

Dont Follow the Signs Follow Jesus

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into Luke chapter 21, discussing the impending desolation of Jerusalem, the days of vengeance, and the signs of the end times. It emphasizes the importance of focusing on Jesus amidst turmoil and not getting caught up in trying to decipher signs or predict specific events. The message encourages believers to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus, the ultimate hope and redemption in the midst of chaos and uncertainty.

Scripture: Luke 21:20, Luke 21:22, Luke 21:25, Luke 21:27, Hebrews 12:2, Romans 13:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, Matthew 24:42, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Hope in Turmoil", "Focus on Jesus"

Description

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Transcript

Luke chapter 21, Luke chapter 21, and we'll read from 20 through 33. I'm hoping to finish this whole passage from 20 through 38, but I don't think we'll get through it. So Luke chapter 21, a reading from verse 20.

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let those who are in the country enter her and not enter her.

For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days, for there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations.

And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And there will be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and in the earth distress of nations with perplexity and the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and the expectation of those things which is coming on the earth. For the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. Then he spoke to them a parable.

Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happen, know that the kingdom of God is near.

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. So this is part of what we said they call the Olivet Discourse.

It appears in all three, the Synoptic Gospels in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Luke's version is probably shorter than, certainly a lot shorter than Matthew. Matthew goes into a lot more detail on this particular passage.

This is a very difficult passage to interpret. If you're going to use it, you try and establish some kind of sequence of events. So when is this going to happen, when is that going to happen, and when that's going to happen.

And the problem with that is that I don't believe that that's why Jesus tells or makes these statements. He is not presenting this teaching in order for us to try and figure out when different things will happen. There are other passages in Scripture that are designed to do that.

Daniel particularly is very good at that, and then of course the book of Revelation. All of these are not straightforward in terms of just trying to say, because if there was, if God gave us a time chart, well then we wouldn't have so many divisions and so many debates and so many arguments about pre-trip and mid-trip and post-trip and premillennial and amillennial and postmillennial, and the list goes on and on and on. He doesn't give us a time chart, and I believe that one of the reasons he doesn't give us a time chart is because he wants us to have our eyes fixed on him and not on the signs.

And that's part of the problem with this passage, is the moment you start reading this passage in order to try and figure out signs and times, you run into difficulty. Because this passage in Luke chapter 21 spans a period of 2,000 years. It goes right from the time that Jesus is speaking, then clearly part of it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, which we touched on last week and we're going to come back to again this morning.

Then other parts touch on the whole history of the church, 2,000 years, in which there would be all sorts of things happening, wars and so on, and then it also deals with the very end. And so there are aspects of the chapter that deal with things that we find in the book of Revelation, basically the seven years of great tribulation. And so, because these things are interwoven, it's almost impossible to try and divide them up and say, well, this is this, this is that, and that is that, so this is going to happen now, so we can calculate so many months, so many years, from here to there, to there.

That's not what it was given for. The reason Jesus teaches this word is so that we might know how to act and how to react and how to live, in the light of the future coming of the Lord. And so we tend to pass over those.

When I listen to so-called prophetic scholars—and I really have a problem with that concept—but when I listen to them, they will emphasize all of these things that speak about when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies and so on, but they will miss out the most important parts, where Jesus speaks about how should we be, how should we live, in the light of these things. And so, having said all of that, let's go to verse 20, because we dealt with the first 19 verses last week. Now, this first section is clearly dealing with the period AD 70.

So what happened was that in about 63—so that would be about 30 years after Jesus' ascension—the Jews rebelled against Rome, and Rome obviously sent down the armies and began to quell the rebellion. That war was interrupted for a period because other political stuff was happening in Rome. And then finally, in AD 68, Titus comes.

Titus was the great general, and he would become the Caesar a few years later. And Titus comes with his armies, and they ransacked Jerusalem. They surround Jerusalem, first of all.

There's a tremendous famine inside of the city because the city is blockaded. Many of them had fled to a place called Masada, which is not in the Scriptures as such, but it's very, very famous right now—not right now, but in recent years. Masada was a mountain fortress, and many of them fled up into the mountain fortress, and they were able to hold out there for several years.

They had a source of water up there. They had food. They could actually grow crops up there.

And then finally, when the Romans breached the fortress, they were able to build a ramp, and they were able to finally get on. The Jews that were up there that were left all committed suicide. And so it stands still as a great memorial to Jewish bravery, and they're standing up against Rome.

