

# Luke 21

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## Introduction

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## THE WIDOW'S TWO COINS

**(21:1.) While Jesus was in the Temple, He watched the rich people dropping their gifts in the collection box. (2) Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two small coins.**

- Following the encounters with the religious rulers and their hit men, Jesus watched the Temple **treasury** offering boxes. One case was of special interest to the Son of God who was about to **give** His all for mankind.

**(3.) "I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. (4) For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has."**

- **R.C. Foster:**

He did not need to make an investigation of her circumstances in order to declare her financial status.

Jesus set forth the principle that it is not how much a person gives to God, but how much he keeps for himself, which furnishes the actual test of generosity and devotion.

- After dealing with the corrupt character of the Pharisees, Jesus must have turned with pleasure to look on the beautiful heart of a devoted widow.
- We are left to guess what happened next to the **widow**, but personal experience says that the Lord provided something for her very soon.

## OUTLINE OF COMING EVENTS

**(5.) Some of His disciples began talking about the majestic stonework of the Temple and the memorial decorations on the walls. But Jesus said, (6) "The time is coming when all these things will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!"**

- These men from Galilee would have been deeply impressed with the building. Luke is writing to Theophilus and the book had opened with a scene in the Temple where Gabriel appeared to Zechariah.
- The beauty of the **temple** was beyond breathtaking. It had taken years of work to bring it to the present, although there was more work ahead. This temple was a major project of King Herod the Great and the work was continuing even though Herod had died. Ten thousand skilled workmen are said to have been employed in its construction.
- **Burton Coffman** describes the scene: "There cannot be imagined a more shocking statement of Jesus, as this must have been viewed by the apostles. Mark identified the ones speaking here as Peter, James, John, and Andrew. To every Jew, the temple was the most sacred and beautiful thing ever seen on earth. *Josephus* (Book V, Chapter 5) described the snow-white stones of such great size, some of which were overlaid with pure gold,

and the magnificence of this structure which required the labor of thousands of men from 20-19 B.C. to 64 A.D. to build. Although not completed until long after Jesus' words, it was nevertheless sufficiently built, even then, to justify what is said of it here.

“In addition to the fundamental structure, there were adornments of the most extravagant and expensive kind, given by people out of gratitude to God for various deliverances, or by such people as Herod for political considerations. Herod's gift was a golden vine with clusters larger than a man.”

- Jesus predicts the temple will be turned to rubble. This would be very hard to believe. But in a few years, it happened as the raging Roman armies dismantled both the temple and the city.

This fulfills Micah 3:12 NLT:

**Because of you, Mount Zion will be plowed like an open field; Jerusalem will be reduced to ruins! A thicket will grow on the heights where the Temple now stands.**

**(7.) "Teacher," they asked, "when will all this happen? What sign will show us that these things are about to take place?"**

- Since this predicted destruction was in the future, the disciples wanted to know when. And will there be a **sign** before this calamity begins?
- The answer is unfolded in the following paragraphs.

**(8.) He replied, "Don't let anyone mislead you, for many will come in My name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and saying, 'The time has come!' But don't believe them. (9) And when you hear of wars and insurrections, don't panic. Yes, these things must take place first, but the end won't follow immediately."**

- Impostors will come, **but don't believe them**. Some impostors will claim to be Jesus himself. Some will claim the time for Jerusalem's fall is very close.
- Jesus was speaking during a time of peace in Judea and the rest of the Roman Empire. War *is* coming, but that does not mean **the end** of Jerusalem will be right then.

**(10.) Then He added, "Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. (11) There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and plagues in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven.**

- **R. C. Foster:**

In the decade immediately preceding the fall of Jerusalem disorders and violence of every kind increased like a whirlwind in Palestine. During this whole period leading to the final disaster there were three definite threats of wars from Roman emperors, three uprisings of Gentiles against the Jews, a number of famines and at least one pestilence in Rome which caused the death of 30,000 people. The Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius, give corroborative details.

- Because the **plagues** and **famine** are taken literally, we take the **earthquakes** literally too. Some **earthquakes** are listed following this statement by Jesus: Matthew 27:54, 28:2; Acts 16:26.

