SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Luke 21

Lift Up Your Heads — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Jesus sees a widow give everything, then tells His disciples the truth about what is coming — a temple torn down, a city trampled, an age of the Gentiles, and His own return in power. None of it is meant to make me afraid; it is meant to make me faithful, awake and looking up.

00 The Text

LUKE 21 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.

2 And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins.

3 And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them;

4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said,

6 "As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."

7 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"

8 And He said, "See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not go after them.

9 "When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately."

10 Then He continued by saying to them, "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,

11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake.

13 "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.

14 "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;

15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

16 "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death,

17 and you will be hated by all because of My name.

18 “Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

19 “By your endurance you will gain your lives.

20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.

21 “Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;

22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.

23 “Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;

24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25 “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,

26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

27 “Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.

28 “But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

29 Then He told them a parable: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees;

30 as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

31 “So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

32 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.

33 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

34 “Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;

35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

36 “But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

37 Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.

38 And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

Marked in the text

- **v2** “two small copper coins” — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** “this poor widow put in more than all of them” — Promise / blessing
- **v4** “she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “there will not be left one stone upon another” — Sin / warning
- **v8** “See to it that you are not misled” — Command / instruction
- **v8** “Do not go after them” — Command / instruction
- **v9** “do not be terrified” — Command / instruction
- **v9** “the end does not follow immediately” — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** “an opportunity for your testimony” — Promise / blessing
- **v15** “I will give you utterance and wisdom” — God — His character & actions
- **v18** “not a hair of your head will perish” — Promise / blessing
- **v19** “By your endurance you will gain your lives” — Promise / blessing
- **v20** “Jerusalem surrounded by armies” — Time / place / contrast
- **v21** “must flee to the mountains” — Command / instruction
- **v21** “flee to the mountains” — Command / instruction
- **v22** “days of vengeance” — Sin / warning
- **v24** “until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” — Time / place / contrast
- **v27** “COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory” — God — His character & actions

- **v28** “straighten up and lift up your heads” — Command / instruction
- **v28** “your redemption is drawing near” — Promise / blessing
- **v32** “this generation will not pass away” — Time / place / contrast
- **v33** “My words will not pass away” — God — His character & actions
- **v34** “Be on guard” — Command / instruction
- **v34** “dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life” — Sin / warning
- **v34** “like a trap” — Sin / warning
- **v36** “keep on the alert at all times, praying” — Command / instruction
- **v36** “to stand before the Son of Man” — Promise / blessing
- **v7** “these things” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v8** “near” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

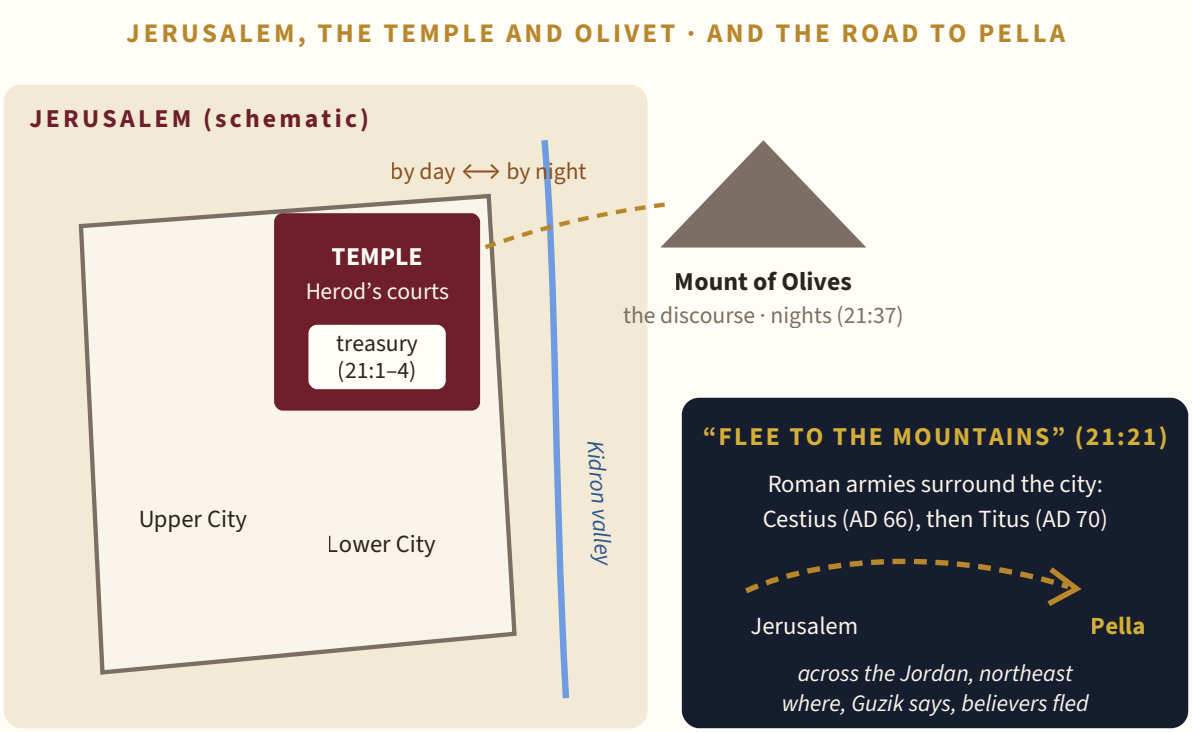
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 21:4