And in fact, today, all Roman officers—sorry, Israeli Defense Force officers, when they become an officer and they take their oath, they take the oath on Masada as a memory of the bravery of those men at the time. So Titus came, destroyed Jerusalem, broke down the rocks of the temple. The temple was, just as Jesus had said, as we dealt with last week, not two rocks would remain on top of each other.

So that's the background. So Luke 21 verse 20 then, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. And this would be literally fulfilled.

So the Roman army would surround the city, and the city would be blockaded. And the destruction was a couple of years away. It was a matter of time.

Terrible times were waiting inside of the city, as they would starve to death and eventually be overrun by the Romans. Then verse 21, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. So those who live in the area surrounding Jerusalem, that's the area of Judea, flee to the mountains.

And that's exactly what they did. Many of them fled to Masada, and they were able to hold out there for a long time. Let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let those who are in the country, and let not, the language is a little bit back to front in my thinking, and let not those who are in the country enter her.

So in other words, you need to get away from Jerusalem. Jerusalem is going to become toxic. If you're in the city, get out of her.

If you're not there, then stay out, because obviously there's going to be trouble. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. So this is a very important verse, because he's giving the reason why Jerusalem was to be destroyed.

These are the days of vengeance. The word vengeance, payback, in our modern language. Who is doing the payback? Who is taking vengeance? This is God taking vengeance on Israel.

Remember that God had pleaded with Israel for hundreds and hundreds of years to serve Him, and yet Israel did not serve Him. And then finally, you remember the parable that Jesus told, we dealt with that not so long ago, where the man sends his servants, and he says, give me my dew. And they mistreat the servants, and they chase them away.

And then finally, he sends his son, and he says, maybe they'll hear my son. And the son comes, and he says, give my father, the owner of the vineyard, his dew. And they take the son, and they kill him.

And of course, Jesus says, what will he do? What will the owner, the landowner do, the landlord, what will he do with those servants? He will kill them. And so this is exactly what Jesus had prophesied. This is what the prophets had prophesied.

You see, it says that all things which are written may be fulfilled. All of the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, all the major prophets, Daniel, all of the minor prophets, all predicted and warned and said, turn to God, because God will take vengeance on you. And yet, what did they do? They killed the prophets.

They didn't heed the prophets and kill them. So here's the problem, is that they said, well, you know, we've been doing quite well without God. Yeah, we'll go to the temple, we have our national religion, we'll do all of these sorts of things, but we're not going to give God priority.

And we can just keep going like that. And of course, that's the problem with the world today. Now you'll see that the interesting thing of the passage is that it deals with what actually happened, and we have the benefit of hindsight to see how this actually happened.

They were standing on the other side, they didn't see, they only had the words of Jesus. But we also have the warnings against the world, that the world has rejected. And so obviously, he's now turned to the Gentiles.

And the world has rejected Jesus. For 2,000 years, the gospel has been preached. And we say, oh, there's no problem.

Things will just continue as they always have. No, they will not always continue. The Book of Romans says that you are storing up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath.

And so the day is coming when God again will take vengeance on the earth. What happened in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem was a minor fulfillment of the stuff that will happen during the seven years of Great Tribulation. Except that in the case of Jerusalem, it was localized, and it was only the city of Jerusalem that was attacked and destroyed, and many, many, many died.

In the Great Tribulation, it's not going to be Jerusalem, it's going to be the whole world. That's going to feel the sting of God's judgment and of God's wrath as he takes out, as he pays back the due for those who have rejected him and rejected the gospel. Many people say, well, you know, there can't be a God

because we see all these terrible things happening in the world.

There's murder, and rape, and incest, and babies being abused, and all of these kinds of things. So God, you know, there can't be a God because all—no, no, no. God is watching, and he's keeping record.

And the day will come, just as he waited hundreds of years before he took vengeance on Jerusalem. Why does it take so long? Because he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And so God sent his prophets for hundreds of years, and he pleads with Israel, come back to me, serve me, forsake your other gods, forsake your religion, and get into a real relationship with me.

And Israel rejects him, and so finally God says, no more. And exactly the same happens with the world. God is not a vengeful God.

God is not like us, who gets even in that sense. But justice must be done. And God is delaying justice simply because he is wanting people to get saved.

But the day will come, and so what's happened here is an interim fulfillment that shows forward to a greater fulfillment at the end of time. Now verse 23, But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days, for there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And so again, you can see how you can read this and understand, because this literally applies to AD 70, 70 years after Christ.

