

## Message #103

## Luke 21:29-38

Years ago, when we were in the Chicago area, I asked a doctor what was the most difficult exam he ever took. He was an internal specialist. He said that he had to learn all of the internal organs of the body and all the possible failures each internal organ could have as it related to the other organs. Then he was given a series of hypothetical situations in which he had to figure out the potential solution. He said the exam went something like this: "If this organ is doing A and that organ is doing B, what are the options of what could be wrong and how do you correct the problem." He said that exam was so tough, it caused him to hyperventilate during the test and he had to take some oxygen. He said there were some students who snapped during that exam and just started writing down crazy answers.

But as tough as that exam was, there is coming one for every one of us much tougher than that. **This exam does not have medical ramifications, it has eternal ramifications. Every person will stand before Jesus Christ to be examined by Him.**

This will be one intimidating exam. It will be based on potentials, possibilities and realities. There will be real situations that will be carefully analyzed. This exam will be very personal and it appears to me to be very near. Now this is one exam we do not want to fail. This is one exam for which we want to be well prepared.

That is the very point Jesus wanted to communicate to His people right here:

**IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST WILL COME BACK TO JUDGE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE BELIEVER GUARD HIMSELF FROM WORLDLY THINGS AND COMMIT HIMSELF TO HOLY THINGS BASED ON A CAREFUL STUDY OF GOD'S WORD.**

The life of Jesus Christ on earth was coming to an end. Israel was about to say goodbye to her King for a while. Now this passage specifically has to do with the return of Jesus Christ as king at the end of the Tribulation.

But certainly we may make an application because each of us will face a personal examination and judgment. Each of us needs to be carefully preparing for our own examination day. We can prepare for it or we can fluff off and waste time. But the exam will come.

In this passage, Jesus Christ was speaking to large crowds in the Temple. During the day, He would teach in the Temple, but at night, He would get away from the crowd and go up on Mt. Olivet (**Luke 21:37-38**). Every morning people would get up early to get to the Temple to hear Him teach. Jesus did not shy away from teaching truth on any subject, including coming judgment. **It is very clear that one thing God's people want to take very seriously is the teaching of God's word.** This will be a critical matter of judgment.

In view of the fact that He would return to judge, He wanted the people to understand many prophetic, judgment realities:

**PROPHETIC REALITY #1** – The return of Jesus Christ will be accompanied by sign indicators. **21:29-31**

The return of Jesus Christ as King of the Jews will be preceded by some very specific and dramatic signs. He had just carefully laid out a series of signs in the previous verses.

In order to drive this point home, Jesus tells a parable about a fig tree. A parable was an earthly story designed to teach a heavenly truth, which was designed to reveal the truth to some and hide the truth from some (Matt. 13:10-11).

The point of this particular parable is that when you see the trees bringing forth leaves and starting to blossom, you know summer is near. This is just like the way it will be when you see the signs that I have just mentioned beginning to blossom—Temple destroyed; False Christ's; wars; cosmological disruptions; severe persecutions; Jerusalem surrounded by Gentile powers; know that the Kingdom of God is near and that Jesus Christ is about to return and Israel will have her king.

These signs will occur during the Tribulation, but when we look around at the condition of things right now in our world, we must realize that the stage is being set for the return of Christ:

- 1) There has been a major departure from the word of God - I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 4:1-5
- 2) There is a major movement to eliminate God and oppose God - II Thess. 2:4
- 3) There is a major escalation of destruction and rebellion - II Thess. 2:3
- 4) There is an increase in people who are unholy, arrogant, malicious people who love pleasure and hate authority - II Tim. 3:2-4
- 5) There is an unashamed and non-blushing attitude toward the abominable sin of homosexuality - Luke 17:28-30

It is clear that things are shaping up that do appear to indicate that the clouds are forming for the events of the Tribulation that will lead to the return of Jesus Christ.

**PROPHETIC REALITY #2** – The return of Jesus Christ is promised in God's word. **21:32-33**

**God will ALWAYS be faithful to fulfill every one of His promises. Jesus Christ is coming back and all can know it because God's word specifically says it.**

Jesus specifically points out two facts:

**Fact #1** - God will preserve His generation. **21:32**

Another way to generically say this is God will always preserve His people. Now there have been at least four different views pertaining to the words "this generation."

**(View #1)** - Jesus is referring to the immediate generation that would not pass away until Jerusalem would be destroyed in AD 70.

The problem with this interpretation is the adjective “all.” All of the things have not happened and did not happen even with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Of course the most obvious is Jesus did not return.

