

## Be Strong in the Lord III

(Prepare and Trust God in Everything)

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If I go back to when I was baptized, that's 1960, and we've been living in the end-times all the way through those years. We've seen ups and downs, good and bad, we've seen everything that Christ tells us is going to happen there in Matt. 24 and Mark 13, all those things we've seen come and go.

Yet, we're still quite a ways from what appears to be the end, and when the end comes what is it going to be like? Mike and I were talking about that, and we're thinking, in going through the prophecies—especially in Jeremiah—how bad it was back then, and what is it going to be today?

Let's just look at one Scripture we've gone over before many, many times. It was a warning and a call to repentance for them at that time. But prophecies have a way of having applications in people's lives at any time through history, especially so when we consider our understanding of who Israel in prophecy is, or who Israel in the end-times are—the 12 tribes—and the blessings that God has poured out upon this nation, and we look and see where it is heading.

It kind of heads in these things incrementally; it doesn't happen all at once. Let's see what it was like here and then let's ask:

- What is it going to be like in our day?
- Why do we need to be strong in the Lord?

Jeremiah 7:1: "The Word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying... [he was a priest so he could stand right there in the temple and let them have it] ...'Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this Word, and say, "Hear the Word of the LORD, all Judah, who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD"" (vs 1-2).

If we can take this and sort of superimpose this upon America, where we have the largest number of churchgoing people on Sunday. I've got an article that shows that even some of these evangelists demand \$10,000 a speaking engagement. Then you look at their lives multiplied over and over again. So, as we read these things let's see how they can apply to us.

Verse 3: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel..." Remember that before God does anything *He gives a chance for repentance!* That's what this is.

"... 'Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in

lying words....'" (vs 3-4).

And if that's not true... I mean, if you follow the political scene as it is today, WOW, that's something! Or the religious scene! How that Christ did everything, all the Law is done away, and all you have to do is just come to this church and you'll be in the rapture and you'll make it.

"... 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.' For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; *if* you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your hurt" (vs 4-6).

What do we have? *All of these things are the sins that they were doing then, and the very sins that are happening today!*

Verse 7: "Then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever. Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know; and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'?" (vs 7-10).

So, I answered Mike with another Scripture here in Jeremiah, which I have used quite often to show the mercy of God. In answering the question: How bad can it get?

Jeremiah 5:1: "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in her open places... [in other words, search out the whole town] ...if you can find a man... [one man, now that's how bad it was] **...if there is one who does justice, who seeks the Truth; and I will pardon her.**"

So in talking about this, Mike asked me: How bad do you think it's going to get? I thought, down here in Southern California perhaps an example of how bad it can get, may be the worst parts of East L.A.: run by gangs, no police force, the police don't go there, everyone does evil; you have murder, gangs, drugs. If that expands out even more in the nation, perhaps that may give us an idea of what it's going to be like.

We need to be prepared! We need to be

strong *mentally, spiritually and also physically* as possible! But let's focus on the *spiritual*. What we need to do to really have a mindset so that when some of these disasters happen we can maintain our equilibrium, maintain our relationship with God, and understand what we need to do. The strength in any of these things comes because you have prepared; ***you have prepared spiritually!***

I think in this society there are going to be a lot of people totally unprepared! There are some physical things we need to do, that is true. But I tell you what, you're not going to store up, say a years worth of food, and sit there in quiet contemplation without someone knowing that you have something somewhere. If they know that you have something somewhere, they're going to try and find that somewhere so they can have something that you have, and they will not be too nice about it!

But as we see these things come along, what we need to do is ***really have a concerted effort of growing in strength spiritually!***

Timothy is talking about the faith that his mother and grandmother had, and he said he was convinced it was in God:

2-Timothy 1:6: "For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands." God has given us His Holy Spirit. But it is something that must be:

- used
- worked
- stirred up
- constantly renewed

That's why we have Sabbath every week, because spiritual things do not remain in a physical mind, without the Spirit of God uniting with our spirit and we actively use God's Spirit. So, *stir up the Spirit of God*, "...the gift of God that is in you..."

Verse 7: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear..." It's going to be difficult when fearful things happen, to not completely fall apart.

