

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The Parables

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

The Absent Householder

Reading:
Mark Chapter 13: 32-37

1. Introduction

Parable: A method of speech in which moral or religious truth is illustrated from the analogy of common experience. (Westminster Dictionary of the Bible)

Matthew 13: 34 *"...and without a parable spake he not unto them:"*

Parables help explain deep spiritual concepts and realities which otherwise would be difficult, if not impossible, to understand. By using **parables** and **similes**: *'like a lion,' 'like a snake,' 'like leaven,' 'like salt,'* etc. **Yeshua the Messiah**, (Jesus Christ) was able to teach those with functioning spiritual ears and eyes (investigative & willing minds) **eternal Truth**. If, however, a listener **did not want to know**, then the parable invariably appeared like a children's story, perhaps a little entertaining but of little practical use. The Master used parables nonetheless, whether his hearers **wanted to know or not**; simply because parables best explain the invisible realities of the **Kingdom of Heaven**.

2. Religious Misconceptions

Christian groups are notoriously prone to error. **'It's an occupational hazard,'** one might say. For example you will find sincere Christians:

- Who do not believe the Bible story of the creation, Noah's flood, the virgin birth, the miracles of Jesus, His resurrection, ascension and promised return.
- Who are woefully ignorant concerning the return of Jesus Christ; incorrectly assuming that
 - a.) He has already returned,
 - b.) or He will never return
 - c.) or that He will return in the distant future, hundreds of years from now.
- Whose leaders periodically fix dates for the Master's return only to be proved wrong again and again; with each disappointment resulting in yet more people giving up their faith.

Nevertheless, though we do not know the **exact day or year of Yeshua's return**, we can be certain that He will return as promised. Indeed, all the signs listed in Matthew chapter 24 indicate that His return is near - **even at**

the doors! The Apostle Peter writes in:

- 2 Peter 3: 1: *“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:*
2: *That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:*
3: *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the **last days** scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*
4: *And saying, **Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.***
5: *For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:*
6: *Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:*
7: *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*
8: *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*
9: ***The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***
10: ***But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.***
11: ***Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”***

Yes the Lord will return, you can be sure of that. The fact that **people scoff** at the prospect of Him coming back, is itself proof that the prophecy is coming true. But though his return is near, we are warned against **setting dates**.

Matthew 24: 36: ***“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”***

3. Warnings / Responsibilities

Not knowing the exact day or year of the Saviour's coming is, I repeat, no reason to think that He is not returning, or that His return is in the distant future. World events, especially in the Middle East, prove that the Saviour's return is very near and gets nearer every day. See **Lesson No. 14** in our Prophecy Library where this is proved.

- Mark 13: 32: *“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*
33: ***Take ye heed, watch and pray:** for ye know not when the time is.*
34: *For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and **gave authority** to his servants, and to **every man his work**, and commanded the porter to **watch**.*
35: ***Watch ye** therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:*
36: *Lest coming suddenly he find **you** sleeping.*
37: *And what I say unto you I say unto all, **WATCH.**”*

Here we have four absolute facts:

- **The Son of Man left His house.**
- **He gave authority to His servants.** (that is, His true followers; be they Jew or Gentile)
- **He gave to every man his work.**
- **And He commanded the porter to watch.**

4. Believer's Duties

This parable, concerning the Master leaving His servants in charge of His household, outlines several important facts which we His servants ignore at our peril. The following questions come to mind:

- What **authority** have we been given?
- Have we all identified **our own work**?
- Who are the **porters** or **watchmen**?
- And what are they to watch for?

Spiritual Authority

The matter of **spiritual authority** is recorded in this passage.

Matthew 28: 18: *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **ALL POWER is given unto me in heaven and in earth.***

*19: Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

*20: **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:** and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

Individual Duties

The matter of **individual duties** is recorded in these passages:

Mark 13: 34: *“**He gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work.**”*

Matthew 25: 14: *“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

*15: And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; **to every man according to his several ability;** and straightway took his journey.”*

1 Corinthians 12: 27: *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

*28: And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, **helps**, governments, diversities of tongues.”*

In other words every believer has a job to do. Everyone has at least **one talent**; even if it's only to help others in some way, financially or in prayer.

