

# Luke 21 Commentary

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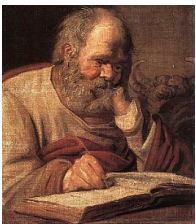
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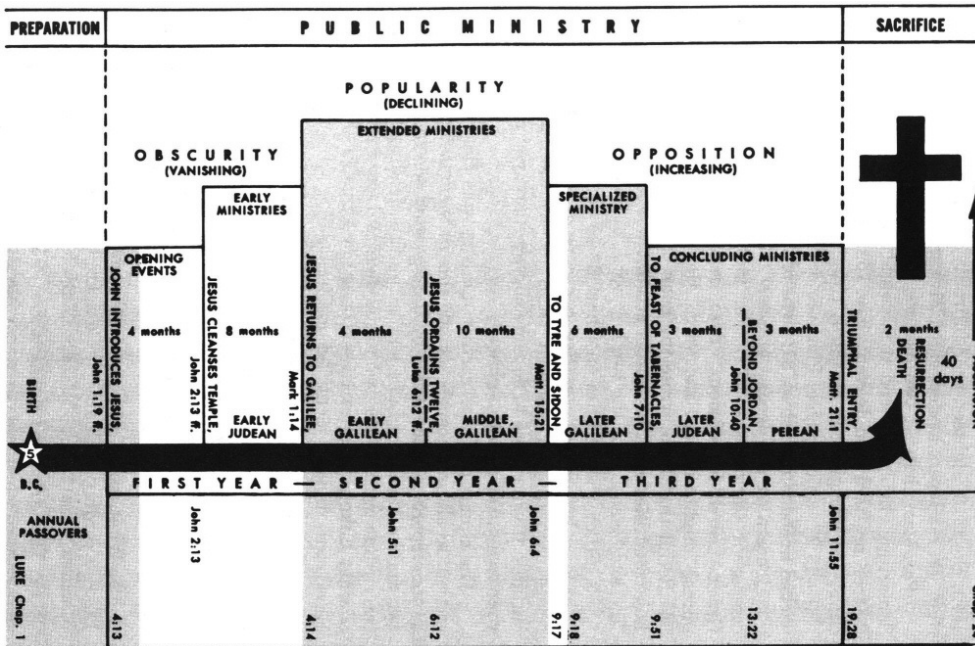
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|                     | "MIGHTY IN DEED" →      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |             | AND WORD" (24:19)                               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |          | LAST MESSAGES               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |        | MISSION ACCOMPLISHED |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |         |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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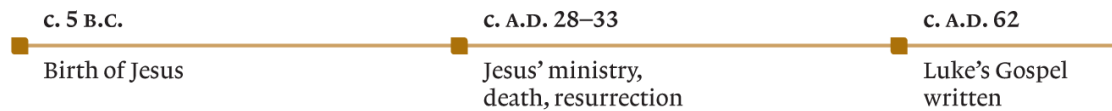
KEY PHRASE: "SON OF MAN"      KEY VERSES: 19:10; 24:19

From [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) by permission  
[John MacArthur's Introduction to the Gospel of Luke](#)  
[Charles Swindoll's Introduction to Luke](#)  
[Luke Overview Chart](#) by Charles Swindoll



Click chart to enlarge LIFE OF CHRIST IN GOSPEL OF LUKE (See Shaded Areas)  
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**Luke 21:1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.**

KJV Luke 21:1 And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

- **and saw** Mark 7:11-13; Mark 12:41-44
- **the treasury** Joshua 6:19,24; 1 Kings 14:26; 2 Kings 24:13; 2 Chronicles 36:18; Nehemiah 13:13; Mt 27:6; John 8:20
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

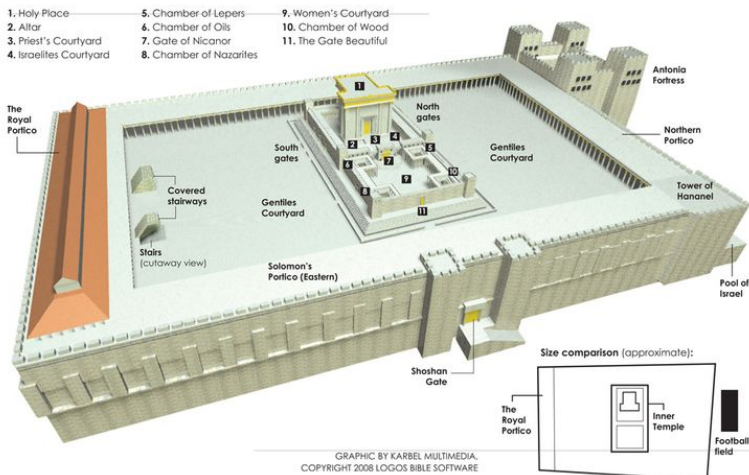
- [Luke 21:1-4 Abusing the Poor](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:1-4 Giving That Pleases the Lord](#) - Steven Cole

## Related Passage:

Mark 12:41-44+ And **He sat down opposite the treasury**, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. 42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. 43 Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; 44for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."

## Herod's Temple

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple wasn't completed until approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



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Let me say at the outset that **Luke 21:1-4 is a VERY DIFFICULT passage for me to interpret.** This statement may surprise you as this seems to be such a simple straightforward teaching on giving. But even more surprising to you is the thought that this passage may not teach principles of giving as is commonly thought! And frankly, at this point you may want to skip past the comments and go on to Luke 21:5 and consult other commentaries which use this passage as a [segue](#) to move smoothly from the widow's example to a sermon on teaching the principles of giving. If you are a pastor, this passage has been considered "rich fodder" to discuss the sometimes touchy topic of giving, because everyone is convicted by the example of this poor widow. While I have previously considered this passage to be about giving generously, [John MacArthur's sermon](#) (and commentary) argue that the thrust of the message is not teaching principles of giving but is a continuation of the theme of Jesus' condemnation against the corrupt Jewish religious system.

So while almost every commentary (and I have read many, both old and new) focuses on this poor widow's giving in **positive light**, John MacArthur takes the approach that this is a **negative example**, an additional warning of judgment to come. I have personally wrestled with MacArthur's interpretation, initially becoming very disturbed at his analysis to the point that I did not feel comfortable placing a link to his sermon on this passage. I have asked God to give me clarity and honesty because it is difficult to jettison an interpretation that almost universally interprets the widow's example in a positive light, which is what one has heard all their life. MacArthur feels Luke 21:1-4 is a continuation of the theme of judgment begun in Lk 20:47+ (and the parallel [diatribe](#) against the Scribes and Pharisees in Mt 23:1-36) which continues into the [pericope](#) in Lk 21:5-36. He makes the point (which is difficult to argue with given that they had turned the Temple into a robbers' den - Lk 19:46+ - and the Pharisees were lovers of money - Lk 16:14+) that this woman was giving to an apostate religious system that was set up to [bilk](#) people out of their money, explaining that she was not giving to God but to a religious system that had distorted God's Word by adding men's traditions.

**Geoffrey Smith** a Presbyterian pastor writing in the Journal of Evangelical Theology has a somewhat "hybrid interpretation" (this article deals with the parallel account of the widow in the Gospel of Mark) on one hand giving a classic interpretation of the widow's giving but adding that it also speaks of the **"coming judgment upon the nation of Israel"**...

"The story of the widow's offering as found in Mark 12:41-44 has long provided the Church with an example of humble devotion to the Lord. Further, it speaks to the people of God about the true nature of giving. Calvin considered this account as providing "a highly useful doctrine, that whatever men offer to God ought to be estimated not by its apparent value, but only by the feeling of the heart, and that the holy affection of him who, according to his small means, offers to God the little that he has, is more worthy of esteem than that of him

who offers a hundred times more out of his abundance.” (ED: THE HIGHLY ESTEEMED REFORMER JOHN CALVIN READS INTO THE TEXT THAT THE WOMAN'S GIVING REFLECTED THE FEELING OF HER HEART, BUT THE TEXT IS COMPLETELY SILENT ON HER HEART MOTIVE! THIS POINTS OUT THAT EVEN THE MOST ESTEEMED EXEGETE CAN BE GUILTY OF MAKING INCORRECT OBSERVATIONS AND THEN INCORRECT INTERPRETATIONS! SEE IMPORTANCE OF CAREFUL, ACCURATE, UNBIASED OBSERVATION OF THE BIBLE!) The careful observer, however, will note a second theme in this account of the widow that intersects with the standard interpretation of the text. **The second theme is the coming judgment upon the nation of Israel.** It is an underlying theme throughout Mark's gospel: The days of covenant-breaking Israel are numbered, and all that remains for what is left of the theocracy is covenant curse. As the gospel narrative moves forward, evidence for God's lawsuit against his people accumulates (culminating in Israel's leaders mocking and insulting the Messiah during his agony on the cross [Mk 15:31–32+; cf. Mk 12:1–12+]). Simultaneously Mark has sprinkled a variety of hints (in the form of non-Israelites approaching Jesus with only their faith) that anticipate the saving reign of God transcending Israel's frontiers into the world of the Gentiles (culminating in the [Gentile] centurion's confession at the foot of the cross [Mk 15:39+])...Thus the brief account of the widow's offering is **strategically inserted between the condemnation of the scribes (ED: SEE JESUS LAST WORDS IN LUKE = Luke 20:47+ AND HIS NEXT WORDS AFTER THE WIDOW'S MITES - Lk 21:6 = "not be left one stone upon another...") and Jesus' announcement of the temple's destruction.** We are able to see a thematic bridge between scribal avarice and the pronouncement of ultimate curse on the nation. ([A Closer Look at the Widow's Offering](#))

Remember that in **inductive Bible study**, the most important step and the one usually given the least attention is the step of careful **OBSERVATION** of the text, letting it say what it says without adding words we "think" it says. Pure observation also takes great care to lay aside one's pre-conceived impressions of the passage (as much as is possible in such a well known story as the widow's mites). I have tried to study Luke 21:1-4 with that approach before I read the commentaries and I would advise you to do the same. If you do this (of course you are already biased by these notes!), I think you may be surprised at the "observations" that many of the commentaries make on this famous text. Specifically, I think you will find frequent comments that, while at first hearing they sound good (and they are Biblically true in other passages) and may sound like they are representative of a true interpretation of the text, but if we are completely honest many of the commentators seem to draw conclusions that are not based on a literal, normative reading of the text, but base their conclusion more on what they "think" or "suppose" that the text means. This is always a potential problem in study of passages that we have heard taught such as the passage in question. Even those who do not read the Bible much have heard about the "widow's mite."

Here are some examples from Pastor Steven Cole's message (and he is one of the most literal and careful expositors of Scripture I have ever read) in which he draws conclusions that are not based on what the text states.

*"She didn't know Jesus was watching her until she got to heaven, where she was richly rewarded!"* WHAT IS COLE IMPLYING? CLEARLY HE IS SAYING SHE WAS SAVED. BUT IS THERE ANY INDICATION FROM THE TEXT SHE WAS SAVED? NONE. THUS THIS CONCLUSION IS CLEARLY NOT FOUND IN THIS STORY. WILL SHE BE IN HEAVEN? POSSIBLY, BUT WE SIMPLY CANNOT SAY. AND CLEARLY SACRIFICIAL GIVING IS NOT MERITORIOUS AND EARNS NO ONE ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN. COLE WAS NOT IMPLYING THE LATTER, BUT PRESUMABLY IMPLIED THAT HER GIVING WAS REFLECTION THAT SHE HAD FIRST GIVEN HERSELF TO CHRIST, WHICH IS POSSIBLE, BUT AGAIN IS DRAWING MORE FROM THE TEXT THAN IS LITERALLY STATED.

*"I don't know for sure why this widow gave those two coins that day; the text does not say.(AMEN! WE CANNOT KNOW HER MOTIVE OR HER HEART BECAUSE THE TEXT DOES NOT TELL US). But I think that Luke wants us to see a contrast between her and the scribes whom Jesus has just denounced. (AMEN! COLE IS "SPOT ON" BECAUSE Lk 21:4 HAS A "BUT," WHICH IS A TERM OF CONTRAST SO CLEARLY JESUS IS CONTRASTING THE GIVING OF THE RICH OUT OF THEIR SURPLUS AND THIS WOMAN OUT OF HER POVERTY. AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRETENTIOUS PIETY JUST DESCRIBED IN Lk 20:46-47, COLE'S NEXT STATEMENT WOULD SEEM TO BE AN ACCURATE INTERPRETATION.). They were doing their religion to impress others with how spiritual they were. She was quiet, unknown, and not trying to impress anyone. They were giving out of pride, for selfish recognition. She was giving in worship, out of love for God."* (YES, FROM THE CONTEXT THEY WERE UNDOUBTEDLY GIVING FOR "SHOW," OUT OF PRIDE, BUT COLE IS ASSUMING HER MOTIVE WAS WORSHIP AND MOTIVATED BY LOVE. WHILE POSSIBLE, THIS IS NOT CLEARLY STATED. THE FACT SIMPLY IS THAT SHE PROPORTIONATELY GAVE MUCH MORE, BUT WHY SHE GAVE MUCH MORE IS NOT STATED.)

*"she gave out of routine faithfulness. When she went to worship at the temple, she gave as a matter of "holy*

*habit.*" NOTE THE ASSUMPTIONS "ROUTINE FAITHFULNESS...HOLY HABIT." AGAIN THE TEXT IS SIMPLY SILENT. WHILE IT IS ADMIRABLE TO ASCRIBE THESE GODLY ATTRIBUTES TO THIS WIDOW, THIS IS SIMPLY GOING BEYOND WHAT THE TEXT PLAINLY STATES.

"When the Lord exclaimed, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them," He was evaluating their gifts. Pile up all the gifts of the rich combined on one side and hers on the other. Hers weighs more in God's sight." CLEARLY THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH WHAT THE TEXT STATES.

"I've already touched on this. **I'm inferring it from the context of this story.** The Lord knew the selfish motives of the religious leaders who gave large amounts to the temple, but they did it to be honored by men (Matt. 6:1-4). Jesus condemned them for their hypocrisy. But He commended this poor widow, who didn't even know that He saw her give. Jesus knew her motives. She gave to express her devotion to God. It was an act of worship." COLE IS SURELY CORRECT IN HIS THOUGHT ON THE MOTIVES OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS. BUT THE MOTIVES OF THE WIDOW ARE NOT STATED.

With this background, there are three considerations that we need to consider which might give us pause to reconsider how we have always interpreted this famous story, so let's look at them briefly.

**(1) The Context** - Context as you know is "king in interpretation." Recall that when the Bible was originally written there were no chapter breaks or verses. A chapter break at Luke 21 makes it easy to read Lk 21:1-4 and forget the preceding context. Below is the preceding context which is clearly a warning against the religious leaders, the Scribes (and Pharisees), who exercised considerable authority over the way the Jewish religion was practiced and how things were "run" in the Temple. So these men represent a corrupt, apostate religious system which no longer honors God but exalts men (the leaders) and takes advantage of widows.

**Beware** of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, **who devour widows' houses**, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. **These will receive greater condemnation.**" (Lk 20:46-47+)

Here are the passages that follow the story of the widow's giving:

**And** while some were talking about the Temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, "As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which **there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.**" (Lk 21:5-6)

Notice that Lk 21:5 in Greek begins with the coordinating conjunction "[kai](#)" which is translated "**and**" which clearly links Jesus' condemnation of the **Temple** with His description of the widow in the **Temple Court of the Gentiles**.

So what is the point? From the passages before and after Luke 21:1-4, it is clear that these sections deal with condemnation of the self-righteousness leaders and the corrupt religion in the Temple itself. The [upshot](#) is that the **before** and **after** passages (context) clearly speak of God's judgment on a religious system which no longer honors Him and benefits His people, but which instead dishonors Him and takes advantage of the people (such as poor widows, Lk 20:47). To summarize:

- **Lk 20:45-47 = Condemnation of religious leaders of the Temple**
- **Lk 21:1-4 = Story of giving in the Temple**
- **Lk 21:5-36 = Condemnation of the Temple**

Another way to look at Luke 21:1-4 is to note what I would call the **spatial context**." In other words, as you compare Lk 19:45-46+, Lk 21:1-4 and Lk 21:5-36, it is as if Jesus is moving from outer portion of the temple complex inward. Recall that on the previous day Jesus cleansed the money changers out of the **Court of the Gentiles** (the outermost court) condemning them for making a "House of prayer" into a "robber's den." (Lk 19:45-46-note) Now on the following day Jesus is again in the Temple in Lk 21:1-4, but instead of addressing the *money changers* in the **Court of the Gentiles**, He is now addressing *money giving* in the **Court of the Women** the court which is between the outer court Jesus had just judged and the inner courtyard (Israelites' Courtyard = [#4 on diagram](#) and Priest's Courtyard = [#3 on diagram](#) - see also [diagram on verse 2](#)) and Temple proper which Jesus predicted in Lk 21:5-36 would soon be judged (this occurred about 40 years later in 70 A D). Below is a summary of the "**spatial context**" and once again we note that the location of the widow's giving is situated between the outer area that has been judged and the inner area which will soon be judged.

1. **Outermost Court** - Money matters in the Court of the Gentiles - Judgment Demonstrated
2. **Next Inner Court** - Money matters in the Court of the Women
3. **Innermost court and the Holy Temple** - Judgment Decreed

**(2) The Religious System to which the widow is giving** - This point is alluded to above, but to reiterate, are the funds given by the people in the **Court of the Women** being used to honor God and bring Him glory? Those questions are rhetorical, because the truth is that the Jewish religion in Jesus' day had become a corrupt "system," emphasizing works righteousness instead of emphasizing faith in Messiah, the only way to obtain true righteousness. It follows that it would be easy for the populace (including a poor widow) to fall prey to the false teaching of the highly respected religious leaders. Jesus had just "scorched" the leaders declaring "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! (WHY? WHAT WERE THEY DOING?) **For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces.** You won't go in yourselves, and **you don't let others enter either.**" (Mt 23:13NLT - READ THE ENTIRE SCATHING DIATRIBE - Mt 23:1-39) As Arnold Fruchtenbaum (Messianic Jewish commentator) says the Scribes and Pharisees "were condemned because they were rejecting Jesus' Messianic claims and **leading the nation to reject them as well.**" It would be easy for a poor widow to have the door of the Kingdom shut in her face, being deceived into the trap that the more she gave to the Temple coffers, the more "right standing" she would have before God! You might respond that the widow was giving of her own free will, which is possible, but there is another consideration. She may have felt an obligation to give, because several of the offerings were mandatory or compulsory. This type of giving flies in the face of giving which pleases God, for God first wants us to give ourselves to Jesus (2 Cor 8:5+) and then, from our love for Him, will flow Spirit initiated and enabled generous, joyful giving (2 Cor 8:3+). As Paul wrote "Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, **not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**" (2 Cor 9:7+)

Commenting on Mark 12:41-44 [Justin Comber](#) writes "**Mark seems to be suggesting that her gift is not quite a commendation, but that it is a sign of Jesus' abandonment of the temple that robbed her of everything that she had** (cf. Malbon, "Poor Widow in Mark," 589–604; cf. Wright, "Widow's Mite," 256–65). **What follows is Jesus' pronouncement of judgment on the temple. It will be destroyed with no hope of restoration** (Mark 13:1–2)."

**(3) What is Jesus' Assessment of this Scene?** Does He truly commend the woman for giving everything she had to live on? Does He chastise the rich for not giving all they had, but only giving out of their surplus? Does God demand that we give everything we have to live on? Is that giving really sacrificial or is it foolish? Why would she give everything? Why not hold back one mite? What did she think giving both coins would accomplish? Would she obtain greater blessing? These are a few of the questions that MacArthur's sermon on this section have raised in my mind. And again I admit that initially I strongly reacted to MacArthur's interpretation. Let's face it, no one likes to be wrong, especially when it comes to God's Word and especially if one has held a particular belief for several decades!

**(4) She may have been guilty of practicing corban** (this is supposition, but it is a way the Scribes "devoured" widow's houses). [See explanation of corban below](#) followed by MacArthur's comments. The [IVP Women's Bible Commentary \(see here\)](#) has this comment on the story of the "Widow's Mite" (keep in mind this comment was even written by a woman!) noting that the interpretation is "**problematic In Mark 12:38-40 Jesus has condemned the scribes who "devour widows' houses." Is Mark 12:44 praise for the widow or lament over a system that would lead her to give away her security? (ED: DOES THIS REMIND YOU OF SOME OF THE "TELEVANGELISTS WHO PREY ON WIDOWS TO ENRICH THEMSELVES? WOE TO THEM FOR THEY WILL SUFFER A "HOTTER HELL" FOR THEIR EVIL!) Shouldn't the religious establishment be supporting the widow? (ED: SEE WHAT JAMES SAYS ABOUT PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION! James 1:27+) In the narrative, the next words of Jesus (Mk 13:2+) predict the destruction of the Temple (ED: THE "FACE" OF THEIR CORRUPT RELIGIOUS SYSTEM!)....while Jesus may have been moved (NOTE "MAY HAVE") by the widow's offering, He can hardly have approved of a religious system that explicitly or implicitly asked if of her!"**

**Stein** has some interesting comments in the [New American Commentary on Luke](#) (MY COMMENTS IN ALL CAPS) as he sets the context for Luke 21:1-4 -

In Luke the contrast is between the rich and the poor. **The exact point of the story, however, is not as clear as first appears. Several suggestions have been made:** (1) the measure of one's gift does not involve how much one gives but how much remains, i.e., how much one keeps; (2) a gift is measured by the spirit in which it is given (**ED: BUT WHERE DOES THE TEXT DESCRIBE THE WIDOW'S SPIRIT? JESUS SIMPLY SAYS SHE GAVE EVERYTHING. THAT MIGHT INDICATE "SELF-DENIAL" BUT IT MIGHT ALSO INDICATE FOOLISHNESS**); (3) one's giving should be commensurate with one's means; and (4) true giving involves giving all one has.

**The question has even been raised about whether or not Jesus was commending the widow for what she had done. Some have suggested that Jesus was not praising but lamenting what the widow had done. According to this interpretation, the widow had been so indoctrinated by the religious leaders that she brought about voluntarily the devouring of a widow's house, which is condemned in Luke 20:46.** This interpretation, however, does not explain the present form of the account, for Luke 21:3 is clearly a commendation (**ED: IS IT REALLY A COMMENDATION OR SIMPLY A STATEMENT OF FACT?**). The widow's

having given more to God than the rich would have been interpreted as a positive action by Luke's readers (THAT IS PROBABLY A VALID CONCLUSION). His readers would have understood the widow as an example of one who was rich toward God (Lk 12:21) (ED: THAT ASSUMES SHE WAS STORING UP FOR HERSELF TREASURE IN HEAVEN, NOT JUST UNDER COMPULSION BY THE LEADERS TO PUT HER COINS IN THE TREASURY IN THE TEMPLE), who was not anxious about this life, but who sought first God's kingdom (Lk 12:22–31) (THIS IS ALL [SUPPOSITION](#) - WHERE DOES LUKE SAY SHE IS SEEKING THE KINGDOM OF GOD? REMEMBER THAT IN Mt 23:13 JESUS SAYS THE LEADERS ACTUALLY SHUT THE DOOR OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BY THEIR NON-BIBLICAL, LEGALISTIC TEACHING! CLEARLY STEIN IS MAKING AN ASSUMPTION ABOUT THE WIDOW'S HEART ATTITUDE WHICH THE TEXT DOES NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESS). She, like Jesus' other followers, was willing to sell everything (Lk 12:22) and leave everything (Lk 5:11, 28) in her love for God (**NB**: AGAIN STEIN [PRESUPPOSES](#) THAT SHE WAS DOING WHAT SHE WAS DOING BECAUSE OF "*HER LOVE FOR GOD*." THAT IS ADDING TO THE TEXT WHAT IS NOT CLEARLY STATED. WHILE ONE MIGHT THINK GIVING ALL SHE HAD TO LIVE ON WAS TANTAMOUNT TO HER GREAT LOVE FOR GOD, ALTERNATIVELY AND ESPECIALLY BASED ON THE WORKS BASED RIGHTEOUSNESS RELIGION THAT SHE BEEN TAUGHT, ONE COULD POSTULATE THAT HER "SACRIFICIAL GIVING" WAS TO ACHIEVE AN EVEN GREATER DEGREE OF MERIT WITH GOD THAN THE RICH WHO PUT IN MUCH BUT NOT PROPORTIONATELY AS MUCH AS SHE HAD PUT IN. SHE COULD REASON THAT SHE PUT IT *ALL IN* AND THEREFORE WAS WORTHY OF A GREATER DEGREE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THAN THE RICH WHO ONLY PUT IN *OUT OF THEIR SURPLUS*). Practical concerns for the widow (What reputable pastor or evangelist would recommend a parishioner to do so?) should not blind us to the point Jesus was making. **Nothing is made of the inner spirit of the widow** (ED: I AGREE, BUT WHY DID STEIN JUST CONCLUDE THAT HER GIVING SHOWED SHE HAD A GREAT LOVE FOR GOD. HE IS CORRECT THAT THE TEXT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT HER INNER SPIRIT AND IT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT HER MOTIVE FOR GIVING), and the widow's gift was clearly not commensurate with her means since she had nothing left. Thus the main point appears to be that God measures the gifts of his people not on the basis of their size but on the basis of how much remains. (THIS IS [SUPPOSITION](#) - IS THAT REALLY AN ACCURATE CONCLUSION? I WOULD SUBMIT THAT GOD MEASURES OUR GIFTS BY LOOKING AT OUR HEART AND OUR MOTIVES, WHETHER WE GIVE ONE MITE OR ONE MILLION.) (New American Commentary - Luke).

**Now for the biggest shock of all** - Probably one of the most honest interpretations I have found in all my reading on the widow's mite is from (of all places) Wikipedia! Here is the full comment from that source ([click here for the footnote explanations](#)):

The traditional interpretation of this story tends to view it as contrasting the conduct of the scribes with that of the widow, and encouraging generous giving; often read with 2 Corinthians 9:7, "...for God loves a cheerful giver."

However, Addison Wright observes that there is no indication given of the widow's demeanor or frame of mind. He points out that earlier, in Mark 7:10-13, Jesus takes to task the scribes and Pharisees for an hypocrisy that would impoverish parents.[4]

For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and 'Whoever curses father or mother shall die.' Yet you say, 'If a person says to father or mother, "Any support you might have had from me is **korban** ([see note](#))"'(meaning, dedicated to God), you allow him to do nothing more for his father or mother. You nullify the word of God in favor of your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many such things."

In the passage immediately prior to Jesus taking a seat opposite the Temple treasury, he is portrayed as condemning religious leaders who feign piety, accept honor from people, and steal from widows. "Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a very severe condemnation."[5]

The same religious leaders who would reduce widows to poverty also encourage them to make pious donations beyond their means. In Wright's opinion, rather than commending the widow's generosity, Jesus is condemning both the social system that renders her poor, and "...the value system that motivates her action, and he condemns the people who conditioned her to do it."[4]

Quentin Quesnell sees in this account "...a **rebuke and rejection of the wrongdoers**." [6] **Quesnell notes that if Jesus' statement was to be seen as an endorsement of the widow's action, it bears none of the usual comments, such as "Go, and do likewise."** (ED: IF WE ARE HONEST, WE HAVE TO AGREE WITH

HIS COMMENT. E.G., SEE Luke 10:37+).

The account of the Widow's Mite is followed by, "As he was making his way out of the temple area one of his disciples said to him, "Look, teacher, what stones and what buildings!" Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be one stone left upon another that will not be thrown down."[7]

Wright notes the irony that as the Temple was destroyed in the year 70, the widow's gift was not only misguided, but for nothing.[4] (**Bold Font added by me for emphasis**) ([click here for the footnote explanations](#)):

Well, now that I have really "[ruffled your feathers](#)" and thrown you a "[theological curve ball](#)," let's look at where the scene of Luke 21:1-4 most likely takes place. Extra-Biblical sources describe 13 offering jars were in the **Court of the Women**. From the diagram above (or perhaps better seen in the one below), notice that the outermost court is called the **Court of the Gentiles** - which was a vast area the size of 10 football fields. This is where the money changing took place which Jesus had **cleansed** the previous day. Surrounding the Court of the Gentiles were a series of "porches" or cloisters through which ran double rows of Corinthian pillars, each cut from marble and measuring 37 feet in height and covered by a flat roof. The entire court was paved with marble. The southern porch was known as "[Solomon's Porch](#)" ("Portico") (Acts 3:11). Gentiles were permitted into this area provided they conducted themselves in a reverent manner. A low wall ran completely around the Temple structure (Temple Balustrade) beyond which Gentiles could not venture on penalty of death (In the diagram, it is immediately around the main Temple area, but somewhat difficult to see). This Temple Balustrade had periodic gates and a stone inscription located at each gate. In 1871 archaeologists discovered a "[Temple Warning Inscription](#)" ([another note](#)) which read "*No Foreigner Is To Go Beyond The Balustrade And The Plaza Of The Temple Zone Whoever Is Caught Doing So Will Have Himself To Blame For His Death Which Will Follow*". Beyond the Temple Balustrade or Dividing Wall was a flight of 14 steps that led up to a terrace on which stood the inner wall of the Temple. This inner wall had a number of gates, but the main gate was located on the eastern side. This was the "[Beautiful Gate](#)" (Acts 3:2). There were 12 steps leading up to this gate. The doors of the gate were made of Corinthian brass and mounted on massive hinges. Entering through this gate brought one into the **Court of the Women**. ([#9 on diagram](#)) was as far within the Temple as women were permitted to enter. **The Court of Women** was surrounded by colonnades. Along the walls there were thirteen jars which served as receptacles for various offerings where the people would drop their offerings. Each jar had an inscription that stated its purpose. Nine of the offering jars were for [mandatory](#) or [compulsory](#) offerings and four were for voluntary offerings (See [tabular summary below](#)).

**Edersheim - Court of the Women.** The Court of the Women obtained its name, not from its appropriation to the exclusive use of women, but because they were not allowed to proceed farther, except for sacrificial purposes. Indeed, this was probably the common place for worship, the females occupying, according to Jewish tradition, only a raised gallery along three sides of the court. This court covered a space upwards of 200 feet square. All around ran a simple colonnade, and within it, **against the wall, the thirteen chests, or 'trumpets,' for charitable contributions were placed.** (See Alfred Edersheim - [The Temple: Its Ministry and Services - Chapter 2 - Within the Holy Place](#))

So Luke opens with Jesus in the **Court of the Women** which contained the thirteen **Treasury-chests** or '**trumpets**'. He was watching the offerings. The Scribes and Pharisees made a great show strutting around like peacocks to attract men's attention. Jesus focuses on the contrast of a poor woman who is presenting her offering in the Temple.

**He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury-** If **He looked up** that means he was sitting down (which Mark attests - Mk 12:41). There is another consideration for why He may have **looked up**. While we need to be cautious in speculating on what was in Jesus' mind at this time, when we compare the account in Matthew's Gospel in which Jesus had just rebuked the religious leaders (Read Mt 23:1-36) with 8 blistering **Woes** ([ouai](#)), then He follows up with some of the saddest words of His entire three year ministry...

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.  
"Behold, your house (THE TEMPLE) is being left to you desolate! (Mt 23:37-38)

So it is at least a reasonable possibility that Jesus was very, very sad and as people do when they are sad, His head may have been looking down. And so Luke says "He looked up."

**Looked up** ([308](#)) ([anablepo](#) from **ana** = up, again + **blepo** = to look, to perceive and so discern) means to look up or direct one's vision upward.

**Anablepo** - 23v in the NT - Matt. 11:5; Matt. 14:19; Matt. 20:34; Mk. 6:41; Mk. 7:34; Mk. 8:24; Mk. 10:51; Mk. 10:52; Mk. 16:4; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 9:16; Lk. 18:41; Lk. 18:42; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 19:5; Lk. 21:1; Jn. 9:11; Jn. 9:15; Jn. 9:18; Acts 9:12; Acts 9:17; Acts 9:18; Acts 22:13

Mark's parallel gives us more background explaining that Jesus "sat down opposite the treasury, and began **observing** ([theoreo](#) = observing with sustained attention - imperfect tense = vivid picture = over and over - one would toss in their coins, then another and another) how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums" (Luke adds the key qualifying phrase - "**all out of their surplus.**") (Mk 12:42+)

Jesus does not say He was impressed by the large sums tossed in by the rich, but neither does He condemn them. He is just making a statement of fact at this time, without giving a commentary pro or con. How did He know they were large sums? Perhaps it was not that He heard just "clink, clink," but "clink, clink, clink, clink, clink, etc" as the rich tossed in many coins into the jars. Of course, Jesus could also have known what they were giving from His omniscience.

While He makes no comment pro or con, the clinking of the shekels which could be heard by all when the rich cast their many coins into the coffer reminds one of His Sermon on the Mount in which He contrasted **radical righteousness** with **rotten righteousness**. I realize He did not condemn them here but His words in Matthew 6 should ring in all of ears as a warning against even subtle forms of self righteousness...

**"Beware** of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. "But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. (Mt 6:1-4+)

**Spurgeon** - That reward is a very poor one, and is soon over. To stand with a penny in one hand and a trumpet in the other is the posture of hypocrisy. "Glory of men " is a thing which can be bought: but honor from God is a very different thing.

**We lose the approval of God when we seek the applause of men!**

Ouch!

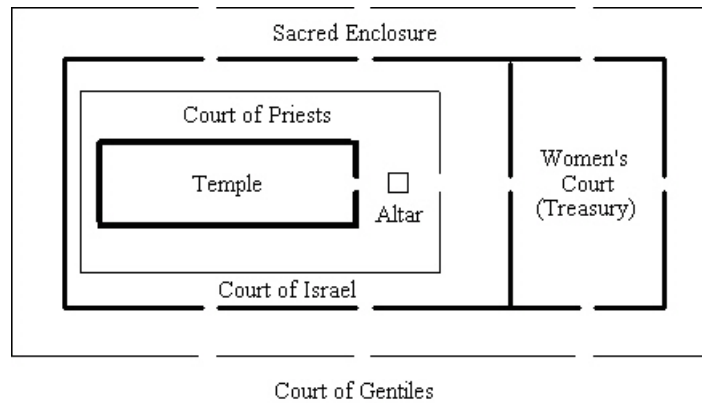
**Mattoon** - Have you ever gone to the mall, an airport, or a ball park, and watched the people walk back and forth from one place to another? I guess you call this "people watching." Watching what people do can be very entertaining. Some folks do funny things, some look very busy, and some have a "panic" look on their face. You can learn some things about people when they don't know they are being watched. In this portion of Scripture, Jesus was doing some "people watching" at the Temple and His attention was grabbed by someone He observed at the treasury. (Treasures from Luke)

**The rich** (4145)([plousios](#) from [ploutos](#) = wealth, abundance, riches) is an adjective which defines that which exists in a large amount with implication of its being valuable. Literally **plousios** refers to having an abundance of earthly possessions that exceeds normal experience.

Although Jesus had been castigating Scribes and Pharisees, He actually does not identify these as either group, but only as the rich. Likewise, while we might suppose they were doing their giving for show, Jesus does not say that this was their motive. Yes, He had just finished issuing a series of "**Woes**" to the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:1-36, even saying in verse 5 that **"they do all their deeds to be noticed by men."** While one might postulate that is what these rich were doing, Jesus does not specifically say that in this section.

**Putting** (906)([ballo](#)) means they were throwing or casting their coins into the Temple treasury jars. This is an interesting picture - Luke uses the [present tense](#) which pictures continual casting of coins which **Vincent** says is "a graphic present tense." They were continually **putting** (casting) coins in the jars which would produce more noise than a gentle dropping of the coins into the jars. As we have learned many of the Jews relished showing off their "religiosity."

**Gifts** (1435)([doron](#)) is that which is given or granted and stresses the gratuitous character of the gift. Anything given or bestowed. A gift is something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation. Something presented as an act of worship and/or devotion (Mt 2:11). **Doron** is used of offerings to God except in Eph 2:8 and Rev 11:10. In classical Greek **doron** referred to a votive (expressing a vow, wish or desire) gift or offering to a god (little g) or a gift from the gods, as well as a present given as a tribute or even as a bribe. Of the 166+ uses of **doron** in the non-apocryphal Septuagint, most are used in the context of an offering to God (cf Ge 4:4, Lev 1:2, 3, 10, 2:1, Nu 5:15, Dt 12:11, 1Chr 16:29, Jer 33:11, etc)



**Treasury** (1049) (**gazophulakion** from **gaza** = treasure + **phulake** = a place where something is guarded) means place of deposit for the public treasure. It is translated "treasury" in all the NT uses (Mk. 12:41; Mk. 12:43; Lk. 21:1; Jn. 8:20).

**Lenski** notes that historical records say there were "Thirteen trumpet-shaped, metal receptacles (shapharoth), each marked with a Hebrew letter, stood in the court of the women to receive the gifts of the worshipers for the benefit of the Temple and for the Temple tax. The singular, the gazophulakion, "the treasury," may refer to all of them. (The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

**Zodhiates** - Among the Jews this was the sacred treasury kept in one of the courts of the temple (Neh. 10:37, 38; 13:4, 5, 7, 8; Esth. 3:9). According to the Talmudists, the treasury was in the court of the women where stood thirteen chests, called from their shape "trumpets," into which the Jews cast their offerings (Ex. 30:13f.) (The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

**Gilbrant** - In the Septuagint the term most frequently refers to the treasury in the Jerusalem temple to which tithes and firstfruits were brought (2 Kings 23:11; Nehemiah 10:38; 12:44; 13:4,8). It was also used of the royal treasury of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) in Esther 3:9. These two uses for sacred or royal treasuries are also paralleled in the Apocrypha (e.g., 1 Maccabees 3:28; 14:49). In the New Testament gazophulakion refers not to an inner chamber where valuable items or agricultural offerings were stored but to an open area with contribution boxes in Herod's temple where worshipers could give monetary offerings. ([The Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Gazophulakion** - 22x in 22v in the Septuagint -

2 Ki. 23:11; Ezr. 10:6; Neh. 3:30; Neh. 10:37; Neh. 10:38; Neh. 12:44; Neh. 13:4; Neh. 13:5; Neh. 13:7; Neh. 13:8; Neh. 13:9; Est. 3:9

**Luke 21:2 And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins.**

KJV Luke 21:2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

- **two small copper coins** Mark 12:42;
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:1-4 Abusing the Poor](#) - John MacArthur

**Related Passage:**

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

James Tissot - The Widow's Mite

Notice that **Tissot** adds to the Scripture by painting this scene with the woman carrying a child on her arm. The point is that we should never get our truth about God from art forms, but only from the Word of Truth.

There is a contrast in the previous passages between those who **take** (and are condemned in Lk 20:47) and those who **give** (poor widow with no judgment pro or con made except to quantify her giving).

It is difficult in any age to be a widow. There are fewer situations more tragic than the death of one's lifelong spouse. But to be a widow in Jesus' day was especially difficult. And to be poor (which was the case with most widows) was a situation in which there was little hope. Widows had little financial recourse and a poor widow was often reduced to begging.

**And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins**- Mark 12:42 explains that these two coins "amount to a cent." This was the smallest offering that it was legal to give. She was unaware Jesus was watching (as best we can tell from the text). You had to strain to hear the faint, "Plink, plink."

**Lenski** - This was not a guess but an exercise of that supernatural knowledge which Jesus always employed wherever he needed it for his work. Let us remember, too, that God always has a special eye on widows and on orphans, and so Jesus does here also. (Ibid)

**Gotquestions** make an interesting comment that "God sees what man overlooks. The big gifts in the temple were surely noticed by people; that's probably what the disciples were watching. But Jesus saw what no one else did: He saw the humble gift of a poor widow. This was the gift that Jesus thought worthy of comment; this was the gift that the disciples needed to be aware of. The other gifts in the treasury that day made a lot of noise as they jingled into the receptacles, but the widow's mites were heard in heaven (ED: OR MORE ACCURATELY WERE SEEN BY THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH)." ([Ref](#))

**Steven Cole** who I think is an outstanding expositor seems to venture a conclusion that seems to be difficult to support by simply observing what the text says. Cole (whose expositions I frequently recommend because they are excellent and "Bibliocentric") comments that "She didn't know Jesus was watching her **until she got to heaven, where she was richly rewarded**. He not only knew how much she gave, but in His omniscience, He even knew that it was all she had to live on." I am having difficulty placing her definitively in heaven based solely on observation of the text. The question is does the text of Luke 21:1-4 allow us to state dogmatically that this woman was a genuine believer in Jesus Christ (which would have to be the case for her to get "to heaven where she" will be "richly rewarded.").

Cole's interpretation of the state of her salvation is one a number of commentators also voice. [Haddon Robinson](#), was one of the more respected expositors of our age, and commented that "The gold-medal giver in the New Testament turns out to be a woman who contributed less than a nickel" (*Leadership* [Fall, 1989], p. 93). In point of fact, in one sense he is absolutely correct, because she gave it ALL! It would be impossible to "out give" her! But he seems to imply that she has set the **gold standard for giving gold**, so to speak! But is that really what Jesus is teaching us in this text?

**Bock** has an interesting comment noting that "This is Luke's fourth "silent" example (the woman who anoints Jesus, Mary, and Lazarus). She says nothing, but her actions speak volumes. On widows, see the exegesis of Luke 18:3+. Luke has much to say about widows and the poor (Luke 2:37; 4:25-26; 7:12; 21:1-4; Acts 6:1-7; 9:39). (See [Luke Baker Exegetical Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT - Jesus is always watching when we give** (whether our time, our talents, our treasures), ever examining our [motives](#) (our reasons for doing something, especially reasons that are hidden or not obvious to others or even to ourselves!) which one day will be revealed. Paul writes in a passage that always deeply convicts me "Therefore **do not go on passing judgment (present imperative with a negative)** before the time, [*but wait*] until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose ([phaneroo](#) - make visible what has been hidden) the motives ([boule](#) = an inward thought process leading toward a decision) of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God." (1 Cor 4:5+). This begs the question - Why do you (I) do what you (I) do in the area of ministry? It is a searching question, we must continually keep in mind, and seeking God's help as in Psalm 139:23-24.

**Kent Hughes** is normally a careful expositor but clearly draws a dogmatic conclusion that the widow's "motivation for such giving could only be love. There is no other explanation. She (not the religious leaders) was living out the Shema, loving God with all she was and had." However, as we have stated, Jesus does not actually comment on her  **motive** for giving and in verse 4 simply quantifies her giving (so to speak) or the proportion of her giving. Note also that He neither affirms her proportional giving (e.g., "This is wonderful!") nor does He endorse that manner of giving as what His disciples should practice (remember He is speaking now to the disciples - Mk 12:43+).

**Poor** ([3998](#))([penichros](#) from [penes](#) = one who works for a living) describes a person who is miserably poor, very poor, needy, wretched. The only NT use is in Luke 22:2. There are three uses in the Septuagint.

Exodus 22:24+ If you lend money to My people, to the **poor** among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest.

Proverbs 28:15 Like a roaring lion and a rushing bear Is a wicked ruler over **apoor** people.

Proverbs 29:7 The righteous is concerned for the rights of the **poor**, The wicked does not understand

such concern.

**Comment:** This passage flies in the face of the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees in Luke 20:47-note!

In the parallel passage in Mark 12:42 the word for **poor** is [ptochos](#) (from **ptosso** = crouch, cringe, cower down or hide oneself for fear) gives us a picture of one crouching and cowering like a beggar with a tin cup to receive the pennies dropped in! These people were so poor that they were unable to meet their basic needs and were forced to depend on others or on society. What a picture of this poor widow!

**Gilbrant - Penichros**, sometimes spelled pentichros, is an adjective meaning "poor" or "needy." Homer (Odyssey 3.348) used the adjective to describe the needy who were without clothes (cf. Liddell-Scott). **Penichros** is used three times in the Septuagint to describe the needy who had to borrow money to live (Exodus 22:25). Proverbs 29:7 also uses the term to compare the deeds of the righteous and unrighteous. The righteous judges rightly for the poor. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Widow** (5503)(**chera** = feminine of **cheros** = bereft of one's spouse) means bereaved as would be a widow whose husband had died. The idea of neediness is often associated with **chera**, and it is also often linked with orphans (Mt 23:14; Mk 12:40, 42-44).

**Putting it two small copper coins** - The verb is ballo for casting or throwing something.

**Bock** - There is no need to appeal to Jesus' supernatural knowledge (as do Plummer 1896: 475 and Arndt 1956: 415-16) **ED:** BOCK IS MAKING ASSUMPTIONS SO IT STILL COULD BE SUPERNATURAL): if [gazophylakion](#) is the treasury then the amount of the contribution might have been (**ED:** "MIGHT OF" IS NOT DEFINITIVE) announced; if it is a receptacle in the temple courtyard, then one could recognize the coins by their size. (**ED:** AGAIN SAME POINT - THIS IS SURELY SUPERNATURAL BECAUSE JESUS KNOWS THIS IS ALL SHE HAS TO LIVE ON!) (**Comment:** Another sources says "Gifts were brought for various reasons, and the one making the offering declared the amount and purp. to the priest; in this way it was possible to know how much various people brought.")

#### Related Resource:

- [What does Jesus want us to learn from what He said about the widow's mite?](#)
- Torrey's Topical Textbook [Widows](#)
- American Tract Society [Widow](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Widow](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Widow](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Widows](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Widow](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Poor, Orphan, Widow](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Widow](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Widow Widows](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Widow](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Widow](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Widow](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Widow](#)
- [Should we tithe off our gross or net income?](#)
- [How can I become a more cheerful giver?](#)
- [What is the difference between tithes and offerings?](#)
- [What was the firstfruits offering? Should Christians give a firstfruits offering today?](#)
- [If you have a lot of debt, can you temporarily stop tithing while paying off the debt?](#)

**Mark's** parallel has more detail than Luke's version...

And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing ([theoreo](#) in the imperfect tense) how the people were putting money ([chalkos](#)) into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. (Mark 12:41)

**Comment:** NASB adds the word "how" which is not in the most other translations. The word **how** gives a slight misconception for **how** means in what way or manner (e.g., were they smiling or frowning when they tossed in their coins, etc). While Jesus in His omniscience undoubtedly did assess the manner and motive of their casting, the more literal sense is that He was simply watching them toss their coins in the

receptacles.

**Adam Clarke** commenting on the parallel passage in Mark 12:41 - It is worthy of observation, that the money put into the treasury, even by the rich, is termed by the evangelist χαλκον, brass money, probably that species of small brass coin which was called **prutah** among the Jews, two of which make a **farthing**, and twenty-four an Italian assarius, which assarion is the twenty-fourth part of a silver penny. We call this, **mite**, from the French, *miette*, which signifies a crumb, or very small morsel. The prutah was the smallest coin in use among the Jews: and there is a canon among the rabbins that no person shall put less than two prutahs into the treasury.

**Wikipedia** - In Jesus' times in Judea, the small copper coin was called a **lepton**; there was no coin called by the English term "mite" at that time. However, there was a **mite** in the time of the creation of the King James Bible, as indeed there had been at the time of earliest modern English translation of the New Testament by William Tyndale in 1525. The denomination was well known in the Southern Netherlands. Both the duke of Brabant and the count of Flanders issued them and they were sometimes imitated in the North. English poet Geoffrey Chaucer refers to the myte in his unfinished poem *Anelida and Arcite* (c. 1370).[8] Originally, the Brabant milt (maille in French) was 1/76 stuiver, the Flemish milt 1/48 stuiver. When the two areas were united under the dukes of Burgundy and later under the Habsburgs, the rate of the milt was set at 1/32 stuiver. More important, they were the very smallest copper coins. By 1611, they were no longer minted, but they were still in circulation.

**Lenski** - This widow "threw in there two lepta," which were called so from their smallness, each was an eighth of an assarion, the two making a quadrans, about the fourth of a cent in value. Bengel remarks that she might have retained one of the two lepta. She has been judged by worldly wisdom which declares that she should have kept the money for her support, and that, as far as the Temple was concerned, her gift amounted to nothing. (Ibid)

**Small copper coins** (3016) (**leptos** from from **leptós** = thin) means something scaled down or light, a small coin, mite. Leptos denotes a small Jewish coin which is the only Jewish coin mentioned in the New Testament. Only in Mk. 12:42; Lk. 12:59; Lk. 21:2. Used in Genesis of Pharaoh's dream of gaunt cows and thin ears of corn (Ge. 41:3-4; 41:6-7, et al). "Ellis (1974: 239) computes the value (OF LEPTOS) as one one-hundredth of a denarius, thus one one-hundredth of the average daily wage—a very small sum indeed!" (Bock)

**Zodhiates** writes that **leptos** was "the smallest coin in use among the Jews, equal to half a kodrantēs <2835>, a farthing which was the eighth part of an assarion, a Roman coin (Mark 12:42; Luke 12:59; 21:2). The value of the widow's gift (Mark 12:42) was little more than a **farthing**. The fact that it consisted of two tiny coins—a fact which is obscured by our careless referral to "the widow's mite"—is full of significance. She might have kept back one, but in spite of her **penury** she cast in all that she had. (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**Gilbrant** - The word **lepton** (neuter of **leptos**) is the noun form of the verb **leipō** which means "to strip or peel bark off a tree." The usual result of peeling bark off trees was small, thin pieces of bark, and hence the noun form meant "thin," "small," and many other synonyms of the same. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Liddell-Scott** - **leptos** - 1. peeled, husked, threshed out, II. 2. fine, small, of dust, ashes, etc.. 3. thin, fine, delicate, of cloth, thread, etc., Hom., Eur. 4. of the human figure, thin, lean, meagre, Ar., Xen.: also slender, taper, Plat. 5. of space, like stenos, strait, narrow, Od.; in a thin line, Xen. 6. generally, small, weak, impotent, faint traces, Xen.; small cattle, i.e. sheep and goats, Hdt.; small craft, Id., etc. 7. light, slight, of sounds, Aesch. light breezes, Eur. 8. of wine, light, Luc. II. metaph. fine, subtle, refined

**Leptos** - 28x in 26v in the Septuagint - Ge. 41:3-4 ("gaunt" cows); Ge. 41:6-7 ("thin" ears); Gen. 41:7; Gen. 41:19; Gen. 41:20; Gen. 41:23; Gen. 41:24; Gen. 41:27; Exod. 16:14; Exod. 30:7; Exod. 30:36 - lean (of meat) ; Exod. 32:20; Lev. 13:30 - fine, powdery; Lev. 16:12; Deut. 9:21; 1 Ki. 19:12; 2 Chr. 34:7; Isa. 27:9; Isa. 30:14; Isa. 30:22; Jer. 51:34; Dan. 2:35;

**Leon Morris** - Commentators often say that worshippers were not allowed to make gifts of less than two lepta, so that this was the minimum offering. But the relevant Talmudic passage does not say that a gift of one lepton is forbidden. It simply says that one should not put one lepton into the charity box unless it is under proper supervision (Baba Bathra 10b). (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

Below is a table describing what is thought to be the **prescribed Temple offerings** which were to be placed in the thirteen trumpet-shaped collection boxes, each with an inscription indicating the use to which its contents would be put (e.g., "The Half-Shekel Tribute", etc). Notice that 9 offerings were mandated and four were voluntary. Historians describe the treasury as having 13 chests for money collection. Each chest had a different purpose:

1. To pay this year's taxes.

2. To pay last year's taxes.
3. To pay for the offering of two birds.
4. To make a donation for other birds. S. For work at the altar.
6. To purchase frankincense.
7. For gold for the interior of the holy of holies.
8. For money left over from the sacrifice of sin.
9. For money left over from the transgression or guilt offering.
10. For money left over from the bird sacrifice for a woman with blood.
11. For offerings required after a Nazarite vow.
12. For money left over for leper sacrifices.
13. For money to be used for burnt offerings.

|                           |   |                     |                            |    |                    |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------------|----|--------------------|
|                           | 1 |                     | <b>Offerings</b>           | 8  | Sin offering       |
|                           |   | Half-shekel tribute | <b>left over</b>           |    |                    |
|                           | 2 |                     | <b>from</b>                | 9  | Trespass offering  |
|                           |   |                     | <b>sacrifices</b>          |    |                    |
| <b>Mandated Offerings</b> | 3 | Turtledove offering |                            | 10 | Offerings of birds |
|                           | 4 | Pigeon offering     |                            | 11 | Nazarite offering  |
|                           | 5 | Wood                | <b>Voluntary Offerings</b> | 12 | Cleansed leper     |
|                           | 6 | Incense             |                            |    |                    |
|                           | 7 | Golden vessels      |                            | 13 | General offering   |

**Luke 21:3 And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them;**

- KJV Luke 21:3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:
- NET Luke 21:3 He said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them.
- CSB Luke 21:3 "I tell you the truth," He said. "This poor widow has put in more than all of them.
- ESV Luke 21:3 And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them.
- NIV Luke 21:3 "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others.
- NLT Luke 21:3 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them.
- NRS Luke 21:3 He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them;
- YLT Luke 21:3 and he said, 'Truly I say to you, that this poor widow did cast in more than all;
- GWN Luke 21:3 He said, "I can guarantee this truth: This poor widow has given more than all the others.
- NKJ Luke 21:3 So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all;
- NAB Luke 21:3 He said, "I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest;
- MIT Luke 21:3 He commented, "I declare to you truly that this poor widow has put in more than all the rest.
- NJB Luke 21:3 and he said, 'I tell you truly, this poor widow has put in more than any of them;
- ASV Luke 21:3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than they all:
- DBY Luke 21:3 And he said, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow has cast in more than all;

BBE Luke 21:3 And he said, Truly I say to you, This poor widow has given more than all of them:

NAS Luke 21:3 And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them;

NIRV Luke 21:3 "What I'm about to tell you is true," Jesus said. "That poor widow has put in more than all the others.

RSV Luke 21:3 And he said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them;

RWB Luke 21:3 And he said, Truly I say to you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

WEB Luke 21:3 And he said, Of a truth I say to you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.

- **this poor widow** Luke 4:25; 9:27; 12:44; Acts 4:27; 10:34
- **put in more than all of them** Exodus 35:21-29; Mark 12:43,44; 14:8,9; 2 Corinthians 8:2,3,12; 9:6,7
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:1-4 Abusing the Poor](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:1-4 Giving That Pleases the Lord](#) - Steven Cole

#### Related Passage:

Mk 12:43+ Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly [amen](#)) I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury."

**And He said, "Truly I say to you** - When Jesus says "**Truly** (alethos) **I say**" He adds a note of importance and authority to what follows! The point is that Jesus knew how much the widow had given and in His omniscience knew that she had give all she had.

**Truly** (230) (alethos from **a** = negative + **letho** = forget related to **lanthanô** = escape notice = actual, true to fact) means indeed, surely, of a surety, truly, of a (in) truth, verily, very. The idea is what one sees reflects what it really in fact is. The real thing is not concealed. It is genuine or authentic. Several uses are by those who attest that Jesus was truly God's Son (Mt 14:33, 27:54, Mk 15:39). Several uses are used by Jesus (Who is "the Truth") emphasizing the truth of what He said (Lk 12:44, Lk 21:3, Jn 1:47 **Gilbrant** - The adverb alēthōs occurs extensively in Greek literature and nonliterary papyri as well as the Septuagint. When it modifies a verb it can be translated "actually," "truly," or "certainly." (Ibid)

**Alethos** - 18x in 18v - certainly(2), indeed(2), really(2), sure(1), surely(2), truly(8), truthfully(1). Mt 14:33 = "You are **certainly** God's Son!"; Mt 26:73 = " to Peter, **Surely** you too are one of them" (cf Mk 14:70); Mt 27:54 = "**Truly** this was the Son of God!" (cf Mk 15:39); Luke 9:27 = "I say to you**truthfully**"; Lk 12:44 = ""**Truly** I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions."; Lk 21:3 = ""**Truly** I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all"; John 1:47 = "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"; Jn 4:42 "this One is **indeed** the Savior of the world."; Jn 6:14 = "This is **truly** the Prophet who is to come into the world."; Jn 7:26, 40; Jn 8:31; Jn 17:8; Acts 12:11; 1 Th 2:13; 1 John 2:5

**This poor widow put in more than all of them** - She literally put in less, but Jesus assesses her gift as more. He does not say it is better, but just that it is more than all the others. He will explain this "quantifying" statement in the next verse.

**Bock** interprets Jesus' statement as saying "Jesus **commends** the woman for her generosity, especially in light of how little she had to give. When he says the poor widow put in more than all the others, he is saying that, in terms of real cost, the woman gave the most." (Ibid)

**Comment:** [Commend](#) means to express approval of, to express a good opinion of, to represent as being worthy of regard. Now the question is this - Does Jesus truly commend her or does He simply make the statement that she put in more than all of the rich donors? **MacArthur** says Jesus is simply stating the truth, but that He is not approving her giving.

**Stein** adds ""More" must be understood as more in God's eyes, for by human standards the widow put in considerably less (cf. Jas 2:5). It is most difficult to see in Jesus' words anything other than a commendation." (NAC)

**INTERPRETATIVE THOUGHT** - I think **Stein** goes too far in his assessment of this poor widow's spiritual condition when he says "The poor, **such as this widow**, are blessed (Lk 6:20+) **and enter the kingdom**, whereas the rich are excluded." In the Luke 6:20+ passage Jesus was not speaking about **material poverty** so much as **spiritual poverty**. There are a lot of poor people who will be excluded from the Kingdom of God. Being poor and even doing "good deeds" does not warrant Stein's conclusion that she is in the Kingdom of God. Is it possible? Of course it is, but the only way we could know for certain is if Jesus had applied Luke

6:20+ to her saying something like "Blessed is this poor widow, for hers is the Kingdom of God." As the [ESV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#) says on Luke 6:20+ "This means "blessed are those of you who are poor in material things **and who are also My disciples and thus are putting your trust in God**" There is no concrete evidence in Lk 21:1-4 that she is a disciple of Jesus or has placed her faith in Him as her Messiah. After all He is sitting in the Courtyard and can see her so it stands to reason she could have seen Him because the Courtyard of the Women is not nearly as big as the Court of the Gentiles. If so why did she not approach Jesus? In sum, the point is that the evidence is very tenuous that this poor widow is His disciple (again, we say she might have been, but the text simply does not tell us).

**NET Note** - With God, giving is weighed evaluatively, not counted. The widow was praised because she gave sincerely and at some considerable cost to herself.

**Poor** (4434)(**ptochos** from **ptosso** = crouch, cringe, cower down or hide oneself for fear, a picture of one crouching and cowering like a beggar with a tin cup to receive the pennies dropped in!) is an adjective which describes one who crouches and cowers and is used as a noun to mean **beggar**. These poor were unable to meet their basic needs and so were forced to depend on others or on society. Classical Greek used the **ptochos** to refer to a person reduced to total destitution, who crouched in a corner begging. As he held out one hand for alms he often hid his face with the other hand, because he was ashamed of being recognized. **Ptochos** describes not simply honest poverty, and the struggle of the laboring man to make ends meet but also describes abject poverty, which has literally nothing and which is in imminent danger of real starvation. All Luke's uses the word **ptochos** - Lk. 4:18; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 14:13; Lk. 14:21; Lk. 16:20; Lk. 16:22; Lk. 18:22; Lk. 19:8; Lk. 21:3. Notice that at the outset of His ministry Jesus declared He had come "TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE **POOR** (ptochos)." (Lk 4:18) Speaking of spiritual poverty He said "'Blessed are you who are **poor**, for yours is the kingdom of God." (Lk 6:20). This word describes the beggar Lazarus in Lk 16:20,22.

**Luke 21:4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."**

BGT Luke 21:4 π ντες γ ρ ο τοι κ το περισσεοντος α το ς βαλον ε ς τ ὀ ρα, α τη ὀ κ το στερματος α τ ς π ντα τ ν β ον ν ε χεν βαλεν.

KJV Luke 21:4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

NET Luke 21:4 For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on."

CSB Luke 21:4 For all these people have put in gifts out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."

ESV Luke 21:4 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

NIV Luke 21:4 All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

NLT Luke 21:4 For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has."

NRS Luke 21:4 for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."

YLT Luke 21:4 for all these out of their superabundance did cast into the gifts to God, but this one out of her want, all the living that she had, did cast in.'

GWN Luke 21:4 All of these people have given what they could spare. But she, in her poverty, has given everything she had to live on."

NKJ Luke 21:4 "for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

NAB Luke 21:4 for those others have all made offerings from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty,

has offered her whole livelihood."

MIT Luke 21:4 For all of them donated out of their abundance. But she, out of her poverty, put in all she had to live on."

NJB Luke 21:4 for these have all put in money they could spare, but she in her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'

ASV Luke 21:4 for all these did of their superfluity cast in unto the gifts; but she of her want did cast in all the living that she had.

DBY Luke 21:4 for all these out of their abundance have cast into the gifts of God; but she out of her need has cast in all the living which she had.

BBE Luke 21:4 For they gave out of their wealth, having more than enough for themselves: but she, even out of her need, has put in all her living.

NAS Luke 21:4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

NIRV Luke 21:4 All of those other people gave a lot because they are rich. But even though she is poor, she put in everything. She had nothing left to live on."

RSV Luke 21:4 for they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all the living that she had."

RWB Luke 21:4 For all these have of their abundance cast in to the offerings of God: but she of her poverty hath cast in all the living that she had.

WEB Luke 21:4 For all these have of their abundance cast in to the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

- **for they all out of their surplus** Luke 8:43; 15:12; Acts 2:44,45; 4:34
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:1-4 Abusing the Poor](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:1-4 Giving That Pleases the Lord](#) - Steven Cole

## THE CONTRAST IN GIVING

**For (gar)** - Term of explanation. What is Jesus explaining? In this case Jesus is explaining how He could make the paradoxical statement in Lk 21:3 that even though she gave less than others, she really gave more. Of course, the only way He could know this fact (that she gave all she had to live on) is by His omniscience.

**They all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on-** So the reason she gave more is not because of the quantity she gave, but the proportion she gave. Notice Jesus neither condemns the rich for not giving like the poor widow. But neither does He laud the poor widow for giving a greater proportion (literally 100%). He is simply stating the contrast between the givers.

**Bock** concludes that since the rich gave out of their surplus, "What they gave to God cost them little." (Baker Exegetical Commentary)

In his IVP commentary **Bock** says 'Jesus' point is not so much to rebuke others' contributions as to exalt a contribution that otherwise would have been underappreciated. Sometimes little gifts cost a great deal more than big gifts do, and their merit is in the sacrifice they represent. In fact, real giving happens when one gives sacrificially. Interestingly, research has shown that when people's income increases their proportion of charitable contributions tends to drop. We tend to give less the more we are blessed. How would Jesus assess this trend?"

**She out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on-** Jesus does not jump up (remember He is seated when this story begins) and exclaim to all the disciples (His primary audience from here on until the Cross - cf Lk 20:45+) "Look at her commitment! This is what I expect of you men. Follow her example!" All Jesus said is that her giving was **RADICAL!**

**This is no question that this woman's giving was RADICAL, but was it RIGHT?** The church at Corinth was commended by Paul for their giving in 2 Cor 8:1-9:15 and in that section Paul himself testified "that according to their ability, and **beyond their ability**, (SACRIFICIALLY YES, BUT NOT EVERYTHING THEY HAD TO LIVE ON - THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOOLISH. IMAGINE

THEIR CHILDREN STARVING. WHAT A HORRIBLE WITNESS THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN TO THE UNBELIEVERS!) they gave of their own accord (NOT BECAUSE A LEGALISTIC JEWISH SYSTEM REQUIRED THEM TO GIVE), begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but **they first gave themselves to the Lord** (THE LORD DOES NOT NEED OUR MONEY! BUT HE DOES DESIRE OUR HEART! HE ALWAYS HAS - Read Psalm 51:16-17, cf 1 Sa 15:22) and to us by the will of God." (2 Cor 8:3-5).

