

That You May Know The Certainty

LESSON 21: JESUS IN JERUSALEM, PART 2 (LUKE 20:41-21:38)

Jesus was now in Jerusalem in the days preceding His death. It is now likely Tuesday of the week that began with His triumphal entry to Jerusalem. Jesus has withstood efforts from the Jewish leaders to trap Him so He would be handed over to the Roman governor.

A QUESTION ABOUT THE MESSIAH (LUKE 20:41-44)

20:41-44. Jesus (still in the temple) now asked whose son the Messiah was (Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37). The Pharisees knew the Messiah was David's Son (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 132:11; Isaiah 9:6-7). Now, Jesus wanted them to consider how David's Son could also be David's Lord (Psalm 110:1), whom Jehovah would invite to sit at the prominent right-hand position (Acts 2:34-36) and would reign until all enemies would be defeated (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). Thus, the Messiah was Deity and David's Lord (John 1:1-3), not just his descendant!

A WARNING AND A COMMENDATION (LUKE 20:45-21:4)

20:45-47. Jesus now spoke to His disciples in the hearing of others, warning about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes (Matthew 23:1-36). They wore robes to distinguish themselves as teachers and leaders (Matthew 23:5). They loved special greetings in the marketplace and the special titles used to address them (Matthew 23:7). They loved to have the most honorable seats at banquets and the synagogue (Matthew 23:6). Yet, despite their appearance of righteousness, Jesus knew their hearts and the evil in their lives. For example, Jesus said they devoured (like animals) widows' houses by taking advantage of them (perhaps embezzling or charging inflated rates for services; Ezekiel 22:27-31). Furthermore, Jesus said they offered long prayers just for show (Matthew 6:5-8). Jesus declared that God's harsh judgment and condemnation would come on such hypocritical leaders!

21:1-4. As Jesus was at the temple (likely in the Court of Women), He observed people bringing contributions to the temple treasury (Mark 12:41-44) – particularly noticing the rich. However, Jesus observed a poor widow and pointed her out to His disciples. Although she only dropped in two lepta

coins (a lepton was the least valuable coin among the Jews; worth about 1/128 of a day's wage). Yet, concluded that while others gave from their surplus, she gave from her poverty all she had to live on and commended her sacrificial gift as being greater than the others!

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM IS FORETOLD (LUKE 21:5-33)

21:5-7. The temple in Jesus's day was beautiful (rebuilt by King Herod; John 2:20), composed of large stones and exquisite gifts. Yet, as Jesus left the temple, He said it would suffer extensive destruction (Matthew 24:1-2; Mark 13:1-2). He was then asked when these things would take place and what the sign would be that such would happen (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:3-4). The discussion that follows is focused on the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, which occurred in 70 A.D. by the Romans.

21:8-19. Jesus's disciples were to watch out and not be deceived. Even when people would claim to be the Messiah and say the time for Jerusalem's destruction was near, they were not to follow such people, or be alarmed at the news of wars and rebellions. These things would happen, but the end (destruction of Jerusalem) would not happen just yet. There would be wars, earthquakes, famines, plagues, and terrifying sights and signs from heaven (perhaps astrological events). Furthermore, the disciples would be persecuted (Acts 5:17-42; 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 12:1-5; 24-26). This would give them opportunities to bear witness concerning Jesus! At these times, God would give them the words and wisdom needed to answer rather than worrying about what they would say, so the enemies of Christ would have no way to answer them. They would be betrayed by close relatives and friends, killed, and hated because of Jesus's name (John 15:18-21; Matthew 10:34-39). Regardless, no spiritual and eternal harm would come upon them if they endured (Matthew 10:28; 16:24-27; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)!

21:20-24. When Jesus's disciples would see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they should know the time for its desolation had come near due to their rebellion against God (Luke 19:41-44). Those who knew this should then flee to escape the devastation. Those who would be pregnant or nursing, though, would bear an even greater burden in trying to escape. For, God's wrath coming against Jerusalem would be severe (death and captivity), as God would use Gentiles (Romans) as His instrument for trampling the city until it was all accomplished.

21:25-28. What Jesus says in these verses fits with the apocalyptic language style used by prophets to foretell

the fall of seemingly stable forces (e.g. powerful people and nations, Isaiah 13:6-10; 34:1-4). It is pictured as though the heavenly bodies were being overthrown and great disturbances on the earth! Such things would strike great fear in the people of the world. They would see the Son of Man come in the cloud (a reference to God's judgment, Isaiah 19:1) to execute His devastating wrath and judgment against Jerusalem. Yet, this would provide redemption for Jesus's disciples who had experienced persecution from the Jews!

21:29-33. Jesus told His disciples a parable about trees (including a fig tree). Similar to recognizing the nearness of summer by seeing leaves on trees, the disciples could know God's rule (kingdom of God) was near in the sense of destroying Jerusalem and the Jewish system of religion (temple, lineage, priesthood, animal sacrifices, etc.) by seeing all that Jesus described. Notice Jesus said all these things would certainly happen within the generation of people living at that time (Matthew 24:32-35). Therefore, His teaching cannot be about His final coming; but the destruction of Jerusalem that happened in A.D. 70. The time would come for heaven and earth to pass away, but His words will never pass away/fail (2 Peter 3:10-13; 1 Peter 1:24-25)!

THE NEED FOR WATCHFULNESS (LUKE 21:34-38)

21:34-38. This section can either apply specifically to the destruction coming on Jerusalem and the Jewish system or to the final judgment of the entire world (perhaps a transition to the final judgment when heaven and earth will pass away, Matthew 24:36-25:46). Jesus's disciples are always to be alert and on guard for the coming judgment of God. They must not have minds dulled from intoxicating substances (through carousing and drunkenness) or by the worries of life. God's judgment will come suddenly on everyone. Jesus's disciples must be alert and praying so they can escape the wrath of God and stand before Christ when He comes. Luke then concludes by noting Jesus would teach in the temple during the day (and all the people would come to listen to Him) and then go spend the night on the Mount of Olives.

CONCLUSION

Jesus was busy teaching during His time in Jerusalem, and many were coming to listen to Him in the temple. The Jewish people should have embraced Him as the Messiah. However, because of the way they would reject Him, Jerusalem would be devastated.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What was Jesus's point about the Messiah being David's Son?

What warning did Jesus give about the Pharisees and scribes?

Why did Jesus commend the widow's gift at the temple above all the others?

What did Jesus say would happen to the temple?

What would happen before the destruction of Jerusalem occurred?

What should Jesus's disciples do when they recognized the time for Jerusalem's desolation had come?

How can you know the signs described in the text (21:7-28) are describing the destruction of Jerusalem rather than Jesus's final coming?

How should people respond to the reality of God's coming judgment?

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