

The King Who comes in Power

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[0 : 00] But we're going to turn now to our reading this morning, and we're back in Luke's Gospel, chapter 21. If you have one of our Blue Church Bibles, you'll find that on page 880.

And we're going to read this morning Luke 21, verse 5, to the end of the chapter. And it's the last section of this particular part of Luke's Gospel.

It began at chapter 19, verse 28. And you'll see there's typical little summary sentences at the end of the chapter. So Luke 21, verse 5.

When some were speaking of the temple and how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, Jesus said, As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.

And they asked him, Teacher, when will these things be? What will be the sign when these things are about to take place? And he said, Watch that you are not led astray.

[1 : 15] For many will come in my name, saying, I am he, and the time is at hand. Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified.

For these things must first take place. But the end will not be at once. Then he said to them, Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all this, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons.

And you'll be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it, therefore, in your minds not to meditate beforehand on how to answer.

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You'll be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends.

[2 : 21] And some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair on your head will perish.

By your endurance you will gain your lives. But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. And let those who are inside the city depart. And let not those who are out in the country enter it. For these are days of vengeance to fulfill all that is written.

Alas for women who are pregnant. And for those who are nursing infants in those days. For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.

They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles or by the nations. Until the times of the nations are fulfilled.

[3 : 22] And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars and on the earth. Distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves.

People fainting with fear and with foreboding for what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Now when these things begin to take place. Straighten up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near. And he told them a parable.

Look at the fig tree and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf you see for yourselves. And you know that the summer is already near. So also when you see these things taking place.

You know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you. This generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away.

[4 : 24] But my words will not pass away. But watch yourselves. Lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life.

And that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times.

Praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that are going to take place. And to stand before the Son of Man. Every day he was teaching in the temple.

But at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple. To hear him. Amen. May God bless to us this his word.

Well would you turn with me to Luke's Gospel chapter 21. Page 880 if you have one of the Blue Church Bibles.

[5 : 30] You can see from the little summary statement in verses 37 and 38. That this is the end of another of Luke's sections. Began in 1938 with Jesus' entry to Jerusalem.

And it's dominated by teaching in the temple and teaching about the temple. The very heart of Israel's experience as God's people was the temple. And Jesus comes as Israel's king first of all offering peace.

But of course he is rejected and resisted even by his own chosen people. But he is Lord of the temple and he will not be denied that lordship. And as we saw in the vineyard parable in chapter 20. The time will come when the owner will take away that vineyard. He will take away his chosen fruit bearing household for the world. And he will give its ministry to others.

Jesus is very clear. Israel will lose its place to the Gentile nations of the world. But Jesus of course is Lord not only of Israel but also of all the nations.

[6 : 39] And all the ages. And as we saw that last time in the psalm that's quoted in chapter 20 verse 43. He will reign until all of his enemies are put under his feet.

And he will sit as judge on the whole world one day. And so in this last section of Jesus' discourse. We shouldn't be surprised that Jesus reminds us very clearly that he is the king.

Who at last will come with power. Power which cannot be resisted. Those days will come. The great day of the Lord. The great day of judgment. And indeed it is near.

And it is about to be felt beginning on the earth. What will that mean for the people of Jesus' day?

The Jews of Jesus' day? And what will it mean for the world?

Well back in chapter 17 at verse 20. Jesus has already said that the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed. The kingdom is already in the midst of you he says. The kingdom is where Jesus the king is.

[7 : 42] And yet there immediately he did go on to talk about the day when the son of man would be revealed. A day still in the future. And he told parables didn't he? That clearly implied a delay before that final judgment.

Talked about the persistent widow. Do you remember? Who kept praying and waiting. And in chapter 19 there was the parable of the ten miners. About the king who went away and then returned suddenly to judge those who had rejected him.

And then in chapter 20 the parable of the tenants. Again the same message. There is a judgment that is still to come. And so here Jesus returns to that theme and explains it much more fully.

