

Prepare for Your Final Redemption

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[0:00] Let's take our Bibles and let's go to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 21, Luke chapter 21, 5-36 is what we'll study this morning.

5-36 things to come. Luke 21, oh, and that black Bible in the chair in front of you, sorry, if you're visiting with us. Go to page 65, towards the back, go towards the back, find page 65.

You'll find Luke 21, verses 5-36. Let's read the passage and then we'll do our study.

And while some were talking about the temple that was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, he said, These things which you're looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.

And they questioned him, saying, Teacher, when therefore will these things be and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place? And he said, See to it that you not be misled.

[1:32] For many will come in my name, saying, I am. And the time is at hand. Do not go after them. And 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. Then he continued by saying to them, Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes and in various places plagues and famines.

There will be terrors and great signs from heaven. 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 namesake.

It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves, for I will give you utterance and wisdom, which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

But you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends. And they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all on account of my name.

[2:33] Yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives. But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand.

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let those who are in the midst of the city depart. And let not those who are in the country enter the city, because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Woe to those who are this child, and to those who nurse babes in those days. For there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations.

And Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there will be signs in sun, and moon, and stars, and upon the earth, dismay among nations.

And perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 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.

[3:38] And then, they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. But when these things begin to take place, straighten up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

And he told them a parable, Behold the fig tree and all the trees. As soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness, and the worries of life in that day come on you suddenly

like a trap.

For it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

Several years ago, a Japanese emperor commissioned an artist to paint a bird. A number of months passed, then several years, and still there was no painting.

[4:53] It was brought to the palace. Finally, the emperor became so exasperated that he went to the artist's home to the man in explanation. But instead of making excuses, the artist placed a black canvas on the easel, and in less than an hour, he completed a painting that was to become a brilliant masterpiece.

When the emperor asked for the reason for the delay, the artist showed him armloads of drawings, of feathers, wings, heads, and feet.

Then he explained that all of this research and study had been necessary before he could complete the painting. Preparation.

Prepare. When I think of prepare, most times I think of preparing for a test. So in my mind, the word prepare seems to be negative. My older kids have had to prepare for college level exams.

Sometimes taking ten weeks to prepare for a college level exam. Only to not pass. Ouch. It's said that when John Huss was arrested, and informed that he would be burned to death for his faith, he purposely practiced holding his hand over fire, to prepare himself for his final test.

[6:15] Prepare. In our passage today, Jesus calls us as his disciples to prepare. Come follow Jesus, you'll find forgiveness of your sins, and today we'll see how we must prepare for our final redemption.

Come follow Jesus, find forgiveness of your sins, preparing for your final redemption. The key verses in that is 28, when Jesus says, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

And then 31, he says, when you see these things happen, recognize that the kingdom of God is near. Redemption, God's kingdom, prepare for it.

Preparing for your final redemption. That's another way we can succinctly put this section of Luke's gospel. Jerusalem's total destruction in 7 AD, and Jesus' return.

There you go. Let's close in prayer. Well, why both? Why Jerusalem's redemption, or destruction, and our redemption?

[7:28] Why Jerusalem's destruction, and then Jesus' return? Why? Because for Jesus, the destruction of Jerusalem, is similar to the end time.

Like an initial fulfillment in 7 AD, and a more fuller, or complete fulfillment, at the end of time. And we can be certain, that when the end does come, it will come quickly.

It won't linger. However, just as things were bleak, in the time of Jerusalem's destruction, in 7 AD, so it will be later on, just before the time, when Jesus will return for his people.

That's why you have both of these together. And that's why it seems to be so similar. And that's why it's one of the marks of confusion, as you come to end times, or eschatological type teaching.

For Jesus, the destruction of Jerusalem, is similar to the end of time. Therefore, since we have this, since it's a true fact, that Jesus will return, Christians are exhorted, to watch and be ready.

[8:43] Jesus calls us, to live sober, godly, serious lives, praying for strength, to escape, and to stand before him, when he does return. Watching for his return, produces godliness in us.

That's why we read the passage today, in Titus chapter 2. God saves us, other people, for himself. And as we are preparing ourselves, as we're living in godliness, we're waiting for him to come.

Make no mistake, Israel will be judged for their unfaithfulness. And they were. And any follower of Jesus, will be the object of persecution from them, as well as from others, as well as from those, in the secular government.

