

The Blessed Hope!

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” –(Titus 2:13)

Diamond & Nugget #54

In my years of studying the Bible, and Bible Prophecy back to very first day on June 8, 1967, I had many questions that frustrated my understanding as I groped for clarity, In my first years there were nothing like what we have today in the way of books and articles on Bible prophecy that we have today. I had no real sources to turn to about Bible prophecy. I was dumb as a rock back on the day my church recording secretary was hollering out on June 7th, 1967: “Rev. Reid, Rev. Reid, is this Armageddon, is this Armageddon?” That hot June morning was as vivid today as if it was just yesterday. I was a college student-pastor of three rural churches in Greene County of the southwest corner of Pennsylvania. I had just finished my sophomore year at Waynesburg College, and unwinding from final exams the week before. I was as green as the grass that I had just finished cutting in my tiny patch of a yard. My front porch was a mere five feet from the street the church parsonages was located behind the Methodist Church. Francis Church lived with her elderly mother across the street. Her cousin was my church treasurer, a retired elementary school teacher by the name of Irene Clutter, who would proof my college papers that I had to write. Mrs. Clutter lived to be 99 before going home to be with the Lord.

You will have to forgive me for reminiscing here but these two ladies were some of my greatest encouragement in my four years at the Rogersville Circuit. I was a student-pastor but they were my teachers. They loved the Bible and my congregations loved us and so they put the seed in my head that I need to find out what the Bible said about prophecy. Unfortunately, a sizeable number of Christians are living with no lynch pin to tie them to our place in the history of the Bible. So many Christians have virtually no clue of just how close we are to the Rapture of the church. There is an old saying in history that you can't know where you are going unless you know from where you came. This is so appropriate for our world today. The prophecies of the Bible are our means by which we can sense where we are in this picture of God's time. Isaiah 66:8 is a prophecy of Israel's rebirth as a nation. It was prophecy before May 14/15th, 1948 but today, in 2021 it becomes history told in advance.

This nuancing of the Isaiah 66:8 passage is a key element in understanding any interpretation of the Bible. It's God's way of affirming He is the Creator and knows all things. God in his omnipotence can say: **“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall**

stand, and I will do all my pleasure:" -(Isaiah 46:10). Who of you would dare to be so brave as to declare what tomorrow will bring. The Bible is a living book, and in some ways I see it like a program guide at a major league baseball game.

In those days, one of the best little hand books was Halley's Bible Handbook. When I left the United Methodist Church, I had 6,200 volumes in my pastoral library. I donated 5,600 volumes to a Bible college where I taught for almost ten years. Those interested in Bible Prophecy today do not lack for good solid material on the subject. In 1997 when Sky Angel went public I purchased a life's membership, and the window to Bible prophecy grew infinitely. The Sky Angel network unfortunately went bust a decade year later.

Many of the major names in Bible Prophecy passed away since 2000, such as Grant Jeffrey, Dave Breese, Dave Hunt, Jack Van Impe, J.R. Church, Chuck Missler, and so these great men have mentored many of those today who focus on Bible Prophecy. Two of those I named here were able to differentiate on what I frequently express Bible Prophecy is "History told in Advance." With that in mind, I thought I would share with readers of this page. I am sharing the transcript of Dave Hunt's 2003 discussion of his book *'Countdown to the Second Coming'* where Dave Hunt enabled his audience to grasp this approach to balancing the message of prophecy in general. I trust that this old lesson will be of broadening your understanding of this concept.

Welcome to The Berean Call podcast. I'm T. A. McMahon, TBC's Executive Director. We're currently re-airing a discussion I had with Dave Hunt in 2003 featuring his book *Countdown to the Second Coming*.

In this program Dave underscores the fact that biblical prophecy is history written in advance. He gives the example of the prophecy in Daniel 9 that indicates that the temple would be destroyed and the Jews would be scattered throughout the world, which took place in AD 70. He explains what "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles" means (Luke 21:24), and how it is still in effect today. He adds that the world's solution to peace in the Middle East by dividing the land God that gave to Israel will bring about His judgment upon them (Joel 3:2).

In this episode, Dave and I begin a list of significant prophecies, many of which have been fulfilled...with more to come.

Does the Bible Write History in Advance?