You get similar versions in Mark 13 and in Matthew chapter 24 and 25 where it's particularly expanded. And each writer has their own particular emphasis which is governed by their own particular gospel aim.

At first sight when we read this chapter though it seems quite daunting. Seems a bit confusing. But in fact I think Jesus is really quite logical in his teaching.

[8 : 48] And Luke of course as we know is very careful in his ordering of what he records. In order to make clear the message that he wants to make clear. And I think the main issues are very clear indeed.

The critical phrase, the key phrase is there in the last line of verse 9. The end, that is the end of this world and its judgment, will not be at once. There will be a period.

As the psalm quoted in verse 43 of chapter 20 said. Until all God's enemies are put under his feet. And there is a final consummation of judgment.

With Jesus' death and resurrection and his ascension to sit at God's right hand. The new age, the end of the ages was near. The kingdom of God is drawing near. That's Jesus' phrase often.

And the gospel age means that the long awaited judgment of God, the day of the Lord, has begun. Just as the prophets constantly predicted and proclaimed.

[9 : 52] And as the prophet said, judgment begins at the house of God. That's why it's no surprise that it's the admiration of God's house, the temple here, that gives occasion for this whole discussion.

It will be totally destroyed, says Jesus in verse 6. Something which to any Israelite would surely signify, quite literally, the end of the world.

That's why in verse 7, the disciples asked, well, when will this be? What will be the signs that this is going to happen? In both Matthew and Mark's account, it is actually phrased, what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?

It's not explicit here, but it's implied. Because as I said, to any Israelite, the destruction of God's temple must mean that. It must mean that the new age of the world to come has begun.

But Jesus answers in verse 8 and says, don't be led astray. Don't be mistaken. It won't come as you are assuming it will come.

[10 : 56] Many will come and many will assume that because of things they're seeing, that is what's happening. But Jesus says, no, the end will not be at once. There'll be wars, there'll be tumults, there'll be all sorts of horrors.

Yes, there will. But don't be terrified. The end will not be quite yet. But make no mistake, the great day of judgment will surely come, both for this present generation of Israelites and for the whole evil world.

This generation is something Jesus has talked about all the way through Luke's gospel. Chapter 9, verse 41, a faithless and twisted generation.

Chapter 10, verse 29, an evil generation. Worse than the Ninevites, worse than other pagans who repented at God's warnings. They would not. The most privileged generation of the most privileged people in the world.

And yet, as Jesus had foretold in Luke 17, 25, they would reject him. They would cause him to suffer and die. Christ, God's own son.

[12 : 07] So generations of prophets had been sent to woo them. John the Baptist had at last come to warn them. And then God sent his own son. And they hated and killed him.

So just look back to chapter 19, verse 43, to see what Jesus had said there. Days will come upon you when enemies will utterly destroy you.

So you see here, Jesus uses that same fateful phrase, days will come when everything is going to be destroyed.

And so Luke's chief focus here in the context is on the people Jesus is speaking to, that very generation. And if you look at verse 32 of our chapter, you'll see he says that is going to happen to this generation.

This generation will not pass away until all this has taken place. It's more certain than the heavens and the earth. My words will not pass away. You can be sure about this.

[13 : 16] But of course, Jesus is also talking in this passage about ultimate judgment on the whole of this world. Look at verse 26. He clearly speaks about something that is coming on the world.

When the world will see the Son of Man coming with power and great glory. All, verse 35, who dwell on the face of the earth. Make no mistake. So you can see Jesus has two clear horizons in view. Because the end will not be at once. And so we need to understand this whole program of God's unfolding plan and purpose for his coming kingdom. How it's going to draw near, to use Jesus' phrase, in this new age, in these last days.

As these last days dawn for the world in Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension to glory. So what is the program for these last days in the earth?

Which is what the New Testament calls the age that we are living in. Well, that is a question that Jesus is addressing here in Luke 21. And most importantly, he's teaching his followers what they will all experience as his people.

[14 : 28] And he teaches them what to expect in history. And above all, he's teaching them how they are to endure. So that they will gain their lives.

