

# Be Alert for the Lord's Return

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being alert and watchful for the second coming of Christ, and the need to be spiritually awake and aware of the times.*

**Duration:** 57:47

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:19, 1 Timothy 1:19

**Topics:** "Second Coming"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a focused and spiritually alert life. He warns against allowing our hearts to be weighed down by worldly distractions such as excessive television and movies. The speaker encourages believers to be ready for the return of Jesus and to not let their hearts be intoxicated with worldly pleasures. He reminds listeners that Jesus himself faced immense pressure but found true relaxation and joy in the presence of God, and encourages them to prioritize doing God's will in their lives.

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## Transcript

I want to turn to Zechariah chapter 14. Zechariah chapter 14, there are number of passages that refer to the second coming of Christ in the Old Testament and when we read the newspapers and see what is happening in the world around us, we see how relevant the Bible is to our time and how prophetic these words are and how we are to be prepared in this day and age. It says in verse 2 that, I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle and the city will be captured and so on and then the Lord will go forth, verse 3, and fight against those nations when He fights on the day of battle and in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.

You know, it was from the Mount of Olives that Jesus ascended up into heaven and when He was ascending up to heaven, two men stood there and told His disciples, why do you stand looking up there? In the same way that you saw Him go up, He will come back. It's exactly going to be the same place from which His feet lifted off and went up to heaven. To the same spot, He's going to return.

That's what it says here, in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives and the Mount of Olives will be split into two. The time immediately before the coming of Christ is going to be a time of a lot of violence and war. When Jesus said, there are going to be wars, I personally can't pray for peace when He said there will be wars.

When I see the wars, I think there will be more wars. He said the last days will be like the days of Noah, a time when it was full of sexual evil and violence. I'm not going to pray that the world will become pure, because I know it's not going to be pure.

I only pray that church will become pure in the midst of a world which is going to become corrupt. I don't know whether you're aware, but among born again Christians, there are some people who feel that the calling of the church is to make the world better. They feel that the church has failed in doing that for so many years, but that they're going to do it now.

Personally, I don't believe that, because the Bible says that as we approach the end of time, evil men will become worse and worse. See, 2nd Timothy chapter 3 and verse 13, the world is going to go from bad to worse. If it's bad now, it'll be worse in the days to come.

Worse morally, there's not going to be less terrorism, but more. 2nd Timothy 3 and verse 13, evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Now, this is chapter 3, the first verse.

You must see the context. It's particularly speaking about the last days. In the last days, difficult times will come.

Or as I think the living Bible says, it's going to be difficult to be a Christian. It's going to be difficult to be a Christian because on one side, Christians are going to be persecuted, and on the other side, you have a whole lot of people who compromise the standards of Christianity, so it's going to be very difficult to stand up against this type of compromise. Most people would like to seek to be popular.

And in this last days, it says evil men and deceivers will proceed from bad to worse. So, we can't expect things to become better in India or in Bangalore or in the world around us. We're not going to expect great multitudes to be saved.

And I'll tell you why. Because Jesus said, the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it. I believe the words of Jesus Christ, that there are very few who find the way to life.

I mean, even among those who have been believers for so many years, it's very difficult to find believers who can say, I have a very satisfying relationship with Jesus Christ, and he delivers me from sin, and anger, and bitterness, and lust, and a lot of money. There are very, very few around the world who can honestly testify to that, which proves that most, even so-called believers, are not very serious about living a wholehearted life. And so, I've seen that everywhere.

And so, I believe what Jesus said is true. There are very few who will find that way to life. And the purpose of our preaching here is to make sure that those who want to be in that few, will be challenged in this church to be among that few who will be ready for the coming of Christ.

There are two places on earth particularly mentioned in relation to the last days. One is Jerusalem. We saw that in the book of Zechariah.

And just turn back there for a moment, Zechariah 14, it says about that war, the final day just before the coming of Christ. It's a statement here which is very difficult to understand. Zechariah 14, it says, in that war, there will be such a terrible situation among the people, that it says in the middle of verse 12, Zechariah 14, 12, People, while they are standing on their feet, their flesh will rot, and their eyes will rot in

their sockets when they are standing on their feet.