Transcript:

Tom: In this program, we're going through Dave Hunt's book *Countdown to the Second Coming*, and as the title implies, the subject is biblical prophecy. In order to help our listeners who are either not familiar with the Bible or its prophecies, we've digressed from Dave's book for the last two weeks so that we could give an overview of key biblical events from Genesis through Revelation, and Dave added a brief commentary on each event.

Dave: Key biblical events—key historic events as well. The Bible writes history in advance.

Tom: Right. And last week we finished with the worldwide dispersion of the Jews, which took place in AD 70. So, Dave, could you just recap that event, and then is there anything of prophetic significance from that point until the mid-twentieth century?

Dave: Well, Tom, of course, Jesus foretold this, but He was pointing out what Daniel 9 had said, or the angel Gabriel had told Daniel: that the Messiah would come at the end of 69 weeks of years from the going forth of the command to rebuild Jerusalem. Don't get confused—not to rebuild the Temple. The Temple

had already been rebuilt. And Messiah would come, and He would be cut off—He would be killed—not for Himself, but for the people. As Isaiah 53 said: “All our iniquities were laid upon Him.” He died in our place for our sins. And then Daniel 9 said “the people of the prince who would come”—that’s the Antichrist, who would come eventually—they would destroy the city and the sanctuary.

So, when Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 24—they showed Him the temple, and He said, “There’s not going to be one stone left upon another. It’ll be cast down,” they should have said, “Well, you must be the Messiah.” Because that’s exactly what the Scriptures foretold.

And then Christ foretold this—and you would get it more clearly in Luke, where He said, “They will be scattered to every nation.” And that would be Luke 21:24, and then He said—you asked for some prophetic significance since then—He said, “Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” And Jerusalem has been trodden down—you know, the Muslims—one Muslim faction after another—because the Muslims fight one another. They’re not united, of course.

But the final Muslim group that held Jerusalem, and, in fact, all of the Middle East for 400 years, the Ottoman Turks, and they were on the wrong side in 1917, World War I. And they lost, and the allies took it over, divided this area up. Created...

See, some people think, “Oh, Saudi Arabia—that must be an ancient country. Jordan must be an ancient country,” and so forth. No! They were all created since then by the allies who carved this area up, and they declared that.... In fact, in 1922, the Declaration of Principles by the League of Nations, the predecessor to the United Nations, declared that all of what was called (and I think you want to get to that) Palestine, *Syria Palestina*, belonged to the Jews. It was their ancient homeland, and it was set apart for the Jews. So, they created Jordan, they created Syria, they created Lebanon, and they created what was going to be the land of Israel again. And then, of course, they took most of it away from Israel.

But Jerusalem—this is one of the most significant prophecies—Jerusalem is *still trodden down of the Gentiles*. It’s the only country in the world that can’t set their own capital. Every other country decides where they want their capital to be. Not Israel. Israel has its Knesset in Jerusalem. Where are the embassies of the world? Down in Tel Aviv or somewhere else, not in Jerusalem! And the whole world will not allow Israel to declare that Jerusalem is its capital. They want to divide this up.

In fact, UN Resolution 181 on November 20, 1947, declared—when they partitioned so-called Palestine—they declared Jerusalem must be an international city. It cannot be under the control of the Jews. And you know what the European Union says.... You know, the pope was there, making another deal with Arafat, signing a declaration that Israel could not be in control of Jerusalem...and I've gone on too long, Tom.

But the prophecy that Jesus made—Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled—it has come to pass. It is still being fulfilled in our day.

Now, when will the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled? Some people thought 1967, when Jerusalem was taken by the Israeli troops. But you remember Moshe Dayan, general with the patch over his eye, just on his own—he, without consulting anyone—he turned the Temple Mount over to King Hussein of Jordan. In 1994, they gave it to the PLO. Today the PLO has the most significant piece of property in the world—35 acres of Temple Mount, and won't even allow anybody up there.

So this is fulfillment—continuing fulfillment—I believe it will be finally fulfilled...the last “fling” of the Gentiles is Armageddon.

Tom: Dave, referring to the Temple Mount—last week, we got a letter from somebody who was, I assume, referring to Jesus' statement in Matthew 24 with regard to “no stone left upon another.” And they said, “Well, wait a minute! There's the Wailing Wall right there.” There's some confusion there, isn't there?

