CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

AUGUST 29 2026

Scripture Story: Luke 21:7-28.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 16, 17.

lift up your head



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flashlight

"The doctrine of the Second Advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer's power and bring them again to the lost Paradise. Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 299).

key text

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars. . . . Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

(Luke 21:25-28, NKJV)

what do you think?

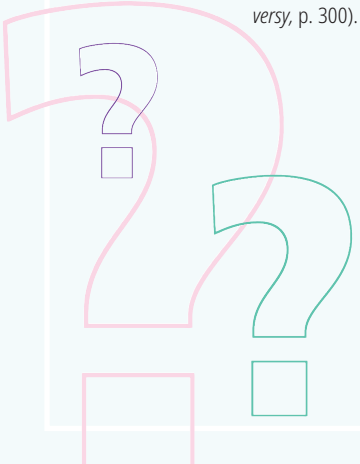
Which do you think is the most powerful motivation for being watchful for the second coming of Christ? Rank according to the strongest emotion you feel (1-strongest; 4-least strong).

____ Fear of being lost
____ Guilt for past
____ Desire for sin to be over
____ Longing to be with Jesus

Why did you answer this way? If you could rank your motivation according to what you think is the ideal, what would be first on your list? Why?

did you know?

The coming of Christ to usher in the reign of righteousness has inspired the most sublime and impassioned utterances of the sacred writers. The poets and prophets of the Bible have dwelt upon it in words glowing with celestial fire" (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 300).



INTO THE STORY

"So they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?'

"And He said: 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am He," and, "The time has drawn near." Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.'

"Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.

"'But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

"'And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.'"

(Luke 21:7-28, NKJV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Underline some of the specific events Christ mentions that indicate that season in which we live.

Describe the mood you think the disciples felt as they listened to Jesus talk about what was to come.

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How should those who are living for the second coming of Christ negotiate between what's happening in the world and what Christ has called them to do?

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To what degree do you think the disciples were certain they would see Jesus come in their lifetime? How should we answer the age-old question, "The signs are all around, but why is it that Christ still hasn't come?"

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Why do you think that the signs of the end tend to be negative in nature?

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Based on this passage, what do you think should be our motivation to "be ready" for the second coming of Christ?

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What do you think Jesus means by "lift up your heads" at the close of this passage?

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_____

punch lines

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" **(Matthew 24:3, NKJV).**

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" **(2 Timothy 3:1-5, KJV).**

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. . . . But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" **(2 Peter 3:3, 4, 8, KJV).**

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" **(Revelation 1:7, KJV).**

"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" **(Revelation 22:12, 13, NIV).**

further insight

"The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 302

Sabbath

Read 2 Peter 3:13, 14.

Read and respond to the activity in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. What motivates you to be mindful of Christ's return? What are the kinds of things that distract you from the events that will frame the return of Christ?

Notice how Peter, close to his own death, refers to the importance of paying attention to how we should live for Christ's coming: "But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him" (2 Peter 3:13, 14, NIV).

According to Peter's frame of mind in this passage, what do you think motivates him to "be ready"?

Sunday

Read Matthew 25:1-13.

As you read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to prompt your study of the text, what emotions do you feel when you imagine and think seriously about the soon return of Christ and the end of the world as it is now? What do you think is the difference between "getting ready" and "being ready" for Christ to return? What do you think God is trying to say to you in this week's passage?

Monday

Read Luke 21:25-28.

The *Key Text* from Luke reveals a solemn reality that "men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken." This text seems to indicate that people will be aware that *something* is going wrong on earth and it will cause fear, but their fear will come too late, for Christ will be coming at that point. Knowing that *something is wrong* is not enough. We must know Christ. When believers hear of the events that cause others to be afraid, what should be their response?

Tuesday

Read the quote from *The Great Controversy* in the *Flashlight* section of this lesson and reflect on the truth that the Second Coming is the "keynote" theme of Scripture. Reflect on what it would look like in our churches if the second coming of Christ were the "keynote theme of all church life." There is a saying that reads, "People can be so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good." Does this saying apply to those who long for the coming of Christ? Whom do you know who lives with their feet firmly on earth but with their hearts and eyes directed toward heaven? What is their impact on others?

Wednesday

As you read the passages listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson, which verse urges you to be ready? Which verse causes you to worry about friends who are lost? Why do you think this verse is particularly relevant to you today?

Thursday

Read 1 Peter 3:15.

Talking to God and to others about the coming of the Lord heightens your awareness and your anticipation of that day. Every time you pray, take a few moments to talk to God about His return and see how it shapes your overall outlook that day. In your interaction with friends, practice talking with them about the Second Coming in a positive, hopeful way, and notice how it affects what you value throughout the day.

Friday

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:7.

Take some time to meditate on the events of Christ's return as you imagine it occurring.

What will it look like?

What will it sound like?

What will it feel like?

It is likely that our mind's eye will fall short of capturing the final event. However, we are called to be watchful for that day.

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy, (or *Love Under Fire),* chapters 16, 17.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.