And so that they will stand vindicated before the Son of Man when he comes. And escape the judgment on this world that sweeps others away into a lost eternity.

Those who don't listen to Jesus. Those who don't bow to his rule. Those who ignore his warnings here. So let's first look at verses 10 to 19.

Where we're told very clearly what Christ's followers will experience in the last days. In these days of Christ's rule as he puts all his enemies under his footstool. What verses 10 to 19 show us is a consistent pattern to the end.

When the kingdom draws near with power, it will mean days of both warfare and witness. For the people of God. The whole picture is one of crisis.

[15:31] One of great pressure, isn't it? Describes so many periods in history. Not least our own day. Just look at the Middle East today. With Russia flexing its muscles. With the U.S. responding. With ISIS. And all the rest of it.

That's verses 10 and 11 right in front of us, isn't it? It's a story of history. Because in these last days, the world is still groaning under the curse of sin.

And Jesus makes plain that there will be upheaval right to the very end. Both what we would call natural things. Famine and pestilence and so on. And things caused by humans.

But more than that, because people still rebel against God. And will oppose his seed right to the very end. We will see persecution. As they hated Jesus.

So Jesus says they will hate his people. For my name's sake. Verse 12. People will be persecuted and imprisoned by the state. For my name's sake. Verse 17.

[16:30] You'll be hated by all. For my name's sake. That's fairly grim. But remember Jesus' words back in Luke 6. Blessed are you. When people hate you.

On account of the Son of Man. Because all of this, verse 13, do you see, is part of God's plan. This will be your opportunity for witness in the world. And verse 15.

Fear not. He will give you the words and the wisdom that you need when adversaries face you.

Well, we read on in Luke's second book into the Acts of the Apostles. And we see that in spades, don't we?

Like Acts chapter 4. Where the apostles were arrested and flogged. And it led to great witness. And you see, the whole church understood that. And that great prayer at the end of Acts chapter 4.

When the gospel causes such furor. When it causes such offense in the world. What do they pray? For boldness to go on speaking. In that way.

[17:28] I read recently somebody today saying that today. We're much more likely in the church to be praying for great sensitivity for our message. So people receive it and don't get offended.

But they saw that opposition and offense and persecution was opportunity. For real witness. With real heavenly power. That none could withstand or contradict.

I wonder if we need to relearn something of that in the church today. That powerful and effective witness.

Evangelism that really changes lives. That really grows the kingdom. That it comes with boldness. Born in the face of real opposition.

And real cost. When Jesus says in verse 15. I will give you utterance and wisdom. He means of course. Through the Holy Spirit. Who comes upon the church for that very purpose.

[18:30] For witness. We read in Acts chapter 1 verse 6. Don't we? You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses. In Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria.

And to the ends of the earth. And indeed it is the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. That ushers in. These last days. The days of witness. When the kingdom of God draws near.

In both salvation and judgment. In the proclamation of the gospel of Christ. Now there was a foretaste of that. Back in Luke chapter 10. When Jesus sent out the 72.

And we're told twice. That the kingdom came near. Into people's lives. It came near in blessing. If they heard and responded. It came near in judgment.

If they rejected. And Jesus said then. Do you remember? He who hears you. Hears me. And the one who rejects you. Rejects me. And so it is.

[19:26] In these last days. In that ultimate sense. Jesus said. Back in Luke chapter 12. That of his own ministry. Even blasphemy.

Against the son of man. To his face. Could still find forgiveness. But not. Blasphemy. Against the Holy Spirit. That is.

The testimony of the apostolic gospel. Through the Holy Spirit. Bearing witness to the resurrection of Jesus. And calling people. To repent. People's response.

To the message of the finished work of Christ. Will be utterly decisive. According to Jesus. Jesus. But note. What Jesus says.

Of this common experience. Of the last days. For his people. His spirit filled people. Living in this age. Of the spirit. The age of the witness. Of the church. It will be an age.

