

Introduction

The Bible tells us that we need to keep watch, lest we fall asleep and are not prepared for our Lord's return.

We are warned that his coming will be quick (Rev 22:7, 12, 20). Obviously quick is not used in the normal sense, otherwise all things would have already been fulfilled. What then does he mean by quick? Quick is coupled with the pattern of a woman in labour. There is a set period of time for the baby to grow, then all of a sudden/quickly the child is born. It's not a long drawn-out process, once the labour begins.

Mat 24:3-8 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the **beginning of sorrows**.

Does the Bible then provide for us the answers to each of our specific questions on events and timing? No, it does not. Faith requires an aspect of trust in the future fulfillment of God's promises. It is not blind faith, but faith based on knowledge and understanding in the things already revealed.

Act 1:6-7 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons**, which the Father hath put in his own power.

We might then conclude that digging into finding answers about Christ's return and the setting up of the Kingdom are not worthy of effort. Here's another passage that helps us see a small but important difference. Note what Jesus tells his disciples after saying no one knows.

Mat 24:36-38 But **of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven**, but my Father only. 37 But **as the days of Noe** were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

Jesus gave them more information so that they wouldn't be in the dark. There would be evidence of the coming of Christ.

Mar 13:32-37 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.**

If there was nothing to watch for, then Jesus would not have demanded us to watch. So, there is a difference in knowing the exact time, and knowing that the time approaches. This shouldn't surprise us, as God has shown to us his character and purpose. He declared his plans with Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham as an example of how he works with those he loves.

Amo 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but **he revealeth his secret** unto his servants the prophets.

Jesus condemns the leaders of his day because they did not understand Bible prophecy concerning the Messiah. This condemnation can only be understood if there is an expectation and ability to discern the times and the seasons.

Mat 16:2-3 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. 3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; **but can ye not discern the signs of the times?**

Paul then gives us additional insight to the times and seasons. He introduces a new fact of which guides our efforts to watch.

1Th 5:1-6 But of the **times and the seasons**, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, **Peace and safety; then sudden destruction** cometh upon them, as **travail upon a woman with child**; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but **let us watch and be sober.**

Jesus will return as a thief in the night, but to us we are called to watch and therefore not be surprised at his coming. We don't know which night, but we know to watch for signs. There is a significant risk for ecclesias to fall asleep and cease watching. Jesus's parable of the ten virgins, and his letters to the 7 ecclesias, specifically Sardis.

Mat 25:1-5, 13 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five

were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept... 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Rev 3:1-6 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, **and art dead.** 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.** 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Jas 2:19-20 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that **faith without works is dead?**

We conclude that a requirement of salvation is faith that leads to works, which includes watching for his return. None of us can watch for something we have no knowledge or understanding. A watchman needs to know the signs and how to sound the alarm to save others.

The Geopolitical Landscape Before Christ Returns

What does the Bible tell us to watch for before Jesus returns?

- Like the time of Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah
- The time of the Gentiles will be coming to an end
- Jews will be back in Israel, with Jerusalem, and inhabiting the mountains
- The land changed and blossoming (vine, fig tree)
- Israel dwelling at peace without walls and gates
- Two groups of nations, one that will invade Israel, the other aligned with Israel
- Nations to watch
 - Israel
 - Syria
 - Libya
 - Egypt
 - Ethiopia
 - Europe
 - Saudi Arabia

- Yemen
- Russia
- Turkey
- Europe
- Merchants of Tarshish + Young Lions

We can now review a handful of passages to extract some of these key details.

Time Period of the Gentiles

Luk 21:24-28 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, **until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.** 25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And **then shall they see the Son of man coming** in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Restoration of Israel

Mat 24:29-35 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the **sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:** 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and **they shall see the Son of man coming** in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of **the fig tree;** When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Mat 24:34 Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass,** till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Sixth Vial – Turkey, Humanism, Drawn Together

Rev 16:12-16 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the **great river Euphrates;** and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the **kings of the east might be prepared.** 13 And I saw **three unclean spirits like frogs** come out of the mouth of the **dragon,** and out of the mouth of the **beast,** and out of the mouth of the **false prophet.** 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to **gather them to the battle** of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue **Armageddon.**

Alignment of Nations

Dan 11:40-45 And at the time of the end shall the **king of the south** push at him: and the **king of the north** shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. 41 **He shall enter also into the glorious land**, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even **Edom**, and **Moab**, and the chief of the children of **Ammon**. 42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the **land of Egypt** shall not escape. 43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the **Libyans** and the **Ethiopians** shall be at his steps. 44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. 45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

Eze 38:2-6, 3 Son of man, set thy face against **Gog**, the **land of Magog**, the **chief prince of Meshech and Tubal**, and prophesy against him, 3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: 4 And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: 5 **Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya** with them; all of them with shield and helmet: 6 **Gomer**, and all his bands; the house of **Togarmah** of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee... 13 **Sheba, and Dedan**, and the merchants of **Tarshish**, with all the **young lions** thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?