**Camille Focant** ([The Gospel According to Mark: A Commentary](#)) makes an honest, objective appraisal of this section writing "From what precedes, it appears that Jesus' sentence has the clear form **neither of a lamentation nor a praise. Jesus does not invite us to imitate the widow.** It is not said that he looks at her and loves her, nor that He commands to go and do likewise, nor that she would be near the reign (cf kingdom) of God). His word however echoes as a statement that the reader can interpret in different ways. (Ed: But only one is correct!)."

**Darrell Bock** - Her poverty means that her contribution cost her in terms of life's basics. But this did not stop her from giving. She did not say, "I do not have enough to live on, so I will postpone my giving." In fact, she could have given just one lepton but instead she gave more. She did not give from abundance; she gave out of "what she lacked," from her poverty (hysterēma; elsewhere in the NT at 1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 8:14; 9:12; 11:9; Phil. 2:30; Col. 1:24; 1 Th 3:10). She could have said, "I'll keep one lepton to be safe, to have a cushion," but she did not. (See [Luke Baker Exegetical Commentary](#)) (ED: AGAIN THE QUESTION MUST BE ASK "IS THAT WISE?" DOES JESUS PRAISE HER FOR GIVING EVERYTHING?)

**Darrell Bock** goes on to conclude that this widow "has the piety that pleases God (DOES THE TEXT STATE THAT SHE PLEASURES GOD? RE-READ Ps 51:16-17! DOES GIVING GUARANTEE ONE IS PIOUS? THE TEXT ONLY STATES THAT SHE GAVE PROPORTIONATELY MORE. WHAT IF SHE GAVE IN ORDER TO MERIT FAVOR WITH GOD?). She gives her life in the little amount that she lays out for God. Her giving costs, and so it is admirable. She serves from the heart and not to self-advantage. (Ibid) (ED: BOCK IS CLEARLY MAKING ASSUMPTIONS WHICH THE TEXT DOES NOT ALLOW ONE TO MAKE! JESUS DID NOT TELL US HER MOTIVES IN HIS EXPLANATION OF HER GIVING. ANY DOGMATIC STATEMENTS REGARDING HER MOTIVES ARE UNFOUNDED AND CANNOT BE SUPPORTED FROM THE TEXT.)

**Geoffrey Smith** writes "She possesses what God loves: **faith**. She **believes** he will meet all of her needs." ([A Closer Look at the Widow's Offering](#)) **Comment** - Read Smith's statement again. Does Jesus say ANYTHING about her great faith as He often did in other situations - cf Mt 8:10, 15:28, Lk 7:9? Does He turn to His disciples and tell them they need this kind of faith so that God will meet all their needs? He does not say that, so Smith seems to be "reading between the lines" interpreting the text as saying something it does not actually say. Again, it seems that the interpretation of Lk 21:1-4 of the widow in a positive light is so fixed in the writings of Christendom that it is difficult to even consider the alternative possibility that it might not be as positive as it has been interpreted over the years.

The poor widow's degree of sacrifice is given great weight, but history is replete with stories of those who have given great sacrifice for a cause they believed in. Given that she is casting money in the Temple treasury, it seems fair to say that she is supportive of the religious system that her money will go to undergird (or that she has been coerced in some way to give). It follows that sacrifice by itself is no indicator of one's faith in Jesus. Here is an example of **great sacrifice** from the daily readings of the Joshua project that literally shocked me...

The Bishnoi are a community of nature worshippers. The guru who founded the sect directed the worship of lord Vishnu (Bishnu), hence the name Bishnoi. **On one day in the year 1730, 363 Bishnoi individuals voluntarily gave up their own lives in order to spare the cutting of trees growing near their village.** The first lady to resist the tree cutters said, "If a tree is saved even at the cost of one's head, it's worth it." The axe intended for the tree severed her head, the first of 363 sacrifices! ([Reference](#))

The point is that the degree of one's sacrifice does not necessarily equate with the certainty of one's salvation (or the quality of one's faith\_. Generally conservative and otherwise good observers of the Biblical text seem to be adding many assumptions to this poor widow's "spiritual portfolio," but doing so without definitive Biblical support. The statements by many seem to be based on their presuppositions rather than on the text. Here is another example:

**Thomas Constable** - This incident contrasts the spiritual poverty and physical prosperity of the scribes with the physical poverty and spiritual prosperity of the widow.

**Comment:** There is no question there are striking contrasts between the religious hypocrites who devour widow's houses and this poor widow, but to say she has gained "**spiritual prosperity**" based on her giving is not a "kosher" conclusion! In fact, if we look just at the facts of the text, the main facts are - she is poor, she is a widow, she gives all she has to live on, she gives more than all the rich. To then conclude that this warrants us assigning her "**spiritual prosperity**" (or even status as a genuine believer or a disciple or one

who has gained entrance into the Kingdom of God) sounds more like works based righteousness than it does grace based righteousness. To reiterate, we simply cannot discern the motive of her heart for giving all she had. Jesus simply did not comment on the state of heart but just on the degree or proportion of her giving. And He did not tell the disciples "Go and do likewise."

**Moody Bible Commentary** has an interesting note -

Jesus noticed and commented the others gave out of their **surplus** (Lk 21:4a)—that is, they gave what they could easily spare. However, she gave out of her **poverty** (Lk 21:4b)—that is, she gave what she could not really spare. (ED: THIS IS A VALID OBSERVATION) She gave all that she had to live on. She gave sacrificially. **The actions of this poor widow are not to be seen as a "requirement" to get right with God** (ED: AMEN TO THAT STATEMENT! GIVING DOES NOT GET ONE INTO HEAVEN!) **One does not earn a right standing with God by giving—sacrificially or otherwise.** But these are the actions of one who is right with God. They prove one's standing with God.

**Comment:** BUT CAN SAY ONE SAY WITHOUT ANY RESERVATION OR DOUBT THAT BASED ONLY ON THE TEXT, THIS WIDOW WAS IN "**RIGHT STANDING**" WITH GOD? WAS SHE REALLY? DOES GIVING WHETHER A LITTLE OR ALL DEMONSTRATE THAT ONE IS IN RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD? THAT IS A "STRETCH" OF THE TEXT AS JESUS SAYS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ABOUT HER **STANDING** BEFORE GOD. HE SIMPLY STATES SHE IS POOR AND HAS GIVEN ALL SHE HAD TO LIVE ON. BUT HER GIVING DOES NOT MAKE HER A BELIEVER IN JESUS NOR DOES IT PROVE SHE WAS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS. WE HAVE TO CAREFUL TO NOT MAKE AN INTERPRETATION THAT IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY A SIMPLE READING OF THE TEXT. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE WHEN WE HAVE HEARD A STORY INTERPRETED ONLY ONE WAY ALL OUR LIFE! One of the cardinal rules for good observation is reading a text as if we are reading it for the first time, shutting out of our mind sermons, commentaries, etc as much as possible.

Below are some of the "traditional" interpretations from a variety of commentaries (old and new), and clearly almost everyone sees this poor widow's giving of all she has to live on in a positive and challenging light. Note that however one chooses to interpret Luke 21:1-4, these assessments below regarding giving are generally true.

- **Alfred Plummer's conclusion** - "The means of the giver and the motive are the measure of true generosity."
- **William Kelly's conclusion** - "The test of liberality is not what is given, but what is left."
- **I Howard Marshall** - what matters is not the amount that one gives but the amount that one keeps for oneself
- **Darrell Bock** - Sometimes little gifts cost a great deal more than big gifts do, and their merit is in the sacrifice they represent. In fact, real giving happens when one gives sacrificially. Interestingly, research has shown that when people's income increases their proportion of charitable contributions tends to drop. We tend to give less the more we are blessed. How would Jesus assess this trend? In contrast to the scribes' pride and hypocrisy stands this woman who has sacrificed out of her life to honor God. ([The Widow Who Gave All 21:1-4](#))
- **Leon Morris** - Jesus shows that the monetary value of a gift is not everything. There is a sense in which the widow made the biggest gift of all. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))
- **John Stott** - Her total devotion, which no-one but Jesus would have realized, is the exact opposite of the Jewish leaders' religion, all show and no heart. (The Message of Luke: The Saviour of the World.)
- **William Kistemaker** - Having just now exposed the hypocrisy of the scribes (20:45-47), Jesus proceeds to reveal the sincerity of a certain widow. He places her genuine religion over against the sham religion of the law-interpreters...Total commitment to God and his cause is the lesson she has taught us. (Baker New Testament Commentary)
- **Broadman Bible Commentary** - Her gift was a genuine expression of her faith that God in his providence would supply her future needs. (**COMMENT** - CAN YOU REALLY DRAW THIS CONCLUSION SOLELY FROM THE TEXT?) The rich had shown no such faith. They had not forfeited any of their financial security. At the same time, they believed that they had earned God's favor with an offering of money.
- **R C H Lenski** - It is the quality that makes a gift more or less in Jesus' eyes....Gifts that are given out of our superfluous income and gifts that are given out of want and necessity are not on the same level. To give the latter requires much more in our hearts than to give the former...No man lives by the bread he is able to buy; millionaires die as did Dives with his tables loaded—not only beggars like Lazarus. We live only by the word that goes forth out of God's mouth, by his will that is expressed in that word. When this widow gave all the living she had she gave herself completely into the hands of God. Her last act with the final bit of her living was an act of worship in true faith that now looked only unto God who cares for the destitute who trust in him. Did the widow starve? I do not think so. But let us not overdraw the picture. She has been pictured as going home with a heart singing with joy. Let us rather say that she was ready to starve if that were God's will. She was ready to accept that from the God she trusted. And if God did not let her starve, she took what he sent her as being sent only

by him. To live thus and to give thus with such a faith means to earn the highest commendation of Jesus. (See [The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel](#))

- **Life Application Commentary** - She gave everything and trusted God to care for her. Jesus wanted the disciples to see this lesson in total surrender of self, commitment to God, and willingness to trust in God's provision. (See [Life Application New Testament Commentary](#))
- **David Guzik** - Jesus' principle here shows us that before God, the spirit of giving determines the value of the gift more than the amount. God doesn't want grudgingly given money or guilt money. God loves the cheerful giver. The widow's gift and Jesus' comment on it also shows us that the value of a gift is determined by what it costs the giver. This is what made the widow's gift so valuable. David refused to give God that which cost me nothing (2 Samuel 24:24).
- **Apologetics Study Bible** - While this verse has doubtless been used by unscrupulous persons to squeeze money out of others, Jesus commended the piety demonstrated by the widow's action. He was not recommending that everyone should demonstrate piety in exactly the same manner as this woman.
- **Lawrence Richards** - It's not how much we give, but our willingness to surrender all. Undoubtedly Luke purposely placed the ragged, humble widow beside the posturing, well-dressed politicians whose pretensions Jesus had just exposed. Luke wanted us to see others as God sees them. He wants us to realize that the mighty are seldom high on God's scale of values. (See [The 365 day devotional commentary](#))
- **Concise Bible Commentary** - He considered that the widow gave more than anyone else, because he measured the gift not by its commercial value but by the degree of sacrifice of the giver. A heart of true devotion, not money, was the valuable thing in his kingdom
- **Tom Constable** - Here is another instructive example of a person with a servant's attitude who gave her all, as little as that was, to God (cf. Mark 10:45). Jesus and Mark taught disciples how God values wholehearted commitment to Himself with this incident.
- **Warren Wiersbe** - When it comes to our giving, God sees more than the portion; He also sees the proportion. Men see what is given, but God sees what is left, and by that He measures the gift and the condition of our hearts. Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." He may have learned that from Jesus (Luke 6:38) or perhaps from Paul (2 Cor. 8:1-15). (Borrow [Be courageous](#))

**NET Note** Comments on the Mark version of the same story -

The contrast between this passage, Mk 12:41-44, and what has come before in Mk 11:27-12:40 is remarkable. The woman is set in stark contrast to the religious leaders. She was a poor widow, they were rich. She was uneducated in the law, they were well educated in the law. She was a woman, they were men. But whereas they evidenced no faith and actually stole money from God and men (cf. Mk 11:17), **she evidenced great faith** (WHERE DOES THE TEXT MAKE THIS STATEMENT) and gave out of her extreme poverty everything she had (THE TEXT DOES SUPPORT THIS CONCLUSION).

**COMMENT:** The points of contrast the NET Note makes are valid observations based on the text and context, but the text does not allow one to make a statement regarding her **FAITH**. This type of statement reminds one of those religious hucksters in our day who say demonstrate your FAITH by sending me your widow's pension just like this poor widow did in Luke 21:1-4 and I will pray over it and you will get back far more than you sent in and you will be pleasing to and blessed of God just as was this poor widow. And there are people in America today who have sent **all they have to live on to the religious charlatans** but this act is clearly not a reflection of their faith in God nor is it a faith based on the Word of God! It is important to observe that Jesus does not conclude as He sometimes does, "**How great is your faith**, in giving everything you have to live on." (Compare Mt 8:10+, Mt 15:28+, Lk 7:9+). One reasonable question in fact to ask is does **God really want us to given EVERYTHING we have to live on** regarding which **John MacArthur** comments "**It was literally her life. She'll go home and die**" ([Sermon](#)) While I am not sure I totally agree with MacArthur that she was definitively destined to die (because she could have gone out and begged as the word **ptochos** suggests she had already done), if we take this passage to a logical practical conclusion as some have done, we should give everything we have to live on. That does not seem to be what this passage is teaching.

**Summary** - I began this section stating it is a **difficult section to interpret**. I initially discounted MacArthur's **negative** view of the widow as a bit harsh and not supported by the text. I prayed over this passage and went back and examined the context which did lend some support to MacArthur's interpretation. In fairness, I have included a number of interpretations that view the poor widow's action in a **positive** light. But in fairness to the text, I have questioned many of the positive statements made about this poor widow as being largely based on the opinion of the writer and not on the Biblical text. If you have not read MacArthur's sermon on this passage [here is the link](#) and I would suggest you read it even if you do not agree with his interpretation.

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Extravagant Gifts Read: Luke 21:1-4

All these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had. —Luke 21:4

When I was pastoring a small church, we faced a huge crisis. Unless we could complete the extensive renovations necessary to bring our building up to the proper safety codes, we would lose our place of worship. A desperate time of fundraising ensued to pay for those renovations; but of all the money given, one gift captured our leadership's attention.

An elderly woman in the church donated several hundred dollars to the project—money we knew she could not spare. We thanked her for her gift but wanted to return it, feeling that her needs were greater than the church's. However, she refused to take the money back. She had been saving for years in order to buy a stove and was cooking on a hot plate in the meantime. Yet she insisted that she needed a place to worship with her church family more than she needed a stove. We were astounded by her extravagant gift.

When our Lord observed a widow putting two mites (the smallest of coins) into the temple offerings, He praised her for her extravagance (Luke 21:3-4). Why? Not because of how much she gave, but because she gave all she had. It's the kind of gift that not only honors our God, but also reminds us of the most extravagant of gifts to us—Christ.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
Yet what can I give Him—give my heart.  
—Rossetti

Gratitude of heart can often be seen in a generous spirit.

By Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

## GREEK WORD CORBAN/KORBAN

**Corban (Qorban)** (2878)(**korban**) is a noun transliterated from the Hebrew **qorban/korban** (07133) (gift, offering, oblation) and which thus signifies a gift or an offering dedicated to God (Lev 2:1, 4, 12, 13-note). This gift was used to excuse a person from doing his or her filial duty toward one's parents (Mark 7:9-13). Something devoted to God (Mark 7:11). **Korbanás** is spoken of money offered in the temple, the sacred treasure, and therefore representing the treasury, equivalent to **gazophulakion** a court in the temple for the collection boxes, treasury (Matt. 27:6KJV). Not found in the Septuagint.

**Ryrie** explains that "If a son declared that the amount needed to support his parents was **Corban**, the scribes said that he was exempt from his duty to care for his parents as prescribed in the law. Evidently, too, he was not really obliged to devote that sum to the Temple." In Mark 7:11 (Context - Mk 7:9-13), korban is used to excuse a person from doing his filial duty toward his parents. The rabbis actually allowed the mere saying of this word by an unfaithful son to prevent the use of needed money for the support of father or mother! Amazing! They must not have read nor understood the many uses of korban in Leviticus! The Rabbis not only justified such a son's trickery in Mk 7:11, but held that he was prohibited from using it (the gift) for father or mother, but he might use it for himself! Talk about conniving! This evil practice permitted a son to be released from any obligation to care for his parents, thus breaking the fifth commandment. He would claim his possessions belonged to God and were therefore unavailable for other purposes.

**NET Note** - **Corban** is a Hebrew loanword (transliterated in the Greek text and in most modern English translations) referring to something that has been set aside as a gift to be given to God at some later date, but which is still in the possession of the owner (L&N 53.22). According to contemporary Jewish tradition the person who made this claim was absolved from responsibility to support or assist his parents, a clear violation of the Mosaic law to honor one's parents (v. 10).

**William Barclay** commenting on **korban** in Mark 7:9-13

The exact meaning of this passage is very difficult to discover. It hinges on the word Korban which seems to have undergone two stages of meaning in Jewish usage.

(i) **The word meant a gift.** It was used to describe something which was specially dedicated to God. A thing which was Korban was as if it had already been laid upon the altar. That is to say, it was completely set apart

from all ordinary purposes and usages and became the property of God. If a man wished to dedicate some of his money or his property to God, he declared it Korban, and thereafter it might never again be used for any ordinary or secular purpose.

It does seem that, even at this stage, the word was capable of very shrewd usage. For instance, a creditor might have a debtor who refused or was unwilling to pay. The creditor might then say, "The debt you owe me is Korban," that is to say, "The debt you owe me is dedicated to God." From then on the debtor ceased to be in debt to a fellow-man and began to be in debt to God, which was far more serious. It may well be that the creditor could discharge his part of the matter by making a quite small symbolic payment to the Temple, and then keeping the rest for himself. In any event, to introduce the idea of Korban into this kind of debt was a kind of religious blackmail transforming a debt owed to man into a debt owed to God.

It does seem that the idea of Korban was already capable of misuse. If that be the idea behind this, the passage speaks of a man declaring his property Korban, sacred to God, and then when his father or mother in dire need comes to him for help, saying, "I am sorry that I cannot give you any help because nothing that I have is available for you because it is dedicated to God." The vow was made an excuse to avoid helping a parent in need. The vow which the scribal legalist insisted upon involved breaking one of the ten commandments which are the very law of God.

**(ii) There came a time when Korban became a much more generalized oath.** When a person declared anything Korban he entirely alienated it from the person to whom he was talking. A man might say, "Korban that by which I might be profited by you," and, in so doing, he bound himself never to touch, taste, have or handle anything possessed by the person so addressed. Or, he might say, "Korban that by which you might be profited by me," and, in so saying, he bound himself never to help or to benefit the person so addressed by anything that belonged to himself. If that be the use here, the passage means that, at some time, perhaps in a fit of anger or rebellion, a man had said to his parents, "Korban anything by which you may ever be helped by me," and that afterwards, even if he repented from his rash vow, the scribal legalists declared that it was unbreakable and that he might never again render his parents any assistance.

Whichever be the case--and it is not possible to be certain--this much is sure, that there were cases in which the strict performance of the scribal law made it impossible for a man to carry out the law of the ten commandments.

Jesus was attacking a system which put rules and regulations before the claim of human need. The commandment of God was that the claim of human love should come first; the commandment of the scribes was that the claim of legal rules and regulations should come first. Jesus was quite sure that any regulation which prevented a man from giving help where help was needed was nothing less than a contradiction of the law of God. We must have a care that we never allow rules to paralyze the claims of love. Nothing that prevents us helping a fellowman can ever be a rule approved by God (**ED**: Now ponder the widow giving everything she had to live on! That prevented her from helping herself! Interesting!)

#### **TDNT on korban -**

**1. korbán is the loanword from the Hebrew.** It is a technical term which Josephus explains as referring to advantages that accrue from the dedication of oneself to God (Antiquities 4.72–73). The form korbanás denotes the temple treasury as the repository of what is offered as korbán (Jewish War 2.175).

**2. korbán in the OT and Later Judaism.** In the OT korbán is "what is offered," more particularly to God (cf. Num. 7:3). All kinds of offerings, not just sacrifices, are included. We find the same general use in later Judaism, but now the term is also a vow formula when something is offered to God, either in sacrifice or by a transfer of use, i.e., a withdrawal from secular use and control. The "something" may be objects, foods, etc., but it may also be individuals or groups or even the whole people. It does not mean that the people or objects are made over to the temple but simply that they are subject to a transfer of control, korbán may take the form of personal renunciation but it may also be a means of denying to others the use of one's person or possessions (whether to exert pressure, to take revenge, or to inflict injury). It can thus lead to a breach of relations even within the marriage or family, and in view of the simplicity but drastic consequences of the process the rabbis try to find ways to reverse the vow or to soften the consequences, though the date of such efforts is much disputed.

**3. korbán in the NT.**

a. In Matt. 27:6 the chief priests rule that the silver pieces that Judas wants to return are not suitable for the

korbanás, i.e., the temple treasury, even though Judas has put them in the temple and they probably come originally from the treasury. The reason given is that they are blood money and hence unclean.

b. korbán occurs only in Mark 7:10ff. in the debate with the scribes and Pharisees. Matt. 15:3ff. uses dóron in the sense of “offering” (cf. 5:23-24; 8:4, etc.; also Heb. 5:1; 8:3-4; 9:9; 11:4). The argument of Jesus is that the scribes uphold a vow (korbán) taken by a son even though it releases him from all obligations to his parents. The scribal argument (based on Num. 30:2-3) is that vows to God always take precedence. In reply Jesus quotes Isa. 29:13. The scribes cannot truly do justice to their concern for fulfillment of the law because they forget that God’s love and justice coincide and that God’s concern is for human welfare. Jesus does not wish to weaken the validity of Scripture but to put it in its full context in which the goal may be sanctification but sanctification itself leads on to lovingkindness. The fourth commandment expresses this, but the defended practice of korbán becomes a means of evasion. (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume)

**John MacArthur** comments - The point that I want you to understand is this: God is concerned that people have their needs met. It is the responsibility in the Ten Commandments of children to provide for their parents when their parents need care and provision. **To say we can't do that because we have given it to God is to violate the Law of God with your tradition** (MacArthur quotes Mk 7:9-13 - "He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. 10"For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH'; 11 but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is **Corban** (that is to say, given to God),' you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.") **MacArthur** goes on to comment that "You have invented a kind of religion that has nothing to do with the commandment of God. You have nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. They had a word for **corban** which means “devoted to God.” You no longer do anything for your mother or father, thus invalidating the Word of God by your tradition. The system that had developed in Judaism abused poor people. And it abused it on a spiritual level. **Anyone who withholds money from needy parents in order to give it to God is in direct disobedience to God and is dishonoring God's Word and substituting a man-made tradition for God's Word.** Basic human needs come first with God before religious offerings. Listen, God's law was never given to impoverish people, but to help them. Man was not made for the law but the law was made for man. We would conclude that this woman was part of a system that took the last two cents out of her hand on the pretense that this was necessary to please God, to purchase her salvation and to bring her blessing. She was manipulated by a religious system that was corrupt. This is not an illustration of heartfelt, sacrificial giving that pleases the Lord, this is not a model for all of us to follow. Jesus never expects that, in fact He told a servant who had very little, you should have put your money in the bank and earned interest because you need that to meet your own physical needs. ([Sermon](#))

**Luke 21:5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said**

KJV Luke 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

- **And while some were talking about the temple** Mt 24:1,2; Mark 13:1,2; John 2:20
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:5-7 Jesus' Description of the Temple's Destruction](#) - John MacArthur

**Darrell Bock's** overview of Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse

### 1. Setting (Luke 21:5–6)

### 2. Signs before the end (Luke 21:7–11)

- The disciples' question (Luke 21:7)
- False claims (Luke 21:8)
- Social chaos before the end (Luke 21:9–10)
- Natural disasters (Luke 21:11)

### 3. Persecution (Luke 21:12–19)

- Persecution and testimony (Luke 21:12–13)
- Divine wisdom (Luke 21:14–15)
- Division of family, possible martyrdom, and hatred (Luke 21:16–17)
- Divine protection of others (Luke 21:18)
- Endurance leading to salvation (Luke 21:19)

#### 4. Picture of the end: Jerusalem's destruction (Luke 21:20–24)

- Jerusalem surrounded (Luke 21:20)
- The days of vengeance (Luke 21:21–22)
- Woe for the great distress of Jerusalem (Luke 21:23–24)

#### 5. The end: coming of the Son of Man (Luke 21:25–28)

- Signs in the heavens (Luke 21:25–26)
- The authoritative return of the Son of Man (Luke 21:27)
- The drawing near of redemption (Luke 21:28)

#### 6. Parable of the fig tree (Luke 21:29–33)

- As fig trees in summer, so the kingdom (Luke 21:29–31)
- The end: all within a generation (Luke 21:32)
- The certainty of Jesus' words (Luke 21:33)

#### 7. Application: call to watch (Luke 21:34–36)

- The call to heed universal judgment (Luke 21:34–35)
- Pray for strength (Luke 21:36)

#### 8. Jesus teaches at the temple (Luke 21:37–38)

- Teaching at the temple, lodging at Olives (Luke 21:37)
  - People hear Jesus teach in the morning (Luke 21:38)
- (Scroll up on this page [Luke : Baker Exegetical Commentary](#))

## THE PLAN OF THE AGES BEGINNING WITH THE TEMPLE

The other synoptic accounts add a few details...

Matthew 24:1; 2 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

Mark 13:1- 2+ As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, **Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!** (BOLD = UNIQUE TO MARK) And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."

**R Kent Hughes** has a good word on your study of Luke 21 and the Olivet Discourse in general - According to Earle Ellis, the venerable New Testament scholar, the so-called Olivet Discourse, recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, "has been the subject of more scholarly debate than perhaps any other passage in the Gospels." This is because of the rich nature of the prophetic language that Jesus used (virtually every verse has multiple allusions to both the Old Testament and to other Jewish apocalyptic literature), and because of the nature of prophecy itself—multiple fulfillments culminating in a final fulfillment. The fact is, we have yet to find a scholar who can perfectly unravel the knotty problems of the Olivet Discourse. Study of it requires a proper humility and a willingness to admit that we do not have all the answers. We must mind Chesterton's dictum: "It is only the fool who tries to get the heavens inside his head, and not unnaturally his head bursts. The wise man is content to get his head inside the heavens." (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

- [Click here for a summary of 5 approaches to the interpretation of the Olivet Discourse.](#)

**When did this conversation occur?** Almost all commentators say this conversation occurred on **Tuesday evening**, but John MacArthur thinks it was **Wednesday evening** (because he dates the "triumphal entry" on Monday instead of the traditional "Palm Sunday" - [see his reasoning](#) in top half of page) **MacArthur** may be correct because otherwise we are left with **Wednesday**, about which the Scriptures are totally silent, and this would seem to be unusual considering the fact that this was the last week and last Wednesday of His life and Jesus is seldom seen not redeeming the precious time (a good pattern for all of His disciples)!

**And while some were talking about the temple**- Matthew has "**Jesus came out from the temple** and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him." The statement about Jesus' leaving the Temple is not found in Luke which at least raises the possibility that the latter discourse was delivered in the Temple complex which a few writers favor. However most commentators consider Luke 21:5-36 to be parallel to Jesus' Olivet Discourse given on the Mount of Olives.

From Matthew and Mark we know the "**some**" that the disciples were "talking about the Temple" and that one in particular of the Twelve drew Jesus' attention to the beauty of the Temple (Mk 13:1). These country Galileans undoubtedly regarded the magnificent Temple complex with a sense of awe and reverence, marveling especially at the massive size of the stones described by Josephus (see [15.11.3](#)) as "built of stones that were white and strong: and each of their length was twenty-five cubits; their height was eight, and their breadth about twelve." The Herodian Temple Complex covered approximately 1/6 of the old city of Jerusalem.

From Matthew and Mark we see that Jesus was leaving the Temple. In Luke 20:45-47 Jesus had condemned the religious leaders, Matthew 23:1-36 describing the full account of His diatribe against their hypocritical practices. Then He spoke to the disciples about the poor widow in Luke 21:1-4 in the Court of the Women. It was presumably after this event that Jesus departed the Temple area. He also spoke the lament in Mt 23:37-39 either before the widow's story or as His last words as He left the Temple. The Jews will not see Jesus again until they say the official messianic greeting of Psalm 118:26, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." (See Zechariah 12:10-14-note, Zechariah 13:1-note, Zechariah 13:8-9-note). This is the pre-condition of His Second Coming. Just as the Jewish leaders led the nation in rejecting Messiah Jesus, the Jewish leaders must lead the nation in accepting Him.

The historian **Tacitus** ([Tacitus 5.8](#)) wrote of Herod's Temple "There stood a temple of immense wealth."

The Jewish historian **Josephus** has a lengthy description of the Temple and of Herod's building project introducing it with these words -

"And now Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign, and after the acts already mentioned, undertook a very great work; that is to build of himself the temple of God, and make it larger in compass, and to raise it to a most magnificent altitude: as esteeming it to be the most glorious of all his actions, as it really was, to bring it to perfection; and that this would be sufficient for an everlasting memorial of him." (**NET NOTE** - The Jerusalem temple was widely admired around the world.)

See **Josephus' Antiquities 15 Chapter 11**; **Josephus' Jewish Wars 5 Chapter 5 = "A Description of the Temple"** and **Tacitus, History 5.8**, (Tacitus was writing after the destruction of the Temple called it "immensely opulent." Josephus compared it to a beautiful snow capped mountain.)

**Josephus** writes

Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds, or their eyes. For it was covered all over with plates of gold, of great weight: and at the first rising of the sun reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it, to turn their eyes away: just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers, when they were coming to it at a distance, **like a mountain covered with snow**. For as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceeding white. On its top it had spikes; with sharp points; to prevent any pollution of it by birds sitting upon it. ([Josephus, Wars V. 5. 6](#)),

**Temple** ([2413](#)) (**hieros**) denotes the entire Temple complex, not simply the sanctuary, as shown by the phrase in Mt 24:1 where "His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him". In Jesus' day the term for the sanctuary proper was naos. Recall that almost 50 years had already been spent in rebuilding "Herod's" Temple (cf at beginning of His ministry - John 2:20+).

**That it was adorned** (**kosmeo**) **with beautiful** (**kalos**) **stones** (**lithos**) **and votive gifts** (**anathēma**) - Mark adds the disciples said "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" Notice that only Luke records the disciple's comment about the **votive gifts** (the Temple's decorations). The Temple had both precious and semi-precious **stones** that had been brought by the Jews. These **stones** were embedded all over the Temple. Some of the beautiful marble columns are reported to have been

up to 40 feet high. **Votive gifts** were gifts the Jews gave and were associated with a vow to God. Vows to God were often consecrated with a gift. This practice was not unique to the Jews but was common in all pagan religions. In the remains of the temple at Corinth one can see rooms filled with votive gifts given to the false god [Aesculapius](#) who was associated with healing (and is by modern medicine as a symbol, the [Caduceus](#), which derives from the [rod of Ascelpius](#) also spelled Asklepios or Aesculapius). Herod had donated a nearly six-foot-high golden vine with golden grapes (see [Josephus 5.5.4](#)).

**THOUGHT** - How tragic that the most beautiful Stone of all was in the Temple and most of the Jews did not have eyes to see His beauty!

**MacArthur** on the glory of the Temple built by Herod not to honor God but himself -

What a stunning place, one of the wonders of the ancient world. Some writers say it was the greatest building in the world...it was being built and decorated for 85 years total and about 50 years of building at the time our Lord walked out. It had been started by Herod the Great in 19-20 B.C. The Jews were so concerned that it would be sacred that Herod actually trained priests to be masons, carpenters and craftsmen so that there would only be people who understood holy things who were actually leading the work. Every stone in that place was made of mezza, white brilliant stone available in the land of Israel that can be finely cut and polished so that it looks like marble....So as the disciples left, they look backed at this massive, glorious, incredible building, must have been wondering about the words of Jesus that they had already heard just a day before, that it was coming down. It was the grandest of Herod's many massive building projects. Its eastern....side was completely covered in gold plating so that it looked like one massive piece of solid gold. In the morning sun, the sun would roll up over the top of the Mount of Olives. It would reflect itself in such a blaze that it would blind someone who didn't cover his eyes just to look at the temple. And in the evening when the sun was on the other side, its golden glory was only subdued but still impressive. By all accounts, it was the most beautiful building in the world. (from [Luke 21:5-7 Jesus' Description of the Temple's Destruction](#))

**David Guzik** adds this note related to the **Temple** -

This temple was originally rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezra 6:15), but greatly expanded and improved by Herod. It was the center of Jewish life for almost a thousand years. The temple was so revered that it was customary to swear by the temple (Matthew 23:16), and speaking against the temple could be considered blasphemy (Acts 6:13). King Herod more than doubled the temple mount area, increasing it to about 36 acres (150,000 square meters). Herod's rebuilding work started in 19 B.C., and was only completed in a.d. 63, taking more than eighty years. It was finished only seven years before it was destroyed....As great as the temple was, Jesus never hesitated to claim that He was greater than the temple (Matthew 12:5). For many Jews of that day, the temple had become an idol – it began to mean more to the people than God Himself did. Good things can become the worst idols; and sometimes God sours or takes away even good things that we make our idols. ([Enduring Word](#))

**William Lane** comments that "This complex of stone was one of the most impressive sights in the ancient world, and was regarded as an architectural wonder. As a mountain of white marble decorated with gold it dominated the Kidron gorge as an object of dazzling beauty." (NICNT-Mark)

**He said** - Strange that this is not in Lk 21:6 but remember the versification was not inspired. Jesus proceeds to pronounce prophecies that have a near fulfillment (70 A D) and a far future fulfillment (end of this age). Jesus' eschatology should stimulate an expectation (of His return) which in turn energizes ethical response. Right doctrine should lead to right living. The goal of this prophecy (as with all prophecy) is not to satisfy our curiosity but to make us desire to be more like the Savior. Toward the end of the prophecy Jesus makes it clear that being ready for the kingdom is the purpose of this prophetic teaching (Luke 21:34–36). As an aside, the Rapture is not in view in this passage.

Whenever the Bible talks about what theologians call eschatology, or the end, its concern is ethics; it's our behavior; it's how we live right now. Prophecy, Bible teaching about the future or about the end, is never merely speculative in the Bible. It is always practical. It is always designed to teach us how we are to live in the here and now, how we are to serve the Lord right now, and you'll find that that's the case in the passage before us today. Jesus gave these prophecies to encourage His disciples (then and now) to persevere, doing so, if need be, unto death. Jesus did not want persecution or rejection of the Gospel to surprise His disciples.

**Paul's** last words to Timothy (a "prophetic promise"! ) echo those of Jesus

Indeed, all (HOW MANY?) who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will (PROPHETIC PROMISE!) be persecuted.(2 Ti 3:12+)

**Peter** warned

Beloved, **do not be surprised** ([present imperative with a negative](#) - Don't let this begin or stop what is already happening) at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. (1 Peter 4:12-16+)

**Steven Cole** comments that "Since Jesus emphasizes that many of these cataclysmic events will take place well before the end (Lk 21:9, 12), His words apply to believers in trying situations down through the centuries, as well as to those living at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem or just before His Second Coming."

**John Phillips** - Herod had prepared a thousand vehicles to carry the stone to the site. He had recruited ten thousand workmen, under the supervision of a thousand priests, to do the work. And the Jews hated him. He was an Edomite and a mass murderer. But if he thought he could ingratiate himself with the Jews by building them a temple, he was mistaken. The Jews were proud of their temple but despised its builder. (Exploring Luke)

**Leon Morris** introduces this section with an interesting comment - There are some puzzling exegetical problems, notably those posed by the fact that part of the address seems to apply to the end of all things and part to the destruction of Jerusalem. In Luke the distinction between the two seems clearer than in the others. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Adorned** (2885)([kosmeo](#) from [kosmos](#) = adorning or order, ornament, decoration, adornment -- this root word gives us our English *cosmetic* something women use to "adorn" their face and make themselves more physically attractive) speaks of that which is to put in order, decorated, embellished, made beautiful with ornamentation, the attractiveness heightened by adding decorative details. **Kosmeo** conveys the idea of arranging something in proper order so as to give it symmetry, comeliness, and beauty. Luke used **Kosmeo** in Lk 11:25 to describe a man cleansed of an unclean spirit. Luke has **kosmeo** in the perfect tense which speaks of the seemingly permanent state of the stones, a "permanence" which Jesus would soon show as only temporary in His prophecy regarding the stones!

**Beautiful** (2570)([kalos](#)) means good with a basic meaning sound, and here describing the outward appearance as beautiful. But much like the hypocritical leaders, on the inside the Temple was filled with corruption wrought by these evil men (cf Mt 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness").

**Stones** (3037)([lithos](#)) and according to Josephus ([15.11.3](#)), some of the stones measured over 35 feet long, 12 feet high, and 18 feet wide. The current [Wailing Wall](#) represents just a small part of the foundation left from Herod's Temple complex. The white marble walls rose some 200 feet (or higher) above the [Kidron Valley](#) on the southeast corner of the complex. The brilliant white walls with gold trim dazzled in the morning sun. The [Court of the Gentiles](#) was about 400 by 500 yards square (Or about 10 football fields, [see diagram](#)), so that thousands of worshipers could gather. A rabbinical saying was "He who has not seen the Temple in its full construction has never seen a glorious building in his life!" (b. Baba Bathra, 3b). While Herod's Temple surpassed even Solomon's Temple, it is surprising that it was not in the list of the the "[Seven Wonders of the Ancient World](#)."

**Votive gifts** (334)([anathēma](#) from [anatithēmi](#) = to set up, to separate) describes that which is dedicated exclusively to the service of deity. It is a consecrated gift hung up or laid up in a temple and is used only in Luke 21:5. These votive offerings were distinguished from sacrificial offerings. It is used of costly offerings presented to the gods and suspended or exposed to view in a temple of that deity.

**Trench** - In classical Greek **anathema** is the predominant form and the only one that Attic writers permitted. It was the technical word for costly offerings that were presented to the gods and then suspended or otherwise displayed in their temples. These offerings were separated from all common and profane uses and were openly dedicated to the honor of the deity to whom they were originally presented. (See Trench's lengthy discussion)

**A T Robertson** - The word **anathēma** (here only in the NT) is not to be confused with **anathema** from the same verb **anatithēmi**, but which came to mean a curse (Gal. 1:8+; Acts 23:14). So **anathema** came to mean devoted in a bad sense, **anathēma** in a good sense.

**Zodhiates** adds the votive gifts "were dedicated to God for the honor of the people offering them as well as for God's glory. Such offerings could be shields, chaplets, golden chains, and candlesticks. Such were and still are

common in heathen temples. The same custom was imitated in the Jewish temple as even in some so-called Christian churches today ([see note](#)). (E.g., the large cathedrals that are all through post-Christian Europe - [see picture of a so called saint holding 2 eyeballs](#) One of her visitors has left a votive offering depicting eyes to indicate her affliction.). (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

[Wikipedia](#) - votive offering is one or more objects displayed or deposited, without the intention of recovery or use, in a sacred place for broadly religious purposes. Such items are a feature of modern and ancient societies and are generally made in order to gain favor with supernatural forces.

**Luke 21:6 "As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."**

KJV Luke 21:6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

- **days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another** Luke 19:44-48; 1 Kings 9:7-9; 2 Chronicles 7:20-22; Isaiah 64:10,11; Jeremiah 7:11-14; Jeremiah 26:6,9,18; Lamentations 2:6-8; 4:1; 5:18; Ezekiel 7:20-22; Daniel 9:26,27; Micah 3:12; Zechariah 11:1; 14:2; Mt 24:2; Mark 13:2; Acts 6:13,14
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:5-7 Jesus' Description of the Temple's Destruction](#) - John MacArthur



Rocks left after Temple Destroyed

## **JESUS DESCRIBES THE UNTHINKABLE FOR THE TEMPLE THOUGHT TO BE UNSINKABLE!**

### **Synoptic parallel accounts:**

Matthew 24:2+ And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

Mark 13:2+ And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."

The picture above represents stones from the [Western Wall](#) which testify to the veracity of Jesus' prophecy (cf "the stones cry out") fulfilled by Roman soldiers in 70 AD. Robertson adds that "Some of these stones at the southeastern and southwestern angles survive today and measure from twenty to forty feet long and weigh a hundred tons. Jesus had, of course, often observed them."

**As for these things which you are looking at**- John Phillips labels Lk 21:5 as the "limited view of the crowd" and Lk 21:6-7 as the "larger view of the Christ." In Matthew and Mark Jesus began with a question "Do you see these great buildings?" (Mk 13:2, cf Mt 24:2) Jesus does not generalize, but specifically addresses the beautiful Temple complex over which the disciples were marveling (see verb below which Jesus chose to describe their "*looking*").

In Matthew 24:2+ Jesus prefaces His warning with "**Truly I say to you**" where truly is Greek word "Amen" which when combined with "I say" emphasizes that what is being said is a solemn declaration of what is true. This exact phrase "**Truly I say to you**" (*amen lego humin*) is used 61 times, all in the Gospels and all by Jesus which makes for a lot of "solemn statements!"

**Truly I say** - Matt. 6:2; Matt. 6:5; Matt. 6:16; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 10:15; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 11:11; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 18:3; Matt. 18:13; Matt. 18:18; Matt. 18:19; Matt. 19:23; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 21:21; Matt. 21:31; Matt. 23:36; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 24:34; Matt. 24:47; Matt. 25:12; Matt. 25:40; Matt. 25:45; Matt. 26:13; Matt.

26:21; Mk. 3:28; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 10:15; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 11:23; Mk. 12:43; Mk. 13:30; Mk. 14:18; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 4:24; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 21:32; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 5:19; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:51; Jn. 8:58; Jn. 10:1; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 13:20; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 16:23

**You are looking at** (2334) (**theoreo** from **theaomai** = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; cp **theoros** = a spectator; English = theater) means to observe with sustained attention, like a spectator looking with interest and attention to details often with the implication that what was observed was something unusual. As **Vincent** explains **theoreo** meant "more than simple seeing. The verb means looking steadfastly, as one who has an interest in the object, and with a view to search into and understand it: to look inquiringly and intently. (And even with a sense of amazement.) The present tense pictures them continually staring at the site!

**Days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another**- Jesus begins His prophecy regarding the magnificent Temple complex. As discussed below, the **days** that **will come** predict the destruction of the Temple by the Roman General Titus in 70 AD. Jesus did not set a date but gave a definitive decree of destruction which was fulfilled perfectly. In fairness, it should be noted that some writers consider Jesus' statement a hyperbolic statement (figure of speech) because the Western Wall stones remained intact. But if one focuses on the Temple and the buildings and walls of that complex, there was not left one stone upon another. The destruction was so complete that today there is true difficulty learning the actual site of the original Temple.

**John Phillips** points out that the Romans never intended to destroy the Temple in 70 A D - The Roman conqueror Titus, during the siege of Jerusalem, ordered that the temple was to be spared. His edict ran counter to the word of Christ who had decreed its utter ruin. The word of Christ prevailed. As the terrible battle raged toward its end, the temple somehow caught fire. Its vast treasure of gold melted in the flames. Some of the gold found its way into the crevices between the massive stones. The Roman soldiers, hungry for spoil, tore the stones apart. (Explore the Gospel of Luke)

**MacArthur** feels that Jesus' "words would be fulfilled literally in A.D. 70, when the Romans, the human means of divine wrath, erected scaffolds around the walls of the temple and its buildings, filled them with wood and other flammable material, and set them on fire. The intense heat from the fires caused the stones to crumble. After it was further dismantled and sifted to find all the **melted gold**, the rubble was thrown down into the Kidron Valley. Only the huge foundation stones remained largely intact. Those stones, however, were not part of the Temple itself, but supports for the retaining wall." (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Luke** uses the phrase "**the days will come**" (or "are coming") to refer to a future event within world history (Luke 5:35; 17:22; 19:43, 23:29).

**Not be left...not be torn down** - Both are strong negatives (ou not me), but Jesus is even more emphatic in Mark's parallel (Mk 13:2) which uses two double negatives (**ou me...ou me** - each "ou me" alone being the strongest way to state a negative in the Greek), marking Jesus' prophecy as emphatically definitive! None left standing and none that are not torn down! And to no surprise, this is exactly what happened.

As the story goes in 70 AD, the Roman general Titus ordered his soldiers **not** to destroy the Temple, but in the heat of battle a soldier threw a torch inside the building igniting the flammable tapestries inside. The gold plating on the inner walls melted and seeped into the cavities between the stones. The Romans removed the stones to get at the gold, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy. The stones of the Western Wall (often called the Wailing Wall), that support the Temple Mount can be seen today, as fine examples of the type of Herodian stonework that would have also been used to construct the buildings which were destroyed on the Temple Mount. They make up the retaining wall holding up the Temple Mount. So as far as the Temple proper was concerned there was no stone left upon another, as Jesus had predicted.

**J. Simons** - If Christ's prophecy about the destruction of the Herodian Temple, not a stone of which was to remain in place ... referred to the **temple proper or to the entire block of buildings within the outer enclosure** no prophecy has been fulfilled more literally, since the very site of the sacred edifice and the disposition of all the accessory buildings have become matters of discussion." **A T Robertson** adds "Only the foundation stones remain."

**Torn down** (2647) (**kataluo** from **kata** = down, intensifies **luo** = loosen, dissolve, demolish) means literally to loosen down (unloose) and then to utterly destroy or to overthrow completely. **Kataluo** was used literally of destroying, demolishing or dismantling an edifice even brick by brick (stone by stone)! Here of course it means to throw down the stones of the Temple so completely that not one would be left on another!

Josephus, War VII. i. 1: "Caesar [Titus] ordered the whole city and the Temple to be razed to the ground."

Note that Jesus had given the nation of Israel a number of prior warnings (and of course the warning here in Luke 21 is only to the disciples, for He had finished warning the nation). Matthew and Mark record the warning of the fig tree that withered (Mt 21:19-20, Mk 11:14,20-21, not found in Luke), all three synoptists record the parable of the vineyard (Lk 20:16, Mt 21:40-41, Mk 12:9), and Mark and Luke record the condemnation of the religious leaders (Lk 20:47, Mark 12:40, cf Jesus' lament Mt 23:37-39)

Recall that this is not Jesus' first warning prediction in the Gospel of Luke (but it would prove to be His final warning) for earlier he had recorded...

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! "Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (Luke 13:34-35-note, distinct from His similar warning - Mt 23:37-39)

"The days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." (AND ALMOST LIKE HE WAS GIVING A PREVIEW OF "COMING ATTRACTIONS") Jesus entered the Temple (COURT OF THE GENTILES) and began to drive out those who were selling, (Lk 19:43-44-note)

So while these prior pronouncements were that the Holy City would be destroyed, now He specifically mentions the destruction of the magnificent Temple.

**William Lane** comments that "Paradoxically, the prophet Haggai had used the phrase "stone upon stone" in his appeal to the people to resume the work of rebuilding the Temple (Hag. 2:15). Now Jesus announces the approach of a day when utter devastation will overtake the city and the Temple will be systematically dismantled....Malachi 3:1-6-note had described the coming of the Lord to his Temple in the context of judgment for the refining and purifying of his people. In this context the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 is to be understood as the judgment of God upon the rebelliousness of his people, and not simply the response of Imperial Rome to insurrection." (Ibid)

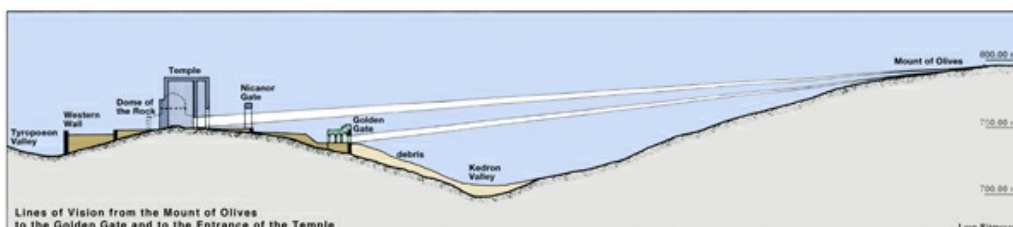
**Stein** - All too often one is enamored with the technical and artistic beauty of an object and is not aware of the spiritual poverty, blindness, and even evil that may underlie it. Jesus saw the latter and not so much the physical beauty of the temple. (NAC)

**ESV Study Bible** on Luke 21:5-24 - Most of this material is found also in Mark, but (assuming that Luke built on Mark's account) Luke has added Luke 21:12, 15, 18, 20-22, 23-26a, 28. As is also the case earlier in Luke (cf. Lk 17:22; 19:43-44), the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is used by Jesus as a pattern or a "type" (a typological example) that points to the ultimate destruction that will come at the end of the age when Christ returns.

**Luke 21:7 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"**

KJV Luke 21:7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

- **Teacher, when therefore will these things happen** Luke 21:32; Daniel 12:6,8; Mt 24:3; Mark 13:3,4; John 21:21,22; Acts 1:6,7
- **what will be the sign when these things are about to take place** Luke 21:20,21,27,28; Mt 24:15,16; Mark 13:14
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:5-7 Jesus' Description of the Temple's Destruction](#) - John MacArthur



## LUKE'S VERSION OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

The synoptic passages add some additional insights:

Matthew 24:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Mark 13:3-4 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** At the outset the reader needs to make a decision in regard to their approach to the interpretation of the Olivet Discourse. There are two main choices:

(1) Jesus' prophecies were all perfectly fulfilled in 70 A D which would be equivalent to a [preterist interpretation](#). In other words, this interpretation sees all the events as historically fulfilled.

(2) Jesus' prophecies have a near and far fulfillment. In other words there is a near fulfillment in 70 A D and there will be a final fulfillment at the end of this age immediately preceding Jesus' Second Coming. The comments you are reading take the latter approach, as this approach fits best with a literal reading of the Scriptures. Note that Luke's version focuses more on the near fulfillment than do the other two synoptic versions, especially Matthews version (Mt 24:1-51-verse by verse commentary).

**Comment** - For more discussion on how these "**general signs**" in Luke 21:8-19 have been variously interpreted see introductory notes on Luke 21:8

It is worth noting that even esteemed preachers like **C H Spurgeon** (not a dispensationalist) recognized the destruction of the Temple in 70 A D did not fulfill Jesus' prophecies in the Olivet Discourse, writing that "**We must regard the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple as being a kind of rehearsal of what is yet to be.**" (Amen to that word from the Prince of Preachers!) (Bold font added)

**Matthew Poole** (1624–1679) a respected English Nonconformist expositor (not a dispensationalist) wrote that "Most divines think that God in the destruction of Jerusalem **intended to give a specimen of the general conflagration, and ruin of the world at the last day**; so as the signs of the same kind with those seen before Jerusalem was destroyed, **shall be seen before the great and terrible day of our Lord's coming to judge the world.**" (And again "*Amen*" to the interpretation which results when one simply and literally reads the text!)

**They questioned Him, saying** - Luke does not tell us where this takes place but comparing with the other 2 accounts it is clear that they asked their question while Jesus "**was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple**" Recall as He came out of the Temple, He would have descended down the slope into the Kidron Valley and then up again to the Mount of Olives where one has a panoramic view of the Temple and the entire city of Jerusalem (see schematic diagram above).

Luke's account does not identify the "**they**" but Matthew 24:3 says "**the disciples came to Him privately**" and Mk 13:3 reveals these disciples were "**Peter and James and John and Andrew.**"

As **J Vernon McGee** says Herod's Temple and "Its magnificence would soon be gone. It would soon lie in rubble, not one stone left upon another. And, friend, that is the way you and I should see the wealth of this world. It won't be here long; it will soon pass away."

**Questioned** (1905)([eperotao](#) from [epí](#) = an intensifier + [erōtāō](#) = to ask, inquire of, beg of) means to put a question to someone, and was even used in a legal setting meaning to interrogate.

**Teacher** (1320)([didaskalos](#) from [didasko](#) = teach to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught <> cp [didaskalía](#)) is one who provides instruction or systematically imparts truth.

**Didaskalos** was used frequently in the Gospels in addressing Jesus and corresponds with the title of "**Rabbi**" (not used by Luke) - Mt 8:19; 12:38; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36; Mk 4:38; 9:17, 38; 10:17, 20, 35; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1; Lk 3:12; 7:40; 9:38; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21, 28, 39; 21:7; John 8:4;

## THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

**When therefore will these things happen** - The Synoptic accounts are similar except that Matthew's version (Mt 24:3) has two

additional questions "Tell us, when will these things happen, and (2) what will be the sign of Your coming, and (3) of the end of the age?"

What are "these things?" Notice that in Luke 21:6 Jesus had just used the phrase "these things" which you are looking at" which in context clearly refers to the Temple. So the question in Luke is focused on the disciples' concern of when the Temple would be destroyed. They did not question Jesus' prophecy that the Temple would be destroyed, but wanted to know when this would happen.

**What will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"**- The disciples are not asking for a **sign** because they wanted to have a [warning](#) of when the disaster would occur. Luke (Lk 21:7) and Mark (Mk 13:4) are almost identical and want to know the "when." (Luke's version does add a "what" question.) As noted above Matthew includes another question (one question or two questions) about signs of the end of this age -- "**what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?**"

So if we include Matthew's questions, the disciples asked Jesus three questions. Remember that the disciples still had it fixed in their mind that **all three events** (alluded to in questions #1-3) would occur at the same time, but Jesus clarified the eschatological views which they as well most first century Jews held (see [Schurer's summary of their beliefs regarding the coming of the Messiah](#) - the Jews viewed the Messiah as "coming" but did not see him as "returning").

Comparing the synoptic gospels, we have three questions...

1. **When** will the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple occur?
2. **What** is the sign of His Coming? (Mt 24:3 - "Coming" is [parousia](#) which can also mean "being present" or "presence." At this point of course Jesus had not died or departed, so they are probably using parousia to speak of His presence for they were still expecting Him to bring in the Kingdom of God (a belief which seems to persist even after His death, burial and resurrection, as implied by their question in Acts 1:6-note).
3. **What** is the sign for the end of the age? (Mt 24:3-note)

As stated above some writers lump #2 and #3 under one question having two parts. Regarding Matthew's phrase "the end of the age" it is worth noting that the Jews in Jesus' day recognized two ages, the age they were in, and the age to come or the [Messianic Age \(Wikipedia\)](#). J Vernon McGee notes that in "Matthew's and Mark's gospels the emphasis is put upon the last two questions."

**Constable** observes that "Luke did not record the other questions (**Ed: #2** and **#3** above) they asked Him about the sign of His coming and of the end of the age (Mt 24:3). Matthew and Mark concentrated on Jesus' answer to the question about Jesus' return, but Luke dealt mainly with His answer to the question about the temple's destruction."

So while Luke does not record questions #2 and #3, and his main focus is on answering question #1, it is notable that His initial answer in Luke 21:8-9 actually addresses questions #2 and #3. Be aware that as Jesus begins to answer the disciples in Luke, the third question "What is the sign for the end of the age?" is answered first. Then note that the disciples' first question "What will be the sign when these things are about to take place" is answered next. **What is the sign for the fall of Jerusalem?** Luke is the only Gospel writer who gives Jesus' detailed answer regarding the first question in Luke 21:20-24.

Matthew and Mark do not really address Jesus' answer to the disciples' question about the Temple but as alluded to earlier focus primarily on His answer to questions #2 and #3.

Finally, note that the second question (#2) by the disciples in is answered last. **What is the sign for the Second Coming?** Matthew and Mark give much more detail than Luke does on the sign of His coming. For example, both Matthew and Mark describe the **abomination of desolation** (Mt 24:15-note, Mk 13:14) and the **Great Tribulation** (Mt 24:21-note, Mk 13:19 albeit Mark does not use word "great"), neither of which are described by Luke (in contrast to what some writers try to say!)

**Sign** (4592) ([semeion](#) from **sema** = sign) is something that serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight. A **sign** is an object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the probable presence or occurrence of something else. A sign is a perceptible indication of something which is not immediately apparent and so it serves as a visible clue that something will happen.

**Wayne Detzler** on **semeion** - Early in its use this word meant a visible sign which someone saw. For instance, when Constantine was embroiled in battle he saw the sign of a cross and the words, "In this sign conquer." This turned him to Christianity, and he granted toleration to the Christians in 313. So first of all semeion meant a real or imagined visible sign. Later it came to mean the intervention of the deities in our world. This is the meaning which the Bible attaches to miracles, when God breaks into the natural world to accomplish some special feat. ([New Testament words in today's language](#)).

| SYNOPSIS OF OLIVET DISCOURSE |          |       |       |             |
|------------------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------------|
| PERIOD                       | Mt 24,25 | Mk 13 | Lk 21 | DESCRIPTION |
|                              |          |       |       |             |

|  |                |             |              |  |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------|--|
| Beginning of sorrows (Mt 24:8)                   | Mt 24:3-13     | Mk 13:5-13  | Lk 21:8-19   | The NT period, before the fall of Jerusalem. (May correspond to the first four seals of Rev 6) |
| Days of Vengeance (Lk 21:22, Isa 61:2)           | -              | -           | Lk 21:20-24a | Desolation of Jerusalem under Titus, AD 70   |
| <a href="#">Times of the Gentiles</a> (Lk 21:24) | Mt 24:14       | Mk 13:10    | Lk 21:24b    | Jerusalem is subdued by the Gentiles and Gospel goes to all the world (cf Rev 11:1-2+)         |
| <a href="#">Great Tribulation</a> (Mt 24:21)     | Mt 24:15-28    | Mk 13:14-23 | -            | The abomination of desolation in middle of <a href="#">Daniel's 70th Week</a> (Da 9:27+)       |
| Appearing of Son of Man (Mt 24:30)               | Mt 24:29-31    | Mk 13:24-27 | Lk 21:25-28  | Cosmic signs, return of Christ in glory  |
| Interlude  | Mt 24:32-25:30 | Mk 13:28-37 | Lk 21:29-36  | Parables and exhortations to watchfulness  |
| Separation                                       | Mt 25:31-46    | -           | -            | Judgment of the Sheep and Goats  |

### Brief Excursus on Jewish Eschatology

The Jews of the first century had a fairly well developed eschatology as it related to their expectations regarding the Messiah. However as alluded to above, their timing of when the events would take place was very mistaken. They did not see the intervening Church Age which makes perfect sense because there was no Church in existence before Acts 2. They also did not see the two comings of the Messiah, but expected one arrival in which he would be triumphant over their enemies (this of course was why the Jews were so jubilant at Jesus' "**Triumphal Entry**" cf Lk 19:36-38-note). And recall also that while they did attribute incredible powers to the Messiah, the Jews were not expecting the Messiah to be God. Son of David yes, but not God. So the following list of events is what the Jews expected when Messiah arrived. What is fascinating is that these events while not a Biblically perfect chronology, they are not that far removed from what will transpire at the Second Coming of Messiah.

**John Phillips** comments on the Olivet Discourse that "This important prophetic statement gathers together the main threads of Old Testament end-time prophecy (**ED: WHICH WAS THE BASIS FOR MOST OF THE JEWISH VIEWS LISTED BELOW REGARDING THEIR MESSIANIC HOPE**) and the threads of New Testament prophecy, weaves them into an imposing fabric of eschatology, and embroiders the fabric with flashes of insight from the Lord's omniscient foreknowledge."

The following summary is taken from John MacArthur's sermon ([see this sermon for expansion of each of the following points](#)) and much of his information is derived from the work of [Emil Schurer](#) (See Schurer's discussion of **The Messianic Hope** - Caveat - Note that I do not agree with all of Schurer's conclusions - e.g., he dates the writing of Daniel circa 164 BC four centuries later than it was actually penned by the prophet Daniel!).

- (i) Before the Messiah came there would be a time of terrible tribulation.
- (ii) Into this chaos there would come Elijah as the forerunner and herald of the Messiah.
- (iii) Then there would enter the Messiah.
- (iv) The nations would ally themselves and gather themselves together against the champion of God.
- (v) The result would be the total destruction of these hostile powers.
- (vi) There would follow the renovation of Jerusalem.
- (vii) The Jews who were dispersed all over the world would be gathered into the city of the new Jerusalem.
- (viii) Palestine would be the centre of the world and the rest of the world subject to it. All the nations would be subdued.

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**False Predictions** - Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age? — Matthew 24:3 - News that a solar eclipse would take place on July 22, 2009, brought an alarming prediction. It was predicted that the eclipse would sufficiently affect gravitational pull, causing tectonic plates to "pop a seam," resulting in a sizable earthquake and a

subsequent devastating tsunami in Japan. The US Geological Survey responded that no scientists “have ever predicted a major earthquake. They do not know how, and they do not expect to know how, anytime in the foreseeable future.”

There have also been many false predictions about the date of Christ’s second coming—despite our Lord’s emphatic words: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Mt. 24:36). Christ told His followers that instead of trying to predict the date of His return, they should “watch” (Mt 24:42) and “be ready” (Mt 24:44).

Peter warned, “The day of the Lord will come like a thief.” Then he added: “What kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives” (2 Peter 3:10-11NIV).

Striving to live for God—that’s what Jesus wants us to focus our energy on while we wait for that “blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13-note).

When someone says, “I can discern  
Exactly when Christ will return,”  
Don’t be deceived or led astray—  
The Lord said we can’t know the day.  
—Sper

**Look for Christ’s return,  
and you’ll live for Christ’s glory.**

**Luke 21:8 And He said, "See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near'. Do not go after them.**

KJV Luke 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

- **See to it that you are not misled** Jeremiah 29:8; Mt 24:4,5,11,23-25; Mark 13:5,6,21-23; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Ephesians 5:6; 2 Th 2:3,9-11; 2 Timothy 3:13; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 1:7; Revelation 12:9
- **for many will come in My name , saying, 'I am He,'** John 5:43; Acts 5:36,37; 8:9,10
- **and, 'The time is near'. Do not go after them** Mt 3:2; 4:17; Revelation 1:3
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:9-11 The World in Conflict and Distress](#) - John MacArthur

## **JESUS BEGINS TO ANSWER THE DISCIPLES' QUESTIONS**

Below are the synoptic passages in **Matthew** and **Mark** that parallel **Luke's** passages to help you see the similarity between all three versions...

Luke 21:8 And He said, “**See to it** (present imperative) that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not go after them.

Matthew 24:4-5-note And Jesus answered and said to them, “**See to it** (present imperative) that no one misleads you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.

Mark 13:5-6+ And Jesus began to say to them, “**See to it** (present imperative) that no one misleads you. 6 “Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He!’ and will mislead many.

Luke 21:9 “When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately.”

Matthew 24:6+ “You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.

Mark 13:7+ “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end.

Luke 21:10 Then He continued by saying to them, “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against

kingdom,

Matthew 24:7a+ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom..."

Mark 13:8a+ "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;"

Luke 21:11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and **there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.** (Words in bold only in Luke 21).