[20 : 23] He says. Of warfare. Struggles. Persecution. State opposition. And great pain.

Verse 16. Betrayals. Look at that. Even from family. Loved ones. Friends. Even violence. And murder. And hatred. From the nearest. And dearest.

For those who love Jesus. An age of warfare. And yet. Of witness. Of wisdom. Incontrovertible. And of power. That is. Irresistible. Losing friends. Yes. Losing livelihood. Losing lives. Losing lives. Losing lives. On this earth.

But. Verse 18. Protected. Utterly. For the life. That is everlasting. You will gain your lives. Forever.

[21 : 21] That's the real. Spirit filled. Victorious. Christian life. In this age of the spirit. According to Jesus. Very different. Isn't it? Very different. From what some people.

Would have you believe. Power ministry is. And spirit filled ministry. Health. And healing. And prosperity. And ease. Not that. Swooning around.

With sentimental worship. Not that. Says Jesus. But rather battles. Struggles. Wounds. Scars. Of warfare. There. Jesus call.

Is to blood. And toils. And tears. And sweat. And endurance. To the very end. That's how he says. We'll gain our lives.

For eternity. Verse 19. That's what lives of. Christian witness. Will look like. And experience. As one writer puts it.

[22 : 16] The summons. To Christians. Is to proclaim the gospel. In the midst. Of crisis conditions. And to recognize. That crisis times. Are for the Christian. Not times. For wringing hands.

And moaning in distress. But for being up and doing. In the service of the word. And that's what true followers. Will experience. In the last days.

Says Jesus. If indeed. They are following the real. Lord Jesus Christ. Remember Paul's words. In 1 Corinthians 16. A wide and effective door. For witness.

Has opened to me. Witness. And. There are many adversaries. Warfare. Now friends.

I think we need to be bucked up. Don't we. By Jesus words here. Because we live in a generation. That has become very very soft. Especially men. I think this must be the softest.

[23 : 09] Generation of Christian men. There's ever been in the world. I was. Thinking about that last Saturday. When we had the. OMF celebration here. 150 years of the China Indian mission. Thinking of.

Hudson Taylor. And some of these early missionaries. And their sheer grit. And determination. And understanding of sacrifice. They knew many of them. They were going to their deaths. So many of those missionaries.

They gave their health. They gave their lives. Gladly. In the service of Christ. Christ. I couldn't help thinking. Well. Where are all these real men today? Many of us think.

We're doing God. An enormous favor. We just turn up once. On a Sunday for church. We're far too tired. To come out again. In the evening. Goodness. We have a terribly hard life today. Never mind doing anything.

Or saying anything. That would ever cause. Uproar. Or unpopularity. At work. Or offense. Oh Lord. Please help me. To be sensitive. I wonder if.

[24 : 11] There's ever been any cause. For us to be hated by all. For Jesus sake. Jesus isn't saying. We're to be offensive people. That's a very different thing.

What is it that makes people hate? I think we're really rather feeble. And soft today. How are we going to cope. If verse 16. Ever actually. Physically.

Happened to us. But Jesus says. That is the kind of experience. That we should expect. In these last days. Certainly. If we're to be involved.

In real witness. In effective witness. The kind of witness. That can't be withstood. The kind of witness. That is with power. Maybe we better stop singing.

The Lord's Prayer. Because when we sing. Thy kingdom come. This is what we're praying for.

These are the birth pangs. As Matthew calls them in his version. The birth pangs. Of the kingdom of

God.

[25 : 08] You can't give birth. Can you? Without real pains. Labor pains. And Jesus says. No. And my kingdom of power. cannot draw near.

Without pains. Without pains. Look at these verses. Perils. Adversaries. Persecutions. Hatred. But also proclamation.

And wisdom. And power. And salvation. Warfare. And real witness. Seem to go together for Jesus. Jesus. That's genuine discipleship.

In the last days. But make no mistake. These birth pains. Will. Bring to fruition. God's purpose. And plan. To vindicate his name.