Now, we know when people die, their flesh rots, their eyes rot in their sockets, and their tongue rots in their mouth. But this is when they are alive, when they are standing in that final war, these soldiers who are standing there, they are people, their eyes are going to rot in their sockets, and the flesh is going to melt while they are standing. In my understanding, that seems to describe a nuclear war.

That's the type of thing that happens when an atom bomb is dropped somewhere, where people standing and their flesh begins to melt, and their eyes rot in their sockets. It's amazing, there's never been in the history of humanity, any bomb or anything that could ever produce that result. It's amazing how accurate scripture is.

So, I personally believe that we are going to end with a nuclear war, according to that verse. Turn to Luke chapter 21. I'm just trying to show you how relevant the Bible is to the time in which we live.

Jerusalem is going to be surrounded with armies, and that's going to be one place where there's going to be a lot of battle. He says here in Luke 21.20, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you know that desolation is at hand. And he goes on to say, verse 24, Jerusalem will be trampled on the foot by the non-Jewish nations until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled.

And we know that Jerusalem was ruled by the Gentiles for many years, and it's only recently that it came back into the hands of Israel. The other place that's mentioned in the book of Revelation, in relation to war in the last days, is Revelation chapter 9. You read about the judgments of the trumpets, and if you read 1 Thessalonians 4, it says that the last trumpet, Christ will come. Maybe you should see that first if you're not sure of it.

1 Thessalonians 4, let's look at that before we go to Revelation 9. In 1 Thessalonians 4, it says, in verse 16, the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. In 1 Corinthians 15, if you turn to 1 Corinthians 15, also it speaks there about that trumpet, in 1 Corinthians 15, in verse 52, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. There are going to be a number of trumpets, at the last trumpet, the Lord will come.

And that's what we read in 1 Thessalonians 4 too, the trumpet will sound. So now we go to Revelation chapter 9, where we read about seven trumpets. So obviously, it's at the seventh trumpet that the Lord will come, but before the seventh trumpet, you read about the sixth trumpet being blown.

It's all picture language, but it has some significance. It says here, the sixth trumpet, verse 14, Revelation 9, 14, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, release the four angels, or demons actually, evil angels, who are bound at the great river Euphrates. How many of you know where the river Euphrates is, in which country? Iraq.

So, there are two places mentioned in relation to the last days, one is Jerusalem, and the other is Iraq. And it says here, there are some demons bound up there, in the river Euphrates, who are going to be released when the sixth trumpet sounds. And they have been prepared for a certain day, and month, and year.

And then, the number of armies around there is going to be 200 million. It's going to be a fantastic number of people fighting together against each other. And then in chapter 16, you read about it again, where you

read about the seven vials of judgment.

And then, when the sixth angel, Revelation 16, verse 12, poured out the bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates, its water was dried up, so that the way may be prepared for the kings of the east. That means people from the east of Iraq, which is Iran, is going to come forward and fight. So, there's so much of warning there in scripture, about some of the battles in the last days.

One other passage, let me show you, where some names of countries are mentioned. Ezekiel, in chapter 38, it speaks about a time when the Lord has gathered, Ezekiel 38, verse 8, after many days, in the latter years, it speaks about people, these Israelites. It refers to the Israelites, in verse 8, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel.

See, that's what happened from 1948 onwards. The people of Israel gathered from many, many nations. They were scattered for 2,000 years as a punishment, because they crucified Christ.

Forty years after Jesus was crucified, God sent the Roman armies to destroy the nation of Israel, and they were scattered to all the nations of the earth. Now, most people, when they get scattered to the nations of the earth, get absorbed into those nations. We know a lot of Indians who've gone to the United States, or England, or Australia.

I mean, in three or four generations, they become part of that country. In 100 years, 150 years, I mean, they may look like Indians still, but their attachment is no longer to India. They've settled down in that country.

The same thing has happened to, say, Africans who go to other countries, or Chinese people who go to the United States. They settle down there and become part of that country, but not the Jewish people. They were scattered all over the world for 2,000 years, and then they came back.