Matthew 24:7b+ "and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes."

Mark 13:8b+ there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines.

## BIRTH PANGS

From a comparison of the three synoptic Gospels, while the similarities are undeniable, there is a difference in that both Matthew 24:8+ and Mark 13:8c+ picture the catastrophic events as **merely the beginning of birth pangs** which is a phrase not found in Luke 21 (who was a physician and knew birth pangs!). What Jesus is saying is that **these things** (described in Mt 24:4-7, Mark 13:5-8 and by extension Lk 21:8-11) will intensify as the world gets closer to the "delivery date," **the end** of the age, the coming of Messiah, the "birth" of His Messianic Kingdom. When **birth pangs** begin, birth generally soon follows. Having delivered a number of babies, it has been my experience that as one gets closer to the actual delivery of the baby, the **birth pangs** increase in quality and quantity. It would appear that Jesus' figure of speech strongly implies that **birth pangs** (false messiahs, wars, earthquakes, famines, plagues, etc) will increase in number and intensity as **the end** draws near. Indeed, the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ (specifically Revelation 6:1-19:21) describes an intensification of all of **these things** which Jesus had alluded to and which have been occurring for the past 2000 years ([See note below](#)).

**R T France** notes that "In later rabbinic literature the phrase "the labor pain (always singular) of the Messiah" comes to be used almost as a technical term for the period of suffering preceding the Messiah's coming." (NICNT - Matthew)

**David Turner on birth pangs** - The use of the pains of a woman in labor as a metaphor for eschatological troubles and/or the woe of God's judgment is found elsewhere in Jewish literature and the NT (Isa 13:8-note; Isa 26:17; 66:7-8; Jer 4:31; 6:24; 22:23; Jer 30:5-7-note; Jer 48:41; Hos 13:13; Mic 4:9-13-note; Mark 13:8; 1 Thes 5:3-note; Rev 12:2-note; cf. John 16:20-22; Gal 4:19; (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 11: Matthew and Mark)

**Weber** on 3 implications of **birth pangs** - **First**, "beginning" implies that patterns of war, famine, and earthquakes do have some connection with the end. But they do not necessarily indicate that the end is near. Adding to this concept is the idea of "birth pains," which begin some time before an actual birth. **Second**, birth is one of the most painful experiences in a woman's life. Jesus, choice of word picture indicates that, when the end does come, it will be very painful for all of humanity. These sorrows are continually experienced in history. But as is true with the birth process, the pains will increase in frequency and intensity until Jesus returns in his power and glory. **Third**, birth is one of the most joyously fulfilling experiences of a woman's life, bringing about the emergence of something precious, beautiful, and highly valued. Jesus' word picture looked beyond the tribulation of God's judgment to the emergence of the fully realized kingdom with Christ in his glory. (Holman New Testament Commentary)

**Craig Blomberg** on **birth pangs** - just as a woman may experience false labor and just as genuine contractions still leave her uncertain about the exact time of delivery, so too the events of Mt 24:4-8 do not enable us to predict the time of Christ's coming. Birth pangs were in fact a common Jewish metaphor to refer to an indeterminate period of distress leading up to the end of this age (e.g., 1 Enoch 62:4; 2 Esdr 4:42; Tg. Ps 18:14). (Matthew, Broadman & Holman Publishers, The New American Commentary)

**ESV Study Bible** - **Birth pains** indicates that there will be a time of suffering prior to the **messianic age** (cf. Ro. 8:22-23). OT prophets use the metaphor to depict terrible suffering in general (cf. Isa. 13:8-note; Isa 21:3; 42:14; Jer. 30:5-7-note; Hos. 13:13) as well as suffering that Israel will endure prior to her deliverance (cf. Isa. 26:17-19; 66:7-11; Jer. 22:23; Mic. 4:9-10-note). (**Comment:** Note allusion to the "Messianic Age" -- this is the age which will follow the church age and which is commonly referred to as the Millennium).

**John Phillips** introduces this section (Lk 21:8-11) commenting that "It is not always easy to be sure whether events described belong to the impending fall of Jerusalem or to the end-of-the-age catastrophes. Probably many of them focus on both because both events have features in common...." (Ibid) (See Five Interpretative Views)

Commenting on the Olivet Discourse in Matthew, **John Phillips** writes "Matthew bracketed the Lord's public ministry between two sermons: the sermon on the mount, in which the emphasis was practical; and the Olivet discourse, in which the emphasis was prophetic. In one sermon we read of the rules of the kingdom; in the other we read of the return of the King. Before giving the sermon on the mount, the Lord was baptized; after giving the Olivet discourse, the Lord was buried. Prior to the first sermon He

proved that the tempter could not conquer Him; after the last sermon He proved that the tomb could not conquer Him." (Exploring the Gospel of Matthew)

**John MacArthur** explains that **birth pangs** is "a very vivid analogy used often in the Scriptures, often by the Jewish writers and so was familiar to Jewish people. **Birth pangs** are an increasing sequence of contractions that finally become fiercely intense and result in the big event, birth. It is an apt analogy for understanding human history. The contractions or the pains, start out light and they increase and they increase and they increase till they reach a point of [excruciation](#) before the big event. So, Jesus is saying these are just the **birth pangs**. These are just the very early birth pains and they've been going on for 2,000 years and have been escalating. And if you want to see what they're going to look like at the very end just before the event then you read Revelation 6-19." ([The World in Conflict and Distress](#))

And so it should not surprise that in the time just before Christ returns in Revelation 19:11-16+, the "**birth pangs**" of each of **these things** will have intensified to such a degree that they will be almost unimaginable. Below are just a few of the examples of the "birth pangs" that will occur at the end of this age...

- **False Christs** - The final greatest human deceiver, the Antichrist - Rev 13:5+ = given authority over the earth for 42 months
- **Wars**- Armies gathering for war at Armageddon - Rev 16:12-14, 16+
- **Famine** - Rider on the ashen horse given to kill 1/4 of the earth with sword and famine - Rev 6:8+
- **Plagues** - 1/3 of mankind was killed by three plagues - Rev 9:18+ (cf Rev 15:1+, Rev 16:21+ = 100 lb hailstones)
- **Earthquakes** - A great earthquake unlike any in the history of the world - Rev 16:18+

**And He said to them** - Jesus now gives His longest recorded answer to any question. Matthew's account is the longest (97 verses in Mt 24:1-25:46). Luke's account (Mt 21:5-36) contains some material not found in Jesus' answer in Matthew and Mark. Clearly this prophetic section is an important topic. Luke 21:8-19 gives the first part of Jesus' answer to the disciples' questions and at first glance it is a very bleak, pessimistic answer which could be summarized as a future which is marked by religious deception, global disasters and persecution of believers. Imagine for a moment you were one of the disciples and you had heard these words! It would have been tempting to "jump ship" before the ship enters the stormy waters!

As **Hiebert** says "Instead of giving them the **sign** they had requested, Jesus began by alerting them to **false signs**." ([The Gospel of Mark- An Expository Commentary](#))

As **Ray Stedman** says Jesus "Big Point" is "Don't Be Fooled! writing "In our understandable haste to come to the great events He predicts for the future, let us not miss the heavy emphasis He makes in this opening word. It is the dominant note of this whole discourse. The age will be a time of great uncertainty as to the meaning of events."

**Comment:** Case in point - one of the finest expositors of our day Dr John MacArthur fell prey to this temptation to read the **signs of the times** -- He was preaching on [Is the Doom of the World Near?](#) in 1972 when the 7 member European Union was planning on adding 3 more members to give it a total of 10. This rightly reminded him of Daniel's prophecy of a coming 10 nation confederacy (cf Da 7:24+) and prompted this comment -

From The Los Angeles Examiner, are you ready for this shock? Los Angeles Examiner, October 29th, the last - 1971, listen. "*The British decision to join the common market has brought Western Europe to the threshold of its strongest union since the nations involved were tied together as part of the Roman Empire 15 centuries ago.*" God said the Roman Empire would be revived in the end days. **You are seeing it happen.** ([Ref](#))

Don't take this wrong - I greatly respect Dr MacArthur's verse by verse expository teaching. My point is that if someone as competent as Dr MacArthur is vulnerable to potentially misinterpret the **signs of the times**, then **ALL** of us are potentially in danger of misreading the **signs of the times**. I know because I have been guilty of doing so! As someone once wisely cautioned me, don't obtain your eschatology from the newspaper! That said to be completely honest, MacArthur may still be proved correct (I too believe the 10 nations will come out of Europe but as of 2022 we have 27 nations in the EU), but clearly those 10 nations were not the 10 nation conspiracy of Daniel 7.

**Stedman** continues "It will be frightfully easy to misinterpret and therefore be misled. The phrase "lead astray" forms the structure around which the whole message is built. He used it again in Mt 24:5...again in Mt 24:11...Once again in Mt 24:24...Because of this continuing possibility, the Lord's exhortation throughout the message is, "**Watch!**", i.e., keep your eyes open. Evaluate! Test! Try the spirits! Bring everything to test that you might understand the true character of movements and pressures, for the predominant note of the age will be one of **deceit and confusion**. Then he proceeds to show to these men that they are already confused in their

thinking that the end of the age lies immediately ahead. From Mt 24:5 through Mt 24:14 he clearly indicates that there would be a rather long, indeterminate period before the end of the age would begin (**Ed**: Some see the long age in Mt 24:5-8, but then see Mt 24:9-14 as occurring at the end of the age). These men knew from the prophet Daniel that the end of the age would not be a single spectacular event but a series of events, covering several years (Ed: I presume Pastor Stedman is referring here to Daniel's Seventieth Week). The Lord begins carefully to trace the age which they could not see, the parenthesis of time in which we now live. If we note carefully the time phrases He employs to lead up to the answer to the disciples' question we shall have no difficulty with this section. He is most emphatically not giving so-called "**signs of the times**" here. To the contrary, he repeatedly indicates that He is tracing the age. For instance, he says in Mt 24:6, "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet." ([The Age of Confusion - Matthew 24:4-14](#))

**See to it that you are not misled** - All 3 synoptic Gospels begin Jesus answer with a warning to the disciples to not be misled. This warning echoes down through the centuries even to our day and will apply to all disciples until the end of this age.

**See to it** (beware, take care, take heed) ([991](#))([blepo](#)) speaks of perception, and frequently implies special contemplation (e.g., often in the sense of "keep your eyes open," or "beware".) In this context **see to it** is a command ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from Jesus calling for disciples (then and now to) to keep directing their attention to the emergence of deceivers and their subtle deceptions in the days preceding the destruction of the Temple and (in context) to the days preceding the end of this age. **W E Vine** helps give us a sense of the meaning of this verb writing that [blepo](#) expresses "a more intentional, earnest contemplation. In Lk 6:41+ = of beholding the mote in a brother's eye; Lk 24:12+ = of beholding the linen clothes in the empty tomb. Acts 1:9+ = of the gaze of the disciples when the Lord ascended."

**Misled** ([4105](#))([planao](#) from **plane** which describes "a wandering"; English = planet) literally means made to wander and thus in the active voice it means to lead astray, cause to wander (cf first use in NT of "straying" sheep = Mt 18:12-13), to mislead, to deceive. To cause one to *wander* from the Truth of God's Word Mt 24:4 and Mk 13:4 use **planao** in this active sense warning of those who would seek to mislead or deceive the disciples. In contrast, Luke has the **passive voice** which speaks more of the disciples as those who can **BE** deceived. Jesus is saying we have to be very careful lest we be deceived.

**For** ([gar](#)) - [Term of explanation](#) - What is Jesus explaining? It is a good habit to ask yourself this question whenever you see a "for" (used to explain something), and many times the answer is straightforward (as here), but other times it will force you to ponder the passage! Jesus is explaining how one might be misled into believing claims such as we are at the end of this age (cf **the end**" Lk 21:9).

## FALSE MESSIAHS

**Many will come** - This is important - not just a few fakers but **many**! In both Matthew and Mark Jesus emphasizes their [modus operandi](#) that they "**will mislead many**." (Mt 24:5, cf Mk 13:6) So **many** will come and **many** will follow them and **many** will be misled. A very sad scenario! False Messiahs have been always been on the scene, but the sobering truth of this prophecy is that **many** would come and sadly **many** would be deceived. I think we could include the current proliferation of prosperity teachers, who are getting rich while leading others into poverty and potentially into eternal separation from God.

**Hiebert** - The first person after the time of Jesus Christ definitely known to have claimed to be the Messiah was Bar Kokhba, the leader of the last great Jewish revolt in A.D. 132. ([Ibid](#))

**Simon bar Kokhba** ([Hebrew](#): שמעון בר כוכבא; died 135 CE), born **Simon ben Kosevah**, was the leader of what is known as the [Bar Kokhba revolt](#) against the [Roman Empire](#) in 132 CE, establishing an independent Jewish state which he ruled for three years as [Nasi](#) ("Prince"). His state was conquered by the Romans in 135 following a two and half-year war.<sup>[a]</sup>The Jewish sage [Rabbi Akiva](#) indulged the possibility that Simon could be the [Jewish messiah](#), and gave him the surname "Bar Kokhba" meaning "Son of the Star" in [Aramaic](#), from the [Star Prophecy](#) verse from Numbers 24:17: "There shall come a star out of [Jacob](#)".The name [Bar Kokhba](#) does not appear in the [Talmud](#) but in ecclesiastical sources. [Rabbinical writers](#) subsequent to Rabbi Akiva did not share Rabbi Akiva's estimation of ben Kosiva. Akiva's disciple, Yose ben Halaphta, in the [Seder 'Olam](#) (chapter 30) called him "bar Koziba" (בר כוזיבא), meaning, "son of the lie".

Some are names we recognize from the news include (1) [Sun Myung Moon](#): considered within the Unification Church as the Messiah and the second coming of Christ. (2) [Jim Jones](#): claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus, Buddha, Vladimir Lenin, and Father Divine prior to leading a mass suicide of his followers. (3) [Marshall Applewhite](#): claimed to be Jesus and the Son of God prior to leading his Heaven's Gate cult mass suicide rendezvous with a space ship hiding behind the comet Hale-Bopp. (4) [David Koresh](#): leader of the Branch Davidian religious sect in Waco, Texas. Claimed to be "the Son of God, the Lamb."

Below are links to a list of people who have been said to be [a messiah](#), either by themselves or by their followers. The list is divided into categories, which are sorted according to date of birth (where known).

1. [Jewish messiah claimants](#) (See [another more in depth article](#))

**EXAMPLE:** [Jesus of Nazareth](#) (c. 4 BC – 30/33 AD), leader of a "marginal Jewish apocalyptic cult"<sup>[4][5][6][7]</sup> who was [crucified](#) by the [Roman Empire](#) for alleged [sedition](#) and is believed by [Christians](#) to have been [resurrected](#).<sup>[8]</sup> Jews who believed him to be the Messiah were originally called [Nazarenes](#) and later they were known as [Jewish Christians](#) (the first Christians).<sup>[9]</sup> [Bahá'ís](#),<sup>[10][11]</sup> [Muslims](#),<sup>[12][13]</sup> and [Christians](#)<sup>[14]</sup> (including [Messianic Jews](#)<sup>[15]</sup>) believe him to be the Messiah.

2. [Christian messiah claimants](#)

3. [Muslim messiah claimants](#)

4. [Other or combination messiah claimants](#)

**Related Resources:**

- [What does it mean that there will be false christs in the end times?](#)
- [Who is Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda? Is Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda the antichrist? \(See Video\)](#)
- [The Christ of the New Age Movement by Ron Rhodes](#)

Jesus' warning brings to mind the false prophecies of Joseph Smith ([reference](#)) and the multitudes ensnared in Mormonism (~4.5 million) having been deceived by a false Gospel and another Jesus (Gal 1:7-8-[note](#)) with the result that many will be lost forever unless they hear and receive the true Gospel of Jesus Christ (Ro 1:16-17, Eph 2:8-9, Ro 10:9-10, Acts 16:31, et al).

**In My name** - This is more literally *upon or on My Name*, "that is, on the strength of; resting their claims on the Name Messiah." (Vincent) This means upon the basis of My Name and My authority. To **come in My Name** means to claim to possess and to use Christ's authority, and in some cases to even claim to be the Christ! "**In my name** means they aim to usurp Jesus' place." (Blomberg)

**Saying, 'I am'** - NET says Jesus "I am the Messiah." The pronoun "**He**" is not in the Greek text so literally they are saying "**I AM**" which is the "**ego eimi**" the same thing Yahweh said in Exodus 3:6 and Ex 3:14 (God said to Moses, **I AM** (Lxx = "ego eimi") **WHO I AM**"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, '**I AM** has sent me to you.'") and what Jesus Himself said in John 8:58 (Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am**.")) which caused the Jews to seek to stone Him (Jn 8:59) because they thought He was blaspheming by declaring "I Am," a phrase they recognized as the equivalent of His saying "I am God!" That is what these many deceivers will also be saying, so remain on high alert!

Jesus' warning in Matthew 24:5+ is even more explicit for there He says these deceivers will flat out lie and say **'I am the Christ'**, where the definitive article "*the*" precedes Christ ("*o Christos*") in the Greek indicating that they are claiming to be the one and only Messiah! This helps understand how these spiritual shysters will be able to lead others astray. It is their claim that they are **the Messiah** and this claim gives authority and authenticity to what they say (cf "in My Name").

**Am** ([1510](#))(**eimi**) is a verb which basically expresses being and so means "to be," "to exist," "to happen" or "to be present." and is one of the most common verbs in the NT (2462x in all its conjugations in 2098 verses; the exact form **eimi** is found 287 verses). Strictly speaking **eimi** is the first person singular present tense, indicative mood; a prolonged form of a primary and defective verb. Because **eimi** is used so frequently in such a variety of contexts, the following discussion is at best a **simple summary** of the manifold uses of **eimi**. Click [here](#) and scroll down to read **Thayer's** full discussion of **eimi**.

**Ego eimi** - As alluded to above Jesus Himself used **ego eimi** to express His eternal self-existence (without beginning, without end) in Jn 8:58. He was saying He was Yahweh (I Am the One Who Is). Jesus is clearly claiming that He is God! The [Jehovah's Witness](#) New World Translation ([a "mistranslation"](#)) (2013) translates Jn 8:58 incorrectly as "*I have been*" which Greek scholars say is absolutely incorrect! Compare other **'I Am'** statements by Jesus = Jn 4:26, 8:24, 28, 13:19, 18:5, 6 ["they drew back and fell to the ground!" = His Name "I Am" literally knocked an entire band of from 300-600 soldiers backward abruptly and hard onto the ground! His Name is indeed powerful!], Jn 18:8. see similar use in Ex 3:14 above). In Ge 17:1 God addresses Abram declaring "I am (**ego eimi**) God" (cf similar uses in Ge 26:24, 31:13, 46:3, Ex 3:6, 7:5, 8:18, 14:4, 18, 20:2, 29:46, etc). Note that there are about 174 uses of "**ego eimi**" in the Septuagint and 48 uses in the NT, but not all uses refer to God (e.g., Mt 14:27). There are 24 uses of **ego eimi** in John's Gospel and most do refer to the Messiah. E.g., in the first occurrence, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman "**I Am**" (**ego eimi**) (Jn 4:26) when she

made a reference to the Messiah (Jn 4:25). In fact **ego eimi** introduces His great "I am" statements in John = **"I am"..."the bread of life"** (Jn 6:35, 41, 48, 51), **"the Light of the world,"** (Jn 8:12), **"the door"** (Jn 10:7, 9), **"the good shepherd"** (Jn 10:11, 14), **"the resurrection and the life,"** (Jn 11:25), **"the Way and the Truth and the Life"** (Jn 14:6); **"the true Vine"** (Jn 15:1, 5). At Paul's conversion on the Damascus Road Jesus told him **"I am (ego eimi) Jesus Whom you are persecuting."** (Acts 9:5). In the final use of **ego eimi** in Scripture Jesus affirms **"I am** the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." (Rev 22:16 [note](#))

**Warren Wiersbe on I am the Christ** (Messiah) - The Jews have often been led astray by false prophets and false Christs. The rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:1–2+ is the Antichrist, that final world dictator who will lead the nations astray. He will begin his career as a peacemaker, signing a (7 year) covenant with Israel to protect her from her enemies (Daniel 9:27-note) (but he breaks the covenant at 3.5 years unleashing his fury against the Jews and Christians during the 3.5 year Great Tribulation in Mt 24:21+ = the Time of Jacob's Distress in Jer 30:7+ = a Time of Distress in Da 12:1+). Israel will welcome this man as their great benefactor (John 5:43). (Borrow [Be courageous](#))

**Saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near'** - Neither Matthew 24:5 nor Mark 13:6 record they will say we are near the end of this age, only Luke. So they not only (1) claim they are Messiah but (2) claim they know the time is at hand. We all have an inherent desire to know about the future, especially end times prophecy. Jesus is warning that there would be individuals who would seek to take advantage of this propensity for prophecy and would deceive them and in so doing would turn them aside from the simple teaching of the Gospel.

As an aside, there is a tendency in the younger evangelical church to shy away from serious study, preaching and teaching on Bible prophecy ("too divisive," "too confusing," "no one can know who has the correct interpretation," and the list goes on). **Beloved, this is (potentially) a deadly deficiency in the modern church.** Why would I say that? Think about it. If conservative, orthodox leaders fail to teach on this subject, the "sheep" are wide open to the plethora of prophetic speculations promulgated on the internet, airways and books. Is it any surprise that most of the cults prey on prophecy? God gave us the Bible to **reveal**, not to **conceal** and **confuse**. God gave us prophecy to energize our hope (absolute certainty of future good), to stabilize our faith and not to satisfy our curiosity. **Bible prophecy is not easy to put together the pieces, but it is not impossible** That said, **see discussion of Bible Prophecy** which includes a section on why it should be studied.

**Excerpt from Gotquestions** - Biblical prophecy plays two roles. It foretells the future, and it explains what the positive or negative results of future events will be. Prophecy may announce events that bring joy and pleasure or fear and foreboding. When prophecy is ignored, it is usually because the hearers don't like what they hear for one reason or another. Biblical prophecy is not usually general in nature. It normally is very specific as to how it will affect someone or something. But it is always dependable and worthy of our complete trust (ED: cf Joshua 21:45+, Joshua 23:14+). We can allow prophecy to help shape our lives, giving us direction and guidance in serving our Lord. It should be a source of strength and instruction for us. Unlike what we hear called "prophecy" today, both in the church and outside the church, true biblical prophecy is always accurate and precise. What God prophesies always occurs. ([How Can We Trust That Bible Prophecy Can Indeed Predict the Future?](#))

**The time is near** - To what **"time"** is Jesus referring? Note the context - in Lk 21:9 we see another important expression of time "the end." While one might postulate that this refers to the end of the Temple in 70 A D, this word **"end"** ([telos](#)) almost certainly refers to the end of this age and the time preceding the Second Coming. The parallel account in Matthew 24 uses [telos](#) three times, all in the context of the **end of this age** (Mt 24:6+, Mt 24:13, Mt 24:14+). So these deceivers who claim the authority of God and/or Messiah ("in My Name"), will make claims that the **time** of Jesus' return is near. In short they are setting dates regarding an event that Jesus clearly said no one knows but the Father (Mt 24:36, 42)

**Guzik** recounts "One notable example of this was the prophetic expectation in 1843 with [William Miller](#) in the United States. Because of his prophetic interpretations, calculations, and publications (ED: [see picture newspaper page with his bizarre "calculations!"](#)) Note depiction of the angel [right bottom corner] blowing horn next to the final [false] calculation of **"1843"**, there were hundreds of thousands in the United States who were convinced that Jesus would return in 1843. When He did not, there was great disappointment, with some falling away, and some cultic groups spawned from the prophetic fervor." ([Enduring Word](#))

Here is what the Bible says about those like **William Miller** who try to set the date of Christ's return...

Luke 12:40+ "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Acts 1:7+ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own

authority;

**Do not go after them** - While this is strictly speaking not a command in the Greek, it is far more than a suggestion from Jesus!

**MacArthur** comments "The Lord's followers are not to go after them. Subsequent history would prove the timeliness of His warning: The passing centuries have seen false messiahs, each claiming to be the one so eagerly anticipated by the Jewish people. Of these self-proclaimed deliverers, some were simply self-deceived, while others were purposefully exploitative; some sought personal prestige, others to rescue their people from oppression; some advocated violence, others prayer and fasting; some professed to be political deliverers, others to be religious reformers. But though their motives, methods, and claims varied, they all had one thing in common—they were satanic counterfeits of the true Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. About a.d. 44 Theudas ([see below](#)) (not the same individual mentioned in Acts 5:36) promised his followers that he would part the Jordan River. But before he was able to do so, Roman troops attacked and massacred many of his followers. The Egyptian for whom Paul was mistaken (Acts 21:38) had boasted that he would command the walls of Jerusalem to fall down. But, like Theudas, his plans were also foiled by Roman soldiers. Although the Egyptian managed to escape his attackers, several hundred of his followers were killed or captured (Josephus, Antiquities 20.8.6; Wars 2.13.5). In the second century Simon Bar Cochba ([See note above](#)) ("son of a star"; cf. Nu 24:17), who was identified as the Messiah by the leading rabbi of the time, led a major Jewish uprising against Rome, conquering Jerusalem for three years, where he was called king and messiah. The Romans crushed the rebellion, retook Jerusalem, and massacred Bar Cochba and five to six hundred thousand of his followers. A fifth-century false messiah on the island of Crete promised to part the Mediterranean Sea so his followers could walk to Palestine on dry land. But the sea refused to part and some of his followers drowned. In the seventeenth century Shabbethai Zebi proclaimed himself "king of the kings of the earth," and attracted a widespread following among the Jews of western Europe. Zebi later converted to Islam and was eventually executed. (John MacArthur, John 12-21, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 2008], 11-12) The long parade of charlatans claiming to be Christ will culminate in the ultimate deceiving false messiah, the Antichrist, the "man of lawlessness ... the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God ... [the] lawless one ... whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (2 Th 2:3-4, 8-10-note; cf. Rev. 13:1-18-[note](#)) There will be no mistaking Christ's return. Jesus said, "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day" (Luke 17:24-note). Not only must believers be wary of false christs, but they must also be ready for Jesus' return. Earlier in Luke's gospel Jesus told His followers (Lk 12:35-40-note) (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Josephus** ([J. AJ 20.97](#)) on **Theudas** - (See also [Wikipedia Article on Theudas](#))

NOW it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, **(1)** persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem. This was what befell the Jews in the time of Cuspius Fadus's government.

**(1)** This Theudas, who arose under Fadus the procurator, about A.D. 45 or 46, could not be that Theudas who arose in the days of the taxing, under Cyrenius, or about A.D. 7, Acts v. 36, 37. Who that earlier Theudas was, see the note on B. XVII. ch. 10. sect. 5.

**Josephus** describes a tragic example of those who "went after" these "false Messiahs" when the Romans came against Jerusalem (in 70 A D) recording that the Roman soldiers...

*"also burnt down the **treasury chambers; in which was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments, and other precious goods there reposed. And, to speak all in a few words, there it was that the entire riches of the Jews were heaped up together: while the rich people had there built themselves chambers [to contain such furniture]. The soldiers also came to the rest of the cloisters that were in the outer [court of the] temple: whither the women, and children, and a great mixed multitude of the people fled in number about six thousand. But before Caesar had determined any thing about these people, or given the commanders any orders relating to them, the soldiers were in such a rage, that they set that cloister on fire. By which means it came to pass that some of these were destroyed by throwing themselves down headlong; and some were burnt in the cloisters themselves. Nor did any one of them escape with his life. A false prophet was the occasion of these peoples destruction: who had made a publick proclamation in the city, that very***

day, that "God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance." ([Josephus 6.5.2](#)) They were misled by a would-be messenger of God! They had not read Matthew, Mark or Luke's Gospels in which Jesus had warned be alert for these genre of men!

**Tony Garland** on [Jewish claimants](#). (some repetition of above)...

(1) Simon Bar Kokhba was acclaimed Messiah by Rabbi Akiva following the Jewish revolt against Rome of A.D. 115-117. (Bar Kokhba's name, son of a star, is a reference to the Messianic prophecy of Num. 24:17.)

(2) In the 5th century, a pseudo-messiah called Moses appeared in Crete.

(3) In the 8th century, three pseudo-messiah's appeared

(a) Abu Issa Al-Isfahani in Persia

(b) Severus or Serene in Syria

(c) [Yudghan in Hamadan](#) (you will need to translate this page) ([search this book and you can read about Yudghan - click page 26](#)) in Persia - "In 1096, it was believed in Salonica that the deliverance had already begun; and in 1121, a Karaite claimant was reported in Palestine. In 1147, the spectacular David Alroy appeared in Mesopotamia and similar figures are recorded in Yemen, Fez, Persia, Spain, and France in the 11th and 12th centuries. Abraham Abulafia was active in Sicily in the 13th century and was followed in Spain by his disciples, Samuel and Abraham. . . . The Spanish persecution of 1391 produced Moses Botarel; the expulsion (1492) was followed by a number of such figures -- Asher Lamlein (1503), Solomon Molcho (c. 1500 - 1532), and others."

(4) [Shabbetai Tzevi](#) (1621 - 1676) of Smyrna - "The masses were won over by his emotional sermons and fresh doctrines. . . . In [1662 after marrying a young Jewess in Egypt] he returned to Palestine and in 1665, was hailed as king-messiah by Nathan of Gaza but excommunicated by the rabbis of Jerusalem. Returning to Turkey, Shabbetai was joyfully received by the masses and heaped with honors. The fervor spread throughout the Jewish world and rumors were current of a Jewish army which would advance from the Arabian desert to conquer Palestine. In 1666, he went to Constantinople to 'depose the Sultan' but was arrested and confined in the fortress of Gallipoli. Here he held court and received thousands of followers. . . . Messianic expectations ran high throughout Europe and the rabbinate was sharply divided on the issue. However, Shabbetai's behavior evoked the wrath of the Turkish authorities and to save himself from death, he accepted the Islamic faith. Jewry was shaken by his conversion. . . . Nevertheless, he kept in touch with his admirers until his death, which they held would precede his return as Messiah and Redeemer."

(5) [Jacob Frank](#) (1726 - 1791) - "Declared himself the Messiah and the successor of Shabbetai Tzevi. . . . His mystical activities were alleged to be accompanied by sexual orgies, the function of which was to bring redemption through impurity."

(6) [Menachem Mendel Schneerson](#) (1902 - 1994) - A prominent Hasidic rabbi who was the seventh and last Hasidic leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. Although he himself did not explicitly proclaim to be the Messiah--but only working to bring the Messiah through good works--some of his later statements implied that he thought that he was.<sup>15</sup> During his lifetime many of his followers had considered him to be the Jewish Messiah, and even after his death, some continue to await his return as the Messiah." Garland notes that the "antidote" to the false Messiahs is a visible, global sign (Mt 24:30). ([Reference](#))

#### Related Resource:

- [Book - 50 Jewish Messiahs](#) ([search this book and you can read about Yudghan - click page 26](#))

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#### Beware!

Read: 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Take heed that you not be deceived. —Luke 21:8

An acquaintance of mine was "taken in" by a smooth-talking salesman who stopped at his place of business. The man displayed some attractive jewelry that he said he had purchased at a tremendous discount. He was especially proud of some very expensive-looking watches that had a well-known name on the dials.

My friend was impressed and bought several watches. But after the salesman left, he examined his “bargains” more carefully. He was surprised to discover that the trademark was not that of a famous brand after all. Two letters in the name were different, but the print was so small he hadn’t noticed it before. The watch straps were not genuine leather but “genuine lizard,” and on the back of the cases were the words “Swiss base metal.”

The incident reminded me of what the Savior said in Luke 21:8, “Take heed that you not be deceived.” Even as some in the business world cleverly pervert the facts and victimize their customers, there are also false teachers in the church who distort the truth. They use biblical terminology and appear to be orthodox. But beware! They are evil and will lead you astray. Be firmly grounded in the Word of God and you won’t be “taken in” by deception.

O grant us grace, Almighty Lord,  
To read and mark Your holy Word,  
Its truths with meekness to receive,  
And by its holy precepts live.  
—Beddome

Examine all teaching in the light of God's Word.

By Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Luke 21:9 "When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately."**

KJV Luke 21:9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

- **When you hear of wars and disturbance** Luke 18,19; Ps 27:1-3; 46:1,2; 112:7; Proverbs 3:25,26; Isaiah 8:12; 51:12,13; Jeremiah 4:19,20; Mt 24:6-8; Mark 13:7,8
- **but the end does not follow immediately** Luke 21:8,28
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:9-11 The World in Conflict and Distress](#) - John MacArthur

## WARS DO NOT SIGNAL THE IMMEDIATE END

### Parallel passages:

Matthew 24:6-8+ You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. **See that you are not frightened** ([present imperative with a negative](#) = Don't let this begin or stop being frightened), for those things must take place, but that is not yet **the end**. “For (term of explanation) nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. “But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs ([see preceding note on birth pangs](#)).

Mark 13:7-8+ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, **do not be frightened** ([present imperative with a negative](#)); those things must take place; but that is not yet **the end**. 8 “For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

**When you hear** (akouo) **of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified**- The natural reaction to war is terror! Jesus says (not a command in Greek but functions like one) **do not be terrified**. How can a believer NOT be **terrified**? First, because Jesus calls for us to believe Him and if we believe Him (His Word) we can choose not to be terrified. Second, in my opinion the only way to “override” our natural reaction of fear is not by “gritting our teeth,” but by believing Jesus and relying wholly on His Holy Spirit to supernaturally enable us to obey Jesus' words. We need to be Spirit filled (controlled) and to continually seek to be surrendered to the Spirit of Jesus (the only way we can be continually surrendered to the Spirit is if the Spirit gives us the desire and the power! cf Php 2:12+, Php 2:13NLT+. Is this spiritual dynamic mysterious? Yes. Is it truth? Absolutely. It is truth not just that we can hold to, but even better is truth which “holds” us when everything around us is falling apart! Compare Luke 21:15± - How will Jesus give **utterance and wisdom**? By His indwelling Spirit, the Spirit of Christ!).

While Luke has wars and disturbances, Matthew and Mark both have "rumors of wars."

**Disturbances** (181)(**akatastasia** from **akatastatos** = unstable from **a** = negative + **kathistemi** = set in order) means literally without order or stability and thus has a basic meaning of instability = to an unsettled state of affairs, an upheaval, a state of violent group disturbance, a tumult, or unrest, especially in a political or social setting (riots, revolutions). In 2 Cor. 12:20 and James 3:16 the context suggests that **akatastasia** is used of the disruption of the Christian community by worldly disputes among the brethren and in both of these passages jealousy and selfish ambition (**eritheia**) are listed prior to **akatastasia** as factors which predispose to social instability.

**MacArthur** adds "Akatastasia (disorder) has the basic meaning of instability, and hence came to be used of a state of confusion, disturbance, disarray, or tumult, sometimes even of rebellion or anarchy. Cautioning His disciples about future false reports of His second coming and the end of the age, Jesus said, "When you hear of wars and disturbances [akatastasia], do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately" (Luke 21:9).

**Louw-Nida** - to rise up in open defiance of authority, with the presumed intention to overthrow it or to act in complete opposition to its demands.

**NET Note** says it speaks of "Social and political chaos also precedes the end. This term refers to revolutions."

The cognate **akatastatos** is used of an **unstable** person (Jas 1:8) and of the tongue as a **restless** evil (Jas 3:8).

**TDNT** on **akatastasia** - This word signifies "disorder" a. as "political turmoil," b. as "personal unrest." Sense a. occurs in Luke 21:9, sense b. in 2 Cor. 6:5. We also find in the NT a further sense c. "disruption" in the community through disputes (Jms. 3:16) or charismatic exaggeration (1 Cor. 14:33). (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume)

**Akatastasia** - 5x in 5v - confusion (1), disorder (1), disturbances (2), tumults (1).

Luke 21:9 "When you hear of wars and **disturbances**, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately."

1 Corinthians 14:33 for God is not a God of **confusion** but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in **tumults**, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

2 Corinthians 12:20 For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes (**eritheia** = selfish ambition), slanders, gossip, arrogance, **disturbances**;

James 3:16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition (**eritheia**) exist, there is **disorder** and every evil thing.

**MacArthur** comments - Akatastasia (disorder) has the basic meaning of instability, and hence came to be used of a state of confusion, disturbance, disarray, or tumult, sometimes even of rebellion or anarchy. Cautioning His disciples about future false reports of His second coming and the end of the age, Jesus said, "When you hear of wars and disturbances [akatastasia], do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately" (Luke 21:9). James has already made clear that disorder does not characterize God's people but rather the "double-minded man, unstable [akatastasia]" (James 1:8) and the unredeemed tongue, which "is a restless [akatastasia] evil and full of deadly poison" (3:8). Because "God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33), biblical wisdom, on the other hand, brings harmony, unity, peace, and love. All the conflicts, crimes, battles, and wars of the world are evidence of the devastation caused by human wisdom. (James Commentary)

Proverbs 26:28 (The One Use in the Lxx) A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth works **ruin**.

As noted akatastasia can refer to riots or rebellions such as recorded by Luke in the book of Acts...

Acts 5:36 "For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.

Acts 21:38 "Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"

**Do not be terrified** - Subjunctive with negative (me) meaning to prevent an action from beginning.

**Terrified** (4422)(**ptoéoō**) is used only twice in the NT (Lk 21:9, Lk 24:37) and means to terrify, frighten, scare. In the passive voice it means to be terrified. Only passive in the NT = be startled, alarmed. Ptoeo conveys a deep sense of terror and emotional distress.

**For these things must take place first** - What things? Disturbances, political upheaval, global instability, social tumults (descriptions based on the nuances of the word **akatastasia**). To reemphasize Jesus is saying these things are not signs that this is the end of the world as we know it.

As **Robertson** says commenting on "**must take place first**" -- "It is so easy to forget this and to insist that the end is "immediately" in spite of Christ's explicit denial here."

**Must** (present tense - continually)(1163)(**dei** from **deo** = to bind objects together) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. **These things** are inevitable! One interpretation is that they **must** occur because that is what the sovereign God has decreed and all of "history" is in His hands. Yes, He allows personal choices, but mysteriously and powerfully He will bring all of the events of History to His desired end. As someone has said "**History**" is **His Story!**

**Hiebert** clarifies that "These national convulsions have not been preordained by divine decree but arise as the inevitable consequences of human depravity. They are the natural results of human nature separated from God and ruled by self-interest. They are divinely permitted as part of God's eschatological program for this world, which includes judgment as well as salvation." ([Gospel of Mark - Expository Commentary](#))

**Lowery** adds that "The world is a chaotic place. It is the (**necessary**) consequence of living in a fallen world. Disciples should not think that human or natural disasters, however tragic, signal **the end**. These are but the prelude to a truly catastrophic finale (Mt 24:21-note). Disciples must keep their balance and stay faithful."

## THE END OF THIS AGE

**But the end (telos) does not follow immediately (eutheos)** - What is Jesus saying? Jesus' is saying we can know (1) there will be tumultuous, disturbing events before **the end** (2) some time will also pass before **the end** comes (**not...immediately**). And to reiterate Jesus especially wants us to understand that these things (such as **disturbances**) are not signs of the immediate end of this age.

**The end (telos)** - Note that "**end**" is preceded in Greek by the definite article "**the**" (*to telos*) which identifies this as not just an "**end**" in general, but as a specific, definitive **end**. It means the very end. Jesus is addressing the disciples' question "what will be the sign of Your coming, and of **the end (sunteleia** related to **telos**) of the age?" (Mt 24:3+) Notice also that (contrary to what a number of writers suggest) Jesus is not speaking of the "**end**" of the Temple nor of the **end of the world**, but of **the end of the age**. **Hiebert** adds that "**The end** is the eschatological goal of history, the final establishment of God's kingdom on earth." ([bid](#))

**The end** - Jesus will give a clear, unmistakable visual event in Mt 24:15+ that will mark the beginning of **the end** of the age. He does not want His disciples to be misled or frightened by these tumultuous events. It reminds me of folks who during WWII said that Hitler was the Antichrist. While he certainly manifested the spirit of antichrist in slaughtering millions of Jews, he was not the Antichrist because the **abomination of desolation** in Mt 24:15+ (and 2Th 2:2-4+) had not yet occurred. In fact there was no Temple (holy place) in Jerusalem in which one could have even stood during World War II. Had these individuals known what Jesus had taught, they would have realized Hitler could not possibly have been the Antichrist. One of the greatest dangers in interpreting eschatology is to use the newspaper to guide one's interpretation!

**J Vernon McGee** - Wars and rumors of wars are not the sign that we are at **the end** of the age, by any means. The Lord is bridging the gap from where the disciples are to the end of the age. It is easy to think of major wars as indicative of the fact that we are at the end of the age. They are not! There have been many major wars in the past few thousand years and only about two hundred years of peace. When I was a little boy at the end of World War I, I remember hearing my dad and others talking about the books being printed declaring it was the end of the world. World War I caused this type of thinking. But after the war, we had a worldwide depression, World War II, and the atom bomb. By this time, I was a pastor in Pasadena, and I told my congregation that a wheelbarrow load of books would come out saying that we were at the end of the world because of World War II. You know something? I was wrong! Two wheelbarrow loads of books were printed, and they were sensational. We have come a long way from

World War II, and the end of the age still has not come. We should listen to the Lord and stop listening to false teachers. We will hear about wars and rumors of wars, but we should not be troubled because all these things will come to pass, and still it will not be the end of the age. Friend, we should also keep in mind that man will never solve the problem of war. The League of Nations could not solve this problem, and the United Nations will not be able to solve it either. There will be no peace until the Prince of Peace comes. (Ibid)

**Steven Cole** remarks that "Jesus is showing His followers how to hold on not only to their sanity, but also to their faith, when the world around them is chaotic and seemingly out of control. When the whole world goes crazy, God's people can remain sane by knowing that all things are under God's righteous, sovereign control. Jesus' purpose was not to satisfy curiosity about the end times. Rather, He was trying to instill assurance and faith in His disciples so that they would not fall away under intense persecution or world chaos." ([Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#))

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**End (5056)(telos)** means a completion, consummation, goal achieved or result attained. It does not speak of annihilation. Gingrich - 1. end—a. in the sense termination, cessation, conclusion Mk 3:26; 13:7; Lk 1:33; 22:37; Ro 10:4; Heb 7:3; 1 Pet 4:7; probably 1 Cor 10:11 (see 2 below).—b. end, goal, outcome Mt 26:58; Ro 6:21f; 1 Ti 1:5; Heb 6:8; Jas 5:11; 1 Pet 1:9.—c. adverbial expressions. to. te,loj as adverbial acc. 1 Cor 15:24; 1 Pet 3:8.—a;cri te,louj, e[wj te,louj to the end, to the last 1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:13; Heb 3:6 v.l., 14; Rev 2:26.— in the end, finally Lk 18:5. To the end Mt 10:22; Mk 13:13. For 1 Th 2:16 forever or decisively, fully. In Jn 13:1 the mngs. to the end and to the uttermost are combined.—2. (indirect) tax, customs duties Mt 17:25; Ro 13:7; perhaps 1 Cor 10:11 (see 1a above). [Cf. teleology.]

**Telos - 40v - continually\*(1), custom(2), customs(1), end(24), ends(2), finished(1), fulfillment(1), goal(1), outcome(6), sum(1), utmost(1).** Matt. 10:22; Matt. 17:25; Matt. 24:6; Matt. 24:13; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 26:58; Mk. 3:26; Mk. 13:7; Mk. 13:13; Lk. 1:33; Lk. 18:5; Lk. 21:9; Lk. 22:37; Jn. 13:1; Rom. 6:21; Rom. 6:22; Rom. 10:4; Rom. 13:7; 1 Co. 1:8; 1 Co. 10:11; 1 Co. 15:24; 2 Co. 1:13; 2 Co. 3:13; 2 Co. 11:15; Phil. 3:19; 1 Thess. 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 3:6; Heb. 3:14; Heb. 6:8; Heb. 6:11; Heb. 7:3; Jas. 5:11; 1 Pet. 1:9; 1 Pet. 3:8; 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 2:26; Rev. 21:6; Rev. 22:13

**Immediately (2112)(eutheos** from **euthus** = straight, immediate) is an adverb which generally means at once, right away, forthwith, straightaway, without an interval of time or a point of time subsequent to a previous point of time. Note that the actual interval of time depends on the nature of the events and the manner in which the sequence is interpreted by the writer. **Eutheos** is used again in Matthew's version of the Olivet Discourse in Mt 24:29-note "But **immediately** (eutheos) after the (GREAT) tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Note that these are the final "signs from heaven" Jesus describes in the context of the very end of this age (see also Lk 21:26-note).

**Eutheos - 33v - immediately(32), shortly(1).** Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 8:3; Matt. 13:5; Matt. 14:22; Matt. 14:31; Matt. 20:34; Matt. 24:29; Matt. 25:16; Matt. 26:49; Matt. 27:48; Lk. 5:13; Lk. 12:36; Lk. 12:54; Lk. 14:5; Lk. 17:7; Lk. 21:9; Jn. 5:9; Jn. 6:21; Jn. 18:27; Acts 9:18; Acts 9:20; Acts 9:34; Acts 12:10; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:10; Acts 17:14; Acts 21:30; Acts 22:29; Gal. 1:16; Jas. 1:24; 3 Jn. 1:14; Rev. 4:2

**Luke 21:10 Then He continued by saying to them, "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,**

KJV Luke 21:10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

- **Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.** 2 Chronicles 15:5,6; Haggai 2:21,22; Zechariah 14:2,3,13; Mark 13:8; Acts 2:19,20; 11:28; Hebrews 12:27; Revelation 6:2-12
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:9-11 The World in Conflict and Distress](#) - John MacArthur

#### Synoptic Parallels:

Matthew 24:7 "For ([gar](#)) nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

Mark 13:8 "For ([gar](#)) nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. **These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.**

**Then** ([tote](#) - time phrase marks progression) **He continued by saying to them** - Imperfect tense = He continued talking. Both Matthew and Mark begin this verse with "for" ([gar](#)) a term of explanation explaining why it is not yet **the end** (Mt 24:6, Mk 13:7)

**Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom** - The idea of **will rise** is to rise up in arms against another nation. We see a similar prophecy in **Isaiah** - Isaiah 19:2 "So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians; And they will each fight against his brother, and each against his neighbor, City against city, and **kingdom against kingdom.**"

**Nation** (Gentile) ([1484](#))([ethnos](#) gives us our word "ethnic") in general refers to a multitude (especially persons) associated with one another, living together, united in kinship, culture or traditions and summed up by the words nation, Gentiles (especially when ethnos is plural), people (much like "people groups" in our modern missionary vernacular). In somewhat of a negative sense ethnos conveys the meaning of godless (generally idol worshipping) pagans (heathens, cp Eph 4:17, Mt 6:32), foreign nations not worshipping the true God (Mt 4:15). Often ethnos stands in clear contradistinction to Jew (Ioudaios) (Gal 2:14).

**Luke 21:11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.**

KJV Luke 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

- **there will be terrors and great signs from heaven** Luke 21:25-27; Mt 24:29,30
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:9-11 The World in Conflict and Distress](#) - John MacArthur

Great Earthquakes (1900-2017)  
Click to Enlarge

## A WHOLE LOTTA SHAKING GOING ON

Jerry Lee Lewis had a hit song in the 1960's called "Whole Lotta Shaking Going On!" ([Watch video](#)) For you youngsters out there, this was some of the crazy music of the 1960's. Our Lord Jesus predicts a "whole lotta shaking" will be going on in the world in the last days (cf Hag 2:7, Heb 12:26+).

### Synoptic Parallels:

Matthew 24:7+ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and **in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.**

Mark 13:8 "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; **there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines.** These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

**And there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines** - As stated above, these are not specific indicators of the end of this age. They have been going on since Jesus spoke these words and will continue to the end. Clearly, these catastrophic events will reach a climax in the time of the very end of the age, which most conservative commentators equate with the horrible events John describes in Revelation 6-19...

Revelation 6:8+ (CORRESPONDS TO TIME OF THE SEAL JUDGMENTS) I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and **with famine** and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Revelation 18:8+ (CORRESPONDS TO TIME OF THE BOWL JUDGMENTS) "For this reason in one day her (BABYLON THE GREAT - Rev 18:2+) **plagues** will come, pestilence and mourning and **famine**, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

**Comment:** The word "**plague**" is used 71 times in the Old and New Testaments and 13 of the uses are found in the Revelation of Jesus Christ

- Rev. 9:18; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 11:6; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 15:6; Rev. 15:8; Rev. 16:9; Rev. 16:21; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 18:8; Rev. 21:9; Rev. 22:18

As an aside several years ago a church we attended had a mission's conference and asked for booths from each Sunday School class (yes, they did exist at one time in the past! What a tragedy they are now considered archaic! They were not perfect, but they did provide a place where one could efficiently dig a little deeper into the Scriptures -- instead of having to plan and orchestrate another "small group" meeting, which is logistically difficult for young families and which may or may not have an individual with the gift of teaching. Sorry had to get on my "soapbox!") Our class (really it was my wife Marty's idea) proposed we would use a world map and then simply document the locations of the earthquakes over the recent past. What we discovered to our utter shock was that there was a very real concentration of severe earthquakes over the so-called "10/40 Window," which of course has the most unreached people groups in the world. Given that calamities often cause people to cry out "O God," or "Help God," one cannot help but wonder if God had brought about these earthquakes in order that the peoples might cry out for the Gospel and be saved.

**Warren Wiersbe** writes "I have a friend who has been keeping track of the earthquakes that have occurred in recent years. Another prophetic student has a list of all the wars and attempted invasions. Both have overlooked the fact that Jesus said that wars, earthquakes, pestilences, and famines *by themselves* are not signs of His soon return. These things have been going on throughout the history of the world." (Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Courageous) (**Comment:** While I agree with Wiersbe, Jesus does call these things "Birth pangs" which suggest they will increase in intensity and number as the end of the age draws near. However, they should never be used to "set dates," for no one knows the hour or day of Jesus' return which heralds the end of this present age! Mt 24:36, cf Acts 1:7-note) (Borrow [Be courageous](#))

**Hendriksen** - throughout the centuries there have been violent earthquakes. For example: On Nov. 1, 1755, 60,000 people perished at Lisbon, Portugal; in 1783 the great Calabrian earthquake occurred with the death of an estimated 30,000; in 1857 the Neapolitan earthquake took more than 12,000 lives. There was also the Charleston earthquake in 1886; the Assam in 1897; the one in California in 1906, which destroyed a considerable section of San Francisco; the one in Messina in 1908; in Avezzano, Italy in 1915; several in Turkey, from 1939 until very recently; the one that shook Kansu Province, China, in 1920; the one that hit Japan, in 1923, wrecking parts of Tokyo and Yokohama; those in Chile, in 1939, 1960, and even more recently; the devastating earthquake in Peru, 1970; etc. Ancient historians and philosophers—such as Thucydides, Aristotle, Strabo, Seneca, Livy, and Pliny—describe similar seismic phenomena in their days. And as early as the year 1668 Robert Hooke wrote his work bearing the title, Discourse on Earthquakes. A certain author counted no less than seven hundred disturbances of this nature, great and small, which had occurred in the nineteenth century! (Ibid)

Note that these are not just light tremors but are **great** (megas) **earthquakes**, presumably fairly high readings on the Richter scale.

**Earthquakes** (4578)(**seismos** from **seio** = to shake) means an agitation or shaking as a series of violent movements, usually of the earth, but once of a storm or tempest at sea (Mt 8:24+). One can picture the height of the huge waves in this supernatural seismos! No wonder the disciples thought they were perishing (Mt 8:25+)!

**Mounce** - Earthquakes are known throughout the Mediterranean region and particularly in eastern Palestine. Geologically, this is because of the movements of the African and Arabian tectonic plates against the Eurasian plates. Earthquakes in the Bible are often seen as divine acts with theological significance. A violent seismos shakes the foundation of the prison holding Paul and Silas; the doors fly open, enabling all the prisoners to escape (though no one does; Acts 16:26). A **seismos** also occurs in connection with significant events such as the death of Jesus (Mt 27:54) and his resurrection (Mt 28:2). In Revelation, an earthquake announces the opening of sixth seal by Jesus (Rev 6:12) and the opening of God's heavenly sanctuary (Rev 11:19). Earthquakes are among the cataclysmic events that will occur in the days of judgment accompanying the last days (Mt 24:7; Mk 13:8; Lk 21:11; Rev 8:5; 11:13; 16:18).

**Seismos** - 14x in 12v - earthquake(10), earthquakes(3), storm(1). Matt. 8:24; Matt. 24:7; Matt. 27:54; Matt. 28:2; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11; Acts 16:26; Rev. 6:12; Rev. 8:5; Rev. 11:13; Rev. 11:19; Rev. 16:18

**Seismos** - 15x in 15v in the Septuagint Est. 1:1; Job 41:29; Isa. 15:5; Isa. 29:6; Jer. 10:22; Jer. 23:19; Jer. 47:3; Ezek. 3:12; Ezek. 3:13; Ezek. 37:7; Ezek. 38:19; Amos 1:1; Nah. 3:2; Zech. 14:5 - Below are some examples...

Ezekiel 38:19 "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day (on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israe - Ezek 38:18) there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.

Amos 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in

visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Zechariah 14:5+ You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

#### Related Resources:

- [Up to date information on latest earthquakes](#) - As I wrote this note 4/6/18 at 4:23 AM read report of 5.9 quake off coast of El Salvador (Apr 2, 6:23 PM)!
- [Earthquake map](#) - latest worldwide (hold pointer over map and rotate mouse scroll wheel)
- [Earthquakes, great - Wikipedia](#)

**And in various places plagues and famines** - Again these were not specific signs of the end. [See the list of plagues and epidemics](#) caused by various viruses and a few bacteria (mainly [Yersinia pestis](#) = [bubonic plague](#) and [Vibrio cholera](#) = [cholera](#)). In recent years two of the more frightening viral diseases have been those caused by [Ebola Virus](#) and by [Zika Virus](#). (I could not resist listing these as my subspecialty as a pathologist is infectious disease).

**Plagues** (5117)(**loimos**) means pestilence in Lk 21:11 and "a public menace" in Acts 24:5, Paul's enemies describing Him as dangerous to public welfare (harmful, troublesome). In Psalm 1:1 **loimos** is used to translate "scoffers." (Hebrew - [luts](#))

**Loimos** - 28x in 28v in the Septuagint 1 Sam. 1:16; 1 Sam. 2:12; 1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Sam. 25:17; 1 Sam. 25:25; 1 Sam. 29:10; 1 Sam. 30:22; 2 Chr. 13:7; Ps. 1:1; Prov. 19:25; Prov. 21:24; Prov. 22:10; Prov. 24:9; Prov. 29:8; Isa. 5:14; Jer. 15:21; Ezek. 7:21; Ezek. 18:10; Ezek. 28:7; Ezek. 30:11; Ezek. 31:12; Ezek. 32:12; Dan. 11:14; Hos. 7:5; Amos 4:2

Note Luke's play on words **loimos** and **limos** which are pronounced alike in the Koiné Greek. Vincent adds this is a [paronomasia](#) or combination of like-sounding words.

**Famines** (3042)(**limos** from [leipo](#) = to fall short, be destitute or be in need) can refer to a literal hunger or famine, and in a metaphoric sense one's mind might be said to be "hungry, starved." **Famines** will be part of the end times scenario according to Jesus (Mt 24:7-note, [Mk 13:8](#), [Lk 21:11](#)). **Famine** forced Jacob to take his family to Egypt where he met his lost son Joseph (Acts 7:11, cf Ge 50:20). In Romans 8 Paul assures believers that nothing, including **famine** "can separate us from the love of Christ." (Ro 8:35-note). John writes about the famine in the end times stating that "Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with **famine** and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth." (Rev 6:8-note). In the last NT use of **limos**, John describes the destruction of Babylon, writing "For this reason (see Rev 18:7) in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and **famine**, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong." (Rev 18:8-note)

**Weber** - **Famine** was foretold in the Pentateuch as a sign of God's judgment for covenant disobedience (Lev. 26:18-note, Lev 20:26-27-note; Dt. 28:23-24, 38-42, 47-48, 53-57). (Holman New Testament Commentary)

## TERRORS AND SIGNS FROM HEAVEN

**And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven** - (NAS Marginal note on "great signs" = "attesting miracles") Note that the parallel passages in Matthew (Mt 24:7) and Mark (Mk 13:8) do not have this phrase. Considering that the signs come from heaven, it seems that the world will have some sense that they are coming from God. Whatever these are it is clear from the use of the Greek word **phobētron** that the people will be horrified.

**Terrors** (5400)(**phobētron** from [phobeo](#) = to terrify or frighten) means a terrible sight, a horror, something that inspires terror, a fearful event. **Liddell-Scott** says this word was used of a scarecrow! The only other use is in the Lxx of Isaiah 19:17 in Isaiah's prophecy of the "terror" that Judah would become to Egypt.

**Vincent** - Not confined to sights, but fearful things. Rev., better, terrors. Used in medical language by Hippocrates, of fearful objects imagined by the sick.

**Gilbrant** - According to Louw and Nida, **phobētron** refers to the "object, event, or condition which causes fear" (*Greek-English Lexicon*, 1:317). In comparison, **phobos** is seen as a state of distress or the occasion or source of fear, and **phoberos** refers to something or someone who causes the fear (*ibid.*, 1:316)..

**NLT** paraphrases it "There will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven."

**Stein** comments that "Reference to such **signs** is frequently made in eschatological/apocalyptic literature. (cf. Isa 13:9–10, 13-note; Ezek 32:5–8; Joel 2:10, 30–31-note; Amos 8:9; Rev 6:12–14) Such descriptions may be used to describe historical events in the future such as the destruction of Babylon (Isaiah), the destruction of Pharaoh's army (Ezekiel), the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (Joel), and the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Amos). Thus the description of "**these things**" given in these verses is best understood as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem (BUT SEE MACARTHUR'S COMMENTS BELOW). According to Josephus (*Wars* 6.5.3–4 (6.288–315), such signs occurred before Jerusalem's destruction. (New American Commentary – Volume 24: Luke)

**Signs** (4592)(**semeion** akin to **semaino** = to give a sign; **sema** = a sign) is a distinguishing mark by which something is known, an object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the probable presence or occurrence of something else.

**John MacArthur** describes the **terrors and great signs from heaven** - Where does all our weather come from? It comes from heaven. Has weather been a blessing? Sure. Has it been a curse? Of course it's been a curse. Heat in drought, scorching, parching the hungry and the thirsty and leaving them dead, storms that come, bring so much water that they drown whole civilizations, whole cities. Even the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius goes up into the air and deposits gas coming down out of the air and asphyxiates the whole of Pompeii. Hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, snow, flood. Revelation 6:12-[note](#), "I looked when he broke the sixth seal and there was a great earthquake and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair (goatskin)." Black means the sun goes out. The moon becomes like blood, dark as well. In the future there will be a great earthquake and the sun will go out and the moon as well, for it's reflected light from the sun. "The stars of the sky fell to the earth as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind and the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up. And every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us.'" As long as you're falling, fall on us "and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb' for the great day of the wrath has come and who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:13-17-[note](#)) The future, time of the tribulation, massive changes in the heavens above. Look at Rev 8:3-13-[note](#).

3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. 7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. 8 The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, 9 and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed. 10 The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. 11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way."

You know what that means. All the tides are thrown off. Day and night is thrown off. All the crops are thrown off. Things can't grow. Life is total chaos. "And I looked and heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven saying with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound.'" (Rev 8:13) If it's that bad with the first four, what in the world is going to happen with the final three? ([The World in Conflict and Distress](#))

**Luke 21:12** "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake

**KJV** Luke 21:12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

**NLT** Luke 21:12 "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.

- **But before all these things** Lk 11:49-51; Mt 10:16-25; 22:6; 23:34-36; Mt 24:9-10; Mk 13:9-13; Jn 15:20, 16:2,3; Acts 4:3-7; Acts 5:17-19,40; Acts 6:12-15; Acts 7:57-60; Acts 8:3; Acts 9:4; Acts 12:1-4; Acts 16:22-26; Acts 21:30,31; Acts 22:30; Acts 24:1-9; Acts 25:1,2,11,12,22-25; Acts 26:2-11; 1 Th 2:15,16; 1 Pe 4:12-14; Rev 2:10
- **for My name's sake** 1 Peter 2:13
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

## JEWISH PERSECUTION OF CHRIST FOLLOWERS

**But before all these things** - This is not only a **contrast** (but), but also an **expression of time!** This begs the question - **before what things?** **These things** refers to what Jesus has just warned the disciples would precede the end. In other words while in the previous section (Luke 21:6-11) Jesus referred to things that will occur in the time between His first and second comings and before the end, in this next section (Luke 21:12-19) He warned of persecution of believers that would happen before these other things. The book of Acts is filled with descriptions of the persecution of the disciples.

**Darrell Bock** - Jesus has already noted that false claims, social upheaval, and cosmic signs do not signal the coming of the end (21:7-11). He now describes something that precedes these "non-end" events: persecution. He seems to make the point that persecution is the church's short-term destiny. Only Luke has a temporal note, which helps to organize Jesus' reply and clarify the relationship between events. (BECNT-Luke)

**Guzik** emphasizes that although **these things** will go on until the end of this age, they also went on prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A D - All these things preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. Were there wars? The Romans were frequently at war with the Jews, the Samaritans, the Syrians, and others during this period. Were there earthquakes? Historians tell us of great earthquakes in the Roman Empire before Jerusalem was destroyed. Were there famines? Acts 11:28 tells of one in this period. Were there fearful sights? Pompeii blew its top just seven years before Jerusalem was destroyed. Were there signs in the heavens? Not long before Jerusalem was destroyed, a comet that looked like a sword hung over the city by night for a year.

**They will lay their hands on you and will persecute you** - Who is **they**? Observe the context. This clearly refers to Jews (cf synagogues) who would persecute the Jewish disciples. Jews persecuting Jews! Did these things happen? Absolutely. The greatest example was Jewish persecution of the greatest Jew, Jesus! The book of Acts chronicles the persecution (by both Jews and later by Gentiles) of the Jewish followers of Jesus - see Acts 4:3-7; Acts 5:17-19,40; Acts 6:12-15; Acts 7:57-60; Acts 8:3; Acts 21:30,31; Acts 22:30; Acts 24:1-9; Acts 25:1,2,11,12,22-25; Acts 26:2-11

**Luke** recorded several events where **hands were laid on** the disciples (or apostles, including Paul)...

Acts 4:3; And they (JEWS) **laid hands on them** and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.

Acts 5:18 They (JEWS) **laid hands on the apostles** and put them in a public jail.

Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king (GENTILE) **laid hands on** some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them.

Acts 21:27 When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, began to stir up all the crowd and **laid hands on him** (PAUL).

**Will persecute** (1377)(**dioko** from **dío** = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for **chasing down criminals**. **Dioko** speaks of an intensity of effort leading to a pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain.

In the Upper Room Discourse before His Crucifixion Jesus had plainly promised **'If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.'** (Jn 15:20) And beloved this "promise" still holds for all of the followers of Jesus! So do not be surprised when you are persecuted. Just make sure it is because of His Name's sake, not because of some fleshly reaction, etc.

