

BIBLE STUDY

BE READY

LUKE 12:40

"You therefore must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Customized for

RUPERTO BRAVO BENAVENTE (R.B.B.)

Reina-Valera 1960 Bible

Greek-Spanish Interlinear New Testament

Francisco Lacueva

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Introduction

Luke 12:40 contains a brief, direct, and solemn warning spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ. In one sentence, the Lord brings together the disciple's present duty, the certainty of His coming, and the unexpected character of the hour. He does not provide a date to satisfy curiosity; He gives a word that is meant to shape the whole of life.

This study listens to the verse within its immediate context, considers its principal expressions in the Greek New Testament, and applies its teaching with sobriety. Its purpose is not to encourage chronological speculation, but to lead the believer into genuine readiness: faith in Christ, daily faithfulness, living hope, and responsible service.

Purpose of This Study

- To understand Luke 12:40 within Jesus' teaching in Luke 12:35-48.
- To distinguish the certainty of the event from the uncertainty of its hour.
- To examine “be ready” as a continuing spiritual condition.
- To relate the passage to other clear New Testament teachings.
- To translate future expectation into faithful living in the present.

Interpretive Approach

The verse will be interpreted first by its immediate context, then by its vocabulary, and finally by the harmonious testimony of Scripture. This sequence prevents two errors: isolating a phrase from its original purpose or loading it with conclusions that the passage itself does not develop.

1. The Immediate Context: Servants Who Wait

Luke 12:40 does not stand alone. Immediately before it, Jesus calls His disciples to keep their waists girded and their lamps burning. The picture belongs to a household whose servants are waiting for their master to return. Their outward condition reveals an inward disposition: they are neither asleep in indifference nor paralyzed by uncertainty; they are ready to open the door.

In Luke 12:35-38, waiting is active. The servants do not know the exact hour, but they know whom they are awaiting. Their blessedness does not depend on calculating the moment. It depends on being found watchful when the master arrives.

Luke 12:39 adds the picture of a homeowner who would have prevented a break-in if he had known the hour. Jesus is not morally comparing Himself to a thief; the comparison is limited to the unexpected nature of the arrival. Surprise makes continual watchfulness necessary.

Peter's Question and the Faithful Steward

Peter asks whether the parable is meant for the disciples or for everyone. Jesus answers with the figure of the faithful and wise steward (Luke 12:41-48). The answer expands the meaning of watchfulness: waiting is not passive sky-gazing, but faithful administration of what the Lord has entrusted to us.

The prepared servant gives the household its portion at the proper time. The unfaithful servant uses the apparent delay as permission to abuse

others and live as though the master would never return. Biblical readiness therefore has both a moral and a ministerial dimension: being found doing what the Lord assigned.

2. The Voice and Authority of Jesus Christ

The verse is not a guess made by the disciples or a later construction of the Church. It is a declaration by the Lord Jesus Himself. He speaks with authority about His coming: “the Son of Man is coming.” The statement calls for a serious response.

Jesus does not present His coming as a possibility. The hour is unknown, but the event is certain. Christian faith lives between a work already accomplished and a promise still awaited: Christ came, died for our sins, rose again, and will come. Our expectation rests on the faithfulness of the One who made the promise.

The Title “Son of Man”

“Son of Man” is one of the titles Jesus most frequently uses for Himself. It expresses His true humanity, yet it is not limited to humanity. In the biblical horizon of Daniel 7:13-14, the Son of Man receives dominion, glory, and a kingdom. In the Gospels, the title is connected with His authority, suffering, death, resurrection, and future manifestation.

The One who comes is therefore not an impersonal force or a religious idea. Jesus Christ Himself will come—the Lord who knows His own, gave His life, and possesses the authority to fulfill His word.

3. Observing the Greek Text

The Greek text allows us to appreciate the force of the exhortation. A widely attested form reads: “καὶ ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἑτοιμοί, ὅτι ἡ ὥρα οὐ δοκεῖτε ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται.” The interlinear review helps us observe word order and meaning without turning grammar into an end in itself.

The expression *kai hymeis* means “you also” and applies the warning directly to the hearers. *Ginesthe hetoimoi* means “become and remain ready,” describing sustained readiness rather than a temporary reaction. *Hē hōra* points to the particular hour; *ou dokeite* means “you do not think or suppose”; and *erchetai* presents the coming with vivid certainty.

“You Also” and “Be Ready”

No disciple may treat the warning as a word meant only for someone else. Christian watchfulness is personal: every believer answers to the Lord, even though the Church waits together.

