

Have you ever wondered what the “Fourth Watch” is, as mentioned in Matthew 14:25?

Let us read:

Matthew 14:25–26 (ESV)

“And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went out to them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out in fear.”

In ancient times, cities were built very differently from modern cities. Most were surrounded by high walls for protection, often so thick that even a horse-drawn carriage could pass over them. For example, the walls of Jericho, Babylon, and Jerusalem were built to defend the city against enemies. A city without walls was considered weak and vulnerable.

The city gates were always closed at night. But walls alone were not enough. Towers were constructed at intervals along the

walls—these were guard towers, manned by sentinels. These guards worked in shifts, or watches, to protect the city:

First Watch: 6 PM – 9 PM

Second Watch: 9 PM – 12 AM

Third Watch: 12 AM – 3 AM

Fourth Watch: 3 AM – 6 AM

So, if an event happened at night, its timing was referred to by the “watch” rather than by modern hours.

The Spiritual Significance:

As Christians, we are like spiritual sentinels. We await the Lord’s return in the midst of the darkness of sin and evil in the world. We do not know the exact hour He will return, just as the disciples could not anticipate the timing of Christ walking on the sea in the fourth watch (Matthew 14:25).

The Lord did not come during the watches of Peter and the other apostles; He did not come during the watches of the second, third, or fourth generations of the Church either. Now we are in the final, seventh church era, known as Laodicea (Revelation 3:14). We are living in the fourth and last watch—the final period before the second coming of Christ. The exact day and hour are unknown, but the season is evident.

Luke 12:36–40 (ESV) highlights this truth:

“Be like those who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them... You also must be ready, for the Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect.”

We are living in perilous times. Those who should be vigilant about the rapture of the Church are often distracted, living carelessly as if they will automatically enter heaven without true

obedience or readiness. Many are busy with worldly affairs and fail to stay spiritually alert.

We must ask the Lord to awaken our spiritual eyes, so that we recognize the watch we are in—the fourth and final watch—and understand that it will not pass without Christ's return. Time is running out.

Have you secured your salvation?

May the Lord give us spiritual eyes to see and understand these truths.

Maranatha!

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Theological Notes:

Fourth Watch Symbolism: The fourth watch (3 AM – 6 AM)

represents the final period before the dawn—the return of Christ. Spiritually, it is a warning of urgency; we are living in the last moments of spiritual darkness.

Vigilance: Just as night guards stayed awake in shifts, Christians are called to spiritual vigilance, prayer, and holy living (1 Peter 5:8).

Laodicean Church: Revelation 3:14–22 describes the lukewarm Laodicean church, representing the last church age. Believers in this era must repent, rekindle their zeal, and be spiritually awake.

Uncertainty of Time: Scripture emphasizes that the exact hour of Christ’s return is unknown, but believers are called to watch and remain ready (Mark 13:32–37).

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