

Command for the Ages: Watch!

by Bob Faulkner

Bob Faulkner emphasizes the imperative for Christians to remain vigilant and prayerful in anticipation of Christ's return amidst worldly distractions and challenges.

Duration: 21:03

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 21:28, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Hebrews 9:28, 2 Peter 3:10-14, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Antichrist"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of watching and praying as Christians. He refers to the command of Jesus to watch for His coming and compares it to the time of the Holocaust, where amidst the horror, there was still a need to watch. The speaker encourages believers to stay filled with the Holy Spirit and not be tempted to join those who have sold out to the Antichrist. He concludes by quoting a poem by Charlotte Elliott, urging Christians to be vigilant and to put on their heavenly armor.

Transcript

Christian, seek not yet repose. Cast thy dreams of ease away. Thou art in the midst of foes.

Watch and pray. Principalities and powers, mustering their unseen array, wait for thy unguarded hours. Watch and pray.

Gird thy heavenly armor on, wear it ever, night and day. Ambushed lies the evil one. Watch and pray.

Welcome back to my house, the Hackberry House, the daily podcast devoted to the Word of God and the persecuted church. I'm Bob, a servant of the Lord from Northern Illinois. We're talking today about watching, and I just gave you a poem, a song that you know probably well in our day, by Charlotte Elliott, who wrote such things as Just As I Am.

She wrote this song, Watch and Pray, in 1836. Let's transfer that over to our study now. Yesterday we were talking about the word watch and what it means.

Do you remember the stories of the Holocaust, the period of the Holocaust? Yes, it did exist, for those who still might question that. In the midst of all of that horror, there was a normal life going on. And so, here's Jesus in the passages we quoted yesterday, talking about watching, and those Christians that are being reminded now of their duty to stay full of the Holy Ghost.

In the midst of all the horror, here's the command again to watch. You just don't know exactly when He's coming in that time. You've endured this long, so the temptation is going to be great to join the normal folks who've sold out to Antichrist and can eat and drink and buy and sell.

Don't yield. Wait. Watch.

He's really coming any day. That's the message that will be going forth in that day. As I say, the application is for all time, all believers.

And it's clear and it's real, but the specificity of this word, then, cannot be ignored either. Once Antichrist has come, then watch. Christ is due.

Yes, John in his day said there are many Antichrists. Through history, many saw emperors and popes in that role. The whole world system could be viewed as Antichrist also.

There are many Antichrists, says John. But one day there will be a man, one man, filled with Satan, raised from the dead, sitting in the temple, attempting to rule a planet. When you see that, watch.

Jesus in verse 33 says that when we see all these things, and I'm in Matthew 25, when you see all these things, that includes Antichrist, tribulation, all of it, then you know Jesus is at the very door, but not until then. So how must I watch? I must be ready to go to Jesus any minute of any day through death. That's how I watch.

I'm not living in the Antichrist days, in that one last Antichrist day. But I've still got to be ready. I've still got to be watching as though my day is today.

Mark's Gospel records the words of Jesus that include everyone of all time. He said, what I say to you, disciples that were in front of him, I'm saying to everybody, watch. These words are spoken in the same context as Matthew 24.

Now, Jesus has already said in Matthew that there are signs of his coming. And then he tells everyone of every generation to watch. The Father, the Father is speaking through Jesus.

Jesus said, I don't know the time. I don't know the day. He said, nobody knows it.

Not even the Son. But the Father knows it. And the Father is the one that Jesus always listened to when he opened his mouth and spoke.

And so it was the Father, God, who knows all, who was speaking through Jesus, knowing, knowing that in the 10th century, in the 15th century, in the 19th and 20th century, Jesus was not coming. He knew that. But he told everybody to watch.

How are we to take this? He's got us all watching all the time, knowing that he's not coming. So we're watching for the coming of the Son of Man into our lives, into our world. Watching like his sleepy disciples, we miss the main events of our lives.

Watching, which is always accompanied by praying, so that our lives not be snatched away by the enemy of our souls. Watching is a lifestyle. You could die today, my brother, my sister.

