



Jesus Prophecies Future Events Luke 21

Introduction

One of the things Jesus did during the week before His crucifixion was prepare His disciples for the future. He gave what is referred to as the Olivet Discourse on the Mount of Olives. Three gospel writers record parts of it which, when put together, give a vast outline of events from then until now and into the future.

Outline of Luke 21

- I. Exemplary Giving by a Poor Widow - Luke 21:1-4
- II. Events up to A.D. 70 - Luke 21:5-24
- III. Events of the Day of the Lord - Luke 21:25-28
- IV. Example of the Fig Tree - Luke 21:29-36

I. Exemplary Giving by a Poor Widow - Luke 21:1-4

- A. Jesus Observes the Givers - Luke 21:1-2

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. The treasury was a place in the temple near the porch where Jesus was teaching. He could glance over and see what was happening. His attention was caught by the contrast of rich people throwing their coins noisily into the treasury so that all around could hear them drop, and a poor woman whose two mites were barely noticeable. Jesus must have found her action refreshing after the tension of the earlier confrontations and He seized the opportunity for commenting and teaching.

- B. Commended Giving - Luke 21:3-4

1. Proportionate

"This poor widow has put in more than all," Jesus remarked on the proportion of the giving. The rich would not miss their gifts that represented only a tiny percentage of their wealth. The gift of the poor woman represented practically all she had. It would be sorely missed and would leave her destitute.

2. Sacrificial

Jesus noted the sacrificial nature of her giving. *"She out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."* Perhaps Jesus instructed Judas, who kept the disciples' money bag, to give her something (John 13:29).

3. Bountiful - 2 Corinthians 9:6

The apostle Paul taught the Corinthians the way to give - proportionately, bountifully, and cheerfully. *But this I say, He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

4. Cheerful - 2 Corinthians 9:7

For God loves a cheerful giver. The Greek word is "hilarious". Does this describe your giving? Considering the above quote from 2 Corinthians, how much do you think God loves your giving?

II. Events up to A.D. 70 - Luke 21:5-24

- A. Prelude to Olivet Discourse - Luke 21:5-7; Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4

1. Temple prophecy - 21:5-6

Some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations. The sun's rays may have been highlighting the temple in the waning daylight, or perhaps the disciples were wanting to soothe their Messiah after the verbal attack by His enemies in the temple courts. Or possibly they wanted to remind Him of the riches that had built the temple before He offended any more givers. Whatever the reason, they drew His attention to the temple's beauty.

Jesus answered, *"These things which you see, the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."* That could hardly have been what they had in mind!

2. Questions from the disciples - 21:7

The shocked disciples wanted to know more. Matthew's gospel most clearly records their questions. *"Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age"* (Matthew 24:3)?

- B. Jesus' Answer to First Question - Luke 21:8-19; Matthew 24:4-14; Mark 13:5-13

Jesus answered the question of *"when will these things be?"* by first describing general events having no special significance but common to all ages.

1. General events of this age - 21:8-11
 - a. Many claiming to be messiahs - 21:8
 - b. Wars and rumors of wars - 21:9
 - c. Nations in upheaval and kingdoms in revolution - 21:10
 - d. Earthquakes, famines, and pestilences - 21:11
 - e. Fearful sights and great signs from heaven - 21:11

2. Personal events for the disciples - 21:12

"Before all these things they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons...for My name's sake." Before these events happened, the disciples would experience persecution, arrest, interrogation before kings, and imprisonment for Jesus' name.

3. Personal promises in distress - 21:13-18

a. Testimony - verse 13

"But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony." Their affliction would bear fruit, as Paul later wrote to the Philippians when he was imprisoned and in chains. *But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me turned out for the furtherance of the gospel* (Philippians 1:12-13). The gospel was reaching into Caesar's palace and Paul could not have been more pleased.

b. Words to say - verses 14-15

"I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist." Jesus promised his disciples wise words during interrogation. They would not even have to prepare. In fact, they were not even to try to prepare. (Note that this is not a promise for giving talks or taking tests.)

The testimony of the apostles Peter and John shut the mouths of the religious leaders (Acts 4:8-13). Paul experienced the gift of wise words when he was brought before kings (Acts 24:10, 25:8, 26:1-24). Many other prisoners of Jesus Christ have experienced this also, such as Reverend Richard Wurmbrand (Tortured for Christ).

c. Protection - verses 16-18

"Not a hair of your head shall be lost." Their heads, perhaps, but not their hair! They would be protected

until the moment God allowed otherwise. Because of this promise Peter could sleep like a baby in prison (Acts 12:6), and Paul could sing at midnight in stocks after a beating (Acts 16:25).