But endurance leads to salvation. So watch, be alert, pray for enduring strength. Let's set this up, which is verses 5, 5 through 7, the setup that we have here.

In verse 5, some of the disciples were talking about the temple, it was adorned with beautiful stones, and voto gifts. And rightly so. Herod the Great refurbished it, started in 19 B.C.

[9:52] and it ended in 63 A.D. over 80 years. How would you like to be remodeling your house for over 80 years? Yikes. The foundation stones, some of the stones were almost the size of boxcars.

Huge. It was a source of national pride. It baffled other nations. It was one of the great wonders of the Roman world. And at a distance, as you were coming into Jerusalem, it looked like a mountain of gold.

Because its nine gates and most of the exterior was plated with gold and silver, along with jeweled sculptures. So they're adoring. This is saying, wow, look at the beauty of this place.

Well, the comment on the temple's beauty is to cause Jesus to tell his disciples what happened to Jerusalem in the near and far future. Notice verse 6. These things you're looking at, the days will come in which there will not be one stone left upon another.

Don't be so impressed. Because it's all coming down, boys. This building is, was, temporary.

[11:06] Go to Israel. What do you see? Nothing. You see the mound. It's gone. Impressive now, but dust later. I told you, the temple was finished in 63 AD.

Seven years later, it was completely destroyed. It's like, oh man, all that work. It was destroyed by Titus, the Roman Empire, who had ordered the temple to be preserved, actually.

It's told that a soldier fired a fiery arrow inside the temple and it set it on fire. So, based on that, Titus ordered the whole city and the temple to be razed to the ground.

Soldiers, who were driven by greed, pulled each stone apart so they could reclaim the melted gold that went into the cracks. So imagine all the soldiers getting these huge, huge foundation stones, pushing them over so they could try and get to the gold that was melting into the cracks of the foundation of the temple.

That's why one stone was not put upon the other. Seven. When are these things going to be? They asked Jesus.

[12:23] What's the sign of these things that are about to take place? Their question not only had to do with the downfall of Jerusalem, but what the future held as well. Eschatological details.

The fall of Jerusalem and the end. Tell us, Jesus. So now we come to our section. Preparing for our final redemption.

How do you prepare? How do you prepare for our final redemption? How can we prepare for our final redemption? Jesus speaks pastorally to His disciples in these eight ways.

Eight ways how you can prepare yourself from our passage. Prepare yourself for your final redemption. Eight ways. I'll give you the first two right off the bat. First, don't follow false leaders. And second, don't be frightened by certain chaotic events. Verse 8 of point 1, 9 through 11, and point 2. Eight ways on how to prepare yourself for our final redemption.

[13:26] Number one, don't follow false leaders. Number two, don't be frightened by certain chaotic events. Jesus says, don't be misled. Many will come in my name. I am. The time's at hand.

Don't go after them. First, things that will not be signs of the end. False Christ. And then verse 9, wars and disturbances.

People who claim they're a Messiah. Who claim the end is near. It's here. It's coming. It's coming. That's not a sign of the end. Don't follow these leaders.

Don't follow these false leaders. And by the way, Jesus assumed a period of time between his departure and return. So he's saying you need discernment. Don't listen.

Don't go after them. Or, I'll put it a different way. Don't be deceived or led astray by these clowns. Don't follow them. Nine, when you hear wars and disturbances.

[14:28] Don't be terrified. Social unrest? Civil unrest? Nope. Still not the end. Hear this stuff? Don't be alarmed. Don't be terrified. The word means a deep sense of terror or emotional distress.

No need to be distressed. Don't be surprised. And it's not yet. With all this chaos and destruction, don't fear. Look, the world will always be in chaos with disturbances because people are just evil and self-centered.

newsflash. 10, he says, he can tell you by saying that the nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes in various places, plagues, famines, terrors, great signs from heaven.

Unfortunately, there's nothing new since Genesis. Did you know in the last 3,421 years of recorded history, only 268 years have known no war?

That's roughly about 7.8%. So in other words, of 3,421 years of recorded, recorded history, we're not even talking about unrecorded history.

[15:40] Recorded history, about 92% of it was just war. there's nothing new under the sun. That's why Jesus is saying, don't be surprised by this stuff.

Notice, back up in verse 9, for these things must take place first. What's our key word in the Gospel of Luke? Day. Delta, Epsilon, Eota, D-E-I.

It must happen. It is necessary. God has planned, has all these things under His control. He's had this planned.

