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“But **about that day or hour no one knows**, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but **only the Father**” (Matthew 24:36).

In many scriptures, God tells His people to watch. Understanding what that means, can be tricky. It is a teaching that requires a good study. Jesus provided all the answers when the disciples asked him three questions:

1. When will this happen [the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24:1-2)]?
2. What will be the sign of your coming?
3. What will be the sign of the end of the age? (Matthew 24:3)

Jesus replied to each question in the same order:

1. **Watch out that no one deceives you.** Jesus had just finished saying that the temple in Jerusalem will be totally destroyed. He referred to the temple in John 2:19 as his physical body. “Jesus answered, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.’”

The spiritual meaning in every story is key. Jesus is warning his Believers to watch out for those claiming to follow him, but lead their congregations astray because they rely on their own interpretations of scripture instead of leaning on Christ. Many churches into the 21st century no longer impart the original teachings that came from the apostles. A hybrid mix of many doctrines are taught across the world. This is what the Christian churches have become today. The battle to overcome these barriers has been arduous for God’s people who are seeking the truth and desiring to obey Him.

“What are you, **O mighty mountain?** Before Zerubbabel you shall become a **plain**. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’” (Zechariah 4:7)

At the completion of the second temple in Jerusalem, there were shouts of joy. When God heard these jubilant cries, He joined in adding, “Grace, grace to it!” He saw the beginning of the spiritual temple who accepted His grace, a humble God-fearing and God-serving people. The struggle of building the second temple mirrors **the struggle in building the spiritual temple in this evil age**. Yet, in the future under the rule of Jesus Christ our only Teacher, the mountain will be crushed and a plain will appear. Along that plain, the righteous will walk—a **living organism of holy people—a kingdom of royal priests will form the temple that excites God to shout, “Grace, grace to it!”**

2. **Watch** for these signs prior to Christ’s return:
 - You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed.
 - There will be famines and earthquakes in various place.
 - When the fifth seal is opened (Revelation 6:9-11), the saints will be persecuted first, then everyone who keeps the commandments of God and holds to the testimony of Christ. Some will be put to death, but the time will come when everyone who follows Christ will be hated by all nations.
 - During this time of widespread persecution, many will turn away from the faith and betray and hate each other.
 - False prophets will appear and deceive many.
 - Wickedness will increase profoundly.
 - During this time of intense persecution, the gospel will go out to all nations. It will be during this time, that Satan will have been thrown down to earth with his rogue heavenly coalition and the nations will surrender to him, worship him and the beast—his heavenly coalition.
 - After the gospel goes to all nations urging them to worship God Almighty and turn away from Satan, then the end will come.

3. **When you see** these events, the end has come:
 - Standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken by Daniel, understand—those in Judea flee to the mountains.
 - A time of great distress so intense will erupt that if those days are not cut short, no one would survive.
 - False Christs will appear doing great miracles and would deceive the elect, but God won’t allow it.

Jesus concluded, “See, [watch] I have told you ahead of time... So, if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. **For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man**” (Matthew 24:26-27).

Christ will return appearing in the east, after the sun and moon are darkened, stars fall from the sky and the heavenly bodies are shaken (Matthew 24:29). He will return in the sky with power and great glory.

THE FIG TREE

Jesus warned his followers; he gave them specific events to watch to prepare and arm them. **“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree** [often imaged as the nation of Israel]: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door” (Matthew 24:32-33).

The fig tree produces in Spring and in Summer. The fruit in Summer is the second of two harvests. The fig tree referenced by Jesus is the most exciting event of all to watch. It is the spiritual growth of 21st century Israel—people from thirteen nations [12+1 because Joseph received the double portion], maturing spiritually into an image of fully, ripened fruit.

Jesus concluded, “I tell you the truth this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened” (Matthew 24:34). It must have been painful for Jesus to foreknow that his people from the house of Judah would continue in rebellion [this generation—this type of rebellious people will continue] until he returns.

LIKE THE DAYS OF NOAH

God will be watching mankind very closely before He gives Christ the green light to return. The nations will be worshiping Satan as it was done in the days of Noah.

“People were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. And they were oblivious, until the flood came and swept them all away. So, will it be at the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:38-39).

On the day Christ returns, the people of the world will be celebrating life and living with the full expectation that their future on earth will be glorious under the reign of Satan. “The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. **He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him”** (Revelation 12:9).