4. Responses - 21:19

"By your patience possess your souls." Knowing what was ahead and what resources they would have removed fear and gave patience. Jesus told them how to respond to each threat. To false messiahs: do not be deceived nor go after them (21:8). To wars and rumors of war: "see that you are not troubled" (Matthew 24:6). To upheavals in nature: "these are the beginning of sorrows" (travail) (Mark 13:8), (You haven't seen anything yet!). Forewarned is forearmed. Knowing what to expect takes away fear and allows calm control. Are you afraid of the future, or are you confident that you have adequate resources in Christ?

C. A Specific Event - Luke 21:20-24

1. Jerusalem surrounded by armies - 21:20

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near." This is the specific answer to their question about when not one stone of the temple would be left upon another (21:6). When was Jerusalem surrounded by armies and not one stone left upon another? It was A.D. 70, when the armies of the Roman general Titus besieged Jerusalem, leveled it, and removed every stone in the temple. "According to the historian, Josephus (The Jewish War), the city was so upheaved and dug up, that it was difficult to believe it had ever been inhabited" (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Alfred Edersheim).

"After a siege lasting about five months, the celebrated Roman general Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian, overran the city with his mighty army, destroyed and plundered the temple, and slew the Jewish men, women, and children by tens of thousands. When their lust for blood had been sated, the Romans carried off into captivity all the able-bodied remnant of the Jews (they had done away with all the weaklings and the aged), so that not a single Jew was left alive in the city. For many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, no Jew was allowed in the city or its vicinity. Only on one day in the year, the day of remembrance of the destruction of the temple, were they allowed to mourn over the city from neighboring hilltops" (The Biblical Expositor, Volume III, Baker Book House).

The first Jews allowed to re-enter were the Christians who had fled to Pella. Today a Muslim mosque stands where the temple once stood. There are still more Jews scattered around the world than there are in Israel. The Savior's prophecy has been fulfilled in every detail.

2. Instructions - 21:21

The natural thing to do under siege would be to seek refuge within the city walls, but Jesus told them to flee to the mountains. Those in the city were to get out, and those outside were not to go inside. There would be no safety in Jerusalem. "It is possible that some of our Lord's hearers lived to see the siege and capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 70" (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Iverson-Norman Association).

3. Fulfillment of prophecy - 21:22-24

a. *Days of vengeance* - verse 22

"For these are the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled." The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70 were prophesied to happen as the result of Israel's disobedient rejection of her Messiah (Deuteronomy 28:25-68).

b. Moses' prophecy

"And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known--wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place" (Deuteronomy 28:63-65).

c. Daniel's prophecy

And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (Daniel 9:26).

d. Woe and distress - verses 23-24

"Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days." Fast escape would be difficult for pregnant and nursing women.

"There will be great distress in the land." After A.D.70 the land was untended and undeveloped for nearly two thousand years until 1948 when the Jews regained possession of it, and the desert began to blossom as the rose (Isaiah 35:1). Prior to that, armies rode through it and fought over it, as in the Crusades. Jerusalem has been leveled fourteen times.

D. A Specific Time Period - Luke 21:24

1. Times of the Gentiles - 21:24

"Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until (writer's

emphasis) *the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*" The times of the Gentiles began with the first destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Israel's king was dethroned and Israel existed under Gentile governments. Israel ceased to be a nation after A.D. 70 when the second temple was destroyed by the Romans and the Jews were scattered. They became a nation again in 1948 after nearly two thousand years without a homeland or leader, an amazing fact no other people can claim. However, even now they exist by virtue of the United Nations charter and the protection of the United States and other democracies. Without these their enemies all around them and even within them, would have accomplished their goal to push them back into the sea.

2. Another "until"

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul gives another "until". *Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in* (11:25). The "fullness of the Gentiles" will mark the end of the times of the Gentiles. There is much debate over the meaning of "fullness of the Gentiles". No one knows for sure, but we do know that it will be God's perfect time and it will set the stage for Christ's return.

III. Events of the Day of the Lord - Luke 21:25-28

A. Answer to Second Question - Luke 21:25-27; Matthew 24:3

The second part of the disciples' question to Jesus was concerning the sign of His return. Matthew's gospel records, "*What will be the sign of Your coming?*"

1. Signs in heavens and on earth - 21:25

a. Heavens

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars." This has not happened yet. Sunspots, landing on the moon, and falling stars do not qualify as signs of Christ's return. At Pentecost, Peter quoted the prophet Joel, "*I will show wonders in heaven above. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD*" (Joel 2:31; Acts 2:19-20). Exactly what these will be we do not know.

b. Earth

"And on the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring." Peter and Joel both say, *there will be signs in the earth beneath*. There is potential for this even now, by human means, but the implication is that God will use nature.

