

**LUKE**

Please turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 21 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Here in Luke chapter 21 we are in the final days of Jesus' earthly life as the cross was before Him.

And since Palm Sunday, the day He rode through Jerusalem as the Messiah the Prince, He has been inspected for any spot or blemish by the Jewish religious leaders and ultimately by Pilate himself. I know, kind of strange and yet the picture is amazing. You see, Jesus is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. And according to the Old Testament, a lamb was to be taken on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nissan and inspected for any spot or blemish and if none were found, then on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan that lamb could be offered as the Passover sacrifice.

Like I have said, Jesus is that Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world and they are trying to discredit Him, find some fault in Him, and they have found none. He was sinless and thus, the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world!

Jesus gets a little break here as He continues to teach about His return, the Second Coming and what is ahead for the nation of Israel. But before He does that He is watching how people are giving in the Temple. Before we get to our text this evening let me share this with you. We are told,

When Wladziu Valentino died, entrepreneurs leased the Los Angeles Convention Center to display the 25,000 to 30,000 objects left from his estate. This was an event for the well-heeled of L.A. Why? Mr. Valentino was better known as Liberace. Thousands of people willingly paid six dollars each for the privilege of viewing the lavish remains of Liberace's materialism. This was followed by an auction at Christie's where another admission charge of ten dollars was levied in an attempt to lessen the size of the enthusiastic crowd. In a frenzied auction, a king's ransom was paid by the bejeweled crowd for the eight warehouses of Liberace's belongings.

At the incredible event money literally spoke, as money was the only speech acknowledged by the auctioneer. It also spoke in other ways, for it eloquently revealed volumes about the heart of the deceased entertainer and the hearts of the competing bidders.

"Money speaks" is more than a cliché. It is an axiom of the heart. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). During the last decade Americans spent over \$180 billion dollars per year on gambling, fifteen times more than it gave to its churches. [Psychology Today, December 1986, p. 23] That is a tragic declaration of the heart of this country. Money speaks!

Aware of this, the Lord chose the temple treasure for his departing shot at his detractors before leaving the temple for good. Money – giving – reveals the state of the heart as few other things can. Thus Jesus chose this setting to contrast the phony righteousness of the religious leaders, who "devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers" (20:47), with true devotion to God as exemplified in the life of one poor widow.

- R. Kent Hughes, Luke Volume Two, That You May Know the Truth, pp. 289-290

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Luke chapter 21 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

## **LUKE 21**

### **VERSES 1-2**

As Luke chapter 21 opens up, keep in mind that this was the end of a long day. And we see that Jesus sits down in the Court of the Women and He is watching the people. And specifically, He is watching how the Passover crowds were giving to God.

You see, in this court were 13 trumpet shaped containers made of brass to collect the offerings. This could obviously feed into the flesh of people as they let people see the generous heart they had as they gave. That is not what Jesus is looking for. He is looking for a heart that is willing to give even if no one sees it and especially when no one knows what is given!

And think about it. How many charities would go under if people could not be recognized for the gift that they gave! When we were in Fort Lauderdale several years ago I was walking around and passed by this synagogue.

And as I looked I saw all these tags on the building. Upon looking closer it was the names of the people who donated doors, windows, this and that. I felt so sad for them because they wanted the praise of men and that was all that they were going to get.

Here, as the rich were putting their money into these brass containers, the noise must have gotten the attention of many.

Then, here is this poor widow. She has nothing but two mites to give, and she gave all she had, quietly to the Lord, no attention was drawn to her by man but guess who was watching how she gave? The Lord! And Jesus does the same with us, He watches how we give, the motivation of our heart and what it costs us.

And keep in mind that this is all this woman had and thus, she could have given half of what she had and kept the other half for herself. But, instead, she gave all that she had to the Lord and no one was aware except the Lord.

Look at what happens next, how the Lord acknowledges what this poor widow did.

#### VERSES 3-4

Mark tells us that at this point Jesus called His disciples over to teach them lessons on giving. The first lesson we learn is that if our giving doesn't cost us something it is meaningless. Are you giving out of your abundance or out of your livelihood? This woman gave all that she had to the Lord.