Dave: Well, of course, that was holding up this Mount. That was not the Temple. And every stone in the Temple was thrown down, literally. There were not two stones one on top of the other. It was leveled to the ground. And historians tell us—Josephus and others—that it was because of the gold that was in the temple, and the heat was so great that it melted the gold, and it just ran down between all the stones, and the Roman soldiers tore every stone down to get at the gold that had melted down there. How it was fulfilled is not important. It was fulfilled!

Tom: Right. Dave, 1,900 years from 70 AD, give or take some, till 1948, as you mentioned...

Dave: Jesus said they would be scattered to every nation.

Tom: Right. The re-establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948—can you just

comment about it? Those who are into prophecy—how do they deal with that?

Dave: Well, Tom, I was raised on prophecy. And I can remember the old preachers coming with their charts: “From Eternity to Eternity” was one of them, you know, that start out with God in eternity past, creation of man, and sin, and the redemption, and the Rapture, and finally, the eternal state. And I can tell you that—you know, I’m old enough to remember the early 30s, late 30s, early 40s—before 1948, and I can tell you that the preachers, they were preaching “Israel will be back in its land.” This is a prophecy! This is foretold. And people would say, “Come on! That can’t possibly happen.”

In fact, you know, one of our favorite authors, in some ways—in other ways I disagree with him, but Sir Robert Anderson, he wrote about that in 1905—way back in the 1800s.

So if you went by the Bible, you knew Israel would be brought back into its land. That’s one of the most amazing prophecies and the whole world has seen it fulfilled. There’s no other group of people brought back into their land, and established as a nation once again! Now, they only have a fraction of that land. But they will have all of it one day, and the nations of the world are...I’m sorry, we’ve mentioned it before—President Bush, Putin, the European Union, the United Nations, and so forth—they are defying God, who says, “This land—I’ve given it for an everlasting possession to Israel.” And Joel 3:2, God says, “I will bring the nations into *judgment* for having divided my land.”

And this, for example, is the whole basis of the so-called Roadmap to Peace: “We’re going to divide this land. We’re going to give some of it to the Arabs, some of it to Muslims, you know, and some of it to Israel.” God says...

Look, Tom, if you’re a Christian, it’s one of the amazing things that we find today in the church: people who are real evangelicals—they’re sound on the gospel, they believe the Bible—*except* they do not believe that Israel still has any prophetic significance today. And they deny the hundreds—literally hundreds of the prophecies in the Old Testament—that after these people were scattered (scattered everywhere because of their judgment), that God would bring them back, and reestablish Israel as a nation once again.

Tom: Dave, isn’t one of the roots of that going back to—if there are prophecies, you say, “It can never happen.” Then we begin to spiritualize it. I mean, you can go back to, certainly, the Catholic Church and their view of “There is no Millennial reign of Christ.” But even more specific, when you have the Reformers, when you have people after that saying, “This can’t possibly happen.” So now we have to establish another theological, eschatological view

to sort of make the Bible work out, according to where we are and what we think about it.

Dave: Yeah...

Tom: That's a problem.

Dave: You've put your finger on it. That is the explanation. Because they couldn't believe it would *literally* happen, then they spiritualize it. "Oh, well, this must be the church; or they must be really talking about the church; and it's talking about spiritual values, and so forth." No. It's quite clear.

I don't think there's any...you're going to spiritualize Armageddon? You can't spiritualize the land. The first thing you learn about Israel—God gave Abram, Genesis 12, a *land*, and it was not the land of Palestine. It was the land of Canaan. There was no such thing as Palestine.

And all through Scripture: "I'll bring you back to the land..." Ezekiel 35, 36, 37—that the mountains of Israel would bring forth, that the cities would be populated; that then the nations of the world would come and attack.

Ezekiel 38: Armageddon. It talks about a people who have been brought back from all the nations of the world—you can't escape it, Tom. This is not the church has been brought back. The church was scattered to all the nations—brought back to where? They were brought back to this land.