THE WATCHMAN (Porter) & HIS DUTIES

Every servant is told to **watch!** In this sense we are all **watchmen**. The responsibilities of the **watchmen** are detailed in many passages of Scripture.

Ezekiel 3: 17: *“Son of man, I have made thee a **watchman** unto the house of Israel: therefore **hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.***

*18: When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; **but his blood will I require at thine hand.***

*19: Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; **but thou hast delivered thy soul.***

*20: Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; **but his blood will I require at thine hand.***

*21: Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; **also thou hast delivered thy soul.**”*

Ezekiel 33: 1: *“Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,*

*2: Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the **sword** upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:*

*3: If when he seeth the **SWORD** come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;*

*4: Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the **SWORD** come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.*

*5: **He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon***

him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

6: But if the watchman see the **SWORD** come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the **SWORD** come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

7: So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the **WORD** at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8: **When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.**

9: Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but **thou hast delivered thy soul.**"

In ancient days the watchmen of Israel looked out for physical attack by the **literal sword**

Today we are looking out for a **spiritual attack** on God's church by an enemy who uses a **spiritual sword!**

What is a spiritual sword?

- The Bible tells us in (Ephesians 6:17) that: "**The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God!**"
- The written **Word of God is the True Bible, the Authorized King James Version!** Reading it will strengthen your faith in the Almighty God. It is the real Word of God.
- The **Sword of the Devil** is the **bogus Bibles** flooding the market these days? They not only conflict with each other, but they contain scores of errors and dubious notes which undermine the faith of millions in the **real Word of God.**
- The **Sword of the Holy Spirit**, the true **Word of God, (the Authorized Version)** is currently splitting asunder the whole English-speaking Christian community into two camps:
 1. Those who believe that the **Real Word of God is the Authorized Version;** and
 2. Those who believe that one Bible is as good as the next, take your choice; and since they all contain errors, none of them can be called the Word of God!

This issue is literally dividing Christian denominations, individual churches and even families. How true is the Bible statement:

Hebrews 4: 12: "**For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**"

Most Christian groups who learn the truth concerning the **real Word of God** will discover that it certainly divides asunder '**soul and spirit,**' '**joints and marrow**' and '**reveals the inner thoughts and intents of the heart.**' For more information on this vital subject of the **Sword of the Spirit** and the **Sword of Satan** see our article **Bible Versions Which is the Real Word of God?**

5. Watching

But this matter of watching is not just the duty of the watchman. It is the duty of every believer to be on his or her guard - to **Watch!** '**But**' some will ask, '**What are we to watch for?**'

Here is a short list to get started:

Watch for the Sword of the Enemy, as mentioned above.

Watch Your Families, Your Children

Nehemiah 7: 3: "**And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house.**"

Luke 12:

37: "**Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.**

38: And if he shall come in the **second watch**, or come in the **third watch**, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39: And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have **watched**, and not have suffered **his house** to be broken through.”

It behoves all parents to watch ‘**over against their own house.**’ Like a sleeping city at dead of night, many in the household are fast asleep. Consider yourself a **watchman**, a **sentry**, a **sentinel** and **guardian of people’s souls**; because your own life and the life of your loved ones depends upon it.

Watch Your Own Performance

It is unwise to keep one's eyes focused on another's short-comings. We are to watch **our own performance**, our own **Works**. This is important. The parable says: “*He gave authority to his servants, and to every man his WORK*”

Revelation 3: 2: “**Be watchful**, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found **thy WORKS** perfect before God.

3: Remember therefore how **thou hast received and heard**, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not **watch**, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

Watch Unto Prayer

In these dangerous days the need for prayer cannot be over emphasized. All of us need to pray more often and more earnestly than we do. **Prayer** is more important than ordinary food. Can anyone afford to miss their meals day after day and expect to be fit and strong? Obviously not. Failure to pray regularly is even more disastrous than missing ordinary meals. It will result in **spiritual weakness** and an inability to resist and overcome sin. Our Lord again and again advised the great apostle Peter to pray; but Peter failed to do so. As a result Peter was overcome in the **hour of temptation**. He denied even knowing his Lord!