"...but **of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness**" (v 7). This is something we do daily:

- through prayer
- through study
- through yielding to God
- through living God's way

and all of that combined. This gives us *the strength spiritually* and *the ability to see the problems* that come along. Know that these things are going to happen, and yet, not get discouraged and say: Why is God going to let this happen? Why is God going to do this?

Well most people in America do not count the murder of little children in the womb in a most gruesome and horrible way as a great thing anymore. But ***God counts it as one of the worst things in the world!*** Plus all the other sins, plus all the things that have taken place.

Let's see how we can be strengthened. Here's how David did it. Think about this, and think about everything that's in the world. Of course, we all have to live in the world—don't we? We all go out there and we work in the world and we're around people in the world. What is going to happen when this occurs?

Psalms 12:1: "Help, O LORD, for the Godly man ceases..." There are still a number of people today trying to do good. But what's going to happen when this day arrives?

"...for the faithful disappear from among the children of men. They speak falsehood each one with his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak" (vs 1-2). Of course, most of the world lives in a make-believe reality created by television, music, and lies of the society. When the reality hits, what are they going to do?

God is going to do this, v 3: "The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, *and* the tongue that speaks proud things." If I were some of these politicians, I'd be mighty afraid. In looking at the political scene, at least in my lifetime, I have not seen such an array of political midgets seeking to become President of the United States. Remember, the nation will get what it deserves, and I'm afraid it's going to be Hillary.

Verse 4: "Who have said, 'With our tongue we shall prevail... [whether it's lies, flattery, whatever, we're going to make it] ...our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' 'For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, I will now arise,' says the LORD. 'I will set him in safety from *him who puffs at him*'" (vs 4-5).

Here is a promise of protection from God, right here. We need to claim that protection and ask God to watch over us. We're not at the hundred percent level. I wonder, if you could put it on a percentage basis, what percentage the society is right now as God would look at it? We'll just have to see as it goes along.

Why does this happen? Verse 8: "The wicked walk on every side when vileness is exalted among the sons of men." That tells us exactly what the political situation is everywhere.

Let's see what we need to do. We need to make a determined effort, every one of us. It is a

spiritual and a mental determination. Psa. 108—here's what people need to do. Since we have gone along, and we have seen this within the Church, many of the things that I've read about and have described that happened within the Church, what happened when the vilest of men were raised to the top of the Church? *Same thing! God judged, yes, He did!*

I've heard people say it many times, and I think it's true, as it happens to the Church it parallels what's happening in the world, kind of goes hand-in-hand—doesn't it? *Yes!* Because of that, people have been hurt mentally, spiritually, and emotionally—disillusioned by hypocrites, disillusioned by liars from the pulpit—they all back away.

They say all right, I've got to protect a little place for myself. The commitment that was asked for before was to an organization and two men. That's the wrong application of the commitment. This is sort of a protective device that is a normal response to give yourself a buffer so that no one can come close and cause you personal problems any longer.

So, what we need to do, we need to take that reaction, and we need to apply it in a little different way. We need to apply it to serving God. We need to apply it with a mental and spiritual resolve.

Psalm 108:1: "O God, **my heart is fixed...**" That's where the strength is going to come from. *It's going to come from God!*

- God is always true
- God is always right

*God is the One Who will:*

- protect you
- watch over you
- strengthen you

*in whatever your circumstances are!*

Verse 12: "Give us help from trouble, for vain is the deliverance of man. Through God we shall do mighty things, for it is He who will tread down our enemies" (vs 12-13). Of course, the final victory is going to be through Christ.

Psalm 112:1: "Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments." We can put there: *everything that God stands for, not just His commandments!*

Verse 3: "Wealth and riches shall be in his house... [those are promised to us in the coming kingdom] ...and His righteousness endures forever. To the upright there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness. It is well with the man who is gracious and lends

freely; who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely he shall not be moved forever... [if there are some things that you slip in, you're not going to be moved forever] ...the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance" (vs 3-6).

Who's doing the remembering? *God is!* That's why I've said many, many times before, **when all else fails remember that God loves you!**

- God has called you
- God is dealing with you
- God wants you in His kingdom
- He hasn't called us in vain

He's called us to do the things that please him, in spite of everything that is all around us.

