

THE TIME OF RETURN | LUKE 21:25-38 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 8/9/2026

I. The Signs of His Return (25–28) | II. The Certainty of His Return (29–33) | III. The Readiness for His Return (34–38)

INTRO: For thousands of years mankind has tried to predict the future. Economists forecast markets. Meteorologists predict the weather. Military analysts watch the movements of nations. Yet despite all our technology, no one knows with certainty what tomorrow holds. – Jesus does! // As He concludes His Olivet Discourse, Jesus shifts from Jerusalem's Destruction to the Second Coming. – So, I've entitled this message... **THE TIME OF RETURN.**

I. THE SIGNS OF HIS RETURN (25-28) – Jesus' teaching in (21:20-24) has a twofold fulfillment. / **HISTORICALLY**, it pointed to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD., events Jesus specifically warned His disciples about. / **PROPHETICALLY**, however, His words still anticipate a **Future Fulfillment!** – Scholars have labeled this time as **The Great Tribulation**, aka **JACOB'S TROUBLE**, when these prophecies will manifest at their proper time (cf. Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1; Rev 13:1-10).

LUKE does not include the details of the Great Tribulation as (Matt 24:15-28; Mark 13:14-23) does. – Instead, he fast forwards to a future time of **Chaos and Calamity** before Jesus' 2nd Coming – **READ:**

- Jesus describes the **World's Darkest Hour** just before His brightest arrival! [*What will happen?*]

A. Creation Will Tremble (25a): "*And there will be **SIGNS** in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars...*" Jesus describes **Cosmic Disturbances** unlike anything mankind has witnessed. The heavenly bodies God established to **MARK seasons** (Gen. 1:14) will become **SIGNS** announcing the King's arrival.

1. Joel prophesied this. "*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood*" (Joel 2:31)
2. Isaiah described similar events. (tt. Isa 13:9-13) "*The stars of heaven...will not give their light...*"
3. Creation itself begins announcing that its Creator is coming!

P/A: The same God who controls **Creation** also controls **History**. – Nothing is random! Everything is moving exactly according to His timetable.

B. Humanity Will Panic (25b-26): "*...distress of nations...*" All alive will suffer anxiety and anguish!

1. **Men's hearts failing them from fear...** The Greek phrase *apopsychō* [ap-ops-oo'-kho] speaks of people literally fainting from terror; "*to breathe out life*" (used only 1x, here in Luke)
 - They will realize something supernatural is happening... **Heavenly Powers are Shaking!**
2. **The World's Greatest Problem** has never been climate change, economic collapse, or political instability. **The world's greatest problem is Life Without Christ!** – The closer history comes to Christ's RETURN, the greater mankind's anxiety becomes.
 - Scripture predicts it! **Our headlines increasingly resemble what Scripture foretold!**

P/A: Fear dominates when a heart that has **NO HOPE!** – But TRUE believers possess something the world cannot manufacture— **Peace in the middle of panic**. – (John 14:27) *Peace, give I to thee!*

C. Christ Will Triumph (27): "*Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*" – History does not end with man's rebellion; it ends with Christ's Reign!

1. **Jesus RETURNS Personally... Visibly... Literally... Gloriously!** – And when He does, (Matt 24:2; Rev 1:7) makes it clear that, **“Every eye will see Him!”** (This is **Not the Rapture**, but His very public **2nd Coming**)
2. The **“ONE”** once crowned with **Thorns** now wears **Many Crowns**. – **The Lamb** returns as the **Lion** (Rev 5:5) – The **Suffering Servant** returns as the **Conquering King**!
 - DANIEL saw this centuries earlier. **“Behold, One like the Son of Man...came with the clouds of heaven.”** (Dan 7:13; Acts 1:9-11) –

P/A: The Return of Christ is the fulfillment of every promise God ever made concerning Messiah's Kingdom.

D. Believers Will Rejoice (28) **“Now WHEN these things begin to happen, look up...”**

1. The world's posture is Downward...The believer's posture is Upward. **Why?** Because our **redemption is drawing near!** – Redemption especially speaks of DELIVERENCE unto SALVATION.
 - (Eph 1:14; 4:30) declares that believers are the **“purchased possession,”** who are **“sealed for the day of redemption!”** That is what we are to be looking for! **Or have you forgotten?**
2. Jesus doesn't say: ‘Hide, Panic, Retreat. – He says, **“Stand up and Look up... Lift your heads!”** – **Instead of being consumed by fear over world events, let them increase your confidence that Jesus is Returning soon! – **Believers should know that Hope has a name: It's Jesus Christ.****

Illustration: When a child waits for his father to return home, every passing car causes him to run to the window. Not because he knows exactly when Dad will arrive... But because he longs to see him. That should be the Christian's heart! (*Do you long for the presence of Jesus Christ?*)

II. THE CERTAINTY OF HIS RETURN (29-33): Jesus now shifts from prophetic events to an emphasizing a believer's proper response. – **READ:** There are **Three principal Fig Tree Teachings** given by Jesus. 1) **The Barren fig tree** (Luke 13:6-9), 2) **the Cursed fig tree** (Matt 21:18-22), and 3) the **Budding fig tree**, which emphasizes the nearness of His Return. **A Parable for them to consider...**

A. Learn the Lesson (29-31): If **the Fig Tree** is fig. of Israel, **LOOK at it... Watch it!** Because it's a **Significant Sign** of that the **Kingdom is NEAR!** – But notice also the mention of **“All the Trees,”** which suggests that **more than one nation** will be involved...