That was God who gathered them from many nations to the mountains of Israel, and against that nation, at that time, a number of armies are going to come against them, and one of them is Persia, verse 5. Persia will come with all its troops. So it says here that Iran, Persia, by the way, is the old name for Iran, is going to fight against Israel. So, all these verses seem to indicate certain things happening around the Middle East, particularly around Iran and Jerusalem, that the center of wars and activities, although there will be wars all over the world, the center of it is going to be around that place.

So, when we read these things in the newspapers, what should we be doing? Let's turn to Luke's Gospel in chapter 21. In Luke 21, it even speaks about the tsunami, in verse 25. It says here in verse 25, in the last part, this is referring to the last days again, there will be a roaring of the sea and the waves, not just the ordinary roaring of sea and waves, but to such an extent that people are going to faint from fear when they hear of these things happening.

And then, soon after all that happens, the Son of Man will come in a cloud. Then it says in verse 28, here's what it says we should do. When these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your head, because your redemption is drawing near.

So, that should be our attitude if you believe all these scriptures, as I do. I want to straighten up, lift up my head, I don't want to hang my head down in shame, with guilt and unconfessed sin, in depression and gloom, like a lot of Christians are. No, it says you've got to lift your head up, because Jesus is going to come.

Your redemption, your total redemption from the world is going to come very soon. But Jesus said that the new heavens and new earth that are going to be born, it's like a baby being born. And in Matthew 24, I don't have time to show it to you, he said, these are the beginning of birth pains.

When a baby is born, a mother goes through a lot of pain, and then the baby is born. So, what Jesus was referring to there was that just before his coming, when the new birth is going to take place for this earth, it's going to go through a period of intense pain, and Christians must be ready for that time. And he also went on to say in verse 34, be on guard, that your hearts are not weighted down at that time, with dissipation and drunkenness.

Now, this is not speaking about physical drunkenness. It's not saying, I fill my stomach with alcohol. It's talking about the heart getting drunk.

How does the heart get drunk? We can take a picture from a man getting drunk. Why do people get drunk? Why do they go for drink? Mainly, it is to forget their sorrows. They have problems in life and they want to forget about it all.

They say, well, if I have a good drink or a few drinks, I can just forget about all that. In other words, for a little while, while the effect of that drink is upon him, he lives in a world of unreality, imagining that all his problems are solved. Nothing is solved, but he can forget about all that.

Now, Jesus said, don't let something like that happen to your heart, where you forget about the real world of eternity, the real world of heaven, and get drunk. It says here, with the worries of this life, the cares of this life. Now, we have to take care of so many things for our children.

We need to provide for them. We got to go to work. We got to earn our living.

Living in a rented house, sometimes you got to move from that house to another house. Life on earth is not at all easy. It's not just for believers.

Look at all the poor unbelievers in Bangalore. Life's not easy for them. Life's not easy for all these laborers who work in such tremendous poverty and go back to the slums where their husbands get drunk.

Life is not easy. And life's not easy for believers. Sometimes we believers think that we are the ones who are having the greatest difficulty.

I remember once, one couple came to me many years ago and told me what a lot of problems they had. I said, just go down to those slums and take a walk there for half an hour and come back and tell me what problems you have. They had no more problems.

We think, and the devil wants to make us think, that we are suffering so much. And the more he makes you think like that, the more he makes you feel sorry for yourself, which is an evil, sinful thing. You want other people to feel sorry for you.

No, we're supposed to lift up our heads and say, I'm okay. God's on the throne. It's like when Jesus was beaten and whipped and blood was flowing down His body and He was carrying the cross and all the women were weeping for Him.

He said, don't weep for me, I'm okay. God is in Jerusalem, He said in Luke 23, don't weep for me, I'm okay. My body is beaten, some blood is flowing and all, but I'm okay.

I'm in the center of God's will. What does it matter if I'm suffering a little? Weep for yourself, He said. Weep for your children.

I wish we had more believers like that in our day, who can say to people around me, around them, don't weep for me, I'm okay. I'm perfectly okay. I may be going through some trials and difficulties, but I'm in the center of God's will.

