

At the beginning, in telling of the wonderful faith of the Thessalonians and the fine things he hears about them, he says, "for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--" He summarizes the activity of the Thessalonians under two heads: 1) turning away from idols to serve the living and true God, 2) waiting for His Son from heaven. He puts a great stress on the return of the Lord and that is the stress we find in most of Paul's epistles--early and late.

We find a dozen times in the NT we should be ready, we don't know when He's coming. We find that stressed very commonly. We have no idea when he is coming, but watch like those whose master has gone away and want to be ready if he comes any time of day or night he will find you active in His service. I think there are many people misled by the English when it says you are to watch. Because there are two Greek words translated watch. *Agpneo* and the other slips my mind. Anyway these two Greek words--both of them I hunted in the Concordance for their use elsewhere--and they mean watch in the Old English sense of being wide awake, vigilant. They don't mean running to the door "Is He coming now?" They mean to be ready so that if He comes now He will be happy with what he sees. I think that's very definite.

The signs of His coming-- I always say today his coming is a day nearer than it was yesterday. But whether it is next month or next year or 1000 years from now, I don't think the Scripture tells us. But it does say that even at this time, it was God's will they should have it as a living hope-- the return of Christ. They should be looking for His coming. I've known people who have said, Oh this is just referring to the eschatological period. When we know when the coming is near then we can say we don't know when he's going to come. Might be today, or tomorrow, or next week. It doesn't come into effect until the eschatological period(they say).

But in Lk. 12 we have no eschatological period whatever. We have there the Lord telling his disciples the various characteristics they are to have: freedom from care, full loyalty to Him, etc. In v. 35, after describing other aspects but with no eschatological mention of the time, then he says, Be dressed and ready for the service, and keep your lamps burning like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night." Verse 40, "you also must be ready for the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." Peter said, Lord are you telling this parable to us or to everyone?" The Lord went on talking in a way that seemed to say this is something that applies to everyone of you.