And they dwell safely, and they have prospered—and then, the nations of the world come against them. In fact, God says, "I will bring all the nations..." You can get that in Zechariah 14: God says, "I will bring all the nations of the world against Jerusalem." Why? There are two purposes for Armageddon. God is going to punish—I'm getting ahead of you, Tom, we haven't gotten to Armageddon yet—but God is going to punish the nations of this world for their treatment of the Jews. And He is going to break the hard heart of His people, who He still loves, and they're still His earthly people, and they have rejected the Messiah. They've disobeyed Him, and that was why all of these problems have come upon them.

So you read in Jeremiah 30:7, "The time of Jacob's trouble..." The worst time yet lies ahead for the Jews. Two-thirds will be killed. You get that in Zechariah 13. But Jeremiah 31:35 says, God says, "Jerusalem and Israel are going to be established forever, and if they ever cease from being a nation, there's no sun in the sky. There's no stars up there. The whole thing is finished."

So, Tom, we have so many very clear declarations, and yet, as you said, they were spiritualized because people couldn't believe it could really happen. Now they're stuck with that, as you point out.

Tom: Well, and they shouldn't be stuck with it. It's a stunner to recognize...on the one hand, if you're honest and sincere about the Bible, you'd say, "Hey, wait a minute! I blew this. Now I can understand it. Now it's clear to me." But as you're indicating, Dave, that's not the case. It's not happening. We just keep adding to—not we, but, you know, those who profess to believe in the Bible yet hold to an amillennial view of what's taken place. Can't get away from it.

Dave: Anyway, Tom, too long—you asked—you began this program by asking about this dispersion, the final Diaspora, of Israel in AD 70, exactly as Jesus foretold it.

Tom: So in 1948, we have at least the beginning of the restoration of the nation of Israel.

Dave: And, Tom, you could probably say that would not have happened without the Holocaust. And the nations of the world had a momentary twinge of conscience, you might say, in 1947. Even Russia voted for it. And they voted for the partition of Palestine. And the Arabs said, "We're going to attack." And I think the nations of the world rather hoped that the problem would be solved, and this little fledgling nation of Israel would be destroyed.

But you have a significant prophecy in Isaiah 66. It says, "As soon as Israel travailed, she brought forth." And I would think that that travail was the Holocaust. And because of that, Israel was born. The nations were sympathetic, momentarily, and so you had a nation that was born in a day, as the Scriptures said.

Tom: Or reborn...

Dave: Reborn, right.

Tom: Since then—I'm looking for events here. We've had a, basically, a continuing preparation of the world for the Antichrist. All of these things setting up for the man of lawlessness, which you've said in programs past, Dave: Satan has always had his man ready, because he doesn't know the day or the hour. And we also have the apostasy of the professing church. We see that very clearly today. The Rapture of the true church, and the resurrection of the dead in Christ.

Now, Dave, some of the things we'll be addressing here is: give us an order of

this, a chronology of this. First of all, the Rapture has to take place as a catalyst to all the events that will follow.

Dave: Well, Tom, I believe from the Scripture there are no signs for the Rapture. I believe this is what Jesus talked about when He said, “At such an hour as you think not the Son of man cometh.” I believe that’s what Jesus referred to in Luke 12:35, when He said, “Let your loins be girded, your lights burning.” You know, and you’re ready for your Master when He comes—your Lord comes.

Well, verse 40 says, “Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when you think not.” Now, that couldn’t be the Second Coming in the midst of Armageddon. There’s nothing else to think of! If Israel is surrounded by the armies of the world, they’re about to go down in flames, and you’ve seen all the prophecies fulfilled that you have laid out in Revelation during the seven-year Tribulation period, and you have—we’ve been here, we’ve watched all this be fulfilled, and then we say, “Oh, I don’t think He’s coming now!” Tom, you couldn’t make that fit at all!

So Jesus said, “I’m coming at a time when you wouldn’t expect me. So you’d better watch and wait.” And again, in Luke 17, He says, “It will be like the days of Noah, like the days of Lot.” They’re buying and selling and building and planting and partying. I don’t see that at the end of the seven-year Tribulation period when the world is practically destroyed.

So this is the Rapture. We believe that Christ is coming. He said in John 14: “I’m going to go away, and I will prepare a place for you. And if I go away, I’ll come again and receive you unto myself.” Well, where would that be? Well, He’s gone to His Father’s house of many mansions, so apparently He’s going to catch us up. And Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4: “We who are alive and remain—the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we who are alive and remain will be *caught up* together with them to meet the Lord in the air.” At the Rapture, the Lord does not come to this earth. He catches us up to meet Him in the air and takes us to His Father’s house as He promised.

