



PREPARE

HEBREWS 9:28

Title: **PREPARE FOR HIS RETURN**

Date: DEC. 17, 2023

Leader's Notes:

1. Start and end the life group on time.
2. Facilitate discussions with your group and **give all attendees opportunities to share their thoughts**. Encourage participation.

Life Group Discussion Proper

WORSHIP: (15 mins)

Option 1: In person - Home gatherings

Suggestions: Assign someone to lead worship or play two praise & worship songs from You Tube.

Option 2: In person gatherings at a public place (at the park, school campus or café) or Online home gathering (via Zoom or other online meeting platform)

Suggestions: Ask three to four people to share testimonies of answered prayers or ask the question: Ask the group, "What are you thankful to God about this past week?"

WELCOME:(15 mins): IWC - Introduce yourself. Welcome guests/first-time visitors. Cheerfully call someone to do the same.

Ice-breaker: Ask the group and give time for participation.

- > *Is there anyone who would like to share a verse you have memorized this past week?*
- > *Is there anyone who would like to share something you received from your daily devotions this past week?*

WORD (30– 45 mins)

Main Text: Acts 1:10-11 NLT

Intro: After Jesus ascended to heaven, two angels spoke to the disciples and told them of His imminent (likely to occur at any moment) return. The Rapture is the snatching away of the church, both the dead and those alive, to meet the Lord in the sky to be taken to heaven while the world suffers the 7-year great tribulation.

Q: What is your understanding of the Rapture?

Read I Thessalonians 4:15-18, 5:1-3

The Rapture

The word "Rapture" is not found in the English translations of the Bible, but it's a Biblical event that will take place as part of the end times! Jesus returns and calls His people and meets Him in the "air" as Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4, *"those who are dead are raised first, and then those who are still alive are "caught up" with the Lord Jesus in the air."*

The English word comes from a Latin word, "*rapio*," which means "*to seize or snatch*" or the actual removal from one place to another. In other words, it means "*to be carried away in spirit or in body.*" The Rapture of the church means the carrying away of the church from earth to heaven and this will take place first, afterwards the revelation of the anti-Christ as a world leader begins.

HOW DO WE PREPARE FOR CHRIST'S RETURN? Read Luke 21:36 NIV

1.Watch – Keep awake, be on guard. Implying continuous and wakeful concern

A. Signs

Q: What signs of the times are you seeing for the Lord's return?

Read – **Matthew 24:1-14**

Q: **Based on the passage, what are the signs mentioned in the passage?**

1. *False messiahs and prophets: v.4*
2. *Wars and rumors of wars:v.6*
3. *Famines, pestilences and earthquakes: v.7*
4. *Persecution and the spread of the gospel: vv.9-14*

Continuation:

Q: How many knows that another sign is the nation of Israel

"I was seven years old when the nation of Israel was established in 1948. I now believe the restoration of the Jewish people to their land is the most important prophetic sign to have occurred in my lifetime." David Jeremiah, Pastor and Author of The Book of Signs

The nation of Israel has faced continuous warfare or the looming threat of it. It's crucial to remember that they are still anticipating their Messiah because they turned away Jesus as the Messiah. This situation could lead them to accept a global leader referred to as the Anti-Christ, who will offer a false sense of peace during the initial phase of his reign. After three and a half years, he will position himself in the temple at Jerusalem and declare him as "god." Today, we see in the news, the war between Israel and Hamas, potentially escalating beyond its borders. We need to pray as the Bible says, **"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May those who love you be secure.'**" Psalm 122:6

B. Watch how you live – Read Luke 21:34-35, Matthew 24:37-38 NIV

Q: How do we live our lives now that we know some of the signs of our Lord's return is near?

Followers of Jesus must not copy the sins and lifestyle of the people of the world. Drunkenness and a life given to the pleasures of the world are out of character for Christians. This doesn't mean that a saint will not fall trap to these things. But the cares of this life, which is much more subtle can cause people to be unprepared.

2. Pray – *"pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* Luke 21:36

Q: On a scale of 1-10, how is your prayer life?

Live a lifestyle of relational communication with God. Prioritizing intimacy with God and relying on His grace to endure faithfully till the end.

Q: What do you think can fuel your personal prayer life?

3. Occupy

Q: What is your understanding of the word "occupy?"

The Greek word for occupy is *"pragmateuomai"* which means to invest, put this money to work, trade, do business.

Read: Luke 19:10-14KJV

V.13 *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.*

Q: What practical things can we do to "occupy" till Jesus comes?

Conclusion: *"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."* **Luke 21:28 NIV**

The first coming of Christ is already behind us but His second coming is just around the corner, and we need to be ready for it. During the time of Christ's birth, only a handful were present at His coming and welcomed Him. This was the reality at the time of His birth even when many Jews studied the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the coming of the Messiah or Savior.

Q: Are you prepared for His return because you are eagerly waiting for Him?

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKE-AWAY FROM THE LESSON?

Tell your group to partner with someone and ask this question to their partner.

Q: What impacted you the most from this lesson?

WORK: The Challenge & Closing prayer (15 mins.)

1. Memorize a verse from your devotions this week and be prepared to share it on our next gathering.
2. Please take time in your smaller groups to pray for one another. If there are specific needs, take time to lift them up to God in prayer as well. Ask each other, **"what can I pray for you?"**

Leader's Notes: Please remind your group the schedule for the next gathering and to invite people for the next gathering.