

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are
Most Surely Believed Among Us
An Expository Study of The Gospel According to Luke
Chapter 21- Luke 21:5- 38
324- When Therefore Will These Things Happen?-
Part 10- The Promise of Judgment- Part 8

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Luke 21:5-38

5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said,

6 *"As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."*

7 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what *will be* the sign when these things are about to take place?"

8 And He said, *"See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not go after them.*

9 *"When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately."*

10 Then He continued by saying to them, *"Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,*

11 *and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.*

12 *"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake.*

13 *"It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.*

14 *"So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;*

15 *for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.*

16 *"But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put *some* of you to death,*

- 17 and you will be hated by all because of My name.
- 18 "Yet not a hair of your head will perish.
- 19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives.
- 20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.
- 21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;
- 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.
- 23 "Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;
- 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
- 25 "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,
- 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
- 27 "Then they will see *THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD* with power and great glory.
- 28 "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."
- 29 Then He told them a parable: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees;
- 30 as soon as they put forth *leaves*, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.
- 31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.
- 32 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.
- 33 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.
- 34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;
- 35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

37 Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.

38 And all the people would get up early in the morning *to come* to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

To the Glory of God

Now the Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that Salvation is eternal. And that fact is indisputable. But it is my conviction that most people in the modern Church have a very confusing and contradictory understanding of the eternality of Salvation. And the proof of that is when you ask these people to discuss *why* Salvation is eternal, they usually don't have very good answers.

Most responses to the question, "*Why is Salvation eternal?*" involve things that don't matter at all and don't have the ability to last until tonight, much less all eternity. The basic understanding of far too many people about this subject goes something like this:

"I prayed a prayer (or walked an aisle) and God is stuck with me-
no matter how I live my life"

... and I categorically reject that.

Now over the last 150 years or so, the Church, especially here in America, has been bombarded with slogans and catchy phrases that *trivialize* Salvation like "Once saved, always saved", or "Eternal Security". These phrases were originally designed to teach us about the fact that true, biblical Salvation is forever. But it has been my experience that these terms usually just get in the way because they are woefully *incapable* of discussing the whole issue, *biblically*. And the result is that many people today in the modern Church do not pay much attention to the many *warnings* that are in the Bible, such as the warning that Jesus gives here at the end of **Luke 21**.

Now all throughout the Bible, God was good to periodically give His people warnings. And while there are *some* warnings to lost people

to repent and be saved, most of the warnings, *especially* in the New Testament, are warnings to people who are already saved.

And the question that comes up all the time is: *If Salvation is secure and eternal, why does God go to such lengths to warn His people?* I mean if I can't ever lose my Salvation, why is the New Testament filled with warnings? Does the Bible teach that genuinely saved people can *lose* their Salvation? For example, does the Bible teach that if a genuinely saved person does not heed a biblical warning that he may actually forfeit his Salvation? And, if not, then why so many warnings?

For example, the Bible says things like this:

Hebrews 12:14

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

Now here, the writer of **Hebrews** says that saved people are supposed to pursue two things:

1. Peace with all men
2. Sanctification (Holiness)

The word “**pursue**” comes from a Greek word that means: *to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing; to run after*¹. And it is the root word from which we get another English word “Perseverance”. So to *persevere* is to *continually run after*, it is to *keep on running after*, or to *pursue something on an ongoing basis*.

So we are told in this verse that genuinely saved people are commanded by the inspired Scripture to “run swiftly” or “run after” or to “pursue” or to “persevere toward” both peace with all men, and Sanctification, which is Biblical Holiness. And then this writer was moved by God the Holy Spirit to say this at the end of the verse:

... without which no one will see the Lord.

¹ Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc.

... which means that those who do *not* run after or run swiftly to peace with all men and Sanctification, or Biblical Holiness, will *not* see the Lord, which means they will *not* go to Heaven.

So how are we supposed to understand this? Does this mean that if genuinely saved people do *not* run after these two things that they will *lose* their Salvation? No. It means that if you have truly been born from above and God the Holy Spirit now dwells inside you, He will *compel* you and *empower* you and *equip* you to “run after” or “pursue peace with all men” and to “pursue Biblical Holiness” on an ongoing basis, as a normal part of your daily life.