But it also applies to the end times. Now the problem is some people misunderstand the context, and they say, well you see, this is what's going to happen in the tribulation. Yes, this is what's going to happen in the tribulation.

But that is not the main thing that Jesus is saying here. The main thing he is speaking about is that which happened 30 years after the Ascension. Now verse 24, And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations.

And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Now this is a weighty verse. So they will fall by the edge of the sword.

They will die at the hand of the Roman army. And they will be led away captive into all nations. So Israel will be scattered.

And we know that that is exactly what happened. In AD 70, Israel ceased to be a nation in the sense of being a nation in its own land. And the Jews were scattered throughout the world, and they still are scattered throughout the world.

You can go anywhere in this world, and you will still find Jewish people who hold to their tradition and their faith and so on. So they will be scattered and taken captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

So Jerusalem will be under Gentile control. Not under the control of Israel, but under Gentile control. Until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The times of the Gentiles—let me deal with that, and I'm going to go back to be trampled by the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles is the time in which we're living now. God dealt with Israel until AD 70.

During the book of Acts, after the Ascension, so the last—the 30 years before—you remember, the apostles go, and they preach the gospel. They preach the gospel to the Jews. Paul goes wherever he goes, and he finds synagogues, and he will preach to the Jews.

But very quickly they would kick him out, and he would go to the marketplace, and he would preach to the Gentiles. So the church is half Jewish and half Gentile. Most of the churches were that way, and many of the issues that arise in those churches that Paul addresses in the book of Galatians and the book of Romans—in fact, in most of his letters—is because we have these mixed congregations of Jews who want to hold on to their Jewish tradition and yet be Christians, and then Gentiles who have become Christians.

But more and more the Jews rejected the gospel, and so the church becomes more and more Gentile and less and less Jewish, so that at the end of AD 70 the church becomes almost exclusively Gentile, and since then the church has been predominantly Gentile. And so we call this the time of the Gentiles. So God deals with Israel.

Israel rejects God, and God finally says, I'm done. Now, I'm going to come back to that. But now he says, I'm going to call those people who are not a people.

And so he begins to call the Gentiles, and he gives us an opportunity. Paul deals with us in Romans. Many scriptures in the Old and the New Testament deal with us.

Paul, in the book of Romans, speaks about the fact that there's an olive tree, and the true branches are broken off—Israel—but the wild branches, the Gentiles, are grafted in, so that we become part of God's blessing. This is the time of the Gentiles. But God must fulfill his covenants with Israel.

Now, there is a teaching we call replacement theology. Replacement theology says that God dealt with Israel until A.D. 70. Israel is now kaput.

God is done with Israel. God will never go back to Israel. All of the blessings that were given and promises that were given to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, all of those promises are now transferred on the church, and the church now becomes the new Israel.

Now, that is simply not true, and there are many, many scriptures that deal with that. The scripture in Romans that I've just quoted, where the wild branches are grafted in, he says, be careful. Don't boast against the natural branches, because if God was able to graft you in as wild branches, is he not able to graft the true branches back in as well? Romans 9, 10, and 11 deals with this in great detail.

God will return to Israel, and Israel will ultimately and finally return to God, and I'm not going to get into those details. So there's a time that God has been gracious to us. We also call it the church age or the time of grace, that God deals with the church or with the Gentiles.

That time will come to an end. At the end of that time, God will return to Israel, and basically for the last seven years and in the next thousand years, God will with Israel again. While we will be saved, and we will be part of the Bride of Christ and all of those wonderful things, the gospel will then be—the emphasis of the gospel will then be on the Jews, and the Jews ultimately will be saved.

They get saved not because they are Jews, but they get saved because they believe on the Messiah whom they crucified. And so this is the times of the Gentiles that we're in now. So what he is saying then is that the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled.

So there's going to be an end. So just this idea that the church now replaces Israel, this verse contradicts that very clearly, because he says when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. So the time that God is dealing with the Gentiles will come to an end.

For all of that time, Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles. Now in 1848—and you remember we mentioned—sorry, not 1848—1948, we mentioned this date last week. And this is important.

It's going to come back again when we speak about the olive tree in a few moments. In 1948, something happened. Remember that the Jews suffered terribly at the hand of Hitler and others during the Second World War.

Six million of them were exterminated, they were mistreated, and so on. And so at the end of the war, the Allied forces felt the need to make some kind of compensation to Israel. And so what they did is that they brokered a deal to give Israel back their own homeland.