I'm sorry to say, very few believers are like that. Lot of believers are full of old whips, getting people to feel sorry for them, for this problem, that problem. They never seem to get out of it.

You see them 20 years later, they're still the same old wretched frame of mind. About this problem, that problem. And that's exactly what the devil wants you to be occupied with.

The worries of this life, get drunk with it, and get so drunk with it, that you can't rejoice in the Lord, so frequently in bad moods, and etc, etc. And just say it, and we can listen to a lot of messages, and may not change us. The Lord said, be careful.

Keep on the alert. If you really believe that Christ is coming soon, and that all that you see around you is going to pass away. Think of Noah, when he knew that God had told him, I've given this earth only 120 years.

Now 120 years was a short time in those days, because people lived up to 900 years. So, 120 years was about one-eighth of their lifetime, which means like, say, 10 years today. Something like that.

It sounds a long time when we say 120 years now. But let me repeat, they live up to 960 years, and we live up to 80 years today. It's only 10 years.

It's like, supposing the Lord were to say, I've given this earth 10 more years, then I'm going to come. How are you going to live those 10 years? How did Noah live in those 10 years, 120 years? He lived only for one thing. There are a lot of things, maybe in the world, which are attractive.

He said, no, I don't have time for it. I don't have time for a lot of stuff that goes on. I want to warn you, my dear brothers and sisters, you young people, and all of you, be careful that your heart is not weighted down, and your spiritual sharpness and alertness goes.

Because you spend your time watching television and movies, and you can say, well, it's not dirty, it's clean, okay, but think of the sharpness that goes from your life. Time that you could have spent, I'm not saying we don't need relaxation and entertainment and all that, but I believe we live in a day when it has become too much. It's become far too much.

And I remember the days when we never had television and we'd pray a lot more. I wonder if a certain drunkenness has come upon some of you. Think of it.

Jesus said, be alert, be alert. There was no man who worked under such pressure as Jesus did. Remember, he came in the flesh, he's like us and he's told us to follow him.

He worked under such tremendous pressure. What sort of entertainment did he find relaxation in, in the time of pressure? Don't let the devil fool you that you need a lot of entertainment because you're under such pressure and all that. There's fullness of joy in the presence of God.

At his right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Be careful that you don't get weighted down with the cares and worries of this world. Do what is necessary, yes, but don't let your mind get taken up with everything that is on this world.

Because the Bible says the world is passing away in all its lusts and all its passions. And he who does the will of God will abide forever. So I want to encourage all of you.

Say, Lord, in the years that are left, I want to do your will. I don't know what it is, I want to do your will. And if you want to do his will, seek fellowship with people who are also interested in doing his will.

Don't waste your time fooling around with people who are not serious about doing his will. Be alert at all times. Read further in verse 36, Luke 21, 36.

Keep on the alert. You know that word in the King James Version, it says watch. Watch means keep alert, keep awake, spiritually awake.

That means I'm always spiritually awake to what's happening around me. Spiritually, I may be physically asleep and I need that, but spiritually I'm awake. When I see things happening around me, when I see things happening in the world, I'm awake.

Yeah, that indicates this, this indicates that. I'm awake, alert. And praying, this is what he said often, watch and pray.

He kept the two together, keep on the alert and pray. I see it like this, keep on the alert means, if you read the newspaper or you hear the news somewhere, be on the alert and say, what does that indicate? And pray. Keep on the alert when you see these things happening and pray.

So that you may have the strength to escape these things that are about to take place and to stand before the Son of Man. So in other words, if I don't keep on the alert when I see these things happening around me and I don't pray, I will not have the strength. You can listen to all the messages you want, but you will not have the strength to be able to face the times to come.

And I'll tell you something, we have to prepare now. We used to have a saying in the military, the more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war. The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war.

Meaning that when times are peaceful, if we really work hard, then we'll be victorious when the war comes. I believe that has an application for us as believers. Our temptation is, when everything is peaceful, to relax.

That's the time we should be preparing. And it's because people don't prepare, that suddenly a temptation comes, a war comes and they fall. Jesus was tempted exactly like us.