In other words, pursuing Holiness on an ongoing basis *proves* that your Salvation is genuine, and that you are not merely deceived into thinking you are saved. So, the ongoing fruit of pursuing or “persevering” toward Biblical Holiness on purpose proves that you have truly been born from above. And that means that the *absence* of this pursuit, the absence of this *perseverance*, proves that you are simply deceived about your relationship with God.

And that is why the Biblical Truth that teaches that Salvation is eternal is *not* “Once Saved, Always Saved”, and it is *not* “Eternal Security”, but rather is called:

The Perseverance of the Saints

And this Doctrine is meant to illustrate the Biblical Truth that genuine saints of God *persevere*. They *keep on*. They *continue*. They *pursue*, they *run after*. Here is how King David described this Truth from **Psalm 42:1-2**:

**1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?**

So, part and parcel to the new divine nature that the individual is given in the miracle of the New Birth is this inherent, intense, overwhelming hunger and thirst to be near to God, and to pursue after God. And this hunger and thirst is *never* satisfied. In fact, any degree of actually drawing near to God and of pursuing after God, that the believer has, simply whets the appetite for more.

Now keep in mind, this isn't the fault of the believer, he can't take any credit for it, this is a gift from God. And so, the believer can't help it, he has been born from above, and this intense "running after" is now engrained in his DNA. It is part of what it means to be saved.

And that means that Salvation is not merely about praying a prayer, it is about *continuing* to pray. It is not about merely repenting on a particular day, but that you *keep on* turning away from evil; it is not merely that you attend church, but that you *continually crave* to be in God's Presence. And it isn't that you just trust in Jesus one time, but that you *keep on* trusting, that you *keep on* believing, that you *keep on* pursuing, that by God's Grace and to God's Glory, you *persevere*. Here's how Jesus put it from **John 8:31**:

... If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

... which means that if you do *not* continue in His Word, you're not His disciple at all. So Salvation is the radical transformation of the human nature by a sovereign Act of God whereby you begin a way of life that is characterized by a *perseverance* in God.

And so God was good to put various warnings in the Bible that are designed to shake us up and to bring conviction into our lives, and to frighten us and to trouble us so that we will not grow lax and not grow comfortable and not get lazy so we will not miss out. These warnings serve as spiritual "road signs" along the way to let us know how we are doing. And we can use them as a "guide" to determine if we are actually growing in Grace or whether we are just marking time. These various warnings will let us know if we are spinning our wheels or whether we are actually turnaround and going back down the mountain.

So, it is true to say that God will keep us. And so we need to know that:

- ✓ Everyone that the Father has chosen before the foundation of the world will be drawn by God the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ And everyone who is drawn will come to Jesus,
- ✓ And everyone that the Father draws Jesus will receive.
- ✓ And everyone that Jesus receives will be saved.
- ✓ And everyone that Jesus saves will be kept all the way to Glory.

But, the *way* that God keeps us saved is *not* to excuse or ignore our sinful behavior. That is not true. The Bible does not teach anywhere that sin after Salvation doesn't matter. That is the ancient heresy of "Antinomianism", or "Lawlessness", and it is an evil *perversion* of Grace.

The way you live your life after you are saved matters to God, and it matters to the Church, and it even matters to lost people, and it is a determiner of whether your faith is real.

For example, **Titus 2** was written to illustrate what a Godly, Healthy, and Biblical Church looks like. And so God moved upon the Apostle Paul to write to this young Pastor how all five groups of people in the Church (old men, old women, young men, young women, and servants/employees) are supposed to behave themselves. And, in **Titus 2**, there are three reasons given as to *why* the people in the Church who say they are saved should strive to obey what **Titus 2** says:

- 1. ... so that the word of God will not be dishonored. (Titus 2:5b)**
- 2. ... so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. (Titus 2:8b)**
- 3. ...so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect. (Titus 2:10b)**

So the Truth is that the Holy Bible teaches in **Titus 2:5** is that people in the Church who say they are saved, and yet who do not obey the Lord, are *causing* the lost people that know them to *dishonor* the Word of God. They are giving the lost pagan world the ammunition they need to blaspheme God and His Word.