Verse 7: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings..." We're going to see plenty of them. I couldn't help thinking of the families there with the mine cave-in in Utah, and all the efforts that they're doing with the continual shifting of the mine and everything. It takes some kind of special person to go down in the mine and mine coal or whatever it is. I don't think I have the type of personality that would really do well at that. But nevertheless, we're going to see difficulties in things that come.

And financially, the market falls and the Fed is able to rescue it. But what's going to happen when they won't be able to rescue it? What are we going to do?

- if you don't love God
- if you don't believe God
- if you haven't set your mind and heart first

Then it's going to be very discouraging and you're going to wonder: Where is God?

"...his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD" (v 7). So, **you trust in Him at all times!** *'The angels of the Lord are encamped about those who fear Him and trust Him!'* We're going to need the help of angels about us when these evil days come.

Verse 8: "His heart is established... [fixed, established, trusting] ...he shall not be afraid until he sees his desire upon his enemies."

Now let's look at the opposite of this: the person who is not fixed, who is not steadfast. This is something you have to prepare for. You just don't say, 'All right my heart is fixed.' *No!* It's a commitment that is always reinforced and built and you grow in it.

And just a little aside on James 1:1. If you write a letter and send it to someone, do you know where they are if you send it to them? *Of course!* What did James do?

James 1:1: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which are in the dispersion: Greetings!” Where did it go? *Everywhere there were synagogues of the Jews that were known!*

Verse 2: “Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials.” That can only come with a spiritual attitude and understanding. That *‘all things work together for good for those who love God are the called according to His purpose.’*

Verse 3: “Knowing that **the testing of your faith produces endurance**. But let endurance have its perfect work... [don’t cut it off; don’t cut it short] ...so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything” (vs 3-4)—spiritually. *Our whole lives are those things where God is working and dealing with us:*

- to help us
- to mold us
- to bring us closer to Him
- to help us develop the character and mind of Christ

**“...so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything.”**

Verse 5: “However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...” God is going to do it. That’s why there needs to be prayer involved.

“...Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because **the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed to and fro**” (vs 5-6).

Now, there’s nothing more unstable than water. It can be humidity as a vapor, it can be liquid as a glass of water, but the water is subject to whatever forces are against it: be it the wind, be it the tide, or whatever.

That’s why we had the tsunami’s when we had the earthquake there in the Indian Ocean some years ago. “...driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*.” You can’t be one way one day and one way the next day.

Verse 7: “Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. **He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways**” (vs 7-8).

- there is the opposite of having your heart fixed
- there is the opposite of establishing your way with God

*We don’t want to be double-minded and unstable!*

I was talking to someone about all of these Hollywood people that are narcissistic, and all they want to do is just serve themselves and have their own way. Whatever the press says that’s what they want, if they can get the photo op, or they can get the name recognition or whatever, that’s where they go. That’s a good example of being *unstable in all of your ways*.

Let’s see how God dealt with a couple of His prophets. Anyone who wants to be a prophet, you better think about it. Here’s Jeremiah, he’s probably 17 or 18, and had a 40-year ministry altogether. God called him and said, **‘I formed you in the womb, I’ve created you for a purpose, I’ve sanctified you, and I want you to do what I tell you to do.’** So then, Jeremiah answered:

Jeremiah 1:6: “Then I said, ‘Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak; for I *am* a youth.’... [which means under 20] ...But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not say, “I *am* a youth,” for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak” (vs 6-7).

Jeremiah’s example is very important, because he went through all the extremes of corruption, to the destruction and captivity of Judah, lived through it, and then was able to take the daughters of the king to Ireland. He had a long ministry ahead of him. It’s just like us, once we start our Christian walk, we don’t know what lies ahead. *He didn’t either!*

God says, v 8: “Do not be afraid of their faces; for I *am* with you to deliver you,’ said the LORD. And the LORD put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth’” (vs 8-9).

Very similar to Isaiah who saw the vision of God’s throne, and he said, ‘who will go?’ Isaiah said, ‘send me, Lord.’ Then one of the angels took a coal off the altar and touched his lips and said your clean, now go speak the Word of the Lord.’

Verse 10: “See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.”