At the Second Coming, His feet touch the Mount of Olives. Zechariah 14 says, “His feet will touch the Mount of Olives. It will split...” and so forth, but when that event occurs, it says, “He brings all the saints from heaven with Him.” You don’t have to be a genius to realize if He brings all the saints from heaven with Him, He must have taken them up there. They didn’t get up there on their own, okay?

So that would be the Rapture. So, the Rapture will come without any signs,

without any warning. Except the Second Coming, which is seven years later, there are signs, and those signs are already in the world.

Tom: So we have the Rapture of the true church and the resurrection of the dead in Christ, then we have seven years Tribulation. Dave, as the church is raptured, we have the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. That takes place while the world is undergoing tribulation. Is that right?

Dave: Yeah, we'll be honeymooning up there with our Lord. You see, if you don't believe in a pre-Trib Rapture—if you don't believe in a Rapture that comes before the Second Coming, then when do we have the Judgment Seat of Christ? When do we have this marriage? Revelation 19: There's a marriage in heaven between Christ and His bride. The church that He loved, even as husbands are supposed to love their wives. So it is only *after* that wedding, and the bride is clothed in white linen, fine and clean, because she has been, as you said, to the judgment seat of Christ. Our deeds have been judged and it says He will wipe the tears from our eyes—there probably will be some tears at that point.

Tom, if I could just end with a little poem, if we have a moment:

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ,
And He shows me His plan for me,
The plan of my life as it might have been
Had He had His way.

And I see how I blocked Him here
And I checked Him there
And I would not yield my will,
Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes?
Grief, though He loves me still?

He would have me rich,
But I stand there poor,
Robbed of all but His grace,
While my memory runs like hunted thing
Down paths I cannot retrace.

I think there will be tears, and He will wipe them away.

Lord, of the time that is left to me,
I give it to thy hand.
Take me, and break me, and mold me

To the pattern Thou hast planned.”

And that surely ought to be the prayer of every Christian: that we would not be ashamed before Him, at His coming, as John says in 1 John 2.

Well, Tom, you originally thought we were going to finish all of this in one program. I’m sorry! I get wound up and just rattle on.

Tom: Dave, you always—you give me goals to set, and reset. But I think it’s great. So, hopefully, next week, the Lord willing, we will finish this, really, survey of key events, key historical events.

Dave: If the Rapture hasn’t occurred yet.

Tom: Yeah, Lord, come quickly!

The purpose of the watchman is to warn the people. Teachers of the Bible are supposed to be watchmen. Ministers are watchmen. The saints are watchmen. A person watches for things they believe will happen. They believe these things will happen, because there is evidence of some kind to justify their being a watchman. We watch, because the Bible tells us of certain events that will come to pass. It gives us certain things to watch for. We watch, because God commands us to do so. When certain events come to pass, we are to warn others of what is yet to come. We warn them to prepare themselves. We warn the people, so that they may not perish. If they choose not to believe and heed the warning, their blood is upon themselves. But if we are unfaithful and do not warn the people, their blood is upon us as watchmen.

Ezekiel 3:17 - ***"I Have Made Thee A Watchman."***

Ezekiel 33:7 - ***"I Have Set Thee A Watchman...Warn Them."***

Matthew 24:42 - ***"Watch Therefore."***

Matthew 25:13 - ***"Watch Therefore."***

Matthew 26:41 - ***"Watch and Pray, That Ye Enter Not Into Temptation."***

Mark 13:33 - ***"Watch and Pray."***

Mark 13:34 - ***"A Man Commanded The Porter to Watch."***

Mark 13:35 - ***"Watch Ye Therefore."***

Mark 13:37 - ***"And What I Say Unto You I Say Unto All, Watch."***

Mark 14:38 - ***"Watch Ye and Pray Lest Ye Enter Into Temptation."***

Luke 21:36 - ***"Watch Ye Therefore, and Pray Always, That Ye May Be Accounted Worthy to Escape All These Things."***

1st Thessalonians 5:6 - ***"Let Us Not Sleep, As Do Others; But Let Us Watch."***