And the logic is why in the world do we want lost sinners to honor God and obey the Bible if people who say they are saved don't think enough of the Bible to obey it? Why do we want public schools to teach about the Ten Commandments if saved people don't teach them in their own homes? Why do we want schools to let our children pray when fathers who say they are saved are not leading their own children in prayer at home? And so living what we say we believe before the lost world gives *credibility* to the Gospel that we preach.

So, for God's Own Glory and for the sake of the credibility of the Gospel, God gives us warnings in the Bible to help us get back on track and to begin to actually live what we say we believe. And so, as saved

people, we must *never* take the position that these warnings are optional. They're not. They are Divine Commandments to all who are truly born from above. And so, if you *ignore* them, if you *cast them aside*, if you *belittle* them, and *excuse* yourself from the impact of them, if you take the position that these warnings don't *apply* to you, you don't change the validity of the Warning. You merely prove that you are not saved. And unless you repent and begin to persevere, you will absolutely miss Heaven.

So, let me be crystal clear about this, it is understandable that as human beings we may fall short of perfect adherence to all the Biblical Commandments. So, as we strive to obey, we fail to always hit the mark. That is what saved people do.

But to just *ignore* the various warnings in the Bible and to *brush them off* as irrelevant because you're saved, or to be totally *unconcerned* about them, proves that you're lost and they testify that you are *not* on your way to Heaven. And that is exactly *why* the Bible says things like this from **1 Corinthians 10:12**:

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

... and this from **Hebrews 12:15-16**

15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

16 that *there be* no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a *single* meal.

... and this from **Hebrews 13:5-6**

5 *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

Now, at the end of **Luke 21:33**, Jesus has just finished prophesying to these Jewish believers about cataclysmic Judgment. And Dr. Luke tells us this in **Luke 21:37-38**:

37 Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.

38 And all the people would get up early in the morning *to come* to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

Now the way this is worded here shows us that this “Olivet Discourse” went on for more than one day. So what we have here in this Chapter is simply a *summary* of what Jesus actually told them. We know from this that Jesus spoke about this subject *repeatedly* during the last week of His earthly life.

And here Jesus tells them that God is determined to end the reign of the *inferior* First Covenant and bring in the reign of the infinitely *superior* New Covenant. And He is going to do that in, by, and through the Life, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is God Almighty in human flesh. *That* is what brought in the New Covenant.

But the *trappings* of the Old Covenant, the visible, outward signs of the Old Covenant like Temple worship with its animal sacrifices and Levitical Priesthood and dietary and ceremonial laws were still up and running 40 years after Jesus had died and risen from the dead.

And many of the Jewish believers were struggling trying to make sense of the radical New Covenant in light of the Old. And they were not doing a very good job. And so four decades after the Resurrection, Jewish believers in Jesus were still sacrificing animals and they were still circumcising their babies and they were still going to the Levitical priests.

And so, in His Mercy, God chose to give a public and visible and powerful and unarguable sign that He was forever finished with the very Covenant that He Himself had brought to the Jews many hundreds of years earlier.

And so, Jesus is promising in this Passage that before the generation of Jews who listened to Him speak on that day all died off God would stir up the spirit of the Roman rulers, even as He had stirred up Nebuchadnezzar almost 600 years before this. And so Jesus promises here that He will “come” to the land of Israel under the standard of Rome, and as they thundered down from the North and run roughshod over the villages and towns of Israel and head toward the

city that 1,000 years earlier King David called "The Habitation of Peace", Jerusalem.

And Jesus promises here that not a single stone of this magnificent Temple would remain standing. And with the destruction of the Temple would be the end of animal sacrifices and the end of the Levitical Priesthood and the end of the Jewish worship of God and their entire way of life.

And listening to all this just had to be utterly unbelievable to these Jews. And I can only imagine what questions they must have had as they tried to make sense of it all. And as Jesus ends this frightening and certain prophecy, He gives His disciples a profound warning in verses 34-36:

Luke 21:34-36

34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;

35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Now as you read through **Luke 21**, it is hard to imagine why anybody would even think about going and getting drunk. It is hard to imagine anyone hearing what Jesus said here and walking away that day, and then the next morning getting up and going about with their daily lives as though Jesus had not just given them earthshaking news. I mean Jesus said that Rome is coming and when they come, *everything* is going to change!