Why is it when the Roman soldiers came, he said, here I am, take me. Whereas Peter took out his sword and chopped off somebody's ear. You know why? Both had the same flesh, but Jesus prayed and Peter slept.

That was the reason. Jesus knew that in his flesh he needed to pray if he wanted to be strong. He prayed.

And he told his disciples, watch and pray. The flesh is weak, the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Watch and pray, otherwise you'll fall in temptation.

And those guys said, oh no, we're okay. It's just like today. A lot of Christians, they read that word, watch and pray, so that you can have the strength to escape all these things.

I mean, the little, little temptations. Think of the little temptations that come in your home and you get upset and irritated. What does it indicate? It indicates that you have not watched and prayed, you've not been alert.

And that's why you fall. And of course, we can take it lightly and say, oh well, I'm sorry I slipped up. Nobody is perfect.

We can't get total victory in this life. None of us have become like Jesus. We've got all these excuses for our defeated life.

What does it mean to be an overcomer? What does it mean to be more than a conqueror? What does it mean to lift up our heads and stand? What does it mean when it says, when we are in our fight against the devil, it says in Ephesians 6, these words, Put on the armor of God. Be strong in the Lord, Ephesians 6, 10. The strength of His might.

And for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers. And then it says in verse 13, Take up the full armor of God, Ephesians 6, 13, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything, finally to stand firm. That means, having overcome everything, finally I'm standing upright.

I'm not knocked down. I'm upright. That's how God wants us to be.

When that evil day comes, if you want to stand firm, now is the time to be alert. To give up a whole lot of... If you're a serious Christian, to give up a whole lot of unnecessary things, which we have as baggage in our life, which makes it difficult for us to run this race. Can you imagine a man coming to run in a marathon race with a suitcase and suit and tie and all those type of stuff? Where is he going? I mean, he's not serious.

He's going for a picnic. He's not going for a marathon race. Man comes to a marathon race, he's going to get rid of all unnecessary things, and say, I've got to run.

You need to decide, whether you've got a lot of baggage that's hindering you from being ready for the coming of the Lord, being ready to do all that God wants you to do, before He comes, to accomplish all that He wants you to accomplish. I think of, what is the Lord supposed, wanting us to accomplish as a church, before He comes? Lord, it must be done. Is there some people we are supposed to contact? Is there some ministry we're supposed to fulfill? Is there something we've got to stand for? Lord, we want to do that.

Whatever it is, we want to be totally available. We don't have bright ideas, as to what we do, but we just say, Lord, we're available, if you will take us weak people as we are, and do your work through us. I believe the Lord will prepare us, to stand true in that day when He comes.

You know, the Lord also said, in Matthew 24, in relation to the coming of the Lord, His own coming, He said these words, in relation to being alert. Be alert, and pray. Then He said here also, in Matthew 24 verse 42, Be alert, for you don't know on which day your Lord is coming.

But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known, at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert. And he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason, you be ready also, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour, when you don't think He will.

You know, Jesus spoke about His coming like, being like a thief in the night. And you know, no thief tells you in advance, I'm coming on such and such a day, at such and such a time. Because if He did, then of course it wouldn't be a surprise.

And so, when He said, He's going to come like a thief in the night, He's going to take a lot of people by surprise. But, those who have studied the word, and those who look around, and see what is happening in the world around, and who are alert, and who study the scriptures, they will not know the exact day, or the exact hour, when Christ is coming. That is so clear.

He said that in verse 42. You do not know the day, your Lord is coming. And the hour, verse 44, the Son of Man is coming at an hour, when you don't think He will.

So the day, and the hour, we don't know. We don't know which date He is coming, or what time He is coming. Morning, noon, night, I don't know.

But, I can know when He is near. That I can know. He said that in verse 33.

When you see all these things happening, recognize that He is near, and He is right at the door. When you see these things happening, some of these things I just spoke about. You know, He spoke about, many times Jesus spoke about Himself as a a king who had gone on a long journey, and then He was going to come back.

There were parables like that. So here is the Lord having gone on a long journey for two thousand years, and He says at a particular time, at a particular time in history, you will know that He is almost near the door now. That means He is gone, and He has come back.