Matthew 26: 37: “And he (Jesus) took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38: Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: **tarry ye here, and watch with me.**

39: And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

40: And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41: **Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:** the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42: He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, **thy will be done.**

43: And he came and found them **asleep again:** for their eyes were heavy.

44: And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45: Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, **Sleep on now, and take your rest:** behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

Proverbs 10: 5: “He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that **sleepeth in harvest** is a son that causeth shame.”

Do not imagine for one moment that where Peter failed you will succeed. If you fail to watch and pray on a regular basis, you will collapse as surely as did that great Apostle.

6. The Hour of Temptation

The Bible speaks of an **Hour of Temptation** which will come upon **all the world!** What is this **Hour of Temptation**?

Revelation 3: 8: “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for

*thou hast a little strength, and **hast kept my word**, and hast not denied my name...
10: Because thou hast kept **the word of my patience**, I also will keep thee from the **hour of temptation**, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."*

Temptation is enticement to do evil. Being tempted is, in itself, not a sin. It is when we succumb to the temptation that we are guilty of sin. If a person is spiritually weak, then even entering the **environment of temptation** is risky as it may end in sin. That is why we are advised to pray: **"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."**

Yahweh Never Sleeps.

It is most encouraging to know that the Almighty never sleeps; but guards His flock day and night.

Psalm 121: 3: **"He that keepeth thee will not slumber.**

4: Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

Strange as may seem, Satan and his angels also do not sleep. Like wild beasts the forces of evil are most active at night when people are asleep.

1 Peter 5: 8: **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a *roaring lion*, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."**

1 Thessalonians 5: 6: **"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us *watch* and *be sober*.**

7: For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night."

Mark 13: 35: **"*Watch* ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:**

36: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37: And what I say unto you *I say unto all, Watch.*"

7. Summary

Yeshua's parable of the **Absent Householder** contains several lessons. I list a few:

1. That no servant knows the day or the hour when the Master will return.
Signs of His return are many, but exactly when He will appear we do not know.
2. Our Heavenly Father has given His Son **Yeshua** absolute authority in heaven and earth. Exercising this authority the Saviour has commissioned His servants to:
 - o **Preach the Gospel,**
 - o **Baptise believers** and
 - o **Teach new converts to observe the commandments.** We are not only told to continue in this commission till His return, but He has promised to **'be with us till the end of the world!'** This is our **royal commission** and our **guarantee of success!**
3. Each and every believer has been given a specific job to do.
As the parable says: **"He gave... to every man his work."**
4. We are also commanded to **'WATCH... lest coming suddenly He finds us sleeping.'**
 - o We must also watch for attack from the **'sword of the enemy.'** If the ***Sword of the Holy Spirit is the true Word of God*** (Ephesians 6:17), the ***Sword of the Enemy*** could well turn out to be the bogus Bibles flooding the churches.
 - o We must watch our **congregations** and our **families**, because this is **'night-time'** and that nocturnal predator **Satan** is on the prowl, seeking whom he may devour.
 - o We must also ***watch and pray lest we ourselves succumb to temptation and sin.***
Failure to watch and pray will find us weak and unable to resist Satan.
If the great Apostle Peter could fall, so could we.
 - o We should watch **world events** and note how they confirm Bible prophecy and that the Saviour's return draws nearer every day.
5. I'm happy to report that the **LORD God of Israel** neither slumbers nor sleeps. He it is who wakens the sleeping watchmen to Israel's danger. And only He can keep us from falling asleep during this critical time in history.

The parable ends with the all-inclusive statement:

“What I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH!”

The fact that we are to watch **till** the Master of the house returns, means that this parable is specifically directed at believers living in these end times. That's us! Paramount questions are: **Are you awake? Are you praying on a regular basis - morning and evening? Are you doing your duty? Are you watching and warning?**

Isaiah 21: 11: *“...He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?”*
12: *The watchman said, **The morning cometh, and also the night.**”*

For some the **‘morning,’** the Saviour's return, will bring joy everlasting. For others it will bring unspeakable sorrow. What is it going to be for you?

My closing prayer is that the Saviour's return will bring joy for you and also for those over whom you have watched.

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.

Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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