**(View #2)** - Jesus is referring to the generation who will be living when these things happen.

The problem with this interpretation is the pronoun, “this” generation, not “that” generation. There would be no point in Christ discussing some future generation of people who will eventually exist when He returns.

**(View #3)** - Jesus is referring to the wicked generation who will continue to exist until He returns.

This is certainly true; however, the context does not seem to support that interpretation.

**(View #4)** - Jesus is referring to the nation Israel who will continue to exist until all is fulfilled.

This is exactly what Jesus meant. **Israel will never pass away because she has been promised a kingdom forever (II Sam. 7:16).**

Israel is not going to ever be out of existence. She will continue to exist until God fulfills every promise He has made to her. Many powers have tried to destroy Israel, and have not succeeded. Why? Because of the providential sovereignty of God.

**Fact #2** - God will preserve His word. **21:33**

God’s word and God’s promises are eternal. The heavens and earth will pass away because God Himself is going to destroy it by a massive global warming fire (II Pet. 3:10). But the word of God stands and endures forever (I Pet. 1:25).

I do not think most people have a clue as to the importance of the word of God to God and to people. God magnifies His word at the same level of all of His own names - Psalm 138:2. God is always true and faithful to His word. God will judge and God will fulfill His promises, not because of our faithfulness to His word but because of His faithfulness to His word.

If we give ourselves to a careful accurate understanding of God’s word, we are giving ourselves to something that will never pass away. Knowing God’s word is something that will never ever pass away.

**PROPHETIC REALITY #3** – The return of Jesus Christ means the judgment by Jesus Christ. **21:34-36**

Now the thought of the return of Jesus Christ should affect the way we live here and now in three ways:

**Way #1** - The fact that Christ will judge us should prompt us to be on guard. **21:34-36**

The verb “Be on guard” (v. 34) has to do with setting your mind on something in a very devoted way (*Ibid.* p. 385). So one actually devotes oneself to the objective.

The verb “keep on the alert” (v. 36) is one that means turn your mind to this specific direction and be very watchful and vigilant. This is more than just mental alertness; this is a constant, sleepless watching for something (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 7).

Now what we need to set our minds on is not being “weighted down” by the things Jesus lists. That verb “weighted down” (barew) means to be so weighted down and burdened that you are totally depressed (*Ibid.*, pp. 75-76).

There are three specific areas mentioned by Jesus Christ of which we need to be on guard.

**(Area #1)** - Be on guard against dissipation. **21:34a**

The word “dissipation” (kraipalh) is a word that refers to partying and drinking to the point that you have nausea and sickness. This is debauchery that is to the point of making you sick (*Ibid.*, p. 256).

**(Area #2)** - Be on guard against drunkenness. **21:34b**

The word “drunkenness” is a word that means just what it says. When Jesus Christ returns you do not want Him to find you as some drunken alcoholic who drinks himself or herself to the point of being sick.

**(Area #3)** - Be on guard against worries. **21:34c**

This word has to do with living life in total worry and anxiety (*Ibid.*, p. 284).

It is intriguing that Jesus lists worrying about everything on the same level as being a drunken alcoholic.

When a believer gets so caught up with this world and worries about all of life, then one is not in their right mind. They are like a drunk out of mind. You do not want to be in this condition when Christ returns.

**Way #2** - The fact that Christ will judge us should prompt us to keep alert. **21:36a**

As we mentioned, the idea of being alert is keeping a watchful vigilance on our heart as we wait for the return of Jesus Christ. Now notice the emphasis, “keep alert at all times.” You cannot let your guard down. You must keep on top of your own spirituality.

Some people drift in and out of spirituality. In view of Christ's return, we need to keep on top of it at all times.

**Way #3** - The fact that Christ will judge us should prompt us to pray. **21:36b**

In view of Christ's return, we should be people of prayer. We need to specifically pray that we have the strength to escape things like dissipation, drunkenness and worry. Prayer is critical to having a strength that enables us to withstand the wiles of the Devil.

We have many prayer meetings here at church and we don't really pack in the numbers. I hope you have your own prayer time. I hope you are personally spending time with God asking Him privately to make you one who has victory.

**From this context, there are three reasons why we need to be on guard at all times:**

**(Reason #1) - The unexpected judgment reason. 21:34**

If one is not on guard, Christ will appear "suddenly" and it will be an unexpected surprise and you will be trapped in your unfaithful condition.

**(Reason #2) - The universal judgment reason. 21:35**

Judgment will come for "all those who dwell on the face of the earth." No one will escape it, so we need to guard our hearts and minds.

**(Reason #3) - The inescapable judgment reason. 21:36**

No one may escape this reality; "all" will stand before the Son of Man.