Revelation 3:3 - ***"If...Thou Shalt Not Watch, I Will Come On Thee As A Thief, and Thou Shalt Not Know What Hour I Will Come Upon Thee."***

Matthew 24:43 - ***"If The Goodman...Had Known...He Would Have Watched."***

Luke 12:39 - ***"If The Goodman...Had Known...He Would Have Watched."***

Luke 12:37 - ***"Blessed Are Those Servants, Whom The LORD When He Cometh Shall Find Watching."***

Luke 12:40 - ***"Be Ye Therefore Ready."***

Hebrews 9:28 - ***"So Christ Was Once Offered to Bear The Sins of Many; and Unto Them That Look for Him Shall He Appear The Second Time."***

Regarding the Rapture, it is written, 1st Thessalonians 4:18 – ***"Wherefore Comfort One Another With These Words."***

How can a person watch, if they cannot read and their minister does not tell them these things? Many fulfilled prophecies indicate the Tribulation is very close. The next events on the prophecy time line suggests the destruction of Damascus in Isaiah 17:1-2; and the Ezekiel 38/39 war with Gog and Magog. The Tribulation is preceded by the Rapture. Yet there is something else alluded to in these passages. This implies something of perhaps greater importance for the times in which we live, particularly so this past year with the mass murder plan-demic of Covid-19.

The Greek **φυλακή *phulakē*** is always spoken of in terms of guarding, a guard, prison, a watch. Jesus' metaphor of the coming of a burglar as a model for the unexpected time of the ***parousia*** made a strong impression on the early church: cf. Luke 12:39; 1st Thessalonians 5:2, 4; 2nd Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3; 16:15.

Surprise is the essence of burglary, and he was caught napping. That is how it is bound to be at the ***parousia***, because everyone, like the householder, is ignorant of ***"the day and the hour"***. In this imagery, as in the ***"keep awake"*** of verse. 42, the call seems to be for a constant alert, since no amount of calculation can anticipate the surprise; but a number of parables will suggest a different perspective on how one may be ready.

In the New Testament ***phulakē*** primarily refers to a prison of some sort. It can, however, refer to a division of time — the Roman night watch which was divided into four 3-hour periods from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. (cf. Matthew 14:25; Mark 6:48). The sense of “guarding” appears in Luke 2:8 where the shepherds guarded their flocks. The meaning “a guard” is attested in Acts 12:10. Here ***phulakē*** is used to refer to the sentinels guarding the prison where Peter was kept. Perhaps there was more than one guard at the first and second stations, and this is why Luke did not use ***phulax***, “a guard.” Throughout its history ***phulakē*** has maintained the same general shades of meaning.

The English word “Watch” is found **61X** in the New Testament. “Watchman” is found **19X**, all in the Old Testament. The majority of New Testament occurrences of “Watch” is in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew (**10X**); Mark (**8X**); and Luke (**7X**). It is found only once in each of the other New Testament books: Acts, 1st Corinthians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 2nd Timothy, Hebrews, 1st Peter, and Revelation.

So clearly, Jesus put added emphasis on this word, and that becomes evident in His Olivet Discourse. Jesus must have upset the disciples when He said that the Temple would soon be brought down, and no stones unturned.

My favorite passage addressing the issue of watching is in Luke 13:33-36: ***“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 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. 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: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”***

Four times Jesus makes that point. Here he gathers up all the intervening time between his first and second comings and divides it into four watches – one long night of the world's sin – and he says, “You don't know, (And I think he implies, “I don't know.”) whether the coming is to be early in that time, or in the middle of it, or three-quarters of the way through, or clear at the end.” No one knows. I don't know; you don't know. But it

is like a man going on a journey (Here he likens it to His own going away.) who gives his servants work to do, and he expects them to do it. And he sets a doorkeeper to watch.

Now, what is he to watch for? Is he to watch for the master's return? That is the way this is usually interpreted. But that is not all of it, for he is to start watching as soon as the master leaves. They know he will not be back right away. What then is he to watch for? He is to watch lest somebody deceive them and gain entrance into the house, and wreck and ruin and rob all they have. So Jesus' word is, "Be alert; don't go to sleep; watch! There are temptations and pressures which will assault you, to make you think that it is all a lie, to make you give up and stop living like a Christian, stop walking in faith, stop believing the truth of God. Watch out for that. And, in the meantime, do your work. Don't let anything turn you aside. Don't let anything derail you from being what God wants you to be in this day and age." This is the way you watch. We are not to be looking up into the sky all the time, waiting for His coming. That will happen when He is ready. It may be very close to the date of a video included in the last two Blessed Hope segments. I'll have more at the end explaining this. We are to watch that we are not deceived. This is the deeper meaning of Jesus' words here.