To bring vengeance. On his foes. On all of those. Who reject his son. And so. Verses 20 to 28.

Jesus moves on. To speak about. What Christ's followers.

[26 : 05] Are to expect. In these last days. The days when Christ. Judges. His enemies. And he gives in these verses. Two. Clear. Predictions.

Of the end. First of all. In history. For Israel. And then upon history. For the whole world. And in both of these. He says. There will be vengeance.

And vindication. For the son of God. First of all. Verses 20 to 24. Look to the near horizon. And to a coming judgment. On Judea. And on Jerusalem.

And the prophet Daniel. In his vision. Foresaw a time. When the anointed one. The Messiah. Would be cut off. And there would be a destruction. Following in Jerusalem. And the sanctuary. And the temple.

And there would be a great desolation. And there would be war. To the end. And Jesus says. In verse 20. That is exactly. What will happen. As I said.

[26 : 58] He's already spoken. In chapter 17. And he's given the reason. Because. They reject Jesus. Their own Messiah. They blasphemed him. They rejected him. So great.

Was Jesus mercy. That he was still going to give them. Yet another chance. Remember the parable of the fig tree. In chapter 13. Chop it down.

No. Let's give it one more chance. Another year. Fertilize it. Give it every opportunity. To bear fruit. God. And so. After Christ. Has been crucified.

Even by his own. And risen. And ascended. To heaven. What does he do? He sends his apostles. To whom? To preach the gospel. To the Jew first.

And also to the Gentiles. Even now. Offering. Repentance. That was Peter's message. On the day of Pentecost. This Christ. Whom you crucified. God has raised.

[27 : 53] And made Lord of all. So repent. Therefore. For the forgiveness. Of your sins. This promise. Is still to you. And to your children. And praise God.

Some of them. Did repent. And receive the word. But in the main. The Jewish nation. Did not so. They rejected him.

And refused that salvation. They. Blasphemed. The Holy Spirit. Come to them. Offering mercy. Offering grace. They refused. God's forgiveness.

And therefore. Only wrath. Self-inflicted wrath. Only that. Could possibly. Remain for them. For a generation. Given nothing. But privilege.

And yet. Showed in return. Nothing but perversity. And so. God's judgment. Would come. Verse 22. As it is written. What Moses promised.

[28 : 47] In the curses. For a people. Spurning God's covenant. What the prophets. Repeatedly. Echoed. What Jesus himself. Affirmed. So solemnly. Verse 23. Do you see?

Wrath. Wrath. Against that generation. Swift. And terrible. Make no mistake. Says Jesus. It will come. And if you don't listen to me.

And if you don't flee. Don't think that you can be saved. God. And God. Withdraws. The blessing. Of his presence.

See. There comes a. Time. When the point of no return. Has been passed. For God's household. When he departs. When his protection. Is no longer there.

For those people. If that was so. For the covenant nation. Of Israel. How much more so. For Gentile churches. Who bear Christ's name.

[29 : 42] By adoption. Into his family. That's what Paul says. So clearly. In Romans 11. If God did not spare. The natural branches. Neither will he spare you. That's a very solemn word. Isn't it? For any Christian institution.

Today. That flouts. The lordship. Of Jesus Christ. The king. And the lord. And yet. Look at verse 24. Even such a cataclysmic. Judgment on Israel. Is not. The end of the world. It's not the end. Of God's plan. Indeed. In God's. Extraordinary providence. It serves his plan. For the times. Of the Gentile nations. To be fulfilled. And that too. Is what Paul explains. So wonderfully. In Romans. That the Jewish. Rejection. Of the gospel. Brings about reconciliation. For the nations. Of the world. The gospel. Has gone out. Into all the world. Just as God. Purposed. It should. And only. At last. When his plan. For all the nations. [30 : 38] Is fulfilled. Only then. Will come the final end. The end of all things. When the son of man returns. As he surely will.

Which is what verses 25 to 28. Speak of. The end will not be at once. Jesus says. There will be a judgment. On this generation. And this nation. For its rejection.