King David gives to us a great picture of this. In II Samuel chapter 24 David decides to take a census, something the Lord did not tell him to do. He wanted to see the strength of his nation, his military might. And even though he was warned not to, he went ahead with it.

And the Lord was going to judge the nation for this. And we see the Lord send a plague upon the nation and seventy thousand people died! And David interceded before the Lord and the Lord told David to build an altar and sacrifice to Him on the threshing floor of Araunah. To do so David had to purchase a piece of property from this man.

Now Araunah, upon hearing the reason that David wanted the land, he told David to take what he needed, it was his. He wanted to donate the land to King David.

And we are told in II Samuel 24:24, **“Then the king said to Araunah, ‘No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.’ So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.”**

Sacrifice is costly and that is what we see here with David and now this poor widow who was giving to the Lord!

The other point is our heart attitude as we give. Why are we giving? Are we giving to show off? Are we giving because we feel pressured to give? Paul makes it very clear when he tells us in II Corinthians 9:6-7, **“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”**

You see, give out of a cheerful heart, not because you have to, not because you are forced to or feel obligated to give, but because you want to give to the Lord! And our giving is not just speaking of our money, but our time, our talents, all that can be given to God as a sacrifice unto Him to be used for His glory, our life! Obviously, an important lesson Jesus was teaching His men and us!

Remember, the others gave out of their abundance; she gave sacrificially, out of her poverty.

VERSES 5-6

As they were leaving the Temple area and just in awe of the beauty of the Temple, Jesus said something that was shocking to them. He said, “**As for 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 statement by Jesus of the destruction of the Temple was just as shocking and unbelievable as if someone told you prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 that the Twin Towers in New York City would come crashing down in a matter of hours!

You see, in 517 B. C., as the Jewish captives were returning from their captivity, the second Temple was built under the leadership of Zerubbabel, but this was a low budget project, it didn't compare to the beauty of Solomon's Temple that was destroyed by the Babylonians.

Then, in around 20 B. C., Herod the Great came on the scene and expanded and beautified this second Temple. The Temple was huge, some 500 yards long and 400 yards wide, taking over 80 years to build. It wasn't completed until 64 A. D., only some six years before it was destroyed.

And Herod, only a little guy, some say 4<sup>11</sup>, loved to build with big stones, some 36 feet long, 12 feet thick and 12 feet high, weighing some 120 tons and fitting in place so tight that you can't place a card between these stones! It must have been a spectacular sight to see!

Of this Temple, Josephus wrote,

The exterior of the building wanted nothing that could astound either mind or eye. For, being covered on all sides with massive plates of gold, the sun was no sooner up than it radiated so fiery a flash that persons straining to look at it were compelled to avert their eyes, as from the solar rays. To approaching strangers it appeared from a distance like a snow-clad mountain; for all that was not overlaid with gold as of purest white. From its summit protruded sharp golden spikes to prevent birds from settling upon and polluting the roof. Some of the stones of the building were forty-five [67.5 feet] cubits in length, five [7.5 feet] in height and six [9 feet] in breadth.

- Mishnah, Shekalim XI5

This is what the disciples marveled over and man does the same today. Look at the many magnificent churches that are beautiful outwardly, but inside they are dead, God is no longer their focus.

And that is just like the Temple, what it had become in Jesus' day! And man does that with all kinds of things they hold in high esteem when the reality is they can be brought down very quickly.

In 70 A. D. Titus and the Roman army came in leveling the city and the Temple was set on fire and burned to the ground. Thus, to retrieve all the precious metals the soldiers had to overturn the stones just as Jesus said would take place. **“Not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.”**

VERSE 7

As they are traveling to Bethany, passing through the Kidron Valley, they found a spot on the Mount of Olives to rest. And His disciples ask Jesus some questions about what is going to take place in regard to the destruction of the Temple and the end of days. Matthew gives to us more details of this teaching known as the Olivet Discourse. And keep in mind that the reason it is called the Olivet Discourse is because Jesus taught His men these things as they were sitting upon the Mount of Olives! And as we are going to see, Jesus is not only going to tell them about the destruction of the Temple but about the future events, the fate of the world and the coming Kingdom.

VERSES 8-9

It was not only true in Jesus' day but in our day also. We see false Christ's, false Messiah's come on the scene, like Jim Jones, David Koresh, Sun Yung Moon, and-so-on. It is a warning not to fall prey to these men!