And of course, that created all sorts of problems, because the land had been occupied by Palestinians, what we call Palestinians today, Arabs basically, mainly Muslims, some Christians, but mainly Muslims. And so since 1948, the state of Israel became a state again. And so many Christians say, that is—Jerusalem is no longer trod underfoot by the Gentiles.

And so God's clock begins to tick again. God's prophetic clock—and I know there's a lot of information here—but God's prophetic clock only runs while Israel is occupying the land. The 70 years in the book of Daniel, when Israel was out of the land, God's clock stopped, and the clock begins to run again at the end.

You get that by putting all of the prophecies together and working out the times, and you see that there are these gaps. When Israel is in captivity, God's timing doesn't function anymore. So God's clock has stopped for 2,000 years, as far as Israel is concerned.

It begins to tick again once God begins to deal with Israel, when the times of the Gentiles is finished, then the time of Israel comes back again. That's when God's clock begins to function again. So now, many say 1948 is when that happened.

The problem is twofold. The first is that Israel, even though they became a nation again, in the sense of a nation—they always were a nation, we understand that—but a nation in the sense that they had their own land. Even though that happened in 1948, they still rejected the Messiah.

And Israel is, by their own definition, a secular state. They are not a religious state. They are not a Jewish state in the sense of what we understand to be Jewish, in the sense that they worship the Lord.

Many of them are atheists, and some of them are, you know, all sorts of different things, but none of them acknowledge as their Messiah. So there's a problem with that idea of 1948. The second problem, and this is the the bigger problem, is that Jerusalem is still trodden underfoot by the Gentiles.

Jerusalem is a divided city. Israel controls some parts of the city. Christians control some parts of the city.

Jews—Arabs control other parts of the city. And so Israel does not control the whole city, does not control the whole of the land. And in fact, the picture that we, I think we all know, is this picture of the Temple Mount.

Now, remember that this is the platform on which the original temple was built. So what you're seeing is the slab, what we would call the slab today, on which you build the house. Of course, in this case, it's a massive, massive slab.

It's very—I don't remember the size, but it's huge. And so what you're seeing in the picture are the walls of the foundation, not the walls of the temple. There is no temple.

What do you see there? Well, the one that you don't notice here is a mosque, the Al-Aqsa Mosque. And then the one that is so visible is the Dome of the Rock, also a Muslim holy site. So there is no temple.

The Jews have no control of the Temple Mount. So the only place they can pray is at the western wall on the other side here. So they can come up to the foundations and they can pray.

And you remember, you may have seen the pictures where they stick their prayers in the cracks in the wall. They're simply praying at the foundations because that's as close as they're allowed to get to where the temple was. So clearly, the Gentiles are still literally trampling underfoot Jerusalem, the most central site of Jerusalem.

Remember I said to you last week that they believe that Israel is the center of the world, Jerusalem is the center of Israel, and the temple is the center of Jerusalem. So the same way as if you control the capital in Washington, that is the center of America. May not be geographically in the center, but that is, you know, if the Russians were to come, God forbid, and they were to take control of the capital, effectively they have control of the whole of America.

It's always about the seat of power. And so here for them, obviously in Israel, it's not about a political seat of power, but it is the temple. The temple was the center of power that represented God.

And so it is still being trampled underfoot by the Gentiles. So the Jews do not, they cannot, they want to build a temple. They tell me they have the plans, they have the materials all stored up already, all of the furniture has been built, they've been breeding for years, they have a breeding program to produce what they call a red heifer.

Now this is a reddish brown cow, a heifer is a cow that hasn't had calves yet, and this is part of the sacrifices in the Old Testament. And so they have the sacrifices ready, they have everything ready, they just need the site. And of course there is no way they can, because the Gentiles control it.

All right, so that deals with AD 70. Now he moves on. He says, and there will be signs in the sun.

Now he comes to the end, so there's a jump from the previous verse, 24 to verse 25, of 2,000 years, roughly. And there will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and on the earth distress of nations, and perplexity of the sea, and the waves roaring. Now again, we've got to be careful.

When you see, when you see a tsunami, it doesn't mean that's the end. We've had many of these things. I remember in, was it 69? I tried to figure this out the other day and I didn't get it, but I think was it 60, 70.

In AD 70, when we went to the moon, people were saying, you see there's signs on the moon. Man has now landed on the moon. And so Jesus is, this is a sign that Jesus is coming.

And of course that was 50 years ago. He still hasn't come. Now I'm not being a skeptic.