Of the son of God. But one day. There will be. The greatest seas. There will be. Judgment. Upon the whole. Earth. And you can see. There's clearly.

A change of focus. At verse 25. Jesus is talking here. In cosmic terms. About the whole earth. About the distress. Of nations. The Gentile nations. And the final end.

Comes. Verse 26. Upon the world. Upon the whole cosmos. They will all see. He says. Verse 27. The coming of the son of man. In a cloud. With power. And glory. That is exactly.

[31 : 33] The language. Jesus used. Back in chapter 17. Where he described. His coming. As like lightning. Observable. By everybody. Nobody. Can miss it. On the great day.

When he is revealed. And only then. As he says here. In verse 28. Is our true redemption near. He means. The redemption.

Of our bodies. When the whole world. Is released. From its bondage. To decay. When the whole creation. Obtains the freedom. Of the glory. Of the children of God.

As Paul puts it. In Romans 8. Only then. Will our heads. Be lifted up forever. And we'll walk tall. As true. And new. Human beings.

Restored bodily. To the image of Christ. Only then. Only when these. Things take place. At the great. Coming of the king. With power.

[32 : 26] And glory. So you see. What Jesus is doing. In speaking to his. First century disciples. In Palestine. Is telling them. What to expect. In the last days.

In the days of the end times. Inaugurated. With his death. And resurrection. The end will not be at once. There'll be a long. Experience. Of warfare. And witness.

For the people of Christ. But there will be. Vindication. For the person of Christ. First. First. In a terrible judgment. On that generation. Of Israelites. And at last.

In a great judgment. On the whole world. At Jesus return. So that's the what. If you like. That Jesus has given us. And because Jesus is a teacher.

Who is seeking a response. Now. Having given us the what. He turns to the so what. He's announced the coming judgment. And now. He turns to applying that message.

[33 : 22] To his heroes. Because that's the whole point. He wants people to be prepared. For that coming judgment. That's the thing Jesus wants us to do. And so just as he has announced. Two clear predictions.

Of coming judgment. So now. He addresses each in turn. To teach his followers. How Christ's followers. Are to endure. The coming judgments. Of the last days.

And these last two paragraphs. Verses 29 to 33. And 34 to 36. Focus on careful preparation. For the end. What we must do. Because whether it's that generation.

Jesus is speaking to. Or subsequent generations. He's very clear. That judgment. Will be faced. By all. That dwell. On the face of the earth. And so there must be.

Among all his people. There must be watchfulness. And wakefulness. That's what marks out. True saving faith. Faith that endures. It's faith that hears.

[34 : 19] And heeds. The words of salvation. So first. Verses 29 to 33. Jesus says. Be ready in this generation. For the fulfillment. Of what is written.

The judgment. On Jerusalem. And on its temple. And all the desolations. That must follow. What's coming on this generation. Verse 32. Is utterly. Certain.

People living today. Will live to see it. Jesus says. Heaven and earth themselves. Are more likely to pass away. Than that my words about this. Will not be fulfilled. Make no mistake.

That's what he's saying. And it happened. Exactly. As it was written. Historians tell us. In AD 70. The Romans. Sacked Jerusalem. They destroyed the temple. They burned the city. They slaughtered. Vast numbers of people. In a. In an invasion. Of terrible brutality.

[35 : 17] Terrible ferocity. And Jesus says to his followers. You need to watch out. For the signs of that day coming. And when you see them. You need to know. That that is what's going to happen.

Don't think you can escape that. Unless you respond. To what I've said. Verse 21. Unless you flee to the mountains. Unless you escape. That coming.

Disaster. Don't stay in Jerusalem. And just pray to God. For deliverance. Get out. You see. Jesus' instruction is very clear. Isn't it? Verse 29. There will be visible signs. Just like the leaves of the tree. Are seen. And tell you that summer is near. Well so you are to look.

Verse 29. Verse 31. See these things. What are they to see? Well what they're to see in verse 20. When you see Jerusalem. Surrounded by armies.