He is near the door now, and any moment He may open the door. So that's what He said. When you see these things, you recognize that He is near, right at the door, but you still don't know the day, or the hour, when He will open the door and come through.

But we can know when He is near. And, in 1 Thessalonians 5, He says this, 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 2, You know very well, brethren, that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. Paul says the same thing that Jesus said.

Like a thief in the night. Do you know whether a thief is going to come tonight? I don't know. He will come like a thief in the night, when everybody around is saying peace and safety.

People are talking about peace and safety, and there is a lot of talk about peace and safety going on in the world. Destruction will suddenly come like birth pains upon a woman with child. It's more than one place in scripture where the last days, the period of suffering just before the Lord's coming is compared to the last birth pains a woman goes through.

Such intense pain, and then the child is born. That's the new earth. And then, but, now listen to this.

This is the verse I want you to know. If you are born again, you brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you like a thief. You know that we are not supposed to be finding the Lord coming like a

thief in the night.

That is for the unbeliever. The Lord coming like a thief in the night is not for a believer. So if you think the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night for you, then you must be an unbeliever.

But He says, you believers in Thessalonica, you are not in darkness that that day should come to you like a thief in the night. The thieves don't come during the day time, they come in the middle of the night. And He says, you are not in the night, are you? You are not walking in darkness, then how can you be here in the light? So how can the Lord come as a thief for you in the night? You are sons of light.

Sons of day, we are not of night, we are not of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as others, but let's be sober. And those who sleep, do their sleeping at night.

And those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But we are of the day. So we are alert all the time.

What does it mean to say that the Lord's coming is not like a thief in the night for me? That means I am always ready for the coming of the Lord, right now. I can say that. If Jesus were to come this moment, I am absolutely ready.

My sins are all confessed and forgiven. I don't have a single sin that I have not confessed and cleansed in the blood of Christ. I have no conflict with anybody in the world for which I am responsible.

And other people may have a conflict with me. Like the Pharisees had a conflict with Jesus. But I have not hurt anybody whom I have not apologized.

I don't have to ask forgiveness from my wife for any word I have spoken to her, which is not said right, or any human being. I don't owe anybody any money. I am ready, right now, if the Lord were to come.

That's what I mean when I say, He is not going to come like a thief in the night for me. He is not going to surprise me. We must always be ready.

That's why I say, as soon as you sin, confess it. I have often said this, that I am not worried. It doesn't disturb me that people fall into sin.

But it does disturb me as to what they do after they fall into sin. I would like to know what they do after they fall. If they can take it lightly, then they are not ready.

If you can speak a rude, hurting word to somebody, your wife, or your husband, or a brother, or sister, there are some people that nature is like that. They can say a word, it just sounds so sweet and all that, but there is a sting in it. And they never seem to get out of that habit.

That speech never seems to become sweet. It's always with a sting. I have noticed that with certain human beings, even believers, they just like to hurt other people with a little sting.

Either it's because they are jealous of those other people, or they are unhappy with something, and that unhappiness finally comes forth in a stinging word. I'll tell you this, you are going to get a surprise when Christ comes, if you don't cleanse yourself from all that before he comes. There is not much time left.

You better get rid of all that. Get rid of it. Because the Bible says, if a man cannot control his tongue, his Christianity is worth zero.

James 1.26 And you will shrink away from Christ with shame when he comes. Turn to Luke chapter 17, where Jesus spoke about his coming also. He said his coming is going to be so sudden, like in the day that Lot verse 29 went from Sodom.

Suddenly the angel came and said to Lot and his wife and daughters, get out of here! Pull them out of Sodom! And that's how the church is going to be raptured. But we got to be ready for it. And he says, on that day when the Lord comes, verse 31, Luke 17 verse 31, on that day when Christ comes, don't let someone who's on the housetop, whose goods are in the house go down to take them away.

In other words, we should not have an attachment to anything down here in this house. There must be nothing I'm attached to on earth. If I'm on the housetop, I'm ready to go from there, because there's nothing downstairs in the house that I'm attached to.