The present imperative *ginesthe* joined to *hetoimoi* communicates an ongoing condition. Readiness is not improvised when alarming events appear. It is cultivated through daily communion with Christ.

“At an Hour You Do Not Expect”

The verb *dokeite* relates to thinking, considering, or supposing. Jesus says more than that the hour is unknown: He warns that it will come when human calculation does not expect it. Every attempt to control the prophetic calendar through secret dates or supposedly infallible deductions is excluded.

“The Son of Man Is Coming”

The verb *erchetai* is in the present tense. In this context it portrays the event with certainty and immediacy. The grammar serves hope: the future does not depend on chance, but on the word of the Lord.

4. The Great Paradox: Certainty and Uncertainty

Luke 12:40 holds together two truths that must not be separated. First, Christ will come. Second, the exact hour is not known by His disciples. The first produces hope; the second demands watchfulness.

If uncertainty is retained while certainty is weakened, Christian hope becomes a vague possibility. If certainty is retained while someone claims to know the date, watchfulness is replaced by calculation. Jesus commands another way of living: absolute certainty concerning His return and absolute humility concerning the hour.

We do not know when; we do know who is coming. Faith rests in the person of Christ, not in a human calendar.

Why Was the Hour Not Revealed?

The text does not offer a complete philosophical explanation, but it reveals the pastoral effect of God's reserve. If the date were known, the human heart might postpone obedience. Because it is not known, every day receives spiritual dignity: today is the day to believe, serve, forgive, proclaim the gospel, and live soberly.

The Apparent Delay

In the following parable, the unfaithful servant says, "My master is delayed in coming." The problem is not acknowledging that time passes. The problem is turning the passing of time into permission to sin. The apparent delay reveals the heart: the faithful servant continues serving; the unfaithful servant shows that he never truly honored the master's authority.

5. What Does It Mean to Be Ready?

Biblical readiness does not consist of collecting rumors, abandoning legitimate responsibilities, or living in agitation. Nor does it mean attaining sinless perfection by human effort. It is the condition of a person who has received Christ by faith and, sustained by grace, lives awake, obedient, and responsible.

5.1 Ready Through Faith in Christ

The first preparation is not a meritorious work, but the response of faith to the gospel. No one can prepare to meet Christ while ignoring who Christ is and what He has done. The gospel announces His death for our sins and His resurrection, and calls for repentance and faith. The believer's security rests in the sufficiency of the Savior.

5.2 Ready in Communion

The watchful believer remains near the Lord through Scripture, prayer, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. He does not chase an extraordinary emotion every day; he cultivates a real relationship. A burning lamp portrays a life that has not made peace with darkness.

5.3 Ready in Holiness

Future hope purifies present conduct. Holiness does not purchase Christ's coming or complete His finished work; it expresses that we belong to Him. Waiting for the Lord includes rejecting what would bring shame if Christ came today.

5.4 Ready in Service

The context emphasizes stewardship. Every believer manages time, abilities, possessions, opportunities, and responsibilities. To be ready is to be found faithful in small things, nourishing others with truth and carrying out the assigned task.

5.5 Ready in Love and Witness

Watchfulness that hardens the heart toward people does not reflect Christ. Those who wait for the Lord love fellow believers, pursue

reconciliation, support the weak, and announce the gospel. Imminence does not reduce mission; it gives mission urgency and tenderness.

6. What Readiness Does Not Mean

- It does not mean setting dates; Jesus emphasizes that the hour is not the one people suppose.
- It does not mean treating every crisis as final proof of a prophetic schedule.
- It does not mean abandoning family, work, church, or legitimate duties.
- It does not mean living in terror, as though salvation depended on nervous vigilance.
- It does not mean moral indifference sheltered by a verbal profession of faith.
- It does not mean debating prophecy while neglecting simple obedience.

7. Parallel and Complementary Passages

Matthew 24:42-44 confirms the unexpected hour and the call to watch. Mark 13:32-37 forbids presumption and commands vigilance. John 14:1-3 gives the personal comfort of Christ's promise to receive His own. First Thessalonians 4:13-18 grounds the Church's hope and consolation. First Corinthians 15:51-52 emphasizes the sudden transformation of believers.

Titus 2:11-13 joins grace, sober living, and the blessed hope. First John 3:2-3 connects future glory with present purity. Second Peter 3:8-14 explains the apparent delay in terms of God's patience and calls believers to holy conduct.

8. The Church and the Hope of Being With Christ

The New Testament presents the Church's hope with an unmistakable center: being with Christ. In John 14:1-3, the Lord comforts His own by

promising to receive them to Himself. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul describes the Lord descending and believers being gathered to Him. The pastoral conclusion is that believers should comfort one another.