He's not surprised. Oh my goodness, there's something happening here. What do I do? What do I do with my cell phone? Oh my goodness, I feel naked. That's not God. He doesn't do that. He planned all as part of Him moving all things toward the consummation.

But why is He talking about Jerusalem's fall in 70 A.D.? Because it will stand as an example of what the end time will look like. It will be tragic and that's what it's going to look like later on too.

[16:47] And then again, I read verse 11, earthquakes, plagues, famines, terrors, false claims, social chaos, physical disturbances, natural disasters, earthquakes, plagues, famines, terrors, great signs from heaven.

Friends, we live in a fallen world that's in chaos. But these chaotic events, they're not necessarily signs of the times of the end. As a matter of fact, verse 12-19 will state that other events must first take place before these chaotic catastrophes.

It's a reminder for us too, when we see such terrible things, it's not the sign of the end. It cannot be predicted. Let's be careful not to allow ourselves to interpret chaotic events in the world as meaning the end of all things has come.

Some people do that. They go, oh, all is just bad. There's a Democrat in office. The end is at hand. Well, no, that doesn't necessarily mean that. Okay. It's all right.

It's okay. Now, if there's no more chocolate in the world, then that might be right. I had to get that in there so well. But really, all serious, all kidding aside, seriously, we tend to do that.

[18:02] We see these terrible things happening, and Jesus is saying, whoa, whoa. Not necessarily means the end. Okay. So, don't follow these false leaders and don't be worried or terrified by these chaotic events.

Number three, number three, don't prepare to defend yourself. So, prepare by not preparing. Can you say that? I just did. Or, trust in Jesus' words of provision.

12 through 15, right? Yeah. Before trouble in the world, there will be trouble in the church. Look, anyone who decides to follow Jesus will follow his example of suffering.

Before all these things, notice Jesus says in verse 12, to lay their hands on you, persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues, prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for my namesake. What events will precede these non-end incidents, persecution by Jews and Gentiles? The faith of Jesus' disciples will be pursued and arrested. Believers put in hostile situations where they have to defend the truth. Examinations, beatings, prison, executions.

[19:17] The book of Acts will describe much of what Jesus was talking about which happened to the early church and it's still happening today, folks. We brought before government authorities for the sake of Jesus' name.

Look, if Jesus is first and you identify with him, you will be persecuted. Jesus is central to his followers and allegiance to him is what it means to be a Christian.

Following him won't be easy. Or as John MacArthur put in his book some time ago, it's hard to believe. It is. It's not easy being a Christian.

Again, this applies to all Christians today around the world. Our brothers and sisters are dying for Christ. Even now, at this time, almost 11.15 on Sunday morning, there are believers dying for the gospel, dying for the truth.

And yet, verse 13, it will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. It will give us followers the opportunity to speak of Jesus, to speak for Jesus, your testimony, to publicly proclaim Jesus and the good news to those in government.

[20:32] So, the place before religious and secular rulers to explain as followers of Jesus their commitment and allegiance to Jesus. That's why Jesus says in verse 14, So, make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves.

Why? For I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refuse. How should disciples fear at this time when they're put in a situation? No need to feel anxiety.

Don't feel anxious about what to say or how to say it because Jesus will give you the ability to speak effectively amid the opposition. Or the word actually means to settle in your heart.

Settle in your heart because Jesus will be your advocate. He will lead you in your reply. How awesome will be those words? How awesome will be those words from Jesus will be so awesome that none of the opponents will be able to resist or refute.

They'll be unable to withstand or contradict what Christians are saying. And you know this is still even true today. They cannot refute. They cannot contradict.

[21:41] Even today there's no way they can refute the truth. Which by the way this should give us boldness should it not in our evangelism. It should give us boldness to speak Christ to others.

There's no way they'll refute. There's no way they'll contradict. I mean you have everything on your side. to be encouraged.

Don't be let astray. Don't be looking at these different signs. Don't be looking at these different things. Don't prepare yourself by defending yourself. Or in other words trust in Jesus' provision. Number four persevere and stand firm. Fourth way for you to prepare for your final redemption persevere and stand firm. 16 through 19 but you will be delivered up even by parents brothers relatives friends to put some of you to death.

Yes they won't be able to refute you. Yes they won't be able to contradict you. Yet not all is positive is it? Disciples of Jesus may be persecuted by those closest to you.