- (Ezek 38-39) mentions Gog/Magog, Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, and Beth Togarmah.
 - (Dan 11:40-43) mentions Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia.
 - **Ultimately: ALL NATIONS!** – **This is perhaps the most important point.** End-time prophecy eventually moves beyond a handful of identifiable nations. Zechariah says: **“I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem.”** (Zech 14:2). *Thus, the inclusion of this parable...*
1. **Every listener** understood how trees announced the changing seasons. – **Believers** are then expected to **recognize the spiritual significance of the prophetic signs He had just described** (vv. 25-28)
 2. **This parable** is less about identifying Israel specifically than about recognizing obvious evidence.

P/A: These prophetic signs indicate that God's redemptive plan is advancing toward its culmination. Have you learned this lesson yet? *If so, then...*

B. Trust the Promise (32): *"This generation..."* – Though **many interpretations exist**, the most natural understanding is that some from **"the generation witnessing these final signs"** **will also witness Christ's return!** – **"That/This"** generation **will not die off**, UNTIL all things take place.

- Once end-time events begin... they move rapidly toward completion! (*possibly since, May 14, 1948*)

C. Believe the Word (33): *"Heaven and earth will pass away, ...My words will not..."* – **This may be one of the greatest declarations of Christ's deity.** – **Everything visible will disappear...**

- Empires fall, Governments collapse, Cultures change, Opinions shift, **BUT God's Word stands forever!** – (Isa 40:8) *"The grass withers...But the word of our God stands forever."*

QUOTE: Warren Wiersbe – *"Prophecy is not given to satisfy our curiosity but to sanctify our lives."*

P/A: The WORD of God is Certain! You can build your life upon the one thing that never changes!

III. THE READINESS FOR HIS RETURN (34-38): Jesus now moves from information... to application, because **Prophecy always demands a response.** – **READ:**

A. Guard Your Heart (34): *"Take heed to yourselves..."* – Three dangers threaten spiritual readiness.

1. **Carousing** is the activity of drinking alcohol and enjoying oneself with others in a noisy, lively way. It's the Party Spirit, aka **Dissipation**, living for pleasure. (*cf.* Eph 5:18)
2. **Drunkenness:** Speaks of Intoxication by Strong Drink or even Living under worldly control! – (Rom 13:13; Gal 5:21) warn against such conduct. **WHY?** **Intoxication clouds judgment!**
3. **Cares of This Life:** During times of difficulty, **it's easy to GIVE UP** and live like the unsaved world!
 - One of Satan's greatest strategies is not always temptation... **It is Distraction!**

P/A: **The enemy doesn't have to make us bad.** He simply wants us **Too Busy** to be watchful!

B. Stay Watchful (35-36): **Jesus compares His Return to a Trap (Snare)** – It will be Sudden and Unexpected! – Every **'Unbeliever'** will be caught by surprise. – **But believers should not!**

- How do we stay ready? **Jesus gives two commands:** **Watch** externally, **Pray** internally!
- **Spiritual Vigilance** begins with a Guarded heart. **Sinful Ventures DULL Spiritual Senses.**

Quote — J.C. Ryle *"The highest style of Christian is the watchful Christian."*

C. Keep Worshiping (37-38): **Luke ends with a beautiful contrast.** – **READ:** During the day... Jesus Taught! At night... He Prayed on the Mount of Olives. – **Meanwhile...** People eagerly gathered every morning to hear Him. – **Jesus remained faithful to His mission until the very end.**

- Even knowing **The Cross was only days away...** He continued teaching. He continued serving. He continued obeying. **He was faithful to do His Father's will till the end.**

P/A: Until Jesus returns... We should continue to do what Jesus did. **Teach... Pray... Serve... Remain faithful!** – **FINAL APPLICATIONS:**

1. Live Expectantly! Every sunrise could be one day closer to seeing Christ. *"Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing..."* (Titus 2:13)

2. Live Purely! Expectation produces holiness. *"Everyone who has this hope...purifies himself..."* (1 John 3:3)

3. Live Faithfully! Don't become consumed with predicting dates. Become committed to making disciples. *"Occupy till I come."* (Luke 19:13 KJV)

4. Live Courageously! The darker the world becomes... The brighter the Gospel shines. – (Deut 31:6) *"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."*

CONCLUSION: Jesus never intended prophecy to frighten His followers. **He intended it to steady them.** When the world shakes... Stand firm! – When others panic... Look up! – When others lose hope... Remember... **THE TIME OF RETURN** is near!

- **BONUS VERSE:** (Rom 13:11) tells us, *...do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*