[36 : 15] Three times Jesus used that same word. See. Means see with your eyes. Pay attention to the world. And its history. And act according to my warning. And save your lives.

And history tells us that many Christians did. Do precisely that. They escaped that terrible slaughter. Because they listened to what Jesus said. But no doubt some of them didn't.

And perished. Just as when way back at. The Passover in Egypt. It was only those who actually did. What God said. About putting the blood. Actually on the doorposts.

That were saved. And the destroying angel. That went past. See sometimes Christians are very foolish. When they think about God's guidance. They want from God.

Some very special. Personal. Miraculous sign. Especially for me. To tell me exactly what to do. Before I act in obedience. To what God has already clearly said I must do.

[37 : 14] Well anybody who was in Jerusalem. And saw those Roman armies approaching. And then said to themselves. Well I haven't had a clear word from God. About what I should do in this situation yet. I'm not sure whether I should really forsake this God forsaken city.

Perhaps I should stay and try and be a good influence here. Perhaps I should stay and help things for the future. After all this is Israel. This is God's national standard bearer. God can't possibly desert Israel.

Well friends let me tell you. Anybody who thought like that. And did that. Was destroyed. By the Romans. And Jesus here gives them a warning. And tells them.

How to escape. How to endure. In the coming judgment. And it's not by prayer. It's by action. And of course the apostles tell us.

Don't they? Very plainly. That God has given us. In his word. Everything that we need. For life and godliness. Everything that we need to know. How to endure. And how to escape. Just such judgments.

[38 : 12] In time and history. As for example. When earthly temples. And institutions. Have passed the point of no return. This is what Paul says to the Ephesian church.

Let no one deceive you. With empty words. For because of these things. Sexual immorality. Impurity. Idolatry. Because of these things.

The wrath of God. Comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore don't associate with them. Have no fellowship. With the unfruitful works of diaries. Darkness. But instead. Expose them.

Flee. From them. Well God made it clear. That judgment was coming. In history. For that generation. And he told Israel. What to do.

What to look for. And how to act. And escape. But as real as that was. And as pertinent. As those warnings were. For those first listeners.

[39 : 10] To Jesus. Of overwhelming importance. To him. Was the ultimate judgment. That Jesus also promised. As absolutely certain. For all in this whole world.

For all eternity. That Jesus return. And if that coming. Historical judgment. Upon Israel. Required. Careful preparation. Then how much more so.

The judgment. That every human being. Will face. As Jesus says. In verse 35. All who dwell. On the face. Of the earth. And the historical. Fulfillment.

Of that judgment. In AD 70. Surely makes. The certainty. Of that coming. Final judgment. Even more. Incontrovertible. And so Jesus ends. You see. In verses 34 to 36.

Telling all his followers. How they're to prepare. For that great day. And again. He says. We must watch. But do you see. What a different kind.

[40 : 06] Of watching. This is. For that first. Specific judgment. In history. There would be things. To look for. With your physical eyes. Roman armies approaching.

And they were to pay attention. To world events. And that would tell them. When to act. And this is a very. Very different. Kind of watching. Here in verse 34. Jesus gives.

No signs. In world events. To trigger action. At a specific time. Please note that well. All through the ages. Many Christians.

Have made absolute fools. Of themselves. By searching for signs. Of the end of the age. Certain dates. Certain things. Like the millennium. Certain things in history. Signs in the stars. All sorts of things.

And they've acted upon them. And made Christians. Look like absolute cranks. Now what does Jesus say. In verse 34. Don't watch the stars. Don't watch the European Union. Don't watch the nations.

[41 : 03] Watch. Yourself. Watch. Watch. Lest your eyes be too much. On this world. And your hearts. Be too immersed. In this world. Giving yourself up.

To self-indulgence. To dissipation. And drunkenness. To dissolute living. Or. He says. Just. To be too focused. On the cares. Of this life. Just the normal things. The good things.

In this life. Our families. Our jobs. Our friends. Our loved ones. Our career progress. Our ambitions. Our promotion. Our education. Our music.