Jesus had given a similar prediction in Luke 11:49-note

"For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them

they will kill and some they will persecute ([dioko](#)),

Hopefully the disciples also remembered Jesus' wonderful promises in His Sermon on the Mount where He actually used the verb "persecute" ([dioko](#)) three times in three verses...

Matthew 5:10 "**Blessed** ([makarios](#) = fully satisfied independent of the circumstances) are **those who have been persecuted** ([dioko](#)) for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:11 "**Blessed** are you when people insult you and **persecute** ([dioko](#)) you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

Matthew 5:12 "**Rejoice** (present imperative) and **be glad** ("jump for joy" - command in present imperative), for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way **they** (JEWS) **persecuted** ([dioko](#)) **the prophets** who were before you.

**Paul** wrote that followers of Jesus are commanded to "**Bless** (present imperative - only way to habitually obey this unnatural" command is by relying on the supernatural power of the indwelling Spirit of Jesus - cf Stephen's reaction as the stones were falling on him - Acts 7:60! How could he say that? See Acts 7:55! There is **NO** other way!) those who **persecute** ([dioko](#)) you; **Bless** (present imperative - IN CASE YOU MISSED THE FIRST COMMAND!) and **do not curse** ([present imperative with a negative](#)). (Ro 12:14)

**Delivering you to the synagogues and prisons** - NLT has a vivid paraphrase = "You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons." Mark 13:9 adds "**to the courts**" the word [sunedrion](#) (literally a sitting together and thus a council) was the Jewish Sanhedrin, which were local courts modeled after the one in Jerusalem.

**MacArthur** explains that "The **synagogues** served as the local Jewish courts, and handled both civil and criminal cases. To be brought before the synagogue court was considered to be a humiliating and degrading experience. In those courts, Christ's followers were to be flogged (Acts 5:40; 2 Cor. 11:24) and imprisoned (Acts 5:18; 8:3). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke)

**Delivering** (present tense = continually)([3860](#)) ([paradidomi](#) from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another. The present tense depicts this as an ongoing activity by the enemies of the Gospel. The point is they (and we) were not to be surprised or caught off guard. Mark 13:9 uses [paradidomi](#) - "But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

**Mark** has a similar phrase but adds a warning command...

Mk 13:9 But **be on your guard** ([blepo](#) [used also in Luke 21:8+] in present imperative - the warning command for constant vigil is only in Mark in this parallel passage but clearly is Jesus' "theme" throughout entire discourse); for they **will deliver** ([paradidomi](#)) you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

**Matthew** has a similar but slightly different description...

Matthew 24:9-note "Then they will deliver you to **tribulation** ([thlipsis](#) - same word used of "Great Tribulation" in Mt 24:21-note, but not that specific time), and **will kill you**, and **you will be hated by all nations** because of My name (see Jesus' related teaching - Jn 15:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23-25, Jn 17:14-15).

**Luke** documents recounts Paul's confessions in Acts regarding his malicious treatment of the saints...

Acts 9:2+ and asked for letters from him to the **synagogues** at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 22:4+ "I persecuted ([dioko](#)) this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into **prisons**,

Acts 22:19+ "And I said, 'Lord, they themselves understand that in one **synagogue** after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You.

Acts 26:10+ "And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in **prisons**, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.

Acts 26:11+ "And as I punished them often in all the **synagogues**, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and

being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

## GENTILE PERSECUTION OF CHRIST FOLLOWERS

**Bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake** - This means the persecution would not just be Jewish but would also be Gentile because the Gentiles were the **kings and governors**. The disciples were first persecuted by the Jews and as the Gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire, the Gentiles began to persecute the believers. See Acts 12:1-4 ("Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church"); Acts 16:19-26 (= Paul and Silas "dragged...before the authorities and...the chief magistrates"); Acts 25:12 (= "Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, "You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go.")

This should not have been surprising for Jesus had taught His disciples "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, **they will also persecute you**; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also." (Jn 15:20) So even as Jesus was led away to Caiaphas (Mt 26:57), so too His disciples would be brought before the authorities.

**Bringing** (520) (**apago** from **apó** = from + **ágō** = to carry, lead) means to carry or lead away, leading from one place to another. Leading an ox or donkey to water (Lk 13:15). In the figurative sense (passive voice) it meant to be deceived or be influenced "by mute idols" before they became believers (1 Cor 12:2) **Apago** was used as a legal term meaning to lead one from one point to another in legal proceedings (to trial, punishment, prison or execution), just as Jesus was "**led...away** to Caiaphas, the high priest." (Mt 26:57), "to Pilate" (Mt 27:2) and finally to be crucified (Mt 27:31, cf prison guards who were led away [to execution] Acts 12:19). **Apago** meant to lead away a prisoner or condemned man (Mk 14:44; 15:16; Rev 13:10). **Apago** (intransitively) is used by Jesus to refer to a way which leads either to eternal punishment or eternal life (Mt 7:13-14-note).

In this verse **apago** is in the **present tense** indicating this was ongoing and passive voice signifies the disciples would continually be brought before the authorities.

**Gilbrant - Apagō** is a very versatile term in classical Greek. Its range of definition extends from the simple idea of "to lead" or "to carry away" to the more technical notions of "to arrest" and "to bring before a magistrate." It can describe God's "driving" Israel into other lands (as punishment; Deuteronomy 28:36,37). In the Septuagint **apago** may refer to someone "escorting" (leading) another (e.g., 1 Ki 1:38) or "abducting" another (2 Chr 36:6; Jer 40:1 of being led away to Babylon; cf. Ps 125:5). But positively the Psalmist relied upon God to lead him (Ps 60:9; 108:10).

**Agago** - 16x in 16v - bringing(1), lead(1), lead...away(2), leads(2), led astray(1), led away(1), led...away(6), took(1), took...away(1).

Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that **leads** to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

Matthew 7:14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that **leads** to life, and there are few who find it.

Matthew 26:57 Those who had seized Jesus **led** Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.

**Rick Renner** - Once Jesus was in their hands, Matthew 26:57 tells us that they "**led him away**." This phrase comes from the Greek word **apago**—the same word used to picture a shepherd who ties a rope about the neck of his sheep and then leads it down the path to where it needs to go. This word pictures exactly what happened to Jesus that night in the Garden of Gethsemane. He wasn't gagged and dragged to the high priest as one who was putting up a fight or resisting arrest. Instead, the Greek word **apago** plainly tells us that the soldiers lightly slipped a rope about Jesus' neck and led Him down the path as He followed behind, just like a sheep being led by a shepherd. Thus, the Roman soldiers and temple police led Him as a sheep to slaughter, just as Isaiah 53:7 had prophesied many centuries earlier. Specifically on that night, however, the soldiers led Jesus to Caiaphas the high priest.

Matthew 27:2 and they bound Him, and **led Him away** and delivered Him to Pilate the governor.

Matthew 27:31 After they had mocked Him, they took the scarlet robe off Him and put His own garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

Mark 14:44 Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one;

seize Him and lead Him away under guard."

Mark 14:53 They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together.

Mark 15:16 The soldiers took Him away into the palace that is, the Praetorium), and they called together the whole Roman cohort.

Luke 13:15 But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him?"

Luke 21:12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake.

Luke 22:66 When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying,

Luke 23:26 When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.

Acts 12:19 When Herod had searched for him and had not found him, he examined the guards and ordered that they **be led away** to execution. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and was spending time there.

Acts 23:17 Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, "Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him."

Acts 24:7 "But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands,

1 Corinthians 12:2 You know that when you were pagans, you **were led astray** to the mute idols, however you were led.

**Zodhiates** - In your state of idolatry or paganism, Paul tells the Corinthians, you were being carried away as captives to destruction

**Agago** - 48x in 46v in the Septuagint Ge. 31:18; Gen. 31:26; Gen. 39:22; Gen. 40:3; Gen. 42:16; Gen. 42:19; Deut. 28:36; Deut. 28:37; Jdg. 4:7; Jdg. 19:3; 1 Sam. 6:7; 1 Sam. 23:5; 1 Sam. 30:20; 1 Sam. 30:22; 1 Ki. 1:38; 2 Ki. 6:19; 2 Ki. 11:4; 2 Ki. 17:27; 2 Ki. 24:15; 2 Ki. 25:20; 2 Chr. 36:6; 2 Chr. 36:17; Est. 1:1; Job 21:30; Job 24:3; Ps. 60:9; Ps. 108:10; Ps. 125:5; Ps. 137:3; Prov. 16:29; Isa. 16:3; Lam. 3:2; Dan. 4:25

In the Septuagint of the Lord bringing the Jews into subjection to another nation (Dt 28:36), of the LORD driving the Jews among the Gentiles (Dt 28:37). Pr 16:29 "A man of violence entices his neighbor And **leads** him in a way that is not good."

**For My name's sake** - They persecute you because they hate the Name of Jesus (The parallel Mt 24:9 has '**because of My Name**'). The hate all that His Name stands for. Have you ever been in a conversation with an unbeliever and you mentioned the Name "Jesus" (not as a curse word as the world besmirches His great Name - Acts 4:12-note)? What happens? The reaction varies, but the truth usually is that they hate His Name! They hate His Gospel message and so it is not surprising they would hate the messenger. NLT paraphrases this verse "there will be a time of great persecution...because you are My followers." These men are followers of Jesus and are loyal to Him and they give offer an aroma of Jesus and they do not like the aroma! As Paul said,

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For **we are a fragrance of Christ to God** among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? (2 Cor 2:14-16)

**My Name's Sake** - Below are some other notable examples of this great phrase in the New Testament - it costs to bear this great Name! Have you experienced that? Have you been rejected or scorned or made fun of because you are His follower? If not, perhaps you are not really His follower (cf Php 1:29-note, 2 Ti 3:12-note, 2 Cor 13:5-note).

Matthew 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms **for My name's sake**, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.

John 15:21 "But all these things they will do to you **for My name's sake**, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

Acts 9:16+ for I will show him (Saul of Taurus) how much he must suffer **for My name's sake**."

Revelation 2:3+ and you (Church at Ephesus) have perseverance and have endured **for My name's sake**, and have not grown weary.

**Stein on My Name's sake** (or "on account of My Name" = NIV; "because you are my followers" = NLT) - Although this expression was a common one in the early church (cf. John 15:21; 1 Pet 4:14, 16; 3 John 7; Rev 2:3), it occurs most frequently in Luke-Acts - Luke 9:48-49; 10:17; 21:17; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:6, 16; 4:10, 17, 18, 30; 5:28, 40-41; 8:16; 9:15-16, 21, 27 (NAC).

## PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS BY THE GENTILES

The Torches of Nero  
See Christians in Upper Right

**Dr. John MacArthur** discusses the [pathogenesis](#) (sorry but as a pathologist I think this term is very apropos) of the Gentile persecution of the disciples of Christ in some depth:

**The history of Gentile persecution begins in the book of Acts** And it begins with the Romans who persecuted Christians for several reasons. At the outset of Christianity the Romans left the Christians alone (cf Acts 18:12-15). Why? Because originally the Romans viewed Christianity as a sect of Judaism and Judaism was [religio licita](#), i.e., "permitted religion," or "approved religion". The Romans did not perceive a threat from Judaism so it had not been banned. However...the influx of Gentiles into the Church became a problem...the Romans began to see Christianity as distinct from Judaism....It did not take Rome long to figure out that if the Jews hated Christians, then Christianity was not part of Judaism....

Christianity was outlawed, and became an **illegal religion** and there were several factors...

**(1) First, there were political motivations.** The Christians allegiance to Christ was...far above their allegiance to Caesar. This aroused suspicion that they were disloyal to the Roman state....The Romans gave great freedom to the nations they conquered, but one thing they asked was total loyalty to be the Caesar. If you demonstrated loyalty to the Caesar, you were demonstrating loyalty to the Roman state. (Ed: [See Imperial Cult in Rome](#); see 13 page article = "[The Worship of the Roman Emperors](#)" - [Henry F Burton](#) - [The Biblical World. Vol 40. No. 2. August. 1912](#) or [here](#)) Keep in mind that in ancient Rome there was a union of religion and state. In fact, the first nation in history that did not have an allegiance between religion and the state was the USA. Prior to that, all civilizations had religion and the state joined inseparably. Refusal to worship the Roman gods or the emperor was considered treason. And the Christians refused to worship the emperor or the Roman gods. They also refused to make the required sacrifice in worship of the emperor. They were therefore seen as traitors. They also proclaimed the Kingdom of God which caused the Romans to suspect them of trying to overthrow the government. They had another King and they had another Kingdom. The Christians in the first century knew they were under suspicion and to avoid confrontation with Roman authorities, they began to hold their meetings in secret at night in clandestine places, for example, the [Catacombs](#)....Furthermore, Christians generally refused to serve in the Roman army which caused them to be viewed as disloyal.

**(2) There were religious motivations** - The Romans had a tolerant attitude toward religion and allowed their subjects to worship whatever gods they desired, as long as they also worshiped the Roman gods. Their approach to religion was all inclusive and what bothered them about Christianity was Christianity was exclusive. Christians preached an exclusive message that there is only one true God, one Savior, and one way of salvation. And they were evangelistic, trying to win converts among the nations that were part of the Roman world which went against the prevailing atmosphere of religious [pluralism](#). Christians therefore were even denounced as atheists because they rejected the Roman [pantheon](#) of gods, because they would not worship the emperor as god, and because they did not worship idols. And the Romans could not disassociate a god from an idol, so if you had no idol, you had no god. And so they were atheists. So here are these subversive atheists, assaulting the unity and the peace of Rome with their exclusive God and exclusive message. The secrecy of Christians also led to lurid false rumors of gross immorality. They assumed that they were in dark, secretive places doing evil things because that is what the Romans did even in the open. They misunderstood what was meant by eating and drinking the elements during the Lord's supper, which led to charges of [cannibalism](#) and that Christians met to engage in lurid, immoral activity and eat each others flesh! They even attacked the Christian gesture of a [holy kiss](#) which was an embrace, as best we can tell, from

cheek to cheek. (cf Ro. 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Th 5:26; 1 Pe 5:14) That gave rise to false accusations of incest and other sexual perversions. The Romans painted a very lurid picture of the Christian's religion.

**(3) Socially the Romans had another motivation**, because the Roman leaders feared the influence of the Christians on the lower social classes. You have to understand that there's no middle class in ancient world as is still true in some countries in the world, especially third world countries....What you had was a mass of humanity that are poor and a small group of elites at the top who controlled all the wealth and power and usually abused the poor. This is what foments revolution. This is why there was a Russian Revolution and a French Revolution. This is why there is revolution typically anywhere in the world. The oppressed have the numbers. And finally they arise, get organized and overthrow the elite. Well the leaders of Roman society feared the influence of Christians on the lower classes because the Christians were drawing people from the lower classes. Remember 1 Corinthians 1:26 "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble." which is to say there were a growing number of Christians who were from the slave population, and there were 10-12 million slaves in the Roman Empire. The wealthy aristocrats were easily threatened by the fear of slave revolt and, feared that Christians were fomenting this revolt, particularly because Christians taught that there's neither bond nor free in Christ (Gal 3:28, Col 3:11). And so they failed to recognize the status of the elite....Christians held themselves aloof from much of public life, because everything was connected to idols. If you went to a theatrical event, a sporting event, any kind of civil event, there would be sacrifices to pagan deities. And there would also be the kind of behavior that went along with their evil idolatry. So Christians could not really engage in the activities of the culture and were completely counter-culture because their conscience restrained them....

**(4) There were economic reasons why the Romans persecuted the Christians** It is overlooked but the persecution of the early church had a lot to do with the dent that the Gospel was making in the false god trade. Remember Acts 16:16-24 when Paul cast a demon out of a girl, a slave girl at Philippi who was making a fortune for her masters by telling people's fortune.....And when he cast the demon out, they lost their source of income. The same thing happened in Acts 19:23-27 which caused a riot at Ephesus and they tried to kill Paul because he made such a dent in the the idol trade. Paul's preaching of the gospel had caused people to burn all their idols and shut down the sale of idols. Early in the second century, [Pliny](#), the Roman governor of Bithnia, lamented in a letter to [Emperor Trajan](#) that the spread of Christianity had caused the pagan temples to be deserted and the sales of sacrificial animals to plummet. You remember now, you're living in a superstitious time. People attribute plague, famine, and natural disaster and all the other things that happen in life, to the gods being unhappy. And the idea was, the gods are unhappy because the Christians are forsaking them. And all of this is coming on us because all these Christians are forsaking the gods and the gods are mad. It prompted the [Christian apologist Tertullian](#) to remark, "*If the Tiber reaches the walls, if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky doesn't move or the earth does, if there's a famine, if there's a plague, the cry is at once, 'Christians to the lion.'*" The gods were mad because of the Christians. For these and other reasons, Christianity became a hated and despised religious sect in the Roman Empire. His letter to [Emperor Trajan](#), Pliny scorned Christianity. He said, "*It is a depraved and extravagant superstition.*" And went on to complain "*The contagion of this superstition has spread not only in the cities but in the villages and the rural districts as well.*"

The Gospel was penetrating, people were being converted, the church was growing and it had a detrimental effect on Roman life. The Roman historian Tacitus, a contemporary by the way of Pliny, describes Christians as "*a class hated for their abominations*" Suetonius, another contemporary of Pliny, dismissed them as "*a set of men adhering to a novel and mischievous superstition.*"

And so persecution of Christians began to foment....The first official breakout of persecution is July, 64 A.D., six years before the destruction of Jerusalem, under the Emperor Nero. On [July of A.D. 64 a fire ravaged Rome](#), damaging much of the city. Popular rumors pinned the cause on Nero himself. You remember Nero fiddling while Rome burned. That is probably not accurate but Nero needed a scapegoat. He needed someone that the populace already considered responsible for bad things, and that was the Christians. And so he blamed the Christians and began to savagely persecute them. Christians were arrested, cruelly tortured, thrown to wild animals, crucified and doused with oil and put on sticks and lit as torches for Nero's garden parties at night ([See Picture](#)). This first official organized persecution was in the vicinity of Rome, but attacks on Christians began to spread and were unchecked by the authorities. According to tradition, both Peter ([Ed: See Picture of Peter being crucified upside down](#)) and Paul ([see note](#)) were martyred under this persecution in

the time of Nero.

Three decades later, in the 90's of the first century, during the reign of [Emperor Domitian](#), another government sponsored persecution of Christians breaks out ([See Wikipedia discussion](#)). We don't know a lot of the details but it extended all around Israel and all the way to Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey. It was this persecution under Domitian that caught John the Apostle and had him exiled to the Isle of Patmos ([Note](#)). And among those martyred at that time was a man named [Antipas](#), a faithful pastor.

One notable example of Christian martyrdom in that time is [Polycarp](#), the aged bishop at the church at Smyrna, around 160 A.D. He was arrested for being Christian, tied to a stake and burned. And when asked to deny Christ, Polycarp said this, "*Eighty and six years ... eighty and six years have I served Him and He never did me any injury. How can I then blaspheme My King and My Savior?*" And he died triumphantly.

It wasn't long until there was empire-wide persecution of Christians, extending throughout the Roman Empire in the year 250 A D under [Emperor Decius](#). Rome at that time faced serious internal issues, economic crisis, natural disasters, external issues, the incursion of barbarians. Decius was convinced that all these difficulties were coming again because of the Christians who were forsaking Rome's ancient gods. He issued an edict (See below) requiring everyone to offer a sacrifice to the gods and to the emperor and obtain a certificate attesting that they had done that. And if they didn't do that, they were to be imprisoned, tortured and then slaughtered.

In January 250, Decius is said to have issued one of the most remarkable Roman imperial edicts. From the numerous surviving texts from Egypt, recording the act of sacrifice, it appears that the edict itself was fairly clear ---

- *All the inhabitants of the empire were required to sacrifice before the magistrates of their community 'for the safety of the empire' by a certain day (the date would vary from place to place and the order may have been that the sacrifice had to be completed within a specified period after a community received the edict). When they sacrificed they would obtain a certificate (libellus) recording the fact that they had complied with the order.[2] That is, the certificate would testify the sacrificant's loyalty to the ancestral gods and to the consumption of sacrificial food and drink as well as the names of the officials who were overseeing the sacrifice.[11]*

It didn't last long, however, by July of the next year, 251 A D, Decius died in a battle but persecution did not end. Now jumped from 251 A.D. to A.D. 303. Fifty-two years later the most violent empire-wide persecution came under an emperor named [Diocletian](#). It was an all-out attempt to exterminate the Christian faith (Ed: See [The Great Persecution](#)). He issued a series of edicts ordering churches to be destroyed. All copies of the Bible to be burned. All Christians offer sacrifice to the Roman gods or be killed. It was not until the [Edict of Milan](#) in which [Constantine](#) participated in 313 A D that 3 years of Christian persecution ended. And by 324 A D, Constantine had established Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire.

Did that end persecution? No. The Holy Roman Empire, the false form of Christianity began to persecute the true church. In the most massive persecution yet came during the Middle Ages. The horrors of the [Inquisition](#), (Ed: See also [Medieval Inquisitions](#)) the [St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre](#), and the martyrdoms of many believers, epitomized the Roman Church's effort to suppress the true gospel of Jesus Christ. When I say massive, I mean massive. According to historian, [John Dowling](#), ([The history of Romanism : from the earliest corruptions of Christianity to the present time](#)) a reputable historian, the Roman Catholic Church put to death 50 million heretics between A.D. 606 and mid-1800's, many of them true Christians ... 50 million. Murderous was that period of time.

The Reformers came along, denounced the Catholic system of [indulgences](#) and works righteousness. In the time of the [Reformation](#), the 1500's, the response from Rome was vitriolic and violent. And, of course, added to the 50 million that were slaughtered during that time. Godly leader like John Hus, Hugh Latimer, William Tyndale ([90 minute movie](#)), Patrick Hamilton, George Wishert(?), many others, martyred for their faith. It was Huss secured to a stake where he would be burned, said with a smile, "My Lord Jesus was bound with a harder chain than this for my sake, why then should I be ashamed of this rusty one." When asked to renounce, Huss declined saying, "What I taught with my lips, I now seal with my blood," and gave testimony to the glory and honor of Christ and the truth of the gospel in his death. And that's what Jesus said would happen. It will turn out for your testimony because the Spirit will show you what to say.

As he was about to be burned at the stake, the Czech reformer [John Hus](#) confidently proclaimed,

- *The Lord Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, was bound with a harder chain, and I, a miserable sinner, am not afraid to bear this one, bound as I am for his name's sake.... In the same truth of the Gospel which I have written, taught, and preached, drawing upon the sayings and positions of the holy doctors, I am ready to die today.* (David S. Schaff, John Huss, His Life, Teachings and Death After Five Hundred Years [New York: Scribners, 1915], 257)
- (see [youtube video](#) or [another video](#)) ([Watch John MacArthur speak of John Hus](#))

The triumph and testimony of John Hus has been the cause of the conversion of who knows how many ... countless thousands ... through history. He died singing a hymn as the flames engulfed his body.

No other religion has this history. In many places in the world today, believers continue to be persecuted. Muslim and Hindu-controlled countries, especially Africa and the Middle East, especially murderous toward Christians. Though other nations such as Communistic states are also antagonistic and during the development of Communism, Christians were massacred wholesale.

A February 11, 1997 article in the New York Times reports

'Millions of American Christians pray in their churches each week, oblivious to the fact that Christians in many parts of the world suffer brutal torture, arrest, imprisonment and even death -- their homes and communities laid waste -- for no other reason than that they are Christians. The shocking untold story of our time is that more Christians have died this century simply for being Christians than in the first nineteen centuries after the birth of Christ. They have been persecuted and martyred before an unknowing, indifferent world and a largely silent Christian community. (See [Original NY Times Article](#))

In addition, an incalculable number of faithful believers have been rejected by their families, hated by their parents, hated by their siblings, by their friends, arrested, beaten, persecuted short of death ... all on account of loyalty to Christ. There's a relatively new book called *The New Persecuted*, published in 2002.

A Roman Catholic journalist, Antonio Succi estimates that in the two thousand years of church history, seventy million Christians have been martyred. The number is likely much greater since he minimizes the number of those executed under the Roman Catholic Church. God knows, I don't know how many but the numbers are staggering.

Under the Roman Catholic Church, which replaced Imperial Rome as the dominant power during the Middle Ages, persecution broke out anew. Ironically, this time the persecution against true believers came from those who called themselves "Christian." The horrors of the Inquisition, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and the martyrdoms of many believers, epitomized the Roman Church's effort to suppress the true gospel of Jesus Christ. More recently, believers have been brutally repressed by Communist and Islamic regimes. In fact, it has been estimated by none other than a Roman Catholic source that, in all of church history, roughly 70 million Christians have been killed for their profession of faith, with two-thirds of those martyrdoms occurring after the start of the twentieth century ([Antonio Succi](#), *I Nuovi Persequitati* [The New Persecuted] Casale Montferrato: Edizioni Piemme, 2002). The actual number is likely much greater. The Catholic journalist cited in this news article estimates that an average of 100,000 Christians have been killed every year since 1990. (Source: MacArthur Commentary on John)

He also says that of these 70 million Christians, two thirds have been killed in the last hundred years. He claims that an average of 160 thousand Christians have been killed every year since 1990 ... 160 thousand a year since 1990.

So was our Lord right when He said you can expect this in the time between My first and My second coming? He was right about the wars. He was absolutely right about the earthquakes and the plagues and the famines, that they would increase and escalate and become worse and worse. Don't think for one split second that the purpose of Jesus failed at the cross. Don't think that what He intended to do didn't come to pass. He laid out exactly what would happen and that's the way it is in the history of the world. And it's going to get worse, not better. If you think persecution of believers is going to go away, you're wrong. The church is going to continue to be persecuted because it's going to continue to be scattered for purposes of evangelism. And it's going to continue to have to give its testimony of triumph in the face of persecution to demonstrate its truthfulness and validity and persecution will continue and get worse. ([The Persecution and Endurance of Christians. Part 2](#))

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BGT Luke 21:13 ποβ σεται μ ν ε ς μαρτ ριον.

KJV Luke 21:13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

NET Luke 21:13 This will be a time for you to serve as witnesses.

CSB Luke 21:13 It will lead to an opportunity for you to witness.

ESV Luke 21:13 This will be your opportunity to bear witness.

NIV Luke 21:13 This will result in your being witnesses to them.

NLT Luke 21:13 But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me.

NRS Luke 21:13 This will give you an opportunity to testify.

YLT Luke 21:13 and it shall become to you for a testimony.

- Philippians 1:28; 1 Th 3:3,4; 2 Th 1:5
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

## **A CHANCE TO BE A MARTYR!**

**It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony** - Literally it reads "**and it shall become to you for a testimony.**" or "**It shall be to you for a witness.**" Jesus explains that their suffering for His Name's sake is not meaningless. To the contrary, the purpose of their persecution leads to their privilege of His proclamation! This is the glorious outcome of suffering for the sake of the Name above all names! We receive the golden opportunity of a lifetime to tell about the life of the Only One in Whom there is eternal life!

The **paradox of persecution** is that it opens a wide door of opportunity for the Gospel, one that leads to a testimony about the Lord Jesus Christ. Recall that Paul had appealed to Caesar and to Caesar (Acts 25:10,11+) and to Caesar he went, but this imprisonment opened up an opportunity to present the Gospel in places it may never have been presented otherwise. For example, Paul was chained to a Roman guard round the clock and we know what they heard. In Acts 27:24+ an angel of God told Paul "you must stand before Caesar." In Philippians 4:22+ written from a Roman prison Paul writes "all the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household." How did they hear the Gospel? Most writers believe that they had been led to Christ by the prisoner Paul.

In Acts 4 Luke describes an open door of opportunity which was brought about by Jewish persecution...

As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, 2 being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 **And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.** 4 But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. 5 On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; 6 and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. 7 When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, 9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. 11 "He is the **STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED** by you, **THE BUILDERS**, but **WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER** stone. 12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." 13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. (Acts 4:1-13+)

Acts 4:33 sums up this opportunity to give a testimony or witness

**And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.** (Acts 4:33+)

**MacArthur** - Christ's warning of the persecution to come shocked the disciples, who were still expecting Him to inaugurate the golden age of the messianic kingdom. Incredibly, the very next evening, during the Last Supper they, unable to shake the persistent hope of the kingdom, bickered over which of them would be elevated to the greatest honor in the kingdom (Luke 22:24). There was no place in their theology or their minds for Messiah to be killed and His followers persecuted. But persecution of Christians would have an outcome opposite what the enemies of Christ intended. Far from destroying the Christian faith, it would help spread the gospel by leading to an opportunity for believers' gospel testimony. Over the centuries persecution has provided opportunities to proclaim the gospel, purified the church, and demonstrated the triumph of saving faith. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Opportunity for your testimony** (3142)([marturion/martyrion](#); English "[martyr](#)") means evidence, proof. The content of what a witness tells. Marturion is the declaration of facts which confirms or makes something known. A person can only testify to what he himself has seen or heard or experienced. A witness in a courtroom is to report only what he knows objectively, factually, and personally. He is not to speculate, guess, or deduce. See Stephen's [eloquent testimony](#) below.

In later centuries (after the first century AD) **marturion** came to be used as a description of [martyrdom](#). Edward Myers says "The word originally referred to one who was a legal witness but came to refer to one whose testimony for Jesus ends in death." (Eerdman's Dictionary of the Bible).

**Tertullian** wrote that "The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed" (Apology, chap. 50).

**MacArthur** - The persecution of the church always brings gospel opportunity. Persecution of the church always purifies the church. The persecution of the church always makes the church strong, it makes the church bold....Persecution of Christians has allowed Christians to give, strong, bold, confident, faithful testimony to the glory of the gospel. You read Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. And you hear these incredibly stirring, beautiful testimonies of those who were brought to the edge of the flames, about to be burned to death, or to the edge of the sword, or the guillotine for their love for Christ and how powerful their testimony is now resounding.

#### Luke 21:14 "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;"

Lenski Luke 21:14 Fix, therefore, in your hearts not to meditate beforehand to make defense for yourselves, I.

BGT Luke 21:14 ἠρεσκετε ουν εν τα ς καρδ αις μ ν μ προμελετε ν πολογηθη ναι.

KJV Luke 21:14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

NET Luke 21:14 Therefore be resolved not to rehearse ahead of time how to make your defense.

CSB Luke 21:14 Therefore make up your minds not to prepare your defense ahead of time,

ESV Luke 21:14 Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer,

NIV Luke 21:14 But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.

NLT Luke 21:14 So don't worry in advance about how to answer the charges against you,

NRS Luke 21:14 So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance;

YLT Luke 21:14 'Settle, then, to your hearts, not to meditate beforehand to reply,

GWN Luke 21:14 So make up your minds not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.

NKJ Luke 21:14 "Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer;

NAB Luke 21:14 Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand,

MIT Luke 21:14 Determine, therefore, in your heart not to premeditate how you will make your defense.

NJB Luke 21:14 Make up your minds not to prepare your defence,

ASV Luke 21:14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand how to answer:

- Luke 12:11,12; Mt 10:19,20; Mark 13:11
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur

## PUT ASIDE FEAR OF WHAT TO SAY

Mark has a similar statement

Mark 13:11+ "When they arrest you and hand you over, **do not worry beforehand about what you are to say**, but say whatever is given you in that hour; **for** it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

**Lenski** - To be arrested and haled before judges low or high is enough to upset anyone. Aside from the shame, fear, and other conflicting emotions, the trial itself and the matter of their defense would cause terrible anxiety to the apostles and to other heralds of the gospel. Their anxiety would not, however, concern itself merely with the manner in which they might defend themselves and escape the infliction of penalties, their anxiety would be concerned chiefly with the honor of Christ and the gospel, that in the midst of their mental confusion, by mistakes, weakness, ignorance, or other handicaps they might injure the Lord's cause. After spending one or more sleepless nights in a foul cell, and having no advocate at their side, in what condition would they be to do justice to the gospel? "Stop worrying what you shall utter!" contemplates and meets this situation....The clause introduced by "for" (gar) explains what this divine gift in the hour of need really means: "for you are not the ones making utterance but the Holy Spirit," i.e., in reality not you, but in reality He. (The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel)

**So (oun)** - means **therefore** and is a [term of conclusion](#). What is Jesus concluding? Or why is He drawing a conclusion? What has He just described? Persecution from Jews. Persecution from Gentiles. And then He stated that it would lead to their opportunity to give a testimony, even to be a martyr if that is what God calls one to be to authenticate their testimony. And so the temptation is to fear what men might do to us and how we might respond to persecution if it affected us personally. So Jesus gives words of comfort and encouragement to His little band of eleven men (and to all disciples through the subsequent 2000 years) that God's grace would provide for them in their hour of testing. And so Jesus begins by calling us to make up your minds or better to determine or resolve in your heart how to respond to persecution. This reminds me of the response of young Daniel captive in Babylon and chosen out of the Jewish populace to be in effect "brain washed" with Babylonian culture and education, etc. And how do young Daniel respond? He responded with a declaration that literally set his course of a godly testimony in the midst of 3 pagan regimes for the next 70-80 years of his life! And so Daniel records...

But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. (Daniel 1:8+)

**Make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves** The KJV has "settle it in your hearts" which is an excellent literal translation. The heart is the "control center" so it all begins there. That's what Solomon said "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." (Pr 4:23-note)

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**Minds** (literally - hearts)([2588](#))([kardia](#)) referring to the heart as the center and source of our whole inner life, the source and seat of functions of soul and spirit in the emotional life (Acts 2:26), the volitional life (2 Cor 9:7) and the rational life (Acts 7:23) (From Friberg Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**To prepare beforehand** ([4304](#))([prometeleo](#) from **pro** = before + **meleleo** = practice, study) means to premeditate, to practice (a speech) beforehand, of a court defense to prepare beforehand. BDAG has "to prepare beforehand by giving careful thought and attention." NET Note says "This term could refer to rehearsing a speech or a dance."

**To defend** ([626](#))([apologeomai](#) from **apo** = from + **logos** = speech) literally means, "to talk one's self off from" and thus to speak in one's own defense, defend oneself. BDAG - "to speak in one's own defense against charges presumed to be false," **Apologia** was a technical word used in the Greek law courts and was used of an attorney who talked his client off from a charge preferred against him. In short it refers to a speech given in defense.

All uses of **apologeomai** (most by Luke) - Lk. 12:11; Lk. 21:14; Acts 19:33; Acts 24:10; Acts 25:8; Acts 26:1; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:24; Rom. 2:15; 2 Co. 12:19

The English word "**apologetics**" comes from the Gr. word here translated "defense." Our English word **apology** originally did not mean "to say I am sorry" but actually referred to "a defense presented in court." **Apologetics** is the branch of theology that deals with the defense of the faith. Every Christian should be able to give a reasoned defense of his hope in Christ, especially in hopeless situations. A crisis creates the

opportunity for witness when a believer behaves with faith and hope, because the unbelievers will then sit up and take notice.

**Luke 21:15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.**

BGT Luke 21:15 γ γ ρ δ σω μ ν σ τ μα κα σοφ αν ο δυν σονται ντιστ ναι ντειπε ν παντες ο ντικε μενοι μ ν.

KJV Luke 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

NET Luke 21:15 For I will give you the words along with the wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

CSB Luke 21:15 for I will give you such words and a wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

ESV Luke 21:15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

NIV Luke 21:15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

NLT Luke 21:15 for I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you!

NRS Luke 21:15 for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.

YLT Luke 21:15 for I will give to you a mouth and wisdom that all your opposers shall not be able to refute or resist.

- **I will give you utterance and wisdom** - Lk 24:45; Exodus 4:11,12; Proverbs 2:6; Jeremiah 1:9; Acts 2:4; 4:8-13,31-33; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3,4; James 1:5
- **Which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute** Acts 6:10; 24:25; 26:28; 2 Timothy 4:16,17
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

## THE PROMISE OF "VERBAL INSPIRATION"

**For** (*gar*) is a [term of explanation](#). What is Jesus explaining? What has He just instructed them to not do in Lk 21:14? He has just said you do not need to memorize a speech so that you were prepared when you are persecuted for Christ's sake. Now He explains why this action will not be necessary.

**Jesus** had given a similar instruction earlier in Luke (read the context - Luke 12:2-10+)

When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry (or be anxious = [merimnao](#)) about how or what you are to **speak** in your **defense** ([apologeomai](#)), or what you are to say; (WHY NOT?) for **the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.** (Lk 12:11-12+)

**I will give you utterance and wisdom** (*sophia*) - NET = "I will give you the words along with the wisdom." **"I"** or **"ego"** is first in the Greek to emphasize that "I Myself" (JESUS BY HIS SPIRIT) will take care of you! The verb **"give"** conveys the truth that this is a **gift of grace** from Jesus Himself - a marvelous gift of words and wisdom! Veritable verbal inspiration! They (and all disciples in similar situations) are not to depend on themselves but wholly lean on Jesus' Name. What a mighty promise! What a mighty God we serve! No wonder Paul could write from a dank, dark prison cell "I can do all things (OUR RESPONSIBILITY) through Him Who strengthens me (JESUS' PROVISION)." (Php 4:13+)

**Utterance** is stoma which is literally "mouth" which is used here as a [metonymy](#) for what the mouth utters (used again in Lk 21:24 of the "edge" of the sword). "I will give you mouth and wisdom." As noted above this promise is from Jesus. How does He give it? By

His Spirit Who will indwell them. Throughout the book of Acts one of the major gifts of the Spirit of Jesus to the disciples is **bold speech!** (cf Acts 4:31, Paul in Acts 9:27-28, Acts 11:22-24, Acts 13:46, Acts 14:3)

### **My hope is built on nothing less**

Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

In his last letter Paul testified of the personal presence of the Lord Jesus when he had to stand before his opponents...

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. **But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me**, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. (2Ti 4:16,17+)

**R C H Lenski** comments that "Jesus promises the disciples inspiration, **verbal inspiration in the critical hour of their need** And its product will be so wonderful as to astonish the disciples themselves when they see that their opponents are defeated and silenced as they so often saw them defeated before Jesus. But this means only that the testimony of the disciples which will be placed on their tongue by Jesus will be so strong and not that the disciples will in every case be acquitted and set free. Despite all his good testimony Jesus himself was crucified. The argument is unanswerable: if Jesus is able and ready to grant verbal inspiration to the disciples for their proper defense at court, will he do less for the testimony of his written Word to all men and all ages? (See [The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel](#))

A similar promise was given to Moses....

Exodus 4:11-15+ The LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?... 15 "You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. (See also Ezek 29:21)

Earlier in His ministry Jesus had given His disciples a similar instruction...

But **beware** (present imperative) of men, for they will hand you over ([paradidomi](#)) to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; 18 and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony ([marturion/martyrion](#)) to them (THE JEWS) and to the Gentiles. 19 "But when (NOT "IF" BUT "WHEN") they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for **it will be given you in that hour what you are to say**. 20 "For it is not you who speak, but **it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you**. (Mt 10:17-20+)

**MacArthur** - Those who suffer for Christ will be defended by Christ. Many of the most memorable and powerful testimonies of the great martyrs were uttered just before they were put to death. God gave them a special presence of mind and clarity of thought to present a testimony more powerful than they would otherwise have been able to give. (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

**R C H Lenski** - Without previous thinking, planning, imagining, at the time of their trials in court, the Apostles will receive directly from God just what to utter. It will come into their minds just as it is needed, and thus they will utter it aloud.... The apostles, indeed, make utterance, and yet they do not, for their act is due to the Holy Spirit, so that most properly he is the one who does his uttering. Everything that is mechanical, magical, unpsychological is shut out.... The apostles will not be like the demoniacs, their organs of speech and their very wills being violated by a demon. Absolutely the contrary: mind, heart, will operate freely, consciously, in joyful, trustful dependence on the Spirit's giving, who enables them to find just what to say and how to say it down to the last word, with no mistake or even a wrong word due to faulty memory or disturbed emotions occurring. This, of course, is Inspiration, **Verbal Inspiration**. (The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel)

**Darrell Bock** - Jesus promises that He will supply the replies needed. This is an indirect way to speak of the work of the Spirit (Mt 10:19-20, Mk 13:11). (The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study - Luke)

**C H Spurgeon** - You need **wisdom** so to conduct your affairs that nothing therein shall scandalize the weak, or bring dishonor upon the name of Christ; for mere knowledge will not suffice for this.

Luke records an example of the fulfillment of this promise

Acts 6:9+ But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen.<sup>10</sup> **But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.** (See also Acts 4:8-12+ and Acts 5:29-32+)

**Which none of your opponents ([antikeimai](#)) will be able ([dunamai](#)) to resist ([anthistemi](#)) or refute ([anteipon](#))** - Why not? Because you will be supernaturally enabled by the Holy Spirit! They will not be able to stand against you.

Peter gives an example of words the opponents could not resist or refute

When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. 30" The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. 31" He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." (Acts 5:27-32+)

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**Wisdom** (4678)([sophia](#)) is the ability to use knowledge for correct behavior. Wisdom is the **application** of truth to experience. It is the ability to apply truth to life that comes only from God (James 1:5; 3:15). Wisdom is insight into the true nature of things. **Wisdom** is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. **Wisdom** is "God's character in the many practical affairs of life. **Spiritual wisdom** is godly **wisdom** (contrasted with worldly wisdom - Jas 3:13-18 and 1Cor 1:19 through 1Cor 2:13) and involves living life in the light of the revelation of God's Will in His Word and applying this knowledge to specific situations. Biblical **wisdom** is definable as skill for living.

**Opponent** (adversary, enemy, oppose) (480)([antikeimai](#) from **anti** = against, opposite + **keimai** = to be placed, to lie or be laid down) means literally to line up against or to lie opposite to, be opposed, be hostile to. The enemy, opponent (Lk 13:17). **Antikeimai** means to be set over against, to be opposed or be in opposition and as noted below is often used as a "verbal noun" variously translated as opponent, enemy or adversary. Note that in the **LXX** (Zechariah 3:1), this verb is used to describe the opposition of the Adversary, Satan, and in the NT, is used to describe the opposition of Satan's man of lawlessness, the Antichrist (2 Thes 2:4)

**Be able** (1410)([dunamai](#)) speaks of inherent power to accomplish a task. Their "task" will be to try to **refute** the Christian witness of the disciples and they will be unable to do so! Christ plus one is always a "majority!"

**Resist** (cope with) (436)([anthistemi](#) from **anti** = against + **histemi** = to cause to stand) is literally to stand or set against. To set one's self against. To withstand. **Anthistemi** means to arrange in battle against and so pictures a **face to face** confrontation. It means to set one's self against, to stand firm against someone else's onset, to oppose (place opposite or against), to resist by actively opposing pressure or power, to withstand (oppose with firm determination). It involves not only a psychological attitude but also a corresponding behavior. It was used to refer to an army arranging in battle against the enemy force and so to array against.

**Refute** (471)([anteipon](#) from **anti** = against + **épō** = to say) to [gainsay](#), contradict means to speak against (only twice - Lk 21:15, Acts 4:14).

**Anteipon** - 30x in 29v. Ge 24:50; Ge 44:16; Jos. 17:14; Esther 1:17; Esther 8:8; Job 9:3; Job 20:2; Job 23:13; Job 32:1; Isa. 10:14; Isa. 22:22; Isa. 50:5; Isa. 65:2; Hos. 4:4

**Luke 21:16 "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death,**

BGT Luke 21:16 παραδοθ̅ε̅ σε̅σθε̅ δ̅ κα̅ π̅ γον̅ ων̅ κα̅ δ̅ελφ̅ ν̅ κα̅ συγγεν̅ ν̅ κα̅ φ̅ λων̅, κα̅ θ̅ανατ̅ σου̅σιν̅ ξ̅ μ̅ ν̅,

KJV Luke 21:16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

NET Luke 21:16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will have some of you put to death.

CSB Luke 21:16 You will even be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. They will kill some of you.

ESV Luke 21:16 You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death.

NIV Luke 21:16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

NLT Luke 21:16 Even those closest to you-- your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends-- will betray you. They will even kill some of you.

NRS Luke 21:16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.

YLT Luke 21:16 'And ye shall be delivered up also by parents, and brothers, and kindred, and friends, and they shall put of you to death;

- **you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends** Jeremiah 9:4; 12:6; Micah 7:5,6; Mt 10:21; Mark 13:12
- **and they will put some of you to death** Acts 7:59; 12:2; 26:10,11; Revelation 2:13; 6:9; 12:11
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

## BETRAYAL BY THE CLOSEST RELATIONSHIPS

**But you will be betrayed ([paradidomi](#)) even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends and they will put some of you to death,**- Remember that Jesus is speaking to His disciples, warning them of the difficult times they would soon experience when He was gone.

Jesus had given a similar teaching earlier in Luke...

“Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; 52 for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. 53 “They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” (Lk 12:51-53+)

**And they will put some of you to death ([thanatoo](#))** - As with Jesus, so it will be that some of His disciples would “follow in His steps” (1 Pe 2:21+). **Some** (not “all”) indicates that this will not be the normal experience for all disciples.

**Luke** describes some of the deaths of disciples in Acts

Acts 7:58+ (STEPHEN) When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” 60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” (GOD ANSWERED THIS PRAYER WHEN HE SAVED SAUL!) Having said this, he fell asleep. (8:1) Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

**Comment:** Spirit filled Stephen gave a “testimony” that no one could **resist** or **refute** (Lk 21:15), including the Christ hater Saul, who was present at his stoning and who soon became a Christ lover!

Acts 12:1-2+ (JAMES) Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them (CAUSE THEM INJURY). And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

Acts 26:10-11+ (SAUL BEFORE HE WAS CONVERTED) “And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I

tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

**Will be betrayed** (delivered up) (3860) (**paradidomi** from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to +**didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another. To **betray** means to hand over, to expose or deliver to an enemy by treachery

**Put...to death** (2289) (**thanatoo** from **thanatos** = death) means **literally** to kill, to cause to be put to death, to mortify, to give up to death, to condemn to death or to deliver over to death. This verb describes what the Jews sought to do to Jesus and eventually accomplished (see Mt 26:59, Mt 27:1, Mk 13:12).

## Luke 21:17 and you will be hated by all because of My name.

KJV Luke 21:17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

- **you will be hated by all** Mt 10:22; 24:9; Mark 13:13; John 7:7; 15:19; 17:14
- **because of My name** Luke 6:22; Mt 5:11; John 15:21; Acts 9:16; 2 Corinthians 4:5,11; 12:10; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 4:14; Revelation 2:3
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

## GENERAL HATRED OF ALL CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS

**And you will be hated by all because of My name** - **All** is not used in the absolute sense (**all** with no exceptions) but refers to the general reaction of unbelievers of all classes toward believers. This is one of those promises you probably won't find in a collection of "God's Promises!"

**MacArthur** "Some believers live lives of almost constant conflict with the world, while others seem to escape it entirely. Some Christians are not persecuted simply because their testimony is so weak it goes unnoticed by the world. When biblical doctrine and standards are compromised to accommodate fallen human nature, society has little argument with that kind of Christianity and will give little opposition to Christians. But to confront the world as Paul did with the declaration that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro 1:18) is to guarantee society's wrath against the gospel and those who preach it....false religion reacts against believers because it is generated by Satan. Government reacts against believers because it is under the control of the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of this world. Ungodly families and society react against believers because they cannot tolerate righteous people in their midst. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew)

If you name the Name of Jesus, you are not in a special club which relatively "few who find it" (Mt 7:13-14note), and which those who do not enter love to hate, because they hate the Name of Jesus.

John 15:18-21 "If the world **hates** you, you know that it has **hated** Me before it **hated** you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world **hates** you. 20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me

John 17:14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has **hated** them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

**John MacArthur** explains **because of My Name** - "The risen, glorified Lord whom His enemies hate is beyond their reach. Driven by their animosity toward Him, they lash out instead at His followers. Even those closest to believers will turn against them." (Luke Commentary)

As **Lenski** says "The friendship of Jesus means the enmity of the world."

**Lenski** on **because of My Name** - This signifies more than merely the personal names "Jesus," "Christ," etc.; it includes all by which

He is known. Hence in phrases such as this "Name" is equivalent to "revelation." Men will in dislike and opposition turn against everything that reveals Christ and makes Him known. The implication in "Name" is that the apostles and those who succeed them will always proclaim this "Name" or revelation and will thus arouse the hatred. In the Acts the persecutors avoid even pronouncing the Name Jesus wherever possible. (ED: IN OUR CULTURE THE NAME "JESUS" OR "CHRIST" IS [SULLIED](#) FREQUENTLY BY UNBELIEVERS IN CONVERSATION, ON TV AND IN MOVIES WHERE IT IS USED AS A CURSE WORD!)

**Will be hated** (3404)([miseo](#) from **misos** = hatred) means to dislike strongly, to have a strong aversion to or to detest, all of these representing expressions of hostility of one person (or group) toward another (Mt 5:43, Lk 6:27, et al). Specifically the hatred can be directed toward God (Lk 1:71). The majority of the NT uses of [miseo](#) convey the literal meaning of animosity towards God, people or particular attitudes.

**Luke's** uses of [miseo](#) - Lk. 1:71; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 6:27; Lk. 14:26; Lk. 16:13; Lk. 19:14; Lk. 21:17

When we realize we are hated because of His Name, we need to recall Jesus' words He spoke earlier in Luke

"Blessed ([makarios](#) = fully satisfied independent of the circumstances) are you when men **hate** you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, **for the sake of the Son of Man** (Lk. 6:22-note)

### Luke 21:18 "Yet not a hair of your head will perish

KJV Luke 21:18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

- Luke 12:7; 1 Samuel 14:45; 25:29; 2 Samuel 14:11; Mt 10:30; Acts 27:34
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:18-19 The Undying Faith of Christians Facing Death](#) - John MacArthur

## A PARADOXICAL PROMISE

[Paradoxical](#) means something seemingly contradictory but nonetheless possibly true. It describes a situation or statement which seems impossible or is difficult to understand because it contains two opposite facts or characteristics.

In the Olivet Discourse, Luke alone records this **paradoxical promise** by Jesus to the disciples, paradoxical in light of the previous promise that some will be put to death!

Can you put yourself in the sandals of the disciples who were just informed by Jesus that some would be put to death (Lk 21:16). How would you feel if someone told you that you might soon be killed? So now Jesus makes a statement which in context, at first glance, seems to make little sense. He had just stated some would be killed and now He says not even a hair would perish. He is giving them a word of encouragement. He is assuring them that their salvation is secure and will not be lost.

**The ESV Study Bible** adds that "This was not a promise for the preservation of their physical lives, but a guarantee that they would suffer no eternal loss. God Himself sovereignly preserves His own."

**A T Robertson** - Jesus has just said that some they will put to death. Hence it is spiritual safety here promised such as Paul claimed about death in Phil. 1:21-note ("For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.")

**Ivor Powell** comments that "Lk 21:16 and Lk 21:18 appear to be at variance. If some of the disciples were to be slain, how could it be said that **not a hair** of their heads would **perish**? The Lord surely was indicating that whilst the outward man would perish, the inward man would be renewed day by day. Although Satan might win a temporary battle, the war would be won by God. Some Christian soldiers would die on the battlefield, but in a deeper sense none would suffer irreparable loss (ED: WHICH IS THE MAIN SENSE OF THE GREEK WORD FOR "PERISH") for they rested in the hand of God. With this assurance filling their souls they were not to be worried about anything. Throughout times of betrayal, God would be faithful; He would be their refuge and strength. When testimony was needed, the Holy Spirit would suggest the words to be uttered, and if they were called to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, they would not be alone, for God would lead them out of the shadows into the eternal sunlight of a new world." (Luke Commentary)

**John MacArthur** - Since He had just warned that believers would die in the coming persecutions, this cannot be a guarantee of

absolute physical protection. The point of the saying is metaphoric—that though they may die physically, true believers will not perish spiritually. Some have interpreted the Lord's concluding statement, "By your endurance you will gain your lives," as a reference to physical survival. That, however, reduces it to a meaningless tautology, saying in effect that those who do not die will not die. What Jesus was actually pointing out is that those whose trust in Christ endures to the end (cf. Matt. 10:22; 24:13), so that they do not fall away, prove that their faith is the authentic gift from God. Such will receive the final aspect of salvation, glorification, and live forever in the joy of God's glorious kingdom.

**Stein** - The whole flavor of Lk 21:12–19 indicates that whereas martyrdom may be experienced by only a few, many will experience persecution. Furthermore, although Acts ends before the [Neronian persecutions](#), Luke's readers must have known about them, and the martyrdoms at that time were more than a "few." Most probably this proverb is meant to contrast what humanity can do and what it cannot do to God's people. In Luke 12:4–5-note the reader is told not to fear those who kill the body and after that can do no more. Rather they are to fear him who has power to cast into hell. After this warning of future persecution, there follows in Lk 12:7a, as here, a similar statement ("the very hairs of your head are numbered"). These words are therefore meant to encourage Jesus' followers by reminding them that whatever may happen to them by way of persecution, nothing can ultimately harm them, not even death, for they possess eternal life (LK 18:30; cf. John 10:28). (NAC)

Some writers such as **Leon Morris** interpret Jesus paradoxical promise as speaking of physical preservation *not* spiritual preservation - The reconciliation (with preceding prediction of death) lies in the thought of God's overriding sovereignty. God's control is absolute. He can bring it about that *not a hair of their head will perish.*" (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**R C H Lenski** comments "The word about "a hair out of your head" recalls Matt. 10:30 which speaks of the care of providence that extends as far as every numbered hair on our heads. The sense must be the same here. When a disciple suffers persecution, even death through wicked men, let him not think that God has forgotten him—he is in God's care and keeping to the last hair of his head. Nothing, absolutely nothing occurs to us without God's own will. (The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

**Yet not a hair of your head will perish**- Note the double negative (*ou me*), the strongest way Jesus could negate this promise. Of course Jesus is not speaking of literal hair on one's head, but is using a saying which was well known to the Jews, as it was found in the Old Testament.

For example in 1 Sa 14:45 we read of the people's defense of Jonathan when Saul was preparing to kill him, the crowd shouting "As the LORD lives, **not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground.**" And Saul spared his son. In 2 Samuel 14 a woman from Tekoa speaks a parable to King David to encourage him to reconcile with Absalom.

Then she (the woman) said, "Please let the king remember the LORD your God, so that the avenger of blood will not continue to destroy, otherwise they will destroy my son." And he said, "As the LORD lives, **not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.**" (2 Sa 14:11)

In 1 Kings we read

Solomon said, "If he is a worthy man, not one of his hairs will fall to the ground; but if wickedness is found in him, he will die." (1 Ki 1:52)

In the present context, Jesus is not saying the disciples would not be killed, but He is saying they would not suffer eternal loss (eternal punishment). They might perish physically, but they would not perish spiritually. This is similar to His declaration in Matthew

**"Do not fear** those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to **destroy** (apollumi) both soul and body in hell (gehenna - the final abode of all unbelievers). 29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. (Mt. 10:28-31)

In Matthew 10:28 Jesus uses the same verb **apollumi** found in Luke 21:18. Jesus is saying that those who do are not safe in Christ will be eternally ruined and will never be useful to God for the purpose for which He created them. Surely this loss of purpose is one of the profound "psychological" tortures and miseries of everlasting hell.

**Will perish** (622)(**apollumi** from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy) means to destroy utterly but not to cause one to cease to exist. **Apollumi** as it relates to men, is not the loss of being per se, but is more the loss of well-being. It means to ruin so that the person (or thing) ruined can no longer serve the use for which he (it) was designed. To render useless. The gospel promises everlasting life for the one who believes. The failure to possess this life will result in utter ruin and eternal uselessness (but not a cessation of existence). **Apollumi** then has the basic meaning of describing that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose.

## Luke 21:19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives."

KJV Luke 21:19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

NLT Luke 21:19 By standing firm, you will win your souls.

- Luke 8:15; Ps 27:13,14; 37:7; 40:1; Romans 2:7; 5:3; 8:25; 15:4; 1 Th 1:3; 2 Th 3:5; Hebrews 6:11,15; 10:36; James 1:3; 5:7-11; Revelation 1:9; 2:2,3; 3:10; Revelation 13:10; 14:12
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:12-19 The Persecution and Endurance of Christians, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:18-19 The Undying Faith of Christians Facing Death](#) - John MacArthur

### ENDURANCE TO THE END

There are similar passages in Matthew and Mark's version of the Olivet Discourse:

Matthew 24:13 "But the one who endures ([hupomeno](#)) to the end, he will be saved.

Mark 13:13 "You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures ([hupomeno](#)) to the end, he will be saved.

**By your endurance you will gain your lives** - Jesus is giving the disciples an encouragement that they will endure, that even if they are killed, they will still "**gain your lives**." It is also a call to remain faithful. Jesus is not saying that one's **endurance** merits or earns eternal life. In other words He is not saying one can earn justification by remaining faithful rather than apostatizing since justification comes by faith, not works. What He is saying is that **endurance** will prove that one is genuinely saved. This is not the "grit your teeth" **endurance** that the world teaches. It is endurance which is enabled and empowered by the Spirit of God Who indwells each believer. Their **endurance** will prove that have a supernatural source enabling endurance which otherwise would not be possible simply by relying on one's natural strength.

**Nelson's NKJV Study Bible** says "Patient allegiance to Jesus leads to eternal life." That comment leaves the door open to the idea that it is the exercise of our power which "**leads to eternal life**," which of course is not the case. It is belief in the fully atoning, substitutionary sacrifice of the Lamb of God that "**leads to eternal life**." What the note is trying to say (in my humble opinion) is that an individual's *externally observable* "patient allegiance" is a clear demonstration of their reliance on an *internally non-observable* source of supernatural strength (the Spirit of Jesus in them) enabling them to manifest endurance to the end of their life. This is proof that they possess eternal life.

**By your endurance** - By your courageous and constant tenacity with hopeful expectancy, indicating an active endurance which opposes the evil while patiently waiting for the Lord.

**Endurance** (5281)([hupomone](#) from **hupo** = under + **meno** = stay, remain, abide) literally means abiding under. The main idea of **hupomone** is to remain under something which demands the submission of one's will to something against which one naturally would rebel. **Hupomone** portrays a picture of steadfastly and unflinchingly bearing up under a "heavy load." It describes that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances under trial. **Hupomone** does not describe a grim resignation or a "grin and bear" attitude but a triumphant facing of difficult circumstances knowing that even out of evil God guarantees good. It is courageous gallantry which accepts suffering and hardship and turns them into grace and glory. For believers, it is a steadfastness, especially as God enables us to "remain under" (or endure) whatever challenges, trials, tests, afflictions, etc, He providentially allows in our life.

It is surprising that this word is used only twice in the Gospels, both by Luke, here and in Luke 8:15note

Luke 8:15 "But the (GOSPEL) seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word (GOSPEL OF GRACE) in an honest and good (ONE THAT IS FAVORABLE "SOIL" FOR THE SEED OF THE GOSPEL) heart (I.E., THEY ARE SAVED. THEIR HEART IS "CIRCUMCISED" BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.), and hold it fast (present tense = one's lifestyle. THE RETENTION OF THE WORD OF GRACE DOES NOT SAVE THEM BUT DOES SHOW THEY ARE SAVED WHICH IS AUTHENTICATED BY FRUIT BEARING!), and bear fruit (present tense = CONTINUAL FRUIT BEARING IS THE PRODUCT OF A GENUINE FAITH) with **perseverance** ([hupomone](#) - E.G., TRIALS COME BUT THIS PERSON CONTINUES

## TO ABIDE IN THE VINE WHICH IN TURN BEARS TRUE SPIRITUAL FRUIT!

**Comment:** The related verb [hupomeno](#) is used 4x - Mt 10:22, Mt 24:13, Mk 13:13, Lk 2:43.

**Hupomone** in Lk 21:19 refers to the brave holding out under adverse situations, suffering, trials, afflictions, etc. To hold one's ground in face of fierce opposition to Jesus! Not giving up. Not "throwing in the towel." (Contrast Luke 8:14-note, Mark 4:19) Jesus has promised persecution. Genuine believers will persevere to the end of their life or the end of this age, whichever comes first. And remember our endurance is not because of our natural ability but because of supernatural enablement for as Paul taught it is "**God Who gives perseverance and encouragement.**" (Ro 15:5-note).

**MacArthur - Endurance** does not produce or protect salvation, which is totally the work of God's grace. But endurance is evidence of salvation, proof that a person is truly redeemed and a child of God. God gives eternal life "to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality," Paul says (Ro 2:7-note). The writer of Hebrews expresses the same truth in these words: "For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end" (Heb 3:14-note). We do not earn our salvation by endurance, but prove it. Continuance is a verification of being a real Christian. Theologians call this the perseverance of the saints. The following Scriptures also emphasize perseverance: Matthew 24:13; John 8:31; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Colossians 1:21-23; Hebrews 2:1-3; 4:14; 6:11-12; 10:39; 12:14; 2 Peter 1:10. Persecution quickly burns away chaff in the church. Those who have made only a superficial profession of Christ have no new nature to motivate them to suffer for Christ and no divine power to enable them to endure it if they wanted to. Nothing is more spiritually purifying and strengthening than persecution (cf. James 1:12-note). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew)

**Darrell Bock** - Saving faith does not renounce Jesus; it holds onto him even in the face of persecution. To cease to trust Jesus is to never have trusted him. Judas pictures one who failed. Peter pictures one who lapsed but whose commitment was real. The spiritual force of this verse reinforces that of Luke 21:18 (Plummer 1896: 481). To cling to Jesus is to have life—even in the face of death. Mark 13:13b makes the connection to salvation explicit: the one who endures to the end will be saved. (BECNT-Luke)

**You will gain your lives** - Literally "gain your souls." The NLT paraphrases it "you will win your souls." NIV has "you will gain life." NAB has "you will secure your lives." Paul uses the verb form ([hupomeno](#)) in his last written communication stating "If we **endure hupomeno** in the present tense = as our general lifestyle, not perfection but our general "direction"), we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us." (2 Ti 2:12-note). In this passage what is the "opposite" of enduring? It is denying! This is not about loss of rewards as some falsely teach, but is about loss of eternal life that reigns with Christ! Mark it down, no one loses their salvation! Those who profess Christ and "appear" to lose their salvation were never genuinely saved! (cf Jn 10:28-29)

**Gain** (acquire)([2932](#))([ktaomai](#)) means procure, obtain or acquire something for oneself. Most NT uses refer to procuring something by purchase for a price (Acts 1:18; 8:20; 22:28).

**Lives** ([5590](#))([psuche](#) or [psyche](#) from [psucho](#) = to breathe, blow, English = psychology, "study of the soul") is the breath, then that which breathes, the individual, animated creature. Psuche is used as it is in Mark 8:35, 36 and in John 12:25, as referring to the immaterial part of man which animates his body, which is as such called "the life."

**NET Note on lives** - "your souls," but [psuche](#) is frequently used of one's physical life. In light of Lk 21:16 that does not seem to be the case here.