“for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but △she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.”

FIGURE · TEMPLE, OLIVET AND PELLA



Schematic, not to scale · north at top · the temple was burned and the city leveled in AD 70

Jesus taught by day in the temple, where the widow gave at the treasury, and spent His nights on Olivet across the Kidron; when armies surrounded the city, believers fled to Pella beyond the Jordan.

Setting. Jesus is in the temple during the last week before the cross (21:37–38). He watches the rich and a poor widow giving at the treasury (vv1–4). When some admire the temple’s stones and votive gifts, He says not one stone will be left upon another (vv5–6), and the disciples ask when and what sign (v7). He answers with the teaching Matthew and Mark place on the Mount of Olives (Matt 24:3; Mark 13:3), and the chapter ends with His pattern for those days: teaching in the temple by day, nights on Olivet (vv37–38).

Structure:

- vv1–4 — **the widow’s two coins:** the rich and their gifts; a poor widow and two small copper coins; “this poor widow put in more than all of them” — “all that she had to live on.”

- vv5–19 — **not yet the end:** beautiful stones and votive gifts; "not one stone upon another" (v6); "when?" and "what sign?" (v7); do not be misled — many will come in My name (v8); wars and disturbances, but "the end does not follow immediately" (v9); nation against nation, earthquakes, plagues, famines, signs from heaven (vv10–11); but before all this, persecution — synagogues, prisons, kings and governors (v12); an opportunity for testimony; I will give you utterance and wisdom (vv13–15); betrayed by family, some put to death, hated by all (vv16–17); not a hair will perish; by endurance you will gain your lives (vv18–19).
- vv20–24 — **Jerusalem surrounded:** armies around the city — her desolation is near (v20); flee to the mountains (v21); days of vengeance, all that is written fulfilled (v22); woe to mothers; wrath to this people (v23); sword, captivity among all nations, Jerusalem trampled "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (v24).
- vv25–33 — **the Son of Man coming:** signs in sun, moon and stars; dismay among nations; the roaring sea (v25); men fainting from fear; the powers of the heavens shaken (v26); the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (v27); straighten up, lift up your heads — your redemption is drawing near (v28); the fig tree (vv29–31); "this generation will not pass away" (v32); "My words will not pass away" (v33).
- vv34–38 — **watch and pray:** be on guard — dissipation, drunkenness and the worries of life (v34); like a trap on all the earth (v35); keep on the alert, praying, to escape and to stand before the Son of Man (v36); by day in the temple, by night on Olivet; the people come early to hear Him (vv37–38).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "things" ×11 — vv6, 7 (×2), 9, 12, 22, 26, 28, 31, 32, 36 ("these things" is the chapter's refrain).
- "come / comes / coming / came" ×10 — vv6 (×2), 8 (×2), 26, 27, 34, 35 (×2), 38.
- "see / saw / seen" ×7 — vv1, 2, 8, 20, 27, 30, 31.
- "take place / happen / happening" ×7 — vv7 (×2), 9, 28, 31, 32, 36.
- "put / putting" (in) ×5 — vv1, 2, 3, 4 (×2); and "put … to death" v16.
- "near" ×5 — vv8, 20, 28, 30, 31.
- "day(s)" ×5 — vv6, 22, 23, 34, 37.
- "nation(s)" ×4 — vv10 (×2), 24, 25; "Gentiles" ×2 — v24 (×2).
- "My name" ×3 — vv8, 12 ("for My name's sake"), 17; and "My words" v33.
- "pass away" ×3 — vv32, 33 (×2); "heaven(s)" ×3 — vv11, 26, 33; "earth" ×3 — vv25, 33, 35.
- "sign(s)" ×3 — vv7, 11, 25; "kingdom" ×3 — vv10 (×2), 31.
- "temple" ×3 — vv5, 37, 38; "Jerusalem" ×2 — vv20, 24; "fulfilled" ×2 — vv22, 24.
- "Son of Man" ×2 — vv27, 36.

