

The Gospel According to Luke

Luke 21:25-38

Reading: Luke 21:25-38

Parallel Passages: Matthew 24:29-36 and Mark 13:24-32

Sermon #90

August 30, 2020

The Destruction Of The Temple and The End Of The Age

(Part 2)

Last week we learned that Jesus gave His followers signs to look for and these signs would indicate that Jerusalem was about to be destroyed and the Temple leveled. Jesus tells His disciples when you see these signs head for the mountains. Our Lord's desire was that His followers be able to escape the coming massacre that took place in 70 A.D. With the siege and destruction of Jerusalem also came the destruction of the Temple. The Temple that had just been completed 4 years prior to 70 A. D. after 86 years of rebuilding and the Romans leveled it with not one stone standing upon another. Jesus' ministry marked the end of the need and purpose of the Old Testament worship, and the Romans brought the Temple structure to an end.

We also learned that while there were preliminary signs to allow God's people to escape destruction of Jerusalem there will be no preliminary specific signs, but rather general conditions for the Lord's return. Please do not misunderstand; there will be signs that usher in the Lord's return but not signs that alert us for the purpose of escaping. For believers, the return of Christ is our great hope and one of the greatest events in history and the greatest event to come. For believers there is no reason to escape Jesus' second coming and for nonbelievers there is no possible escape. We will experience Jesus coming, if we are alive and

of the generation when He returns as Jesus speaks of in the later part of our text today.

Part of the reason that the earth and nature is in turmoil is that creation is also waiting for the Lord's return. When Jesus returns all creation will herald and shout the Lord's return with roaring waves and signs in the heavens. You will notice in the text that when these signs begin, we are to look up because our redemption will be near.

The reason there will be no signs to alert God's people beforehand like with the destruction of the Temple is because we are not looking to escape but to meet Jesus in that day. Our Lord's desire is that His people live every day in anticipation of His return. The other reason there will not be specific signs is that there is no need for signs to indicate beforehand our Lord is coming back. Why? Because His coming will be unmistakable. No one alive on the face of planet earth will miss it or be able to avoid it. The very earth will throb and quake as its Maker returns. To witness Jesus' return will be both exciting and terrifying depending on one's relationship with God.

Remember what we learned early in Luke chapter 17, ²⁰ **“Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, ‘The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,** ²¹ nor will they say, “Look, here it is!” or “There!” for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.’ ²² And he said to the disciples, **‘The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.** ²³ And they will say to you, “Look, there!” or “Look, here!” Do not go out or follow them. ²⁴ **For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.’ ”** Jesus return will be the most cataclysmic

event in history! *Christ's second coming is certain and when it happens everyone will know without a doubt who Jesus is and everything will change for eternity.*

My beloved, we must be alert and watching for the return of our Lord. Our battle, here and now, is to fight against the temptation to live our lives as if His coming is far off. It is a mistake and a serious problem if one gets so focused on the here and now at the exclusion of eternity. What we see now is passing away. We are to live as sojourners on this earth because this is not our home. With this background we are ready to take into our minds and hearts the Word of God

Let us come before our Lord in prayer as we prepare to open our hearts and minds to the Word of God.

Now my family in Christ please stand and hear the Word of God as Patrick reads Luke, chapter 21, verses 25 to 38.

The Certainty of Christ's Coming (v.25-28)

We begin with the heralding of heaven, reading at verse 25, as Jesus taught, "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." These verses are not intended to be a forecast as to what will happen on the earth immediately preceding the return of our Lord. They are not given so we can sift through them and use them as preliminary indicators as to when Christ will return. Rather they happen as He comes. This entire passage is meant to show us

the certainty of His return and because of His return and as He descends upon the earth that is in great turmoil, He comes for redemption of believers, judgement of the unsaved and to bring eternity.

Throughout human history there has been floods, earthquakes, storms, roaring seas, and nations perplexed. At the coming of our Lord, these events will suddenly be at an alarming degree with great intensity. In addition, the sun, moon and stars will react to Jesus' return and mark this ending of history. The perplexed nations will see Christ coming. No longer will political leaders think they are in charge. No longer will the nations rule themselves. No longer will America live under a broken political system and the tyranny of lying politicians and unkept promises. When Our Lord returns, He comes dramatically as the true ruler, the Holy One who rules in truth and in promises kept and he will rule over everyone and everything.

