

I find it very clear in the NT that our Lord said that He would return at a time when we do not expect Him. Luke 12:40 says, "You must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." I heard once of several Christians meeting together and some of them said, "You don't expect the Lord will come today? Do you think he will come today? They said, Oh no, I don't think so. To another: Do you think the Lord will come this year? No. I don't think so. To another, Do you think the Lord will come this month? Oh, no, I don't think so." Then he read from the KJV this same verse where he says, "You must be ready for the Son of Man will come at a time when you think not. At a time when you do not expect him. There are if we all agree that the Lord is coming today or tomorrow, that would be pretty good evidence he's not coming then, because he's going to come at a time when we do not expect Him."

But there are those who take this exhortation which is found about a dozen times in our Lord's Words, and at least several times suggested in later epistles, and who take each case and say, Yes but in the context this must happen first; this must happen first. That comes after these things. That means after these things happen, then we do not know when the Lord will come!

I do not wish to argue about such passages. But I do wish to say that Luke 12 is the case where the Lord is not speaking about eschatology. The Lord is very definitely in this ch. speaking to his disciples about what kind of people they are to be, and what they are to do in order to be such as he desires. We find that as He gives these exhortations to his disciples, starting in v. 35, "Be ready for 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 meet him and open the door for him. It will be good for those servants if their master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, . . . 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. But understand this, if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would not let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

Who are the "you also" who must be ready? Certainly in the context it is clear he was speaking to people who were there before him. Peter in the next verse asks this question: "Lord are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone." The Lord then answered, "Who then is a faithful and wise manager whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds doing so when he returns, . . . and he continues making it very clear, I believe that he is talking to them and telling them what kind of people they are to be. God wants us to prepare to meet our God, to meet Jesus Christ who is our God, whenever he chooses to come and he tells us very clearly that we do not know the time. He said himself at that time did not know. He said it was not to be revealed to anyone when he would come."