Contrasts: The rich and their surplus ⟷ the widow and her poverty (vv1–4). Beautiful stones ⟷ not one stone upon another (vv5–6). "The time is near" (false) ⟷ "the end does not follow immediately" (v9). Some put to death ⟷ not a hair will perish (vv16–18). Those in the city ⟷ those who flee (v21). Men fainting from fear ⟷ believers who straighten up (vv26, 28). Heaven and earth pass away ⟷ My words do not (v33). Hearts weighed down ⟷ alert and praying (vv34, 36). A trap for all who dwell on the earth ⟷ strength to escape and stand (vv35–36).

Shape of the chapter: a small scene (one widow, two coins) opens onto the widest horizon in Luke — the temple, the city, the nations, the sky — and then narrows back to the single heart that must be on guard (v34). Questions about "when" are answered with commands about "how": do not be misled, do not be terrified, make up your minds, endure, flee, straighten up, be on guard, keep on the alert.

Chapter theme (my words): Jesus tells His people the truth about the future so they will not be deceived, terrified or caught asleep. The temple fell as He said, Jerusalem has been trampled as He said, and He will come again as He said — so I give Him everything, endure, and keep my head up.

02 Interpretation

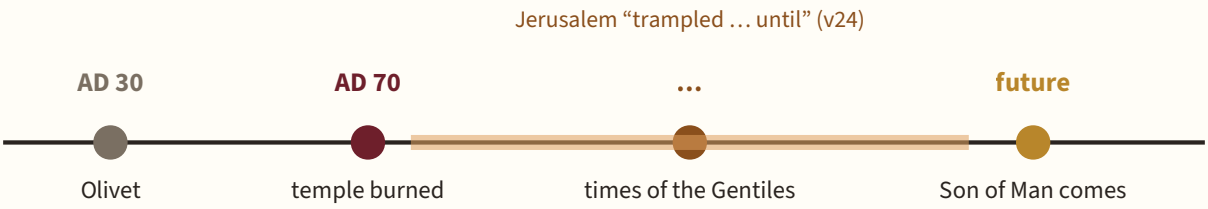
WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 21:24

"and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

FIGURE · TWO HORIZONS

TWO HORIZONS IN ONE DISCOURSE · LUKE 21:8–36



vv8–19	deceivers, wars, persecution — "the end does not follow immediately" (v9)
vv20–24	Jerusalem surrounded, flight, captivity — fulfilled in AD 70 (all four teachers)
v24b	"until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" — a long age with an end
vv25–28	signs in sky, sea, nations — the Son of Man in a cloud — redemption
vv34–36	watch and pray — "strength to escape" and "stand before the Son of Man"

Futurist (Guzik, Ed): vv25–36 are still ahead. Sproul: the time-bound prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70; the final return is still ahead. Spurgeon and Henry: fulfilled once at Jerusalem, and fully at the end.

Read the bar left to right: the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 opens a long age of Gentile trampling that ends when the Son of Man comes — and notice which verses sit on each side of that age.

