

May 3, 2020

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Luke 21: 31-36

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Take Heart, Watch, Wait & Pray

## Introduction:

We are entering our seventh week of the shutdown and for many of us dealing with no sports has taken its toll. Sports often are a venue to vent and destress. I really miss our Yankees. For now many are resorting to watching old recorded ballgames. Even President Trump has resorted in doing this. I came across a fascinating college football game. In 1929 Georgia Tech played UCLA in the Rose Bowl. In that game a young man named Roy Riegals recovered a fumble for UCLA. He picked up the ball and began running 65 yards toward the goal line. The problem was he was headed for the wrong goal. He was about to score a touchdown for Georgia Tech. His teammate Benny Lom saw what was happening and got to him before getting into the end zone. Why Roy went the wrong could have been for various reason. Maybe he was just confused in the heat of the game. Some of us can become confound in the heat and pandemonium of this Coronavirus. We have some dear saints who have lost sight of the right goal post and they are heading in the wrong direction. Yes, things are chaotic and even scary but we must follow the Lord's instructions and yes He did give guidance to us for these times. He told us when these things come to past, "Watch, Wait and Pray".

## 1. Watch!

1. In Luke chapter 21 Jesus is teaching His disciples about end time events and what should be watch for. Jesus was not referring to His own generation but of the generation that sees these future signs in which he spoke of. Today we are seeing the shadows of those end time signs and we should watch as Jesus stated in verse 28, **"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"**.

To be true to the text Jesus was speaking concerning the Jewish nation and people. He concluded that no matter how terrible the tribulation times get that they would not perish. God would secure His chosen people despite terrible persecution and attempted genocide. Christ is explaining that this future generation must be aware and "Watch" because this is relevant to the whole earth and the Jewish nation.

2. Next in verse 36 the Lord Jesus says, **Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.** Jesus told His followers to pray that they may be found worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass. The good news in Jesus is that we don't have to go through this calamity that is coming. His Church the Bride is taken up prior to the Tribulation, however the signs of the End Times cast there shadow to this present time. We must watch because our redemption is coming, the Rapture of the church it is our hope and peace that we escape the great time of Jacob's trouble.

3. This is the time known as the seventh week of Daniel that still pertains to God people the Jews. In Daniel 12:1 clearly the reference is to "thy people" - the Jews. They are the main ones who are suffering during the time of the Tribulation. Daniel is told of two things about this future generation after he received from Almighty God the lasts day prophecy in Daniel 12:4. **But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.**

1. This prophecy should help us discern the sign of the times. Please note I am not saying signs of the Rapture. Daniel is told that travel will increase. As you know, for thousands of years the methods of transportation scarcely improved. Then man invented the steam engine and marvel followed upon marvel. In 1908, the Ford Motor Company launched the Model T and in the first year production sold over 10,000 cars. In 1914 the assembly line produced 300,000 cars a year. Travel changed forever. Airplanes were invented jets and rockets. The speed of transportation increased until now men are traveling eighteen thousand miles an hour and that is just the beginning. We are seeking to travel at warp speed.

2. Knowledge will increase another sign. Along with this has come a fantastic increase in general knowledge that has produced our modern age of technology. Computers are super-fast and can do thousands of calculations in a minute. E-mail and smart cell phones and satellites have enables knowledge to increase and to be received in a faction of time compared to just a generation ago. We all surf the information highway called the web. Information is at our fingertips. The Apostle Paul exhorted in I Thess. 5:6, **“Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.** What are we “the Church” to watch for? ...

## II. Wait for the rapture ( I Thess. 4:13-16)

1. The Rapture is our ticket out of the future end time events that we know are coming. So have hope. Yes, Jesus spoke of a time of sorrows that we will have to endure but the worst is yet to come and thank God the bride of Christ is taken up and out. Paul writes: **But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (4:13 a-b).**

2. The Apostle Paul uses the word asleep, or "sleep," it is often used in the Bible as a euphemism for believers who have died. For example, when Jesus hears his dear friend Lazarus has died, what does He say to His disciples in John 11:11. “He sleepeth”. Maybe Jesus himself coined this expression. The word asleep indicates there will be an awakening and expresses the temporary nature of death. **Therefore, believers should sorrow not, even as others which have no hope (4:13c).** Knowing about Christ's return gives us hope in the midst of our grief and even in this time of the dealing with a horrible virus.

