

## ***Being Strengthened to Stand Without Compromise (Lk. 21:34-36)***

### **I. OVERCOMING THE SNARE AT THE END OF THE AGE**

- A. Jesus prophesied that the events related to His return would come like a snare that would test and challenge everyone (v. 35). He called His people to be strengthened to escape a snare of sin so as to stand in victory (v. 36), and warned them to not allow their heart to be weighed down (v. 34). He gave two exhortations—to *take heed to themselves* (v. 34) and to *watch and pray* (v. 36).
- <sup>25</sup>*“There will be...on the earth distress of nations...<sup>26</sup>men’s hearts failing them from fear...<sup>28</sup>When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near...<sup>32</sup>this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place...<sup>34</sup>But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. <sup>35</sup>For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy [have strength] to escape all these things...” (Lk. 21:25-36)*
- B. ***Distress of nations***: The intensity of the distress will cause men’s hearts to fail from fear (v. 26), yet others will be encouraged, lifting their heads because their salvation draws near (v. 28). The distress includes financial crisis, terrorism, racial clashes, violent weather, persecution, etc.
- C. ***Your redemption***: God’s power will be manifested in an unprecedented way. Jesus will return. <sup>3</sup>*He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. (Ps. 91:3)*
- D. ***Begin***: God’s people are to recognize when these things “begin” in the generation of His return (v. 28, 32). The end-time “snare” of sin, pressure, and persecution will increase in intensity over a generation, reaching its fullness in the final 3½ years of this age culminating with Jesus’ return.
- E. ***Unexpected***: Many will lack understanding of the danger of the events that are unfolding (v. 34).
- F. ***Snare***: In the ancient world they used snares or traps to capture animals for food. A snare was purposely *hidden* so that the bait lured its prey expectantly into the trap. A snare or trap was also designed to *entrap* its prey, making it very difficult to escape once it was caught.
- G. Jesus highlighted three emotional snares that will cause people to draw back from the Lord. People filled with fear and pain often seek to find “comfort” as a way to escape their anguish.
1. ***Carousing (dissipation)***: Over-indulgence leads people to dissipate, squander, or lose their strength. The general idea of dissipation is to live without sufficient restraints. Many today are overly stimulated by what they eat, drink, watch, or do.  
<sup>2</sup>*...the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication... (Rev. 19:2)*
  2. ***Drunkenness***: Many will seek to escape pain and pressure without connecting with God.
  3. ***Cares of this life***: Many will be overcome with anxiety or fear related to their provisions and safety (v. 26, 34). This preoccupation will cause their hearts to be weighed down.

## II. TWO COMMANDS: TO TAKE HEED (V. 34) AND TO WATCH AND PRAY (V. 36)

- A. God’s people can be strengthened to escape the snare of sin and fear to stand in victory (v. 36). Jesus gave two commands—to *take heed to themselves* (v. 34) and to *watch and pray* (v. 36).  
<sup>34</sup>*Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life...* <sup>36</sup>*Watch...and pray always that you may be counted worthy [have strength] to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”* (Lk. 21:34-36)
- B. **Have strength:** A vibrant spiritual life leads to courage, zeal for God, and being alert in the Spirit. The phrase “be counted worthy” (v. 36) is translated as “to have strength” in most modern Bible translations. A footnote in the NKJ has “to have strength” as an alternative translation.  
<sup>36</sup>*...praying that you may have strength to escape all these things....”* (Lk. 21:36; NAS)
- C. **Weighed down:** Our heart can grow spiritually dull, defiled, clouded, and unresponsive to God. What we do with our body (immorality, drunkenness, etc.) greatly affects the spiritual condition of our heart—such as losing godly perspective, motivation to diligently seek God, or courage.
- D. **To escape:** To escape by yielding to lust, drunkenness, fear, and drawing back from God, etc.
- E. **To stand:** To stand boldly and in victory, in contrast to falling into sin and compromise
- F. **#1 Take heed to yourselves:** We are to pay close attention that our hearts not be weighed down. It is far easier to avoid an addiction than to struggle to get free of it. Augustine (354-430 AD): “Lust yielded to becomes a habit, and a habit not resisted becomes necessity [addiction].”
- G. **#2 Watch and pray:** to position yourself to receive more from the Lord—*strength* to love well in the mounting pressures and *insight* to understand what the Lord is doing so as to help others.
1. To pray for strength to stand via growing in communion with Jesus. See [mikebickle.org](http://mikebickle.org) for notes: **Ten Prayers to Strengthen Our Inner Man: F-E-L-L-O-W-S-H-I-P.**
  2. To watch is to be alert to what God is doing outwardly in society (and the nations) and inwardly in our heart (His leadership in our personal life). Watching includes being alert to the biblical signs of the times as “anointed observers.” People with understanding will have life-saving insight, like one who has a *compass* while in a storm on the sea.
  3. Some believers *pray* but do not watch or pay attention to what is happening prophetically in the nations. Others *watch* what is happening prophetically, but do not pray.
- H. Jesus gave His people practical pastoral counsel by calling them to watch and pray. Ten times in the Scripture, God’s people are exhorted to “watch” related to end-times events and pressures (Mt. 24:42; 25:13; Mk. 13:9, 33, 34, 35, 37; Lk. 21:36; 1 Thes. 5:6; Rev. 16:15). The command to watch and pray is a call to love people well. People will need to be helped by those with godly resolve, courage, and insight into what God is doing. Spiritually dull believers filled with fear and confusion will contribute to the problem, not to the solutions, of those they love.