## **THE TIME BEFORE THE END OF THE NATION**

**(12.) "But before all this occurs, there will be a time of great persecution. You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons,**

**and you will stand trial before kings and governors because you are My followers.**

- The Book of Acts is a recitation of verse 12.
  - Peter and John were arrested and tried in Acts 4.
  - The Twelve were arrested and tried in Acts 5.
  - Stephen was arrested and tried in Acts 6.
  - Saul arrested and imprisoned believers in Acts 8.
  - The list goes on.
- Before Jerusalem was to fall, there would be a time of persecution for believers in Christ. So the city was still standing and synagogues were still operating and kings and governors were still meting out punishments.

**(13.) But this will be your opportunity to tell them about Me. (14) So don't worry in advance about how to answer the charges against you, (15) for I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you!**

- The trials were a good platform to tell important people about the risen Jesus. The apostles were skilled at turning their arrests into a time to tell about the Messiah, Jesus. The Lord says to not prepare a defense, but that He would give them an added measure of speaking ability and **wisdom** that their **opponents** can't **refute**.



**(16.) Even those closest to you—your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—will betray you. They will even kill some of you. (17) And everyone will hate you because you are My followers.**

- This echoes a statement Jesus had made to His followers earlier:

**'Father will be divided against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; and mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'**" Luke 12:53 NLT

- The believers should not expect support from their families. More than that, they might receive death from even family members. The Muslim call this "honor killing."
- Following Jesus would not be popular, but would become the grounds for being **hated** by the public.

**(18.) But not a hair of your head will perish! (19) By standing firm, you will win your souls.**

- Not a **hair of their head** perishing must be in the eternal sense, since He just warned of the possibility of death in verse 16. Jesus' teaching here is that, even though the Twelve (verse 5) are put to death, nevertheless, neither their soul nor their body (from mention of hair) shall perish! Most of the Twelve were put to death, but have they perished? No. They sit upon twelve thrones judging twelve tribes of (spiritual) Israel.

Matthew 19:28 NLT: **Jesus replied, "I assure you that when the world is made new and the Son of Man sits upon His glorious throne, you who have been My followers will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

- But even then, Jesus had a plan to save all of His own followers from the coming calamities. It unfolds in verse 21.

## THE DOOM OF JERUSALEM

**(20.) "And when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived.**

- Rumors of wars (verse 9) were not the signal for the end, but the presence of **armies** was the signal that the city would be **destroyed**.

**(21.) Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. Those in Jerusalem must get out, and those out in the country should not return to the city. (22) For those will be days of God's vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be fulfilled.**

- Daniel 9:26 (NLT) had predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed:

**After this period of sixty-two sets of seven, the Anointed One will be killed, appearing to have accomplished nothing, and a ruler will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple. The end will come with a flood, and war and its miseries are decreed from that time to the very end.**

- The believers were to leave Jerusalem and **Judea** quickly. If a believer was in the countryside, he or she must not enter the city. The **vengeance** of God was about to begin on the City that had rejected His Son.
- The elders of Jerusalem told the common people that God would defend the city so they were secure inside. The truth was exactly the opposite.
- At this point, a person would be forced to pick the way of Jesus or the way of the national leaders. Neutrality was impossible. All believers moved to Pella. The church historian **Eusebius** writes:

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men

there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. *Eusebius Book 3, chapter 5*.

“For they were such as had come back from the city of Pella to Jerusalem and were living there and teaching. For when the city was about to be taken and destroyed by the Romans, it was revealed in advance to all the disciples by an angel of God that they should remove from the city, as it was going to be completely destroyed. They sojourned as emigrants in Pella, the city above mentioned, in Transjordania.”

—*Epiphanius, On Weights and Measures*

**(23.) How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. For there will be disaster in the land and great anger against this people. (24.) They will be killed by the sword or sent away as captives to all the nations of the world. And Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the period of the Gentiles comes to an end.**

- Being **pregnant** or **nursing** a baby would be doubly hard under these conditions because of the great **disaster** ahead. The wrath of God would be poured out on this Christ-rejecting people. There will be death by the **sword** and **captivity** in other **nations** for those who survived. No less than one 1,100,000 died and 90,000 were led into captivity.
- The hated **Gentiles** would control **Jerusalem** until the **period** of the **Gentiles comes to an end**. What is the **period of the Gentiles**? Jesus has spoken of the destruction of **Jerusalem** and that **Gentiles** would then control it until a time in the future.
- The Jewish leaders were in control of the city.
  - We have to assume that present day Israel is related to the Israel of Scripture. This is hotly disputed by some.
  - It may be that we are in the times of Gentiles at present and that a shift of emphasis is on its way with Israel becoming

more important again in God's plans — if present Israel is Israel of Scripture.