3. The word “asleep,” koimaō to cause to sleep, is the word from which we get our word cemetery. It really meant a sleeping place. It was a substitute word for dormitory, a place where people sleep. For the Christians the term is accurate, for it is a temporary thing. Our love ones are asleep in the hotel of God to be awakened at the last trump. Now be careful

I did not say their soul sleeps but our corrupt bodies sleep and will be made anew. Where is the spirit? It is with God. In Ecc. 12:7 we read, **“[https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/ecc/12/7/s\\_671007](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/ecc/12/7/s_671007) Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.**

Then, their spirits, which are in heaven, will be reunited with their resurrected, earthly bodies that Jesus will transform to be like His glorified body (Philip. 3: 20, 21).

4. Folks, for a Christian, death is not a period; it is a comma, because there is more to come. However, in the midst of our grief, we are to have hope.

Our blessed hope, according to Titus 2:13 is **Looking (WATCH!) for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ**; Watch and watch how you live too don't be found unfaithful... Paul explains: **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (4:14).** The fact that Jesus died and rose again is our guarantee of our future deliverance, we are out of here!

5. Some ask will there really come a day when airplanes fall from the skies, unmanned cars crash into store fronts because people are mysteriously missing from cars, train, and planes. Would to God if the rapture occurs let it happen now in a time where so many are at home and airplanes are ground and subways are poorly attended. But it is not for us to say when but to watch because our hope is that our redemption draweth nigh. Paul said the Rapture will happen, Christ will not abandon His bride...this unique group of believers.

6. The term for Rapture is in verse 17, "shall be caught up together," it is the term from which we get the concept of Rapture. . The word comes from the Latin Vulgate "rapio / rapiemur. In the Latin Vulgate, rapiemur is translated from the Greek word, / *har'pa'zo* / meaning "carry off". It is to be caught up, snatched up. It has to do with the catching away of the church, the taking up of the church. So you can imagine when you talk about the Rapture your unsaved friends and family want to haul you off in a strait jacket. Too many false prophets have disparaged the doctrine of the Rapture. None the less it is true. The bride of Christ is not the first rapture. There have been others: **Enoch**: Genesis 5:23-25; **Elijah** was taken up into heaven: --II Kings 2:1, 11; **Jesus**: ascended before the apostles in Acts 1:10, 11

### III. Wail (Pray)--- I Thess. 5:17

1. Yes, things in our lives may be upside down and in confusion, just making it another day seems harsh. Some are worried about the bills and the rent. However you can make it! Dr. Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission once said, "You go forward on your knees". Don't sell out to the lie - I don't feel like I can pray so I just won't put myself through that... Prayer is not a feeling it is a choice, make the choice to pray. We choose to pray even in our spiritual feebleness because the scripture tell us to do this. Even the greatest of God servants have had these times.

2. We need to be brave and pray like Jehoshaphat in II Chronicle 20 when all the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. It was a time of great despair for Judah but verse 9 tells us, Jehoshaphat prayed "**If, *when* evil cometh upon us, *as* the sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name *is* in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.** Right now many feel helpless but are you focus on God. You can worry and fret and complain but that won't stop this virus or make anyone better. We are told to pray to be like Jehoshaphat and trust God in what you don't understand.

3. Prayers changes things, prayer changes lives, prayer grants us the protected power of God. As Christians, we believe that God hears us when we pray not because we deserve it but because Christ has opened the way for us to talk directly to the Father.

We often make our requests quietly and confidently, but there are times when we cannot help but cry out to God in heartbreak and anguish. When we ask, souls are saved.

**The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer. —Psalm 6:9**

### Conclusion:

Prayer activates our faith. After praying, we are more prone to trust God and with this trust come an attitude of hope and peace that replaces the petty and critical attitudes that come when we haven't prayed. As God's people we must learn to pray in the midst of problems, following God's Word. The devil is going to attack you and try to make you panic but praise God: "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Believe in the power of prayer.

**(For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds- II Co.10:4**

Jesus instruction to us for this time period is to Watch and pray! Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. ---Ephesians 6:18