Satan will be the supreme heavenly ruler over the earth at that time and under his authority will be his angels who will be thrown down to earth with him. These angels together will form the heavenly alliance referred to in Revelation as the beast from out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads. This beast is the same that Daniel saw and recorded in chapter seven. It is the “fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts and it had ten horns...” and “a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully” (Daniel 7:7-8).

TEN HORNS, TEN KINGS RULE FOR ONE HOUR

The ten horns of this beast are explained in Revelation. “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom” (Revelation 17:12). There aren’t any scriptures found in the Bible promising earthly kings a kingdom, however, at the time of Babel, God gave heavenly leaders rulership over the nations on earth (Deuteronomy 32:8). At that time, God, himself took

the descendants of Jacob as His people to rule over them as their King (Deuteronomy 32:9). It was likely, during this time, ten heavenly leaders were promised a kingdom. Unfortunately, these ten heavenly leaders have chosen to team up with Satan and war against God. The promise of a kingdom remains an unbroken promise. They will receive a kingdom, but their reign will be brief “for one hour” (Revelation 17:12).

THE NATIONS CHOOSE TO WORSHIP SATAN OVER WORSHIPPING ALMIGHTY GOD

During this time of great turmoil, the nations of the world will conclude, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him? (Revelation 13:4b)” They will conclude that no nation on earth can overthrow the beast, so they will surrender and accept the rulership of Satan and the beast. “Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worship the beast” (Revelation 13:4a). **The nations of the world will not decide to call out to their Creator for help.** They will buy the theology of Satan from the merchants serving Babylon (Revelation 18) and revel in the supernatural technology of these alien gods, their promises of extended life and kingship within this material universe. **It is their surrender to serve Satan that prompts God’s fierce wrath against the nations on earth.**

The days that lie on our near horizon will be terrifying and horrific. The importance of watching is critical to every Judo-Christian’s salvation. The rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities of Ephesians 6:12 will fight to the end to destroy the repentant on earth. These enemies do not want their royal high positions to be given to mankind. There is no salvation plan for them; they sinned knowingly.

KEEP WATCH

Jesus was adamant. “**Keep watch**, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 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. So, you must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Matthew 24:42-44).

The key point Jesus was making is that a Christian’s calling is to be ready all the time. Never slip away or grow tired from obeying the commandments of God, keep the Sabbath and God’s Holy Days, grow in your relationship with our Father in heaven, and guard against allowing the evil spirits of opposition, hatred, jealousy, envy, lust, lying or deceit from destroying God’s spirit of love within you.

“Now about the times and seasons, brothers, we do not need to write to you. For you are fully aware that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night**. While people are saying, “Peace and security,” destruction will come upon them suddenly, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” Only the wicked will experience the surprise of Christ’s return.

“But you, brothers and sisters, are **not in the darkness so that this day should overtake you like a thief**. For **you are all children of the light and children of the day**; we do not belong to

the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not sleep as the others do, but **let us remain awake and sober**. For those who sleep, sleep at night; and those who get drunk, get drunk at night” (I Thessalonians 5:1-7).

Like the lighthouse, God’s faithful people are built on the rock of Christ, filled with God’s Holy Spirit and they shine out brightly without a break to bring people who are lost in the dangerous waters of wickedness back to their Creator. No matter the storm, they remain steady and strong. The Apostle Paul provided the means of standing strong during these raging storms.

HOW TO REMAIN UNMOVEABLE DURING EVERY ATTACK

“Finally, be strong in the LORD and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes... so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand your ground**, and after you have done everything, to stand... with the belt of **truth**... breastplate of **righteousness**... feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of **peace**... shield of **faith**... helmet of **salvation**... sword of the Spirit which is the **word of God**” (Ephesians 6:10, 13-17).

- **Truth:** test everything.
“The coming of the lawless one will be accompanied by the working of Satan, with every kind of power, sign, and false wonder, and with **every wicked deception directed against those who are perishing, because they refused the love of the truth that would have saved them**. For this reason, God will send them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie, in order that judgment will come upon all who have disbelieved the truth and delighted in wickedness” (II Thessalonians 2:8-12).

God’s word is truth. Satan will completely deceive the wicked, because they refuse to love God’s word. Study like the Bereans who God calls noble because they tested what the ministry was preaching.