Now then, after God told him what was going to happen, v 16: “And I will pronounce My judgments against them regarding all their wickedness in that they have forsaken Me, and burning incense to other gods, and worshiping the works of their own hands.... [we do that today] ...**You, therefore, must gird up your loins, and arise, and speak to them all that I command you....**” (vs 16-17).

We're going to have to virtually do the same thing in the end-time. We're going to have to endure the things that come along. The reason I'm going through this is because I don't think, even though we can read some of the things that are coming, we have a full enough comprehension to realize how mentally and spiritually we need to be fortified. But nevertheless:

"...Do not be dismayed... [discouraged or frustrated] ...at their faces..." (v 17). He did get discouraged. You read a little later on he said, 'O God, why did you call me to do this? This is so terrible!' God said, 'You're going to be spared.' Sometimes the circumstances can look really, *really*, *really* bad, and the circumstances can tend to get you down. But don't let them get it get you down.

"...lest I confound you before them. For, behold, I have made you a fortified city this day..." (vs 17-18). This is the mental resolve that He gave Jeremiah, that we're going to need.

"...and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land.... [talk about 'You and me, Lord, this is it'] ...against the kings of Judah, against its rulers, against its priests, and against the people of the land. And **they shall fight against you; but they shall not overcome you. For I am with you,** says the LORD, **'to deliver you'**" (vs 18-19).

In some cases, by the skin of his teeth. But God still delivered him! *Yes, He did!* This is how we need to have this kind of *mental resolve*. Now, some people call that hard-headedness, but *it is actually spiritual strength*, because still within you have *feeling, compassion and mercy*. When Jeremiah saw all that was going on, he said, '*Oh, my eyes are like rivers of water*, when I see all these things going on, and what's going to happen to them.'

Ezekiel 3:1: "And He said to me, 'Son of man, eat what you find. Eat this scroll, and go speak to the house of Israel.' So, I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, 'Son of man, cause your belly to eat, and fill your belly with this scroll that I give you.' Then I ate *it*; and in my mouth it was like honey for sweetness. And He said to me, 'Son of man, go! Go up to the house of Israel and speak to them with My words. For you *are* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of a difficult language, *but* to the house of Israel; not to many people of a strange speech and of a difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I had sent you to them, they would have hearkened to you. But the house of Israel will not be willing to hearken to you, for they will not be willing to hearken to Me; for all the house of Israel *are* of a hard forehead and a stubborn heart. Behold, I have made your face strong against

their faces and your forehead strong against their foreheads. I have made your forehead as an adamant stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or dismayed by their faces, for they *are* a rebellious house'" (vs 1-9).

I tell you, that's something! That's the kind of resolve that we are going to need. Why? Let's see some of the things that we are going to face, we've been facing them. Isn't it interesting that when we talk about prophecy and the things that come along, we always come back to Matt. 24, because that is the framework on which everything in the end takes place?

Jesus talks about false prophets, nations rising against nations, and earthquakes in different places, Matthew 24:10: "And then shall many be led into sin... [the whole society is being led into sin, incrementally step-by-step] ...and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." That sure sounds like today, hating one another.

***That's why we need the love of God; that's why we need the love of each other!*** Brethren, when it's all over and said and done, remember that those of us who have God's Spirit, we are all that we have, that's it! We've got to love each other, take care of each other and be concern for each other, especially in the days that are ahead.

Verse 11: "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many; and because lawlessness shall be multiplied..." (vs 11-12). I can understand how it's going to be multiplied, with all the things we have to multiply it, all of the media, all of the things that we have at our fingertips for anyone.

"...the love of many shall grow cold.... [that's why we need the love of each other] ...But **the one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved**" (vs 12-13).

But let's see something that's important. Why we need to have the kind of attitude that I've been talking about.

Verse 21: "**For then shall there be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until this time, nor ever shall be again.**"

How long we have to go we don't know. But I tell you what, we're going to face worse things than what we read up there with Jeremiah and Ezekiel. How many of us are going to pass from the scene before then, we'll just have to wait and see. We don't know, because He also said that you don't know the day, you don't know the hour. But we need to be strengthened with God, and strengthened in His might and His way in order to do the things

that God wants us to do.

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Now let's come back to the book of Psalms, and let's see that ***being strong in the Lord is trusting Him!*** Regardless of what our circumstances are, regardless of what comes along, we need to trust God in everything. Now, it'll generally work out differently than we think.