Jesus tells us at the very beginning of these events, look up because our redemption is near. The question might be asked by some as to how when He returns will everyone on earth witness His coming? The answer is that there will be such a catastrophic change on the earth and in addition, beyond my imagination - the whole universe will suddenly and dramatically change. This event of Jesus' return will be beyond anything we can comprehend. I tell you honestly, I desire to be there! Our Lord has already told us in Luke 17 that no one will be able to miss it. The bottom line is that the One who was spit on, beaten, and crucified will come bringing glory and majesty with His return. All creation longs for that day. I long for Jesus' return and I pray you too long for the Lord's return as well.

Luke records this image of Jesus coming, with the words of Jesus' in verse 27, **“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great**

glory.” This is the most exalted imaginary of Jesus return – He returns in a cloud; He returns with power to bring the entire earth under His authority and no person will be able to deny His glory. This is the fulfillment of the vision Daniel received in chapter 7, ¹³“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man (*Septuagint – say **on** the clouds of heaven*), and he came to the Ancient of Days (*Ancient of Days was the title given to God in the Book of Daniel and symbolize perfection and eternity*) and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that **all peoples, nations, and languages** should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.” Jesus Christ demonstrated that He alone is the Son of man, the Messiah, the Christ and the Savior for those He calls and who believe. Luke records Jesus ascension in the beginning of Acts, the resurrected Jesus had just told the disciples they would be His witnesses to the ends of the earth, ⁹“And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’ ” (Acts 1:9-11) Jesus ascension, witnessed by the disciples, solidified for them beyond doubt Jesus is the Christ. They would need this absolute knowing Jesus as the Christ for them to fulfill their mission to take the Gospel to **“Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”** (Acts 1:8)

I would also like you to notice in this text that there is a great contrast between the reaction of the nations, which means all those who are lost and the reaction of God’s people. Reading the 2nd half of verse 25 and 1st half of verse 26,

“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 those who are lost and living in their sin, the return of Christ means certain judgment. Jesus’ return means judgment and eternal condemnation is near for unbelievers and there is nothing they can do about it. However, reading verse 28, “Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” God’s people, those who have been saved from their sins by Jesus Christ, for them His return will be the greatest event they ever experienced. Jesus says, “raise your heads” for “your redemption is drawing near.” When Christ comes the saved will now live in His presence!

Remember, we live in the days of salvation given by God’s grace but we remain sinners, so our salvation is not completely finished for we have not been glorified. God has justified those of us who have been forgiven of sin and have placed our trust in Christ alone. As Paul wrote to the saints living in this broken world,¹¹ “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power,¹² so that **the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him**, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 1:11-12) So, your salvation has already happened. But we are in the process of being sanctified, being made more and more into the image of Christ by repentance and obedience. However, at this point in time we have not yet experienced the end of our salvation; namely we have not been glorified with God, we have not received complete sanctification and glorification. On that day, we will experience the consummation of our complete redemption. We will be changed forever.

Back to this morning's passage, the phrase "look up" is also Jesus' way of showing us that His return is certain. His return plays a key role in redemption. Without His return there would be no permanent redemption. Just as without the cross, there is no redemption. As certain as the death of Christ took place on the cross and He rose from the dead and He ascended into heaven, so too, is the certainty of His second coming. Our completed redemption is near when our Lord returns. There is also, something else that has begun and is now being formed that will see its completion at the Second Coming - God's Kingdom eternal realized for His chosen. The Kingdom of God began with Jesus' first coming and will be complete with His second coming.

The Certainty of Christ's Kingdom (v.29-33)

Now Jesus moves from the certainty of His return, His 2nd Coming and moves to the certainty of His Kingdom. His focus moves to His disciples, to those who believe in Him as the Christ; they need to be ready and waiting for His return. Reading at verse 29, "And Jesus told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰ As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.' "

Just as it is evident when new leaves are seen on a once barren fig tree, the new leaves tell us, we know "summer is already near". So, it is also certain when these signs are viewed, Christ's coming "is already near." The word translated as "near" is the Greek word with a number of meanings. Here in context it is used to denote the nearness rather than the remoteness of God's working. It means God

is near and what He has promised is coming to pass. Just as the fig leaf marks the beginning of summer, so shall great signs mark the coming of our Lord and the consummation of the Kingdom of God.