But there is more to this than that I believe. You see, the word "***Christ***" is in italics and the actual statement by Jesus is this, "***Many will come saying, I Am.***" It is the Ego Eimi. The point here is that many will come claiming to be God and we see that today.

The New Age movement has brought this into the mainstream and there are many false religions and some so-called Christian faiths, like the name-it-claim it groups who actually believe we are little gods! And with eastern mysticism coming into the church today, this false teaching will continue to spread!

Make no mistake about it, we are not gods! And Jesus is warning His men and us not to be deceived by these lies. Again, the Word of God exposes the lie!



Not only will people believe that they are god but there is going to be an increase in the frequency of wars. What is interesting here is that Jesus tell us that when you hear of these things, “**... do not be terrified ...**” And for many Christians, as they see what is happening in this world, they are terrified.

But think about it, why shouldn't we be terrified of what is coming? Because Jesus has warned us ahead of time what is coming down the pike and thus, we don't need to be afraid, we need to rest in Him. We need to understand that these things must come first before His return!

And think about this for a minute. For every year of peace that man has enjoyed in his history there has been 18 years of war! This, in itself, is not a sign, but it will continue on till the end and I think the key is these things will increase in frequency and intensity, climaxing with the return of Jesus Christ as I have said!

#### VERSES 10-11

First of all, let's look at the near fulfillment of what Jesus is speaking of and that is the destruction of Jerusalem. That occurred in 70 A. D., so less than 40 years from when Jesus spoke these words.

During this period of time there were many wars as well as great earthquakes within the Roman Empire.

Also, there was a famine before the destruction of Jerusalem occurred. And, of course, with famine comes disease. In Acts 11:28 we are told, “**Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.**”

Also, Pompeii blew up just seven years before Jerusalem was destroyed, so there were fearful signs.

And lastly, signs in the heavens could be speaking of the sword-shaped comet that hung over Jerusalem by night for a year. So, what Jesus spoke did come to pass before Jerusalem was destroyed.

But we also need to understand that Jesus is speaking of a future time, way in the future, the time of the Tribulation Period which will give birth to the Kingdom Age. Even today we are seeing wars, civil wars, national wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilence or deadly diseases, fearful signs as you look at the things that are happening around the world and even signs in the heavens with these large chunks of space rock that are getting close to the earth.

What these are, I believe, are what we might call false labor pains getting the world ready for the real labor that is to come. That means that these things, as bad as they are today, will increase in frequency and intensity prior to the Lord's return!

I like the way that one commentator summed this up. He wrote, "These things must happen because they are part of the prophetic programme of the End-time in general, and so are divinely decreed; but they do not usher in the *immediate* end. The fall of Jerusalem and the events leading up to it were morally, though not chronologically, of an eschatological character." (Geldenhuis)

VERSES 12-15

Make no mistake about it, these things happened prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and they will also occur prior to the return of Jesus in glory. The thing we have to remember is that Christians are being persecuted for their faith every day. That has not stopped and it began with the establishment of the church in Acts.

Stephen, in Acts chapter 7, gives to us a great example of this as he spoke of his faith in Christ before the Jewish religious council! As you read the testimony of Stephen and of Paul in Acts you will see that it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through them, giving them the words to say and putting to silence those who were opposing them.

I think we tend to forget what our brothers and sisters in the Lord are suffering for their faith every day. In one month 322 Christians are martyred for their faith in Christ. Every month 214 Christian churches or property is destroyed. And every month 772 forms of violence against Christians occur.

One article put it like this,

Christian persecution is any hostility experienced from the world as a result of one's identification as a Christian. From verbal harassment to hostile feelings, attitudes and actions, Christians in areas with severe religious restrictions pay a heavy price for their faith. Beatings, physical torture, confinement, isolation, rape, severe punishment, imprisonment, slavery, discrimination in education and employment, and even death are just a few examples of the persecution they experience on a daily basis.

According to The Pew Research Center, over 75% of the world's population lives in areas with severe religious restrictions (and many of these people are Christians). Also, according to the United States Department of State, Christians in more than 60 countries face persecution from their governments or surrounding neighbors simply because of their belief in Jesus Christ.

