



Luke 21c small group notes.

Luke 21:20-28 Jesus' View of the Future: The Need for Endurance

Opening discussion: how often do you think about Christ's return? Does it get you nervous or excited? Is there any reason why you would prefer Christ to delay his return?

- Colossians 3:1-4 [1] If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. [3] For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (ESV)
 - If heaven is the promise of my future reality, then it should create in me a heavenly attitude in my present reality. That Heavenly attitude strengthens the endurance of my faith.

Question: Based on some of the things Pastor Rob has said in his sermons, what would a "heavenly attitude" look or sound like in our every day life?

- Review:
 - Reading prophecy:
 - The fog lights: immediate context. (The first coming of Christ and how the world responded.)
 - The low beams: future implications for the direct audience. (The arrival of the Holy Spirit and how the world responded.)
 - The high beams: future implications for the universal church in history, from which we find an application. (The future return of Christ and what the world is doing.)
 - Implication>application

- **All prophecy is focused on God's faithful covenant given in Gen. 3 and finally fulfilled in Rev. 22.** If you don't understand God's Hessed, you will never receive the true gift of prophecy!¹
- **Christ's prophetic warnings were never meant to cause fear, but confidence.**
 - If we aren't instilling confidence in God's plan for the church, we aren't reading New Testament prophecy correctly.
 - Know the Biblical worldview!
 - World-view asks three questions:
 - How did we get here? God created.
 - What went wrong? God's creation (Adam) brought sin into the world, and death by sin.
 - Is there any hope? The Gospel is the hope for all mankind, and all creation.

Did you grow up with this worldview? Why is it so different from a secular world view built on evolution?

- See prophecy through the grid of the Endcaps!
 - The first and final garden
 - The first and final (or second) Adam
 - The first and final Marriage
 - The first and final covenant.
 - Everything in the middle is the already/not-yet sanctification process.
- Jesus was teaching his followers (and by inference us as well) that to have endurance in our faith, we must remember his sovereign purposes and the end of the story.
- This is why our worship music should include anthemic and upbeat songs! These songs are our motivational speeches to ourselves to remember the Gospel!
 - "I've read the back of the book, and we win"! (Southern Gospel Artists *The Cathedrals*)

¹ Graeme Goldworthy, Christ-Centered Biblical Theology (IVP Academic: Downers Grove, IL. 2012) 133,

- “On the victory’s side!” (An old Southern Gospel Hymn)
- “Getting Ready” (A song by Maverick City)
- “Living Hope” (A song by Phil Wickham)
- “Because He Lives, Amen!” (Matt Mahr, Bill Gaither)

Discussion: What songs do you love that remind us of our hope in Christ’s return and the joys of heaven?

- [20] “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. [21] Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, [22] for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. [23] Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. [24] They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
- So, when is Jesus saying this will take place? Is he saying it would take place in the lifetime of the people He was speaking to, or in the future of our day? Yes! To both!
- This was fulfilled in AD70 when the temple was destroyed by Titus.²
- But this wasn’t just a prediction of what would happen to the temple and to Jerusalem. This was a cycle of punishment predicted by Isaiah because of the sins of the nation!
 - **Isaiah 34:8 [8] For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. (ESV)**
 - **Isaiah 63:4 [4] For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. (ESV)**
- Much of what we read as futuristic prophecy is really a continuation of what God has already done throughout human history and continues to do!

² I talked in detail about the destruction of the temple during my message on July 19 and August 23.

- 278 of Revelation's 404 verses contain some reference or allusion to the Old Testament or Old Testament imagery spoken by prophets like Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zechariah and even found in the Psalms—nearly 70% of the book.³
- Revelation 1:7 says: "Behold, he is coming with the clouds..." This draws heavily on Daniel 7:13, where the "Son of Man" comes "with the clouds of heaven." It also combines imagery from Zechariah 12:10 concerning the one who was pierced and the mourning of the nations. So John isn't saying, "*Daniel 7:13 says...*" Instead, he weaves Daniel and Zechariah into his own prophecy.⁴
- Another major example is Revelation 13, where the beast combines characteristics from the beasts in Daniel 7. Revelation 17–18 likewise draws extensively from Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah concerning Babylon, judgment, and corrupt kingdoms.⁵
- Actually, the book of Judges articulates really well for us the cycle of God's actions and reactions (or responses) to the unfaithfulness of his people:
 - Israel's sin>God's judgment through the nations around>Israel's repentance>God's deliverance through a deliverer.
 - This is the same pattern utilized in prophecy, always pointing to God's faithfulness in keeping his covenant and preserving his elect.

Question: Have you witnessed this cycle in your own life? Can you articulate a section of time you experienced it?

