

TEXT Matthew 24:36-44; Hebrews 9:28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Matthew 25:1-13; Mark 13:35;
Luke 12:40; Revelation 3:3

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to recite the requirement for being included in the Rapture of the saints: the vital necessity of living a sinless life, walking in all the Light they have, and eagerly watching for the Lord’s coming.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. — Matthew 24:44

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. — Revelation 16:15

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **Chapter Four**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Be Ready**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The illustration in Matthew 24:36-44 emphasizes the unexpectedness of the Lord’s coming by showing that the individual concerned was occupied with the usual cares of life without giving thought to Messiah’s return. Believing Israel is exhorted thereby to be prepared for that day.

With reference to Hebrews 9:28, the finality of Christ’s sacrifice is in contrast to the earthly high priest who entered the Holy of Holies every year “with blood not his own.” If Christ’s sacrifice had not been final He would then have had to suffer often, since the continued sins

of men would entail repeated suffering on earth. But His sacrifice was once for all—thus there is no need for further sacrifice. Christ’s coming for His own will not involve the sin question, but rather final salvation—when He delivers believers from the empire of death, reunites them with their purified souls, and brings them into His eternal glory.

The title of our lesson is “Be Ready.” Ready, according to Webster, means “prepared or equipped to act immediately.” How vital it is to be prepared and equipped for the immediate return of Christ!

YOUR OPENER

Be Ready

TEXT: Matthew 24:36-44; Hebrews 9:28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 25:1-13; Mark 13:35; Luke 12:40; Revelation 3:3

KEY VERSE: Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. — Revelation 16:15

RESPONSES

1. Psalm 15:1-3 — walketh uprightly, worketh righteousness, speaketh truth. Psalm 24:3,4 — clean hands and pure heart. Matthew 5:8 — pure in heart. Ephesians 5:27 — without spot or wrinkle. Titus 2:11-13 — sober, righteous, godly. Revelation 19:7,8 — clothed in righteousness.

After your students have offered their responses to each Scripture, summarize by pointing out that a member of the Bride will have the qualities listed. Discuss whether this list makes any allowance for sin.

2. The Bible tells us that these sins are the works of the flesh, and that those who commit such shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. The sins of the people of Noah’s time were very similar and received God’s judgment. Discussion of this question should bring out that though people in the world practice and condone these sins, they still are not acceptable with God. The excuse that “everybody does it” will not be sufficient in the day of judgment.

Just a knowledge that we are living in the last days does not make us ready for Jesus’ coming. We are commanded to watch for His coming, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:13). True watching is an attitude of mind and heart, which would joyfully and quickly turn from any occupation or activity to meet the Lord. In this lesson we will consider how we can be ready. It is vital to prove by our daily living that we both know and are prepared for the most exciting event of all ages—the Rapture of the Church.

1. At Jesus’ coming, the Bride of Christ will be raptured to meet Him in the air. Look up the following Scriptures and determine what qualities the Bride will have.

Psalm 15:1-3

Psalm 24:3,4

Matthew 5:8

Ephesians 5:27

Titus 2:11-13

Revelation 19:7,8

2. A number of sins are listed in Galatians 5:19-21, including adultery, fornication, witchcraft, and drunkenness. The sins listed are commonly accepted by many in the world today, even in some so-called religious circles. What does the Bible say about those who do such things? How do the above sins compare with those of Noah’s time?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

3. Use Hebrews 9:28 and I John 3:2 to fill in the blanks in the following statements: The purpose of Christ's first coming was to bear the _____ with His death on Calvary. To those who look for Him, He shall appear the second time without _____ unto _____. We know that, when He shall appear, _____; for our bodies shall be changed to be like Christ's glorified body. These promises apply to those who can say, "Now are we the _____."

4. Read the parable of the ten virgins given in Matthew 25:1-13. Why were some of the virgins left behind? What will it take to be a "wise virgin"? Use I John 1:6,7 as a supplementary Scripture in formulating your response.

5. Prior to the beginning of Jesus' ministry at His first coming, John the Baptist preached, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." The message of the Gospel to mankind today anticipates Jesus' second coming. Compare the responses of men in those days, with the responses of men today.

6. Compare Matthew 24:42-44 and I Thessalonians 5:6. What point do these verses make?

7. In spite of Noah's warnings for about 120 years, life continued as before, with man's attention diverted to things other than the coming Flood. List some things that you think capture the attention of people today, preventing them from being ready for Jesus' return.

8. What will be the consequences of our not being ready? See Revelation 21:8.

YOUR WRAP-UP

3. This is a good opportunity to explain salvation. If there are those in your class who are not saved, use the phrase, "Now are we the sons of God," as a springboard for a discussion of just what it means to be a son of God.