FIGURE · FOUR READINGS

HOW OUR TEACHERS READ THE HARD SAYINGS

	vv20–24	vv25–27	"this generation" (v32)
GUZIK	AD 70 (Pella)	still future — no AD 70 fit	those who see the signs
SPROUL	AD 70 (Romans)	judgment imagery, AD 70 coming	an age group: AD 30–70
SPURGEON	AD 70 (no Christian lost)	a rehearsal at Jerusalem; again	two meanings, outer and inner
HENRY	AD 70	type of the end: AD 70 a specimen	those then alive (AD 70 first)

All four agree on AD 70 for vv20–24 and on a real, visible return of Christ; they part on how much of vv25–32 is still ahead.

Every teacher puts verses 20–24 in AD 70; read across each row to see where they divide on the cosmic signs and on "this generation."

Why the widow here? Luke sets her straight after the warning about scribes "who devour widows' houses" (20:47). Guzik: "Perhaps a scribe devoured her house." Sproul: she is the answer to hypocrisy — "Jesus realized that this woman was all in." She is also a picture of the chapter's whole lesson: hold nothing back from God, because everything else here is passing away.

What were the disciples asking? "When therefore will these things happen?" (v7) is about the temple. Matthew adds "the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age" (Matt 24:3). Guzik: "Prophetically, the two are connected, though separated by many centuries," and "Luke's record focuses more on the first aspect."

Are wars and earthquakes the sign? No. Jesus says "the end does not follow immediately" (v9). Guzik: like labor pains, "without any one of them being the specific sign of the end." Spurgeon: they keep us watching, not curious.

Verses 20–24 — AD 70. All four teachers agree that Jerusalem "surrounded by armies" describes the Roman siege, the burning of the temple and the scattering of the Jews. Guzik and Spurgeon say the Christians obeyed verse 21 and fled (to Pella), and few or none perished.

What are "the times of the Gentiles"? The age in which Jerusalem is under Gentile power and the nations hear the gospel — with an end. Sproul: "up to this point and then it stops." Guzik notes 1948 and believes that when these times end, "the remaining seven-year period appointed to the Jewish people in Daniel 9 begins." Spurgeon: the time when the Messiah gathers in the Gentiles, after which Israel turns. This is where I stand: God is not finished with Israel (Rom 11:25–26).

Verses 25–33 — fulfilled, future, or both? This is the honest difference.

- *Futurist (Guzik; my frame):* "History records no adequate fulfillment of these words in A.D. 70 or immediately following." The signs in the heavens, the nations in perplexity and the Son of Man "coming in a cloud with

power and great glory" (Dan 7:13; Acts 1:11) are still ahead — the tribulation of Revelation 6–18 and the visible return of Christ.

- *Partial preterist (Sproul):* the cosmic language is the prophets' judgment idiom, "generation" is "an age group," and "In AD 70, Jesus came in judgment." He still holds to Christ's final, bodily return.
- *Double fulfillment (Spurgeon, Henry):* "We have had a rehearsal of that coming in the destruction of the favored city" — "fulfilled once, and it shall soon be fulfilled again." I read verse 27 as the same coming as Acts 1:11 and Revelation 1:7 — a coming every eye will see — and I take the AD 70 fall as the down-payment that proves the rest will come just as surely.

"This generation" (v32). Sproul: the people living then. Guzik: the generation that sees "these things" begin, or possibly the Jewish people, who will not pass away. Spurgeon: "two meanings, an outer and an inner." Whatever the reader decides, verse 33 settles the main thing: "My words will not pass away."

What is the "escape" in verse 36? Guzik reads it as the Lord taking His ready people before the coming calamity (compare Rev 3:10; 1 Thess 4:16–17). Others read it as being kept faithful through it. Either way, the means is the same: "keep on the alert at all times, praying."

Word study (Greek):