The exhortations to vigilance which follow are linked to the fact that the critical moment remains unknowable. The connection with verse 32 and with the brief parable which follows is underlined by reference to an ignorance of God's secret counsel. This fact is illustrated by the parable of the absent householder, which is unique to Mark. A journeying master delegated authority to his servants and assigned each to his work, specifying that the doorkeeper is to watch. These details recall a familiar early Christian pattern of exhortation stressing vigilance and an application of the vigilance concept to the Christian ministry in terms of work and labor. The true servant will want to be actively engaged in his Master's service when he returns. The danger is **"lest coming suddenly he finds you sleeping"** (verse 36). The imagery of a master who first leaves and then returns suddenly, which is integral to the call to watchfulness, is appropriate to the **parousia** and serves to make the content of **"that day"** precise. A subordinate feature of the parable is the reference to the four night-watches in verse 35, which conforms to the Roman reckoning of time (in contrast to the Jewish practice of dividing the night into three watches).

I have been disturbed, as many of you have been, at how many Christians of late seem to have fallen away. I saw this in something I did some while back. Two years ago I mailed out a brochure to 300 pastors in my part of the state, offering my 2-CD volume "The Inspired Word of God: Mathematically Proven True!" I did not receive a single request even though it was free. I look back across years of ministry and I see men whom I would have sworn were solid, tremendously committed, faithful, Bible-teaching Christians, but who are now denying their faith and have turned aside. And on every side, seemingly, this increases – people falling off into immorality and iniquity, turning away from their faith, saying, in effect, they no longer believe the Lord or the Bible. It is

this that our Lord is warning against.

Therefore He says we are to keep awake. Do not believe all the secular voices that tell us the world will go on forever as it is now. Don't believe the other voices which tell us there is no God, so we can live as we please, or that if God exists, he will never judge us. Don't swallow that idea that all roads lead to Heaven. Don't believe the voices which whisper to us constantly and try to turn us away from our faith. With one sharp, arresting, ringing word of command, Jesus ends his message: "**Watch!**"

The Greek word for "watch" in Matt 26:41 and Mark 14:38 is the same. It is **γρηγορέω grēgoreō**. It has the sense of being "vigilant," "to keep awake," "to be on the alert," and "to keep one's eyes open." In Mark 13:33 a different Greek word, **ἀγρυπνέω agrupneō** is used for "watch." This word means "to be sleepless," or "to keep oneself awake for the purpose of watching." The two Greek words here are similar but different, the later one having an emphasis on not sleeping.