**Lenski** - To suffer for Christ, to die for him, seem like losing the life (soul in this sense); but if we hold out bravely, instead of losing anything of life or life itself we shall do nothing but gain these very lives (souls). What is lost is transient and lost to the soul anyway in the end. They who strive for nothing more will have no gain of any kind at the end but an irreparable and eternal loss; but they who suffer for Christ, even die for him with brave, true hearts, achieve everything, gain their own "souls" in this pregnant sense of the term. (Ibid)

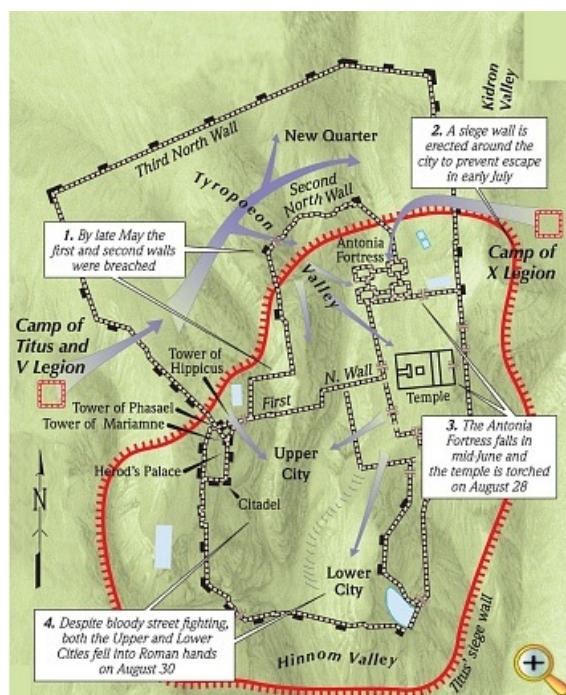
### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about perseverance?](#)
- [Perseverance of the Saints - is it biblical?](#)
- [How can I find joy in the midst of trials?](#)
- [How can I keep the faith?](#)

**Luke 21:20** "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then **recognize** that her desolation is near.

thereof is nigh.

- Luke 21:7; 19:43; Daniel 9:27; Mt 24:15; Mark 13:14
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole



Siege of Jerusalem by Romans in 70 AD  
(Source: Holman Christian Study Bible)

## THE SIGN OF COMING DESOLATION: SURROUNDED BY ARMIES

**Introduction** - Luke 21 is frequently referenced in commentaries on Matthew 24, especially to support the interpretation that Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:15-22+ was fulfilled in 70 AD, at the time of the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem by the Roman armies commanded by Titus. The following commentary will attempt to highlight the **significant differences** between certain passages in Luke 21 and Matthew 24, differences which are **problematic** (constituting or presenting a problem or difficulty) when one seeks to use them **to support interpretation** of Mt 24:15-22 as fulfilled in the past ([Preterist view](#)).

**But (term of contrast)** - What is Jesus contrasting? He has just stated "By your endurance you will gain your lives (literally "your souls")." (Lk 21:19) Clearly Jesus has just issued a call to remain faithful, for trusting in Him is the means to eternal (spiritual) life. Now however Jesus describes a danger to their physical lives and He will explain how they can preserve their physical lives.

**When (note)** means at that time, and in context Jesus explains it is at the "time" of the visible sign. Recall that after Jesus had predicted the Temple would be razed (Lk 21:6), the disciples did not question His prediction, but they did ask **when** this would occur, specifically asking "What will be the **sign when** these things are about to take place?" (Lk 21:7)

**When you see (horao)** (cf Mt 24:15-note = "therefore when you see") - The verb **horao** (aorist tense and active voice = the subject carries out the action) means literally to see with one's eyes. Jesus is saying that this event will be easily visible and clearly discernible. To keep this statement in context, recall that Luke records that

while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, "As **for these things** which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down." (cf Mt 24:1-2) And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, **when** therefore will **these things** be? And **what will be the sign when these things** are **about** (Notice "about" means almost, nearly or very close to doing something and thus is also a "time sensitive" word) to take place?" (Lk 21:5-7)

So the disciples asked **when** and **what**? They wanted to know the timing and the **sign**. Jesus responds by linking the **when** with the **what**, giving the Jews a specific **sign** that marks **when these things** were going to take place. The sign in Luke 21:20 is Jerusalem surrounded by armies. Contrast this sign with the sign in Matthew 24:15-note of the **abomination of desolation standing in the holy place**. A simple reading of the text leaves little doubt that these are two different signs, one dealing with the city and the other with the Temple (holy place). To argue that this is not really what these verses are saying is in essence to argue with the plain sense

of Jesus' description of these strategic signs! Ipso facto (because of that fact), they are **INDISPUTABLY NOT THE SAME (IDENTICAL) SIGN!**

**When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies** - See the diagram above for the **siege wall (++++)** which the Roman army built around the city of Jerusalem in July, 70 AD to prevent Jews from escaping. The city fell in August, 70 AD.

**Surrounded** (encircled) (2944)(**kukloo** related to **kuklos** = a ring, a cycle) means to encircle. In Lk 21:20 **kukloo** is in the present tense and passive voice, which could be translated "*being surrounded*." This tense pictures Jerusalem as "*being surrounded*" which in other words would mean the city was in the *process* of being encircled but that the enemy forces had not yet completely encircled the city. Obviously if the encirclement were complete, Jesus' warnings could not be obeyed. It follows that there may have been a "window of opportunity" for the inhabitants of the city to escape once they saw this "sign." There is a historical record of Jewish believers who escaped when an initial Roman siege was then withdrawn prior to the final siege by Titus (see [discussion below by Fruchtenbaum](#))

**Kukloo** - 4 NT uses in NAS: encircled(1), gathered around(1), stood around(1), surrounded(1). **Note** - **KJV** has **kukloo** in Rev 20:9 but NAS has the verb **kukleuo** = to encircle, to wind around, to surround, to compass.

Luke 21:20 "But when you see Jerusalem **surrounded** by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.

John 10:24 The Jews then **gathered around** Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Acts 14:20 But while the disciples **stood around** him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

Hebrews 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been **encircled** for seven days.

Rev 20:9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and **surrounded (Kukloo in the KJV but kukleuo in the NAS)** the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

**Kukloo** - 73 verses in NAS in the Septuagint - Gen 2:11, 13 ("**flows around**"); Ex 13:18 ("God **led** the people **around**"); Nu 34:4-5; Dt 2:1 ("**circled** Mount Seir for many days"), Dt 2:3; 32:10; Josh 6:7; Jdg 11:18; 16:2; 19:22; 20:5; 1Sa 7:16; 2Sa 18:15; 22:6; 24:6; 1Ki 5:3; 7:15, 23f; 22:32; 2Ki 3:9; 6:15; 8:21; 11:8; 2Chr 4:3; 18:31; 21:9; 23:2, 7; Job 1:17; 16:13; 19:12; 22:10; Ps 7:7; 22:16; 26:6; 27:6; 32:7, 10; 48:12; 49:5; 55:10; 59:6, 14; 88:17; 91:4; 109:3; 118:10ff; Eccl 1:6; 7:25; 9:14; 12:5; Song 3:2f; 5:7; Isa 29:3; 37:33; Lam 3:5; Ezek 43:17; Hos 7:2; 11:12; Jonah 2:3, 5; Hab 2:16; Zech 14:10.

Below are some uses of **kukloo** in the OT...

Psalm 7:7 Let the assembly of the peoples **encompass** You, And over them return on high.

Psalm 22:16 For dogs have **surrounded** me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.

Psalm 32:7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You **surround** me with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Psalm 32:10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall **surround** him.

Psalm 49:5 Why should I fear in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes **surrounds** me,

Isaiah 29:3 And I will camp against you **encircling** (Heb = dur; Lxx = kukloo) you, And I will set siege works against you, And I will raise up battle towers against you.

**Comment:** Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled by Sennacherib in about 701BC (2Ki 18:17, cf Isa 37:33) and later by Nebuchadnezzar when the Babylonians surrounded Jerusalem (2Ki 24:11) with the final siege in 588BC lasting for 18 months (2Ki 25:1-4). Jesus made a similar prediction in Lk 19:43-44 and here in Lk 21:20.

**Then** (5119)(**tote**) is an adverb that functions as an **expression of time**. **Tote** means at that time or a point of time subsequent to another point of time. **Tote** is used with **when** (**hote**) and translated "**when...then**" as here in Luke 21:20 (cp other examples of "when...then" = Mt 9:15, 13:26, 21:1, Mt 25:31, Lk 5:35, 14:10, Jn 7:10, 8:28, 11:6, 12:15 Acts 13:12 [inverted order], Acts 28:1, 1Cor 15:28, 54, 2Cor 12:10, Col 3:4). In short Jesus' warning is crystal clear = "**WHEN** you **SEE**, **THEN** you **KNOW...THEN** you **FLEE!**" (Lk 21:21)

**Recognize** (1097)(ginosko) means to know by experience. **Ginosko** is in the **aojist imperative** which is a command that conveys a sense of urgency! Jesus is saying in essence "Do not miss this sign!" The implication is that "your life depends on your recognition!" It follows that the sign will not be ambiguous! The Jews in Israel were to know by experiencing (ginosko) the sight of the Roman armies laying siege to the city of Jerusalem. That was the sign they were to flee and not enter the city. This sign is clearly different from the sign in Mt 24:15-note because in that passage the sign to flee is when the **abomination of desolation** is **standing in the holy place**, the Temple. If the abomination that causes desolation is the Roman army as so many ancient and modern commentators propose, you can see the absurdity of this interpretation, for once the Romans had scaled the defense walls (thus enabling them to be "**standing in the holy place**"), it would have been too late to flee to safety! Furthermore, Josephus records that Titus had set up a perimeter fence to capture any Jews who might attempt to escape (**See Josephus' record**). And so the fact that Jesus gave very specific and different signs in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 is one of several reasons for stating that Mt 24:15-22 is not referring to the past destruction of Jerusalem (as Lk 21:20-24 clearly does) but to the future destruction of the Temple. Yes, I know what you are saying -- "There is no Temple in Jerusalem (as of April, 2016)." But if God can regenerate a nation as He did with Israel in May, 1948, surely He can rebuild a Temple in the city of Jerusalem! (**See "The Tribulation Temple"**) As [Paul Harvey](#) used to say "And now you know the rest of the story!" (Read Jeremiah declaration [Jer 32:17-note] and God's rhetorical question [Jer 32:27-note]).

**Her** - This refers to Jerusalem which is a feminine noun in Greek.

Even resources that interpret Mt 24:15 are forced to acknowledge the difficulty of their proposed interpretation. Thus **A L Williams** in the **Pulpit Commentary** on Matthew favors the identity of the **abomination** as the Roman army and as with most similar commentaries, appeals to Jesus' "sign" in Lk 21:20-note to support his interpretation of Mt 24:15. And yet **Williams** admits that

*the presence of the Latin forces would be no new sign to the Jewish people, as they had been familiar with such a sight for many years. If the Temple itself is meant (referring to the phrase "holy place"), **it is plain that it would be too late to fly from that doomed city when the Roman eagles were already in the hallowed courts.***

I agree with **Williams** on this point. It would be TOO LATE TO FLEE! In addition Williams records that Josephus states that Titus had a wall constructed which encompassed the entire city of Jerusalem

*to guard against the Jews' coming out....So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city*

Here is **Josephus' record** of Roman General Titus building a "retaining" wall around Jerusalem to remove all hope of escape...

That therefore his opinion was, that if they aimed at quickness, joined with security, they must build a wall round about the whole city. Which was, he thought, the only way to prevent the Jews from coming out any way. And that then they would either entirely despair of saving the city, and so would surrender it up to him; or be still the more easily conquered when the famine had farther weakened them. For that besides this wall, he would not lie entirely at rest afterward; but would take care then to have banks raised again, when those that would oppose them were become weaker. But that if any one should think such a work to be too great, and not to be finished without much difficulty, he ought to consider, that it is not fit for Romans to undertake any small work: and that none but God himself could with ease accomplish any great thing whatsoever....When Titus had therefore **encompassed the city with this wall**, and put garrisons into proper places, he went round the wall, at the first watch of the night, and observed how the guard was kept...3. So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city. Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families. The upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine: and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged. The children also, and the young men wandered about the market places like shadows, all swelled with the famine, and fell down dead, wheresoever their misery seized them. [Read [Josephus's description of the wall in Book 5, Chapter 12, Verses 1-3](#)].

**Notice** that this retaining wall was built before the Roman Army even broke through the walls of Jerusalem, before the Roman Army could even possibly stand in the **holy place**! Do you see the problem one encounters if they interpret the sign of the **abomination of desolation** in Mt 24:15 as the event marking when the Jews were to flee the city (Mt 24:16)? As it has already been reasoned, this record by Josephus makes it virtually impossible that the Roman Army was the **abomination of desolation** in Mt 24:15! To reiterate, if the Roman army is the **abomination** and it must stand in the **holy place** and that would be the warning to the Jews to flee, then the warning sign was (as they say) "*too little, too late!*" So from both historical and Biblical perspectives, the interpretation which ascribes the **abomination** to the Roman army is nigh to impossible if one interprets the Biblical text **Literally!**

**Her desolation is at hand** - This refers to the desolation of the holy city of Jerusalem. In contrast Matthew refers to the **desolation of the holy Temple**. One might argue that desolation of the city would obviously include desolation of the Temple, but they are specifically identified because Luke is referring to a different event than Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14+. To say that all three are referring to the same event requires one to "twist" the words of Jesus to make them "fit" one's predetermined [preterist interpretation](#) of Matthew 24 and Mark 13!

**NET Bible** on Lk 21:20 - This passage refers to the events associated with the fall of Jerusalem, when the city is *surrounded by armies*. (**Ed**: In contrast Mt 24:15-note is associated with the fall of the Temple, when it is occupied by the *abomination of desolation*.)

## JESUS FIRST PREDICTION OF JERUSALEM'S DESOLATION

If we compare Luke 21:20-24 with Luke 19:41-44+, we see that Jesus had already prophesied that **Jerusalem would be surrounded and made desolate**

And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this **day** (**More literally** = "on this day, even you" - the day that had been given to the Jews in Daniel's prophecy!), even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. "For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another (**Ed**: This would certainly qualify as "desolation!"), because you did not recognize the **time** of your visitation (**Ed**: If the Jews had studied and believed Da 9:25+ they would have known the **day** and **time** of Jesus' visitation! See also Lk 1:68-79+)." (Lk 19:41-43).

**Desolation** (2050) (**eremosis** from **eremoo** = to desolate, lay waste) means a state of being made uninhabitable = devastation, destruction, depopulation. Luke 21:20 refers to the city of Jerusalem. Matthew 24:15-note refers to the holy place (the Temple). Mark 13:14 clearly parallels Mt 24:15 but instead of "standing in the holy place" Mark has "standing where it should not be." **Ermosis** - 3v - Mt 24:15, Mark 13:14, Luke 21:20

The related adjective **eremos** was used by Jesus when He prophesied to the Jews "Behold, your house (Temple) is being left to you **desolate!**" (Mt 23:38). In Mt 24:26 **eremos** is translated wilderness, which is the most frequent way it is translated in the NT.

**Ermosis** - 26x in 23v in the Septuagint - Lev 26:34-35; 2Chr 30:7; 36:21; Ps 73:19; Jer 4:7 ("To make your land a **waste**"); Jer 7:34 ("the land will become a **ruin**"); Jer 22:5; 25:18; 44:6, 22; Da 8:13; 9:2, 18, 25, 27; 11:31; 12:11. See discussion of Daniel passages in discussion of **abomination of desolation** below.

Leviticus 26:34-35 'Then the land will enjoy its Sabbaths all the days of the **desolation** (Hebrew = **shamen/samen**; Lxx = **eremosis**) while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. 35 'All the days of its **desolation** it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your Sabbaths, while you were living on it.

2Chronicles 36:21 - (verse 20 for context) And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, 21 to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation (Hebrew = **shamen/samen**; Lxx = **eremosis**) it kept Sabbath until seventy years were complete.

Jeremiah 7:34 "Then I will make to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land will become a **ruin**. (Hebrew = chorbah = waste, desolation; Lxx = eremosis)

Jeremiah 22:5 "But if you will not obey these words, I swear by Myself," declares the LORD, "that this house will become a **desolation** (Hebrew = chorbah = waste, desolation; Lxx = eremosis)."

Daniel 9:2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the **desolations** (Hebrew = chorbah = waste, desolation; Lxx = eremosis) of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

Daniel 8:13-commentary (**FULFILLED PROPHECY**) Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will the vision *about* the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror ("the transgression that makes desolate"), so as to allow both the holy place (Temple) and the host (the Jews) to be trampled?"

**This prophecy was fulfilled by Antiochus IV Epiphanes**, the "Antichrist of the Old Testament", who

caused an altar to be set up in the Temple and placed an idolatrous image of Zeus on the altar (cf 2Macc 6:2). In addition, he turned the priest's chambers into brothels, creating the "abomination that causes desolation". In other words, the Temple was desolate to pious Jews because of the desecration of the holy altar. The Jews had no desire to worship in such a polluted environment and thus the Temple was deprived of (made "desolate" of) Jewish worshippers. In a similar way the future [Antichrist](#) will set up an **abomination** in the sanctuary, which is in essence demonic counterfeit worship (Da 9:27-note; Da 12:11-note). Even more blatantly defiant of God, the [Antichrist](#) will command worship of himself and his image! (2Th 2:3-note, 2Th 2:4-note, Rev 13:14-note, Rev 13:15-note) God will allow this gross evil because He is using this devilish man to fulfill His purging and purifying purpose in the nation of Israel (cp Da 12:10-note). While the infinitely good and holy God does not cause evil, in His infinite wisdom and omnipotence is able to bring good out of what others mean for evil. (cf Ge 50:20, Ro 8:28-note)

**Read 1Mac 1:41-64NRSV** (Note that 1Mac 1:54NRSV is approximately 167BC) (See especially **1Mac 1:46-50NRSV** = "[The king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, gave written orders] to **defile the sanctuary** and the priests, 47 to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, **to sacrifice swine** and other unclean animals, 48 and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves **abominable** by everything unclean and profane, 49 so that they would forget the law and change all the ordinances. 50 He added, "And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die.")

Daniel 9:27-commentary (**NOT FULFILLED**) "And **he** (the prince in Da 9:26-commentary) will make a firm covenant with the many (the Jews) for one week (7 years), but in the middle of the week (3.5 years) **he** will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of **abominations** will come one who makes **desolate**, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes **desolate**."

The NIV translation of Da 9:27 says he "will set up an **abomination** that **causes desolation** until the end that is decreed is poured out on him" (Da 9:27NIV)

**Comment:** Notice that both Daniel 9:27 and Daniel 12:11 refer to the abolition of sacrifices and association with **abomination** that makes **desolate**. The question arises as to who is "**he**" in Daniel 9:27? Without going into a detailed discussion, this individual has all the attributes of the future "Antichrist." (See also Da 11:36-note where he is referred to as "the king" who "will do as he pleases.") For an in depth discussion of "**one week**" and the identity of "**he**" as the future Antichrist see the **commentary** on Daniel 9:27.

**See also: Time Phrases** - 3.5 years, "Time, times, half a time", 42 mo, 1260 days - The chances that the Spirit inspired these identical time phrases as simply coincidence is highly unlikely. Any intelligent observer must be struck by the fact that they are (1) identical times and (2) used in a similar, sometimes identical eschatological context. To interpret these time phrases as figures of speech is as absurd as interpreting Jesus' promise to rise from the grave in 3 days! Just as Jesus literally meant what He said, so too these time phrases are to be interpreted literally. To not do so is to not be intellectually honest (in my opinion)!

Daniel 11:31-commentary (**FULFILLED PROPHECY**) - "And forces from him ([Antiochus IV Epiphanes](#)) will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the **abomination of desolation**."

**Comment:** In the **context** of Daniel 11:1-45, this prophetic passage was fulfilled in 167 BC when [Antiochus IV Epiphanes](#) (the "Rather Small Horn" of Da 8:9-commentary) placed an idol in the Temple to honor the pagan god Zeus. Antiochus' soldiers even profaned the Temple by spreading sow's broth on the altar and banning daily sacrifices (see comments on Da 8:14-note). This passage would not fulfill Matthew 24:15-note because it was past history at the time Jesus spoke His words of warning. Remember that the **context** is Jesus giving His disciples a description of what the end of the age and His return would look like. As an aside, it is reasonable to refer to this abomination committed by Antiochus in 167 BC as an act which foreshadowed the final, yet to come **abomination**.

**John MacArthur** - He took to himself the title *Theos Epiphanes*, which means "manifest god," but his enemies nicknamed him *Epimanes*, which means "madman" or "the insane one." Ironically, when he died in 163, he was totally insane, outraged to the point of madness because of his military defeats by the Jewish rebel Judas Maccabaeus. The text of Daniel 11:21-35-note perfectly describes the rule of Antiochus, who gained his throne "by intrigue" (Da 11:21-note), made numerous excursions into Egypt (Da 11:24-27-note), broke his covenant with Israel (Da 11:28-note), and desecrated the Temple in

Jerusalem (Da 11:31-note). The apocryphal books of 1 and 2 Maccabees vividly portray the time of Antiochus and the Jews' zealous resistance to his brutal and sacrilegious tyranny. He slaughtered countless thousands of Jewish men, sold many of their wives and children into slavery, and tried to completely obliterate the Jewish religion. He desecrated the Temple by sacrificing a pig, the most ceremonially unclean of all animals, on the altar and forcing the priests to eat its flesh. He then set up in the Temple an idol of Zeus, the pagan deity he fancied himself as manifesting. That horrible defilement by Antiochus was a preview of the even greater abomination of desolation to be committed by the Antichrist in the end time.

Daniel 12:11-commentary (**NOT FULFILLED**) "And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the **abomination of desolation** is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

**Comment:** In the **context** of Daniel 12:1-13 (end times), this could be the passage to which Jesus referred in Mt 24:15-note. If one compares Scripture to Scripture, the seminal event (abolition of regular sacrifice and setting up the abomination of desolation) is similar to Daniel's description of the sacrifices in Daniel 9:27.

It is sad that even one of the better pre-1900 commentators like **Jamieson** (Critical Commentary) refer to the Roman army as the **abomination of desolation!** Others say that Luke did not use the phrase **abomination of desolation** because it would have had very little meaning to the Gentile audience. That sounds good but it is mere speculation, especially in light of the context even in Luke that Jesus, a Jew, is answering the question of Jews regarding the Jewish Temple! Not to mention that Matthew and Mark who both use this phrase (and reference Daniel) are recording a different discourse. It follows that it should not surprise us if there are significant differences between Luke and the other two synoptic gospels ([as there are - see chart](#))! The reason **abomination of desolation** and Daniel's prophecy is not mentioned by Luke is because Luke is referring to a different event!

**NET Note** on Luke 21:20 - The phrase **its desolation** is a reference to the fall of the city, which is the only antecedent present in Luke's account. The parallels to this in Mt 24:15+ and Mk 13:14+ refer to the **temple's desolation**, though Matthew's allusion is clearer. They focus on the parallel events of the end (**Ed**: the end of this age, cp Mt 24:14b), not on the short term realization in A.D. 70. The entire passage has a prophetic "two events in one" typology, where the near term destruction (A.D. 70) is like the end. So the evangelists could choose to focus on the near time realization (Luke) or on its long term fulfillment, which mirrors it (Matthew, Mark).

**Robert Stein** makes an interesting comment that "Luke reworded **"abomination of desolation"** (Mk 13:14, Mt 24:15-note) in order to keep his readers from confusing the fall of Jerusalem with the end time." (New American Commentary - Luke) **Comment** - Unfortunately many of the commentators over the years have failed to make the clear distinction with the result that many saints are confused about these important eschatological passages!

In view of the fact that Luke 21 is similar to Matthew 24, it would be prudent to compare these two accounts focusing especially on Luke 21:20-24 which is somewhat controversial. Below is a simple chart comparing Luke 21:19-24 and Matthew 24:14-21 line by line, passage by passage. If you go through these passages and make simple observations of the plain meaning of the text, it is clear that these two discourses share a several similarities, but it also becomes clear that there are many differences.

As **Warren Wiersbe** say commenting on Luke 21:20-24 "This paragraph is peculiar to Luke; there is no parallel in Matthew or Mark, in spite of the similar language in Matthew 24:16-21 (**Ed**: Better Mt 24:14-21) and Mark 13:14-17. However, it is clear that both Matthew and Mark were referring to events in the middle of the Tribulation when **"the abomination of desolation"** would be set up in the Jewish temple and the Antichrist (the world ruler) would begin to persecute Israel (Da 9:24-27; Rev. 13:1-18). Jesus warned the people to flee and go into hiding, for **"great tribulation"** was about to fall. **Luke's account refers not to a distant event to occur during the Tribulation but to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the Roman army in A.D. 70, just forty years from that time** (see Luke 19:41-44-note). This terrible event was in many respects a "dress rehearsal" for what will happen when Satan vents his anger on Israel and the believing Gentiles during the last half of the Tribulation (Rev. 12:7-17-[note](#)). The Jewish historian **Josephus** claimed that nearly a million people were killed by the Romans (ED: A NUMBER OF WRITERS CONSIDER THIS NUMBER TO BE AN EXAGGERATION), and over 100,000 taken captive, when Titus captured the city." (Borrow [Be courageous](#))

## **MATTHEW & MARK'S SIGN IS DIFFERENT THAN LUKE**

Most of the writers who favor Mt 24:15 as historically fulfilled in 70AD appeal to Luke 21:20-24 to support their interpretation, for Luke's passage clearly describes the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. These writers seem to automatically "default" to the assumption that Luke 21 is describing the same event as Matthew. However, if one **carefully observes** the parallel passages in

Luke and Matthew, it is very clear that there are a number of differences ([See Chart Comparison](#)). In fact, if one reads Mt 24:15ff and Lk 21:20-24 literally, it seems clear that Jesus is describing two distinctly different events, one that is yet to occur (Mt 24:15) and one that has occurred (Lk 21:20). A number of commentaries have also made the observation that Luke 21:20-24 is not describing the same event as Mt 24:15-21.

**Hiebert** comments on the differences in the **signs** in Mt 24:15 and Luke 21:20-24 - "The **sign** given in Luke 21:20 relates to the historical fall of Jerusalem. But **Luke's sign**, Jerusalem surrounded by armies, is **not the same as that given in the other Synoptics**, namely, the **abomination of desolation in the temple**. Luke 21:20-24 records a part of the Olivet Discourse which has not exact parallel in the other two Gospels. It vividly pictures the capture of the city and the resultant condition reaching to the end of the age. The similarity of Luke's picture to that of the other Synoptics had generally led to the assumption that they refer to the same event. **While the two events have much in common, there are features in Mark's account which clearly look beyond the fall of Jerusalem and relate to the eschatological end.**" ([The Gospel of Mark- An Expositional Commentary- D. Edmond Hiebert](#))

**Stein** - A number of differences between the Lukan account and its parallels in Mark and Matthew help us understand Luke's particular interpretation. One involves the reference to the "abomination of desolation" found in Mark 13:14; Matt 24:15. Luke omitted this and referred instead to Jerusalem's being surrounded and its desolation having neared (Lk 21:20). He may have done this because his Gentile readers would not have understood this expression. More likely, however, is that he did this in order not to confuse Jerusalem's fall with the events associated with the end time. (New American Commentary)

**Thomas Constable** writes that "The **similar passages in Matthew and Mark are sufficiently different to alert the reader to the fact that they deal with a different incident from what Luke described** (Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20). Even some commentators who believe that Luke depended heavily on Mark for his material admit this difference. [Note: E.g, Marshall, The Gospel . . . , p770-71.] (Ed: See Marshall's comments below) ([Luke 21 Commentary - Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable](#))

**I Howard Marshall** admits to significant differences between Luke 21:20-24 and Mark 13:14-20 writing "The passage is parallel to Mk 13:14-20, but the amount of verbal parallelism is **slight** (four words in Mk 13:20, 21a and Mk 13:23a). Mark refers cryptically to the '*desolating sacrilege*' and to the need for the people of Judaea to flee; he emphasizes the awful plight of the people under tribulation. **By contrast** Luke specifically names Jerusalem and refers clearly to a siege. Mark's warning about delay (cf. Lk. 17:31) is replaced by a warning to keep away from Jerusalem." ([he Gospel of Luke - The New International Greek Testament Commentary- I. Howard Marshall-](#)).

**A C Gaebelein** adds that "Luke's account however differs in many ways from the account given of the prophetic Olivet discourse in Matthew and also that in Mark." ([Luke 21 Commentary - Arno Gaebelein's Annotated Bible](#))

**HCSB Study Notes** also draws attention to the differences between Luke 21 and Matthew 24 - Matthew 24:15-note refers to '**the abomination of desolation**' spoken of by Daniel (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11) that will be set up in the holy place in the temple. Luke spoke **only** of the **desolation** of Jerusalem. ([Study Notes](#))

## AN ASSESSMENT OF DR JOHN MACARTHUR'S INTERPRETATION OF LUKE 21:20-24

I do not often disagree with Dr John MacArthur, but this time I strongly disagree with his interpretation of Luke 21:20-24 as a prophecy of a future event. He feels that Luke 21:20-24 describes an end-times event and not an event in 70 A.D. In [his sermon](#) he asks about Jerusalem being surrounded by armies ---

"Is that what our Lord was talking about? Was He talking about 70 A.D. here? I don't think so. Keep reading. Verse 21, "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains," that happened then. "Let those who are in the midst of the city depart," that happened. "Let those who are in the country not enter the city," and they didn't. Then verse 22, "Because these are the days of vengeance in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Wait a minute here. That language does not lend itself to a 70 A.D. interpretation. These are not the days of vengeance. These are not the events which cause things which have been written to all be fulfilled." ([Read his entire argument supporting Lk 21:20-24 as a future event](#)).

Notice his wording "that happened then," "that happened" and "they didn't," which certainly sounds like MacArthur sees all three of these prophecies as fulfilled in 70 A.D. and yet he seems somewhat inconsistent when he says "Is that what our Lord was talking about? Was He talking about 70 A.D. here? I don't think so." So on one hand he says the prophecy was fulfilled and on the other hand he says he does not think Jesus was referring to an event in 70 A.D.

I would respectfully suggest that Dr MacArthur seems to discount the preceding context of Luke 21 where the disciples had specifically asked for "**the sign when these things are about to take place?**" (Lk 21:7). What **things** are they asking about? Jesus has just described those **things** saying that "**the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.**" The phrase "**the sign**" has the definite article (*to semeion*) and therefore the disciples are asking for a very specific **sign**, something they can see and which is distinctive. Jesus does not answer their question immediately, but first warns about deceivers and then describes general signs of the end times (Lk 21:8-11). And then He says even before those "general signs" begin to unfold like "birth pangs" (Mk 13:8), the disciples themselves would be persecuted, hated, brought before kings and some even put to death, but by their endurance they would gain their lives. (Lk 21:12-19) Notice He does not say at that time the Gospel would be preached to all the nations and then the end would come, which He did say in Mt 24:14! Matthew 24 is clearly describing future events (in that passage Jesus referred to "**the end**" 3 times (Mt 24:3, 6, 13 and notice especially Mt 24:14 -- while He used "**the end**" once in Lk 21:9 which clearly in the context of a description of the general signs before**the end** of this age, because Lk 21:12 then moves from the future to the events that would directly impact His disciples). Now back to Luke 21:20 which begins with "**But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies...**" What had the disciples ask for? **The** (specific) **sign!** Here it was --- **Jerusalem surrounded by armies!** And in context the "**you**" is a reference to His disciples. This event would occur in 70 A.D. at a time the disciples would have been around 60-70 years old. We know the apostle John lived to about 90 A.D. so it is not unreasonable to deduce that some of the disciples would be alive when Jerusalem was **surrounded by armies**. The point is that Jesus was giving them a specific **sign** of when there would be no stone left upon another stone. And we know from history that after the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem, the Romans general Titus drew back from the siege for a time which provided opportunity for those Jews who heeded Jesus' words to get out of the city. In sum, I think MacArthur is incorrect in his interpretation that Luke 21:20-24 refers to a future event. On the other hand it clearly could foreshadow the future event in Zechariah 14:2 (see note below).

In Dr MacArthur's sermon he goes on to say this on Lk 20:21,

"Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains," **that happened then.** (ED: WHEN? HE SEEMS TO HERE BE SAYING 70 A.D.) "Let those who are in the midst of the city depart," that happened. "Let those who are in the country not enter the city," and **they didn't.**" Did you hear what he is saying? He is saying that 3 specific prophecies by Jesus were fulfilled in 70 A.D. and yet he goes on to say "**Wait a minute here. That language does not lend itself to a 70 A.D. interpretation.**" ([Read his entire argument supporting Lk 21:20-24 as a future event](#)). (Bold added for emphasis)

Here is a note from the **MacArthur Study Bible** -

A comparison with Mt 24:15, 16 and Mk 13:14 suggests that this sign (ED: The sign in Lk 21:20) is closely associated with "the abomination of desolation" (see Mt 24:15; Da 9:27; 11:31). This sign of Jerusalem under siege was previewed in a.d. 70, but awaits its fulfillment in the future."

Observe carefully his words "**suggests that this sign** (Lk 20:21) **is closely associated with the abomination of desolation**" Beloved, by the time the sign of the Abomination of Desolation occurred, there would be no way for Jews could flee Jerusalem because the walls were already breached! The sign in Lk 21:20 is **OUTSIDE** the city and the sign in Mt 24:15, Mk 13:14 is **WITHIN** the city, in fact **WITHIN** the Temple. So I would strongly disagree that these signs are "**closely associated,**" and that they are distinct and different, Luke's sign applying to Jesus' first century disciples and Matthew's sign applying to disciples of all ages, but especially those alive at the end of this age. The upshot is that Luke 21:21-24 describes an event the disciples would experience in the future in 70 A.D. and both Matthew 24 and Mark 13 describe an event which has not yet occurred but which will occur and signal the beginning of the Great Tribulation, a term that Luke does not use. Days of vengeance is not the same as Great Tribulation.

In fairness to MacArthur his study Bible says "This sign of Jerusalem under siege was previewed in a.d. 70, but awaits its fulfillment in the future." I agree that the event in 70 A.D. was a foreshadowing of what will be fulfilled in the end times in the prophecy in Zechariah 14

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

While Zechariah does not specifically state Jerusalem will be encircled, almost certainly that is what will occur, even as it was encircled in 70 A.D.

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

## LUKE 21 AND MATTHEW 24

In the following chart, the points of difference between Luke 21 and Matthew 24 are highlighted in **bold green font** in the Luke 21:19-24 column. From a quick overview, it should be obvious that these two passages have some significant differences. It is therefore surprising that so many commentators (especially those explaining on Matthew 24:15-22) see these two sections as parallel passages. If one reasons from simple observation, **they do not at all appear to be parallel passages!** Note the two major irreconcilable differences, "The Sign" and "The Great Distress" are highlighted in **Green Background**.

| <b>COMPARISON OF TWO SIMILAR<br/>BUT NOT IDENTICAL PASSAGES</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Luke 21:19-24</b>  | <b>Matthew 24:14-22</b>  |
| <b>Immediate Context = Lk 21:19</b><br><br><b>"By your endurance you will gain your lives"</b><br>(No statement here about either preaching the Gospel or "the end")<br>Comment: The focus is on the one's life | Immediate Context = Mt 24:14<br><br><b>"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."</b><br>Comment: Context focuses on "the end" |
| <b>Lk 21:20</b><br><b>But when</b>  | <b>Mt 24:15+</b><br><b>Therefore when</b>  |
| <b>Lk 21:20</b><br><br><b>What they are to see:</b><br><b>Relates to the city of Jerusalem</b>  | <b>Mt 24:15+</b><br><br><b>What they are to see:</b><br><b>Relates to the Temple and the Holy Place</b>  |
| <b>Addresses</b><br><b>"you"</b><br><br>Jesus is addressing the question of the disciples<br>"What specific sign" in Lk 21:7  | <b>Addresses</b><br><b>"you" and "the reader"</b><br><br>Jesus is speaking not only to the disciples but to all who would read this prophecy in the future   |
| <b>"THE SIGN"</b><br><b>Jerusalem Surrounded by armies =</b><br><b>Her desolation</b>   | <b>"THE SIGN"</b><br><b>Abomination of Desolation</b><br><b>standing in the Holy Place</b>   |
| <b>Surrounded</b>   | <b>Standing</b><br>Neuter Gender in Matthew 24:15<br>Masculine Gender in Mark 13:14  |
| <b>No specific mention of the</b><br><b>abomination of desolation</b>   | <b>Abomination of Desolation:</b><br><b>Also mentioned in Mk 13:14</b>   |
| <b>Armies</b><br><b>mentioned</b>   | <b>No mention</b><br><b>of Armies</b>  |
| <b>Her desolation =</b><br><b>refers to the desolation of the Holy City</b>   | <b>Desolation =</b><br><b>refers to the desolation of the Holy Place</b>   |
| <b>No mention of</b><br><b>a related prophecy in Daniel</b>   | <b>Related prophecy in Daniel -</b><br><b>especially Daniel 9:27+, Da 12:11+</b>   |
| <b>Lk 21:21 Those in midst of city depart</b><br><b>Lk 21:21 Those in country not to enter the city</b><br>Note emphasis is on the city   | <b>No mention</b><br><b>of city</b>  |
| <b>Lk 21:22 Days of vengeance</b><br><b>in order that all things written may be fulfilled</b>   | <b>No</b><br><b>Parallel</b>   |
| <b>Lk 21:23 Woe to those</b><br><b>with child and nursing</b>   | <b>Mt 24:19 - Woe to those</b><br><b>with child and nursing</b>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>No<br/>Parallel</b>  | <b>Mt 24:20 - Pray your flight<br/>may not be in winter or on a Sabbath</b>  |
| <b>Lk 21:23 Great distress</b>  | <b>Mt 24:21+ - Great Tribulation</b>   |
| <b>Distress = Greek word anagke</b>   | <b>Tribulation = Greek word thlipsis</b>   |
| In the Septuagint <b>anagke</b> is used to describe the great Day of the LORD (Zeph 1:15), but never used to specifically describe the future time of distress on Israel. One might argue that distress on Israel is inherent in the "Day of the LORD." | In Septuagint <b>thlipsis</b> is used in Da 12:1+ which describes "a time of <b>distress</b> such as never occurred since there was a nation (of Israel) until that time" (cp Mt 24:21+- time phrases) |
| <b>Lk 21:23 Upon the land<br/>Implies distress local</b>  | <b>Mt 24:21+<br/>Implies tribulation global ("since the beginning" [cf "flood"];<br/>"no life...saved" both imply global)</b>  |
| <b>"THE GREAT DISTRESS"<br/>Distress NOT described<br/>as unique or unprecedented</b>   | <b>"THE GREAT TRIBULATION"<br/>Tribulation described<br/>as unique, unprecedented</b>  |
| <b>Lk 21:24 Fall by sword, led captive into all nations<br/>("Jewish dispersion")</b>   | <b>No<br/>parallel</b>   |
| <b>Lk 21:24 Jerusalem trampled under foot<br/>until times of Gentiles fulfilled</b>   | <b>No<br/>parallel</b>   |
| <b>No<br/>Parallel</b>  | <b>Mt 24:22<br/>those days shall be cut short</b>  |

### DIFFERENT SIGNS POINT TO A DIFFERENT "DESOLATION"

Notice that both Luke 21:20 and Mt 24:15+ begin with the same phrase "**when you see.**" Then Jesus goes on to describe distinctly different "**signs**" in Luke and Matthew. Luke says the "**sign**" the disciples are to look for is when Jerusalem is **besurrounded by armies**. When they see that "**sign**" "then recognize that her **desolation** is at hand." In Matthew 24:15 (and Mk 13:14) the **sign** for which the Jews were to watch was "**the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION...standing in the holy place**" While both passages use the word "**desolation**," Luke associates it with the desolation of the city of Jerusalem and Matthew associates it with the desolation of the "**holy place**," the Temple. If one observes these texts with an unbiased view not trying to read anything into the words of Jesus, it is clear that Jesus is giving two distinctly different signs pointing to two different events occurring at different times. The other major difference between Luke and Matthew (Mark) that cannot be easily resolved is that the **tribulation** in Matthew (Mt 24:21) and Mark (Mk 13:19, cf Da 12:1) is a unique historical event that will never be repeated. While 70 AD was a time of horrible distress to the Jews, even the distress of World War II proved to be even more horrible. Thus Mt 24:21, Mk 13:19 and Da 12:1 describe a time that will surpass the horror of 70 AD! And while there is disagreement regarding the interpretation of Luke 21:20-24 (discussed below), my view is that historically this was fulfilled in 70 AD and also that it foreshadowed the armies attacking Jerusalem in Zech 14:2.

### COMMENTARIES FAVORING LUKE 21:20-24 AS HISTORICALLY FULFILLED

Almost all evangelical commentaries interpret Luke 21:20-24 as descriptive of a historical event that was fulfilled in 70 AD. Here is just a sample:

Arnold Fruchtenbaum, [David Guzik](#), [Arno Gaebelein](#), [Harry Ironside](#), [Thomas Ice](#), Warren Wiersbe, [Henry Morris](#), [Steven Cole](#) (he suggests it has a near and far fulfillment), [NET Bible Notes](#), [J. Vernon McGee](#), ESV Study Bible (suggests it possibly foreshadows the fate of Jerusalem in the end time), NIV Study Bible, NLT Study Bible, Faith Life Study Bible, KJV Study Bible, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Believer's Study Bible, New Unger's Bible Handbook, Kent Hughes in Preaching the Word: Luke, [John Walvoord](#).

Note that all of these writers see a future fulfillment in Luke 21:25-28.

Below are some representative comments of those who interpret Luke 21:21-24 as fulfilled in the past...

**Henry Morris** - In context, this sign refers to the future [Siege of Jerusalem \(70 AD\)](#) by Titus, climaxing with its invasion and destruction in A.D. 70. Seeing Jerusalem surrounded by Roman armies would be the signal for believers to flee to the mountains. This event can be considered as a type of the coming flight during the great tribulation period, except that then the sign will be seeing the abomination of desolation set up in the rebuilt temple by the Antichrist (Matthew 24:15,16-note). In the meantime, after the destruction of the temple by Titus in A.D. 70, Jerusalem was more completely "desolated" by Hadrian's armies in A.D. 135. ([Defender's Study Bible Notes](#))

**John Walvoord** - The prophecies of Luke 21:20-24 are clearly fulfilled in the first century, whereas the answers to the questions in Matthew and Mark and in Luke 21:9-19 and Lk 21:25-28 have reference to the end of the age. ([Ref](#))

**NET Bible Notes** - (On phrase "her desolation) = "**her**," referring to the city of Jerusalem (the name "Jerusalem" in Greek is a feminine noun). The phrase **its desolation** is a reference to the fall of the city, which is the only antecedent present in Luke's account. The parallels to this in Mt 24:15-note and Mk 13:14 refer to the **temple's desolation**, though Matthew's allusion is clearer. They focus on the parallel events of **the end**, not on the short term realization in A.D. 70. The entire passage has a prophetic "two events in one" typology, where the near term destruction (A.D. 70) is like the end. So the evangelists could choose to focus on the near time realization (Luke) or on its long term fulfillment, which mirrors it (Matthew, Mark). ([Ref](#)) (Bolding added)

**Thomas Constable** - Jesus now returned to the subject of when the temple would suffer destruction (v. 7). The similar passages in Matthew and Mark are sufficiently different to alert the reader to the fact that they deal with a different incident from what Luke described (Matt. 24:15–22; Mark 13:14–20). Even some commentators who believe that Luke depended heavily on Mark for his material admit this difference. Lk 21:20 The sign that Jerusalem's destruction was imminent would be the presence of besieging armies (cf. v. 7). This happened when Titus encircled the city with troops and put it under siege beginning in 68 A.D. (Lk 21:21–22) Then the Jews should get away from the city. Those in it should leave, those outside it should not enter it while it would be under siege, and those living in the surrounding area should move farther from it. God's vengeance on the city would descend shortly in fulfillment of prophecy (Dan. 9:26). Earlier Luke recorded Jesus' teaching about the destruction that would come on Palestine just before His return (Lk 17:22–37). Matthew and Mark wrote that Jesus also gave that teaching in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:15–22; Mark 13:14–20). However though that teaching is similar, it is different from what Jesus announced here. Here He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem that happened in 70 A.D.

**Dwight Pentecost** - In Matthew 23 the Lord has announced judgment on the Pharisees and blindness on the nation. Now in chapter 24 He announces the overthrow of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:1-2). In the minds of the disciples they had eschatological significance, for their fulfillment was associated with Messiah's coming and the terminus of the age. They asked: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Matt. 24:3). Probably the promise of His return (Matt. 23:39) had given the disciples this eschatological association. **The answer to the first question is not recorded by Matthew**, but is given in Luke 21:20-24. This portion of the discourse had to do with the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in 70 A.D. (Things to Come)

## **COMMENTARIES FAVORING LUKE 21:20-24 AS YET FUTURE**

**Commentaries that interpret** Luke 21:20-24 as describing a yet future fulfillment: John MacArthur's commentary on Luke and his study Bible ([Sermon on Lk 21:20-24](#)), Moody Bible Commentary (Kevin Zuber), Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary, Expositor's Bible Commentary (Walter Liefeld) (Actually it is a "hybrid" = "It is certainly possible to assume that Jesus' predictions incorporated two phases: [1] the events of AD 70 involving the Temple and [2] those in the distant future"). Below are some representative comments...

**Kevin Zuber** in the **Moody Bible Commentary** - The tribulation will be a time of unprecedented persecution and hardship for the Jewish people and nation of Israel (Lk 21:23b; cf. Jer 30:7). The height of persecution will come with a siege of Jerusalem (Lk 21:20a; Zech 12:1-9). The description here and in parallel texts on this point in prophetic history (cf. Mt 24:4-31) make it unlikely that this is a description of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70. (**Ed**: See comparison of "parallel texts" in Luke 21 and Matthew 24 in chart below).

**John MacArthur's** commentary on Luke 21:20-24 - In a.d. 70, forty years after our Lord spoke these words,

His prediction that Jerusalem would suffer **desolation** was fulfilled. The Romans laid siege to Jerusalem, sacked the city, burned the temple, and slaughtered thousands of people. But no previous assault, including the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70, is what Jesus referred to here. (ED: NOTICE THAT THIS COMMENT IS AT ODDS WITH THE STATEMENT HE HAD JUST MADE "His prediction that Jerusalem would suffer **desolation** was fulfilled.") It is true that during that Roman siege there were those **in Judea** who did **flee to the nearby mountains**, and others **who were in the midst of the city** did manage to **leave** before the city was surrounded, while **those who** were **in the country** naturally did **not enter the city** once that massacre and destruction had begun. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke)

**Comment:** It is interesting that MacArthur writes that the actions Jesus called for in Luke 21:21 actually "**happened then.**" And as I note above the time to which he refers seems to be 70 AD. So I do find it surprising that MacArthur goes on to discount the possibility that Luke 21:20-24 was not fulfilled in 70 AD (for he has just stated Jesus' "prediction that Jerusalem would suffer **desolation** was fulfilled!"). If I am assessing his comments correctly, note that he seems to acknowledge the events as fulfilled in history. But then he says they were not fulfilled based primarily on Luke's inclusion of the phrase "**days of vengeance,**" (Lk 20:22) since that term is used in the OT describing the "end times." (e.g., Isa 34:8, 35:4, 61:2, 63:4, Micah 5:15). So how could one address this phrase? Constable makes an interesting comment that "God's **vengeance** on the city would descend shortly in fulfillment of prophecy (Da 9:26)." Daniel prophesies "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." So was this prophecy to destroy the city fulfilled? Absolutely. **Does this dogmatically exclude the possibility that 70 AD was a near fulfillment and the assault on Jerusalem in the time of the Tribulation is the far fulfillment?** For example, there is clearly a description of assault on Jerusalem in end times in Zech 12:2-3+ and Zech 14:2+, just preceding the coming of the Son of man in Zech 14:3+ which is the same pattern in Luke where we see Lk 21:20-24 = destruction of Jerusalem and Lk 21:25-28 = coming of Jesus. In summary, I think it is very reasonable to see Lk 20:21-24 as a foreshadowing of a future fulfillment of the **days of vengeance** against Jerusalem and the Jews. (see [near and far fulfillment below](#)). Surprisingly, MacArthur does not suggest that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was a **foreshadowing** of Jerusalem's future destruction.

In his study Bible MacArthur has this comment on **Jerusalem surrounded by armies** "This sign of Jerusalem under siege was previewed in a.d. 70, but awaits its fulfillment in the future." I would agree with this because it portrays this prophecy as having a near and far fulfillment.

That said, there are significant problems with interpreting Luke 21:20-24 as **ONLY** an end time event occurring in the last 7 years of the Tribulation.

(1) One major problem is the sign in Luke is not the same as the sign in Matthew 24:15+. There is no way to avoid this conclusion. Yes, the word "**desolation**" is used by both Luke and Matthew, but Luke ascribes the desolation to the **city** and Matthew ascribes desolation to the **holy place**, the Temple. One might argue that the Temple is in the city, so desolation of the city would include desolation of the Temple. Possibly, but why did Jesus give a very unique sign for the **desolation** of the Temple? And why did He cross reference that sign with the prophecy of Daniel to help the reader understand the sign in Matthew 24:15+? I think the answer is that these were different signs pointing to different historical events, one past and one yet future.

(2) Another problem with a futuristic interpretation of Luke 21:20-24 is that historically the actions Jesus' encouraged were heeded by first century believers who escaped the city when the initial Roman siege was withdrawn ([see Fruchtenbaum's analysis below](#)).

(3) A third problem is that **distress (anagke)** in Lk 21:23 is a different Greek word than **tribulation (thlipsis)**. Matthew and Mark which are clearly parallel passages, use the same Greek word **thlipsis**. (As does the Septuagint of Da 12:1+ describing the same "time of distress") But even more significant is the fact that Matthew describes the **Tribulation** as **Great**, because it is a unique, unprecedented event in the history of the world (Mt 24:21-22+), but **Luke makes no such distinction**. While one might argue that Luke just left out this distinctive, important detail, the more obvious conclusion is that Luke's **distress** was a qualitatively and quantitatively different **distress!** MacArthur does not address this difference between Matthew and Luke's versions.

(4) Finally, if Luke is describing a future event, why would Jews be **led captive into all nations** in the last 3.5 years of this age, during the time of the **Great Tribulation**? Is the Antichrist trying to capture them or kill them? MacArthur has no explanation for this specific event. In his commentary on Luke, he essentially repeats the Scripture but gives no explanation writing - "*Not all who flee will escape, however. Many Christian martyrs and Jewish unbelievers will fall by the edge of the sword, while others will be led captive into all the nations.*" (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke)

That simply makes no sense. In fact we know from several texts, not only will the Jews not be **led captive into all the nations**, but they will be hounded and persecuted by Satan who seeks their total annihilation! He seeks to **kill** them, not **capture** them! Read about Satan's agenda for the Jesus in Rev 12:12-14+ where the "*dragon*" is Satan and the "*woman*" is Israel. Also notice John's description in Rev 12:15+ "*the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.*" Even **John MacArthur** commenting on this passage in Revelation 12+ says "*The devil will seek to cause Israel to be swept away with the flood; to be drowned by it, to be consumed and destroyed.*" (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Revelation) So there **MacArthur** has **consumed and destroyed** not **led captive into all the nations**! As **Tony Garland** comments on Rev 12:15+ "*Satan desires to drown her (Israel) with his flood, but God has plans to regenerate her with His living water (Ezekiel 36:25-27; John 7:38-39).*" To reiterate, drowning her DOES NOT sound like leading her captive into all the nations! Zechariah 13:8-9+ also describes a time of horrible bloodshed in which 2/3's of the Jews will be killed in the end times - "*And it will come about in all the land,*" *Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it.*" In sum, the Scripture supports that the Jews in the end times will not be led captive into all the nations but will be killed or at least attempts will be made to eradicate them!

In summary, I think that the weight of evidence strongly favors the interpretation of Luke 21:20-24 as descriptive of an event which has been historically fulfilled in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 70 AD. As noted above, the majority of evangelical writers who espouse a futuristic interpretation of other passages (especially Mt 24:15-28+) also favor the **past historical fulfillment of Luke 21:20-24 in 70 AD**. For example, **Thomas Ice**, an avid [dispensationalist](#), comments on Luke 21:20-24...

[Preterists](#) and [futurists](#) do not agree on much when it comes to the Olivet Discourse. However, when it comes to the interpretation of Luke 21:20-24, we both agree that it is a **literal prophecy of the AD 70 judgment**. Preterist Dr. Kenneth Gentry says, "The **context** of Luke demands a literal Jerusalem (Luke 21:20) besieged by literal armies (Luke 21:20) in literal Judea (Luke 21:21)- which as a matter of indisputable historical record occurred in the events leading up to a.d. 70." [5] However, when expounding on Luke 21:25-28, preterists resort to massive doses of symbolic interpretation in their attempt to give these verses a first-century fulfillment. The futurist does not need to make such adjustments and continues a plain or literal reading of the text. I believe that Luke 21:25-28 is a brief prophecy that parallels Matthew 24 and Mark 13, as I will expound upon in the future. Luke 21:20-24 demonstrates that preterists take prophecy literal when it is alleged to support their view, but if a passage would lead to a non-preterist view, if interpreted literally, they [allegorize](#). On the other hand, futurists are able to take all parts of Christ's Olivet Discourse, and all prophecy literally. It is clear that Luke 21:20-24 is spoke of the first-century Roman invasion of Jerusalem.....The entire passage speaks over and over again of judgment and wrath upon the Jewish people and their city, just as Christ prophesied in Matthew 24:2+ and the other passages noted above. Yet, when one searches prophecies of Matthew 24 and Mark 13 this language is missing. ([The Thomas Ice Collection](#))

**D A Carson** in his comments on the identity of the **abomination of desolation** in Matthew 24:15 notes that "Some have suggested Caligula's plan to set up a pagan altar and standards in the temple precincts (A.D. 40), a plan never carried out; but the description in the following verses cannot apply to that (**ED: ESPECIALLY Mt 24:21+**). **The obvious occasion, in general terms, is A.D. 70, though certain difficulties must be faced**....(**ED:** Then Carson mentions a major problem!) by the time the Romans had actually desecrated the temple in A.D. 70, it was **too late for anyone in the city to flee**. Mark's language is less explicit: "standing where **it** does not belong" (Mark 13:14+), instead of "standing in the holy place." Luke resolves the matter: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near" (Luke 21:20)—but now there is no explicit mention of "the abomination of desolation." **Possibly** Jesus said something **ambiguous**, such as Mark reports." ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Comment:** Another **possibility** for Luke not mentioning the crucial phrase, **the abomination of desolation**, is

that Luke 21:20-24 does not refer to the same event as Mt 24:15+. It is also interesting that Carson quotes Mark 13:14+ but not from the ESV translation which reads "the **abomination of desolation** standing where **HE** (Greek is masculine, singular) ought not to be." The fact that Luke does not mention the **abomination of desolation** standing in the holy place coupled with the fact that the ESV translation of Mk 13:14ESV+ translates it as a "**HE**" make an "A.D. 70" fulfillment less than "*obvious!*" In fact, the ESV rendering would favor a **MAN** standing in the holy place (cp 2Th 2:3+, 2Th 2:4+) rather than an **ARMY** standing in the holy place!

## A NEAR FULFILLMENT AND A FAR FULFILLMENT

As alluded to above, the phrase **days of vengeance...will be fulfilled** could be construed as relating not just to the fulfillment of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (which did fulfill Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 9:26+) but to a future fulfillment of the destruction of Jerusalem during the seven year tribulation.

For example **Norman Crawford** commenting on Luke 21:20-24 espouses a near and far fulfillment a concept which is seen with other prophetic passages...

"Jerusalem compassed with armies" is one of the great events of prophecy which allows us to link the teachings of Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation with the chronology of the Lord's teaching in the Synoptic Gospels. The siege of Jerusalem under Titus in ad 70 is the "**near fulfillment**", but what happened then was a [portent](#) of another great siege of the city in the time of the end, just preceding the coming of the Son of man (Zech 14:1-3+). Those who limit the teaching of the Lord to the event of ad 70, must, when they reach Lk 20:25-27, move on to the coming of the Son of man (ED: THERE IS ACTUALLY A NICE CHRONOLOGICAL TRANSITION, BECAUSE TRAMPLING OF THE CITY IN THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES IN 70 A.D EXTENDS 2000+ YEARS AND AWAITS A FUTURE FULFILLMENT). Some have used Luke's account of the Lord's teaching to interpret Matt 24, but there is nothing in Matthew that can rightly be given a "near" interpretation. Luke does combine the "**near**" and the "**far**", but much of this material is yet future. The events of verses 8 to 19 are what Matthew has called, "**the beginning of sorrows**" (Mt 24:8)...."**Days of vengeance**" have application to the ad 70 destruction of Jerusalem, but we would have a serious problem in limiting this expression to the historical event. "**The days of vengeance**" is an OT expression used frequently to describe the coming time of "Jacob's trouble" (Isa 34:8; 35:4; 61:2; 63:4; Dan 12:1; Hosea 9:5-7; Micah 5:15; Zech 12:1-3), and the vengeance that God will bring upon Israel's enemies. Then there is the Lord's sweeping statement, "all the things that are written may be accomplished" (JND). All that is written will not be accomplished until David's greater Son, who is truly David's Lord (20:41-44) will sit upon His own throne of glory (Matt 25:31), righting every wrong and establishing a kingdom of righteousness and peace that cannot be shaken (Heb 12:28). ([What the Bible Teaches: Luke](#))

**ESV Study Bible - Jerusalem surrounded by armies.** The first fulfillment of this was the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70, and **this destruction may also foreshadow a greater judgment at the end of the age**, so that some of what Jesus predicted in Lk 21:5-24 may also find fulfillment in events that precede Christ's second coming. Cf. also note on Lk 19:43-44.

I agree with the comments by **Steven Cole** "The first part of this discourse (Lk 21:5-24) focuses on the impending judgment of Jerusalem because of rejecting her Messiah. But the terrible events that happened in A.D. 70 were just a [portent](#) of the events that will lead up to the second coming of Christ and the final judgment. As I said last week, **many of the events that Christ predicted have double or multiple fulfillments, culminating in the grand finale at His return.** ([On Guard! He's Coming! Luke 21:25-38](#))

Luke 21:21 "Then let those who are in Judea **flee** to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city **depart**, and let not those who are in the country **enter** the city: tote oi en te loudaia pheugetosan (3PPAM) eis ta hore kai oi en meso autes ekchoreitosan (3PPAM) kai oi en tais chorais me eiserchesthosan (3PPAM) eis autes

KJV Luke 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

- **flee** - Lu 17:31-33 Ge 19:17,26 Ex 9:20,21 Pr 22:3 Mt 24:16 Mk 13:15
- **let those:** Nu 16:26 Jer 6:1 35:11 37:12 Rev 18:4
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole

## GET OUT OF THE CITY AND DON'T ENTER IT

**Then (expression of time)** - **Then** signifies "at that time" or "next" and should always prompt a simple question of "At what time?" or "What's next?" Jesus has just given them a clear "sign" of **when** the Jews were to take action. This sign was to be a visible for all to see = Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies. The encircling army presaged the coming desolation of the city. As Stein says the "**then**" "refers to the "**when**" of Lk 21:7." (Ibid) To reiterate Jesus' command = '**WHEN** you **SEE...THEN** you **FLEE!**'

**Flee...depart...not enter** - Jesus issues not one but three commands to emphasize the urgency of His warning to abandon the city of Jerusalem.

**MacDonald** - Unbelief might have argued that with a besieging army outside the walls, escape would be impossible; but God's Word never fails. The Roman general withdrew his armies for a short season, thus giving the believing Jews the opportunity to escape. (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**To flee to the mountains** - This instruction is for those who are in Judea.

**Flee** (escape) ([5343](#))(**pheugo**) means to flee away in the sense of to take to flight in order to seek safety. To flee in the sense of to escape something, being made safe from danger by eluding or avoiding it. **Flee** is a command (present imperative) calling for continual obedience - keep on fleeing!

**To the mountains** - These would be less accessible and familiar to the foreign forces and thus would be more likely to be safe havens.

**Let not those who are in the country enter the city** - This is the opposite of the normal reaction of country dwellers who would normally flee to the protective walls of the city when an enemy was invading their land. Jesus command counteracts the prevalent logic! As an aside Jesus said many things that countered the logic of men!

**Eusebius** a Roman historian (ad 260/265 - 339/340) describes the fleeing of the Christians from Jerusalem prior to the destruction in 70AD. There were several large scale revolts by the Jews against the Roman Empire between AD 66-135, the **First Jewish-Roman War (66-73AD)** being the one of interest to us and to which Eusebius alludes in the following quote:

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation (**Ed**: Could Eusebius be referring to Jesus' command in Luke 21? We cannot be certain, but it is possible.), vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called **Pella (in the Transjordan)**. And when those that believed in Christ had come thither from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men. ([Eusebius Pamphilius- Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine](#))

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** elaborates on how Jesus' warning command to flee upon seeing the sign of surrounding armies Luke 21:20 was obeyed by the Jewish believers...

In answer to their first question (**Ed**: This refers to the questions the disciples ask Jesus. Lk 21:7 was their question about the Temple He had just predicted would be razed - Lk 21:6.), the Messiah gave them the **sign** (**Ed**: They asked for a specific "**sign**" in Lk 21:7) that would mark the fact that Jerusalem was about to be destroyed. The **sign** was the surrounding of the City of Jerusalem by armies. The Jewish believers were told that, when they saw this **sign**, they were to leave Jerusalem and Judea and flee outside the Land. This **sign** would mark the coming **desolation** of Jerusalem and, from that point on, Jerusalem will be continually "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Lk 21:24)

**This prophecy was fulfilled in a very marvelous way.** In the year A.D. 66, the first Jewish revolt broke out against the Romans. When the revolt first began, the Roman general in the Land, **Cestius Gallus (see description of the Jewish Revolt AD 66-74)**, came with his armies from Caesarea and **surrounded** Jerusalem. The surrounding of the city marked the **sign** that Jesus had promised, and the Jewish believers knew that Jerusalem would soon be destroyed. Jesus had commanded the Jewish believers to desert the city when they saw this happening (Lk 21:21). However, it was impossible to do so while the Romans were surrounding the city.

Then **Cestius Gallus** noticed that his supply lines were not secure. He did not have enough supplies to maintain an extended siege, so he lifted the siege of Jerusalem in order to go back to Caesarea. On the way,

he was attacked by Jewish forces and killed (AD 67). **Temporarily, the city was no longer surrounded by the armies, so every single Jewish believer was able to leave Jerusalem.** They crossed the Jordan River and set up a new community of Jewish believers in the town of [Pella in the Transjordan](#). They were joined by Jewish believers from Judea, Galilee, and the Golan. There, they waited for the prophecy of Yeshua to be fulfilled.

In the year A.D. 68, a new Roman general by the name of [Vespasian](#) and his son, [Titus](#), again [besieged the city](#), and in the year A.D. 70, the city and the Temple were destroyed. Altogether, 1,100,000 Jews were killed in this final onslaught (**Ed:** As noted elsewhere this estimate which is usually attributed to Josephus is felt by a number of historians to be an exaggeration), but not one Jewish believer died because they obeyed the words of their Messiah. Since that time, Jerusalem has indeed been trodden down by the Gentiles and continues to be so to the present day. Jerusalem will not be free of Gentile nations treading upon her until the Messiah returns. With these words, the Messiah answered their first question, the **sign** of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. (Lk 21:7) (**Ed:** Lk 21:7 = "what *will be* the **sign** when these things are about to take place?" - Context is Lk 21:6 = Jesus had just said "these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.") (Messianic Bible Study Collection - Logos Software)

**Joseph Benson** (Methodist minister who wrote in mid-1700's) explained how the Jewish believers were able to flee Jerusalem even in the face of a Roman siege:

It is remarkable, that after the Romans, under Cestius Gallus, made their first advance toward Jerusalem, they suddenly withdrew again, in a most unexpected and impolitic manner. "This conduct of the Roman general," says Macknight, "so contrary to all the rules of prudence, was doubtless brought to pass by the **providence of God**, Who interposed in this manner for the deliverance of the disciples of his Son." For, at this juncture, the Christians, considering it as a signal to retire, left Jerusalem, and removed to Pella and other places beyond the river Jordan, so that they all marvelously escaped the general ruin of their country, and we do not read anywhere that so much as one of them perished. Of such signal service was this caution of our Lord to his followers!"