All these things. Be careful. Says Jesus. That you're not so immersed. In this world's cares. That that day. Comes upon you.

Suddenly. Like a trap. The day. Verse 35. That will come upon all. On the face of this earth. When we stand before the son of man.

[42 : 00] It'll come suddenly. It'll come unexpectedly. Just as Jesus had said. Back in chapter 17. Just like in Noah's day. When life was going on. Absolutely as normal. And then bang. Judgment fell. And nobody was ready.

No one. On the face of this whole earth. Says Jesus. Can avoid that judgment. Whether it's those alive. At Jesus return. Or whether.

We die first. And find ourselves. Just like that. Before the judgment seat of Christ. And so the question. Above all other questions. Is verse 36.

Will we be found standing. That is vindicated. Before the son of man. Or will we fall. Under his judgment. Because we're not prepared.

For that day. Jesus said in verse 19. It's those who endure. Who will stand. Who will gain their lives. He talks here in verse 36.

[43 : 01] About having strength. To escape. Through these judgments. That are to come. But how. How do we prepare. For that day. Well emphatically not. By paying attention. To the world.

And looking for visible signs. Like cranks. And fleeing to the mountains. We're 2,000 years too late. For that particular response. It won't work. No.

We're to pay attention. Says Jesus. To ourselves. Be watchful. And be wakeful. Watchful. Verse 34. That this world. Doesn't consume us. And steal our hearts.

And blind our eyes. To the reality of eternity. And the life to come. Watchful. In turning away. From this world. And its ways. And its lies. And its false promises. And its assurances.

Turning our back. On this world. Denying this world. Isn't that what Jesus says. Deny yourselves. That's all summed up. In one little word.

[43 : 58] That the Bible uses. Called. Repentance. Means turning away. From yourself. From this world. And its desires. Decisively. And day.

After day. After day. To the very end. Watchfulness. And wakefulness. Verse 36. Awake. Alert. At all times. To the world to come.

To the eternal world. And to the eternal king. And lord himself. And so prayerful. In touch with god. Crying out to him.

Decisively. And. Day. After day. After day. For strength. To endure. To endure to the very end. And to be found. Firm. Standing.

Before the son of man. On the great day of his appearance. Watchful. Lest this world consume us. And so turning our back. Back on its siren voices. In the denial.

[44 : 52] Of true. Repentance. And wakeful. At all times. Awake to the lord himself. Hearing his voice. Heeding his call. To follow him. That's what the bible calls faith.

Daily repentance. And daily faith. That's how you endure to the end. Says Jesus. Jesus. And that's the only way. To prepare.

For the coming of the lord Jesus. The king. Who will come with power. By your endurance. Says Jesus. You will gain your lives. The end will not come at once.

But that day. Will come upon all who dwell. On the face of the earth. Death. So are you ready for that day? Or is that day going to come upon you.

As a trap? See verse 37. Tells us. That all those people. Heard Jesus. Day after day. After day. Saying these things in the temple. But many of them.

[45 : 57] Perhaps most of them. Perished. In AD 70. Maybe you've heard it all before as well. Maybe you know it all very very well.

You've heard it day after day. Week after week. In this temple. Jesus says. Watch out. And wake up.

Lest that day come upon you. Suddenly. As a trap. Let's pray. Heavenly Father. How we thank you for your words.

Of gracious and merciful. Warning to us. Of the reality of your. Right and true.

Anger. Against. Sin. And rebellion. In our hearts. And against all. Hatred and denial.

[46 : 58] Of your lordship. And your sovereign rule. Over all this world. We know Lord. That you will come. In power. To judge.

And to justify. And so we pray. That you would keep us. Watchful. And wakeful. Day. After day. After day. Turning away. From all. That this world. Would ensnare us with. And turning our hearts. To you. In prayer. Seeking from you alone.

The strength. That is able. To make us. Endure. So help us. We pray. This day. And every day.

For we ask it. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.