- [https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/?keyword=christian%20martyr&b&g&165772780452&11&c&650404711&38276723275&gclid=Cj0KEQjww7zHBRCToPSj\\_c\\_WjZBEiQAJ8ii5JNw1ISqRN\\_-qPub33o-nqRZmkzLksBBL8wSkcZLvyoaAjY48P8HAQ](https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/?keyword=christian%20martyr&b&g&165772780452&11&c&650404711&38276723275&gclid=Cj0KEQjww7zHBRCToPSj_c_WjZBEiQAJ8ii5JNw1ISqRN_-qPub33o-nqRZmkzLksBBL8wSkcZLvyoaAjY48P8HAQ)

The wonderful thing is that they are using this as a witness of their faith just as the early church did. It was a testimony and our lives should be a witness to the lost, no matter what they do against us!

And as much as Christians are being persecuted for their faith today, I think that persecution will increase in intensity and climax during the Tribulation Period, especially for the Christian Jews but not limited to them, all Christians will be persecuted for their faith during this time.

### VERSES 16-19

Imagine, being turned in by your own family members for your faith in Christ! And we do get a glimpse of what is coming during the Tribulation Period as we look at the early church. In the early church six million Christians were put to death for their faith in Jesus.

It happened during the inquisitions as Rome put to death many for their faith in Jesus and for rejecting the Catholic Church as the one true church. Millions have been put to death by Rome.

And again, we see it today as many Christians are put to death for their faith in Jesus in China, India, and in the Sudan alone as well as many Muslim nations. Millions have been put to death for their faith in Jesus. And, as I have said, it will reach its climax in the Tribulation Period when the Antichrist will put to death millions for their faith in Jesus, those who have come to Jesus during this period of time for the church will be with the Lord prior to the start of the Tribulation Period.

In Revelation 20:4 we are told, “**And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**” You see, their words, their death is to be a witness and a testimony of Jesus!

Now in verse 19, where it says that “**. . . not one hair of your head shall be lost**” some feel that this is speaking of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses during the Tribulation Period as God will set a seal upon them and protect them.

It may be but I don't think so. You see, I don't believe this is speaking of physical death, even though God can and has protected us that way. What we need to remember is that Jesus just got done saying that some will be put to death for their faith.

Then what is He talking about? In Matthew 10:28 Jesus said, “**And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**” You see, to be absent from this earthly body we will be present with the Lord. If you are His you are saved, your spirit will not be lost, but will be with the Lord!

And the key is what we read in verse 19 where Jesus said, “**In your patience possess your souls.**” The Greek word for “**patience**” is HUPOMONE, (hoop-om-on-ay’) and it speaks of a strong endurance and not a passive waiting. God is going to see us through all the storms of life and ultimately, He will see us home with Him. ***HE WILL LOSE NO ONE!*** Thus, don’t be anxious, don’t be in a hurry, but wait upon God, rest in Him, endure till the end!

#### VERSES 20-24a

The near fulfillment was the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. As we have talked about, this is when the Romans surrounded Jerusalem, they cut off their food supply, and the people were starving to death. It was so bad that people were stealing and killing for food, and many died, not by the hands of the Romans but by famine and murder by their fellow Jews! About one million Jews were killed during this time and another 97,000 were taken back to Rome as slaves!

Why didn’t the Jews flee Jerusalem? There were many warnings of what was coming? Because many Jews expected the Messiah to return in glory when hostile Gentile armies surrounded Jerusalem. However, Christians in Jerusalem fled the city.

You see, the warning is that when you see this you are to flee, and according to tradition, during a prayer meeting, the Holy Spirit spoke to the Jewish Christians and told them to flee out the eastern gate and by a miracle of God they did escape. They say that not one Christian was killed during this invasion.