**Eric Cline** has an interesting historical note on wars and **Jerusalem** noting that "There have been at least 118 separate conflicts in and for Jerusalem during the past four millennia—conflicts that ranged from local religious struggles to strategic military campaigns and that embraced everything in between. Jerusalem has been destroyed completely at least twice, besieged twenty-three times, attacked an additional fifty-two times, and captured and recaptured forty-four times. It has been the scene of twenty revolts and innumerable riots, has had at least five separate periods of violent terrorist attacks during the past century, and has only changed hands completely peacefully twice in the past four thousand years. ([Jerusalem Besieged- From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel](#))

**Luke 21:22 Because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled:hoti hemeiai ekdikeseos autai eisin (3PPAI) tou plesthenai (APN) panta ta gegrammena (RPPNPA).**

BGT Luke 21:22 τι μ ρ αι κδικ σεως α τα ε σιν το πλησθ ναι π ντα τ γεγραμ ν α.

KJV Luke 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

NET Luke 21:22 because these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.

CSB Luke 21:22 because these are days of vengeance to fulfill all the things that are written.

ESV Luke 21:22 for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.

NIV Luke 21:22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.

NLT Luke 21:22 For those will be days of God's vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be fulfilled.

NRS Luke 21:22 for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written.

YLT Luke 21:22 because these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all things that have been written.

GWN Luke 21:22 This will be a time of vengeance. Everything that is written about it will come true.

NKJ Luke 21:22 "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

NAB Luke 21:22 for these days are the time of punishment when all the scriptures are fulfilled.

MIT Luke 21:22 For these are days of retribution to fulfill all the things that have been written.

NJB Luke 21:22 For this is the time of retribution when all that scripture says must be fulfilled.

ASV Luke 21:22 For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

DBY Luke 21:22 for these are days of avenging, that all the things that are written may be accomplished.

BBE Luke 21:22 For these are the days of punishment, in which all the things in the Writings will be put into effect.

NAS Luke 21:22 because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

NIRV Luke 21:22 This is the time when God will punish Jerusalem. Everything will come true, just as it has been written.

RSV Luke 21:22 for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written.

RWB Luke 21:22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

WEB Luke 21:22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

- **days:** Isa 34:8, Isa 61:2 Jer 51:6 Ro 2:5 2Pe 2:9, 3:7
- **all:** Lev 26:14-33 Dt 28:15-68, Dt 29:19-28, Dt 32:34,43 Ps 69:22-28, Ps 149:7-9 Isa 65:12-16 Da 9:26,27 Zec 11:1-3 14:1,2 Mal 4:1 Mk 13:19,20
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole

## DAYS OF VENGEANCE FOR JERUSALEM

**Because** ([hoti](#)) (**term of explanation**) - Jesus is explaining why the residents are to flee Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem will not experience victory but vengeance.

**These are days of vengeance** - "time of retribution" - NEB This describes days of divine righteous retribution for the city of Jerusalem. While the instruments of **vengeance** were the Roman army, their destruction of Jerusalem was not an act of chance or fate, but an act of a faithful God, faithful to fulfill His promise of punishment for Israel's rejection of her Messiah. Even as God had called King Nebuchadnezzar "My servant" (Jer 25:9), so too He would use the Roman armies of Vespasian commanded by Titus as His instrument to judge the nation of Israel.

The psalmist calls God a "God of vengeance" (Psalm 94:1) Isaiah recorded that "the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion." (Isa. 34:8). Here the context is not Israel per se, but God's coming wrath against the nations (Isa 34:1) that will occur in the last days (see Rev 6:1-Rev 19:21).

**In order that** - (term of purpose or result) The purpose of the **days of vengeance** is to fulfill what Jesus had previously prophesied in Lk 19:41-44+.

**All things which are written will be fulfilled** ([pimplemi](#)) - **All things** refers not to every prophecy ever written but in context to the prophecy concerning Jerusalem. One might ask where were these **things** prophesied? If we go back a few chapters in Luke's Gospel, we encounter this prophecy from the lips of our Lord...

When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 **"For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you (EXACTLY LIKE THE ROMANS DID IN 70 AD), and surround you and hem you in on every side,** 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and **they will not leave in you one stone upon another,** because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:41-44+)

And even in the immediate context Jesus repeated this same prophecy...

And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, 6 "As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which **there will not be left one stone upon another** which will not be torn down." (Lk 21:5-6<sup>+</sup>)

Jesus' prophecy in Luke 19 and Lk 21:5-6 is then followed by a related prophecy in Luke 21:20-24. While I highly respect John

MacArthur, it seems he is placing great weight on the statement **All things which are written will be fulfilled**, commenting that "all things which are written were not fulfilled." I would submit that **all things** that Jesus prophesied in Lk 19:41-44+ and Lk 21:5-6+ were in fact fulfilled in 70 A.D. On the other hand, if one proposes as MacArthur does that Luke 21:20-24 refers to a future event such as described in Zechariah 14:2+, there is a significant problem with that interpretation. Jesus clearly stated "**they will not leave in you one stone upon another**," a very specific detail (which was even repeated for emphasis!) and this detail was fully fulfilled in 70 A.D. Furthermore if one compares the Zechariah 14 passage, there is absolutely no mention of the enemy throwing up a barricade and not leaving one stone upon another. In fact in Zechariah's future vision, the destruction of the city is brought to an abrupt end by the return of Messiah which will also mark the end of **the times of the Gentiles**, Zechariah 14:2-4+ recording that

"For I will gather all the **nations** (GENTILES) against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured (NOTE - NO MENTION OF A BARRICADE, NO MENTION OF STONES TORN DOWN), the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

To reiterate Jesus' twice prophesied no stone would be standing upon another, a specific prophetic detail that was fulfilled to the letter! God (Jesus) said it. That settles it, whether we understand it completely or not. Centuries before the Temple was destroyed Jehovah had declared

'Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; Yes, let him recount it to Me in order, From the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming And the events that are going to take place. (Isaiah 44:7)

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**Vengeance** (1557)(**ekdikesis** from **ekdikeo** = from **ek** = out or from + **dike** = right, justice) is literally that which proceeds from justice. **Ekdikesis** means to give justice to someone who has been wronged, in the present context the One wronged being God! It means to repay harm with harm on assumption that initial harm was unjustified and that retribution is therefore called for. The judgments of God are holy and right, and free from any element of self-gratification. There is thus no element of vindictiveness or sense of "taking revenge" in the judgments of God for they are both holy and righteous (right).

**Written** (1125)(**grapho**) is in the **perfect tense** signifying it was written in the past and is still in effect. It speaks of permanence of the writing. To what writing Luke is referring is not clear, but there are a number of passages where God predicts vengeance on His people (cp Lev 26:14-33 Dt 28:15-68, Dt 29:19-28, Dt 32:34,43 Ps 69:22-28, Ps 149:7-9 Isa 65:12-16) For example in Leviticus 26:14-16, 31-32 God promises "But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, I, in turn, will do this to you....I will lay waste (eremos - emptied, desolate, abandoned) **your cities** as well, and will make your **sanctuaries desolate** (exeremoo = make quite desolate, devastate); and I will not smell your soothing aromas. And I will **make the land desolate** so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled over it."

**May be fulfilled** (4092)(**pimplemi**) means to fill full. It can refer to spatial filling (Lk 5:7; Lxx of Ge 24:16 = "filled her jar", cp Ge 21:19; filling of wells with dirt = Ge 26:15). It can refer to being filled with the Holy Spirit (John the Baptist in utero = Lk 1:23). In Lk 21:22 and Lk 1:20 **pimplemi** refers to fulfilled prophecy, of prediction that would surely happen. **Pimplemi** was used to describe the days of Zacharias' priestly service as coming to an end (Lk 1:23). In the Septuagint **pimplemi** is used figuratively to satisfy a need totally or be satiated (Pr 1:31). In Ge 6:11, 13 the earth "was **filled** (Lxx - pimplemi) with violence." In Ex 16:12 God told the children of Israel "in the morning you **shall be filled** (Lxx - pimplemi) with bread." In Ps 65:4 David affirms "How blessed is the one whom Thou dost choose, and bring near to Thee, To dwell in Thy courts. We will be **satisfied** (Lxx = pimplemi) with the goodness of Thy house, Thy holy temple." This begs a question - Do I seek satisfaction in God or in "goods"? Only one will truly satisfy my soul! (cp Ps 23:6, Ps 27:4, Ps 84:10).

**Liddell-Scott** have some secular uses of **pimplemi** - to fill, discharge an office, to fill oneself a cup of wine, to get ships laden, to satiate one's desire with meat and drink, fill the plain full of your chariots, Passive - to be filled, become or be full of, to have enough of a thing.

**Pimplemi** - 24x in 24v - NAS Usage: come(1), completed(2), ended(1), filled(18), fulfilled(1), passed(1). Matt 22:10; 27:48; Luke 1:15, 23, 41, 57, 67; 2:6, 21f; 4:28; 5:7, 26; 6:11; 21:22; Acts 2:4; 3:10; 4:8, 31; 5:17; 9:17; 13:9, 45; 19:29

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**Luke 21:23 Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress**

upon the land, and wrath to this people: ouai tais en gastri echousais (PAPFPD) kai tais thelazousais (PAPFPD) en ekeinai tais hemerais estai (3PSFMI) gar anagke megale epi tes ges kai orge tos lao touto,

- **woe:** Lu 23:29 De 28:56,57 La 4:10 Heb 9:12-17 13:16 Mt 24:19 Mk 13:17
- **great:** Lu 19:27,43 Mt 21:41,44 1Th 2:16 Heb 10:26-31 Jas 5:1 1Pe 4:17
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole

**Woe** (Alas! How dreadful!) (3759)(ouai) (3759 - click and select "Phonetics" to hear "ouai" pronounced) (ouai pronounced "oo-ah'ee," an eerie, ominous foreboding sound some say is like the cry of an eagle) is an onomatopoeic word (an imitation of the sound) which serves as an interjection expressing a cry of intense distress, displeasure or horror. It may convey a warning of impending disaster to the hearers.

**Those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days** - This needs little comment, as it would be very difficult for pregnant and nursing women to flee quickly when the siege of Jerusalem occurs. Clearly **those days** are the days of Jerusalem's impending destruction. Jesus' disciples may have recalled His earlier warning when He declared "Behold, the **days** are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'" (Lk 23:29).

**For (gar)** - This **term of explanation** should always prompt the reader to pause and ponder what the writer is explaining. In this context Jesus is explaining why it will be so horrible for pregnant women and nursing moms.

**There will be great distress** - As already noted, the Greek word Luke uses for **distress (anagke)** is different than that used by Matthew (**thlipsis**). It is notable that in the Septuagint **thlipsis** is used in Da 12:1-note which describes "a time of **distress** such as never occurred since there was a nation (of Israel) until that time." (cp Jesus' similar description in Mt 24:21). While the Greek verb **anagke** is used in one OT passage to describe the Day of the LORD (Zeph 1:15), it is not used by Daniel to describe the time of unique suffering that will come on Israel in the end times.

**Great distress** is very similar to the description of the time of **great tribulation** Jesus predicted in Mt 24:21. As discussed the text uses different Greek verbs, but more importantly the great tribulation is distinguished by the solemn phrase "**such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.**" While Luke predicted **great distress** in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, Matthew predicted **great tribulation** of unprecedented proportions. If one reads Lk 21:23 and Mt 24:21 as would a little child, it seems clear that these two times of distress are different and that Luke's distress occurred in 70AD and Matthew's distress has yet to occur. The only way to avoid this conclusion is to make a futile (like a number of commentaries that fight hard against a future fulfillment of Matthew 24) attempt to make the text say something it does not say! These are serious, life and death passages, and it is hardly conceivable that a loving God would inspire a warning message that only an person with a theological doctorate could accurately interpret!

**Distress** (318)(**anagke** from **ana** = up, again, back, renewal, repetition, intensity, reversal + **agkale** = arm when bent) refers to any necessity or compulsion, outer or inner, brought on by a variety of circumstances. The idea of an obligation of compelling nature (a complete obligation, a necessary thing) is dominant in Mt 18:7; Lk 14:18; Ro 13:5; 1Co 7:37; 9:16; 2Co 9:7; Philemon 14; Heb 7:12, 27; 9:16, 23; Jude 3; Lk 23:17. **Anagke** can be subdivided into a moral necessity (as in Mt 18:7; Heb 7:12, 27; 9:16, 23) or a spiritual necessity (Ro 13:5; 1Co 9:16; Jude 1:3) The other sense of **anagke** is that of trouble, distress or hardship, the meaning intended by Luke in the present passage (Used in a similar sense in 1Co 7:26; 2Co 6:4; 2Co 12:10, 1Thes 3:7).

**Anagke** is used in the Septuagint (Lxx) in Jeremiah 15:4 to describe the judgment of God on the nation of Judah (cf Jer 9:15 where the English of the Lxx says He will feed them with **trouble** [anagke]). Four times in Ps 107 Israel cried out to the LORD in their trouble (thlibo = press upon) and He delivered them out of their **distresses** (anagke) (Ps 107:6, 13, 19, 28). What a longsuffering God we serve! Zephaniah 1:15 describes a "day of trouble (thlipsis) and **distress** (anagke)," which is a description of the great Day of the LORD.

**Wrath** (3709)(**orge** from **orgaō** = to teem, to swell) conveys the picture of a swelling which eventually bursts, and thus describes an anger that proceeds from one's settled nature. Orge does not refer to uncontrollable anger to which men are so prone but to God's settled indignation and controlled passionate hostile feeling toward sin in all its various manifestations. Settled indignation means that God's holiness cannot and will not coexist with sin in any form whatsoever. Orge is not the momentary, emotional, and often uncontrolled anger (thumos) to which human beings are prone. Orge is used primarily of God's holy, righteous wrath but

occasionally refers to the wrath of men (Eph 4:31)

**To this people** - Which people? In context this is specifically directly to the Jews. This distress is not global as implied in Matthew 24:21-22 but local.

**Luke 21:24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled: kai pesountai (3PFMI) stomati machaires kai aichmalotisthesontai (3PFPI) eis ta ethne panta kai Ierousalem estai (3PSFMI) patoumene (PPPFSN) hupo ethnon achri ou plerothosin (3PAPS) kairoi ethnon.**

BGT Luke 21:24 κα πεσο νται στ ματι μαχα ρης κα α χμαλωτισθ σονται ε ς τ θνη π ντα, κα ερουσαλ μ σται πατουμ νη π θν ν, χρι ο πληρωθ σιν καιρο θν ν.

KJV Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

NET Luke 21:24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away as captives among all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

CSB Luke 21:24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

ESV Luke 21:24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

NIV Luke 21:24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

NLT Luke 21:24 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.

NRS Luke 21:24 they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

YLT Luke 21:24 and they shall fall by the mouth of the sword, and shall be led captive to all the nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by nations, till the times of nations be fulfilled.

GWN Luke 21:24 Swords will cut them down, and they will be carried off into all nations as prisoners. Nations will trample Jerusalem until the times allowed for the nations to do this are over.

NKJ Luke 21:24 "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

NAB Luke 21:24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken as captives to all the Gentiles; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

MIT Luke 21:24 They will fall, consumed by swords, and they will be taken captive to all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations until their times are up.

NJB Luke 21:24 'For great misery will descend on the land and retribution on this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive to every gentile country; and Jerusalem will be trampled down by the gentiles until their time is complete.

ASV Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

DBY Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the nations until the times of the nations be fulfilled.

- **led:** Dt 28:64-68
- **Jerusalem:** Isa 5:5 63:18 La 1:15 Rev 11:2
- **until:** Isa 66:12,19 Da 9:27, 12:7 Mal 1:11 Ro 11:25
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:5-24 Staying Sane When the Whole World Goes Crazy](#) - Steven Cole

- [Luke 21:20-24 The Terrors of the Great Tribulation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 21:20-24 The Terrors of the Great Tribulation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passage:

Romans 11:25+ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel **until** the **fulness of the Gentiles** has come in;

**Comment** - When is "**until**"? For help understanding the timing compare this to the timing of Israel's "**partial hardening**" -- When is this "partial hardening" no longer "partial" but in fact lifted by God? It is when "all Israel will be saved" (Ro 11:26) which equates with the Deliverer's return, the timing of which equates with Messiah's Second coming (gathering of the elect = Mt 24:31+, saving of Jews = Zec 12:10+, Zech 13:9+). Therefore to summarize -- the **fulness of the Gentiles** does not equate with the removal of the church (as erroneously stated by C I Scofield) because we know that after the removal of the church there will be a great harvest of Gentiles from every tribe, etc (a great multitude - Rev 7:9+) who are saved during the Great Tribulation (Rev 7:14+), after which the Deliverer will come and "all" Israel will be saved (2/3's will be killed and 1/3 saved). At the time all Israel is saved, obviously the partial hardening is removed. Finally, although "**fulness of the Gentiles**" is a different event, it does appear to correspond timewise to the termination of the "**times of the Gentiles**" (Lu 21:24) which also ends with the Second Coming of Christ.



Jerusalem Destroyed 70 AD  
Click to enlarge

### DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM 70 A.D.

**And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive(aichmalotizo) into all the nations** - **They** refers to the Jews. While it may be an exaggeration, Josephus reports that over 1 million Jews were killed when the Romans sacked Jerusalem and burned the Temple in 70AD. Josephus reports that 97,000 prisoners were taken and carried off everywhere. This is one aspect of this prophecy which would be difficult to see being fulfilled in the last 7 years of the Tribulation, for as noted above Satan does not desire to capture but to kill the Jews as the apostle John explains...

"For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." 13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman (ISRAEL - JEWS) who gave birth to the male child. 14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman (ISRAEL), so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time (3.5 YEARS CORRESPONDING TO THE GREAT TRIBULATION), from the presence of the serpent. 15 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman (ISRAEL), so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood (DOES THIS SOUND LIKE SATAN WANTS TO LEAD THE JEWS CAPTIVE INTO EVERY NATION - THIS IS A STRONG ARGUMENT AGAINST SAYING Lk 21:20-24 WAS NOT FULFILLED IN 70 A.D. - THE FACT IS THAT THE JEWS WERE DISPERSED INTO EVERY NATION AT THIS TIME). (Rev 12:12-15+).

Some like John MacArthur believe Lk 21:20-24 was not fulfilled in 70 A.D. but will be fulfilled in the future. However, this interpretation is not compatible with the Apostle John's description of the future fate of the Jews. It is interesting that in MacArthur's commentary he gives no explanatory comment on how, when or why the Jews will be **led captive into all the nations** in the future. This simply would make no sense in light of Revelation 12:12-15+.

**Moses** had prophesied this fate would befall Israel if they disobeyed Jehovah writing

"Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. 65 "And among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. 66 "So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you shall be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life. 67 "In the morning you shall say, 'Would that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Would that it were morning!' because of the dread of your heart which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes which you shall see." (Dt 28:64-67)

**Bob Deffinbaugh** adds that "The Roman historian Tacitus states (Historiae, v, 13, 4) that the normal population of Jerusalem was 600,000 before A.D. 70. And if we bear in mind that before the investment of the city the Jews poured into Jerusalem in tens of thousands for the Passover and could not again return to their homes and thus remained in the city throughout the five months' siege, it may be understood that hundreds of thousands would perish in the over-populated city." ([Jerusalem in the Last Days Luke 21:5-38](#))

## THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

**Jerusalem will be trampled (pateo) under foot by the Gentiles** - This prophecy is perfectly compatible with the previous description Jesus gives in Lk 21:20-24a as having been fulfilled in 70 A.D. The Gentile Romans trampled Jerusalem in 70AD and the city will continue to **be trampled under foot by the Gentiles** until the end of this age, for in the Revelation, John writes that the Gentiles will "tread under foot the holy city for 42 months." (Rev 11:2+) It is notable that 42 months correlates with the last 3.5 years which is known as the Great Tribulation. (See Time Phrases - 3.5 years, "Time, times, half a time", 42 mo, 1260 days)

**Eric Cline** gives us a sense of the Gentiles trampling on Jerusalem writing that "There have been at least 118 separate conflicts in and for Jerusalem during the past four millennia—conflicts that ranged from local religious struggles to strategic military campaigns and that embraced everything in between. Jerusalem has been destroyed completely at least twice, besieged twenty-three times, attacked an additional fifty-two times, and captured and recaptured forty-four times. It has been the scene of twenty revolts and innumerable riots, has had at least five separate periods of violent terrorist attacks during the past century, and has only changed hands completely peacefully twice in the past four thousand years. ([Jerusalem Besieged](#)) (**Comment:** Only twice has the Temple in Jerusalem been destroyed, in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and 70 AD by General Titus of Rome.)

**Warren Wiersbe** explains that "This was not the first time Jerusalem would be "trodden down of the Gentiles," for the Babylonians had destroyed the city in 586 B.C. when "**the times of the Gentiles**" began. This significant period in God's plan will end when Jesus Christ returns to the earth, destroys all Gentile power, and sets up His own righteous kingdom (Da 2:34-36+, Da 2:44-45+; Rev. 19:11-21+)." (Borrow [Be courageous](#))

**Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled** - This phrase is mentioned only by Luke. Given the fact that Luke is speaking in the context of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, some expositors feel that this date marks the beginning of the times of the Gentiles. Notice however that Luke actually does not state when these **times** begin but only predicts when they will terminate. So this naturally begs the question "When did these times begin?" The majority of conservative writers feel that Jerusalem's defeat by Babylon (Gentiles) in 586BC marks the inception and that over the succeeding centuries Jerusalem has never been totally free of Gentile domination to some degree.

**Until** - Don't miss the "until's in Scripture! This word is an **expression of time** and means something will continue to happen up to a point and then it will not happen. In the present context (and keep in mind the following analysis is based on a literal interpretation of Scripture, not someone's systematic theology!), Luke says something found in no other place in Scripture, that the city of Jerusalem will be trampled under foot **UNTIL**. So there is a day when the Gentiles will not tread on the city of Jerusalem. Luke says that the time allotted to the Gentiles to tread on Jerusalem is finite and will come to an end one day. One might ask if the [Six-Day War](#) of 1967 in which the Jews regained control of Jerusalem ([See "The Old City"](#)) brought an end to Gentile domination of the city and so that year marked the end of the "times of the Gentiles?" While one might suppose that is the case from a superficial reading of the text, one must ask if Israel today (2016) controls **ALL** of the city? In fact the truth is that they do not control the MOST IMPORTANT piece of land in the entire city and for that matter, in the entire world! What is that property? Of course it is the [Temple Mount](#) area, the site of the former Jewish Temples and the present site of the Muslim [Dome of the Rock](#) and the [Al-Aqsa Mosque](#), the third holiest site in Islam This small but supremely strategic swath of real estate is under Muslim control, and so it is *tread under the feet* of the Gentiles so to speak.

The apostle John writes of a future day that they are to **leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.**" (Revelation 11:2-note; compare also Zech 12:2-3 which speaks of the last days) And so Jerusalem will be tread underfoot even to the end of this age, the Gentile domination (to one degree or another) coming to an end only after the 42 months which corresponds to Jesus' description of the coming "**Great Tribulation**," a tribulation which He will cut short by His glorious appearing (And praise God, He cuts it short! = Mt 24:22). At that time Christ the Rock will crush ALL Gentile powers, even as prophesied in the Stone's striking of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Daniel 2 (Da 2:34-35-note, Da 2:43-45-note). The Righteous One will then set up His **Kingdom** with Jerusalem as His capital and the newly rebuilt Temple (Ezek 40:1-Ezek 48:35-**See Jehovah Shammah-The Lord is There**) the site of His glorious throne. **In that day the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled! Hallelujah!**

**The times of the Gentiles be fulfilled** - From the preceding discussion it is clear that the "times of the Gentiles" will indeed be fulfilled at the end of this age at the **Second Coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ!

**R C Sproul** makes a rather strange statement - "Luke's reference to '**the times of the Gentiles**' lends credence to the idea that Scripture distinguishes between a Jewish epoch and a Gentile epoch. This in turn supports the idea that "the end of the age" may refer to the end of the Jewish age." (The Last Days According to Jesus)

**Comment:** I think the apostles might vehemently disagree with Sproul for in their final question to Jesus before His ascension Luke records "**And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"**" (Acts 1:6-note) Notice that Jesus **did not** correct them saying "No, you are mistaken because the Jewish age has ended" (Acts 1:7) but gave them their "immediate assignment" to take the Gospel to the world (Acts 1:8)! The groundless speculation by R C Sproul is absolutely, unequivocally incorrect! To the contrary, the end of the age will mark the beginning of the Messianic age! Hallelujah! Amen!

**William MacDonald** has an interesting note - Down through the centuries from the time of the Savior's words, Jerusalem has been largely controlled by Gentile powers. Emperor Julian the Apostate (a.d. 331-363) sought to discredit Christianity by disproving this prophecy of the Lord. He therefore encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple. They went to the work eagerly, even using silver shovels in their extravagance, and carrying the dirt in purple veils. But while they were working, they were interrupted by an earthquake and by balls of fire coming from the ground. They had to abandon the project.[Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, II:95-101] (Believer's Bible Commentary)

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**Will be led captive** (163)(**aichmalotizo** from **aichme** = a spear + **halotos** = to be taken or conquered) was a military term which mean to take captive as a prisoner or be led away captive.

**Trampled** (3961)(**pateo**) means to tread on or step on. Transitivity **pateo** means to set foot on, to tread, or to trample something (Rev 14:20). Pateo in a hostile sense means to tread down or trample under foot and figuratively to subdue by force, plunder, treat contemptuously (Lk 21:24, Rev 11:2). Intransitively **pateo** means to walk or step on something (Lk 10:19)

**Pateo** - 5x in NT - **NAS** Usage: trampled under(1), tread(1), tread under foot(1), treads(1), trodden(1).

Luke 10:19 "Behold, I have given you authority **totread** on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

Luke 21:24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be **trampled under** foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Revelation 11:2-note "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will **tread under foot** the holy city for forty-two months.

Revelation 14:20-note And the wine press was **trodden** outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

**Comment:** We see a similar passage in Joel 3:13 "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, **tread**, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great."

Revelation 19:15-note From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He **treads** the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

**Times** (opportunities) (2540)(**kairos**) means a point of time or period of time, time, period, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology. It means a moment or period as especially appropriate the right, proper, favorable time (at the right time). A season. A point of time. A moment. An opportunity. Something that lasts for a

season and so is transient, temporary or enduring only for a specific period of time. In short, the Gentile's treading of Jerusalem will last only for a "season," a season we are currently in and have been in since the Gentile power of Babylon first destroyed the holy city in 586BC.

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#### QUESTION - [What are the times of the Gentiles?](#)

**ANSWER** - In Luke 21:24, Jesus speaks of future events, including the destruction of Jerusalem and His return. He says that "Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (ESV). A similar phrase is found in Romans 11:25, which says, "A partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (ESV). Does the Bible tell us what the phrase "times of the Gentiles" means?

The Old Testament does not contain this exact phrase, but there are references that seem to match up. Ezekiel 30:3 points to "a time of doom for the nations" in connection with the Day of the Lord. Daniel's series of visions deals with Gentile world powers and their role in God's plan for the earth. Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay (Daniel 2:31–45) represents successive Gentile kingdoms that will dominate until Christ returns and establishes His reign. Daniel's vision of the four beasts (Daniel 7:1–27) likewise speaks of four kings, or nations, which will dominate for a time until Christ comes to rule forever. The vision of the ram and the goat (Daniel 8:1–26) gives more detail about these Gentile rulers and the time involved in their dominion. In each of these passages, the Gentiles have dominion over the world, including the Jewish people, for a time, but God will ultimately subdue them all and establish His own kingdom once and for all. Each prophecy culminates with a reference to Christ's kingdom, so the "times" of these Gentile rulers would be all the years between the [Babylonian Empire](#) of Nebuchadnezzar and the glorious return of Christ to establish His kingdom. We are now living in "the times of the Gentiles," that is, in the era of Gentile domination.

When we examine the book of Revelation, we find similar references to the time of Gentile dominion ending with the return of Christ. In Revelation 11:2, John indicates that Jerusalem will be under Gentile rule, even though the temple has been restored. The armies of the Beast are destroyed by the Lord in Revelation 19:17–19, just before the millennial reign of Christ is initiated.

Looking again at Luke 21:24, we see that Jesus mentions a time in which Jerusalem is under the dominion of Gentile authority. Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem in 588 BC began that period, and it has continued through the present time. Romans 11:25 gives us a hint as to God's purpose in the times of the Gentiles: the spread of the gospel throughout the whole world. The organization and inventions of the pagan world powers have actually aided the evangelism of the world. For example, in the first century, it was the widespread use of the Greek language and the network of Roman roads that allowed many people in far-off lands to hear the gospel.

One theme of Romans 11 is that, when the Jewish people rejected Christ, they were temporarily cut off from the blessings of a relationship with God. As a result, the gospel was given to the Gentiles, and they gladly received it. This partial hardening of heart for Israel doesn't preclude individual Jews from being saved, but it prevents the nation from accepting Christ as Messiah until His plans are finished. When the time is right, God will restore the entire nation, and they will come to faith in Him once again, ending "the times of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 17:7; 62:11–12; Romans 11:26). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### Related Resource:

- [The Times of the Gentiles and "Fullness of the Gentiles"](#) - John Walvoord

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#### QUESTION - [What is the fullness of the Gentiles \(Romans 11:25\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - In Romans 11 Paul makes a compelling observation—an affirmation he refers to as a mystery—that a partial hardening has happened until "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Romans 11:25ESV). The context helps us understand the meaning of the partial hardening and what is the fullness of the Gentiles.

In the first eleven chapters of Romans, Paul catalogs the mercies of God in God's provision of righteousness through the gospel. First, in Romans 1:1—3:20 Paul considers the universal human need for God's righteousness, as all are unrighteous and separated from God. Then in Romans 3:21—4:25 Paul lays out how God applied righteousness through faith to all who believe in Jesus, outlining three different and significant types of [descendants of Abraham](#): 1) ethnic Israel (Romans 4:1), 2) believing Gentiles (Romans 4:11), and 3) believing Jews (Romans 4:12). These three sets of descendants of Abraham are especially important for understanding the partial hardening and the fullness of the Gentiles that Paul talks about in Romans 11.

Romans 5—8 discusses the implications of that righteousness applied in freeing believers from the penalty and bondage of sin (Romans 5—7) and assuring them of a present and future of reconciliation and peace with God (Romans 8). At the end of Romans 8 is a powerful affirmation of the believer's [eternal security](#)—God will keep His promises to those who have believed in Jesus Christ,

and they will never be separated from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35).

While discussing these mercies of God, Paul seems to anticipate that his readers might wonder why, if God is so faithful to restore those who believe in Jesus, God's promises of restoration to Israel do not seem to be fulfilled yet. Simply put, if [God is faithful](#), and if His promises to believers are trustworthy, then why is He not keeping His promises to Israel? It is to answer this concern that Paul writes Romans 9—11, as he introduces the ideas of a partial hardening of Israel and the fullness of the Gentiles (Romans 11:25).

In Romans 9 Paul expresses his love for his Jewish brethren (Romans 9:1–5) and recognizes that the covenant promises are to be fulfilled to a specific group of Abraham's descendants. Paul shows the distinct groups by highlighting God's choosing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and affirms that God's blessing would be for those descendants who believe in the Messiah (Romans 9:33). Salvation would not only be for believing Jews, though, as Gentiles could also call upon the name of the Lord for salvation (Romans 10:12–13). While there are believing Jews and Gentiles, Paul explains that the nation of Israel as a whole has not yet received her Messiah (Romans 10:18—11:10), but they will one day be saved through believing in their Messiah (Romans 11:26).

In the meantime, Paul explains that there is a partial hardening of the nation—that many will refuse the Messiah—until the fullness of the Gentiles occurs. Israel's hardening will continue until the divinely set number of Gentiles are saved: "Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ" (Romans 11:25NLT).

Paul recognized that Israel's failure to accept the Messiah when He came offering the kingdom represented blessing for the Gentiles because, instead of setting up that kingdom on earth at that time, Christ died to pay for the sins of all. In so doing, Christ fulfilled the promise God made to Abraham that in Abraham's seed all the peoples of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3b). That partial hardening of Israel also represented a shift in focus to the announcement of salvation to the Gentiles. Paul acknowledged himself as an apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13) and sought that many Gentiles would come to know Christ so those promises could be fulfilled and then the Jewish people might return to their Messiah (Romans 11:14–15). Paul alluded to this in 2 Timothy 4:17 when he expressed gratitude for God's sustaining him so that Paul might fulfill his ministry and that all the Gentiles might hear.

Even though God's promises to save the nation of Israel are not presently being fulfilled, Paul recognizes that God will keep those promises after the fullness of the Gentiles. Paul seems to be building on the foundation of Daniel 9, in which is revealed a 490-year prophetic timeline after which God will accomplish His covenant blessings for Israel. After the first 483 years of the timeline, the Messiah was cut off (Daniel 9:26a), signaling a shift in the focus away from Israel as Gentiles (Rome) would dominate, and there would be wars and desolation. But one day in the future, the ruler who would be known as [the Antichrist](#) would make a seven-year agreement with Israel. That last seven years of the timeline would begin to return the focus back to Israel and would conclude the times of the Gentiles of which Jesus spoke in Luke 21:24.

The fullness of the Gentiles in Romans 11:25 reminds us of God's global focus (with the universal proclamation of the gospel of salvation) and chronology (with the times of the Gentiles not yet complete). One day, the fullness of the Gentiles will be complete, and God will deliver the nation of Israel. Anyone who might have doubts about God's faithfulness in keeping His promises can consider these passages as important reminders that God has a detailed plan that He is fulfilling patiently and carefully. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Luke 21:25 "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,**

BGT Luke 21:25 Κα σονται σημε α ν λ κα σελ ν κα στροις, κα π τ ς γ ς συνοχ θν ν ν πορ χου ς θαλ σσης κα σ λου,

KJV Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

NET Luke 21:25 "And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth nations will be in distress, anxious over the roaring of the sea and the surging waves.

CSB Luke 21:25 "Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and there will be anguish on the earth among nations bewildered by the roaring sea and waves.

ESV Luke 21:25 "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,

NIV Luke 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.

NLT Luke 21:25 "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.

NRS Luke 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

YLT Luke 21:25 'And there shall be signs in sun, and moon, and stars, and on the land is distress of nations with perplexity, sea and billow roaring;

GWN Luke 21:25 "Miraculous signs will occur in the sun, moon, and stars. The nations of the earth will be deeply troubled and confused because of the roaring and tossing of the sea.

NKJ Luke 21:25 "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;

NAB Luke 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

MIT Luke 21:25 Signs will appear in the sun, moon, and stars. Upon the earth there will be anguish worldwide and confusion due to the roaring of the sea and its surging.

NJB Luke 21:25 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the turmoil of the ocean and its waves;

ASV Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows;

DBY Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roar of the sea and rolling waves,

- **There will be signs in sun and moon and stars** Isaiah 13:10,13,14; 24:23; Jeremiah 4:23; Ezekiel 32:7,8; Joel 2:30,31; Amos 8:9,10; Mt 24:29; 27:45; Mark 13:24,26; 15:33; Acts 2:19; 2 Peter 3:10-12; Revelation 6:12-14; 20:11
- **on the earth dismay among nations** Daniel 12:1
- **in perplexity** Isaiah 22:4,5; Micah 7:4
- **at the roaring of the sea and the waves**, Ps 46:3; 93:3,4; Isaiah 5:30; 51:15
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:25-26 Celestial Signs of the Coming Savior](#) - John MacArthur

## COSMIC SIGNS CAUSE CONFUSION

Matthew 24:29+ describes the **signs in sun and moon and stars** immediately after the tribulation...

"But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and (FOLLOWING PHRASE IN Lk 21:26) the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Mark 13:24+ is similar as to both the timing and the specific signs...

"But in those days, after that tribulation (**NOTE DOUBLE TIME PHRASE!**), THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, 25 AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and (FOLLOWING PHRASE IN Lk 21:26) the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.

**Comment:** Notice how important it is to accurately interpret **tribulation** Mark 13:19 which gives a very specific description of the **tribulation** writing "For those days will be a time of **tribulation** such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will." So this is a once in a lifetime tribulation! It will not be repeated! That is a very clear marker of this time of great suffering for the nation of Israel. This description strongly weighs against those who say the catastrophic events of 70 AD fulfill this time of "**tribulation**"! Beloved, in the book of Zechariah 13:8-9+ we see that 2/3's of the nation of Israel will be killed during this time (that did not happen in 70 AD!) A literal reading of Mark's description of the **tribulation** correlates perfectly with the similar time phrase in Daniel 12:1+ which says "there will be a **time of distress** such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people (A ONCE IN A LIFETIME TIME OF DISTRESS FOR THE NATION OF

ISRAEL - COULD IT BE STATED ANY CLEARER?), everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued (WHICH IN TURN CORRELATES WITH PAUL'S PROPHECY IN Ro 11:26+)."

**Hiebert comments** that "the periphrastic form of the future tense ("*will be falling*") here used stresses the duration, star after star falling".....The double statement, "**in those days, after that tribulation,**" suggests a close connection with Mk 13:14-23. The implied close connection is explicitly affirmed by Matthew's "**immediately**" (Mt 24:29+). The demonstrative pronouns, *those* and *that*, view the unparalleled **tribulation** just described as still remote at the time of speaking." ([The Gospel of Mark- An Expository Commentary](#))

Recall that the disciples' question in Luke 21:6 was "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" Their question was referring primarily to the destruction of the Temple. Matthew's version adds "**what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?**" (Mt 24:3+). It is this latter question that Luke 21:25-28 addresses.

**Thomas Ice** commenting on the passage in Matthew 24 writes that "One of the original questions that the disciples ask Jesus at the beginning of this discourse was "what will be the sign of your coming?" He has been answering the question since Matthew 24:23. Having spoken of His coming in Matthew 24:27, Jesus now builds upon His previous point that He will not arrive clandestinely, but His return will be a clear, public event that will take place suddenly. Just such a glorious appearing is exactly what is described in Matthew 24:29-30. ([Matthew 24:29 The Sun, Moon, and Stars](#))

**There will be signs (semeion) in sun and moon and stars** - The NAS marginal note on "**signs**" is "attesting miracles." Remember the **sun** is earth's own star which Matthew's parallel description says will be darkened (Mt 24:29+). Luke does not tell us when these signs will occur. But if we compare the similar passages in Matthew and Mark, it is clear that these celestial signs follow the "tribulation," which in Matthew refers to the last 3.5 years of Daniel's Seventieth Week, called the Great Tribulation (cf "a time of distress such as never occurred" = Da 12:1+).

**David L McKenna** - When the sign of His coming is given (**Ed**: He is referring here especially to the cosmic cataclysms), it will defy scientists and pseudoscientists, astronomers and astrologers, but there will be no way to misread its purpose." ([The Communicator's Commentary](#))

**Stuart Weber** - The Messiah's coming will be accompanied by supernatural manipulations of celestial bodies—or at least manipulations of their appearance, or their ability to give light. These **signs** in the sky will be such that all people of earth can see them and realize that the Messiah is coming. If only one of these, **signs** were given, it might be explained away as an eclipse or a meteor shower. But all of them together can be caused only by the hand of God. The Second Coming of Christ to establish His kingdom on earth will be a majestic event that will extend over many hours (**ED**: NOT SURE HOW HE ARRIVES AT THIS CONCLUSION). The earth and its occupants will be forced to watch, amazed, as the armies of the hosts of heaven descend to the earth in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4+, cf Rev 19:11-16+). (Holman New Testament Commentary)

**Signs** in the sun and moon and stars are cosmic signs that turn our attention to the end and the Son of Man's return for the righteous. OT imagery is present: See Isa 13:9–10; 24:18–20; 34:4; Ezek 32:7–8; Joel 2:1, 30–31; 3:15.

Isaiah 13:9-10+ Behold, the [Day of the Lord](#) is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. 10 For the **stars** of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The **sun** will be dark when it rises And the **moon** will not shed its light.

**Comment:** While the near fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy predicted the destruction of Babylon in a decree by the sovereign God Himself (Isa 13:3), "the LORD of hosts is mustering an army for battle" against Babylon, the far fulfillment looking to the defeat of the final city of Babylon the great (Rev 18:2+). While the Medes would be God's instrument of the near fulfillment, the Messiah would be the instrument of the far and final fulfillment of this great prophecy.

Isaiah 24:18-20 Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit, And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare; For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake. 19 The earth is broken asunder, The earth is split through, The earth is shaken violently. 20 The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard And it totters like a shack, For its transgression is heavy upon it, And it will fall, never to rise again.

**Comment:** Isaiah 24-27 is often referred to as the "**Little Apocalypse**" as it describes the final judgment of all humanity. As Henry Morris says "From chapter 24 through 27 the prophetic vision leaps ahead to the judgments of the great tribulation of the end time, more or less covering the same events as Revelation 6-

20. The devastating earthquakes and other calamities of those days will leave the earth's surface disheveled and almost empty of inhabitants. This first verse summarizes the end result of that awful time that is sure to come.

"The [Little Apocalypse](#)." Isaiah 24–27 uses apocalyptic imagery heavily as the prophet records what he foresaw happening after the people of Israel and Judah returned from their exiles in Assyria and Babylon. The subjects of Isaiah's attention include not only God's people but the whole world, as he looks at the final ramifications of human sin.

Isaiah 34:4+ And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree.

Joel 2:1, 30-31+ Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the [Day of the Lord](#) is coming; Surely it is near, 30-31+ "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. 31 "The **sun** will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Joel 3:15+ The **sun** and **moon** grow dark And the **stars** lose their brightness.

**And on the earth dismay** ([sunoche](#)) **among nations, in perplexity** ([aporia](#)) **at the roaring of the sea and the waves**- The earth is personified as perplexed and bewildered which is in fact a description of all those who dwell on the earth in this divinely decreed day of destruction describe in graphic detail in Revelation 6-19. **Dismay** means the feeling of despair in the face of obstacles, a lowering of one's spirits so they become downhearted. Dismay can also refer to fear resulting from the awareness of danger and there will be no [dearth](#) of danger in the time of the Revelation. **Norman Crawford** says waves is **salos** which "means "to toss", particularly the swelling and tossing of the waves or "billows" (RV) of the sea. The "roaring" (v. 25, *ēchos*) of these tossing billows adds to the chaos leaving people completely confused without escape and nowhere to turn. ([What the Bible Teaches: Luke](#))

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**Signs** ([4592](#)) ([semeion](#)) are distinguishing marks by which something is known. Signs can often be seen as in the present context. In this context these are celestial signs of the coming of Christ (Lk 21:27).

Semeion - 69v - Matt. 12:38; Matt. 12:39; Matt. 16:1; Matt. 16:3; Matt. 16:4; Matt. 24:3; Matt. 24:24; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 26:48; Mk. 8:11; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 13:4; Mk. 13:22; Mk. 16:17; Mk. 16:20; Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 21:7; Lk. 21:11; Lk. 21:25; Lk. 23:8; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:18; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 3:2; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:54; Jn. 6:2; Jn. 6:14; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:41; Jn. 11:47; Jn. 12:18; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 20:30; Acts 2:19; Acts 2:22; Acts 2:43; Acts 4:16; Acts 4:22; Acts 4:30; Acts 5:12; Acts 6:8; Acts 7:36; Acts 8:6; Acts 8:13; Acts 14:3; Acts 15:12; Rom. 4:11; Rom. 15:19; 1 Co. 1:22; 1 Co. 14:22; 2 Co. 12:12; 2 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:17; Heb. 2:4; Rev. 12:1; Rev. 12:3; Rev. 13:13; Rev. 13:14; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 19:20

**Dismay** ([4928](#)) ([sunoche](#) from **sun** = with, together + **echo** = to hold) literally means a "holding together" (compression, prison) but is used only figuratively in the two NT uses here and 2 Cor 2:4, both times to refer to one who is held or gripped by a severe emotional stress. **Sunoche** describes a state of mental distress which includes acute anxiety. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:4 "out of much affliction and **anguish** of heart" in reference to a letter (probably a "missing letter" - seenote) he had to write to the church in Corinth, which was born out of deep inner "distress" over the actions (and accusations) of the church he had founded!

**TDNT** on the root word [sunecho/synecho](#) - This word means first "to hold together," e.g., law upholding the state, or deity the cosmos, or virtues the world. Then we find the meaning "to enclose" or "to lock up," e.g., an army behind walls, or a prisoner, and once for holding one's breath. Another sense is "to oppress," "to overpower," "to rule," e.g., of afflictions, illnesses, emotions, or impulses. (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume)

In Jer 52:5 in the Lxx **sunoche** is translated as "siege" against Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (cf similar use in Micah 5:1-note). In Jdg 2:3 God said to Israel "Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they will become as **thorns** (Lxx = sunoche = distress) in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.'" In sum, the source of the pressure described by sunoche can be found either inside or outside the person or persons who are subject to these feelings.

**Gilbrant** on **sunoche** - This noun is used in two primary ways in classical Greek. First, it is used to mean "maintenance" or "control." Second, it is also used in various expressions from a narrow place in the road, to denote straights or narrows, to mean continuity or coherence, or to denote a conflict in battle (Liddell-Scott). It is used metaphorically in the Septuagint to symbolize the compressing of a person's inner emotions and can be translated "distress" or "anguish" in many cases. The context gives the best direction as to which would be

the proper translation. Job 30:3, Micah 6:14, and Jeremiah 52:5 are examples where sunochē is used in the Septuagint. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Perplexity** (only used here in NT)(640)(**aporia** from **a** = negates + **poros** = way) literally means "without a way", "in the sense of being at one's wit's end" (Vine), "not knowing which way to turn" (NEB). Aporia means difficulty coping, serious anxiety, consternation, distress, difficulty. **BDAG** says that originally aporia was used of 'lack of means/resources' (esp. papyri). In Greek literature generally, **aporia** is literally "difficulty in getting through a tight place" and is used figuratively by philosophers. The root verb aporeo means to be in doubt, be at a loss, be uncertain (Jn 13:22, Acts 25:20; 2 Cor. 4:8; Gal. 4:20).

**Aporia** is used in the Septuagint to describe God's judgment on Israel for disobedience to the mosaic covenant - "sudden terror" (Lxx = aporia)(Lev 26:18), smiting with "consumption" (Lxx = aporia) (Dt 28:22), "distress" (Isaiah 8:22+).

**Perplexity** describes trouble or confusion resulting from complexity, including an inability to deal with or understand something. CSB translates it as "nations bewildered" which is a good description as bewildered means caused to lose one's bearings, becoming perplexed or confuses especially by a complexity, variety, or multitude of objects or considerations, in this case the variety being divinely wrought celestial signs. The next verse describes the effect of their inner dismay and perplexity -- fainting because of the overwhelming evidence that God is once and for all bringing divine destruction to this world!

**Aporia** - 11x in 10v - Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:22; Prov. 28:27; Isa. 5:30; Isa. 8:22; Isa. 24:19; Jer. 8:21

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**J C Ryle** - The subject of this portion of our Lord's great prophecy, is His own second coming to judge the world. The strong expressions of the passage appear inapplicable to any event less important than this. To confine the words before us, to the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans, in an unnatural straining of Scripture language.

**We see, firstly, in this passage — how terrible will be the circumstances accompanying the second coming of Christ.** Our Lord tells us that "there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

This is a singularly solemn picture. It may not be easy perhaps to attach a precise meaning to every part of it. One thing however, is abundantly plain. The second coming of Christ will be attended by everything which can make it alarming to the senses and heart of man.

If the giving of the law at Sinai was so terrible that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and tremble" — then the return of Christ when He comes to earth in power and great glory, shall be much more terrible.

If the hardy Roman soldiers "became as dead men," when an angel rolled the stone away and Christ rose again — then how much greater will the terror be when Christ shall return to judge the world. No wonder that Paul said, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." (Hebrews 12:21; Matthew 28:4; 2 Corinthians 5:11.)

The thoughtless and impenitent man may well tremble, when he hears of this second coming of Christ. What will he do when worldly business is suddenly stopped, and the precious things of the world are made worthless? What will he do when the graves on every side are opening, and the trumpet is summoning men to judgment? What will he do when that same Jesus whose Gospel he has so shamefully neglected — shall appear in the clouds of Heaven, and put down every enemy under His feet? Surely he will call on the rocks to fall on him, and on the hills to cover him. (Hosea 10:8.) But he will call in vain for help, if he has never called on Christ before.

Happy will they be in that day — who have fled beforehand from the wrath to come, and been washed in the blood of the Lamb!

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## **Don't Despair, Share**

Read: 2 Peter 3

Be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless. —2 Peter 3:14

During these days of horrific world events, Christians should be appalled but not taken by surprise. Jesus forewarned us of terrible times to come (Luke 21:25-28). In today's reading, Peter reassured believers by reminding them of God's unfolding purposes and final victory.

The apostle described ungodly scoffers, who in the last days will say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter 3:4). We too

may wonder why Christ doesn't come back and change things now. Peter affirmed that the Lord "is not slack concerning His promise," but delays His return to give people everywhere more time to repent (v.9).

We mustn't forget that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (v.8). Eventually the day of the Lord will come, bringing a judgment of consuming fire. This will be followed by a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness and of God's forgiven people (v.13).

As we anticipate that triumphant day, we must live consistent, holy lives (v.14), resist all evil influences (v.17), and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (v.18). Then, instead of despairing over evil, we will be able to share the good news of Jesus with the world.

We know not when the Lord may come  
To right the wrongs of this old earth,  
But this we know—He's left us here  
To share good news of second birth. —Hess

We don't know what this world is coming to, but we know the One who is coming to this world.

By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Luke 21:26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

**KJV** Luke 21:26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

**AMP** Men swooning away *or* expiring with fear *and* dread *and* apprehension and expectation of the things that are coming on the world; for the [very] powers of the heavens will be shaken *and* caused to totter.

**Barclay** - And there will be signs in sun, and moon, and stars, and on earth the nations will be in distress and will not know what to do in the roaring of the sea and of the wave, while men's hearts will swoon from fear and from foreboding of the things that are coming on the world. The power of the heavens will be shaken; and then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and much glory. When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your hearts for your deliverance is near.

- **men fainting from fear** Leviticus 26:36; Deuteronomy 28:32-34,65-67; Hebrews 10:26,27
- **for the powers of the heavens will be shaken** Mt 24:29; Mark 13:25; 2 Peter 3:10-12
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:25-26 Celestial Signs of the Coming Savior](#) - John MacArthur

Parallel passages but only Luke describes the swooning at the sights:

Matthew 24:29-note "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and **the powers of the heavens will be shaken**.

Mark 13:25 AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven (THIS DESCRIPTION CORRELATES WITH Lk 21:25), and **the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken**

## **SINNERS SWOON AT SIGHT OF SIGNS**

**Swoon** describes a spontaneous loss of consciousness caused by insufficient blood to the brain which reflects the response to extreme emotion which overcomes the person's [persona](#) (a personal facade that one presents to the world)!

**Men fainting from fear the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world**- The signs are clearly visible globally and incite a global panic far more serious than the shaking of the stock market a product of men, whereas these signs are clearly a product of God.

**Fainting** (present tense = continually)([674](#))(**apopsucho** from **apo** = from + **psucho** = to breathe) means to

breathe out life, to leave off breathing, to stop breathing and thus faint or lose consciousness. In light of the fear generated by the cosmic turmoil men will breathe their last (presumably some will actually die for it was used this way in some Greek writings). Louw Nida adds that "this could be mainly a psychological experience rather than actual loss of consciousness. It could also refer to complete discouragement because of fear, leading people to give up hope."

**Webster's 1913 on swooning** - Swooned; [OE. swounen, swoghenen, for swoʒnien, fr. swoʒen, soghen to sigh deeply, to droop, AS. swōgan to sough, sigh; cf. geswōgen senseless, swooned, geswōwung a swooning.] To sink into a fainting fit, in which there is an apparent suspension of the vital functions and mental powers; to faint;—often with *away*.

**Fear** (5401)(**phobos**) means alarm, fright, terror with a sense of dread and alarm in the present passage.

**Expectation** (4329)(**prosdokia** from **pros** = to, toward + **dokao** = to look for) is literally a looking for and refers to an expectation of something that is to happen, whether in hope (a "morbid hope" in Acts 12:11 where Jews anticipated with hope that Peter would be executed) or in fear, the latter being the case in Lk 21:26. The only other NT uses is by Luke in Acts 12:11 - When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were **expecting**." There are 3 uses in the Lxx - Gen. 49:10; Ps. 119:116; Isa. 66:9.

The related verb **prosdokao** is used more commonly in the NT - In the NT the verb often denotes eschatological hope. Thus in Matt. 11:3 and Luke 7:19-20 the question is whether Jesus fulfills the messianic hope. In Mt 24:50; Luke 12:46-note; 2 Pe 3:12-14-note the returning Christ is the object of expectation. (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume)

**For (gar)** is a term of explanation. What is Jesus explaining?

In Luke 21:11 Jesus had already stated that "there will be terrors and great signs from heaven."

**The powers of the heavens will be shaken** - "[Chicken Little](#)" will finally be proved right. In case you are not familiar with this name, Chick Little is from a children's fable about a young chick who believed the sky was falling after an acorn hit her head. In the time of the Second Coming, [earth dwellers](#) will think the sky is falling.

Jesus is alluding to Old Testament descriptions such as those found in the following books...

Isaiah 34:4 And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree.

**Comment** - The ESV Study Note cross references Rev 6:12-17-note). MacArthur adds "Revelation 6:14 (the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up) affirms the future fulfillment of this prophecy during Daniel's 70th week (see Isaiah 2:19-note; Isaiah 13:10-note). (The MacArthur Study Bible)

Haggai 2:6 "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land.

**Powers** (1411)(**dunamis**) describes an ability to produce a strong effect, including supernatural (often translated miracles). **BDAG** adds that **dunamis** can refer to "an entity or being, whether human or transcendent, that functions in a remarkable manner, power as a personal transcendent spirit or heavenly agent/angel" (Ro 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 1 Pt 3:22), and that could be the meaning in this context. The NET Note favors this interpretation adding that Jesus is making "An allusion to Isaiah 34:4. The heavens were seen as the abode of heavenly forces, so their shaking indicates distress in the spiritual realm. Although some take the powers as a reference to bodies in the heavens (like stars and planets, "the heavenly bodies," NIV) this is not as likely."

**Practical Word Studies in The New Testament on dunamis** - Authorities, powers, supernatural power, ruling power; the demons of Satan in the lower atmosphere who constitute his kingdom in the air.

**Will be shaken** (4531)(**saleuo**) means caused to move to and fro, caused to waver or totter, as the unexpected and disastrous shaking of what would be thought to be stable, e.g. earth or sky. (Mt 24:29, Mk 13:25).

**Luke 21:27 "Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.**

KJV Luke 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

**Barclay** - The power of the heavens will be shaken; and then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and much glory.

- see Daniel 7:13; Mt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 1:7; 14:14
- with Mt 16:27,28; 25:31
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:25-26 Celestial Signs of the Coming Savior](#) - John MacArthur

## **THE ULTIMATE SIGN: THE KING IN HIS GREAT GLORY!**

### **Parallel Passages:**

Matthew 24:30 “**And then** the sign ([semeion](#)) of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and **then** all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

**Comment** on **and then** - Jesus is linking His return to the cataclysmic cosmic signs just described in Mt 24:29-note. Notice that the use of **then** marks progression in the sequence of events. First the cosmic signs, **then** the coming Son! At His first coming it was John the Baptist who heralded His arrival. At His second coming, cosmic signs will herald the arrival of the ultimate Sign, the Savior Himself! Note the second use of **then** marks the time of mourning. First the sign and **then** the mourning.

Mark 13:26 “Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory.

**Then** (5119)([tote](#)) is a marker of sequence of events, in this context the "even of all events" the glorious return of the Redeemer, at the climax of the cosmic chaos. So first Luke describes the signs which cannot be missed and then the Savior Who cannot be missed, "for every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen." (Rev 1:7-note). [Maranatha](#)

**Matthew** adds a detail not found in Luke or Mark's versions that "then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn." While the commentaries debate over the specific identification of **the sign**, if one takes Jesus' words at face value the answer is obvious. The **sign** is the **Son of Man** Himself coming on the clouds with power and great glory! Compare Mt 16:27 and Mt 26:64. Recall that in Mt 24:3+ the disciples asked "what will be the **sign** of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" Jesus now answered their question and gave them the **sign** - Himself!

**John MacArthur** adds that "the sign of signs will be the **Son of Man** Himself, Who will appear in the sky. Many of the early church Fathers, such as Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Origen, imagined that this sign would be an enormous blazing cross, visible to the entire world, that would pierce the total darkness then shrouding the world. Other interpreters have suggested it will be the Shekinah glory of the Lord's presence returning to earth. It is likely that the Shekinah glory will be involved, as the unveiled Christ Jesus makes His appearance. But the sign is not just His glory; it is Christ Himself, the **Son of Man, Who will appear in the sky**. The sign of should be translated as a Greek subjective genitive, indicating that the sign will not simply relate to or point to the Son of Man (as with an objective genitive) but will indeed be the Son of Man. In other words, Jesus Himself will be the supreme and final sign of His coming. In the midst of the world's unrelieved blackness-physical, emotional, and spiritual-Jesus Christ will manifest Himself in His infinite and undiminished glory and righteousness. Just as the destructive catastrophes of the Great Tribulation will be utterly unparalleled (v. 21), so will be this manifestation of the glory and power of Christ. (See [MacArthur Commentary](#))

**Kent Hughes** - In this cosmological confusion Jesus will come in shining clouds of glory. (PTW-Mark)

**They will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD** -Who is **they**? The nearest antecedent is the "fainting men," but of course they would have returned to consciousness or else they could not see Him. Of course the *they* is all the inhabitants of the world, and this would even include the believers who are alive at that time (having been saved during the Great Tribulation - Rev 7:9, 14+). While the unbelievers will mourn, the believers will rejoice at the sight of their Redeemer.

This is no secret coming as often spoken of the Rapture. This is not a coming in lowliness to be rejected and to redeem, but in

majestic splendor to as conqueror over His enemies.

**Norman Crawford** - This is the coming of the Son of man, the last Adam, the second Man, the Victor of Calvary and the Conqueror of death and hell. His feet will stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4+) whence He had once ascended from amidst the little band of wondering disciples. He will come to destroy the beast and his armies, to put an end to Gentile rule and dominion over Israel and Jerusalem, to deliver the oppressed and set the captives free. He will come at the crucial hour for the deliverance of His earthly people, and with Him will be "the armies in heaven" following Him. "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev 19:15, 16). ([What the Bible Teaches: Luke](#))

Jesus quotes Daniel's description from Daniel 7:13+

"I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, **with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming**, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

### **Glorious Day**

One day when Heaven was filled with His praises  
One day when sin was as black as could be  
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin  
Dwelt among men, my example is He  
Word became flesh and the light shined among us  
His glory revealed

*Chorus:*

*Living, He loved me*

*Dying, He saved me*

*Buried, He carried my sins far away*

*Rising, He justified freely forever*

*One day He's coming*

*Oh glorious day, oh glorious day*

One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain  
One day they nailed Him to die on a tree  
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected  
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He  
Hands that healed nations, stretched out on a tree  
And took the nails for me  
Chorus

One day the grave could conceal Him no longer  
One day the stone rolled away from the door  
Then He arose, over death He had conquered  
Now He's ascended, my Lord evermore  
Death could not hold Him, the grave could not keep Him  
From rising again  
Chorus

One day the trumpet will sound for His coming  
One day the skies with His glories will shine  
Wonderful day, my Beloved One, bringing  
My Savior, Jesus, is mine  
Chorus

Glorious day, Oh, Glorious day

**With power and great glory** - Mark's version places "**great**" before "**power and glory!**" In Greek two "d" words "dunamis and doxa!" Great is not megas but polus which means "much."

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**Power** (1411)(**dunamis**) describes Christ's inherent ability to accomplish a task, in this case the complete crushing of all His enemies, when He comes to "He tread the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty." (Rev 19:15-21-[note](#), cf the Stone - Da 2:34-35-note, Da 2:44-45-note)

**Glory** (1391)(**doxa**) describes His radiance, brightness, splendor, magnificence, majesty....and the list will go on throughout eternity! Splendor means a quality that outshines the usual. How apropos to Jesus, the Light of the World returning to reclaim His redeemed World!

**Luke 21:28 "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."**

**KJV** And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

**NET** But when these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

**Barclay** - When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your hearts for your deliverance is near.

- **But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads** Ps 98:5-9; Isaiah 12:1-3; 25:8,9; 60:1,2
- **because your redemption is drawing near** Romans 8:19,23; Ephesians 1:14; 4:30
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:25-26 Celestial Signs of the Coming Savior](#) - John MacArthur

## **PEOPLE GET READY!**

**But when these things begin to take place** - **These things** are different than the more non-specific things mentioned earlier (Lk 21:8-19+) and are so dramatic that they will be difficult to miss as divinely sent 'messengers' to [earth dwellers](#). There is an old classic Gospel and R & B song entitled "[People Get Ready](#)" and that is what Jesus is in essence saying here.

**These things** - Here Jesus describes cosmic changes that clearly communicate a "change" is coming! Whereas the other "signs" were more general, now the signs are more specific. Of course Matthew 24:15+ and Mark 13:14+ give the unequivocal sign of the times, the Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Place, marking the beginning of the last 3.5 year period known as the Great Tribulation. The Cosmic signs *probably* will begin in the first 3.5 years of the last 7 years, but one must be careful being too dogmatic regarding timing. Not so with the Abomination of Desolation, which is clear, visible and unmistakable (to those who read the Scripture literally!) In His great mercy, God gives the world one final great warning sign, which is why it is so sad to see so many evangelical writers ascribing the fulfillment of the Abomination of Desolation to the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. That leaves the world without a definite warning sign of the beginning of the end! Does that really sound like what God would do? I think not for in the midst of wrath, God remembers mercy! (cf Hab 3:2+)

Some like the **NET Note** interprets **these things** as all the events in Lk 21:8-27. While that is a possibility, as we have already noted the things in Lk 21:8-19 are not very specific signs of the end of the age.

**Begin** (present tense = beginning)(757)(**archo**) is used predominately as an auxiliary verb with a present infinitive (in this verse, *to take place* = present infinitive of ginomai) used to draw attention to some element in the story. ( cf Mt 26.37, Lk 7:15, 24, 38)

### **"People Get Ready"**

People get ready, there's a train a comin'  
You don't need no baggage, you just get on board  
All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'  
Don't need no ticket, you just thank the Lord

People get ready for the train to Jordan  
It's picking up passengers from coast to coast  
Faith is the key, open the doors and board 'em  
There's hope for all among those loved the most.