Luke 12:40 does not by itself develop the entire eschatological sequence. Its chief purpose is to require readiness before the unexpected coming of the Son of Man. Responsible interpretation allows fuller doctrinal passages to explain details while Luke retains its moral and pastoral force.

Coming for His Own and Glorious Manifestation

When the New Testament is considered as a whole, distinctions should be made without artificial separation. The Church's particular hope is expressed as gathering to the Lord and the transformation of believers. Other passages describe Christ's public and glorious manifestation in judgment and kingdom. Both lines confess the same Lord and the certainty of His victory, while emphasizing different moments and purposes.

Christian hope is not escape into an abstraction. It is being gathered to Jesus Christ and remaining with Him forever.

9. Grace, Security, and Watchfulness

Some read "be ready" as though salvation depended on maintaining perfect emotional tension until the final moment. That reading does not honor the gospel. Salvation is by grace through faith, grounded in the finished work of Christ. Watchfulness does not replace grace; it is the fruit of grace.

Others use assurance of salvation to minimize obedience. The context does not permit that conclusion either. The Lord expects faithfulness and exposes the servant who uses delay as permission for abuse. The grace that saves also teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly while we await the blessed hope (Titus 2:11-13).

The believer's security does not rest on claiming that the believer can never fail. It rests on recognizing that Christ never fails. Because we belong to a faithful Savior, we desire not to be ashamed before Him. Watchfulness is a grateful response, not a purchase price.

10. The Faithful Steward: Readiness at Work

Jesus' answer to Peter moves from waiting to stewardship. The faithful and wise steward receives an assignment: to give the household its portion at the proper time. His blessedness lies in the master finding him doing so. This protects the doctrine from a merely contemplative spirituality.

Current areas of stewardship include truth, time, family, the Church, material resources, and public witness. Faithfulness means teaching honestly, ordering priorities in light of eternity, loving and caring for family, serving according to one's gifts, managing resources with integrity, and making one's confession visible in conduct.

Luke 12:47-48 teaches proportional responsibility: to whom much is given, much will be required. Readiness cannot be measured by comparing ourselves with others. Each person answers for the light, opportunity, and task received from the Lord.

11. Pastoral Applications

For the person who has not yet believed: "Be ready" first means being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ—recognizing sin, resting in Christ's death and resurrection, and responding to the gospel with repentance and faith.

For the weary believer: Christ's coming is not only warning; it is comfort. Suffering, illness, injustice, and death will not have the final word. Christ is coming, and the believer perseveres because hope rests in the faithful Lord.

For the distracted believer: daily routine can lull the heart to sleep. The call is not to flee everyday life, but to live it again under Christ's lordship.

For those who serve in the Church: ministry itself may be carried out without inward watchfulness. The faithful servant not only teaches correctly, but treats the Lord's household well.

For the Christian community: a prepared church is not the one that announces the most dates. It is the church that preserves the gospel, loves truth, cares for people, practices holiness, and keeps hope alive.

12. A Personal Readiness Examination

- Is my hope placed in Jesus Christ or in my ability to interpret events?
- Have I personally responded to the gospel with repentance and faith?
- Is there a tolerated sin that I need to confess and forsake?
- What responsibility has the Lord entrusted to me that I am postponing?
- Does my expectation produce peace and faithfulness, or fear and speculation?
- Am I nourishing and building others up, or using my position for myself?
- Is there a relationship in which I should pursue reconciliation?
- How would this week change if I lived consciously before Christ's coming?

13. Guide for a Pastoral Sermon

Suggested title: "Ready for the Hour We Do Not Expect."

Proposition: Because Jesus Christ will certainly come and we do not know the hour, we must live today in faith, watchfulness, and faithfulness.

Movement 1 — A certainty that sustains us: "the Son of Man is coming." Present the authority and faithfulness of Christ.

Movement 2 — An hour we do not control: “at an hour you do not expect.” Show the futility of date-setting and the necessity of humility.

Movement 3 — A life we are responsible to order: “be ready.” Apply readiness to faith, holiness, service, and love.

Suggested opening: “There are appointments we write on a calendar, and there are encounters whose hour we do not know. Jesus speaks of the most important encounter. He did not give us a date for our calculations; He gave us a word for our lives: Be ready.”

Suggested conclusion: “The question is not whether we can discover the hour. The question is whether, when He comes, He will find us trusting His work and faithfully doing what He placed in our hands. Church of the Lord, let us not fear the promise; let us live in its light. Christ is coming. Let us be ready.”