Now why is this a day of vengeance? Because they had rejected His Son, the Messiah and now they will be judged! It is as one commentator put it, “From the commencement of the history of the Jewish nation, God through His servants warned them clearly that if they behaved unfaithfully and wickedly they would reap disastrous retribution. Cf. especially the striking words of Deuteronomy 28:15-68. There is almost no form of calamity that visited the Jews during the Roman-Jewish war, not mentioned here in Deuteronomy.” (Geldenhuis)

Also, as we are going to see, this is looking on ahead to the Tribulation Period. During this period of time the Antichrist will come after the Jews, at the 3½ mark of the seven-year Tribulation Period. It is at this time the Antichrist will go into the rebuilt Temple and demand to be worshiped as god. And the Jews will recognize he is not the Messiah and they will flee to the rock city of Petra where God will protect them for the last 3½ years of the Tribulation Period and during that time they will call upon Jesus as Lord and Savior, ushering in His Second Coming! (Revelation 12:13-17).

Now if you still don't believe that this is speaking of the end times, the Tribulation Period, I think the last part of verse 24 here in Luke chapter 21 will show you that is exactly what Jesus is speaking of!

Also, as you read on He speaks of His Second Coming, in Luke 21:25-28.

VERSE 24b

The Bible speaks about a few different things in regard to the Gentiles. We are told in Romans 11:12, “**Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!**” Paul is speaking of the *RICHES FOR THE GENTILES* or the privileges we have in Christ and what the Jews are missing in their rejection of Him.

Then, in Romans 11:25 Paul says, “**For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**” In this verse Paul is speaking of the *FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES* and this is talking about that period of time when that last Gentile gets saved before the Rapture of the Church.

But here in Luke 21:24 Jesus is speaking of the *TIMES OF THE GENTILES*. This started back in 586 B. C. when Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, made his third and final assault upon Jerusalem, taking the remaining Jews captive to Babylon and it continues on through today and up until the powers of the Antichrist are destroyed and Jesus sets-up His Kingdom.

Yes, the Jews are back in the land, that occurred in 1948, they became a nation once again! Then on June 7, 1967 they captured the old city of Jerusalem.

But make no mistake about it, the Gentiles are still trampling upon them. The United Nations is trying to tell them what to do. Europe is trying to tell them what to do. And prior to this President, the United States has been trying to tell Israel what to do! And Gentiles are still in the land!



And think about this. Even though they recaptured the old city of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, Moshe Dayan gave the Temple Mount to the Jordanians to oversee and they in turn gave it to the Palestinian Authority. So today they still do yield the rule and the administration of the most central piece of Jerusalem – the Temple Mount – to Gentile rule! Thus, it can be argued that prophetically speaking, Jerusalem is still ***TRAMPLED BY THE GENTILES!***

But not in the Kingdom Age when the times of the Gentiles comes to an end.

#### VERSES 25-28

Let me say this before I go any further. There are those that will tell you that the Tribulation Period, the events spoken of in the book of Revelation have already occurred when Jerusalem fell in 70 A. D. There is nothing that proves that and as you look at what the Scriptures are teaching, this is still a future event.

And if you think about it, John wrote the book of Revelation well after 70 A. D. and thus, was he not speaking prophetically, was he just writing history down? That is why those who believe that this already occurred say John wrote Revelation before the fall of Jerusalem, but there is no evidence for that!

And when you read what Jesus said in these verses, this is speaking of the Tribulation Period leading up to the Second Coming of Jesus! And it is a time of devastation that is so bad that men's hearts will begin to fail as problems become so bad that there is no way out! Now I want you to listen carefully for who this day is for, and it is not for Christians.

First of all, let's look at Isaiah chapter 13 and begin reading in verse 6, which says, **“Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will be limp, every man's heart will melt, And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another; their faces will be like flames. Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.”** Isaiah 13:6-13.

Sounds similar to what Jesus spoke of here in Luke and did you notice that this judgment is to destroy sinners, not those saved by grace!

Our New Testament comparison is in Revelation 6:12-17, which says, **“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”**

This has not taken place yet, it is still future. It did not occur back in 70 A. D.!

Also, back in Isaiah chapter 34, starting in verse 1, we read, **“Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, and His fury against all their armies; he has utterly destroyed them, he has given them over to the slaughter. Also their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, and as fruit falling from a fig tree. . . For it is the day of the LORD’S vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.”** Isaiah 34:1-4, 8.

Let me make this clear. God does not pour out His wrath upon the righteous, but upon the wicked. And the only reason we are righteous is because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed into our lives by faith!