That's the meaning of that passage, that if you're attached to something on this earth, that'll hold you down and prevent you from being taken up when Christ comes. I don't want to be attached to anything. You can have a lot of things, but don't get attached to any of them.

Don't get stuck to them. Hold everything loosely. Everything that you have, when these things possess your heart, that you have a problem.

If you have your house, and that house is outside of you, that's fine. But if your house gets inside your heart, that's a problem. If your money is in the bank, that's okay.

But when your money gets into your heart, then you're attached to it. It's not a question of how much money you have. It's a question of where it is.

Is it in the bank or is it in your heart? Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also. So, he speaks here about not being attached to things. And likewise, it says in verse 31, let not the one who is in the field turn back.

Today we would say an office. Those days people worked in a field and today you go to work in an office. If you're working in an office and the Lord suddenly comes, do you have to say, hang on Lord, I didn't settle things with my wife before I left this morning.

You shouldn't have to say that. You should have settled things with your wife before you left for the office or the field. There's no need to turn back.

Always ready for the coming of Christ. We may slip up, but we settle the matter before we move on. To me, sin is like getting a thorn in your foot.

If you get a thorn in your foot, when do you take it off? You don't wait till the evening to remove all your thorns. I don't know about you, I remove it immediately. I do the same with sin.

Exactly the same. Sin is worse than a thorn. And I say, I want to remove it immediately.

I want to be ready. Whatever I do, I want to settle it immediately. I want to clear all my debts and I want to ask forgiveness from all those whom I have to ask forgiveness from.

I want to be absolutely clear. I don't want to be attached to anything on this earth. Though I may have many things, attached to nothing.

But ready. Holding everything loosely, so that when Christ comes, we are ready to go. And then he said in verse 32, Remember Lot's wife.

She was pulled out of Sodom. God loved her, pulled her out, but she was still lost. Only because of one reason.

Her body was out of Sodom, but her heart was in Sodom. She thought of all the saris she left behind. She thought of her lovely garden that's burnt.

She didn't have time to pick up all her ornaments. How sad. Instead of being thankful, she escaped the judgment.

So the Lord said, Remember Lot's wife. Don't be like that. So, if I don't want to find the Lord coming like a thief in the night, it's very simple.

Keep your conscience absolutely clear. At all times. Immediately.

Do your best to settle everything with God and with man. Don't get attached to anything. If the Lord multiplies your goods, don't get attached to it.

If the Lord increases your salary, that's fine. Praise the Lord. But don't get attached to it.

Don't get clingy to the things of earth. Otherwise our heart can be weighed down. And we can get drunk with the things of this life.

Now I want to also show you another passage in relation to the second coming of Christ, the second Thessalonians. In chapter 2, where it speaks about the Antichrist coming up in the last days. And before that it says here there's going to be in those days a tremendous activity of Satan.

And this activity of Satan, second Thessalonians 2 verse 9, there's a phrase there called the activity of Satan, that the devil is going to be very active. And it's not just in persecution. The devil is active in persecution, I know.

But there's another way he leads people astray and destroys Christians. That is by deception. When he comes in persecution he comes like a lion.

The Bible says, devil is like a roaring lion waiting to devour people. And when he comes with deception he's like a snake. More subtle.

There's a difference between a snake and a lion. A lion terrifies you, but a snake is very subtle. And the devil comes with persecution, but he comes with deception.

And one of the ways, and in the last days it's speaking about deception. Deception through false signs and wonders. That means signs and wonders done in Jesus' name, apparently, but which are not drawing people to Christ, but maybe to a healer or to a preacher.

it's not leading people to godliness or holiness. The healing becomes an end in itself. And there can be deception there, because you know, it's unfortunate when we think that everything supernatural is from God.

No. Everything supernatural is not from God. Everything done in Jesus' name is not necessarily from God.

Jesus said that in Matthew 7:22 Many will come to me in the last day and say, Lord, we did miracles in your name. And you'll say, get away, I never knew you. You who work iniquity.

You who live in sin. You who practice sin. You who never led anybody to holiness.

You are only interested in your sinful life. So, that's the other thing mentioned here, in verse 9. The activity of Satan with power and signs and lying, false wonders. And with all the deception of wickedness.

