 1984).

Lenski, R.C.H., *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943, reprinted 1964)

The Lutheran Study Bible (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

Nave, Orville J., ed., *Nave's Topical Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979)

New Bible Dictionary. Second Edition. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1962)

Nicoll, W. Robertson, *The Greek Expositor's Testament*. Vol. 1. Five Volumes. (New York: George H. Doran Co., ca. 1910). Excellent notes on the Greek text and summaries of commentators. Available at Google Books (www.books.google.com) and the Internet Archive (www.archive.org - easier to find

here than at Google Books).

NIV Archeological Study Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005)

Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture* (Text from Project Gutenberg)

Robertson, A.T., *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2000). This “Concise Edition” is derived from the six-volume work by Robertson published in 1933. Robertson was also the author of 45 books, including numerous commentaries, a Harmony of the Gospels, etc. Also available online

Rogers, Cleon L. Jr., and Cleon L. Rogers III, eds., *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998). This is the second edition of the excellent work by Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, translated and edited by Cleon L. Rogers, Jr.

Strong, James, ed., *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990)

Vine, W.E., *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Original Greek Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, no date). Originally published circa 1940.