Please understand me, and one of my concerns about the message last week is that folk will listen to the message and say, I don't believe in any signs. No, I do believe in the signs. I believe that there are signs, but we need to put the signs in their proper place.

We can't follow the signs, we must follow Jesus. Here's a title for today's message. Don't follow the signs, follow Jesus.

That's the point. And so when we're all about the signs, we can easily misread the signs. When we follow Jesus, it's a lot easier.

All right, so there's going to be trouble. That's really what he's saying. And then verse 26, men's hearts failing them for fear.

Now again, I've seen guys make huge charts of the number of heart attacks of people and say, well, you know, you see, you know, heart attacks are increasing. Men's hearts failing them for fear. And so this is a sign that we're coming to the end.

No, if heart attacks are increasing, it's probably because of our unhealthy modern lifestyle more than anything else. It's not a sign of Jesus coming. What is he saying? He's saying it's going to be tough.

Times are going to get hard. And times have been somewhat hard in these last two years as we dealt with COVID. But as they say, you ain't seen nothing yet.

COVID is nothing in comparison to what's coming. The Second World War is nothing in comparison to what is coming. Roger fought in Vietnam, and it was terrible.

I've seen pictures, I've spoken with men who fought. And in fact, I did fight with other men who came from Vietnam in Southern Africa, and it was terrible. But that was that small in comparison to what's coming.

It's terrible, and men's hearts will fail them for fear. And the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heaven will be shaken. Now the book of Revelation deals with this.

The stars and the planets will be shaken out of their orbits. That's literally what's happening. So you can see that the fact that we happen to have a strange sunset doesn't, this is not it.

The fact that there may be an asteroid that missed the earth by several thousand miles, this is not it. What he is speaking here is about things that are incontrovertible, things that you can't even begin to question, because everything is out of place. The planets are out of place.

The powers of the heaven will be shaken. The stars and the moons and the satellites—sorry, the planets. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

So it's going to get worse and worse and worse. So let me sum up again. We have the first 70 years, AD 70, the destruction of Jerusalem.

Then all of these verses speak about the fact that there's going to be all sorts of trouble for the next period, what I call 2,000 years up till now, because I believe that we're very near the end. But then there's going to be an intensifying, and things are going to happen like you've never seen before. And that is the period of seven years of what we call the Great Tribulation.

So then they will see the Son of Man coming. When all of this stuff reaches a crescendo, when it all reaches a climax, and it really gets to a point where everything is out of place, and massive hailstones—the book of Revelation speaks about that—rivers turning into blood, the planets moving out of space, the sun darkened, world war, like you've never seen before, all of these things happening. Then the Son of Man will come in a cloud, with power and with great glory.

In the midst of the darkness, Jesus will come. And so again, I don't believe he's saying to you, now read these signs, when you see the planets move, when you see this, when you see that. No, he's saying it's going to get worse and worse, and it's going to get terrible, but Jesus is coming.

And he's simply contrasting. I don't believe that the previous verse is for us to try and figure out timing. He's simply saying it's going to get black.

But in the darkest of the night, the light will come. Jesus will come. And notice, he will come with power and with great glory.

So it's going to be terrible. People are going to be dying. Everything is going to be wrong.

But Jesus comes with glory. You see the same pattern in the book of Lamentations. Remember Lamentations? Jeremiah writes about all of the terrible stuff going on in Israel, and how Israel has forsaken God, and everything is black.

And of course, the book is called Lamentations because he's lamenting, he's weeping over Israel, over his state. But right in the middle of the book is this wonderful verse, great is thy faithfulness. And so in the midst of the darkest time of Israel, God is still faithful.

And in the midst of the darkest times in this world, Jesus is going to come. And so we look at what's happening in the world, and yeah, things are tough. Economically, things are tough for us, but it's nothing like what other people, other countries are experiencing.

COVID has done a number on us. All of these things are happening. Politically, things are in turmoil around us.

But don't worry, Jesus is coming. And when you think it can't get any worse, that's the point at which Jesus is going to come. That's simply what he is saying.

Now, when these things begin to happen, notice, when they begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads because your redemption draws near. Here's what it's all about. It's not about the thunder, and the lightning, and the wars, and the pestilence.

It's about looking up. And you remember that from the beginning of 2020, when COVID began, we've been emphasizing this attitude and saying, if you're going to watch the numbers, you're going to get destroyed. You're going to become discouraged.