And when God's Judgment has finished, over a million Jews will lie dead, the great city will be nothing but smoking ruins, and the Temple will be utterly demolished. And the entire Old Covenant, that had been in force for at least 14 centuries, was going to be over. So, how could they possibly *not* be on guard about this? How could they forget? How could they settle down and act like Jesus had not said these things? How could they just go to work and raise their children and pay their bills when all this destruction is coming?

Devastation like they had never seen before is coming and Jesus is warning them about them getting drunk and getting caught up with the normal every day cares of life? Are you kidding me? How does this make any sense?

This makes about as much sense as Jesus and the Apostles telling those of us who labor in the modern Church that the single greatest event in the history of the world is about to happen, Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth, and when He comes, *everything* is going to change, and yet just before He comes back, just before the end of our entire way of life, people are getting drunk and getting neck deep in the cares of this life! How could *that* be? We are told that not just Jerusalem, but every city, and not just a million Jews will die, but when Jesus finally does come back His Fury against unrepentant sinners will be so great that the blood will run up to the horse's bridle. And yet many people, who say they are saved, live their lives today totally unconcerned about it all.

But we have to know that many of the Jews that day that stood there and heard Jesus speak these words didn't heed the warning that Jesus gave here because they didn't think it applied to them. They thought they were *exempt* from this warning because they were God's chosen people. And when the Roman army came, it was a surprise to them. They were taken off guard because they had ignored the warning. And they perished along with the others.

And as I said, so many people today who exist in the modern Church *dismiss* the many warnings from Jesus and the Apostles in Scripture because they reason to themselves that since they're saved, that these warnings do not apply to them. It is the same thing. So as we read warnings in Scripture, we must take them to heart.

Now the warning of Jesus here is divided into two parts:

- 1. Be on Guard (Luke 21:34)**
- 2. Keep on the alert (Luke 21:36)**

... so let's look at this together.

1. Be on Guard

Luke 21:34-35

34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;

35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

Now notice here that Jesus is telling these Jews to guard their hearts. And the reason He tells them to guard their hearts is because the heart is the easiest thing to corrupt. The Bible teaches that the human heart is deceitful above everything else. For example, in **Jeremiah 17:9**, the Prophet said:

The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

So, as human beings, we cannot trust our hearts. Our hearts lie to us, they deceive us, and they lead us astray. Jesus said this in **Mark 7:18-23**:

18 And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him,

19 because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (*Thus He declared all foods clean.*)

20 And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

23 "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.

... and so Jesus tells us to examine the words that come out of our mouths. So we must take inventory to what we say and how we speak and what words we use, because that is an indication of the condition of our hearts.

So, we must understand that our hearts are idol factories that churn out new idols every day. The Apostle John taught us in **1 John**

2:15-17 that everything that we love is not good; that as fallen humans, we have the capacity to love what God's hates, we can love what is evil, we can set our affections on things that bring God no Glory. We actually, and in reality, have the ability to genuinely love and enjoy and take pleasure in sin and that which dishonors God. And here, in the first part of verse 34, Jesus uses the twin issues of drunkenness and dissipation as examples of what an evil heart will do.

Now all throughout Scripture, drunkenness was forbidden. It is *always* a sin to be drunk. There is *never* an occasion when drunkenness is allowed by God, except in the case of Mercy when a sick man is dying and is in great pain, and hard liquor is permitted to relieve his suffering, like we do today with morphine.

But the condemnation of drunkenness is clear in Scripture. But why is drunkenness such a terrible sin? Drunkenness dishonors God because we are commanded by God to not only love Him with all our hearts, but with all our mind as well. Jesus said in **Mark 12:30**:

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.

... and the Apostle Paul taught in **Titus 2:11-14**:

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,
12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,
13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,
14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

... and the word "**sensibly**" in verse 12 comes from the Greek word from which we get our English word "sober". So, as a believer, we are not to have our mind clouded or confused, but we are to think clearly and to live sensibly and soberly, and we are to worship God with our minds as well as our hearts. And so we must guard what goes into our minds by making sure that what we read and what we spend time looking at and

what we listen to is *edifying* and not merely *entertaining*. But we must also not allow alcohol or drugs to cloud our minds.