[22:59] Parents brothers relatives good friends. Look Jesus never promised physical victory. Some of us will face death.

Just because God speaks through us doesn't mean the message will be accepted. Just because they can't refute you they cannot contradict you it doesn't mean that they're going to believe. It doesn't mean that. Stephen James Peter Paul the no name Christian that just died over the past hour that we don't even know their name.

The sad part is these family members may turn in their own family because they're disciples of Jesus. Confessing Jesus might mean being hated by even those that love you the most.

So be prepared. Be prepared to face family rejection. Be prepared not by separating from them necessarily but by being prepared for them to react to you in a hostile way.

[24:19] disciples of Jesus pay a price. It's a costly choice that splits families but friends it also creates new ones.

That's what the church is. That's why the church is called the family of Christ. The family of God. That's who we are. So the blood family the blood line there's tension and they're hostile towards you because you're a Christian.

There's a new family a spiritual father spiritual mother spiritual brother and sister you can connect with and you have more in common with them than you would in your own family. Because we have Christ together and we'll live forever together.

Yes you will have to live forever with me. That's right. But it's not just family that will hate you.

Notice he says 17 you'll be hated by all on account of my name.

Everyone will hate you because of the name of Jesus because you confess allegiance to Jesus.

True followers of Jesus are objects of severe rejection. They will offend many.

[25:29] But the cost is worth it because God will save you. Notice he says yet not a hair of your head will perish by your endurance you will gain your life. You're doing what you're made to do.

So persevere. Stand strong. the cost is worth it to be a Christian. If you're here today you're not a follower of Jesus come to Jesus.

The cost is high but it's so worth it. You will find satisfaction for your soul. God will never allow any of his own to perish despite the hatred despite the persecution despite the death.

Final destruction is impossible for those committed to Jesus Christ. You won't face God's judgment. Whatever happens you're under God's hand.

You can persevere. You can stand firm. You can be strong. Endure faithfully. Look at how Jesus in the midst of this is bringing such comfort and assurance to his people.

[26:39] to his disciples. You can have such comfort. That's why he says continue to endure.

Continue to stay faithful. By your endurance you will gain your soul.

Any disciple of Jesus will be secure in spite of the threat of losing his or her life. Physical life is short. Everlasting life is made certain.

So persevere. persevere. Did not Jesus say you lose your life for my sake you will gain it? Right? Cling to faith.

Cling to faith in the midst of this severe persecution. Saving faith continues to hold on to Jesus. If one stops trusting Jesus then that one never truly trusted Jesus at all.

To have great awesome a life worth living for life means one clings to Jesus. Even as you're staring death in the face.

[27 : 52] Stand firm. We must persevere and stand firm. Understand the Christian life is not a sprint it's a marathon. A long marathon.

Steady on. Stand firm. True believers continue through thick and thin. Thin is strong by the grace of God.

Persevere stand firm. That's how you prepare. You're persevering. You're standing firm. You're standing strong. Number five. Fifth way to prepare. Observe what's happening.

Observe or know what's happening. verse 20 says when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies then recognize or know or observe that her desolation is at hand. Then he goes into 20-24 this section which is quite odd because Luke is different than what Matthew says and Mark says.

For instance Luke does not mention the tribulation in which is the most intense period of time the earth will ever face. He doesn't mention that the Lord will cut short those days so people would survive.

[29 : 00] He doesn't mention the time should not be in the time of winter. He doesn't mention the abomination of desolation in the temple. He doesn't say any of that stuff. will what does Luke focus upon so we can observe what's happening and how does he interact with us preparing for our final redemption?

What does Luke focus upon? Well, he focuses upon the near fulfillment of judgment upon Jerusalem, 70 AD. Why? Because it's a preview with less intensity of what will take place on global scale in the future.

When Jerusalem falls the first time, it will not be the end, but sure will look like it. In other words, what will the end be like?

It will be just like that time when Jerusalem fell in 70 AD. It will be horrendous. I'll get to more of it about what happened. I gave you a taste of it earlier on.

I'll give you some more in just a moment. There's major judgment that took place. Chaos! That's what it's going to be like. So when you see Jerusalem surrounded, you know desolation is here.

[30 : 22] You know desolation has come, is at hand. Now let me say a few words in reference to tribulation type stuff since we're in eschatological type thinking. Today, probably based upon Mark's gospel and Luke's gospel, I personally would lean more toward a post-tribulational viewpoint.