You could. Why not? Are you watching for his coming for you? But only that last generation will be watching the eastern sky for the revelation of the Son of God at any minute. Luke 21, 36 adds yet another comment of Jesus, again in the same discourse.

Preceded by watch is the notion that if we watch and pray, we'll be among those who escape the things that are about to happen. Now, in that verse, the tribulation has already passed. The gospel has been preached in all the world.

Antichrist has come and failed. Only one thing remains, the coming with judgment of the Judge Jesus. Those who are praying and watching at that hour will be caught up together to meet the Lord and the rest of the church that's already assembled.

And I don't mean through a previous rapture. There's only one rapture. This passage is not about escaping trouble, tribulation, bad things happening in the earth.

They're happening already, folks. Look around. Read your papers.

You've been blessed maybe that you haven't been a part of it, but it's happening. There's tribulation in the world now, and it's only going to get worse. This passage isn't about escaping trouble.

Jesus is not saying if you're good and you watch and you pray, you won't have to go through any problems on the earth. He's talking about escaping the wrath of God for which we were not appointed. Jesus is coming back, and he's coming back angrily.

And when he comes back, judgment is going to fall, but you will be caught up to meet him in the air. Jesus is not alone in his efforts to create a people who watch. Jesus tells his disciples in 1 Corinthians 16, 13, 1 Thessalonians 5, 6, 2 Timothy 4, 5 to do the same.

Peter follows suit in 1 Peter 4, 7. Jesus via the Apostle John has a final word about watching in Revelation 3, 3. It's through that dead church at Sardis. If you don't stay awake, he says, I'm going to come to you as a thief. That is, in the same way that I'll be coming to the world.

You're going to be shocked when you see just how many people in your congregation are not in the Lamb's Book of Life. How many whose names I will not confess before my Father. Watching.

It's our very life. We look for Jesus to be in our midst all the time. This isn't about eschatology, last things only.

It's about the spirit-filled life. There are watchers in every generation of church history. Watchers and non-watchers too.

There are people who are alert and people who are asleep. That's what the parable of the virgins is all about. These watchers are not fearful of the Lord's sudden snatching these sleepy ones.

That's not why they watch. I'm sorry, not the sleepy ones, the good ones. That's not why they watch.

They're not afraid constantly. They just love Jesus. They're in prayer.

They're in the word. They're in fellowship. They're serving.

They watch their mouth and the words that come out of it. They watch their weight. They watch their attitude.

They watch their friend list. I'm not just talking about Facebook, but in reality, real friends, those ones on Facebook. Well, we won't talk about that right now.

What Jesus said in the first century, he says to us today, watch, stay awake, stay alert, stay alert. And none of the above has anything to do with whether Antichrist or Christ comes first. If Jesus is not coming for a thousand years, and I could prove it, I'm just saying if, I'm still supposed to watch, not the sky, but my life.

But in that last generation, an added quality is placed on the command. For then the physical coming of the Lord draws near and any day that long watch could end. So what are we looking for? We get into a different category of thinking now.

There's a shade of difference between watching and looking in the New Testament. As we have seen, watching has to do with the heart and the discipline of keeping that heart fixed on Jesus Christ. It has end time significance, but it's not only the end time in its scope.

Looking, well looking gets a little more specific. When we do look to the future, and we do see in our mind's eye that something or someone is coming, exactly what is it that we're looking for? The critics of the Post Trib complained that people who believe in Matthew and Paul's order of events, and it is Bible folks, that they're not looking for Christ, they're looking for Antichrist. The Bible, they imply, demands that we look for Christ.

So let's take a look at looking. Jesus says to look up at a certain point in history when you see all that stuff. We talked about that verse above in Luke 21-28.

When should we physically look up? We should look up when we see these things begin to take place. What things? The things he talked about in the Olivet Discourse, the unprecedented tribulation, the signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, the actual coming of Jesus to earth. That's when you look up.

Definitely we will be looking up for Jesus at that moment. No one contests that. But what about before that final moment? Paul, Peter, and the writer of Hebrews gives us clues.