Peace then Destruction

Eze 38:8, 11-12 After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the **mountains of Israel**, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they **shall dwell safely all of them**... 11 And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of **unwalled villages**; I will go to them that are at **rest**, that **dwell safely**, all of them dwelling **without walls**, and having **neither bars nor gates**, 12 To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

Dan 8:23-25 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he

shall magnify himself in his heart, and **by peace shall destroy many**; he shall also **stand up against the Prince of princes**; but he shall be broken without hand.

1Th 5:1-5 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, **Peace and safety; then sudden destruction** cometh upon them, as **travail upon a woman with child**; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Understanding Ezekiel 38

There are better studies on this specific subject, but I want to at least highlight a few facts that help us understand and interpret the peoples and places that Ezekiel highlights.

- Our interpretation must align with other prophecies concerning the last days, and it must keep Israel as the center.
- Nebuchadnezzar's image gives us context for the cultural, geographical, and government structure. Specifically, we cannot escape the Babylonish, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman nations that must be joined together.
- Daniel's visions also highlight the continuity of the fourth beasts which demands a Roman heritage.
- Jesus' Christ's own Revelation also demands a direct connection with Roman roots to the Harlot, the Beast, and the Dragon.
- To gain insight into understanding the nations mentioned by Ezekiel we could do a full study of the descendants of Noah and their expansion out from the Middle East. We only want to highlight specifically that the Jewish historian Josephus in his "The Antiquities of the Jews" draws a connection to the Scythians and the Land of Magog. How this helps us understand Ezekiel's prophecy is that it identifies the land north of the Black Sea and east as part of this confederacy. Thus, we would expect this area to be ruled by Gog in the last days.

What Do We Then See in the News?

- Israel is back in the land – 1948
- Jerusalem their capital – 1967
- Egypt and Israel peace treaty – 1979
- Jordan and Israel peace treaty – 1994
- Gulf States and Israel peace initiatives began in – 1948, 1996
- Abraham Accords: United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel – 2020
- Arab Spring 2011-2014 – Civil Unrest and Rebellion
 - Tunisia – Prime Minister resigns
 - Egypt – President replaced

- Bahrain – Declares martial law
- Saudi Arabia – Announces reforms giving women right to vote
- Yemen – President replaced
- Libya – Gaddafi is murdered – Relationship goes from West to Russia/Turkey
- Syria – Civil war
- UK withdraws from EU - 2020
- Russia invades Ukraine - 2022
- Gaza + Hamas – 2023-2024
- Lebanon + Hezbollah – 2023-2024
- Iran + Hezbollah – 2023-2024
- Syria + Hezbollah (Iran, Russia, Turkey) – 2024

What's Next?

- Further alignment with Saudi Arabia and possibly Yemen.
 - This would require removal of the Houthis rebels and stabilization of this region
- Syria not a threat to Israel
 - This may require the rebels to be unable or unwilling to align with Russia and Iran
- Peace and Security in Israel (temporarily)
 - This would require Gaza (Hamas), Lebanon (Hezbollah), Syria (Hezbollah) to all be subject to the power of Israel
 - Iran cannot be an active threat
- Turkey dried up
 - This may require Turkey to be overtaken by Russia
- Nebuchadnezzar's image standing up together
 - This would require alignment of the Gogian confederacy of which Russia and Europe are principal allies. Currently, this doesn't appear feasible with the war in Ukraine and the European temperament.
 - Russia inhabiting Ukraine
- Ready for war
 - Libya aligned with Russia and able to invade Israel
 - Ethiopia aligned with Russia and able to invade Israel
 - Iran aligned with Russia and able to invade Israel
 - Russia aligned with Europe and able to invade Israel

Summary

We should see an outcome in Israel where they fully believe and there is rational reason for the world to believe that they have achieved a full peace with security. So much so, that they will remove their walls and their gates. In my lifetime I couldn't ever understand how this could be achieved outside of incredible warfare where Israel's enemies are decimated.

Bible Prophecy – Watching the News

Finally, we are seeing this being truly fulfilled. The Hamas incursion finally gave Israel license to go to war without restraint.