Now the word “**dissipation**” that Jesus used here has to do with the dark lifestyle of debauchery and sexual immorality, and the lack of clear thinking that drunkenness always leads to. So, not only is the act of drunkenness condemned, but also the *lifestyle* that goes along with it. The Apostle Paul said this in **Ephesians 5:18**:

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

Now many people in the modern Church have used this very verse to promote wild and silly and foolish behavior as being from God the Holy Spirit. Falling on the floor and uncontrollable laughter has been used as examples of when the Spirit is supposedly moving upon an individual. The Brownsville Revival, down in Florida a few years ago, was notorious for promoting more and more strange behavior as signs that God was moving in their midst.

But, in reality, this verse has to do with the Apostle condemning the use of alcohol as a tool for worship. Many of the pagans of Ephesus used alcohol to supposedly contact the spirit world like the American Indians used peyote. And the Apostle is condemning such practices here by saying that all that drunkenness does is to lead to dark and sexually immoral lives, not Holiness. And so, Paul tells the believers in this notoriously corrupt city that it is infinitely better to be controlled and led and empowered and enabled by God the Holy Spirit than by alcohol.

Now it is important to understand why drunkenness is sinful so that we may, by extension, also say that it is also a sin to get “high” or to even get a “buzz” on. Getting high is sinful for the same reason that getting drunk is sinful; it alters your mind, and God wants our minds to be clear and sober and sensible, not clouded and confused.

Now drinking to get a “buzz on” is technically *not* being drunk. But to “almost be drunk, but not quite” is simply splitting hairs with God, and we are never to do that.

And so the various impulses and affections and desires of our hearts must be tamed, they must be tempered, and they must be governed. And the Bible teaches us that the way to overrule the

natural tendency of our hearts to run amuck is to inform our hearts with a renewed mind. **Romans 12:2** says:

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

So we must not be naïve about our own hearts and assume that because we are saved and because we know the Bible and because we attend Church and because we pray and because we read the Bible that our hearts are not capable in a moment of time to turn away from the living God and turn towards sin. So we must heed the warnings of Jesus.

But notice also that after Jesus talked about raw sin, He then gave a warning about *another* aspect where we can be easily deceived. Look again at the middle of verse 34:

Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with... the worries of life...

Now drunkenness and the lifestyle that goes along with drunkenness is blatant sin. But here Jesus also warns His people about something called “**the worries of life**”. And this is *not* blatant sin. This is *not* the same thing as adultery and debauchery and drunkenness. Notice that Jesus didn’t say the “*sins* of life”, but “the *worries* of life”.

These are the worries that people have about paying bills and about raising children. These are the everyday worries that we go through just to live in this life. And this also includes worries about the future and about the unknown.

Now coming on the heels of the cataclysmic Judgment that Jesus just prophesied, this is a strange statement. Jesus just spent many verses telling His people about the great and terrible Judgment that He was going to bring upon the land and on Jerusalem and on the Temple, and now He turns around and tells them not to worry?

We need to remember that over the next four decades from this moment every single Jew who was there that day is going to have his entire world turned upside down. *Everything* is going to change, their worship of God, their way of life, their food supply, their safety, and

their very lives will be at risk. *Nothing* will be left unscathed at the Judgment and the Great Transformation that God is bringing on the world. And Jesus tells them to guard their hearts so that they will not be “**weighted down**” with the *worries of this life*? Why did He say that?

Now to get a better idea of just how big and issue the worries of this life are to the believer, let’s go to the “Parable of the Sower and the Seed” in **Mark 4:18-19**:

18 "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,

19 but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

You see, Jesus said here that the worries and cares of this life in combination with the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things besides Jesus has the power to literally “choke” the Word of God until the Word no longer has any effect on your life, and your life becomes barren and unfruitful. So, these cares and worries of life have the power to rob you of your First Love, to cause you to lose interest in Prayer and Bible Study, to cause you to get off by yourself and get away from God’s people, and to cause you to forsake the assembling of yourselves together. People who are consumed with the worries and cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches and the desire of other things are content not to be used by God; they see nothing to do, they have no burden to press into the things of God.