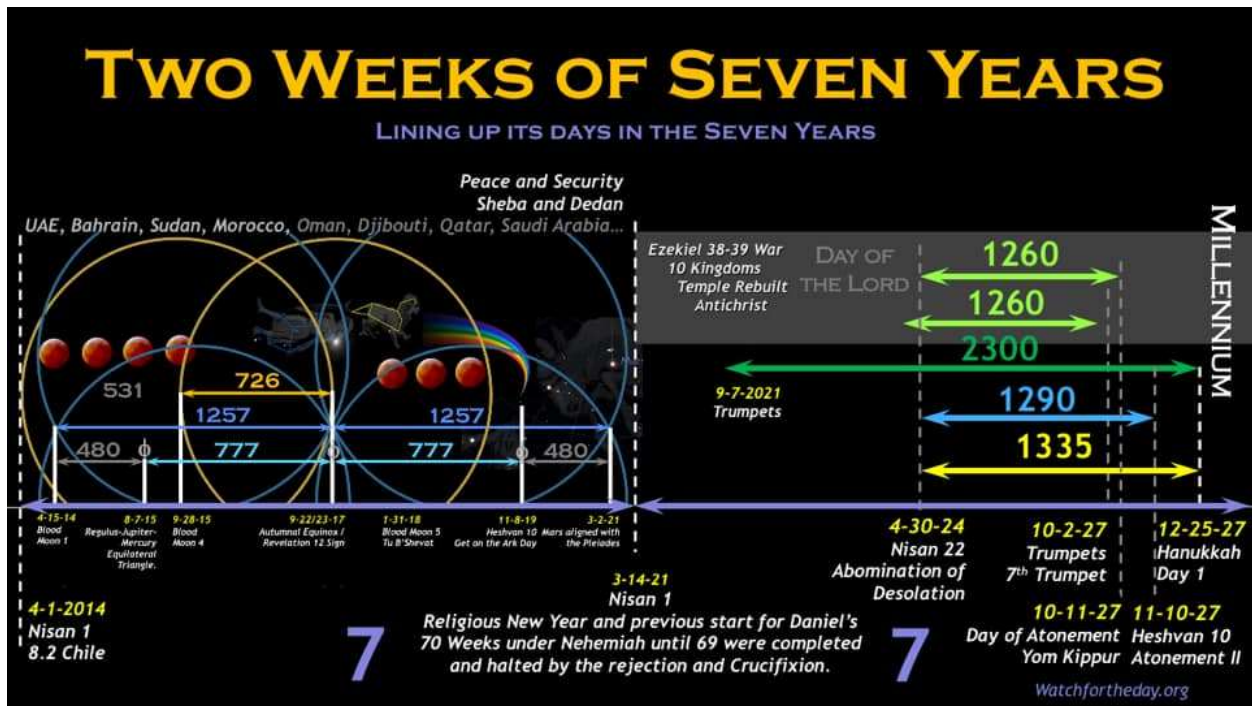
In both its literal and metaphorical sense. **Agrupneō** appears only **4X** in the New Testament -(Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36; Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 13:17). In the Synoptic Gospels the term is used in the phrase: **blepete, agrupneite, "Be on guard! Be alert!"** - (Mark 13:33, NIV). Luke joined the admonition to be constantly alert with the notion of prayer (**deomenoi hina** [21:36]; cf. Mark 13:33, some later manuscripts add "**and pray**"). Paul also united the concept of prayer to watchfulness -(Ephesians 6:18). The metaphorical sense "keep *watch over*," "*care for*," or "*guard*" occurs at Hebrews 13:17 in reference to the leaders who were overseers of the congregation. As you can see here the word in English is not quite the same as described in the listing just above on page 12 & 13.

All of these passages here deal with moments of crisis. In Matthew, Jesus warned His disciples to remain spiritually awake for the purpose of not falling into sin. This is a great reminder for us to be watchful in order to flee sin and trust in Him. We had a high "Watch" day on March 6th, 2020, but nothing changed. There is another "Watch" day coming up March 14th (13th/14th overlap on the Hebrew clock).

Daniel Matson of "Watch For The Day" posted an interesting chart for our consideration on the next page for those who are anticipating the Rapture event. The time chart for his projection of Nisan 1, being the date of the Rapture. Daniel Matson has been a major Bible Prophecy analyst for three decades of events and dates dealing with the Jewish people. Nisan 1 (i.e., Rosh Chodashim) marks the **start of the month of the Exodus from Egypt and the beginning of Jewish national history**. As such, it represents the start of the Biblical year for counting the festivals -(Exod. 12:2). Note that the month of Nisan is also called Aviv since it marks the official start of spring. I will not go into how dates are determined in this Blessed Hope, other than to affirm Nisan 1 in the spring of the year and Tishri 1 in the fall of the year. Daniel's chart suggests that we should be awake and "watching" for March 14th, 2020, which begins at sundown of

the 13th of March. Passover which follows this year, begins on Saturday, March 27th and ends on Sunday, April 4th at sundown.

I find the date very interesting since this date was the beginning of the Israelites journey from Egypt to the Promised Land! The Biblical Exodus event is a prototype of the Rapture, and so for many reasons. The Exodus event was the focus of Blessed Hope #7 posted on my web page last year on May 17th, 2020. It appears currently on page 21 of my web page www.pastorbobreid.com If you have not read it, check it out because the real Exodus event occurred at a place called Yom Suph on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. So, as Jesus said to us all, **“Watch”!**



Blessings, Jesus is coming, and very soon!

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