We should see a significant change in Europe and Russia, so that an iron/clay mixing and a commitment to the beast system and the harlot is brought together. They will come together based on their common goals, shared history, religion, economy, and geopolitical interests. I struggle to see how this will occur still, as they appear more as enemies than possible allies currently. However, there are many worthy news articles that prove this is more than a possibility. Historically Russia has been aligned to both sides of a divided Europe, these changes have occurred very quickly and out of necessity. Europe has a history of strong economic ties with Russia. It would only take a pro-European president to take over Russia to see a massive shift in policies. While I don't know how that would be Putin, I think it's possible with various other pressures at play. Despite the Western outrage over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it was a well-known fact that Ukraine was one of the most corrupt governments in the world before the invasion. We should see a resolution to Russian and Ukraine's war which will lead to a single ruler over the territories Ezekiel names (Magog, Rosh, Meshech, Tubal). Currently, the only nation that could rule over those territories is the leader of Russia.

An arms race and significant improvements to the military capabilities in Europe, Russia, Iran, Libya, and Ethiopia. This perhaps is the most difficult for me to understand. The invasion of Israel will be so swift and overwhelming that despite their strength they will fall. Currently none of these nations not even Europe could launch an all-out assault into the Middle East in any meaningful way. Libya is at war with itself currently. Turkey is a thorn in the side of Russia blocking any mass militaria moving through its territory or Syria's. Iran has been humbled and despite their best efforts over the past years have only given Israel the license to attack back. Russia couldn't even take Ukraine due to the financial backing of the West. We need to see some significant changes in the power structure and capabilities of the Northern Confederacy.

How do we look for these changes and not become disillusioned in their perceived impossibility? Firstly, we look at all the impossible things that have already come to pass as evidence and assurance that which remains will to. World War I and World War II provide for us a template and warning on how quickly nations can go from zero to one hundred. 1914 WWI begins. 1918 WWI ends. Germany and its allies were ruined. 1939 WWII begins only 21 years later. Germany despite its economic and geopolitical situation was able to nearly take over the world. What we see going on in Ukraine and in Israel is a change in warfare because of technology. The mass production of cheap drones provides for us at least one sign and indication of how these things may come to pass.

Our final passage may well indicate trouble ahead, or perhaps we are already in the midst of them. The news already confirms much of this passage.

Bible Prophecy – Watching the News

Luk 21:25-28 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Bible Prophecy – Watching the News

Thoughts

- We need to watch
- We should be able to discern the times
- Virgins fell asleep
- He comes as a thief, but not to those who believe
- He tells his plans to those he loves
- He warns us so that we can choose to act

Events

- Russia's war with Ukraine
- Israel's war with Gaza (Hamas)
- Israel's war with Lebanon (Hezbollah)
- Israel's war with Iran (Hezbollah)
- Israel's war with Yeman (Houthis)
- Syria overtaken by Rebels (Turkey)
- United State Elections (Trump)

Passages

- (Eze 38:1-6, 13) Gogian confederacy
- (Mat 24:28-35 cp Luk 21:25-33) Olivet prophecy, eagles, fig tree, a time of trouble. (Luk 21:24) Time period of the Gentiles.
- (Dan 8:25) The horn will destroy the holy land by peace
- (1The 5:1-5) Peace and safety and then sudden destruction
- (Rev 16:12-16) Sixth vial, Euphrates River dried up

News

- Egypt + Ethiopia - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/23/egypt-delivers-second-stockpile-of-weapons-to-somalia-amid-ethiopia-tension>
- Turkey + Syria - <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/erdogan-says-turkey-close-dialogue-with-syrias-de-facto-leader-2024-12-23/>
- Turkey + Russia - <https://apnews.com/article/russia-turkey-putin-erdogan-syria-assad-afbfc5a271438c0c61142f8cb9fcb6f4>
 - <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/5030236-turkey-russia-syria-conflict/>
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/07/assad-syria-turkey-iran-russia-diplomats-regime>
 - <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/understanding-turkiyes-entanglement-with-russia?lang=en>
 - <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/turkiye-and-russia-an-unequal-partnership?lang=en>
 - <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/an-ambiguous-partnership-the-serpentine-trajectory-of-turkish-russian-relations-in-the-era-of-erdogan-and-putin/>

Bible Prophecy – Watching the News

- Turkey + Russia + Iran - <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/turkey-russia-and-iran-meet-in-doha-seeking-exit-from-syria-chaos/article68957979.ece>
- Turkey + Ukraine + Russia - <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/expressions/turkey-walking-tightrope-between-nato-russia-and-ukraine>
 - <https://www.euronews.com/2024/11/01/russia-criticises-turkey-for-supplying-weapons-to-ukraine-while-offering-to-broker-peace>
- Israel + Lebanon - <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9vp7dg3ml1o>
 - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/lebanon-hezbollah-ceasefire-deal-israel-vote-1.7393352>
 - <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2024/12/unbearable-fragility-lebanon-israel-ceasefire-deal>
- Israel + Gaza - <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgq1l5kv2npo>
 - <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-gaps-have-narrowed-elusive-gaza-ceasefire-deal-sides-say-2024-12-23/>
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