

**Later Judean Ministry, Part 6:  
Are You Ready?  
Looking into the Face of Jesus  
Life of Christ, 2: Pages 100-102  
Manuscript: Lesson Plan 70**

**Introduction**

For this lesson, or text is Luke 12:35-48.  
How many of you had to take tests in your academic career? How did/do you know if you are ready for a test? Have you felt you were ready for a test, only to fail it when you took it? Why did you fail?  
Are you ready for the ultimate test? Are you ready for Jesus to return? Are you so ready that you cannot wait for the moment you hear the trumpets sounding? In this lesson, Jesus was stressing this very thing! We are in Luke 12, and remember, He was talking to thousands of people.  
Our last lesson was about how we are to lay up treasures in heaven instead of here on earth and how we are to be rich towards God instead of toward things here on earth. Jesus then transitioned to a new topic—being prepared for His return. The key verse is Luke 12:40: "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

**Jesus' Teaching on Being Prepared**

Jesus' teaching on being prepared is found in a series of four parables. The first is the parable of the waiting servant and is found in Luke 12:35-38 (read). The lesson we learn from this parable is that servants were to be ready for the master's return even if they did not know when it would be. What is meant by saying the master would dress and serve his servants (Luke 12:37)? They would not have understood this. What master would actually serve his servants? This is referencing the great truth that Jesus will reward everyone who is ready for His return.

The second parable is the parable of the thief in the night. It is only one verse, Luke 12:39, but we will also read verse 40 (read). The message of this parable is also fairly brief. We are not going to know when the time is for Christ's return. Parable number three is the parable of the wise steward, found in Luke 12:41-46 (read). Jesus was making a clear point on what it means to be ready and prepared. If the servant was faithfully fulfilling his responsibility when his master returned, Jesus said He would be rewarded (Luke 12:42-44). If the servant was abusing his authority, Jesus said he would be severely punished (Luke 12:45, 46—"will cut him in pieces").

The final parable in this series of parables teaching about being prepared is the parable of the knowledgeable and ignorant servants. We read in Luke 12:47, 48 (read).

Is there a difference between those who have been given opportunities to understand God's will and those who maybe have not had as many privileges? One will be beaten with many stripes while the other is beaten with few. What does this mean? Your level of punishment will be determined by your privilege.

**To Whom Does This Apply?**  
Peter wanted to know whom these parables applied to; was this a general application or a special application (Luke 12:41). Jesus' answer was simple. It applied to any faithful servant to whom his master has given responsibilities (Luke 12:42).

Our question, though, is to whom does that apply in this room? This answer is also simple: everyone. God has given each of us responsibilities. But He also made it clear to Peter that this also had a special application for him (and the other apostles); The Lord had given them "much", therefore, "much" would be required of them.

Does this apply to us in both a general and specific sense? Absolutely! God has given every one of us responsibilities to serve and glorify Him. God has also given every one of us great opportunities to be ready and prepared.

This passage, likely, brings up another question:

### **Are There Different Degrees of Punishment in Hell?**

We have to ask, did the Lord teach this principle in Matthew 11:21-24? First, we should read Matthew 11:21-24, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."

Notice what Jesus says: "More tolerable for Tyre and Sidon" (Matthew 11:22) and, "More tolerable for the land of Sodom" (Matthew 11:24). We should also consider what the author of Hebrews wrote in Hebrews 10:26-29, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" What do you think is meant by "severer punishment"?

Guy N. Woods says the verses in Luke teach us four things. First, that there are different levels of knowledge possessed by people. Second, that there are different degrees of preparation. Third, that there are variations in the amount of service rendered. Finally, that these differences will be the determining factor in the administration of punishment.<sup>1</sup>

So, what determines the punishment you will receive? The amount of privilege and opportunity you had to live righteously. Unless the Lord is planning to erase our minds, think about how horrible eternity would be knowing we had

<sup>1</sup> Guy N. Woods, *Questions and Answers Open Forum: Freed-Hardeman College Lectures* (Henderson, Tenn.: Freed-Hardeman College, 1976), 230.

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every opportunity to not only avoid that horrible place, but to live eternally with our Father in heaven.

**Conclusion**

This brings up one more vital question: are you ready? Jesus urged His listeners 2,000 years ago, and He is urging you right now. Be ready, because you do not when Christ is coming. Being ready and prepared means that you will be doing the Master's will when He comes. Your service will dictate the outcome when He comes.

If you are not ready, get ready soon (now is not too soon)!

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