You're going to have depression. If you're going to try and figure out between what these guys are saying and those guys are saying about the virus, you're going to get yourself confused. And politically, we're going through the same kind of thing.

If you're going to listen to this side, and you're going to listen to that side, or whatever you want to listen to, you're going to get yourself in a mess. But look up. Look to Jesus.

Remember, we spoke about Peter, who, when he walks on the water, as long as he has his eyes on Jesus, he's able to walk on the storm. He's able to walk on the water, and the waves, and the wind don't touch him. But the moment he takes his eyes off Jesus, he begins to sink.

And folks, that is so important for us now. And that is so important as we get closer to the coming of the Lord Jesus. If you have your eyes on the politics, you're going to get yourself into a stew.

You're going to get yourself into an emotional mess. If you get your, if you keep your eyes on anything that's happening in the world, yeah, we need to know what's happening. But if you think too much about what's happening in the Ukraine right now, you will not sleep.

Because there's big trouble. But let's keep our eyes on Jesus. Looking unto him, the author and the finisher of our faith.

And so, when these things begin to happen, I don't believe, my understanding of how things play out in the end time, I don't believe that the Christian will go through the tribulation. Now, there are different views on that. I don't believe we will.

But we will see the beginning of it. Matthew speaks about the same thing. So when things begin to stir, when things begin to happen, we need to look up.

Now, do you think things are beginning to happen? Well, some people think it's beginnings, others say, no, it's still a way off. Well, the point is that when you begin to become uncomfortable with what's happening around you, at whatever stage, whether 70 years after Christ or whether now, or whether in 10 years time, if we're still here in 10 years time, when you begin to get worried, look up. Look up.

Because your redemption is coming close. We're not looking for the signs. We're not looking for the Antichrist.

I've said this so many times, and I need to say it again. Because there's a big trade being made out of books and videos and stuff about how to recognize the Antichrist. Is this the Antichrist? Is that the Antichrist? No, he'll come from here.

No, he'll come from there. But we're not looking for the Antichrist. We're looking for the Redeemer.

We're looking for Jesus. And if you know Jesus, if you see the Antichrist, you'll recognize him. But if you don't know Jesus, you may be fooled by the Antichrist.

The point is not to know the Antichrist. The point is not to be able to figure out the signs. The point is to stay close to Jesus.

And it doesn't matter what happens. What happens politically, economically, health-wise, to us or to the rest of the world, if you have your eyes on Jesus and your relationship with him is right, you'll be able to see through those times. I think I'm going to close there.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus, who is the hope that we're looking forward to. Lord, that there is this hope that is an anchor to the soul, but sure and steadfast.

And that hope is the hope of the resurrection and of the return of Jesus. And so, Lord, as we watch the news and we read about the stuff going on around us, I pray that you'd help us to have our eyes in the

right place. Lord, I'm so disturbed by the fact that so many Christians and so many churches have their eyes fixed on various political figures.

They would be apparently the solution to our problems. And yet, Lord, we know that they are not the solution, that only Jesus is that solution. And so, Lord, as we find ourselves in a turbulent world and where things are just upside down and inflation is rising and the store shelves are often empty and gas prices are going up and the political scene in Washington is as terrible as it's ever been before, and we are on the brink of maybe European war, if not world war, in the Ukraine.

Lord, as all of these things surround us, as we find ourselves in the grips of this pestilence that has swept the world in these last two years, Lord, that in all of these things we may look up. Because our redemption draws near. Lord, we thank you for medical science.

We thank you, Lord, for those who are able to help us in various ways in this world. But at the end of the day, Lord, our hope is not in those things. Our hope is in Jesus.

And we pray that you'd help us to have our eyes fixed on him. Lord, we're seeing many, many people struggling with depression and suicide and all sorts of things happening because of the times in which we're living. But Lord, that we may be those who are stayed on you.

And Lord, that we will have perfect peace because we are built upon that rock which cannot move, the rock of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so Lord, we pray that these things may be real and true for us. Lord, it's easy to talk.

It's easy to agree. But Lord, when we watch the news, when we listen to what other people are saying, when we look at what people are posting on Facebook, Lord, we become easily disturbed and easily concerned. But Lord, we pray that we may have our eyes fixed on Jesus, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher.

Lord, what you've begun in us, you will complete. And we pray, Lord, that we may have our eyes fixed on Jesus. In his name, we pray.

And so Lord, we pray that you'd go with us now, keep us and protect us, bring us together again safely on Thursday. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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