In other words, I believe there will be a time of tribulation upon the earth. Afterwards, Jesus will return calling for his people. There will be what's called the rapture, the catching out of tribulation. That's kind of what I lean more towards.

And then there will be the first resurrection. And then I'm also what's called premillennial, which I'll explain that a little bit later on.

When we come to this section, we see that what's happened is that Israel would face desolation and judgment because they rejected the day of their visitation. They rejected their Messiah. And in the same way, the world would face desolation and judgment because they rejected the Messiah. See the correlation? So really Jesus was saying that Jerusalem must fall before the end, but the length of time between the two events, he didn't define it.

[31 : 38] But it was a terrible time. Josephus writes, now it could be exaggerated the numbers, but he has. 1.1 million Jews were killed.

97,000 were taken captive. Children were cooked as food in the midst of the siege. Old people were lining the streets, even those of the high priestly class, they were lining the streets scrapping for food, any scraps of food they could find.

Their unfaithfulness to God led to his ruthless judgment. It was a terrible time. God will be faithful to judgment, to righteous judgment.

Injustice cannot be tolerated, else God would cease being a just, righteous God. notice what Jesus says now in 21 and 22, that those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, those who are in the midst of the city depart, those who are in the country, not enter the city because of their days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

How severe will the situation be? Don't go to the city, run, run from the city, the city, it's going to be a place of refuge. See, in that time period, when you have an army coming around the middle of

nowhere, you're like, where do we go?

[33:14] Go to the sea. It's a big wall, thick wall, nobody's going to get us in there. Jesus is saying, no, no, no, no, don't do that. Run. Go out to the country, go to the mountains.

If it doesn't, stay there. Those in the city should depart and leave. Go out to the country. Because these are days of vengeance, he says in verse 22, of God's judgment upon Israel, because she had rejected her Messiah.

She killed him. And the scriptures will detail this punishment. It will be fulfilled. And notice how terrible it will be.

23, woe to those who with child. Woe to those who nurse babes. For the great distress upon the land. Wrath to his people. They'll fall by the edge of the sword.

They'll be led captive in all the nations. A sad day for women who are pregnant. A sad day for women who are nursing babes. Because great distress.

[34:15] Because they rejected their Messiah. Remember, these remarks are the pattern for judgment in the future. In other words, these words, they apply to the latter period at the end of time when the great tribulation takes place upon the earth.

Woe to you who are pregnant during that tribulation. Woe to your nursing mothers, because that day too will be terrible for you. They will be killed. Many will be enslaved.

Even the young mothers. The city would go into captivity just like they did before. No grace or mercy from the Romans.

They completely wiped out Jerusalem and laid it flat. Just like the Babylonians did in 586 BC. Jerusalem will and notice Jesus says at the end of verse 24, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Victorious armies will conquer the great city. This statement has a short and long term view though. And that Jerusalem's fall is analogous for the end because of the world's unfaithfulness.

[35:28] Just like Israel was unfaithful, as the world was unfaithful, judgment will come upon the whole world. For how long will Jerusalem's destruction be like this?

For how long? Jesus says until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. With the times of the Gentiles the only Gentile domination of Jerusalem. Why is Jesus saying this?

This is the part that's kind of weird. Wait a second. Matthew doesn't talk about this. Mark doesn't talk about this. John doesn't even talk about any of this. But Matthew and Mark don't say anything about this. Why is Jesus saying this?

Why does Luke have this in his gospel? What does Jesus automatically assume when he makes this statement here? Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

What does he mean? What is he assuming? Three things. I'll put the third one up on the screen for you. first, the duration of the city's fall is limited.

[36:33] There's going to be an end to it. I mean, until this time. So there's going to be a certain end. Second, Gentiles will dominate, but a latter period is going to be different.

The Gentiles won't dominate. So, in short, Jesus is differentiated between Israel and Gentiles. And after Jerusalem's fall, the Gentiles will be prominent.

And yet, that time, the Gentiles would come to an end later on. So, third, other thing that this assumes is that Israel has a future in God's plan.

There's a future for Israel. The way Paul put it, Israel will be grafted back into the covenants. The big trees, the covenants, the promise. What happened to Israel, they were pulled out and Gentiles were grafted into the covenants of promise.

And now, what's going to happen is, Israel's going to be grafted back into the covenants of promise. Romans chapter 11 verses 24 to 27. Israel as a nation would be reincorporated in that Israel as a whole would experience God's salvation.

