

Luke 12:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Analysis

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not (καὶ ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἔτοιμοι, ὅτι ἡ ὥρα οὐ δοκεῖτε ὁ νιὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται, kai hymēis ginesthe hetoimoi, hoti hē hōra ou dokeite ho huios tou anthrōpou erchetai)—The inferential conjunction oun (therefore, in some manuscripts) draws the conclusion from the previous illustrations. The imperative ginesthe (γίνεσθε, be, become) is present tense, commanding continuous state of readiness. The adjective hetoimoi (ἔτοιμοι, ready, prepared) appears frequently in eschatological contexts (Matthew 24:44, 25:10).

The causal clause explains why readiness is essential: **the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not**. The title "Son of man" (ho huios tou anthrōpou, ὁ νιὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) combines Daniel 7:13-14's messianic figure with Jesus' self-designation, emphasizing His authoritative return in glory. The present tense erchetai (ἔρχεται, is coming) expresses certainty—not "if" or "might" but "is coming." The phrase hē hōra ou dokeite (ἡ ὥρα οὐ δοκεῖτε, the hour you think not) indicates the return will contradict human expectation and calculation. Speculative date-setting or presuming delay both lead to unpreparedness.

Historical Context

This summary statement concludes the watchfulness parables and transitions to Peter's question about audience (verse 41). The early church lived in constant expectation of Christ's imminent return (Romans 13:11, James 5:8-9, 1 Peter 4:7).

However, as time passed, some began mocking the promise (2 Peter 3:3-4), while others set dates and created speculation. Jesus' teaching cuts against both extremes: maintain constant readiness because the timing is genuinely unknown and may surprise even the faithful. The Son of Man title recalls Daniel 7's vision of one "like the Son of man" receiving eternal dominion—Jesus will return in glory and judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does perpetual readiness look like practically in daily Christian living, work, and relationships?
2. How does the certainty of Christ's return combined with uncertainty about timing shape Christian priorities and values?
3. What attitudes or behaviors indicate that someone is unprepared for Christ's unexpected return?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ύμεῖς	οὖν	γίνεσθε	ἔτοιμοι	ὅτι	ἢ	ὢρᾳ	οὐ
also	ye	therefore	Be	ready	for	G3739	at an hour	not
G2532	G5210	G3767	G1096	G2092	G3754		G5610	G3756

δοκεῖτε	ό	υἱὸς	τοῦ	ἀνθρώπου	ἔρχεται
when ye think	G3588	the Son	G3588	of man	cometh
G1380		G5207		G444	G2064

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 5:6 (Parallel theme): Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

Revelation 19:7 (Parallel theme): Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Romans 13:11 (Parallel theme): And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Romans 13:14 (Parallel theme): But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Matthew 25:13 (Parallel theme): Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 24:44 (Parallel theme): Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 24:42 (Parallel theme): Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