- **two small copper coins — *lepta* (G3016):** the smallest coin; KJV "mites."
- **poverty — *hysterēma* (G5303):** lack, shortfall; contrast *perisseuma*, surplus (v4).
- **misled — *planaō* (G4105):** to lead astray, make to wander (v8).
- **endurance — *hypomonē* (G5281):** remaining under the load (v19).
- **desolation — *erēmōsis* (G2050):** laying waste; Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20.
- **times — *kairoi* (G2540):** appointed seasons — "the times of the Gentiles" (v24).
- **redemption — *apolytrōsis* (G629):** full release by ransom; only here in the Gospels (v28).
- **generation — *genea* (G1074):** an age group, or a race/kind (v32).
- **dissipation — *kraipalē* (G2897):** the hangover of excess; only here (v34).
- **keep on the alert — *agrypneō* (G69):** to stay sleepless, like a sentry (v36).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The widow came right after the warning** about devouring widows' houses (20:47).
2. **Jesus counts what is left, not what is given** — surplus vs lack.
3. **The first word about the future is a warning** — do not be misled.
4. **Persecution is a pulpit** (v13).
5. **Endurance is not passive** — *hypomonē* (Guzik).
6. **Obedience saved the Jerusalem church** — they fled when they saw the armies.
7. **"Until" has an end** — Luke 21:24 and Romans 11:25.
8. **The teachers honestly differ on verses 25–32** — futurist, preterist, double fulfillment.
9. **Redemption is still arriving** — head up, not head down.
10. **Worry can make a sober man drunk** (Spurgeon).

Cross-references: Dan 7:13; 9:24–27; 12:1; Zech 12:10; 14:4; Matt 24; Mark 12:41–44; 13; Luke 13:35; 17:22–37; 19:41–44; 20:47; Acts 1:6–11; 2:20; Rom 8:23; 11:25–26; 2 Cor 8:1–3; 1 Thess 4:16–5:9; 2 Thess 2:1–4; Rev 1:7; 3:10; 6–19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 21:36

"But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Example to follow — the widow. She had two coins and gave both. Some of the men I sit with have almost nothing — a commissary account, a few dollars, a borrowed Bible. Jesus says that kind of gift counts for more than all the rest. I don't get to wait until I have more. This week I will give God something I will actually miss — money, time, or the thing I hold tightest.

Sin to confess — admiring the stones. I can get impressed with the beautiful things — a building, a program, a reputation, even my own ministry — and forget that not one stone will be left. I confess the idols I have made out of good things.

Command to obey — do not be misled; do not be terrified. Jesus gave me no date to chase. I will stop feeding my fear with headlines and start feeding my faith with His words, which "will not pass away."

Promise to trust — not a hair of your head. Men may betray me, even family (v16). Jesus promises utterance and wisdom when I stand before the people who oppose me (v15), and He promises that my life is kept: "By your endurance you will gain your lives." I will stay under the load today instead of running from it.

Command to obey — be on guard; keep on the alert. The trap Jesus names is not only drunkenness; it is "the worries of life." For a man in recovery both are real. I will name which weight is on my heart, hand it to Him in prayer, and stay awake.

Hope to hold — lift up your heads. I believe the Son of Man will come in a cloud with power and great glory, as surely as the temple fell in AD 70. When the world shakes, I am told to straighten up, not shrink back: my redemption is drawing near.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. The widow gave out of her lack, not her leftovers. What would it look like for me to give God something I will actually miss? (21:1–4; 2 Cor 8:1–3) *Jesus counts what is left behind (Guzik: one coin was half her money).*
2. The disciples were admiring beautiful stones. What good thing in my life — even a religious one — has started to become an idol? (21:5–6) *Good things can become the worst idols (Guzik).*
3. Jesus' first word about the future was "do not be misled." Where do I go looking for certainty about dates instead of faithfulness for today? (21:8–9; Acts 1:7) *Signs keep us watching, not curious (Spurgeon).*
4. Some believers will be betrayed even by family (v16). How does verse 18–19 help a man who has lost relationships for following Jesus? (21:16–19) *The body may be taken; the life is kept.*
5. Our teachers read verses 25–32 differently. What do all of them agree on, and how does that shape the way I live this week? (21:25–33; Acts 1:11) *A real return, a real redemption, a real call to watch.*

6. Which weight is pressing my heart down right now — dissipation, drunkenness, or “the worries of life”? (21:34–36) *Care can intoxicate as surely as drink (Spurgeon).*

Worship. The Lord sees two copper coins. He knew the temple would fall forty years before it fell, and it fell. He holds the times of the Gentiles in His hand and keeps His promises to Israel. His words outlast heaven and earth, and He is coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You see what I give and what I hold back. Take all of me. Keep me from being misled and from being terrified. When I am betrayed or hated for Your name, give me Your words and keep my soul. Lift the weight of worry and the pull of old habits off my heart. Keep me awake and praying, and let me stand before You with my head up when You come. Amen.

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