Let's look at Peter first. In 2 Peter 3, 10-14, he starts by saying that the day of the Lord will come as a thief. We're going to talk about that thief context in Paul's writings.

But significant here is that Peter is clearly talking about Jesus coming on earth. Everyone will say that. That's not an arguable passage.

As you look at it, you realize he's talking about the second coming here. And he's still talking about the thief and the destruction that's going to accompany that return. No one sees a pre-tribulation rapture in this particular passage.

But the day of the Lord, that day, not that what we call a rapture today. He's not talking about that one. It's clear in the passage.

He's talking about the second coming. And that day is going to come as a thief. Oh, that's an important clue.

Placed alongside of the account of Jesus in Matthew 24, we conclude that this coming follows the reign of Antichrist. Again, Antichrist has already come when Peter's coming is cited. When he speaks of the day of God, he's talking about the return.

But in verse 12, he simply says that we should be looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. Do you get the point I'm making? Even though Antichrist will come first and great trouble and great destruction. And Peter would not deny that.

Peter is looking for Jesus, even though he knows Antichrist is coming first. Following is a great revelation for some, but let me try it out. Are you there? Here we go.

It is possible to be looking for two things. At the same time, I don't mean to insult your intelligence, but it is possible that those who come against the post-tribulation rapture, the biblical order of events, would deny this very simple fact that you really can't be looking for two things at the same time. Peter is here looking for a series of catastrophes that's going to occur at one point in the last days, but it doesn't take away his focus.

It doesn't diminish Peter's zeal or lull him to sleep, to know that Jesus is going to come at the end of a series of events. Doesn't stop Peter at all. On the contrary, look at his words.

He says, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness? Look at this now. Judgment is coming, Peter says. Trouble is coming, and wrapped up in all of this is the work of the Antichrist.

It's all coming. Get holy, people of God. It seems to me that the persons who preach that we escape all these difficulties are the ones that have been lulled to La La Land.

What did Peter look for? What did he tell his people to look for? Verse 14. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent. Be diligent.

Then you've got the writer of Hebrews 9.28, states that Jesus died for our sins the first time he was here, and that he will appear, what, a second time to those who are eagerly looking for him. A second time. I don't see any third time mentioned.

Those who have concocted this pre-tribulation doctrine say they speak of two phases of the second coming, not a third coming. I'd say that's a dubious way of handling scripture. That's just my opinion, but it's a very strange thing that we can't believe God when he says second, and just leave it at that.

I don't believe that. He's coming back again. He's coming a second time.

We can't just drop it there. Do we have to stretch it out and say there's a beginning of the second and an end of the second? Well, we're told by them that the people called the church will be eagerly awaiting for Jesus at what they call the rapture, that first time. But what of those so-called, by the creators of the doctrine anyway, tribulation saints, the ones who get it together during that seven years? Will they not be eagerly looking for him? Will they be saved? Are they not church if they're saints? A whole lot of unanswerable questions in the pre-tribulation theory.

I like the simplicity of the math here. He came once. We're looking for him to come twice.

Not twice more, but a second time period. For these multiplied centuries, this Hebrew's writer and the historic church called this second coming, they called it the second coming, and it's after Antichrist who

comes first. Well, I don't know about you, but I want to thank you for tuning in and leave you with a couple of reminders to go to Sermon Audio.

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So they're there. Go to the Prophecy Studies, go to a through the Bible study, a course on the Koran. You need to know what the Muslims are teaching so you can compare it to the Word of God.

Lots of stuff there. Would you go there and check me out? Thank you again for tuning in. I hope to talk with you again real soon.

Blessings. Let's just do the rest of watch and pray. I know that one of these days I'm going to get brave and I'm going to sing to you, but I won't do that today.

I'm not quite there yet. Here's the last three verses here. The victors who are came still they mark each warrior's way.

All with one sweet voice exclaim, watch and pray here. Above all here, thy Lord, him thou lovest to obey. Hide within thy heart his word.

Watch and pray. Watch as if on that alone hung the issue of the day. Pray that help may be sent down.

Watch and pray. Amen.

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