

SOUL FOOD

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MATTHEW 24:36-44 NOT FOR US TO KNOW

For generations people have been trying to set a date as to when the Lord would return. In Matthew 24:36–44, however, Jesus insists that the time is hidden. We cannot know it, and we must not be distracted by trying to know it.

What can we learn from this passage? First, not only is the hour of the end a secret known by the Father alone, but when the judgment falls it will be unexpected and sudden. Also, it will be seen by the whole world. That is the point Jesus is making when he draws a comparison with the great flood in the days of Noah: **“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”** The point is not that the people at the end of the ages will be as wicked as people were in the days of Noah. That may or may not be true, but it is not what Jesus says. Jesus draws attention to the way people were just living their normal lives in Noah’s day before the Flood: **“People were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark.”** The flood took them by surprise and completely destroyed them. **“That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”** Two men or two women will be laboring together in some joint task, and the judgment will snatch one away and leave the other. The end of the age will be sudden and unexpected.

Secondly, it follows that faithful servants will always be ready. Obviously, a homeowner would not know when a thief would turn up. However, he takes necessary precautions so that he is always prepared. The point is not that Jesus’ return at the end of the age is going to be sneaky like a thief stealthily approaching a house to rob. The point is that although the timing of His return cannot be predicted, He will come, and his people should be as prepared for it. **“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”**

As a child when I was misbehaving, my mother would often ask me if I wanted to be doing that when Jesus returned. I find this still to be a great question to ask in order to evaluate whether or not an action or plan is good and acceptable. Jesus tells us to always **“keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”**