

# What to do When Your Nation is in Decline

The Jews' rejection of Jesus, their Messianic King, sealed their doom. Not one stone of the temple would be left upon another (Luke 21:6). Political turmoil, religious apostasy, indifference, social chaos, and the persecution of Christians were all on the immediate horizon (Luke 21:8-19). The Most High who rules in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:25) and determines the rise and fall of every nation (Acts 17:26) would encompass Jerusalem with armies (Luke 21:20) and execute God's righteous judgment on that generation (Luke 21:21-32). And, as the Jewish historian Josephus so thoroughly documents in his extensive writings, Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled precisely as predicted.

No patriot wants to watch as his beloved nation declines and falls. The prophets Jeremiah and Habakkuk had such a vantage point, and it broke their hearts. Jeremiah rightfully earned the nickname of "the weeping prophet" because he ever strove to prevent such a catastrophe. His repeated warnings of Jehovah's certain wrath upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness fell upon impenitent ears.

Though I am not a prophet or the son of a prophet, each of us has a front row seat to watch America's increasing decline. As the open embrace of humanism with its toxic tentacles ever increases among our fellow citizens, the principles of righteousness will proportionately decrease. Respect for God, authority, the rule of law, marriage and innocent human life are not insignificant matters; they are the essential building blocks of a morally vibrant society. History and Scripture testify that the moral and spiritual decay of a nation always results in oblivion because, ***"Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people"*** (Proverbs 14:34).

What are Christ's disciples to do during such a time of national decay? Jesus' words in Luke 21:33-36 contain our Lord's concise counsel. He states:

***"Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man."***

For a disciple of Jesus to make and keep the main thing during such times, they need to:

***Focus on the imperishable, not the perishable.*** Not only do nations rise and fall, but the very earth on which they exist will also pass away. The only kingdom on this earth which cannot be moved (Hebrews 12:28) is the eternal one the God of Heaven set up in the days of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:44). It is eternal because its Constitution—God's Word (Luke 8:11) is imperishable (1 Peter 1:23). Like the flower of grass, a nation's glory withers and falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever (1 24-25).

***Take heed to yourself.*** Satan seeks to distract people so that they do not make and keep the main thing. Distraction from God and His Word is a spiritual snare. It is intentionally designed to take your attention and focus off seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The cares of this life are thorns that destroy the fertility and productivity of good soil (Luke 8:14). While thus distracted, God's Day of Judgment will come upon you, and you are unprepared for it. Tragically, you will have an eternity to mourn your lack of preparation.

***Watch and pray.*** Continuous spiritual alertness is imperative. Being alert in prayer is part of a Christian soldier's armor (Ephesian 6:18). Spending time in prayer and making

supplication and intercession for all who are in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2) is commanded. Spending time following the daily “news” and allowing it to generate cares and fears in your heart is not. We all watch something. I decide whether I am watching and praying about things related to the kingdom of Heaven or matters only related to the kingdoms of this earth. Watching and praying over spiritual things will prepare me to stand before the Son of Man. Watching and paying attention to worldly things will not. Beloved, make and keep the main thing.

—John Chowning

### ***Prayer Request***

**La Donna Chism** was admitted into MCH last Sunday for a UTI. She was treated and released to go home on Monday afternoon. Please continue to keep LaDonna in your daily prayers.

LaDonna’s husband, **Stan Chism**, was also sick last weekend with flu-like symptoms. It was not covid.

**Louis Escontrias** (Gloria Craig’s co-worker) was involved in an motorcycle accident last Sunday. He sustained a broken femur, clavicle, ankle and chest bones and will undergo multiple surgeries. Louis is in Rm #613 at MCH. Keep him in your prayers.

We need to keep **Amanda and Jordan Zuniga** in our prayers as they are going through a very sad and difficult time in the loss of their unborn baby. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to them.

### ***Prayer List***

Wayne Anderson; Maria Baeza; Betty Branson; Naomi and Adelynn Bustillos; Glenna Callendar; LaDonna Chism; Cathy Eastwood; Ann Ellison; Mark Erwin; Paul Gunn; Doug Gynn; Lon & Lana Howard; Charles Lewis; Jason Moore; Melissa Moore; Juan & Estella Morolez; Rudy Ochoa; Bruce & Trina Plyler; Terresia Weaver; Luke Wells; Carolyn Wilkerson; Ron Williams; Bill Wood; John Wood.