There ain't no room for the hopeless sinner  
Who would hurt all mankind just to save his own  
Have pity on those whose chances grow thinner  
For there's no hiding place against the Kingdom's throne

So people get ready, there's a train a comin'  
You don't need no baggage, you just get on board  
All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'  
Don't need no ticket, you just thank the Lord

**Straighten up** (aorist imperative - Don't delay! Speaks of urgency) **and lift up** (aorist imperative - Don't delay!) **your heads** - **Straighten up** could have a dual meaning as it literally referred to one straightening up from being bent over (as might occur when one sees the world as we know it begin to literally fall apart). The more likely sense is that it has a figurative meaning and is a charge from the Commander in Chief to be strong and courageous or as BDAG says "to take heart in expectation of deliverance," and so to "stand tall." As noted below both verses are commands and as explained elsewhere God's commandments always include His enablements. The only way to keep these commands when everything around you is falling apart is to jettison dependence on your natural strength and lean wholly upon the Holy Spirit to enable you. Notice I did not say to "help" you, for that verb implies you just need a little push! What we need is the indwelling Spirit to give us both the desire and the power to keep these commands (cf Php 2:13NLT+).

#### Related Resource:

- [Discussion of Need for Dependence on the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#)
- [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible \(100/100\)](#)

**Straighten up** (aorist imperative - Don't delay! Speaks of urgency)(352)(**anakupto** from **ana** = again, up + **kupto** = to bend, stoop) means to lift or raise oneself up, to bend up, to stand erect. Galen used **anakupto** of straightening the vertebrae of the spine. Metaphorically **anakuptō** speaks of the mind looking up (Thayer = "one's soul: to be elated, exalted") as looking up in anticipation and hope here in Luke 21:28. "Moulton and Milligan give an illustration from the papyri in which is found the sentence, "it is not possible ever to show face (anakuptō) again in Tricomia for very shame" (page 35, Vocab). In spite of the shame of the cross and being hated and persecuted, the disciples were "to stand erect and lift up the heads" (A. Marshall). ([What the Bible Teaches: Luke](#))

**Lift up** (1869)(**epairo**) means to lift up, hold up ("lifting up holy hands" = 1 Ti 2:8, cf Lk 24:50 as a gesture of blessing; Lxx = Ps 134:2), in Lxx of Moses lifting up his hands and Israel prevailing in the battle (Ex 17:11), lift up a sail (hoist) (Acts 27:40). Figuratively, to rise up against, to be in opposition (2 Cor 10:5, cf Lxx = Ezra 4:19 "that city has risen up against the kings", Da 11:14 "many will rise up against the king of the South"). To lift up or exalt oneself (be arrogant, put on airs) (2 Cor 11:20; Lxx - Jer 13:15 - "do not be haughty").

**Because** (dioti) - Term of explanation. Let me suggest that even when it is relatively easy to ask and answer the question "What is being explained?" it is a good habit to get into when you read your Bible and begin to spot "for" and "because" when they are used as terms of explanation. If nothing else pausing to ask and answer the question slows you down and keeps you from falling into one of two traps - speed reading the Scripture and/or reading with your eyes but without really engaging your mind and heart. The Spirit your Teacher will honor your practice of pausing to ponder His inspired Word.

"We are not just looking for something to happen,  
we are looking for Someone to come!"  
-- Vance Havner

**Your redemption** ([apolutrosis](#)) **is drawing near** - Only occurrence of "**redemption**" (apolutrosis) in the Gospels. Recall Jesus is speaking to the Jewish disciples. It follows that this applies especially to the Jews. Of course it also applies to Gentiles. What does just mean using the word "redemption?" As believers we have been redeemed in the past but there is a future aspect of redemption (Eph 4:30+), which is synonymous with glorification. Since redemption requires a Redeemer, in this context it clearly refers to the return of the Son of Man. And again keep in mind who Jesus is speaking to because if you miss that, you run the risk of grossly misinterpreting what He means here. Of course He is speaking to Jews from Israel and in the end times Israel will exist (even as it does now which must cause preterists nightmares!) and at His return 1/3 of the nation of Israel will be redeemed, rescued or delivered as described by Zechariah 13:8-9+ and Paul in Ro 11:26+. Notice His possessive pronoun "Your" is literally directed to His Jewish disciples and by extension to the nation of Israel.

**THOUGHT** - Can Gentile believers apply this passage? Absolutely! And many Gentiles will come to faith in Jesus in the Seven Year Tribulation, as discerned by comparing John's descriptions of Revelation 7:9+ (= "a great multitude which no one could count") and Revelation 7:14+ (= "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.") While many of them will be martyred for their faith in Jesus, there are clearly believers who will remain alive and these are those to whom this passage would especially apply. But in another sense it also applies to all of us who are "looking for ([prosdechomai](#) in present tense - are you "looking for" Him daily? This mindset will/should radically impact whether you are living for Him!) the Blessed Hope and appearing of the glory (cf Lk 21:27 = great glory)" of our Great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (Titus 2:13+)

**Related Resource:**

- See discussion of "Vertical Vision"

**Redemption** (629)([apolutrosis](#) from **apo** = marker of dissociation or separation + **lutroo** = to redeem <> from **lútron** = ransom <> from **lúo** = loosen what is bound, loose any person tied or fastened) is the payment of a price to **ransom** (**lutron** = money for a ransom = ransom or price paid for a slave who is then set free by the one who bought him), to **release** (of someone from the power of someone else), to **buy back** or to **deliver** one from a situation from in which one is powerless to liberate themselves from or for which the penalty was so costly that they could never hope to pay the ransom price. In other words, the idea of **redemption** is deliverance or release by payment of a ransom.

**Apolutrosis - 10v** - Lk. 21:28; Rom. 3:24; Rom. 8:23; 1 Co. 1:30; Eph. 1:7; Eph. 1:14; Eph. 4:30; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; Heb. 11:35

**What the Bible teaches** - It is the strengthened form of the word *lutrōsis* and looks back to the ransom paid at the cross and forward to the complete deliverance at the coming of the Lord. "Not accepting deliverance" ("release" - Heb 11:35+) uses redemption (*apolutrōsis*) as deliverance from physical torture and this aspect of it may be included in v. 28. ([What the Bible Teaches: Luke](#))

**Rightemire** rightly notes that "The central theme of **redemption** in Scripture is that God has taken the initiative to act compassionately on behalf of those who are powerless to help themselves. The New Testament makes clear that divine redemption includes God's identification with humanity in its plight, and the securing of liberation of humankind through the obedience, suffering, death, and resurrection of the incarnate Son. ([Redeem, Redemption - from the well done summary article in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary](#))

**Spurgeon** writes that "The figure of redemption is very simple, and has been very frequently used in Scripture. When a prisoner has been taken captive, and has been made a slave by some barbarous power, it has been usual, before he could be set free, that a ransom price should be paid down. Now, we being, by the fall of Adam, prone to guiltiness, and, indeed, virtually guilty, we were by the irreproachable judgment of God given up to the vengeance of the law; we were given into the hands of justice; justice claimed us to be his bond slaves for ever, unless we could pay a ransom, whereby our souls could be redeemed. We were, indeed, poor as owlets, we had not wherewith to bless ourselves. We were, as our hymn hath worded it, "bankrupt debtors;" an execution was put into our house; all we had was sold; we were left naked, and poor, and miserable, and we could by no means find a ransom; it was just then that Christ stepped in, stood sponsor for us, and, in the room and stead of all believers, did pay the ransom price, that we might in that hour be delivered from the curse of the law and the vengeance of God, and go our way, clean, free, justified by his blood. (Spurgeon's sermon [Justification by Grace](#))

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**J C Ryle - We see, secondly, in this passage — how complete will be the security of true Christians at the second coming of Christ.** We read that our Lord said to His disciples, "When these things begin to come to pass — then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws near."

However terrible the signs of Christ's second coming may be to the impenitent — they need not strike terror into the heart of the true believer. They ought rather to fill him with joy. They ought to remind him that his complete deliverance from sin, the world and the devil — is close at hand; and that he shall soon bid an eternal farewell to sickness, sorrow, death and temptation!

The very day when the unconverted man shall lose everything — shall be the day when the believer shall enter on his eternal reward. The very hour when the worldly man's hopes shall perish — shall be the hour when the believer's *hope* shall be exchanged for *joyful certainty and full possession*.

The servant of God should often look forward to Christ's second coming. He will find the thought of that day to be *acordial* to sustain him under all the trials and persecutions of this present life. "Yet a little while," let him remember, "and he who shall come — will

come and will not tarry." The words of Isaiah shall be fulfilled, "He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces — and will remove the disgrace of His people." One sure method for a patient spirit, is to expect little from this world, and to be ever waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

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**Bob Gass** - Dr. C. M. Ward tells of flying on a plane with a 7' 4" basketball star. Ward, an avid sports fan, asked him, "When you're told to 'block' a player, what do you look at? His eyes, to see which way he is looking? His feet, to give you an indication as to which way he might run?" The young man replied, "No, Reverend, I look at his belly button—until that moves, he ain't goin' nowhere!"

Point well taken! Jerusalem is the political and spiritual "navel" of the world, and until things begin to move there—we ain't goin' nowhere! Jesus said, "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). The "last days" began in May 1948 when the Jews miraculously came home from the four corners of the world, to establish Jerusalem as the capitol of their new nation. In spite of death camps, and assimilation into the nations of the world, God preserved their identity and fulfilled His Word. Why? To prove to a skeptical, doubting world that, "The Most High ruleth in the affairs of men" (Daniel 4:17).

Now if He kept that promise (see Amos 9:14–15), He'll keep this one too: "At that time they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27).

REJOICE, CHILD OF GOD—JESUS IS COMING AGAIN; YOU CAN ABSOLUTELY COUNT ON IT! (A Fresh Word for Today)

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#### **David Jeremiah - PROMISES AND PREDICTIONS LUKE 21:28**

In 1949, the magazine Popular Science predicted, "Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons." In 1977, Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment Corporation, said, "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." Bill Gates said in 1981, "640K ought to be enough for anybody." Making predictions is risky business—unless you are God! According to John Wesley White, the coming again of Christ and the end of the age occupies some 1,845 scriptural verses, and each one offers sure and certain hope for the Christian. Just consider these promises: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). "I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3). "Behold, I am coming quickly!" (Revelation 22:7).

Vance Havner said, "We are not just looking for something to happen, we are looking for Someone to come! And when these things begin to come to pass, we are not to drop our heads in discouragement or shake our heads in despair, but rather lift up our heads in delight." (Sanctuary)

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**Luke 21:29 Then He told them a parable: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees;**

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KJV Luke 21:29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

- **Behold the fig tree and all the trees** Mt 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-30
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:29-33 The Final Generation of the Future Judgment](#) - John MacArthur

#### **Related Passages:**

Matthew 24:32+ "Now **learn** the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;

Mark 13:28+ "Now **learn** the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

### **AN AGRICULTURAL ANALOGY**

**Then** - This is not **tote** but **kai** and is translated as "**and**" by ESV and KJV. NAS, NET, et al, translate it as "then" because it implies "a sequence of events within the narrative." (NET Note) It clearly links the teaching of the parable to the preceding description of the end of the age.

**He told them** - Matthew and Mark both add that He gave them a command (aorist imperative - speaks of urgency) to **learn**

([manthano](#))

**Parable** (3850)([parabole](#) from **para** = beside, near + **ballo** = throw, cast) is literally a throwing beside or placing of one thing by the side of another. In the NT [parabole](#) is "a rhetorical figure of speech, setting one thing beside another to form a comparison or illustration." (Friberg Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Behold** - A command in the aorist imperative to perceive or pay attention. This command often conveys a sense of urgency.

**Fig tree and all the trees** - As noted below in Nelson's comment the addition of "**all the trees**" differentiates this parable from other Scriptures which use the fig tree as an illustration of Israel as Jesus did earlier in Luke 13:6-7-note. Jesus' point here is simply that a budding tree of any type, which occurs in the spring, signifies summer is near. And in the same way, the "budding" of signs (so to speak) described in the previous section, signifies the coming of Christ and end of the age is near. He will go on to give several commands that call for a sense of readiness and alertness (Lk 21:34, 36).

**Fig tree** (4808)([suke](#) from **sukon** = a fig) is the fig-tree, which in Latin is the word *figus* (see [Wikipedia](#)).

**Neil D. Nelson** notes that the **fig tree** "is not a type of Israel (**Ed**: Some say the budding symbolizes Israel becoming a nation in 1948 but such an interpretation is completely unfounded!). Jesus instead used it to make a straightforward analogy. (This is evident in the Luke parallel where Jesus said: "*Look at the fig tree, and all the trees*." Any deciduous fruit tree would make the same point.) Just as the budding fig tree inevitably results in a harvest of figs, so the events of Mt 24:4-25 will inevitably usher in the judgment of the Son of Man at His coming. ([Journal of Dispensational Theology - Volume 11:33 Aug 2007](#))

**Luke 21:30 as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.**

- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:29-33 The Final Generation of the Future Judgment](#) - John MacArthur

## SPRING IS SPRUNG

### Parallel passages:

Matthew 24:32 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;

Mark 13:28-30 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

**As soon as they put forth leaves** - The phrase **as soon as** adds a note of urgency regarding this observation. Given that it was Spring in Israel, some of the trees may have been putting forth leaves even as Jesus spoke.

**Put forth** (4261)([proballo](#) from **pro** = before, in front of + **ballo** = throw) literally means throw before. In Acts 19:33 it means to put forward, cause to come forward. BDAG - push someone forward to speak in the theater. Only other NT use in Lk 21:30 means sending out or putting out new growth.

**Gilbrant** - The Greek orator Demosthenes (Fourth Century B.C.) used it in the sense of "to put (someone) forward" (18.149). The Greek philosopher Epictetus (late First Century A.D.) used **proballō** of plants putting out fruit (Discourses 1.15.7). In the Septuagint **proballō** is used for putting forth words to men (Pr 26:18, Septuagint only) or, in the case of Samson, propounding a riddle to the Philistines (Jdg 14:12,13,16-note). (Ibid)

**Proballo** - 11x in 11v in Septuagint - Jdg. 14:12; Jdg. 14:13; Jdg. 14:16; Prov. 22:21; Prov. 26:18; Jer. 46:4

**Norman Crawford** - After the bare and barren state of the fig tree throughout winter, the first green shoots of spring tell that the summer is at hand...The suddenness of the appearance of the manifest kingdom is graphically expressed by Luke's use of the expression "they now shoot forth" (*proballō*). ([What the Bible Teaches: Luke](#))

Behold, I am coming quickly.

-- Revelation 22:7,12+

**You see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near**- Seeing is believing so to speak. In Matthew's parallel discourse,

Jesus warned about false Christs who would mislead making false claims, but when one sees the clear, unmistakable signs (visible like the budding leaves of the trees), then and only then can you know that the visible aspect of the Kingdom of God is about to be manifest because of the return of the King of kings (Rev 19:16+).

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**J C Ryle - We see, thirdly, in this passage — how needful it is to watch the signs of the times in the prospect of the second coming of Christ.** Our Lord teaches this lesson by a parable, "Behold the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening — you know that the kingdom of God is near!" The disciples ignorantly supposed that Messiah's kingdom would be ushered in by universal peace. Our Lord, on the contrary, tells them that the signs which shall immediately precede it shall be wars, confusions, perplexity, and distress.

The general duty which these words should teach us, is very plain. We are to observe carefully the public events of the times in which we live. *We are not to be absorbed in politics* — but we are to mark political events. We are not to become prophets ourselves — but we are to study diligently the signs of our times. So doing, the day of Christ will not come upon us entirely unawares.

Are there any signs in our own day? Are there any circumstances in the world around us which specially demand the believer's attention? Beyond doubt there are very many. The drying up of the Turkish empire — the revival of the Romish church — the awakened desire of the Protestant churches to preach the Gospel to the heathen — the general interest in the state of the Jews — the universal shaking of governments and established institutions — the rise and progress of the subtlest forms of infidelity — all, all are signs peculiar to our day. All should make us remember our Lord's words about the fig-tree. All should make us think of the text, "Behold, I am coming quickly." (Revelation 22:7.)

**Luke 21:31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.**

KJV Luke 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

- **when you see these things happening** Luke 12:51-57; Mt 16:1-4
- **recognize that the kingdom of God is near.** Hebrews 10:37; James 5:9; 1 Peter 4:7
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:29-33 The Final Generation of the Future Judgment](#) - John MacArthur

## HOW TO KNOW THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM ARE NEAR

### Parallel passages:

Matthew 24:33+ so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. 34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

Mark 13:29+ "Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door. 30 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

**So you also** - The idea is in this same manner, the same way you saw and recognized the nearness of summer.

**When you see these things happening** - Jesus emphasizes the visual aspect of these cosmic signs of Christ's coming with the verbs "**see**" ([blepo](#)) in verse 30 and "**see**" ([horaō](#)) in this verse. The same phrase **these things** was used in Luke 21:28 when Jesus declared ""when **these things** begin to take place, **straighten up** and **lift up** your heads, because your redemption (~Redeemer) is drawing near." What **things**? This would certainly be things what one could perceive and see. Therefore, in context this would most likely include the visible signs preceding His return in Lk 21:25+ and then to the ultimate sign in Lk 21:27+ (cf Mt 24:30+ = "the sign") of the Son in the sky. What a dramatic contrast will be seen when the sun which is darkened will be replaced by the Son Who is descending in radiant, majestic splendor! O glorious day! What will soon follow His return? Logically when the King of kings returns (Rev 19:16-[note](#)), He needs a **Kingdom** over which He can rule as absolute Sovereign. So when one sees His "sign" they can know the Kingdom of God is not far behind!

**These things** - 8x in 7v in Luke 21 - Luke 21:6 Luke 21:7 Luke 21:9 Luke 21:12 Luke 21:28 Luke 21:31 Luke 21:36

In the version of the parable in Matthew 24:32-33 it is interesting that Jesus says **'recognize that HE is near.'** This makes sense of course, since the Kingdom is not a Kingdom without the presence of the King. When the King returns, everything changes! John alludes to this in Revelation 11:15+ in a [proleptic](#) prophecy writing that "Then (When? see Rev 11:13+) the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

**Recognize that the Kingdom of God is near** - This has been the persistent object of the disciples' desire - the **Kingdom of God**. The disciples did not grasp that Jesus had to depart (See the prevalent [Jewish eschatological beliefs in Jesus' day regarding Messiah and His Kingdom](#)) and there would be a 2000 year interval until He would return to set up the **Kingdom of God** on earth, even asking Him after His resurrection "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6-note), a question that He did not refute, rebuke or correct and which makes absolutely no sense unless it were true (which it is). And so now, Jesus is giving them a parable to help them comprehend how the nearest of the **Kingdom** would be recognizable. They erroneously thought it was **near** now. It was not near in man's definition of time, but in God's definition of time a day is like a thousand years. Therefore (so to speak) only "two days" have passed since Jesus' departure.

- Tony Garland's discussion of the Arrival of the Kingdom of God

**Recognize** (1097)(**ginosko**) means to know by experience and what an experience it will be! When you experience **these things**, they are like someone is "knocking at the door!"

**NET Note** - The verb *ginoskete*, "**know**" can be parsed as either present indicative or present imperative. In this context the imperative fits better, since the movement is from analogy (trees and seasons) to the future (the signs of the coming of the kingdom) and since the emphasis is on preparation for this event. Jesus is urging the the reader to realize what is happening.

**Kingdom** (932)(**basileia** from **basileus** = a sovereign, king, monarch) denotes sovereignty, royal power, dominion and specifically the territory or people ruled by they king.

The nearness of the **Kingdom** was used in the letter to the Hebrews to encourage Jewish believers who were being tempted to go back to Judaism

Hebrews 10:37+ FOR (see context Heb 10:36) YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

**Comment** - In relation to eternity, it is only **very little while** before Christ returns.

**Steven Cole** - The "**very little while**" is from God's perspective of time, not from our perspective! The original quote in Isaiah 26:6 was written to the people of Judah who were being threatened by hostile enemies. God is encouraging them to hold on for a **little while**, until He delivers them and judges their enemy. The point is, this present life is "a very little while" in comparison with the eternal joys of heaven. That is why Paul could call his many trials "**momentary, light affliction**" which was producing "**an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison**" (2Co 4:17). To have enduring faith in trials now, get God's eternal perspective.

**Wuest** - The exhortation to patience is strengthened by the promise of the soon coming of Messiah. The expression is very much stronger in the Greek text. Expositor's translates it: "**For yet a little—a very little—while and He that cometh will come and will not delay.**" Another translates it: "**For yet a little—ever so little—while.**" The expression comes from Habakkuk 2:3-note. Vincent says: "In the Hebrew (Hab. 2:3), the subject of the sentence is the vision of the extermination of the Chaldees (Babylonians). '**The vision—will surely come.**' As rendered in the LXX either Jehovah or Messiah must be the subject. The passage was referred to Messiah by the later Jewish theologians, and is so taken by our writer (of Hebrews)." The disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus, "Art thou He that should come or look we for another?" The expression "He that should come" is Jewish and refers to Messiah.

**Near** (1451) (**eggus**) is an adverb which means near (or close) and can describe a **physical** position relatively close to another position (Lk 19:11) or also a **temporal** position of one point of time relatively close to another point of time (Mt 26:18 - referring to His Crucifixion). In context the emphasis is primarily on **near** in time.

**Joel** uses **eggus** 3x to describe the [Day of the LORD](#) as **near** (Joel 1:15+, Joel 2:1+, Joel 3:14+, cp Ezek 30:3). In fact the events Jesus is describing here in Luke 21:25-38 are part of the Day of the LORD! If that "Day" was near when Joel wrote (835 BC), it is that much nearer in our day. The point is that we are to live our lives as if Jesus could return today. Our life motto should be "Perhaps Today!" Might that put a damper on those temptations to commit that sin that so easily entangles us? If we are looking for

Him, we are more likely to be living for Him! See discussion of "[Vertical Vision](#)"

Matthew's version uses the adjective **near** (eggus) with the phrase **at the door** which serves to doubly emphasize nearness of the Kingdom. It does not tell us how near in time. James uses the phrase to alert believers that "the Judge is standing right **at the door.**" (James 5:9) In context the idea is that the return of Jesus is always imminent, but it does not tell us how close it is. **Hiebert** notes that more literally the Greek (of **at the door**) reads "*upon the doors* (plural)" where "*upon*" "pictures the subject so near as in fact already located on the doorstep."

#### Related Resources

- [Can the return of Christ truly be said to be imminent?](#)
- [Is Jesus coming soon?](#)
- [How are we to live our lives in light of Christ's return?](#)
- [What is the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming?](#)
- [Is it possible to know when Jesus is coming back?](#)
- [What is the blessed hope?](#)

**Luke 21:32 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.**

KJV Luke 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

- Luke 11:50,51; Mt 16:28; 23:36; 24:34; Mark 13:30
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:29-33 The Final Generation of the Future Judgment](#) - John MacArthur

#### Parallel passages:

Matthew 24:34-note "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Mark 13:30 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

**Note:** Most of this discussion is taken from the more in depth discussion of Matthew 24:34

**Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place** - To which generation is Jesus referring? This is discussed in more detail below because one of the possible meanings of **this generation** is used by [preterists](#) to justify interpretation Mt 24:15-22 (and Mt 24:23-29) as past history!

**Truly** (281)(**amen** is a transliteration of the Hebrew noun **amen** [= (0543) **amen**] and then into Latin and into English and many other languages, so that it is practically a universal word. **Amen** has been called the best-known word in human speech. Every use of "**amen**" or "truly" by Jesus serves to affirm what follows and by extension to cause us to pay close attention to the teaching.

**Lenski** comments that Jesus use of **truly** expresses "profound solemnity, using His well-known seal for verity and authority." (The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel)

**Truly I say** - As alluded to above, truly emphasizes that what follows is important. The Greek verb is [lego](#) and is in the **present tense**, implying this is something Jesus is continually saying.

**Norman Crawford** emphasizes the importance of Jesus prediction that **ALL things would take place** - "This generation shall not pass away" is difficult and has been interpreted in different ways. Those (**ED:** e.g., [preterists](#)) who limit the entire teaching to the historical destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) insist that it means that the generation then living would be alive when the city was destroyed. The problem this creates is that the Lord said "**ALL**" would be fulfilled. It is not possible to suppose that Lk 21:25-27 were fulfilled then. Even if we could accept this meaning, the difficulty of Matt 24:34 and Mark 13:30 (**ED:** BOTH HAVE "**ALL**") would remain. ([What the Bible Teaches: Luke](#))

**This generation** (1074)(**genea** gives us our English genealogy) literally refers to those descended from a common ancestor and in this sense refers to a race, a clan or descendants. For a more in depth discussion click [genea](#).

**"THIS GENERATION"**  
**TO WHICH GENERATION DOES JESUS REFER?**

**This generation will not pass away** - This same description is found in Matthew 24:34 and the following explanation is adapted from the comments on the Matthew passage.

If one interprets Mt 24:15-29 literally, it is clear that these events are yet future. The **abomination of desolation** which marks the beginning of the one of a kind great tribulation did not occur in 70 AD (see Mt 24:15 Commentary), so it is clear that Jesus was not referring to the **generation** who was alive at the time He spoke the **Olivet Discourse**. Preterists use "**this generation**" to support their premise that we have already experienced the **abomination of desolation standing in the holy place** and the world has already experienced a unique, never to be repeated time of **tribulation** (see Mt 24:21 Commentary) which is a most illogical deduction! It follows that the preterists are forced to say that "**this generation**" cannot refer to a future generation. They are in effect "reasoning backwards" and using their interpretation of "**this generation**" to support their misinterpretation of Mt 24:15ff. But given that "**this generation**" is clearly not the generation alive (assuming a literal interpretation) when Jesus spoke, then what is the interpretation of Luke 21:32 and Matthew 24:34? While many interpretations have been proposed (see **analysis of each interpretation**), the two most reasonable interpretations of "**this generation**" are:

(1) Jesus was using "this generation" to refer to the people who are living at the time of the Tribulation and witness all the signs Jesus had described. "The simple and most reasonable interpretation that the leaves of the fig tree represent the birth pains and the other signs of His coming Jesus has mentioned in this chapter and that **this generation** refers to the people living at the end time who will view those signs." (John MacArthur)

**MacArthur** writes "It is best to understand the **generation** of which Jesus spoke to be the one that will be alive when the signs come to pass. Just as the appearing of leaves on the trees indicates that summer is near, so also will those signs reveal to that **generation** that the coming of the Son of Man to establish the earthly, millennial **kingdom of God** is near. (SO FAR I WOULD AGREE) That also answers the disciples' question that prompted the Lord's discourse. Christ's return will come soon after the appearance of the final signs. The final **generation** will be limited to those saved after the rapture of the church (THIS IS HIS POINT ABOUT WHICH I HAVE A QUESTION), which will take place before the tribulation begins."

- **Comment:** The problem with MacArthur's interpretation is that it does not really address the distinctive time phrase **will not pass away until all things take place**." What does that phrase imply? In other words what is the sense of the time sensitive word "**until**?" **Until** means the generation (whoever they are) will exist **until** all these things have transpired and then they will **pass away**. If they are believers saved during the Tribulation after the rapture, how is it that they will **pass away**? And lest one have any confusion about what Jesus means using the phrase **pass away**, He uses the identical verb (*parerchomai*) in the next verse (Lk 21:33) not once but twice declaring **heaven and earth will pass away**, and adding His **words will not pass away**. So if "*the final generation will be limited to those saved*," as MacArthur proposes, how is it that they will **pass away**? This does not make sense because most conservative commentators (including MacArthur) believe the believers saved during the Tribulation and alive on earth when Jesus returns are the very ones who will populate the Messianic Kingdom which Jesus establishes. Do you see the problem with MacArthur's interpretation? If these believers **pass away** how can they *pass into* the Jesus' Millennial Kingdom. On the other hand, if one **posits** that **this generation** refers to an evil **generation**, it makes sense that they **will pass away**, because they will be taken from earth and to judgment (cf Mt 24:40-41 about which MacArthur comments they will be "*taken in judgment just as in Noah's day*.")) All this to say, I think we all (including the one typing these words) needs to be humble and cautious about being absolutely dogmatic on topics such as this **generation**.

Here is an excerpt from **MacArthur's sermon** - "Some people say that this **generation** means the bad people...in the sense of an evil generation. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it's sometimes used for the word **dor** (Strong's # [01755](#)) in Hebrew which can refer to an **evil** generation or a **righteous** generation. And what our Lord is saying is, they're going to be wicked people all the way till the Second Coming. Is that news? We don't need affirmation that...they are going to be sinners **until the end**. It makes no sense, no point. There's no point in saying they are going to be Christ-rejecters **until the end**, or there are going to be evil people **until the end**. ([Sermon](#)) (Bolding added)

- **Comment on MacArthur's sermon statement:** My question would be are there not also going to be believers "**until the end**"? His argument for excluding an **evil generation** could just as easily be applied to a **believing generation**. Or perhaps I am missing something in his logic. If so please email me about my errant logic and I will gladly revise these comments. Also the verb pass away as discussed below is often used to describe something (heaven and earth in 2Pe 3:10) disappearing or coming to an end. And as noted above even in the immediate context (Lk 21:33) this verb clearly speaks of "heaven and earth" passing away. That could hardly be said to be true of the believers who are alive when Christ returns. In sum, there seems to be some difficulty in resolving MacArthur's interpretation.

**Neil D Nelson** agrees that Jesus' words clearly imply "that **this generation**" will **pass away**" at the Second Coming. Only the wicked belong to this type of people. This evil generation will be "swept away" in judgment and put into hell (Mt 24:39, 51). The righteous in contrast will inherit the kingdom and enter into eternal life in the presence of the Son (Mt 25:20-23, 34, 36). Therefore, **"this generation"** in Matthew 24:34 refers to an evil and faithless people guilty of resisting the messengers and the message of Christ. This view best aligns with the use of the phrase throughout Matthew and the purpose of Jesus in the discourse and the Gospel to prepare the disciples to endure the rejection of unresponsive humanity as they obediently serve Christ and others and thus ready themselves for the Lord's glorious return." (See more of Nelson's analysis)

(2) Jesus was using the word **generation** as a qualitative term (as He had done numerous times in Matthew) and not as a quantitative term.

**Richard Mayhue** - The pejorative view understands **"generation"** in the sense of referring to the category of rebellious, sinful people who have rejected God's truth and righteousness (cf. Mt 12:45; 23:35-36); this has an OT precedent in Dt 32:5, 20 and Pr 30:11-14. ([See more detailed discussion](#))

**John MacArthur** agrees that this interpretation is "linguistically possible" but he feels that "it does not fit the context and also would have been superfluous and pointless, because no Jew doubted that many unbelieving, ungodly people would be alive to be judged when the Messiah came. In the minds of most Jews, the essential work of the Messiah would be to deliver Israel from its ungodly oppressors. He could hardly judge the nations and put His enemies under His feet if they had already been eradicated." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

**Neil D Nelson** argues "The major problem with this view is that it ignores the negative force of **e genea aute** ("this generation") throughout the New Testament and Matthew in particular and the moral use of the phrase in the Old Testament. The negative connotation of the phrase as referring to ungodly people united in their opposition to God's messengers is found in all previous uses of **e genea aute** (Mt 11:16; 12:39, 41, 42, 45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:36). The reader of the Gospel would naturally understand the phrase to have the same connotation in Matthew 24:34. This view (view #1) also ignores the implication that **"this generation"** will **pass away**" at the Second Coming. Only the wicked belong to this type of people. This evil generation will be "swept away" in judgment and put into hell (Mt 24:39, 51). The righteous in contrast will inherit the kingdom and enter into eternal life in the presence of the Son (Mt 25:20-23, 34, 36). Therefore, in Nelson's view **"this generation"** in Matthew 24:34 refers to an evil and faithless people guilty of resisting the messengers and the message of Christ. This view best aligns with the use of the phrase throughout Matthew and the purpose of Jesus in the discourse and the Gospel to prepare the disciples to endure the rejection of unresponsive humanity as they obediently serve Christ and others and thus ready themselves for the Lord's glorious return. (See more of Nelson's analysis)

As noted below, even highly respected commentators such as [William Hendriksen](#) and [R C H Lenski](#) (both of whom favor a 70 AD fulfillment of Mt 24:15ff), agree that **this generation** is a *qualitative* term, not a *quantitative* (chronological) term referring to a *kind* of generation, not a *time* of a given generation. In other words, they both agree that **"this generation"** is highly unlikely to refer to the generation that was alive at the time Jesus gave the Olivet Discourse the only interpretation that supports a preterist interpretation of Mt 24:15ff.

The **NET Note** offers three possibilities for **this generation** - (1) Some take (**generation**) as meaning "race" and thus as an assurance that the Jewish race (nation) will not pass away. But it is very questionable that the Greek term *genea* can have this meaning... (2) **Generation** might mean "*this type of generation*" and refer to the generation of wicked humanity... (3) **generation** may refer to "the generation that sees the signs of the end" (Mt 24:30), who will also see the end itself.

While I agree the meaning of **generation** is controversial, my view is that the weight of Scriptural evidence most strongly supports the interpretation that Jesus was referring to the "*type of generation*" ([see note of explanation below](#)) that will witness the events beginning in Mt 24:15-note with the "*revelation*" of the Antichrist and ending with the "*revelation*" of the Christ in Mt 24:30-note (cp the two revelations - 2Th 2:8). Obviously, I believe the **abomination of desolation** in Mt 24:15-note is yet to stand in the **holy place**, the Temple. I am not a **dispensationalist** nor a [preterist](#), but a **literalist** and a literal interpretation of Daniel 9:27-note calls for a 7 year treaty that is broken after 3.5 years, a specific event which has no past historical fulfillment in the first century. While the Hebrew of Daniel 9:27-note is difficult, this first portion of the verse is not difficult (i.e., the making and breaking of a covenant at the midpoint of seven years) and thus it gives the reader some very important truths to aid the understanding of Mt 24:15-note. Jesus clearly commanded the reader of Matthew 24:15 to direct his attention to Daniel. No, He did not specify Daniel 9:27 but that passage and Daniel 12:11-note (which from context of Da 12:1-note describes the same event as Da 9:27), are the writings in Daniel that most clearly relate to the **abomination of desolation** of Mt 24:15-note. And if one reads 2Thes 2:3-4-note, seeking a literal meaning, it is clear that Paul describes the revelation of a man who carries out an **"abomination"** in the **holy place** by taking his seat there and exalting himself over "every so-called god!" Even the **ESV Study Bible note** agrees that Paul is referring to the Antichrist. There is no Biblical or historical record that fulfills Paul's description in 2Th 2:3-4, so clearly it refers to a future event, an

event which correlates perfectly with Jesus' warning of an **abomination of desolation in the holy place** in Mt 24:15-note! Note that this assessment is based on no one's system of theological interpretation! It is based on a literal reading of the text. **It is only when one goes to the commentaries that one encounters considerable confusion.** In fact, it is notable that none of the top five Matthew commentaries listed by Tim Challies or Ligonier ministries interpret Jesus' words in Mt 24:15-22 as descriptive of a future event. **Do you think there might be some bias in their lists?** It follows that if you consult those commentaries *before* you go to the Scripture, you will likely read Jesus' words in the Olivet Discourse with an inherent bias against a literalistic and futuristic interpretation. As I have attempted to demonstrate in the commentary notes on Matthew 24:15-34, any interpretation other than a literal interpretation encounters significant problems in trying to make a non-literal interpretation "fit." And so while I admit "**this generation**" in Mt 24:34 is a controversial phrase, it is patently (and intellectually) unfair to use one's interpretation of this phrase as a reason for jettisoning a literal reading of Matthew 24:15-22! "**This generation**" (with up to **6 possible interpretations!**) should not be allowed to "trump" (be a decisive overriding factor) a literal reading of the "**abomination of desolation**" (Mt 24:15-note) a clear sign that will mark the starting point of the yet to occur, unprecedented time of the **great tribulation** (Mt 24:21-note). In fact the clear temporal association of the **abomination of desolation** with the unique **great tribulation** (*When* in Mt 24:15, *Then* in Mt 24:21-note Daniel 12:11-note), strongly supports a futuristic interpretation because the distress in 70 AD was not **UNIQUE** and especially falls well short of the Jewish distress in World War II (when up to 6 million Jews were killed). While one might say 70 AD foreshadowed the ultimate great tribulation, one cannot in all fairness interpret the **great tribulation** as fulfilled in 70 AD, unless one spiritualizes or twists the plain meaning of Jesus' words!

In sum, **this generation** could refer to the evil type of **generation** that will exist until Jesus returned. Alternatively, MacArthur interprets it as the **generation** which would be alive at His Second Coming, an interpretation with which I would not strongly disagree. **Hiebert** seems to combine these two interpretations of **this generation** writing that "It seems best to preserve the natural meaning of **generation** as denoting the people alive at a given time and accept the view that the reference is to that future, turbulent, **wicked** generation that will see the actual beginning of those eschatological events." There is only one view that is the least likely and that is the view that **this generation** refers to the one that was alive when Jesus spoke these words! For example, how could one possibly explain what are clearly literal cosmic signs (Lk 21:25-26)?

## WHO WILL PASS AWAY?

**Will not pass away** - As explained in the following discussion of **until**, the idea is that when all these things have taken place, then the generation **will pass away** (cp Mt 24:36-38, 39 = "took them all away", Mt 24:40, 41 = "one will be taken [evil into judgment], and one [regenerate, redeemed] will be left," Mt 13:41 = "will gather out of His Kingdom all stumbling blocks and those who commit [present tense = habitually] lawlessness"). In sum, the perverse, evil, unbelieving, adulterous Christ rejecting **generation**, will pass away (be taken into judgment) into hell and eternal punishment! But God will deliver a **remnant** of believing Jews (Ro 11:26,27-note) and believing Gentiles (Mt 25:31-41) who will not pass away but in fact will "pass into" the Messiah's Kingdom.

**Pass away** (3928) (**parerchomai**) literally means to pass by (Lk 18:37), but here Jesus uses the verb figuratively meaning to come to an end, to disappear as the rich man in James 1:10, as the old things in those who have been born again (2Cor 5:17). Here are some other things that will come to an end (pass away) and thus will no longer be present

Matthew 5:18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth **pass away**, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Luke 16:17; "But it is easier for heaven and earth to **pass away** than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens **will pass away** with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth **passed away**, and there is no longer any sea.

**Until** - Means up to the point in time. In context Jesus refers to "all these things." Nelson adds that "The word **until** means "up to the point at which and no farther" here, implying **this generation** (unlike Israel) will **pass away** in judgment at the Second Coming of Christ." Here are two uses of **until** in other eschatological passages...

Mt 13:30 'Allow both to grow together **UNTIL** the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

**Comment:** John the Baptizer described that woeful day when the harvest would be complete - "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Mt 3:12) But UNTIL that day, it is still the day of salvation for all who would believe! Dear skeptical reader, do not delay, for you know not what tomorrow holds. Throw yourself on Jesus Who holds all of your tomorrows and will

hold you until tomorrow is no more! Thank you Lord God.

Mt 23:39 "For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me **UNTIL** you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

**Comment:** When will Israel make this declaration of love and loyalty? Not UNTIL the Messiah returns and "all Israel" (all that believe in Messiah, 1/3 according to Zech 13:8 = the believing ) is saved. Then the redeemed will cry out to their Redeemer the glorious words of Psalm 118:25! May that day hasten quickly Lord Jesus. Amen

## ALL THINGS

**All things take place** - What **things**? Some say **all these things** up to but not including His return (described in Mt 24 because of Mt 24:33 where Jesus says "when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.") And what would that still include? They would include the cosmic signs of Mt 24:29+ that lead up to His return and yet it is clear that **they have not occurred**. This creates an insurmountable problem for every commentary that says all of these events took place in 70 AD.

## CRITIQUE OF THE TOP RATED COMMENTARIES ON "ALL THESE THINGS" & "THIS GENERATION"

Below are **comments** on some of the "top five" **commentaries** on Matthew as determined by [Challies](#) and [Ligonier](#). As has been noted elsewhere (See critique of their interpretation of Mt 24:15), all of these commentaries hold to a "preteristic" interpretation of Matthew 24 and see the Roman Army in 70 AD as the fulfillment of the abomination of desolation in Matthew 24:15+. It is worthy noting that none of these "acclaimed" commentaries even mention the *possibility* that the abomination of desolation could be the Antichrist taking his seat in the Temple as described by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4+!

**Craig Keener** makes a fairly dogmatic statement that "the view (circulated mainly in current popular circles) that Matthew 24 addresses only a tribulation that even readers after 70 assumed to be wholly future is not tenable; Matthew understands that "**all these things**" (probably referring to the question about the temple's demise—Mt 24:2; Mk 13:4) will happen within **ageneration** (Mt 24:34), language that throughout Jesus' teachings in Matthew refers to the generation then living (e.g., Mt 11:16; 12:39, 45; 16:4; 23:36; cf. Mt 27:25).

**Editorial comment:** **Keener** is not correct in making the statement that **generation** always refers to "generation then living." Notice that **Keener** conveniently ignores Jesus' uses of "**generation**" that are used as an adjective to describe the **quality** or **kind** of generation (Mt 12:39 = "evil and adulterous generation," Mt 12:45 = "this evil generation," and Mt 16:4 = "evil and adulterous generation") Notice also that Keener does not reference Jesus' pithy pronouncement against the "unbelieving and perverted generation" in (Mt 17:17). In summary, Keener's argument that generation always refers to the "generation then living" simply cannot be substantiated from Jesus Own words! This is another example of interpretative bias because of the difficulties presented by interpreting "**generation**" as a kind of generation (or as the generation living when all these events occur). Keener would be forced to admit that the plain, normal reading of Jesus' words describes events which have not yet come to pass!

Further, AD 70 was not "great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be (Mt 24:21)." Though Josephus reported terrible atrocities, the tribulation Jesus was predicting here must be greater than the devastation caused by the universal flood in Noah's day to which Jesus in context directly compared the events of the end (Mt 24:37-39).<sup>24</sup> Matthew 24:22 says, "if those days had not been shortened, no human being (flesh) would be saved." *pasa sarx* ("all flesh") is a technical term referring to all humanity nine times in the New Testament (Matt 24:22; Mark 13:20; Luke 3:6; John 17:2; Acts 2:17; Rom 3:20; 1 Cor 1:29; Gal 2:2-6; 1 Pet 1:24). "All flesh" here is not limited to Jews who died in Judea in the first century; rather it implies that all humanity would be extinguished in the future "great tribulation" as happened at the flood (except for Noah and his family), if not for God's intervention for the sake of His elect. Jesus here was speaking of an event much worse than AD 70.

**R T France** (another of the top rated commentaries on Matthew) on Matthew 24:34 writes that

"Those who interpret this passage as referring to the parousia must therefore either conclude that it proved to be untrue, or that **this generation** does not here carry its normal meaning. It has, for instance, been taken to mean 'the Jewish race', or 'unbelieving Judaism'. It is unlikely that such an improbable meaning for the noun would have been suggested at all without the constraint of apologetic embarrassment!" (Tyndale NT Commentary-Matthew)

**Editorial comment:** France does not even attempt to defend his dogmatic statement that "It is unlikely that such an improbable meaning for the noun (genea - generation) would have been suggested." As discussed above Jesus Himself in this very Gospel used **generation** several times to describe the "**kind**" of generation (qualitative use not quantitative use) that would witness all these things, referring to it as "**evil**" in three different statements (Mt 12:39, 12:45, Mt 16:4). **France's** argument simply does not

stand up to comparison with several of Jesus' earlier uses in Matthew of the word **generation**.

**William Hendriksen** holds the view that Mt 24:15 was fulfilled in 70 AD and yet he concludes that "**this generation**" is a *qualitative* term and not a *quantitative* term.

"By no means has it been established that the term "**this generation**" must be limited to contemporaries. It can also refer to **this kind of people**"; for example, **the Jews, at any time or in any age**. Worthy of consideration in this connection are such passages as Dt. 32:5, 20; Ps 12:7; 78:8; etc., where the Septuagint (Lxx) uses the same word (**genea**) as is here rendered "**generation**," but evidently with a meaning that goes beyond "group of contemporaries." Thus even in the New Testament (see Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:15; Heb. 3:10), though the starting point may well be a reference to the people of that particular day, this may not be the entire meaning. So also probably here in Mt. 24:34. ([Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew, Baker Book House, 1953-2001, New Testament Commentary](#))

**R C H Lenski** who also holds a 70AD fulfillment for Mt 24:15 agrees with Hendriksen on the interpretation of "**this generation**" as kind of generation:

With profound solemnity, using his well-known seal (**Ed**: "Amen" or "Truly") for verity and authority (see Mt 5:18), Jesus declares that "**this generation shall not pass away until all these things shall occur**." The view that **genea** and especially *genea aute* refers to the contemporary generation, those living at the time when Jesus spoke, is **untenable**. A look at the use of (**Ed**: the Hebrew noun) [dor \(01755\)](#) in the Old Testament and at its regular translation by **genea** in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** reveals that a **kind of men is referred to**, the **evil kind** that reproduces and succeeds itself in many physical generations. Compare Ps 12:7: "Thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever"; Ps 78:8, the fathers (many physical generations of them); Ps 14:5, "the generation of the righteous"; Ps 24:6; 73:15; 112:2; Deut. 32:5, 20; Pr. 30:11-14; Isaiah often; Jer. 7:29; etc. From these passages turn to the New Testament and in addition to the Gospels note Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:15; Heb. 3:10. Sometimes the evil manifested by the kind of men referred to is indicated by modifiers, as in Mt. 16:4; 17:17; Mk 8:38, but often the context does this... "**This generation**" consists of the **type of Jews** whom Jesus contended with during this Tuesday, Mt 21:23-23:39... this **type of Jew** will continue to the very Parousia. It has continued to this very day. The voice of Jewish rejection of Christ is as loud and as vicious as ever: "He is not the Messiah, not the Son of God!" ([The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel- R. C. H Lenski, Augsburg House, 1961](#))

**D A Carson** interprets "**this generation**" with a "quantitative" rather than a "qualitative" meaning writing that

only with the greatest difficulty be made to mean anything other than the generation living when Jesus spoke. Even if "**generation**" by itself can have a slightly larger semantic range, to make "**this generation**" refer to all believers in every age, or the generation of believers alive when eschatological events start to happen, is highly artificial. Yet it does not follow that Jesus mistakenly thought the Parousia would occur within his hearers' lifetime. **If our interpretation of this chapter is right**, all that Mt 24:34 demands is that the distress of Mt 24:4-28, including Jerusalem's fall, happen within the lifetime of the generation then living. This does not mean that the distress must end within that time but only that "**all these things**" must happen within it. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Comment:** Note that Carson does not even acknowledge that the word "**generation**" as used in the Bible clearly can have both a quantitative and qualitative meaning. Notice also that Carson's statement "*if our interpretation of this chapter is right*." But as Carson admits in his discussion of the "**abomination of desolation**" in Mt 24:15 the "*obvious occasion, in general terms, is A.D. 70, though certain difficulties must be faced*." He is forced to make this statement because he interprets the Roman Army as the "abomination." However he does acknowledge this interpretation creates a significant problem noting that "*by the time the Romans had actually desecrated the temple in A.D. 70, it was too late for anyone in the city to flee*." It is notable that he does not even mention the possibility of the Antichrist as the abomination of desolation, nor does he discuss Paul's description in 2Thes 2:3-4 of a future event which would certainly parallel Mt 24:15 and Daniel 9:27. In addition, regarding the unique, unprecedented "great tribulation" (Mt 24:21) which he interprets as fulfilled in 70AD, he makes the statement that even the horrors of the Nazi holocaust (where 6 million Jews, one-third of the world's population were annihilated) were not greater "*percentage wise*" than the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD (where Josephus estimates 1.1 million Jews died a figure many observers feel was exaggerated)! Finally, notice that Carson admits that "**all these things**" in Mt 24:33 is more problematic for "**all these things**" would include the cosmic cataclysms of Mt 24:29 which clearly have not occurred. He attempts to explain this problem by saying "The more natural way to take "**all these things**" is to see them as referring to the distress of vv. 4-28, the tribulation that comes on believers throughout the period between Jesus' ascension and the Parousia." But that still does not explain Mt 24:29, which precedes His coming!

**Leon Morris on "this generation"** - On the surface of it, the meaning is that he will be returning in glory during the lifetime of people then living, and indeed some exegetes hold to this view, claiming that Jesus thought that he would reappear on earth not so long after his death, perhaps at the fall of Jerusalem, to usher in the end of the world, which, of course, means that he was mistaken. In view of the fact that two sentences later he says that he does not know when it will occur (Mt 24:36), this appears to be an erroneous interpretation of the words. A better view is that all these things refers to the distress indicated in verses 4-28, which must occur before Jesus comes again but which does not mean that his coming will follow immediately. **A difficulty with this view is that it is not easy to see why all these things should include the events of Mt 24:4-28, but not those of Mt 24:29-31.** So others have suggested that the **generation** is the Jewish nation (it means "not just the first generation after Jesus but all the generations of Judaism that reject him," Schweizer, p. 458; so also Ryle, Hendriksen, and others) and point to its continuation through the centuries. Others think that the reference is to the human race, but this view has little to be said for it. **We should notice that in the Old Testament the term is sometimes used for a kind of person, as when we read of "the generation of the righteous" (Ps. 14:5) or "the generation of those who seek him" (Ps. 24:6).** From passages like this some have taken Jesus to mean that the church (**Ed:** Note Jesus was not addressing the church but Jews! The church did not even exist at this time!) will survive to the end (e.g., Green). But the term is used also of the wicked, as when the Psalmist prays, "guard us ever from this generation" (Ps. 12:7); or it may refer to "the generation of his wrath" (Jer. 7:29). **If this is its meaning, Jesus is saying that this kind of person, "this generation," will not cease until the fulfilment of his words. It is perhaps relevant to notice that a little earlier Jesus said of people to whom he was speaking, "you killed" Zechariah (Mt 23:35), a statement that implies the solidarity of the race through the years.** Mounce draws attention to the phenomenon of multiple fulfilment. He points out that the **"abomination of desolation"** had one fulfilment in the desecration effected by Antiochus Epiphanes and another in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. "In a similar way, the events of the immediate period leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem portend a greater and more universal catastrophe when Christ returns in judgment at the end of time." **Right up to the time when all these things happen there will be people of the same stamp as those who rejected Jesus while he lived on earth.** ([The Gospel according to Matthew The Pillar New Testament Commentary](#))

**Comment:** Notice that Morris recognizes the difficulties with interpreting **"this generation"** as the one alive when Jesus was speaking (which is D A Carson's interpretation - see above). Morris acknowledges that even in the preceding context (Mt 23:36), Jesus used **generation** (genea) in a qualitative and not quantitative manner, speaking of a evil, murderous kind of generation.

**For More Detailed Discussion see Related Resources:**

- Discussion of Which Generation in Matthew 24:34
- Three Critical Exegetical Issues In Matthew 24: A Dispensational Interpretation Neil D. Nelson Jr., Ph.D.
- Seven Possible Interpretations of "This Generation" - Richard Mayhue
- "This Generation" and it's Preterist Exegetical Misuse - Bob DeWaay
- How Preterists Misinterpret Matthew 24:34 - Bob DeWaay

**Luke 21:33 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."**

KJV Luke 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

- Ps 102:26; Isaiah 40:8; 51:6; Mt 5:18; 24:35; Mark 13:31; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 3:7-14; Revelation 20:11
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:29-33 The Final Generation of the Future Judgment](#) - John MacArthur

## THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS' WORDS

Parallel passages:

Matthew 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

Mark 13:31 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

**Heaven and earth will pass away** - This is a prophecy which is yet future. Jesus is the Creator **"for by Him all things were created"** (Col 1:16) and He is also the "Sustainer" for **"In Him all things hold together."** (Col 1:17), but one day He will remove His Sustaining Hand and **"the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."** (2 Pe 3:10-note). In the Revelation John describes this unique time period writing "Then I

saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and **no place was found for them.**" (Rev 20:11-[note](#)). In other words there was no place for earth and heaven because they had passed away, just as Jesus predicted. And after the judgment of all non-believers (Rev 20:11-15-[note](#)), there will be a new heaven and new earth (Rev 21:1-[note](#)).

When will **heaven and earth pass away**? After the Messianic Age which John says will last 1000 years, at the end of which Satan is released and then defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire forever and then the events of 2 Peter 3:10-note transpire which explains why John says of heaven and earth there is "no place found for them." As an aside, it is amazing that if one reads Revelation 19:11-21:1 literally and simply (not adding anyone's "systematic" theological views, be they dispensational or otherwise), the text clearly paints a logical, easy to discern chronology of events. However, if one resorts to allegorizing the text, it is not surprising that soon it begins to make no sense (i.e., it borders on "nonsense!"). Click here for a simple minded summation of Revelation 19-21 showing how it flows from one event to another if one reads it literally.

**But** - Term of contrast. It is always worthwhile to pause and ponder "What is being contrasted?" Usually (as in this case) it will be relatively straight forward. There was an old advertisement slogan "[The pause that refreshes.](#)" To pause gives the Spirit a chance to speak. If we are reading too quickly and passively, rather than slowly and actively, intentionally engaging the text, we are less likely to hear His voice. And pausing to ask simple questions tends to aid dynamic interaction with the Living Word and Living Lord, through His Living Spirit.

Of course the obvious wonderful contrast is that Jesus' words will never pass away, which was recorded by Isaiah centuries earlier when he wrote "The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." (Isaiah 40:8)

**My words will not pass away** - What is Jesus saying? Which **words**? Of course the truth that Jesus' words **will not pass away** also applies to every word Jesus spoke, not just the prophetic words in the Olivet Discourse. But if context means anything, in this context Jesus is referring to the answer He has just given to the disciples' questions about Jerusalem's fate, about His return, about the establishment of the Kingdom of God and about the end of the age. Every "[jot and tittle](#)" of His prophetic answer will be perfectly fulfilled.

**Pass away** ([3928](#)) See preceding discussion of the verb [parerchomai](#) used twice in this verse.

**MacArthur** writes "His word can neither be added to nor taken away from (cf. Deut. 4:2; Matt. 5:17-19; Luke 16:17; Rev. 22:18-19). The Word of God is the same unassailable, unchanging truth whether it speaks of the past, present, or future. Just as Christians were "born again ... through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Peter 1:23) and are being sanctified by the "word of His grace" (Acts 20:32), so also will they in the future be glorified, according to the promises of the Word (Rom. 8:17, 30). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Luke)

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**Philip Ryken** has a great **illustration** of this passage - How sad it is that the living and abiding words of Jesus so often are opposed by people who reject the gospel. Whether it is false gospels like the so-called Gospel of Judas or religious hoaxes like The [Da Vinci Code](#), someone is always trying to cast doubt on the words of Jesus. But his words will never pass away, which means that eventually anyone who tries to discredit Jesus will be discredited himself. My favorite example comes from [Voltaire](#), the famous French philosopher. Not everyone remembers Voltaire these days, which is ironic, because he predicted that within fifty years people would no longer remember Jesus! It was a rash prediction, because the very year that Voltaire said this, the British Museum paid half a million pounds to purchase an ancient Bible manuscript, while at the same time a book of Voltaire's agnostic writings was selling for only eight pence in the London book stalls. Move forward fifty years to witness an even greater irony. After Voltaire died, the philosopher's home in Geneva was eventually purchased by the Geneva Bible Society. Fifty years to the day after the philosopher's outrageous prediction, the presses in his very own home were printing thousands of Bibles every day. Every copy included the words of Luke 21:33, written in French: "Le ciel et la terre passeront, mais mes paroles ne passeront point." Which means, as any Frenchman could tell you, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (Reformed Expository Commentary - Luke)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - GOD has a way of turning the tables on evil. The French philosopher Voltaire predicted that Christianity would be swept from existence within one hundred years. Yet just fifty years after he died in 1779, the German Bible Society had occupied Voltaire's house and was using his printing press to produce stacks of Bibles. During World War II, Adolf Hitler erected a massive stone structure in Monte Carlo. It was to be a radio station from which to broadcast Nazi propaganda into North Africa. Today, from that very building, **Trans World Radio** beams the Gospel of Christ's redeeming love all across Europe and into Russia and Africa. Could these ironies of history be just a hint of the last word Christ will have at the end of this age?

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The French philosopher [Voltaire](#) would certainly fit Jesus' warning about spiritual "dogs and a hogs" in Matthew 7:6-[note](#), for

he violently opposed God, His Holy Word and His precious Son. How tragic that one of the most fertile and talented minds of his time (which parenthetically bears witness to the common grace and longsuffering of our great Father), was such a vicious opponent of truth, using his pen to retard and demolish Christianity as much as humanly possible. Once speaking about our Lord Jesus Christ, Voltaire uttered the unspeakable words "Curse the wretch!" Voltaire was so self deceived and arrogant that he once boasted that within "twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear." God however is not mocked beloved (see Galatians 6:7-[note](#), Galatians 6:8-[note](#)) and so not surprisingly shortly after Voltaire's death the very house in which he printed his vicious anti-Christian literature became the home of the Geneva Bible Society! ([However see another discussion on this topic](#)) A nurse who attended Voltaire at the time of his horrible death vowed "For all the wealth in Europe I would not see another infidel die." Voltaire's physician, Trochim, also attended the infidel up to the time of his last breath, and is quoted as hearing Voltaire's last desperate (rightly so) cry "*I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!*" Voltaire is the epitome of the type of individual that citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven (per orders of our Master) must refrain from sharing the precious and holy truth of God's Word. I had such an encounter with an atheist and finally ceased speaking truth to him when he became too vile in his attacks of me and my Lord.

**Luke 21:34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;**

BGT Luke 21:34 Προσχετε ὅ αὐτο ς μ ποτε βαρηθ σιν μ ν α καρδ αι ν κραιπ λ κά μ θ κά μερ μναι ς βιωτικα ς κά πιστ φ μ ς α φν διο ς μ ρα κε νη 35 ς παγ ς· πεισελε σεται γ ρ π π ντα ς το ς καθημ νου ς π πρ σωπον π ση ς τ ς γ ς.

KJV Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with [surfeiting](#) (an excessive amount of something) and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

NET Luke 21:34 "But be on your guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day close down upon you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will overtake all who live on the face of the whole earth.

CSB Luke 21:34 "Be on your guard, so that your minds are not dulled from carousing, drunkenness, and worries of life, or that day will come on you unexpectedly 35 like a trap. For it will come on all who live on the face of the whole earth.

ESV Luke 21:34 "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.

NIV Luke 21:34 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.

NLT Luke 21:34 "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.

NRS Luke 21:34 "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.

YLT Luke 21:34 'And take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts may be weighed down with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day may come on you, 35 for as a snare it shall come on all those dwelling on the face of all the land,

GWN Luke 21:34 "Make sure that you don't become drunk, hung over, and worried about life. Then that day could suddenly catch you by surprise 35 like a trap that catches a bird. That day will surprise all people who live on the earth.

NKJ Luke 21:34 "But 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. 35 "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

NAB Luke 21:34 "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise 35 like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth.

- **Be on guard** Luke 21:8; 17:3; Mark 13:9; Hebrews 12:15
- **so that your hearts will not be weighted down** Luke 12:45; Leviticus 10:9; Pr 21:4; Isaiah 28:7; 56:10-12; Hos4:11; Ro 13:11-13; 1 Th 5:6-8; 1 Peter 4:3-7
- **with dissipation** Deuteronomy 29:19; 1 Samuel 25:36; Isaiah 28:1-3; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; Galatians 5:20
- **the worries of life** Luke 8:14; 10:41; Mt 13:22; Mark 4:19; Philippians 4:6
- **that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap** Luke 12:46; Ps 35:8; Mt 24:39-50; Mark 13:35-37; 1 Th 5:2-4; 2 Peter 3:10,14; Revelation 3:3
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:34-36 The Believer's Gift to Christ](#) - John MacArthur



### VIGILANT ANTICIPATION PREVENTS BEING TRAPPED

This title is from MacArthur's [sermon](#). I would add that continual Vertical Vision is the antidote for having your senses dulled and being caught off guard by Jesus' return.

Both Matthew and Mark add a note not found in Luke regarding **that day**...

Matthew 24:36 "But of **that day and hour** no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Mark 13:32-33+ "But of **that day or hour** no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 33 "**Take heed** ([blepo](#) in present imperative), **keep on the alert** ([agrupneo](#) in present imperative) for you do not know when the appointed time will come.

**Comment:** In keeping with Jesus not regarding "equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil 2:5+), in His humanity even Jesus did not know the time of His return. ([see note on not knowing when Jesus will return](#)).

**MacArthur** - Vigilant anticipation (**ED**: AKA "VERTICAL VISION") of the Lord's return produces the fear that leads to holiness and virtue in believers, since it motivates separation from worldliness and sin. Mēpote (so that) introduces **a result clause** that expresses the expected outcome of vigilantly anticipating the second coming. Those who eagerly watch for the Lord's return will not have their hearts ... weighted down (See [Luke 18-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Phillip Ryken** comments that "every time Jesus talked about the end of the world, he always gave his disciples the same practical advice to get ready for it now, before the time comes. Jesus did not give us signs of the coming judgment so we could chart the future, but to exhort us to practice what J. C. Ryle described as "perpetual preparedness." Are you ready for the end of the world?" (Reformed Expository Commentary - Luke)

**Be on guard**, ([prosecho](#) - command to continually be on guard which necessitates continual [dependence on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) This is the picture of a thief who breaks into a house with the owners unaware. It is the stealthiness of a mugger who silently and slyly approaches an unsuspecting victim.

**So that** (purpose clause) **your hearts** ([kardia](#)) **will not be weighted down** ([bareo](#)) **with dissipation** ([kraipale](#)) **and drunkenness** ([methe](#)) **and the worries** ([merimna](#)) **of life** - In light of the truth that all that Jesus has predicted will come to pass perfectly, He gives a warning to His disciples, but it is a warning which applies not just to the disciples in the first century but disciples throughout the interval of time as we anticipate His return. Note that the command be on guard does not mean to be on the lookout for signs, but with the command in Lk 21:36 to **keep alert**, Jesus' point is that we are to continually be alert. And He explains why this is imperative -- otherwise we will begin to be weighed down with the things that affect those in this world, who are living for this world.

Jesus is calling for an "other worldly" mindset. Peter predicted that worldly minded people would scoff at the idea that Jesus is returning writing

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts (CF "DISSIPATION AND DRUNKENNESS"), 4 and saying (NATURALLY THEY WILL SCOFF FOR THEY WANT TO BELIEVE THEY WON'T BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR EVIL LIFESTYLES), "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." 5 (PETER EXPLAINS HOW ILLOGICAL THEIR REASONING IS -- THEY HAVE IGNORED THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD BY A GLOBAL FLOOD) For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. (2 Peter 3:3-6+)

**Rod Mattoon** adds that **prosecho** means "to draw something near to yourself. It was the same word used to describe a captain that would bring his ship to land. Jesus said, "Wake up and watch out what you are doing! Like a ship, bring your life to shore so you don't drift away." And what could cause a believer to "drift way?" The passing pleasures (Heb 11:25) of this passing world (1 Jn 2:17).