2. Universal panic - 21:26

"Men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Some have speculated this could mean nuclear action. Hearts already tremble at the knowledge of what nuclear warfare or accident could mean to the entire world.

3. Return of Christ - 21:27

a. "With power and great glory"

"Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." The cloud is the cloud of Shekinah glory as in the Old Testament (Exodus 40:34-38).

b. Seen by all

Behold He is coming with clouds and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him (Revelation 1:7).

c. Israel's repentance

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10). See also Zechariah 12:11-14.

B. Response - Luke 21:28

"Now when these things begin to come to pass, look and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near." As we see signs setting the stage for the end of history as we know it, we can rejoice. Each day brings the fullness of our redemption nearer.

IV. Example of the Fig Tree - Luke 21:29-36

A. "Look" - Luke 21:29-31

"Look at the fig tree, and all the trees." Trees have a seasonal cycle, similar to life, which is intended for our instruction. When they bud, you know summer is near.

1. Application

"So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place." This has been variously interpreted, but it probably means that the generation that sees these things begin to occur will see the consummation.

2. Assurance

"Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will by no means pass away." The Word of God is sure and infallible.

B. Watch and Pray - Luke 21:32-36

"Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. "That Day" will catch the unbeliever unprepared, but as the apostle Paul later wrote to his beloved believers in Thessalonica, You, brethren, are not in darkness so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6). "That Day" will not come upon a believer unexpectedly. That is why Jesus gave the exhortation to, "Watch therefore and 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."

Application

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, it should be your joy and eager expectation to stand before your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at His return. You will stand worthy through the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed for the remission of your sins. You will stand in His righteousness and not your own. You will stand in no worthiness of your own, but by the worth of His blood. *Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct.....but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot* (1 Peter 1:18). Worthy is the Lamb!

Have you turned to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Are you living for Him, praying, and watching for His return with joy? If you are not sure of your eternal destiny, which depends wholly upon your relationship to Jesus, please ask your discussion leader for a Disciplers Confidence Letter. It will explain how you can have assurance of your position in Christ.

QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read lesson notes and references.

1. What thought or fact was new or challenging to you?
2. Was any point confusing or difficult to accept? If so, what was it?
3. Does it help you to know the broad outline of the future? If so, in what way?

DAY TWO: Read Luke 22:1-6; Matthew 26:1-5; John 11:45-53.

4. a. What feast day was just a few days away?

b. What did it celebrate? See Exodus 12:1-7, 12-13, 18-20.

c. How was the celebration observed?
5. a. Who was plotting against Jesus? What were they plotting?

b. From John 11:45-53, what reasons did they give for their actions?

c. When did they think would be a bad time to arrest Jesus (Matthew 26: 5)?
6. a. What happened to Judas?

b. What did he do as a result?

c. How did the chief priests respond?

DAY THREE: Read Luke 22:7-16; Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

7. Which two disciples had the task of finding the upper room?
8. a. Do you think Jesus had arranged for this supper? Why or why not?

b. How many ate together that evening in the upper room?

c. How did Jesus explain to them that this supper was different?

9. a. From 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, give two reasons believers observe the Lord's Supper.

b. ♥(Heart Question) Give some reasons the Lord's Supper is important to you.

DAY FOUR: Read Luke 22:17-27; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:18-25; John 13:1-11.

10. a. As Jesus was about to share the bread and drink, whom did He say was at the table with Him?

b. Did they know who it was? What question did they all ask Him?

11. a. In Luke 22:24-27, what dispute arose?

b. What did Jesus say about their disputing?

12. a. In John 13:1-11, what amazing thing did Jesus do?

b. What was Peter's first response to Jesus' action?

c. How did his opinion change after Jesus explained?

13. a. Do you sometimes resist what the Lord wants to do for you? Share an example.

b. Why do you think people resist the Lord in such ways?

DAY FIVE: Read Luke 22:28-30; John 13:27-30, and review DAY FOUR passages above.

14. According to John 13:27-30, when did Judas leave the upper room?

15. What did Jesus promise the disciples in Luke 22:29-30?

16. What did Jesus say about the bread? Give verses.

17. a. What did Jesus say about the drink? Give verses.

b. What reason did Jesus give for the shedding of His blood?

18. a. From Leviticus 17:11 and Hebrews 9:22, what can only be done by blood?

b. What does this have to do with the Passover in Exodus 12:23?

c. What did John the Baptist call Jesus in John 1:29?

d. Why do you think he called Him that?

DAY SIX: Read Luke 22:31-38.

19. a. What warning and what reassurance did Jesus give to Peter?

b. What was Peter's response?

c. What did Jesus tell him?

20. What instructions did Jesus give the disciples?

21. ? (Thought Questions) a. Why do you think these instructions (Question 20) were needed?

b. Do you think the disciples understood? Why or why not?