Psalm 56:1: "Be gracious unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up..." Sometimes you feel like that just out in the world, especially if you're stuck in traffic and can't go anywhere.

"...fighting all the day, he oppresses me. Those who lie in wait for me would trample me, for many are those who proudly fight against me. When I am afraid... [so when you start getting afraid] **...I will trust in You**" (vs 1-3). That's where it has to be, *trusting* God! Trust is ***faith in action!***

Verse 4: "In God I will praise His Word; in God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?... [some of these are prophecies relating to Christ] ...All day long they pervert my words... [I didn't know they had the drive-by media back then] ...all their thoughts are against me for evil. They stir up strife; they hide themselves; they watch my steps as they wait for my soul. Because of iniquity cast them out. In Your anger cast down the people, O God. You number my wanderings, O put my tears into Your bottle..." (vs 4-8). In other words remember all of my anguish and everything I'm going through.

"...are they not in Your book? When I cry out to You, then my enemies will be turned back. **This I know because God is for me**" (vs 8-9).

Remember this: ***Regardless of the circumstances, God is never against you!*** Even in the most terrible trial that you may go through, or the most unusual circumstances you may come across. ***God is for you!*** That's why He's called you. Let's look at it this way: Did God call us to fail? ***No! God has called us to succeed at the greatest thing that He has for those whom He calls: to be in the first resurrection!*** God is for us.

Verse 10: "In God—I will praise His Word; in the LORD—I will praise His Word. In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (vs 10-11). Jesus said, "The worst they can do is kill the body." *After that, it's all in God's hands!*

Verse 12: "Your vows are upon me, O God; I will give thank offerings to You, for You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" (vs 12-13). Just look at

that as the resurrection. Just look at that as a tremendous and wonderful thing that God is going to do.

Psalm 57:1: "Be gracious unto me, O God..." If you are in a terrible difficult trial, and it's more than you can handle ***then you need to trust in God!*** If it's such that you are overwhelmed ***then claim the promises of God!*** Here's what God told Moses when he wanted to see his glory.

Exodus 34:5: "And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful... [when we ask God to have mercy on us, He will have mercy on us] ...and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth'" (vs 5-6).

The way that you approach God, is to take Scriptures like this, and incorporate them in your prayers and ***claim the promise.*** God says he's merciful.

- Oh God be merciful
- You promised that You would be
- You're a God of Truth who cannot lie
- You're a God of love Who has called us and Who is for us
- Who has given us the greatest hope of any people on earth

Verse 7: "Keeping mercy to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear ***the guilty...***" That is the unrepentant; God's going to take care of the sins of other people.

When you ask, how can God allow this, whatever it may be, God is doing it ***to show His power.*** So, if they don't repent then God sooner or later will come. Look at what Israel did here at this point and look what Aaron did at this point, in making the golden calf and causing the children of Israel to worship the golden calf. And He's saying, ***'I will forgive!'***

You don't like to compare sin, but sin is sin. However, have any of us done what they did? If God forgave them, will He forgive us? ***Yes, indeed!*** That's why we're to ask God's forgiveness every day.

Psalm 57:1: "Be gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me; for my soul trusts in You; yea, ***in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge*** until these great troubles pass by. I will cry to God Most High, to God who fulfills His purpose for me" (vs 1-2).

Remember, ***we have nothing we didn't***

**receive!** Everything physical *and* spiritual all comes from God, likewise for everyone in the world. Does God provide breath, air, water and food for everyone in the world? *Yes!* That's just an extension of God's love even to those who despise Him and hate Him.

Verse 3: "He shall send from heaven and save me; He rebukes him who would swallow me up. **Selah**.... [stop, think, meditate] ...God shall send forth His mercy and His Truth. My soul is among lions; I lie among those who breathe out fire, the sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.... [notice what he does]: ...Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have dug a pit before me; into the midst of it they have fallen themselves. **Selah. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise**" (vs 3-7).

That's the attitude that we need to have to be strengthened in the Lord.