The Certainty of Salvation and Judgment (v. 32-36)

The Lord continues teach at the Temple court that these events are coming and they are certain, so for His disciples He wants them and us to understand and be ready. Reading at verse 32, “Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place.”³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.³⁴ But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.³⁵ For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth.³⁶ But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” For those who truly believe in Christ as their Lord and Savior their redemption is certain, just as, the coming Kingdom is certain. Jesus wants each generation of believers to be prepared, to be ready and if they are among the generation of Jesus’ return, they will see these catastrophic events and Jesus coming on a cloud. As verse 32 says, “Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place.” Believers will not survive Jesus’ return but they will thrive at His return and experience His glory.

Jesus goes on to declare that these Words of His teaching and prophesy are more certain than even the earth and the heavens themselves. The Bible teaches that there is a time when this earth and the heavens will pass away in order to make way for a new heaven and a new earth. As the Apostle Peter instructed,⁸ “But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand

years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.” (2 Peter 3:8-10) My beloved, know this with complete certainty, even after these events that Peter describes takes place, Jesus’ Words will remain forever and remain unchanged. His Word is certain and eternal.

Our job is to be watchful and to be ready. As God’s people we must not fall asleep, we must not be drunk with all the trappings and influences of the world but be watchful. He uses drunkenness as an example of those who are not watchful. To be drunk is to be engrossed in the state of the times one lives in and this takes one’s focus off of Christ and is pleasing to the evil one. The question before us this morning is, as Jesus is drawing closer and closer, are we ready? For some, the return of Christ will be a blessing but for others it will be a trap without escape.

We must be ready and watching. We must remain focused on Christ and not on the cares of this world or this age. At this time, we cannot let this coming election and the chaos of riots take our focus off of Christ. Things may not be as we would like and hope for – but I know this – God is in charge and His plan for redemption is certain and nothing mankind can do will change His plan. Again, the Apostle Peter wrote almost 2000 years ago; it was true then and is true now, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) So, learning what we have learned this morning, let me ask each of you, my beloved, are you living life in preparation for Christ’s return

or do the cares of this world entrap you and take your focus and your affections off of Christ?

The Certainty of the End of the Age (v. 37-38)

We begin bringing our time to a close this morning. Remember last week Jesus predicted the Temple would be destroyed and the Old Testament system of sacrifices, now that Jesus had come, would no longer serve a purpose. Reading the last 2 verses of this morning's passage, ³⁷“**And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet.**” ³⁸“**And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.**”

I think Luke is pointing out here, the fact, that by the ministry of Jesus those people seeking God were not coming to the Temple first and foremost to offer sacrifices, although that was still going on, but they come to hear and obey Jesus. God was drawing worshippers and they were coming to Jesus, in the Temple courts, outside the Temple itself because the Temple was no longer to be the center of worshipping God – Jesus was now the only focus and His followers would become the temples of God the Holy Spirit.

When Solomon dedicated the first temple, God declared that it would be a place where His presence would be in a special way. He would hear prayers and He would forgive sin if His people repented. As is written, ¹⁴“**If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.**” ¹⁵“**Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.**” (2 Chronicles 7:14-15) The Temple was the place where God met with His people. Immanuel, God with us. Now, a new age has dawned and Luke so wonderfully highlights the fact that the people are still coming to the

Temple to meet with God but not as the House of God, but where the Son of God is before them in the courts, as verse 38 says, “[And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.](#)”

Here is what we need to take away this morning; Christ’s second coming is certain and when He comes everything will change for eternity, so His people need to live with expectation each and every day of their lives. Jesus’ return is growing closer; we must be ready! We should be longing for Christ and living for His glory. Each day we go about the day’s activities and demands, but we must walk through each day with the anticipation of Christ’s return. We need to plan for the future, but do so with His return in mind. As Paul wrote, “[For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.](#)” (Philippians 1:21)

Jesus knows as fallen people we have fears; so, in this passage, for those who believe in Him as the Christ, He takes away the fear of death and of His second coming. Unlike the majority of mankind who fear death and will be struck with a fear beyond any human experience at the return of Christ; as believers we are to look up for our redemption has arrived with Christ, not judgement. Amen!