These people can skip Church and not be convicted about it; they can hang out of Prayer Meeting and Bible Study and they see absolutely nothing wrong with cancelling Church to watch the Super Bowl. But Jesus said they were unfruitful and these issues have choked the Word of God in their lives. And so Jesus is faithful here to warn His people about this. And He said in **Luke 21:34-35**:

34 ... and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;

35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

So having the weight of sin and the worries of life on your heart will cause you to not see what is coming on the world. And it could even cause you to miss out. Jesus gave the parable of the Ten Virgins to

illustrate that as believers, as saved people, we are to watch and pray and not slumber as we see the Day of the Lord approaching. The writer of **Hebrews** told us this in **Hebrews 10:24-25**:

24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

So, as they saw God's Wrath getting closer and closer, they gathered more and more. And as we see God's Judgment getting hotter and hotter in our day against our own ungodly nation, we should be gathering *more often*, not less; we should have *more* prayer meetings, *more* bible studies, *more* evangelistic opportunities, *more* preaching, *more* fasting, not less. And we should gather so as to stimulate each other to love and to good works *more*, not less. And we should all be bearing *more* fruit, not less.

Now, I can understand why many people think that the statement in verse 35 could be talking about Jesus' Second Coming, and they may be right. But I honestly think this statement was merely referring to the people in the "known world" at that time, which would mean the Roman Empire.

2.Keep on the alert (Luke 21:36)

Now finally, Jesus gave one last warning in verse 36:

But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

... and even though the correct context here is that this Statement was given to the people who stood by Jesus on that day, there is a universal *application* of this verse to *all* believers throughout *all* ages. All genuinely born again souls are to always "keep on the alert". We are *never* to get lax, we are *never* to slack up, we are *never* to coast, and we are *never* to get weary of "well doing".

Believers stop pressing into the things of God and we stop repenting and we stop preaching and we stop praying and we stop

bearing godly fruit only when we die. But as long as we live, we are to *always* be on guard and to *always* be alert and to *always* stay awake and to *always* stay sharp and to *always* have our eyes open, and to pray without ceasing, and to pant after God, and to hunger and thirst after Righteousness until we close our eyes or until Jesus comes back.

Now notice the connection here that Jesus makes between staying alert and praying. And that connection is made all through the New Testament. And it is synonymous. In other words, praying *is* staying alert, and therefore, *not* praying is equated with falling asleep at the wheel.

And so, Jesus began this entire Chapter in verse 8 by warning His people:

Luke 21:8

See to it that you are not misled...

... and now He ends it by saying,

Luke 21:36b

... keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

... and the two are connected. We are to stay “prayed up” and “filled up”, and to “keep on the alert” because these are not merely geo-political events between Rome and Jerusalem. This is the fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy. This is the *ending* of one Covenant and the *bringing in* of the New one. And so these are powerful days that will be very confusing and very violent days where *everything* will change. So it is time to gird up the loins of our minds and to be sober and to watch and pray and to not be led astray and to be on our guard.

And so, Jesus ends this magnificent Chapter by giving them and us yet another warning that we should take to heart:

Stay alert and Pray.

.. and those who listened to the warnings of Jesus that He gave here were spared, and those who didn't perished in the Holocaust that Rome brought to the city where they killed the Lord.

And so now the mantle is laid at our feet, in our day. And we can hear the warnings from our King:

- ✓ Make sure no one misleads you
- ✓ Be in your guard
- ✓ Stay alert and pray

... for we, too, are living in powerful days; days of great upheaval and change, days when men's hearts are failing them for fear, and days when people in the Church are closing their eyes and engaging in the cares and pleasures of this fallen world, days when Prayer meetings are being cancelled and where the Bible is no longer studied, days when worldly activities take center stage, even in the House of God, and days when hearts are leading people astray.

And so we must take heed to the many warnings in the Bible and make sure that when Jesus comes back that He will find us faithful to what He said, and so He will find us fruitful in His Kingdom, and so Jesus will find us busy in the Work of the Lord.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 www.covenantofpeace.net

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.