Now, who are the people who are going to be deceived by this? It's only one category of people that will be deceived. Those, verse 10, who don't receive the love of the truth, so as to be saved. Dear brothers and sisters, please listen to this word of exhortation.

Love the truth about yourself in order to be saved. Saved from what? I'll tell you honestly, I'm a thousand times more interested in being saved from the wretched nature of Adam that I've got, than in being saved from hell. Most Christians only want to be saved from hell.

I'll tell you what I want to be saved from. I want to be saved from all the wretched habits that the Adamic nature has given me. All the selfishness and pride and every other type of evil there is.

I want to be saved from that. If you don't love the truth about yourself to be saved. In other words, when the Holy Spirit tells you something about yourself in a particular situation.

I've been in situations where the Spirit of God has told me that was downright selfish of you to behave like that. What do I do when the Spirit of God tells me that was downright selfish of you to behave like that or to talk like that to that person? I can only weep. Lord, it's true.

I'm sorry. I'm really sorry that I want to be free from to be free from selfishness like climbing a mountain. To be free from pride and spiritual pride is like climbing a mountain.

Are you determined to get to the top of that mountain of humility and totally free from selfishness? Are you determined to climb that? That means every time the Spirit of God shows you something nobody else may have known about it but you know and you love the truth about yourself and say, I want to be saved. Not just from hell. I want to be saved from every wretched thing the devil gave me through my Adamic nature.

If I'm not like that the Bible says the Lord I believe the Lord allows all these things to happen. To see who all are interested in His nature. One of the things I have seen is how the Lord allows wicked people to prosper.

It would be very easy for the Lord to make wicked people suffer. But when wicked people prosper and they live long healthy lives, it makes some people feel well I suppose it's not too serious then, being a little wicked. And immediately the Lord has found out who is really interested in holiness and who is not.

The Lord allows many people who are outright compromisers apparently for their ministry to be successful. They have contacts and in fact most of the Christian preachers I see on Christian television I'll tell you honestly I don't have any respect for any of them. Maybe you do.

I have to tell you honestly I don't. Because I don't see Christ in them. I don't see the humility of Christ in them.

I don't see their attitude to money as the attitude of Jesus Christ. That's what disturbs me. So I don't have any respect for them.

I don't see the humility and meekness of Christ. But a lot of people are taken up with that. Oh, look at the millions that are listening.

Ok, ok, go ahead. But I will not be deceived. I will not be deceived by numbers.

I mean if you are going to be taken up by numbers you could join Islam. They've got one billion people too in the world. And they go more regularly to their prayers than Christians do.

No, I'm not impressed by numbers. The Jehovah's Witnesses have got numbers. The Mormons have got numbers.

The cults have got numbers. No. To those who don't love the truth God allows them to be deceived.

Deceived into false cults. Deceived by all these so called healers who apparently are doing something for the Lord. You'll be deceived.

I'll tell you you'll be deceived. But if you love the truth about yourself you will not be deceived. Say, Lord, I want to be saved.

So that's the other thing the Lord speaks about in relation to the last days. So I pray that the Lord will help us to be alert in these days. Particularly as we live in very exciting times.

And we read the newspapers and tsunamis and war in Jerusalem and war in Iraq and everything brings a... the lights begin to sparkle. Hey, things are beginning to happen. We're coming closer to the coming of Jesus.

I mean supposing you were a bride and you heard that you're the one you're going to get married to has come pretty close. Your marriage day is coming soon. Are you excited? Or do you sit like many of us? Yeah, I think I'm getting married one of these days.

Christ is coming. There's going to be a wedding. I'm looking forward to it.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before God. The Lord wants you to live an exciting life in these days.

Christian life is meant to be exciting. Heavenly Father, help us, we pray, not just to be stirred temporarily by what we hear for a moment, but to be permanently challenged. As we look around in the world to be alert, to be alert, to know your word so that we can discern what is spiritual and what is soulish.

Help us in these days of tremendous deception to love the truth so that we will not be deceived, to be saved from all the wretched things of the nature of Adam that you died to save us from. Help us, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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