I know in going through all the Psalms many, many times, it has really helped and strengthened me in my life. We all need to be strengthened. We all have the weakness of flesh. We all have sins and problems and difficulties. God made us that way, that's just the way that life is. But God is there to help. God is there to intervene. Now, if you're in real trouble, and you really feel bad, do like this:

Psalms 61:1: "Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth I cry to You when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the Rock higher than me... [to Christ] ...for You have been a shelter for me, a strong tower against the enemy. I will dwell in Your tabernacle forever; **I will take refuge in the hiding place of Your wings. Selah**" (v 1-4).

Of course, we are going to abide in the tabernacle of God forever. What does Rev. 21 say? '*Behold the tabernacle of God is with men.*' Men made perfect. Our goal is to dwell in New Jerusalem.

Psalms 70:1: "Make haste, O God... [sometimes you need God's intervention immediately] ...to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD. Let them be ashamed and confounded, those who seek after my soul; let them be turned backward and put to confusion, those who desire my hurt. Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame, those who say, 'Aha, aha!' Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; and let those who love Your salvation say without ending, 'Let God be magnified'" (vs 1-4).

This is how we're going to be strengthened

for the things that are going to take place in the future.

I've got a little white box up here, and in little white box I've got a whole stack of news reports. Some of the things that are going to be cut loose, the stage is already set. What I'm going to do is go back and look at the incrementalism of how it took place, and how we came to where we are today.

Psalms 11:1: "**In the LORD I have taken refuge**... [always] ...how *then* can you say to me, 'Flee like a bird to your mountain'?.... [some things you can't get away from] ...For lo, the wicked bend their bow; they make ready their arrow on the string, so that they may secretly shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (vs 1-3).

That pretty well helps answer that there are going to be times worse than it's ever been since there was ever a nation. And we're going to live into that time. We're going to have **to be strong in the Lord, trusting him in everything!** An organization is not going to help you. As a matter of fact:

- organizations will fail you
- people will fail you
- schemes will fail you
- **but God will never fail you**

Verse 4: "The LORD is in His Holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven. His eyes behold; His searching gaze tests the children of men. The LORD tries the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.... [God is going to take care of them] ...Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone; and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup" (vs 4-6). Which is also a prophecy of *the seven last plagues!* God is going to take care of it.

Verse 7: "For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face." He is:

- watching over us
- being with us
- preserving us
- helping us

1-Peter 5:6: "Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God..."

I suppose living back in the Midwest has some benefits, though I don't like those tornadoes. And they have some storms back there that my wife continually reminds me that it puts the fear of God in you. Maybe that's why that's the 'Bible Belt' back there, who knows. But I tell you what, some of those displays of an awesome power of God,

humbles you! *Yes, it does!*

So, “Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God...” Let’s put it this way: You can yield to God in trust, in faith, in love and grow in humility through that. **OR** You can be humbled through circumstances that take you down, because you didn’t do the former. But nevertheless, here is the key:

“...so that He may exalt you in *due time*... [God will take care of you in due time] ...casting all your cares upon Him, because **He cares for you**” (vs 6-7).

Here is the struggle that goes on when you’re in a difficulty, problem and trial that you are going through. This we’re going to have to face on a daily basis when we come to the real upheaval that’s going to occur. Satan is ‘Johnny-on-the-spot’ to offer you *his* way. That’s why you have to know to choose **God’s** way.

Verse 8: “**Be sober!**.... [that is realistic of everything] ...**Be vigilant!**....” *Being on guard!* By the way, the word for, ‘keep the garden’ for Adam, was to **guard** it. He wasn’t very vigilant was he? “...**Be vigilant!**....” Not sleepy, not folding hands. What is the Proverb? ‘*A little sleep, a little folding of hands, and so shall your poverty come upon you.*’ Not only physically, but spiritually, because He cares for you.

“...For your adversary *the devil* is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith... [that is trusting God] ...knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are in the world*” (vs 8-9).

Whenever I’m going through difficult times, I always remember this, v 10: “Now, may the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus... [always focused on the goal] ...after *you* have suffered a little while, Himself **perfect you, establish, strengthen, and settle you**.... [that’s the whole purpose of it] ...To Him *be* the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 10-14). Quite encouraging words!

When you study through the Apostle Paul’s life and everything that he went through, he came from the two extremes: From being a hateful enemy of God and the people of God, God called him, converted him, and made him one of the hardest working apostles of all. When you figure the whole New Testament together, his 14 epistles, plus Luke wrote under his supervision for the books of Luke and Acts, you’re dealing with little less than two thirds of the whole Bible written by Paul.