### ***Eisenhower’s Shut-ins***

Glenna Callendar; LaVerne Couch, James & Joyce Drake; Ronda Lyne; Dusty and Kathy Marshall; Janelle Shirley & Marilyn Upshaw.

Remember to keep all of our sick, shut-ins, the bereaved, our military personnel and spiritually weak in your daily prayers.

### ***Events***

Watch “*In Search of the Lord’s Way*” Sunday mornings at 7:30 am on KWES TV 9.

The Ackerly Church of Christ is hosting a “**Gospel Meeting**” with speaker Joe Wells on February 17th-19th. Their invitation is on our bulletin board. Please plan to attend if you can.

### ***Youth***

Bible Knowledge ...“Third Time’s a Charm”

Jonah was inside the big fish for three days. (Jonah 1:17)

### ***Office News***

The items requested for our “**Food Pantry**” for this week are: canned meat, boxes of Jello and puddings.

Our “**Vacation Bible School**” this summer has been scheduled for July 24th-26th. The theme is: “The Flood.”

We will have a “**Teacher’s Appreciation Banquet**” on Saturday, April 22nd in our Annex. Adam Orr will be our guest speaker.

### TACTICS SATAN USES

If we fail to be aware of the tactics Satan uses, we doubtless will find ourselves snared by the traps he sets (2 Timothy 2:26). In God’s word we find the devil’s strategies for causing us to lose our souls, and God’s plan for victory over Satan through our faithful obedience to Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57, 1 John 4:4). Here are some of the tactics Satan uses ....

**HE AMUSES.** “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:25). The temporary pleasures to be found in some sins can only lead to poverty and spiritual barrenness (Proverbs 21:17; Luke 8:14; 2 Peter 2:13). The devil is a clown who attempts to amuse us in sinful pleasures all the way to hell.

**HE CONFUSES.** “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:33). The devil is the father of ignorance, discord and divisiveness. By distorting the plain truth of God’s word in the minds of men, he gains his followers (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

**HE EXCUSES.** “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). The devil in this context offered Eve excuses for doing what God had expressly forbidden (Genesis 3:16). Even today, Satan works hard to get us to rationalize our sins and bring reproach upon our Savior.

**HE ACCUSES.** “...for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God, day and night” (Revelation 1:10). This passage provides a picture of implacable hostility on the part of the devil. Satan is constantly looking to point the finger of accusation at us! He falsely accused Job of honoring God only for personal advantage (Job 1:6-11). In Zechariah 3:1-10, our adversary stands at the right hand of Joshua the high priest to level charges against him. If the devil finds any “dirt” on us, you can bet he will throw it on our faces.

**HE ABUSES.** “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31). Satan is the father of all abuse. He wants to violently shake us to get what he wants and then throws us away as useless chaff. Indeed, the devil is the master user. How aware are you of his tactics? Mike Vestal

#### February 12, 2023

Announcements  
Song Leader  
Sermon  
Opening Prayer  
Scripture  
Second Prayer  
Closing Prayer

#### A.M.

Jeff Wesson  
Steve Easlon  
Allen Weakland  
Jeff Wesson  
Tommy Garcia  
Bill Ryan  
Jr. Munoz

#### P.M.

Jeff Wesson  
Craig Wesson  
Allen Weakland  
Jeff Wesson  
Gary Loving  
Don Easlon  
Charles Wood

#### Lords Supper

Trini Wood  
Caleb York  
Cody Wesson  
Don Easlon

Jon Roemisch  
Communion  
(In Library)

**Other Responsibilities:** *Elder:* Jeff Wesson 556-5547 *Deacon:* Jacob Carson 940-3775 — *Pulpit:* Richard Siler 556-2151 — *Table:* Jon Roemisch 202-7725 — *Song Leaders:* Cody Wesson 934-4646 — *Recording Sermons:* Steve Easlon 260-9716 — *Collections:* Steve Easlon

**Sunday AM**

*“Confidence in God”*

*(Joshua 8:1)*

**Sunday PM**

*“Art of Making Peace”*

*(Matthew 5:9)*

**Our Records**

*Bible Class... 58*

*Morning Worship...107*

*Evening Worship ... 38*

*Wednesday...No Service*

*Contribution...\$5,225.25*