14. Questions for Group Study

- What pictures does Jesus use in Luke 12:35-40, and what does each one teach?
- How does Peter’s question relate to the parable of the steward?
- What is the difference between biblical watchfulness and speculation?
- Why does the certainty of Christ’s coming produce hope?
- Why does the unknown hour produce responsibility?
- How does Titus 2:11-13 connect grace and expectation?
- How is faithfulness displayed in family, church, and work today?
- How can this doctrine be taught without producing panic or indifference?
- What concrete decision should follow this study?

15. Doctrinal Summary

- Jesus Christ Himself declared the certainty of His coming.
- The exact moment remains beyond human calculation.

- The Church is called to a continuing condition of readiness.
- Readiness begins with faith in the finished work of Christ.
- Grace does not produce passivity; it forms sober, holy, and useful lives.
- Watchfulness is demonstrated through faithfulness to the assigned task.
- Christian hope is centered on being with the Lord.
- Prophetic teaching should lead to comfort, purity, mission, and worship.

Conclusion

Luke 12:40 places the disciple before a reality that reorganizes the present: Jesus Christ will come. We do not know the hour, and we do not need to invent it. We know who made the promise. The Son of Man, who came in humility, gave His life, and rose again, will also fulfill His word concerning His coming.

“Be ready” is a call of grace and authority. It invites the unbeliever to come to Christ and the believer to live as one who belongs to Christ. Readiness is not religious anxiety; it is awakened faith. It is not fruitless curiosity; it is stewardship. It is not isolation; it is love. It is not confidence in our merit; it is rest in the faithful Savior who never fails.

Lord Jesus Christ, may we be found believing Your Word, resting in Your work, and serving faithfully. You are coming; by Your grace, keep us ready.

Appendix: Key Greek Terms

γίνεσθε (ginesthe): present imperative; calls for an ongoing disposition.

ἑτοιμοί (hetoimoi): plural adjective; describes the disciples as ready.

ᾧρᾱ (hōra): dative noun; points to the particular moment not revealed.

δοκεῖτε (dokeite): present verb; refers to thinking or supposing.

ἔρχεται (erchetai): present verb; expresses the coming with vivid certainty.

Note: the analysis is presented for pastoral purposes. Interlinear study helps identify lexical and grammatical correspondences, but interpretation must preserve literary context and the united witness of the New Testament.

Bibliography and Scripture Index

Holy Bible, Reina-Valera 1960. Base text and biblical references for the Spanish edition.

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Principal passages: Luke 12:35-48; Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:32-37; John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-13; 1 John 3:2-3; 2 Peter 3:8-14.

CLEAR BIBLE INFOGRAPHIC

LUKE 12:40 — BE READY

Christ will certainly come. Since the hour has not been revealed, His people live in faith, watchfulness, and faithfulness.

1. The Lord’s Voice

The warning comes from Jesus Christ. His authority guarantees the promise.

Luke 12:40

3. An Unknown Hour

The date was not revealed; presumptuous calculations are excluded.

Mark 13:32-37

5. Faith in Christ

Readiness begins by resting in His death and resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

7. A Holy Life

Future hope orders and purifies present conduct.

1 John 3:2-3

9. Hope and Comfort

The Church expects to be gathered and remain with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

2. A Certainty

The Son of Man is coming. The event is certain.

Luke 12:40

4. Be Ready

The expression calls us to remain ready, not merely react for a moment.

Luke 12:35-40

6. Burning Lamps

Communion, Scripture, and prayer keep the heart awake.

Luke 12:35

8. Faithful Service

The prepared servant is found carrying out the assigned task.

Luke 12:42-44

10. A Present Decision

Today is the time to believe, obey, serve, and proclaim the gospel.

Titus 2:11-13

CONCLUSION: We do not know when; we do know who is coming. Let us live ready in the grace of Christ.

COMPILER BIOGRAPHY



RUPERTO BRAVO BENAVENTE (R.B.B.)

Senior project developer and process engineering expert with more than 40 years of experience in the technical and financial structuring of industrial, agrifood, and critical infrastructure complexes.

Specialist in modernizing investment models and implementing advanced technologies (extrusion, cryogenics, HIMSS 7), with a focus on economic feasibility under the international standards of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

Compiler and editor responsible for biblical and educational study materials.

Resident of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In this work, he serves as its initiator, compiler, and editorial presentation lead. The doctrinal content is grounded in the biblical references indicated and should be examined in the light of Holy Scripture.

Editorial note: only professional background relevant to a public publication has been included. Sensitive personal data, identity documents, addresses, and other private information have been omitted.