And in Haggai 2:20-22 we are told, **“And again the word of the LORD came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, ‘Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying: “I will shake heaven and earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them; the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.”””**

You can see as you read through these verses the horrors of God’s judgment, but make no mistake about it, God’s judgment is righteous, it is fair, and He desires that men would turn from their evil and receive the forgiveness of sin that is only found in Jesus. That is the only way you will escape this judgment!

And for those who believe Jesus came in secret in His Second Coming, like the Jehovah Witnesses do, Jesus says that He is coming in the clouds and in Matthew 24 He tells us that every eye will see Him. Not in secret but blazing across the sky!

And the warning is that when you see these things happen, these labor pains, it will give birth to the Kingdom Age as Jesus Christ returns to sit on the throne of David and rule and reign for a thousand years! We are beginning to see the signs, we need to be alert, we need to be watching, because the Lord is coming back for His bride, the church.

VERSES 29-33

Notice not just the fig tree, which would speak of Israel, but all trees. It is not a symbolic reference, but an agricultural one. And what Jesus is saying is that when you see the false Christ's, the false prophets, the wars, the world wars, the rumors of wars, the earthquakes, the famines, diseases, the persecutions, the abomination of desolation, the cataclysmic signs in the heavens and on the earth! When these things begin to happen know that the Lord's return is close, He is at the door! It is just as the trees budding you know summer is near!

So that generation that sees these things will see the Lord return. But there is something else that this speaks of when it says that “**... this generation will be no means pass away till all things are fulfilled.**”

You see, this word “**generation**” is the Greek word GENEIA and it does speak of a race or nationality. Thus, another sign would be that the nation of Israel, the Jews would not ethnically pass away, and that is a miracle.

You see, after 70 A. D. the Jews wandered without a homeland for some 1878 years and no other ethnic group has survived more than five generations, more than 150 years without a homeland because they are assimilated into other groups, other cultures. But not the Jews, they even have preserved the Hebrew language! Hitler tried to destroy the Jews, some six million of them, but they remain and he is gone! Thus, this too is a sign for us that the Lord's return is getting close, the Jews have remained!

Now some have a hard time believing that but Jesus puts an exclamation mark here by saying His Word is true, it will happen even though the heavens and the earth may pass away, His Word will remain, it is true, these things will come to pass! Do you believe it?

VERSES 34-36

Worldliness, carnality is a snare or a trap that entangles many Christians. Jesus' warning is simple. He is coming back, keep your eyes focused upward, keep strong in the faith, occupy till He comes.

Don't let worldly things weigh you down or prevent you from serving Him! Don't be so busy with worldly things that you are not looking for His return! The Lord's return is our blessed hope and maybe that is why many Christians are struggling so much, they have lost that hope!

I like what Paul said to Titus in Titus 2:11-15, **“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”**

Now verse 36 causes some Christians some anxiety as they pray that they are worthy to escape this judgment that is coming upon the earth dwellers, upon sinners! Jesus did say, **“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.”** Luke 21:36.

First of all, if it was our worthiness that caused us to escape these things that are coming upon the earth, none of us would escape. We would all be judged! Then what makes us worthy to escape this judgment of God? Is it our good works? Is it going to church? Is it giving money to the church?

No, it is Jesus and Him alone. It is as Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:9-11, **“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”** Thus, Jesus is exhorting us to watch and pray that we will not be caught unprepared!

### VERSES 37-38

Notice how focused Jesus was in His work. The cross was only a few days away and yet He took the time to teach the people and spent the night on the Mount of Olives, no doubt praying for the strength to complete the work that was before Him. What a great example for us to follow!

As I close this evening, please understand that there is coming a far greater judgment than that of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. A judgment where God’s wrath is poured out upon the whole world. The only way out is through Jesus Christ. Listen to these words. We are told,

This call to vigilance is universal. It is meant for us today. Jesus issued the command from the Mount of Olives, the official site of his return. Will his coming be today, or in the next decade? Possibly . . .

We must not be numbered by all the earthbound, secular voices that say life will go on and on. It will not! All of life is moving toward him. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all of creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him” (Colossians 1:15, 16).

We are to keep looking up. “The grace of God . . . teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13). “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure” (1 John 3:2, 3).

Keep looking up!

- R. Kent Hughes, Luke Volume Two, That You May Know the Truth, p. 304