**(25.) "And there will be strange signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. (26) People will be terrified at what they see coming upon the earth, for the powers in the heavens will be shaken.**

- The subject has not changed as seen in Matthew's parallel account in Matthew 24:29. The end of Jerusalem is still in view. (The Second Coming will be instantaneous and without warnings to heed.) **Paul Butler** says, "This is picturing the distress of the wicked as these calamities of the destruction of Jerusalem roll over them like waves of the sea. Isaiah 57:20-21 uses the same symbolism."

**(27.) Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud [Daniel 7:13] with power and great glory. (28.) So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near!"**

- **Salvation** is very close. Jesus was speaking to His men who would be there.
- **Paul Butler** writes, "These prophecies, we believe, refer to the establishment of the New Israel, the church, on the day of Pentecost—and the subsequent destruction of the old order, Judaism."

## **THE FIG TREE AND ALL OF THE TREES**

**(29.) Then He gave them this illustration: "Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. (30) When the leaves come out, you know without being told that summer is near. (31.) In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that the Kingdom of God is near.**

- An observer can tell the time of year when the **fig tree** puts out its **leaves**. The fig tree serves as an example of events to come.

**(32.) I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things have taken place. (33.) Heaven and earth will disappear, but My words will never disappear.**

- The signs of the destruction of Jerusalem would begin unfolding while many of His listeners were alive.
- The **words** of Jesus were as certain as anything could be.

### **A WARNING TO WATCH AND PRAY**

**(34.) "Watch out! Don't let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, (35) like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth.**

- Don't become weighted down with parties and **worries** and miss the signs that have been disclosed here.

**(36.) Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man."**

- They will **stand before the Son of Man** approved.

**(37.) Every day Jesus went to the Temple to teach, and each evening He returned to spend the night on the Mount of Olives. (38) The crowds gathered at the Temple early each morning to hear Him.**

- Jesus is in His final week of ministry and is busy **teaching** those who would listen.
- But where to sleep safely at **night**? Outside of town under the stars on the Mount of **Olives**.

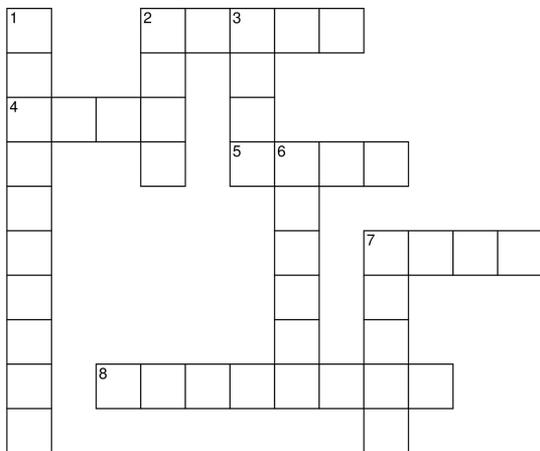
- **Barclay** is picturesque when he says, “Jesus spent the day amidst the crowds of the Temple; he spent the night beneath the stars with God. He won his strength to meet the crowds through his quiet time alone; he could face men because he came to men from God's presence.”



**Mount of Olives in Modern Times.**

# Luke 21

New Living Translation



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## ACROSS

- 2 Don't \_\_\_\_\_ in advance about how to answer.
- 4 The widow had given \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Everyone will \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus' followers.
- 7 It was a \_\_\_\_\_ widow who put in two coins.
- 8 The stonework of the Temple was \_\_\_\_\_.

## DOWN

- 1 Jesus said the Temple will be \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The disciples wanted to know \_\_\_\_\_ things will happen.
- 3 Jesus watched the \_\_\_\_\_ people giving gifts.
- 6 Destruction will come when Jerusalem is surrounded by them.
- 7 When they heard of wars, don't \_\_\_\_\_.