If Paul couldn’t be honest, no man could,

after all that he went through, and when he was called, remember, God told Annas in Syria, ‘You go down there to Saul, he’s down at this house, and he’s blind. I want you to lay hands on him because I’ve chosen him.’ Annas said, ‘Lord, he’s wreaked havoc with the Church.’ God says, ‘He’s a chosen vessel of Mine.’

Notice that He didn’t send any of the apostles there. He just sent Annas. Annas baptized him. And part of it was, that he was going to preach the Gospel to the children of Israel, and to the Gentiles, and Paul was going to suffer in his life greatly!

That humbled Paul; that made him effective and it made him a vessel of God’s Spirit. That really is a fantastic thing related in the Epistles of Paul when you read them.

- there is God Spirit
- there is conviction
- there is belief
- there is humility

that comes through all that Paul experienced. We find it manifest re in Eph. 3. Paul is talking about the great plan of God, which is been hidden from the ages past.

Ephesians 3:7: “Of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, *which was* given to me through the inner working of His power. To me... [notice how all of these things brought Paul to the humblest position possible] ...who am less than the least of all the saints, was this grace given, that I might preach the Gospel among the Gentiles—*even* the unsearchable riches of Christ” (vs 7-8).

But notice his attitude: He considered himself ‘less than the least of all the saints.’ A true example of what Jesus said, ‘**He who is going to be great among you is going to be the servant of all!**’

I remember that as an upside down pyramid. They like to have the corporate pyramid with a great mucky muck at the top. Well, Jesus said, ‘He who was the greatest is going to be the servant of all.’ So I look at that as an upside down pyramid, and Paul probably felt right down at the bottom of that upside down pyramid. That’s what the Spirit of God does.

Verse 9: “And that I might enlighten all *as to what is* the fellowship of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places*, **according to His eternal purpose**...” (vs 9-11). God has called you according to **His** purpose. ***This is what’s going to strengthen***



***us in the times ahead!***

“...which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very* own faith.... [Christ’s faith in us] ...So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you...” (vs 11-13). He didn’t have a pity party when he was in jail. He said, look I’m going through this for you.

“...which are *working for* your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He may grant you... [this is what Paul’s prayer is to give to us] ...according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man**” (vs 13-16).

- that’s how we’re to be strong in the Lord
- that’s where it’s going to come from
- that’s where we’re going to have our minds fixed

*that’s how we are going to be:*

- the brazened wall
- the pillars of iron
- the rock of flint

against all the evil that’s going to come

Verse 17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... [Christ in you the hope of glory] ...*and that being rooted and grounded in love...* [love of God, love the brethren, love of neighbor] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [to have a full understanding of the plan of God.] ...and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; **so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God**” (vs 17-19).

That’s what God wants! *That will give you strength regardless of whatever the circumstances are in your life!*

- He will help you
- He will bless you
- He will be with you
- He will strengthen you

At the resurrection you’re going to be filled with all the fullness of God. Now, here’s a promise:

Verse 20: “Now, to Him Who is able... [that means has the *power*; Greek: ‘dunamis’] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 20-21).

So, ***that’s how we are to be strengthened in the Lord!*** When we see the fearful things that are

going to come,

- trust in God
- be strong in the Lord
- fix your heart

***God will be with you!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in It’s Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Jeremiah 7:1-10
- 2) Jeremiah 5:1
- 3) 2 Timothy 1:6-7
- 4) Psalm 12:1-5, 8
- 5) Psalm 108:1, 12-13
- 6) Psalm 112:1, 3-8
- 7) James 1:1-8
- 8) Jeremiah 1:6-10, 16-19
- 9) Ezekiel 3:1-9
- 10) Matthew 24:10-13, 21
- 11) Psalm 56:1-13
- 12) Psalm 57:1
- 13) Exodus 34:5-7
- 14) Psalm 57:1-7
- 15) Psalm 61:1-4
- 16) Psalm 70:1-4
- 17) Psalm 11:1-7
- 18) 1 Peter 5:6-14
- 19) Ephesians 3:7-21

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Mark 13

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