

The Third Watch

By T.W. Tramm

"It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes ... even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night."

—Luke 12:37-38

IN ANCIENT TIMES, the Jews divided the night into military watches consisting of four hours, each watch representing a period during which the watchman was to remain on duty.

The "watches" Jesus refers to in Luke 12 are not literal four-hour periods during a specific/known evening because no man knows the *day* of His coming (Matt. 24:36; 42-44). The three watches in Luke are thus symbolic—consecutive indeterminate windows of time in which the Lord might return.

In autumn 2015, a one-of-a-kind sequence of solar and lunar eclipses was interpreted as a mega-sign that the Day of the Lord is at hand:

"The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" (Joel 2:31).

If autumn 2015 to autumn 2016 represented the "first watch," and autumn 2016 to 2017 represented the "second watch," then autumn 2017 to 2018 represents the "third watch."

Biblically, the number three denotes a period of testing, preparation, and purification:

- Daniel and a select group of Israelites underwent three years of training before being deemed fit for service under the king (Dan. 1:5).
- Jonah spent three days preaching repentance to the Ninevites (Jon. 3:3).
- Paul spent three years warning the Church at Ephesus to be on guard against false teachings and spiritual apathy (Acts 20:25-31).
- Joshua, a prophetic type of Christ, gave the children of Israel three days to prepare before crossing the Jordan to take possession of the Promised Land (Josh. 1:11).

- Moses told the people to be ready by the third day because on that day the Lord would descend upon Sinai (Ex. 19:11).

The number three is also linked to wholeness, completion, and resurrection in the Bible:

- Jesus' ministry lasted three years.
- The Lord was raised from the dead after three days (Mark 8:31).
- Hosea says: "On the third day [God] will revive us ... he will restore us, that we may live in his presence" (Hos. 6:2).

Are you getting the picture? According to Luke, there are three watches in which the Lord might return. The number three is consistently linked to the types and themes we associate with the Rapture. Autumn 2015 was a pivotal/defining moment concerning signs of the impending Day of the Lord. It's only speculation, but is it possible that the "watches" in Luke refer to year-long periods and that we're currently living in the final moments of the third watch?

Only God knows for certain when Jesus is returning, but the signs and prophetic timelines are converging as never before.

So keep watch!

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NOTES:

The three watches would last respectively from sunset to 10 P.M.; from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M.; and from 2 A.M. to sunrise.

https://biblehub.com/topical/w/watches_of_night.htm