[37:45] A major, major revival of Israel as a nation. It would come to their Messiah. Israel. This is what's called, we're moving into what's called the chilliest or what's also known as the pre-millennial viewpoint.

The belief that Israel would be grafted back in, they would along with the church experience the glories of Christ's kingdom as he reigns over this world in a full world domination.

Church and Israel will be one because there's one people of God. And we together would reign over the world, over this earth as kings, reigning with Christ in this kingdom.

That's the pre-millennial or tilliest viewpoint. So, observe what's happening. This is what's going on. So, how do you prepare for this? You're observing what's going on. We're seeing what's happening, what's unfolding before our eyes. Which leads to number five. Number five is this. Straighten and lift up your head.

[38 : 53] Fifth way for you to prepare for your final redemption. Straighten and lift up your head. 25 to 33. Since Jerusalem's fall is analogous to the end, Jesus outcomes his discourse toward the end.

First notice, signs in sun, moon, stars. First cosmic signs, changes in the sun, moon, and stars, natural wonders. And then notice what he says here too. Upon the earth, dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea, the waves, men fainting from fear and expectation of the things which are coming upon the world.

For the power of the heavens will be shaken, he says. People will be dismayed, tormented by uncertainty.

They're at a loss over the circumstances. I mean, if people, they feel, would feel totally helpless in the face of a natural disaster, even today people feel that way, don't they?

They would be overcome with great fear, looking with expectation what's happening to the world because the powers of the heaven will be shaken. In other words, in short, people will be freaking out.

[40 : 06] They'll be freaking out. What's going on? Strange things will be happening. People won't know what's going on. People won't understand what's happening. The heavens are shaking. Global chaos, sea turbulences, complete mayhem, and then 27.

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. glory. And then the Son of Man will return in a cloud with power, with great glory.

The King of God's kingdom will come with great authority and majesty. The powerful coming of the one who is deity, who brings judgment by the power of God.

Here He is, He comes, He comes on the cloud, He's here. And then notice 28, when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads because your redemption is near.

These things, what are the things? The cosmic signs and Jesus' return. When you see these things, how should we react as His disciples? The moment is here.

[41 : 13] The moment we've been longing for. The moment we've been waiting for. The Messiah in the totality of His authority and power is here. So straighten and lift up your head.

Why do you lift up your head? Because if you're in shame, if you're in fear, you're not like this, you're like this, right? Oh no, oh no, this is terrible. Jesus, no, He lifts up your head.

Yes! He's here! He's here! Oh, finally! I don't have to eat chocolate anymore. Finally! He's here!

Notice the difference with the nations who are cowering with fear. The foreboding, the shame that they have, but not us.

We lift up our heads. Why? Because your redemption has drawn near. There's total deliverance from a fallen world. It has come.

[42 : 14] All that was promised has come. Faith is now sight. The Son of Man is coming. You see authority, victory, while the world is in dreadful fear.

True followers have great hope. You prepare by straining up, lifting up your head, you're ready, I'm ready, I'm willing, come. Oh, glorious day, oh, glorious day, that will be.

Isn't that good? One day he's coming. An illustration he gives. 29, fig tree, all trees. Since they put forth leaves, you see it, you know for yourself summer's down here.

They begin to leaf out. For us right now, it's the opposite. Everything, all the leaves are falling and making a mess. It's like, okay, now I gotta go sweep that up. The trees, they look dead.

And then when you go out there, February, March, April, you see the little green things coming out, right? Oh, spring's coming, summer's coming. Wait, summer's coming, that's not so good for us, it's really hot.

[43 : 18] So what he's saying, thus, when disciples see these things happening, the conclusion they can draw is God's kingdom is near. Even so you too, when you see these things happening, recognize, know that the kingdom of God is near.

God's kingdom in all its fullness will be coming, that's come. All of God's promises will come to pass and his people will be vindicated as people observe trees and the summer is coming, so one can observe these events, the cosmic signs and Jesus' return.

And no consummation has come. And then Jesus says this, 32, should I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.

And what? What did Jesus say? What does this mean? This generation? What generation? There's actually six different viewpoints to how you can take this.

Six of them, that's right. I think probably the best way, there's other ways, some take the viewpoint that Jesus is saying this race will not pass away the Jewish race.

[44 : 25] I don't lean in that direction, I lean in another direction. When he says generation, Jesus meant that generation that sees the events of the end. That very generation.