“Now **the Berean Jews** were of **more noble character** than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day **to see if what Paul said was true**” (Acts 17:11).

Christ will cast away those in the ministry who preach outside of God’s law and apply their own interpretation to scriptures. “Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ And he will answer, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from. **Depart from me, all you workers of lawlessness.**’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but **you yourselves are thrown out**” (Luke 13:26-28, Matthew 7:23).

Jesus Christ is our only Teacher; the only one who can interpret scriptures. “Don’t let anyone call you ‘Rabbi,’ for **you have only one teacher**, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters... you have only one teacher, **the Messiah**... Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces.

You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to” (Matthew 23:8, 10, 13).

In this evil age, it is important to test everything in every area of life. Love truth.

- **Righteousness:** Living and doing the word of God is righteousness. “But **don’t just listen to God’s word**. You must **DO what it says**. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves” (James 1:22).

“For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is **those who obey the law who will be declared righteous**” (Romans 2:13).

Righteousness is all about LIVING God’s way. The Apostle Paul prayed, “that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to **discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God**” (Philippians 1:9-11). Paul then added, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves... **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing... he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on the cross!**” (Philippians 2:5-8).

“Join with others in following my example, brothers, and **take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you...** Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—**put it into practice**. And the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 3:17, 4:8-9).

- **Peace:** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for **they will be called children of God**” (Matthew 5:9). It takes the wonder of humility and the strength of weakness to resolve issues and bring peace. It often begins with two people. God says to quickly resolve grievances privately between the two parties, in weakness—without a gang or bullying.

“If your brother sins against you, go and **confront him privately**. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over” (Matthew 18:15).

Before confronting your brother or sister, complete a self-check to ensure that your own reaction is not caused by an evil spirit of opposition or hatred, or envy or lust. Investigate yourself, using logic and cast out all negative emotions that may influence your thoughts leading to a false judgment. Don’t be hasty.

“Do not go out to argue in haste. Otherwise, what will you do in the end when your opponent **puts you to shame?”** (Proverbs 25:8)

With the goal of achieving peace, come before your brother or sister in weakness, that is, without aggression, without an army but with a humble spirit knowing all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Winning is not about the battle, but all about preserving friendships and living God’s way of love.

“Though I am free of obligation to anyone, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible” (I Corinthians 9:19).

Peacemakers are filled with God’s wisdom, gently exposing wrong doing with words fitly spoken, preserving dignity and strengthening your brother or sister’s desire to live God’s way. **“But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere”** (James 3:17).

- **Faith:** “Now faith is the assurance of what we hope for and the certainty of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1). Presently, mankind cannot see into the heavens or through the heavens where God’s throne is located. Yet, Believers hold to the absolute conviction that God exists, Christ will return and the faithful will be saved and transformed into eternal beings just like Christ. That is faith.

The blessings promised are beyond any comparison on earth that is why the Apostle Paul urged Christians, **“So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.** For what is seen is temporary, but **what is unseen is eternal”** (II Corinthians 4:8).

All these people: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the people who passed through the Red Sea on dry land, the people who marched around Jericho and witnessed the walls fall, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the Prophets to name a few “died in faith, without having received the things they were promised. However, **they saw them and welcomed them from afar. And they acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth”** (Hebrews 11:13).

The terrifying and horrific times that rest on our near horizon place a great weight on the importance of the words of the Apostle Paul, **“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, let us run with perseverance the race** marked out for us. Let us **fix our eyes on Jesus,** the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.** In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood” (Hebrews 12:1b-4).

God will test and purifying His saints, after all, the highest position in God's great kingdom is yet to be filled. It will be offered to the saints—rulership with Christ, God and Son of the Father.

- **Salvation:** Christ made salvation possible for all of mankind. He paid the price. He took the beatings, the scourging and death on the cross. God, the Son accepted mortality to be the saving sacrifice. Though tempted, he did not sin. Death could not capture him for he lived righteously, yet willingly, he suffered and death took him in exchange for those sentenced to die and without hope of salvation.

Hence, only through Jesus Christ can salvation be found (Acts 4:12). "Everyone who calls on the name of Lord [Jesus Christ], will be saved" (Acts 2:21). Satan is likely to offer the nations an alternative when he is ruling on earth, but he is the father of all lies (John 8:44).

God, the Father and His Son foreknew the great iniquity in heaven and the complete fall of mankind on earth. A salvation plan was carefully designed before time itself.