4. In reading I John 1:6,7, we understand that the Lord requires us to walk according to the knowledge He has given to us. This knowledge includes our need to be ready for His coming. Discuss with the class that if we know what it takes to be a wise virgin and we have not made preparation, then the fault is all ours and we shall have to take the blame. The knowledge of salvation has been revealed to us, a definite experience of sanctification has been taught to be essential, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a necessary gift to be received. These are parts of the Light that we must walk in if we expect to be ready for Jesus' coming.

5. Some responded and others did not. Prior to Jesus' day, Israel waited for the Hope of Israel, the coming of the Messiah. Many who were knowledgeable regarding His coming neglected to prepare spiritually, therefore were not ready when He came. This negative condition exists today. Conversely, others did prepare and were immediately receptive when the Messiah appeared. This positive condition also exists today and is necessary that the Bride might be ready. The students need to understand that each condition exists.

6. Your students' responses should bring out the necessity of watching continually because the time of Christ's coming is unknown. How does a Christian watch? Compare the preparations a Christian makes to preparations made for some important event in our physical lives; graduation, marriage, birth of a child, etc. (Choose a subject appropriate to the age level and interests of your class.)

7. The combined answers of the students will provide a good list. They will realize that it is possible to be too involved in the affairs of life. Things such as a quarrel, finances, family matters, or the cares of life can divert our attention from the most important thing in life—to prepare for the Rapture.

8. All sinners will be cast into the lake of fire. Using Matthew 25:34 as a contrast, discuss with your class the two places where eternity can be spent, one of which will be their destination. Zero in on the importance of making the right choices now, in order to be sure that we are ready to spend eternity in Heaven.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How might we compare the days of Noah with the present time?

What good and acceptable things might still keep us away from the necessary preparations?

The Bible gives us signs, and they are in abundance all around us, that the Lord's coming is right at hand. How do you think the attitude, even of professing Christians, compares with that of people in Noah's time?

Think of the problems, disappointment, and inconvenience when you missed an appointment, a train or bus schedule. Discuss how much greater and final will be the anguish of those who miss the Rapture.

What is one of the most common attitudes for not being ready?

What does "apathy" mean? How does it relate to people today concerning spiritual things?

Bring to class some news accounts of accidents or obituaries, especially of young people, and discuss verse 44 of our text in Matthew; we don't know when our Lord will return. For those people, He has already come. The Rapture might be tomorrow; but God might call us today!

THINGS TO DO

Items needed: Balloon, hand air pump, basketball needle, tape. Attach the needle to the air pump and put the balloon over the needle. Tape it to seal against air loss. Slowly blow up the balloon. Tell the students it will pop soon, although you aren't certain of the exact moment. All you know is that the bigger the balloon gets the closer it is to popping. Liken this to the Lord's coming.

Take a calendar to class. Point out that special days are marked on it. However, one special day is not marked; that is the day of the Lord's return. We do not know exactly which day it will be. It could be today, tomorrow, or next week, so it is vital for each of us to be ready and waiting for that day.

The following may be simplified or enlarged upon to suit a review or class-time presentation:

Choose students to represent handicapped persons. The setting is the Pool of Bethesda. The sick and handicapped are waiting for the angel to trouble the waters, but they don't know when the angel will appear. As the group waits, some are praying, some talking to others about the possibility of the angel's coming today and

others saying they have waited months or years and it hasn't happened yet, some are talking about families and cares of life, etc. The emphasis must be on the need to be expecting, watching, and allowing nothing to distract you or take you away long enough to miss what is about to happen. Obviously, the numbers who made it into the pool while the waters were troubled were very few in comparison with the numbers who came to the pool, or who were there part of the time, or who hoped to make it, and who thought they were ready. When we can recognize ourselves to be so "crippled" or "handicapped" that we cannot possibly make it without the help of our Friend and will call on Him, He will help us to be ready, watching, and waiting for the sound of the Trumpet. We need not be among the disappointed ones left behind.

Tell from your own experience (or invite a visitor to speak) of the excitement felt when a loved one returned from war or military service. Often the arrival date would be unknown, only an approximate time. Emphasize preparation, anticipation, and excitement. Let students share family experiences of similar occasions. Stress that the same anticipation and preparation should be in evidence in our lives now as we look forward to the Lord's coming.

Answers for ANSWER

A Note About Being Ready

Music and song are a great way to praise the Lord and you'll be praising the Lord if you are ready. Ready for what? To find out, use the music code and complete the verses on the music sheet.

Code: C D E F G A B

I Go to prEpArE A plAcE for you.
AnD iE I Go AnD prEpArE A
plAcE For you, I will ComE
AGAin, And rECEivE you unto
mysElF; thAt whErE I Am, thErE
yE mAy BE AlSo.