- When Augustine was asked about this very topic of the destruction of the temple, he responded in this way: "The signs given in the Gospel and in prophecy and fulfilled in us show the coming of the Lord...We know that the coming is near by the fact that we see the fulfillment of certain signs of that coming the have been accomplished...The signs that Christ told them to look for are listed in the Gospel of Saint Luke: "Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the nations are fulfilled." This has happened and no one doubts that it has happened....It is plain that there is no country or place in our time that is not harassed or humbled according to the words "for fear and expectation of what will

³ Mark Hitchcock, 101 Answers To Questions About Revelation. (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Pub. 2012) 27-28

⁴ Open AI 2026, Aug. 24 Version. "What OT Scriptures are referenced in the book of Revelation?" Prompt.

⁵ Ibid.

come on the whole world.” All the signs that the gospel describes in the earlier verses have mostly been accomplished.” He stated this in his letter 198 to the church.⁶

- One letter later (199) he states this: “Anyone can see that these words refer to the last coming of the Lord when he says, “When you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is near”...This passage is phrased in this way in Matthew and Mark so that it is uncertain whether it is to be understood as the destruction of the city or of the end of the world....Luke has so arranged it that it seems to refer to the destruction of the city.”⁷
- Understanding this prophetic statement from a fog light, low beam and high beam perspective, we can see what Augustine is getting at:
 - **Fog Light: Jesus knew destruction was coming.**
 - **Low Beam: His followers needed to prepare for difficult times ahead as God allowed for the destruction of the temple to take place as part of his plan of discipline on Israel.**
 - **High Beam: God continues to bring calamity on the earth as part of his plan against sin, and believers across history need to remember that although this has a spill over affect on believers too, we are ultimately going to be preserved by God because of his covenant faithfulness!**

Question: What are some of the calamities we see around us today that remind us of apocalyptic scriptural language? How do these events or realities prepare people for the preaching of the Gospel?

- This way of reading prophecy becomes very clear in Jesus’ next statement!
- Augustine and Ambrose both read prophecy in this way, and that is why Ambrose connected Jesus’ next statement to the future as a spiritual metaphor for how God

⁶ Arther A. Just Jr. & Thomas C. Oden (editors) *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. (Downers Grove, IL.: Inter Varsity Press. 2003) 321-22. Quoting *Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947) 30:353-54

⁷ Ibid. 30:377-78

works through his church to preach the Gospel and how the world tends to respond by “turning off the lights with a cloud of unbelief”.⁸

- **[25] “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, [26] people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [27] And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. [28] Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (ESV)**
 - I don’t believe this is simply and only metaphorical. I believe this is meant to help us see the cycle of hopelessness in a broken world without God. I believe Jesus was predicting a continuous future for world believers in which they will continue to endure until He returns.
 - In a sense, this is also metaphorical because tragedy drives people to look for answers (remember the Biblical Worldview).
 - Sept. 11 resulted in incredible church growth for a season, but it did not last because once life was normal again, people forgot God again. That is the very cycle of Judges.
 - The Covid-19 pandemic also pushed people to be honest about their trust in Jesus and their faith priorities.

Discussion: talk about what you witnessed with these events and how it affected believers and unbelievers.

- **In a realistic sense, there are three types of people in this world that Jesus is warning:**
 - **Those headed into hard times.**
 - **Those in the middle of hard times.**
 - **Those coming out of hard times.**

Question: which one are you?

⁸ Arther A. Just Jr. & Thomas C. Oden (editors) *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. (Downers Grove, IL.: Inter Varsity Press. 2003) 321-22. Quoting St. Ambrose of Milan. *Exposition of the Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke with Fragments on the Prophecy of Isaias*. Translated by T. Tomkinson. (Etna, Calif.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998) 399

- **For all three of these types of people, the message is clear, and it is a Gospel-centric message: “Straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near!”**
- This is the every day hope of the Gospel!
- **Romans 15:13 [13] May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (ESV)**
- Rich Mullins captured this idea in his song *My Deliverer*.
 - Joseph took his wife and her child and they went to Africa, to escape the rage of a deadly king. There along the banks of the Nile, Jesus listened to the song that the captive children used to sing. They were singin’: My Deliverer is coming, my Deliverer is standing by. My Deliverer is coming, my Deliverer is standing by.⁹
 - Our deliverer, Jesus, is on his way. He is standing by and waiting for God the Father to give him the green light to return and deal with Satan’s evil. Yes, that is a future reality! We can’t wait! Some of us are already jumping in practice for his return!
 - Every time I see a huge cloud, I think about Jesus’ return, and that is the point!
 - But for today, our deliverer, Jesus, is here with us through His Holy Spirit! We are not alone in our waiting, but we have a comforter (a helper the ESV states) who is reminding us moment by moment about Jesus’ words!¹⁰
 - **If heaven is the promise of my future reality, then it should create in me a heavenly attitude in my present reality. That Heavenly attitude strengthens the endurance of my faith.**

Final Discussion: talk about the hope we received knowing that Christ is ready to return, he’s just waiting for the green light from our Heavenly Father. How can this give us hope as believers in a broken world?

⁹ Songwriters: Chad Robert Cates / Jason Walker / Tony W. Wood. *My Deliverer* lyrics © Capitol CMG Publishing, Universal Music Publishing Group

¹⁰ John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7