"He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time" (II Timothy 1:9).

God's plan to create Adam and Eve on earth as mortals and after their fall, implement their saving plan was all part of the greater plan—to develop a humble creation of God-fearing, God-serving gracious priests. That is the great office that remains unfilled to this day—the position of Christ's bride—his church of holy, royal priests—repentant and faithful men and women from earth. God has promised the faithful eternal life and they know He will be true. Jesus' resurrection as the first of the first-fruits is evidence that God will fulfill His promise. He has already been coronated and serves as King of kings, Lord of lords.

"Therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good purpose (Philippians 2:9-13).

God has a purpose for His covenant people and all of mankind and He will finish it. **"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"** (Philippians 1:6).

God will ensure that His repentant people have everything they need to grow into complete maturity in time for the return of His Son. “Therefore, you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. **He will sustain you to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful**” (1 Corinthians 1:7-9).

- **Word of God:** It is understood by Judo-Christians that the word of God is symbolic of a two-edged sword. When Christ said that he came not to bring peace but a sword, he was telling us that he came to bring the truth. He was not willing to compromise on the word of God.

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. **I DID NOT COME TO BRING PEACE, BUT A SWORD.** For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household” (Matthew 10:34-36).

When the truth is spoken in an age where evil runs rampant, some people don’t like it, so they will respond with hatred. “If the world hates you, **keep in mind that it hated me first**” (John 15:18).

Bringing the truth will divide families for many reasons:

- Members in disagreement over scriptures do not humbly go to God and ask for clarification.
- Many do not verify truth like the noble Bereans.
- Some do not want to hear the truth.
- In stubborn pride, some hold onto their own beliefs refusing to look at a demonstrable view.
- Some fear stepping away from the church’s doctrines.
- Some are in-love with their church and accept their teachings without testing.

When Christ returns, he will come with a sword for he is the Word of God. He will capture Satan, the beast from out of the sea and earth, the Antichrist and the false prophet. Then, he will turn to the nations who worshiped these wicked characters after the gospel of truth went out to them. He will remind them of all they heard and yet, still chose to worship Satan. “**Out of his mouth will come a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations**” (Revelation 19:15). Then, they will understand why he will rule them with an iron scepter (Revelation 19:15b). They heard the word of God—the gospel will go out to all the world, they knew about the God of Israel—their Creator, they enslaved the repenting 21st century nations of Israel, mocked their God and Savior and ridiculed them mercilessly.

During these excruciating days, the saints will obey God’s command to endure patiently. “If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with

the sword, with the sword he will be killed. **This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints**" (Revelation 13:10).

While God punishes those who worship the beast, He reminds His people, **"This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus"** (Revelation 14:12).

The group of people who Jesus identifies as the church in Philadelphia will heed God's words. **"Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth"** (Revelation 3:10).

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATCHING

Jesus gave Judo-Christians a complete package of events, strategies and commands on who, what, when and how to watch.

WHO: The enemy is not flesh and blood. Pray for your fellowmen and women on earth—love them. Know your spiritual enemy who resides both in heaven and in the shadows on earth (Ephesians 6:12) and arm yourself.

WHAT: Prevent the destruction of the spiritual temple. Guard yourself from spiritual destruction. Live God's word and grow in His grace and knowledge and never grow tired. God will give those who endure to the end a rich reward.

WHEN: Jesus listed one by one events to watch that identifies when he will return and when the end will come. It was important to Jesus that Christians know this; heed his words.

HOW: Put on the full armor of God; this battle is not against flesh and blood. It is a spiritual battle of withstanding evil spirits that impact emotions. At times they appear out of nowhere and at other times, they try to enter through people who revel in the evil spirits of: opposition, hatred, anger, jealousy, lust, lies and deceit. While God expects every Christian to be able to give an answer for their beliefs, identifying argumentative and irrational people and avoiding them is in good judgment.

God Almighty has reserved the right to determine the day and the hour when Christ will return. The wait may depend on God's assessment of the sincerity and spiritual development of the remnant of 21st century Israel. Regardless of when, those who love God and Christ, wait patiently for that time and into the Millennium when the rule of Christ will bring, finally, justice, righteousness and perfect harmony.

In the meantime, we are the lighthouses built on the Rock **always watching**, standing strong in the raging waters, shining the light without a break, and guiding the repenting people back to God.

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