Generation that sees the beginning of the end will also see its end. In other words, it happens quickly within a generation. That's what he's saying. I think that's probably the better way to take the text. But notice how certain Jesus is about this.

Verse 33, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Jesus' word is certain, it's more permanent, being truth, than the earth or the heavens. The end will come just like he predicted it would.

But creation will pass long before Jesus' word would. God's word endures forever. God's word endures forever.

That's how we're preparing. We're preparing what's happening. Straighten up and lifting up our heads for him to come. That's how we're preparing. Two more ways for you. We did one through six.

[45 : 26] Now, seven and eight. Verse number seven, take heed or, in a positive spin, pursue godliness. Jesus here exhorts them to take heed.

34, be on guard or take heed that your heart should not be weighted down with dissipation, drunkenness, the worries of life. In other words, you don't become careless believing that this day will never come and it doesn't matter how you live.

That phrase weighted down, it means having an insensitive heart, thus a careless attitude. Well, how does one become careless in their attitude?

Dissipation, drunkenness, the worries of life. Interesting, that phrase worries of life takes us back to chapter eight. with the sower and when the tree or the grain that begins to sprout, what chokes it are the worries of life, the anxieties of life.

Those types of things, carousing, excessive drinking, the cares of this world would all be destroyed. God's need. Jesus says, take heed.

[46 : 38] Be on guard. Pursue godliness. Because if you do, if you're not doing this, that day will surprise you. It will come and you sound like a trap.

For it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. That day will snap shut and catch its victims, says one writer. Judgment will come.

The temptation would be to imitate the people of this world. Wait a second, why would Jesus say such a thing? I mean, would true Christians do this? Would true Christians act like this?

Yeah, these sins are out of character for disciples of Jesus, but, J.C. Ryle says this, quote, there is no sin so great, but a great saint may fall into it.

There is no saint so great, but he may fall into a great sin. So, Jesus has given a warning to us. The warning is that you live your life prepared for the day of judgment, so that you won't be surprised and be trapped facing God's wrath because you have shown by the way you live your life, you have no allegiance to Jesus.

[48 : 00] Judgment comes upon all who dwell on the earth. The end is on all. Prepare yourself. Prepare yourself for your final redemption by taking heed. In other words, pursue godliness.

And last, number eight, there's three of them, together, be watchful, faithful, and pray for strength. Right there in verse 36. Keep on the word, be watchful at all times.

Pray, know that you may have strength, one, to escape all these things that are about to take place, two, stand before the Son of Man. Instead of excessive drink, instead of drunkenness, instead of worries and the cares of this life, instead, disciples of Jesus should be on the alert at all times, praying for strength in these two ways, to escape these things to stand before the Son of Man. In other words, to be faithful in the midst of intense pressure, and strength to endure temptation. That's what He's saying. That's how you prepare yourself. Temptation will come in the midst of brutal persecution.

Other pressures of this life, and with this pressure, we need God's strength. Pray for it. Don't think you can do it on your own. Look for God's kingdom to come, and God's strength to be faithful. [49 : 21] Be faithful, a faithful disciple of Jesus. Pray for God to give you the strength to do that. so you can stand before the Son of Man.

Some events must precede the end. Persecution, false claims about Messiah, wars, natural disasters, Jerusalem's fall. In the midst of this persecution, followers of Jesus can rely on their Savior for guidance on how to reply their accusers.

Jerusalem's destruction is like his return. judgment will come upon the whole earth. It will come quickly and suddenly within one generation. His coming will bring redemption for his disciples, but judgment for his rejecters.

So, his disciples should not live careless lives, but be watchful and alert at all times, pursuing the holiness, honoring God, praying for his strength to stay faithful as they await their salvation.

So, be prepared. Prepare yourself. Depend upon God and the strength to endure. Jesus is not with us, true, but we have his spirits. And he has all things under control.

[50 : 38] Everything. He's watching out for his own. And he'll return for our redemption. He will. So, live faithfully, watch and pray until he comes.

Be prepared. Take a few moments to think and ponder what we've seen in the scriptures this morning. Pray, even for strength, that you would be faithful and endure, that you would prepare yourself in these different ways.

I'll give you a few moments to do that, and then we'll continue by having our time of giving, singing our last two songs in our closing prayer. So, think and pray and ponder.

We'llikan para your five minutes past, can we Thank you.

Thank you.