Our Lord wants us to "gird our minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix our hope** (aorist imperative) completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:13+)

Paul explains that if believers are looking for Jesus it will blunt the attraction of the strong lusts of this world

For (explaining how Titus 2:10 is possible) the grace of God has appeared (JESUS' FIRST COMING), bringing salvation to all men (ALL WHO RECEIVE HIM AND BELIEVE), 12 instructing us (HIS GRACE IS LIKE OUR "TUTOR" DISCIPLINING US) to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking (present tense) for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory (JESUS' SECOND COMING) of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, (Titus 2:11-13+)

**Comment:** Notice the powerful spiritual dynamic presented by Paul - Verse 12 is situated between Jesus' First Coming (v11) and His Second Coming (v12). Verse 12 is the present evil age (Gal 1:4+) in which we are all now living. Verse 13 describes the motivation for us to be living godly lives in this present evil age. The "motivation" is energized by looking with anticipation for Jesus' return. Here is the point -- It is simple, but powerful. If you are looking for Jesus to return, you are far more likely to be denying ungodliness and worldly desires, and instead living sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age! If we are looking for Him, we will be living for Him. The future hope (absolute assurance) empowers present behavior. Have you allowed the world to weigh you down and cause you to take your eyes off His return? Don't be downcast. Confess it. Repent. And begin to live as if His return could be today (because it COULD BE TODAY!). You will be amazed at what a difference "a day" will make in your personal perspective, prerogatives and practice!

**Related Resource:** Vertical Vision

**Be on guard** is a present imperative which calls for one to be continually watching out for Jesus' return. This mindset is only possible by continually relying on the indwelling Spirit Who gives us not just the desire but also power to continually stand on guard, especially in a spiritual sense. (See Php 2:13NLT+)

**Wesley** reminds us Jesus was addressing His beloved disciples adding that if there was "need to warn the apostles themselves against such sins as these...then surely there is reason to warn even strong Christians against the very grossest sins." (Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament)

**Practical Word Studies in The New Testament** - The end time and the day of the Lord's return demands taking care. Note this important fact: the believer is to watch out; that is, to guard his life. How? By not engaging in worldliness. His heart is not to be weighed down (barethosin): heavy, weighed down, burdened, overloaded, filled up, indulged.

Jesus says the heart of the issue regarding His coming is the condition of one's heart.

"The certainty of the Second Coming of Christ should touch and tincture **every** part of our daily behavior."  
-- John Blanchard

**Spurgeon** writes "A short life should be wisely spent. We have not enough time at our disposal to justify us in misspending a single quarter of an hour. Neither are we sure of enough life to justify us in procrastinating for a moment. If we were wise in **heart** we should see this, but mere **head wisdom** will not guide us aright." See his full note on Ps 90:12+ See article on [Redeem the Time](#) or

[watch the youtube video of talk I gave to men's group](#)

The hearts of all followers of Christ are always in danger of becoming "sleepy" regarding the Second Coming of Christ. In fact Jesus' command in Lk 21:36 could be rendered "Stay awake!"

The idea of **being** (passive voice = by outside forces = dissipation, drunkenness, worries) **weighed down** means to be burdened, oppressed, depressed, dejected. To be too much to cope with. One becomes pressed down as if with a weight and in such a state one's mind loses its alertness. Then Jesus mentions three sins which can weigh down one's mind.

The NLT has an interesting paraphrase translating bareo as not to let one's heart **be dulled.**"

"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. (Luke 21:34 NLT)

Given the danger of a slow "leakage" of "eternal vision" from our hearts which would cause us to become "sleepy" regarding the **day** of days, Paul, in a letter addressed to relatively new believers, writes words of warning and encouragement...

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief (COMPARE "SUDDENLY LIKE A TRAP"); 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then **let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.** 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since **we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.** 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11 Therefore **encourage** (present imperative) one another and **build up** (present imperative) one another, just as you also are doing. (1 Th 5:4-11+)

Have you ever heard the medical term **veisalgia** a synonym for hangover and derived from Norwegian: kveis, "discomfort following overindulgence", plus Greek: algos, "pain." Now that's a word that gives a vivid "word picture!" See depictions - [The Day After, Self-portrait](#), [The Day After](#).

**MacArthur** gives brief overview of "the vile behavior that accompanies it has been a problem throughout history. After the flood Noah "became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent" (Gen. 9:21). Nabal, whose name means "foolish," lived up to his name (1 Sam. 25:25) by getting drunk at a feast after scorning and turning away David's messengers (v. 36). While Elah, king of the northern kingdom of Israel, "was at Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, who was over the household at Tirzah [1 Kings 16:9] ... Zimri went in and struck him and put him to death ... and became king in his place" (v. 10; cf. 20:16). Shockingly, some of the Corinthians actually got drunk at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:21). The Bible repeatedly warns against drunkenness (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3).(See [Luke Commentary](#))

The related verb methusko is used in Paul's great passage regarding what one should be "drunk" with, commanding (first negative, then positive) "And **do not get drunk** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled** ([pleroo](#) in the [present imperative](#)) with the Spirit," (Eph 5:18). By extension, beloved believer, do not be intoxicated by the enticements of this passing world, but instead be invigorated by the enlightenment of the Word of Truth regarding the eternal world to come.

Jesus' big point here is that if disciples are not alert for His appearing and instead become too absorbed in the cares of everyday life, their senses will be dulled to eternal things, especially the need to be looking frequently for Him and living faithfully for Him. As noted elsewhere, **frequent looking** energizes **faithful living!** [Are you looking for Him. Is the cry of your heart Maranatha](#) (Come Lord)?

In Romans 13 **Paul** clearly links **holy looking** with **holy living** writing (carefully observe the many *time sensitive* words or phrases - in **green font**)...

Do this (WHAT? cf Ro 13:10), knowing **the time**, that it is **already the hour** for you to awaken from sleep; for **now** salvation is **nearer** to us than **when** we believed. 12 The **night is almost gone**, and **the day is near**. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave properly as in **the day**, not in carousing and drunkenness (CF "DISSIPATION AND DRUNKENNESS" in Lk 21:34), not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But **put on** (aorist imperative - Do this now! Do not delay! With a sense of urgency!) the Lord Jesus Christ (CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH "GARMENTS BY JESUS!" SPEAKING AND WALKING LIKE HE WOULD, DOING SO BY THE POWER OF HIS SPIRIT - see [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)), and **make no provision** ([present imperative with a negative](#) = EITHER STOP DOING THIS OR DO NOT BEGIN) for the flesh in regard to its lusts. (Romans 13:11-14+)

## John links hoping with living

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2+ Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3+ And everyone who has this **hope** (THAT WE WILL BE LIKE HIM) fixed on Him purifies (present tense = lifestyle, active voice = volitional choice) himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:1-3+)

1 John 3:1 What We Are

1 John 3:2: What We Shall Be

1 John 3:3 What We Should Do

**Comment:** Note that the Greek word for **hope** ([elpis](#)) in the NT is not the lost world's version of hope which is a "**hope so**," but instead speaks of a "**hope sure**." In other words, the believer's **hope** is the absolute certainty that God will do good to us in the future. The [consummate hope](#) of course is the certainty that we will see Jesus and we will be like Him forever! This is good news of our great hope which motivates godly living for the glory of our gracious God. Let it be so Lord. Amen.

**And that day will not come on you suddenly ([aiphnidios](#)) like a trap ([pagis](#))** - What **day** Jesus is describing? Clearly in context, it is the day of His return (cf Lk 21:27 - cp [Second Coming](#)). That day will be a shock to all who are thinking of the earth as their permanent dwelling place (even though they know no one escapes death). This certainty should not motivate us to gloat, but to speak the Gospel, to warn the lost and tell them they can be "found" by believing in Jesus! "Go therefore and **make disciples** (aorist imperative - Do this now! Do not delay! With a sense of urgency!) of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always (NOW HIS SPIRIT INDWELLS AND EMPOWERS US!), even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:19-20+)

**Stephen Olford on like a trap ([pagis](#))** - Godet and Alexander Maclaren...point out that the image here is of an individual who hunts birds for sport. The fowler walks out into a field, hides behind a tree or rock, and watches as the birds come down to feed. At first they are alert, but, sensing no danger, they become absorbed in picking up the grain. Suddenly the fowler lifts his net and with one quick stroke swoops down to trap his bird. That is the picture behind that word **snare**.

Now you might also interpret this **day** as the day Jesus comes to rapture His church. However, given the fact that Jesus has referred to His return in glory, it is most reasonable to interpret this **day** as the day of His Second Coming. Also the next verse describes this day coming upon all who dwell on the face of the earth which would indicate the day does not refer to the Rapture but to His Second Coming when every eye will see Him (Rev 1:7+).

That said, if you are one who believes in a "Pre-Tribulation Rapture" (the interpretation I favor), then the principles Jesus' teaches of being watchful is especially apropos because the Rapture (if pre-trib) could occur at any time and needs nothing else to be filled prophetically.

**Thomas Constable** comments on the issue of the Rapture in relation to Jesus' words of warning in this section - Luke's original readers evidently lived after Pentecost and before the destruction of Jerusalem. Most of them lived to witness the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction of Jerusalem's destruction. This event would have encouraged them to believe His teaching about His return and to prepare for it. They could have met the Lord anytime if the Rapture occurred during their lifetime. As history has unfolded, we know that the Second Coming is still future. Before that the Tribulation must occur and before that the Rapture (CLEARLY CONSTABLE BELIEVES IN A PRETRIB RAPTURE). The New Testament apostles voiced many of the same warnings urging watchfulness in view of the Rapture that Jesus gave in view of His second coming (e.g., Ro 13:13; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Th 5:4-11, 17; et al.). After the Rapture, people who become Christians will need to remain vigilant because they will go through intense persecution in the Tribulation. For them the Second Coming will be only a few years away. Jesus' exhortation to be watchful is therefore applicable to all disciples regardless of when they may live before His second coming. Vigilance is essential because the Lord's return is imminent (i.e., impending, overhanging) regardless of when we live. ([Luke 21 Commentary](#))

**David Guzik** adds "In Luke 21:34-36 Jesus said that He would come as a surprise, a snare – and emphasized the importance of readiness. This is because the second coming of Jesus has two distinct aspects, separated by an appreciable time. The first aspect comes suddenly, unexpectedly, as a snare, in a time of peace and safety. The second comes with great anticipation to a world almost destroyed by the judgment of God, with Jesus coming to the earth with His people from heaven. Those who are ready for the first aspect of His coming would be counted worthy to escape all these things, the things of great calamity to come to the earth. They would instead stand before the Son of Man. These are those who are caught up together with Jesus, to meet the Lord in the air (1

Thessalonians 4:17), to escape the tribulation to come upon the earth.. What Jesus spoke of at this part of Luke's record of the Olivet Discourse applied to those of the whole earth, not only those who lived in Jerusalem or Judea. This speaks of much more than what happened to Jerusalem of a.d. 70. ([Luke 21](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [When is the Rapture going to occur in relation to the Tribulation?](#)
- [What are the strengths and weaknesses of the pretribulation view of the rapture \(pretribulationism\)?](#)
- [What are the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-wrath view of the rapture?](#)
- [What are the strengths and weaknesses of the midtribulation view of the rapture \(midtribulationism\)?](#)
- [What is the Tribulation? How do we know the Tribulation will last seven years?](#)
- [What are the strengths and weaknesses of the posttribulation view of the rapture \(posttribulationism\)?](#)

Note that whenever Jesus discusses His **Second Coming**, He invariably enjoins **watchfulness**

"Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. 38 "Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. 39 "**But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.** 40 "You too, **be** (present imperative) ready; for **the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.**" (Lk 12:37-40+; cf Mt 25:13; Mk 13:33,-37).

Earlier **Luke** had recorded Jesus' warning of destruction to all who reject His gracious offer of redemption - "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed ([apollumi](#) = not annihilation but eternal loss of purpose for which men were created = to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!) them all. 30 "**It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed** (Luke 17:26-30+)

**THOUGHT** - Given that Jesus' warning call for watchfulness applies to every generation of believers until He returns, how would you gauge your spiritual alertness? Are you continually watchful, contemplating that today could be **the day**, or have you been dulled into living a worldly existence which focuses on the temporal at the expense of the eternal? You cannot focus on both at the same time!

John warned his readers of the danger of losing their eternal rewards because of failure to remain watchful...

**Watch** (You can guess the tense can't you? - present imperative) yourselves, that you do not lose (HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT LOSING SALVATION BUT THE REWARDS ONE ACCRUES AFTER SALVATION) what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. (2 John 1:8)

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**Be on guard** (Watch out for yourselves)([4337](#))([prosecho](#) from **pros** = before, toward + **echo** = hold) means literally to hold to, toward or before. Originally it was followed by the word "the mind" (nous) but at times "the mind" was omitted but still the idea of "the mind" was implied. To apply one's self to. To hold the mind or the ear toward and so to pay attention or give heed.

**Hearts** ([2588](#))([kardia](#)) is the control center of our being, the center of our personality, which controls our intellect, emotions, and will. Given the import of the heart Solomon wisely admonished us to "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. " (Pr 4:23-note) Are you watching over your heart with diligence? Or is your heart burdened, troubled, overcome but sin?

**Weighed down** ([916](#))([bareo](#) from **baros** = weight, heaviness, figuratively a burden as in Gal 6:2) means to lay on a heavy load; to encumber with weight, to weigh down, to burden. Figuratively, to oppress with any thing grievous; as, to burden a nation with taxes. The effect of drowsiness = "Heavy eyes" of Peter, James and John who were overcome by sleep instead of by prayer. (Mt 26:43, Mk 14:40, context = Mt 26:41-note) Earlier Luke wrote about the Transfiguration when "Peter and his companions **had been overcome** (bareo = weighed down) with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him." (Lk 9:32+). Bareo is also used figuratively in 2 Corinthians 1:8 to describe the effect of Paul's affliction, and in 2 Cor 5:4-note to speak of the crushing burden of sin and affliction that believers experience in this present life.

**Dissipation** ([2897](#))([kraipale](#)) is used to describe excessive wine drinking and the carousing and drunkenness that ensues as well as next days symptoms of [hangover](#) including headache, nausea, etc. This word can also to dizziness, staggering, clouded thinking, and similar consequences related to excessive alcohol intake. It describes drunken behavior without moral restraint. **BDAG** says it is "unbridled indulgence in a drinking party." Vine says it is "the giddiness and headache resulting from excessive wine-bibbing, a

drunken nausea."

**Drunkness** (3178)(**methe**) is a noun which means strong or potent drink and then describes the state of intentional and habitual intoxication. Clearly methe is closely linked to kraipale. As an aside, the tumultuous times of the end will undoubtedly lead many to "self-medication" in an attempted to achieve an altered state of reality. The tragedy of course is that if they had chosen to run to Jesus, they would find comfort not just in time but in eternity! Where do you run when the going gets tough?

**Trench's differentiation** of the words **methe** (3178) Drunkness, **potos** (4224) Drinking Party, **oinophlygia** (3632) Excess of Wine, **kraipale** (2897), **komos** (2970) Revelry

Methe, potos, oinophlygia, **komos**, and kraipale refer from different perspectives to riotousness and excessive drinking of wine.

**Methe** (Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:21) and potos (only in 1 Peter 4:3) may be distinguished as an abstract and a concrete. Methe means "drunkness" ( Joel 1:5; Ezekiel 39:19); potos refers to a drinking bout, a banquet, or a symposium. Potos does not necessarily imply excessiveness, though it does provide an opportunity for excess.

**Oinophlygia**, which is translated as "excess of wine" in the Authorized Version, occurs in the New Testament only in 1 Peter 4:3 and never in the Septuagint, though oinophlygein is used in Deuteronomy 21:20 and Isaiah 56:12. Because oinophlygia refers to something worse than methe, Philo listed it among the "extreme lusts." Strictly speaking, oinophlygia means "insatiate desire for wine" or "insatiate desire." Commonly, however, oinophlygia is used to refer to a debauch, to an extravagant indulgence in alcoholic beverages that may permanently damage the body. According to Arrian, this type of fatal orgy was responsible for the death of Alexander the Great.

**Komos** is found only in the plural in the New Testament, where it is translated in the Authorized Version once as "rioting" (Ro 13:13) and twice as "revelings" (Gal 5:21; 1 Pe 4:3). Komos unites the concepts of rioting and revelry. At the same time, komos often refers to the company of revelers themselves to a festive company that is not necessarily riotous and drunken. Generally, however, komos refers to excess and is applied in a special sense to troops of drunken revelers who at the end of their revels, with garlands on their heads, with torches in their hands, and with shouting and singing pass to the harlots' houses or wander through the streets insulting everyone they meet. In the indignant words of Milton: "When night darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine." Plutarch characterized the mad drunken march of Alexander and his army through Carmania on their return from their Indian expedition as a komos.

**Kraipale** is another word whose derivation remains obscure. In the New Testament it occurs only in Luke 21:34, where it is translated as "surfeiting," "carousing," or "dissipation." It does not occur in the Septuagint, though the verb kraipalao is used three times ( Psalm 78:65; Isaiah 24:20; Isaiah 29:9). The early sense of the English word **fulsomeness** would express kraipale very well, though fulsomeness refers to the disgust and loathing that arise from eating too much meat and drinking too much wine, while kraipale refers only to the latter.

**Worries** (anxieties, cares)(3308)(**merimna** from **merizo** = to draw different directions exactly what **anxiety** does!) refers to cares (the only way KJV translates this word), distractions or concerns. It is often used in a negative sense and thus is translated as "**worry**". From the origin, one can see that **merimna** describes the state of "being pulled apart." Thus when circumstances are difficult, it is easy to let oneself be dominated by anxiety and worry. **TDNT** says in classic Greek **merimna** in the plural (it is plural in this verse) was "often used for the cares of life which disturb sleep, from which refuge is sought in love or drink, and which only death can end."

**Worry** has a fascinating **etymology** = Worrying may shorten one's life, but not as quickly as it once did. The ancestor of our word, Old English **wyrgan**, meant "to strangle." (**Ed note**: Isn't this what worry does to our joy?) Its Middle English descendant, **worien**, kept this sense and developed the new sense "to grasp by the throat with the teeth and lacerate" or "to kill or injure by biting and shaking." This is the way wolves or dogs might attack sheep, for example. In the 16th century worry began to be used in the sense "to harass, as by

rough treatment or attack,” or “to assault verbally,” and in the 17th century the word took on the sense “to bother, distress, or persecute.” It was a small step from this sense to the main modern senses “to cause to feel anxious or distressed” and “to feel troubled or uneasy,” first recorded in the 19th century. ([American Heritage Dictionary](#))

The word merimna is used in the parable of the soils in all three synoptic Gospels...

Matthew 13:22+ “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the **worry** of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth **choke the word**, and it becomes unfruitful.

Mark 4:18-19+ “And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the **worries** of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and **choke the word**, and it becomes unfruitful.

Luke 8:14+ “The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are **choked** with **worries** and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

**Comment:** Notice the effect of worries on the germination of the Gospel seed is to choke it out. It stands to reason that worries can exert a similar effect on the Word even in the lives of believers.

**Suddenly** (160) [aiphnidios](#) from [aiphnes](#) = unexpected, sudden) describes that which is unexpected or unforeseen. It is something that one cannot anticipate nor understand how it happened. In 1Th 5:3 [aiphnidios](#) is at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis and refers to the sudden, unexpected, unforeseen destruction accompanying the last 3.5 year period referred to as the **Great Tribulation** (Mt 24:21), the time of **Jacob's distress or trouble** (Jeremiah 30:7 “*Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it.*”) or the **time of distress** in (Daniel 12:1 “... *And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.*”)

**Trap** (snare) (3803) ([pagis](#) from [pegnumi](#) = set up, fix) is a trap (as that which is fixed or fastened by a noose or notch) and which can fall unexpectedly or suddenly (so that wild animals and birds are caught by surprise). **Pagis** was used in Greek for a “net” (a piece of equipment for a bird-catcher), a “snare” or a “**mousetrap**.” In short a **pagis** is that which causes one to be suddenly endangered or unexpectedly brought under control of a hostile force. **A T Robertson** on **pagis** - Paul uses it several times of the devil's snares for preachers (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26).

**Pagis** - 5x - Lk. 21:34; Rom. 11:9; 1 Tim. 3:7; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Tim. 2:26

**Friberg** on **pagis** - (1) literally, anything that catches and holds fast snare, trap, noose, net (Lk 21.35); (2) metaphorically; (a) used in Ro 11.9 of a false sense of security that leads to a sudden and unexpected judgment pitfall, concealed danger, source of error; (b) as a stratagem of the devil for gaining control deceitful trick, entanglement (1Ti 3.7); (3) figuratively, as any allurement to wrongdoing enticement, temptation, attraction (1Ti 6.9) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**NET Note on like a trap** - The metaphor of a trap is a vivid one. Most modern English translations traditionally place the words “like a trap” at the end of v. 34, completing the metaphor. In the Greek text (and in the NRSV and REB) the words “like a trap” are placed at the beginning of v. 35. This does not affect the meaning.

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The day of the Son's return is clearly a truth that the Spirit deems to be of highest import and priority. Why do I say that?

For every prophecy on the first coming of Christ, there are 8 on Christ's second coming!

**ONE IN EVERY 30 NT VERSES REFER TO THE SECOND COMING!** - More than a fourth of the Bible is predictive prophecy. Approximately one-third of it has yet to be fulfilled. Both the Old and New Testaments are full of promises about the return of Jesus Christ. Over 1,800 references appear in the Old Testament, and 17 Old Testament books give prominence to this theme. Of the 260 chapters in the New Testament, there are more than 300 references to the Lord's return – one out of every 30 verses. Twenty-three of the twenty-seven New Testament books refer to this great event. Three of the four other books are single-chapter letters written to individuals concerning a particular subject, and the fourth is Galatians, which does imply Christ's coming again. For every prophecy on the first coming of Christ, there are 8 on Christ's second coming. George Sweeting

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**Repeated Promises Of Coming** - Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with promises of the Second Coming of Christ.

There are 1,845 references to it in the Old Testament, and a total of seventeen Old Testament books give it prominence. Of the 260 chapters in the entire New Testament, there are 318 references to the Second Coming, or one out of 30 verses. Twenty-three of the 27 New Testament books refer to this great event. The four missing books include three which are single-chapter letters written to individual persons on a particular subject, and the fourth is Galatians which does imply Christ's coming again. For every prophecy on the First Coming of Christ, there are 8 on Christ's Second Coming. - Paul Lee Tan (presumably he is quoting Sweeting above)

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**J C Ryle - Let us learn from these verses — the *spiritual danger* to which even the holiest believers are exposed in this world.** Our Lord says to His disciples, "Watch out! Or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life — and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap!"

These words are exceedingly startling. They were not addressed to carnal-minded Pharisees, or skeptical Sadducees, or worldly Herodians. They were addressed to Peter, James, and John, and the whole company of the Apostles. They were addressed to men who had given up everything for Christ's sake, and had proved the reality of their faith by loving obedience and steady adhesion to their Master. Yet even to them, our Lord holds out the peril of carousing, and drunkenness, and worldliness! Even to them He says, "Watch out!"

The exhortation before us should teach us the immense importance of *humility*. There is no sin so great — but a great saint may fall into it. There is no saint so great — but he may fall into a great sin. *Noah* escaped the pollutions of the world before the flood — and yet he was afterwards overtaken by drunkenness. *Abraham* was the father of the faithful — and yet through unbelief he said falsely that Sarah was his sister. *Lot* did not take part in the horrible wickedness of Sodom — and yet he afterwards fell into foul sin in the cave. *Moses* was the meekest man on earth — and yet he so lost self-control that he spoke angrily and unadvisedly. David was a man after God's own heart — and yet he plunged into most heinous adultery.

These examples are all deeply instructive. They all show the wisdom of our Lord's warning in the passage before us. They teach us to be "clothed with humility." "Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." (1 Peter 5:5; 1 Corinthians 10:12.)

The exhortation before us should teach us the great importance of an unworldly spirit. The "cares of this life" are placed side by side with carousing and drunkenness.

Excess in eating and drinking, is not the only excess which injures the soul. There is an excessive anxiety about the innocent things of this life — which is just as ruinous to our spiritual prosperity, and just as poisonous to the soul.

Never, never let us forget — that we may make spiritual shipwreck on lawful things — as really and truly as on open vices! Happy is he who has learned to hold the things of this world with a loose hand, and to believe that seeking first the kingdom of God, "all other things shall be added to him!" (Matthew 6:33.)

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**Steven Cole** - According to a survey published by U.S. News and World Report in late 1997, two-thirds of American adults believe that Jesus someday will return to Earth. However, most who believe in Christ's return placed it well beyond their lifetime, with 33 percent saying it will happen more than a few hundred years from now. Among us, I would guess that belief in Christ's return is near 100 percent. **Yet I wonder how much the awareness of His return affected your life this past week? Did it figure in how you spent your time? Did it fill you with hope as you faced a trial or crisis? Did it enable you to resist temptation, as you thought about what it will be like to stand before Him on that great day? Did it determine how you spent your money as a steward who will give an account? Or did you even think at all about Christ's soon coming as you went about your week?** If the second coming of Jesus Christ is not a major factor in your normal Christian life, you are missing one of the most powerful biblical motivations to godly living....

**ILLUSTRATION** - I (Steven Cole) once worked at the swanky Drake Hotel in Chicago. Years before I was there, in July of 1959, Queen Elizabeth was scheduled to visit Chicago. Elaborate preparations were made for her visit. The waterfront was readied for docking her ship. Litter baskets were painted and a red carpet was ready to be rolled out for her to walk on. Many hotels were alerted to be ready. But when they contacted the Drake, the manager said, "We are making no plans for the Queen. Our rooms are always ready for royalty." That's how our lives should be in light of Christ's return. We shouldn't have to make any special or unusual preparations. We should live each day alert and ready, dependent on Him in prayer, and obedient to His Word. When the world is gripped with fear because of frightening events, we should look up, filled with hope because our redemption draws near.

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**Oswald Chambers - CHRISTIAN SEEMLINESS** (Luke 21:34–6). - **Seemliness** is conduct in accordance with the highest standard recognised. Our Lord in these verses describes the character of Christian conduct in the confusion at the end of this dispensation, that is, the day in which we live.

In Luke 21:34 Our Lord warns against the subtleties of indulgence; in Lk 21:35 He describes the snare of war and confusion as

inevitable, and in Lk 21:36 He urges Christians to strenuously maintain their integrity.

#### **Subtleties of Indulgence - 'And take heed to yourselves lest ...' (Lk 21:34).**

The most startling thing about this verse is that the Lord should have considered it necessary to warn Christians lest they sought distraction in these times of confusion by dissipation or drunkenness.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

This verse is another indication of how our Lord will not allow Christians to build their conduct on suppositions based on ignorant innocence, but only on the revelation facts which He Himself gives. For instance, we should feel quite sure that we were not at all likely to seek distraction in these ways: but let us not forget that our Lord said. 'Take heed to yourselves lest ...'

In this present war there have been many attempts to inculcate seemliness of conduct in the British Empire according to the highest standard of nobility accepted by our nation, and it behoves us as saints to see that we conduct ourselves according to the plan laid down for us by our Lord.

Although our Lord talks of distraction in its final stages, we must remember that He condemns it in its initial stages. The beginning of surfeiting is indifference to present conditions from self-indulgence. We must take heed that in the present calamities, when war and devastation and heart-break are abroad in the world, we do not shut ourselves up in a world of our own and ignore the demand made on us by our Lord and our fellow-men for the service of intercessory prayer and hospitality and care.

This same line of things holds good with regard to the dissipation of drunkenness and the cares of this life. The latter distraction to Christians is the most dangerous of all. A Christian must see to it that his interest in his possessions is not of such vital order that he is distracted from God in this present confusion. Our Lord says that if these things are not heeded 'that day will come upon us unawares.' If in that day any Christian finds himself in a panic, that is a sin which must be confessed and the burden of criminal carelessness laid at our Lord's feet, with a determination to follow a course more seemly according to God's standard for His saints.

#### **Snare of The Inevitable - Luke 21:35**

'... for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth' (v. 35).

This verse states that the sudden arriving of this day of confusion will ensnare the whole world. It is not stated as a probability but as an inevitable certainty, and Christians are counselled by our Lord to lay their account with the inevitable. Civilisation and its amenities are made possible by Christianity, but they are not Christianity, and it is these amenities which ensnare and devastate in the time in which we live, and if we by unspiritual self-indulgence have been living our life in the externals, we shall be caught by this crisis and whirled into confusion. There is a false sense of security produced by considering that there is safety in numbers, but our Lord in this verse states that the consternation will embrace 'all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth,' so that instead of numbers proving a security it proves an added element of terror. Have we taken heed and laid our account with these stern certainties, or are we as Christians indulging in the infatuation of any false security?

#### **Strenuousness of Integrity - Luke 21:36**

'Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape ...' (v. 36).

The striking thing about these words is that the escape is not the free gift of God, but the result of Christian integrity. This verse is positive in its counsel as the other verses are positive in their commands. The counsel is to keep awake and pray. That our Lord should think fit to counsel prayer in time of war when practical common sense would place active doing first, reveals how totally different man's conceptions are from our Lord's. Prayer seems suitable for old men and women and sentimental young people, but for all others it is apt to be looked upon as a religious weakness.

There are many things in the minds of Christians which are not yet brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, Prayer is always answered rightly by God, our Lord says; no wonder we have to keep awake and pray, for thousands of men are being hurled into eternity during this war. Are we keeping awake and praying, or are we amazed at the magnitude of the slaughter? Countries are devastated, cities are sacked, commerce is tied up, hundreds are bankrupt, millions out of work, innumerable homes are blighted and broken; are we keeping awake and praying?

When the veil is lifted we shall find that the seemly conduct of prayer wrought the things of God in men. Let us keep awake and readjust ourselves to our Lord's counsel. He counsels His children to keep alert, to be pure, to yield to no temptation to panic, to false emotion, to illegitimate gain, or to a cowardly sense of futility. We can never be where we are not, we are just where we are; let us keep alert and pray just there for His sake. Then our Lord says we shall be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man—stand, not lie, nor grovel, nor cry, but stand upright, in the full integrity of Christian manhood and womanhood before the Son of Man.

The seemliness of Christian conduct is not consistent adherence to a mere principle of peace, but standing true to Jesus Christ. Let us stop all futile wailings that express themselves in such statements as 'War ought not to be.' War is, and we must not waste our

time or our Lord's by giving way to any surfeit of screaming invective for or against any one or any thing; but 'casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God' in connection with ourselves, let us face life as it is, not as we feel it ought to be, for it never will be what it ought to be until the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ. Let us gird up our loins, watch and be sober, and behave in the seemly manner of those that look for their Lord.

**Luke 21:35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.**

KJV Luke 21:35 For **as a snare** (IN THIS VERSE IN [TEXTUS RECEPTUS](#) BUT MODERN MANUSCRIPTS PLACE IT IN Lk 21:34) shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

BGT Luke 21:35 ς παγ ς πεισελε σεται γ ρ π π ντας το ς καθημ νους π πρ σωπον π σης τ ς γ ς.

NET Luke 21:34 "But be on your guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day close down upon you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will overtake all who live on the face of the whole earth.

CSB Luke 21:35 like a trap. For it will come on all who live on the face of the whole earth.

ESV Luke 21:34 "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.

NIV Luke 21:34 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.

NLT Luke 21:35 like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth.

NRS Luke 21:35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.

YLT Luke 21:35 for as a snare it shall come on all those dwelling on the face of all the land,

GWN Luke 21:35 like a trap that catches a bird. That day will surprise all people who live on the earth.

NKJ Luke 21:35 "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

- **As a snare** (ONLY IN [TEXTUS RECEPTUS](#)) Ps 11:6; Ecclesiastes 9:12; Isaiah 24:17,18; Jeremiah 48:43,44; Revelation 16:15
- **all those who dwell on the face of all the earth** Luke 17:37; Genesis 7:4; Acts 17:26
- of the whole earth Or, "of this whole land; the land of Judea, on which these heavy judgments were to fall."
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:34-36 The Believer's Gift to Christ](#) - John MacArthur

## **THE BAD NEWS FOR ALL WHO REJECT THE GOOD NEWS!**

**For (gar)** is a term of explanation. What is Jesus explaining? What is the context? Clearly the context is the unknown **day** of His glorious return (Mt 24:30+, Lk 21:27+). And while Luke does not tell us, Matthew and Mark tell us that we cannot know the day nor the hour of Jesus' return (Mt 24:36 Mk 13:32). And so Luke says it will occur so fast, it will be analogous to a **trap** (Lk 21:34).

**It will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth-** "**It**" is the **DAY** of Jesus' return and "**It**" will be **like a trap** to [earth dwellers](#). Notice the two uses of "**ALL**" indicating that Jesus is making an "**ALL-inclusive**" statement. NO ONE can hide from His glory! In Philippians Paul speaks of a future time when all will bow their knees (Php 2:9-11-note, quoting Isa 45:23). While the exact timing of that event is not clearly stated, **all** men could bow at His Second Coming which would make sense because He returns as **King of kings and Lord of lords** (Rev 19:16±, cf Mt 16:27, 25:31-46) and men have always bowed before earthly kings, so surely they will bow before the **King of kings!** Another time they might bow before Him is at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15±) where Jesus sits as Judge (cf 2 Ti 4:1-note, John 5:22-27, Acts 10:42, 17:31+, Ro 2:16+). ([See additional](#)

[explanation regarding when all will bow](#)) Jesus' words are surely a call for serious, sober-minded self-examination (cf 2 Cor 13:5+).

**On the face of all the earth** - Signifies this is not restricted to just those in Judea (Lk 21:21) but is a global event.

**Guzik** comments that "In a lesser and more immediate sense regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, those who listened to and obeyed Jesus escaped the horrible destruction that came upon the city. ii. Regarding the far greater destruction that is coming upon the whole earth, those who listen to and obey Jesus can escape the horrible destruction that will come." ([Luke 21](#))

**Come upon** ([1898](#))([epeiserchomai](#)) is found only here in the Bible and describes something as happening suddenly and forcibly coming in on the [earth dwellers](#) and taking them by surprise.

**Tony Garland** has an interesting note on [earth dwellers](#), a description that is found several times in the Revelation (describing the time prior to Jesus' Second Coming in glory)...

The tribulation and wrath associated with this coming hour is intended to test those whose home, citizenship, and focus is earthward rather than heavenly. The phrase those who dwell upon the earth takes on a soteriological/eschatological meaning in the book of Revelation for it denotes the unsaved at the time of the end who steadfastly continue in their rejection of God. In contrast to the faithful who are aliens and sojourners upon the earth (Lev. 25:23; Nu 18:20, 23; 1Chr. 29:15; Ps. 39:12; 119:19; John. 15:19; 17:14, 16; Php. 3:20+; Heb. 11:13; 1Pe. 2:11) and whose hope is heavenward (Heb. 11:13-16; Rev. 13:6+), these that dwell upon the earth are trusting in man and his environment. These are the spiritual offspring of the humanists of our day. Believers are not among these earth dwellers, for the earth dwellers ultimately hate believers: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19). When the earth dwellers give us praise and are in love with us, then it is time for us to reassess the validity of our heavenly witness. (See [earth dwellers](#))

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**J C Ryle - Let us learn secondly from these verses — the exceeding *suddenness* of our Lord's second coming.** We read, "That day will close on you *unexpectedly* like a trap!" It will come as a *trap* falling suddenly on an animal, and catching it in a moment — as the *lightning* flash shining suddenly in the sky, before the thunder is heard — as a *thief* coming suddenly in the night, and not giving notice that he will come — so sudden, so instantaneous will the second coming of the Son of man be!

The precise date of our Lord Jesus Christ's return to this world, has been *purposely withheld* from us by God. "Of that day and hour — no man knows." On one point however, all the teaching of Scripture about it is clear and unmistakable. Whenever it shall take place — it will be a most *sudden* and *unexpected* event. The business of the world shall be going on as usual. As in the days of Sodom, and the days before the flood — men shall be "eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage." Few, even among true believers, shall be found completely alive to the great fact, and living in a state of thorough expectation.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the whole course of the world shall be stopped. The King of kings shall appear. The dead shall be raised. The living shall be changed. Unbelief shall wither away. Truth shall be known *too late* by myriads! The world with all its trifles and shadows shall be thrust aside. Eternity with all its solemn realities shall begin. All this shall begin at once, without notice, without warning, without note of preparation. "That day will close on you *unexpectedly* like a trap!"

"perpetual preparedness to meet Christ."

The servant of God must surely see that there is only one state of mind which befits the man who believes these things. That state is one of *perpetual preparedness* to meet Christ. The Gospel does not call us to retire from earthly callings, or neglect the duties of our stations. It does not bid us to retire into hermitages, or live the life of a monk or a nun. But it does bid us to live like men who expect their Lord to return! *Repentance* toward God, *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and *holiness* of conduct — are the only true habitual preparations required. The Christian who knows these things by experience — is the man who is always ready to meet his Lord.

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**Related Resource:** Second Coming of Christ - multiple devotionals, quotes

During World War II occurred early in the war when the Japanese army stormed the Philippines and forced United States General Douglas MacArthur to leave the islands. Upon leaving the Philippines, General MacArthur declared his famous promise, "I shall return." And he did, walking ashore a victor at Leyte in the Philippines several years later. In an even more famous quote, the Captain of the hosts, the Lord Jesus Christ declared to His fearful band of disciples "I will come again" (John 14:3)

He that rose from the clods we expect from the clouds.

- Thomas Adams

A little while—then Christ will come;  
The glorious hour draws nigh  
When He will come to take His bride  
To dwell with Him on high.  
—Gilmore

Christ's second coming is as certain as His first.

When it comes to belief in the Lord's return there are two kinds of Christians—gazers and goers.

He is coming! Oh, the rapture  
To behold His lovely face,  
And to tell Him how I love Him,  
Who has saved me by His grace.  
—Dimmock

Christ is coming—perhaps today!

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He who loves the coming of the Lord is not he who affirms it is far off, nor is it he who says it is near. It is he who, whether it be far or near, awaits it with sincere faith, stead-fast hope and fervent love. - Augustine

That day lies hid that every day we be on the watch. - Augustine

In the first advent God veiled his divinity to prove the faithful; in the second advent he will manifest his glory to reward their faith. -Chrysostom

The only remedy for all this mass of misery is the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why do we not plead for it every time we hear the clock strike? - Anthony Ashley Cooper

As Christians, we should not be exitists, looking for our going, but adventists, looking for his coming. - William Freel

The subject of the second coming of Christ has never been popular to any but the true believer. - Billy Graham

Christ hath told us he will come, but not when, that we might never put off our clothes, or put out the candle. - William Gurnall

Oh, the joy to see thee reigning, Thee, my own beloved Lord! Every tongue thy name confessing, Worship, honour, glory, blessing, Brought to thee with glad accord—Thee, my Master and my Friend, Vindicated and enthroned, Unto earth's remotest end Glorified, adored and owned! - Frances Ridley Havergal

Christ will come when he pleases, to show his sovereignty, and will not let us know when, to teach us our duty. - Matthew Henry

If this (Second Coming) is not an integral part of the faith once given to the saints, I do not know what is. - C. S. Lewis

Precisely because we cannot predict the moment, we must be ready at all moments. - C. S. Lewis

The primitive church thought a great deal more about the coming of Christ than about death, and thought a great deal more about his coming than about heaven. - Alexander Maclaren

I never preach a sermon without thinking that possibly the Lord may come before I preach another. - D. L. Moody

Christ is coming to the earth, in such form at least as shall fulfil his purposes of mercy to his friends and justice to his foes. - Thomas V. Moore

I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that perhaps he may interrupt my work and begin his own. I am not looking for death, I am looking for him. - G. Campbell Morgan

There is such a danger of our being so occupied with the things that are to come more than with him who is to come. - Andrew Murray

Millions of graves are dug every year, but it is inspiring to think that one generation of Christians will cheat the

undertaker. - J. C. Pollock

The return of Christ represents not only the ultimate sense of accountability but the ultimate sense of hope as well. - [FBC Booklet](#)

Oh, that Christ would make long strides! Oh, that he would fold up the heavens as a cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way! - Samuel Rutherford

There shall be no time for parting words or a change of mind when the Lord appears. -J. C. Ryle

Uncertainty about the date of the Lord's return is calculated to keep believers in an attitude of constant expectation and to preserve them from despondency. - J. C. Ryle

If I knew that our Lord would come this evening, I should preach just as I mean to preach; and if I knew he would come during this sermon, I would go on preaching until he did. - C. H. Spurgeon

Oh, that the Lord would come! He is coming! He is on the road and travelling quickly. The sound of his approach should be as music to our hearts! - C. H. Spurgeon

The fact that Jesus Christ is to come again is not a reason for star-gazing, but for working in the power of the Holy Ghost. - C. H. Spurgeon

Since he may come any day, it is well to be ready every day. - J. Hudson Taylor

He who came in humility and shame will return in spectacular magnificence. - John R. W. Stott

The imminent return of our Lord is the great Bible argument for a pure, unselfish, devoted, unworldly, active life of service. - R. A. Torrey

This is pinned as a badge to the sleeve of every true believer—that he looks for and longs for Christ's coming to judgement. - John Trapp

The Christian hope is not a matter for tickling our minds, but for changing our minds and influencing society. - Stephen Travis

I am daily waiting for the coming of the Son of God. - George Whitefield

The brightness of Christ's advent will reveal the true character of those things which were previously hidden by darkness. - Geoffrey B. Wilson

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A Scottish preacher once said, "The doctrine of the Lord's second coming, as it appears in the New Testament, is like a lofty mountain that dominates the entire landscape." Commenting on that statement, author A. J. Gordon adds, "No matter what road you take, no matter what pass you tread, you will find the mountain bursting on your vision at every turn of the way, and at every parting of the hills. What first struck me in reading the New Testament was this: Whatever doctrine I was pursuing, whatever precept I was enforcing, I found it fronting toward and terminating in the hope of the Lord's second coming. All paths of obedience and service lead on to that mountain." Someone has pointed out that there are more than 300 references to Christ's return in the New Testament. One fact is clear—Jesus is coming back. Each day we are getting closer to that climactic moment. Today could be the day! - Our Daily Bread

The Lord has said He will return  
To judge the world someday;  
Are you prepared for Him to come  
Or hoping for delay?  
—Sper

**Don't complain about what this world is coming to.  
Proclaim the One who is coming to this world.**

**Luke 21:36 "But **keep on the alert** at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."**

BGT Luke 21:36 γρυπνετε δ ν παντ καιρ δε μενοι να κατασχητε κφυγε ν τα τα π ντα τ μλλοντα γ νεσθαι κα σταθ ναι μπροσθεν το υ ο το νθρ που.

KJV Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be **accounted worthy** ([kataxioo](#)) to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

NET Luke 21:36 But stay alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that must happen, and to stand before the Son of Man."

CSB Luke 21:36 But be alert 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."

ESV Luke 21:36 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."

NIV Luke 21:36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

NLT Luke 21:36 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."

NRS Luke 21:36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

YLT Luke 21:36 watch ye, then, in every season, praying that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are about to come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

GWN Luke 21:36 Be alert at all times. Pray so that you have the power to escape everything that is about to happen and to stand in front of the Son of Man."

NKJ Luke 21:36 "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."

NAB Luke 21:36 Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man."

NJB Luke 21:36 Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to hold your ground before the Son of man.'

ASV Luke 21:36 But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

- **But keep on the alert at all times** Luke 12:37-40; Matthew 24:42; 25:13; 26:41; Mark 13:33,37; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Peter 4:7; 5:8
- **praying** Luke 18:1; Job 27:10; Acts 10:2; Ephesians 6:18,19; Colossians 4:2; 1 Th 5:17
- **that you may have strength** Luke 20:35; 2 Th 1:5,6
- **to stand before the Son of Man** Ps 1:5; Malachi 3:2; Ephesians 6:13,14; 1 John 2:28; Jude 1:24-25
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:34-36 The Believer's Gift to Christ](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passages:

Psalms 1:5 Therefore **the wicked will not stand in the judgment**, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

Malachi 3:2 "But who can endure the day of His coming? **And who can stand when He appears?** For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, **we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame** at His coming.

Jude 1:24-25 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and **to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy**, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty,



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## BE READY FOR THE RETURN OF THE KING OF KINGS

But **keep on the alert at all times** - Why "all times"? So that we are **ALWAYS** ready for His appearing at **ALL TIMES** because He could return at **ANY TIME!** **Keep on the alert** is in the [present imperative](#) which calls for us to continually [depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#). The idea is to not fall into spiritual slumber. Do not be entangled by the world's enticements which will blunt your vertical vision of the things of eternity!

**THOUGHT** - Does this describe your (my) lifestyle? I hope you are as convicted as I am!

**Keep on the alert** (keep watch)(69)([agrupneo](#) from **a** = without + **hupnos** = sleep; cp **agrupnia** - 2Co 6:5, 11:27) literally means to abstain completely from sleep, pass sleepless nights, to be sleepless, to lie awake and think about (Liddell Scott) to stay alert, and then figuratively to stay alert, to remain vigilant and fully aware of threatening peril, "to be alertly concerned about" (BDAG). The figurative picture is one who is spiritually alert and wide awake to spiritual intrusions (Mk 13:33, Lk 21:36, Ep 6:18). **Wuest** adds that **agrupneo** "is the opposite of listlessness, expressing alertness." ([Ref](#)) In sum, **agrupneo** expresses wakefulness and watchfulness, for the latter could hardly transpire without the former.

It is interesting that **BDAG** has two meanings for **agrupneo**, the first meaning "to be vigilant in awareness of threatening peril" which indeed would apply to all who are unbelievers, who are in great peril should Jesus return and they have procrastinated in regard to believing in Him! The second meaning in **BDAG** is to "be alertly concerned about" and would be apropos for all genuine believers. We keep alert because of our hope of heaven, while the lost world is vigilant regarding the peril of hell. Share the Good News with someone this week beloved reader! While we still have time! (cf 2 Cor 6:2).

**A T Robertson** - This means to be sleepless and so keep awake and be ready is the pith of Christ's warning.

**Times** (2540)([kairos](#)) in this context refers to all points of time, past, present, or future time, those times marked by suitability season, (favorable) time, opportunity (2 Cor 6.2). Jesus is saying that all times are the season for prayer, but is especially referring to the "last season," on earth preceding His return.

## LOOK OUT! LOOK UP!

**Praying** ([deomai](#)) that you may have strength ([katischuo](#)) to escape ([ekpheugo](#)) all these things that are about to take place- **Praying** is present tense calling for continual prayer (and/or an attitude that is ready to pray at all times), which calls for continual [depend on the Holy Spirit](#). Recall the context -- Jesus is speaking of the **last days**, specifically the "last of the **last days**," the days that precede the **DAY** of His true "triumphal entry." Paul warned "that in the last days difficult (hard to bear, troublesome, perilous, violent dangerous, savage) times ([kairos](#)) will come." (2Ti 3:1+). The last days will require Spirit energized perseverance in prayer, continually seeking God's face that we might remain sober minded and alert. Continually praying will give spiritual strength so that we may **escape all these things that are about to take place**. Perseverance in prayer will enable perseverance in persecution, "so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. (1Jn 2:28+)

Paul linked the verb [agrupneo](#) and the cognate of [deomai](#) ([deesis](#)) in his exhortation to the saints at Ephesus in the context of (1) being Spirit filled (Eph 5:18+) and (2) aware of ongoing spiritual warfare and the need to "fight on one's knees!" Imagine the "spiritual warfare" in the last of the last days! Prayer will need to be a priority!

With all prayer and petition ([deesis](#)) pray at all times in the Spirit (THE ONLY WAY TO PRAY "IN THE SPIRIT" IS TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT!), and with this in view, **be on the alert** ([agrupneo](#)) with all perseverance and petition ([deesis](#)) for all the saints, (Ephesians 6:18+)

**Related Resource:**

- [Praying in the Spirit](#)

**Praying** (beseeching, begging) (1189)(**deomai** from **deo** = to bind) means to ask for something with the sense of pleading, beseeching or begging and with a sense of urgency and a presumed need. When used in the context of prayer **deomai** means to make petition, to implore (pray for earnestly) and emphasizes the existence of a need. **Deomai** is a strong way to ask for something - a leper imploring Jesus to heal him (Lk 5:12), a father's desperate plea to Jesus to cast a demon out of his son (Lk 9:38). Saints in the end time before Jesus returns will have a similar need, because the magnitude of the evil in these days will be "*palpable!*"

All of Luke's uses of **deomai** - Lk. 5:12; Lk. 8:28; Lk. 8:38; Lk. 9:38; Lk. 9:40; Lk. 10:2; Lk. 21:36; Lk. 22:32; Acts 4:31; Acts 8:22; Acts 8:24; Acts 8:34; Acts 10:2; Acts 21:39; Acts 26:3

**John MacArthur** comments "Throughout the New Testament saints are instructed to continue in the faith and warned not to turn back (e.g., Matt. 24:13; John 8:31; Col. 1:21-23; Heb. 3:6, 14; Heb 10:39). Two promises are given to those who faithfully persevere. First, they will escape all these things that are about to take place; that is, the future and eternal judgments associated with Christ's Second Coming in power and glory (1 Th. 1:10; 1 Th 5:9). The believers of the church age will be raptured before the tribulation begins and thus escape the future judgments (cf. Rev 3:10) (Ed: [See this sermon for why MacArthur favors a pre-trib rapture](#) - scroll to middle of page); those alive during the tribulation will be protected from the outpouring of God's wrath on unbelievers. Second, having escaped divine judgment, they will stand before the Son of Man, receiving acceptance, approval, and welcome from Him. No one can do so in his own strength." (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Have strength** (2729)(**katischuo** from **kata** = against + **ischuo** = to prevail) means to be strong against someone or something and so to prevail over. In a hostile sense (Mt 16:18) it means to overcome or vanquish, getting the upper hand, so to speak. Used only 3 times in the NT - Mt 16:18, Lk 21:36. **Katischuo** is used to describe the cry to crucify Jesus in Lk 23:23+, which was so loud and persistent by the Jews, that they prevailed with Pilate. O, the difference a few days can make in one's heart response -- they hailed Him and wanted to crown Him King on His Triumphal Entry (Lk 19:38+) and now they cry for His crucifixion like a criminal. But Jesus always gets the last word for He uses **katischuo** in His prophecy "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not **overpower** (**katischuo**) it."

The first use of this verb in the Septuagint is in Genesis 49:24 where it used as one of three descriptions of the coming Messiah as "the **Mighty One** (**katischuo**) of Jacob, (from there is the **Shepherd**, the **Stone** of Israel)." In Ex 17:11 "So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed (**katischuo**)." Moses prays for his replacement "Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; **encourage him** (Lxx = **katischuo** = a prayer to strengthen him), for he will cause Israel to inherit it." (Dt 1:38, cf Dt 3:28)

**Gilbrant** adds that **katischuo** "abounds in the Septuagint, translating 16 different Hebrew verbs, most often **chāzaq** meaning "be stronger than, prevail against." In Joshua 17:13 the Israelites are described as "stronger" than the Canaanites, yet they failed in that they did not "utterly drive" the Canaanites out. Frequently this ability to "be stronger" is attributed to God (2 Chr 25:8; Ps 89:21; Hag 2:4). In all occurrences of **katischuo** it is clear that ultimately the righteous will "prevail against" the wicked. (Ibid)

**Katischuo** occurs 103x in 96v in the Septuagint - Gen. 49:24; Exod. 1:7; Exod. 7:13; Exod. 17:11; Exod. 18:23; Deut. 1:38; Deut. 2:30; Deut. 3:28; Jos. 11:20; Jos. 17:13; Jos. 23:6; Jdg. 6:2; Jdg. 7:8; Jdg. 9:24; 1 Sam. 19:8; 2 Ki. 14:5; 2 Ki. 22:5; 2 Ki. 24:2; 1 Chr. 5:20; 1 Chr. 11:10; 1 Chr. 15:26; 1 Chr. 21:6; 1 Chr. 22:12; 1 Chr. 29:12; 2 Chr. 8:3; 2 Chr. 11:12; 2 Chr. 11:17; 2 Chr. 12:13; 2 Chr. 13:18; 2 Chr. 13:21; 2 Chr. 14:11; 2 Chr. 15:8; 2 Chr. 16:9; 2 Chr. 17:1; 2 Chr. 22:9; 2 Chr. 24:5; 2 Chr. 25:8; 2 Chr. 25:11; 2 Chr. 26:7; 2 Chr. 26:8; 2 Chr. 26:9; 2 Chr. 26:15; 2 Chr. 26:16; 2 Chr. 27:5; 2 Chr. 27:6; 2 Chr. 28:23; 2 Chr. 31:4; 2 Chr. 32:4; 2 Chr. 32:5; 2 Chr. 34:10; 2 Chr. 35:2; 2 Chr. 36:13; Job 18:9; Ps. 89:21; Isa. 22:4; Isa. 24:20; Isa. 42:25; Isa. 50:11; Isa. 54:2; Isa. 63:12; Jer. 8:21; Jer. 15:18; Ezek. 3:8; Ezek. 13:22; Ezek. 30:24; Dan. 8:8; Dan. 8:9; Dan. 9:25; Dan. 10:8; Dan. 10:18; Dan. 11:2; Dan. 11:5; Dan. 11:6; Dan. 11:7; Dan. 11:12; Dan. 11:19; Dan. 11:21; Dan. 11:32; Dan. 12:3; Hos. 7:15; Hos. 14:8; Hag. 2:4; Zech. 8:9; Zech. 8:13; Zech. 10:6; Zech. 10:12

In place of "**that you may have strength**" the Lu 21:36KJV translation has "that ye may **be accounted worthy**." The **KJV** is translated from the [Greek Textus Receptus](#) not the more modern (and supposedly more accurate) manuscript used by NAS, ESV, NIV, NLT, etc. The difference is that in place of the newer manuscripts verb, the Textus Receptus uses **kataxioo**.

**J Vernon McGee** - How are you going to be **worthy**? The only thing that will make me worthy is my position in Christ. Therefore, I have trusted Him as my Savior, and I have committed my way to Him, so that if I am alive at the time of the Rapture, I'll be going to meet Him in the air by the grace of God.

**Accounted worthy** (2661)(**kataxioo** from **kata** = intensifies + **axioo** [from **axios**] = to think worthy) means to count worthy of

something. To be thought of as deserving. All the NT uses are in the passive voice ("to be counted worthy"). This is not speaking of one who is worthy because of something they have done to merit God accounting them as worthy, but they are accounted worthy because of the gift of God's unmerited favor! There is none worthy, no not one, *EXCEPT* for the Lamb Who Alone is worthy (Rev 5:12+) and with Whom every believer is in Covenant by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+).

**Kataxioo** - 4x in 4v - Lk. 20:35; Lk. 21:36; Acts 5:41; 2 Th 1:5

Luke 20:35-note but those who are **considered worthy** to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;

Acts 5:41 (CONTEXT Acts 5:40 - AFTER THE DISCIPLES WERE BEATEN FOR THEIR TESTIMONY OF JESUS! TALK ABOUT HOLY SPIRIT POWER!) So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they **had been considered worthy** to suffer shame for His Name.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you **will be considered worthy** of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.

**Steve Lewis** explains **considered worthy** in 2 Th 1:5 - The Thessalonian believers are **considered worthy** of the kingdom of God because they have kept their faith in Christ, even when faced with severe opposition. The verb **considered worthy** (**kataxioo**) does not mean to **make** one worthy, but to **declare** one is worthy. This verb is an aorist passive infinitive = "to have been declared worthy at a specific point in time." It is unfortunate that many English Bibles have translated this as if it were a future tense (NASB, HCSB, NIV are examples). **They have already been declared worthy**, but in a future sense at the time the millennial kingdom begins they certainly "will be" shown to have been worthy. Their worthiness to participate in the kingdom of God was established well before persecution came upon them -- it was established when they placed their faith and trust in what Christ did on their behalf by dying on the cross. There is no human effort involved in meriting the kingdom of God. These believers had outwardly confirmed the inward truth (BY THEIR SPIRIT ENABLED RESPONSE TO PERSECUTION) that they indeed are Church-age saints who will eventually rule with Christ during His 1000-year kingdom on earth (see 1 Th 2:12+ and 2 Ti 2:12+ = "if we endure, we will reign with Him" - we are enabled to endure ONLY because He gives us the *supernatural* power to endure, to do what we could never do in our *natural* strength!). Their response to life's trials definitely confirmed that they already had a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The phrase **for which** does not mean "*in order to gain the kingdom*" but "*in the name or interest of the kingdom*" -- **their suffering was not in order to gain more merit before God. Their suffering was because they had already been declared worthy of the kingdom. You are persecuted because you are a Christian.** (cf, Php 1:29+, 2 Ti 3:12+) ([Reference](#))

**And to stand before the Son of Man** - Meditate on these words for a moment. One day, dear follower of Christ, you and I will be face to face with the Lover of our souls! You might even want to close your eyes and listen to Mercy Me's great song [I Can Only Imagine](#).

The apostle **John** speaks to this future "crisis" time giving us a warning

Now, little children, **abide** in Him (present imperative - the only way to daily abide in Jesus is to rely on the enabling power of His Spirit), so that (PURPOSE - WHAT PURPOSE? WHAT WE SHOULD BE ABIDING) when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. (1 John 2:28+)

As **Warren Wiersbe** says "While we must not ignore our daily duties, we must be careful to live in the light of eternity. By reminding ourselves daily that Jesus may return before the day ends, we will walk carefully so that we will not be caught unprepared when He comes." (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#) )

**To stand** means we need the strength to stand, and in a sense implies we can muster up the strength to stand! Of course, that is an absurd implication, for no creature can stand before the Creator without the sustaining supply of strength from the Savior! The good news of course is that the Savior supplies what we need, Jesus half brother recording

**Now to Him Who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy**, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25+)

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**Lawrence Richards Devotional - Do's and Don'ts to Live By** (Luke 21:5-36)

Ask a Christian to make up a list of "do's and don'ts believers should live by" and you probably won't get the Ten Commandments.

In the little church I joined after I was converted, our list had things like “don’t smoke,” “don’t drink,” “don’t go to movies,” “do be at church Sunday evening as well as morning,” and a few other similar things. Our do’s and don’ts list didn’t keep us from loving the Lord and other people. And it didn’t keep us from some of the most meaningful prayer and worship I’ve ever experienced. In fact, looking back, I doubt that the list had any great impact on my life at all—except to make me a little uncomfortable when some sailor friend lit up a cigarette in my “Christian” car.

A list of do’s and don’ts that can really make a difference is buried in Luke’s report of Jesus’ teaching on the future. Among teachings that apply directly to us are:

- Don’t follow false leaders (Lk 21:8).
- Don’t be frightened when natural and other disasters befall (Lk 21:9–11).
- Don’t be anxious if persecuted because of your Christian witness (Lk 21:12–16).

And on the positive side:

- Do persevere and maintain a firm stand when others turn against you (Lk 21:17–19).
- Do take heart; full redemption will be yours when Jesus comes (Lk 21:25–28).
- Do watch and pray, that you might live a life the Son of man will approve (Lk 21:34–36).

God’s do’s and don’ts belong at the top of our lists.

Quotable - “Have thy tools ready; God will find thee work.”—Charles Kingsley (Borrow [The 365 day devotional commentary](#))

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### **Watch therefore, and pray always. Lk 21:36**

In 1857 a money panic hit the United States. Although the entire nation was in a state of perplexity, the main force of the blow was felt in New York City, the center of finance. The now-famous Fulton Street noonday prayer meeting had been organized there a short time before the panic hit. As the uncertainty increased, this gathering grew in size and spiritual intensity. Similar groups began springing up all over the city. The movement spread across the country and a great wave of petitions ascended to heaven. Thousands of Americans turned their hearts toward God. This spiritual awakening became known as the “Prayer Meeting Revival,” and it is credited with sustaining the nation in an hour of great crisis. Imagine what great things could happen if believers from all walks of life would gather to plead for God’s mercy! If our concerns were channeled into prayer, the tide could be turned. Yes, prayer is today’s imperative. Are we doing our part?—P R. V

PRAYING IS WORKING WITH GOD.

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**F B Meyer** - Let us never release the girdle from around our loins, nor throw ourselves listlessly upon the bank to drink, whilst the enemy may be stealing up against the wind. It is the art of our great enemy to fill the air with the heavy breath of the poppy; that, like the lotus-eaters of the old legend, we may be indisposed for the perils and toils of our onward journey.

**Watch ye in the season of festivity.** — When merry voices fill the chamber with mirth, and jokes pass; old stories are retold; quaint anecdotes circulated remember to look frequently up into the Master’s face, to discover if aught has covered it with shame, or filled it with regret. Let not your heart be overcharged with surfeiting drunkenness.

**Watch ye in hours of stress and anxiety.** — These will come between the soul and Christ, oppressing us with anxious care, leading us to think too much of the things which are seen and transient, and filling our hearts with dismay, as though the future would find us orphans and homeless, because the storm had swept away some few gatherings of the earth’s perishable stores. When stocks are falling, business declining, competition increasing — Watch! Make supplication! Stand before the Son of Man as those whom He cannot forget or forsake.

**Watch ye in seasons of tender love.** — We wear armor abroad, but when we come within the closed door of the home, and our hearts expand beneath the genial warmth of kindred natures, how apt we are to cry, Now, surely, we may unbend, ungird, and let nature have free course. But the Master says, Watch ye at every season; and He reminds us that we never cease to stand before the Son of Man.

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**J C Ryle** - Let us learn, lastly, from these verses — the special duties of believers in the prospect of the second coming of Christ. Our Lord sums up these duties under two great heads. One of these two is *watchfulness*. The other is *prayer*. “Watch therefore,” He says, “and pray always.”

We are to “watch.” We are to live on our guard like men in an enemy’s country. We are to remember that evil is about us, and near

us, and in us — that we have to contend daily with a treacherous heart, an ensnaring world, and a busy devil! Remembering this, we must put on the whole armor of God, and beware of spiritual drowsiness. "Let us not sleep as others do," says Paul, "but let us watch and be sober." (1 Thessalonians 5:6.)

We are to "pray always." We are to keep up a constant habit of real, sincere prayer. We are to speak with God daily, and hold daily communion with Him about our souls. We are to pray especially for grace to lay aside every weight, and to cast away everything which may interfere with readiness to meet our Lord. Above all, we are to watch our habits of devotion with a godly jealousy, and to beware of hurrying over or shortening our prayers.

Let us leave the whole passage with a hearty determination, by God's help, to act on what we have been reading. If we believe that Christ is coming again — then let us get ready to meet Him. "If we *know* these things — happy are we if we *do* them." (John 13:17.)

**Luke 21:37 Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.**

KJV Luke 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

- **Now during the day He was teaching in the temple** Luke 22:39; Matthew 21:17; Mark 11:12; John 12:1
- **but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.** Luke 19:37; Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 26:30; Acts 1:12
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:37-22:2 God's Preparation for Christ's Cross](#) - John MacArthur

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY

This detail is found only in Luke's Gospel. MacArthur notes that "This passage (Lk 21:37-22:13) marks a major point in Luke's gospel, beginning its final and most significant section. That section, which covers the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the climax to which all that preceded it has been headed." (Ibid)

**Now during the day He was teaching ([didasko](#)) in the temple** - I don't think we have to guess at what Jesus was teaching with His last words? Surely He was teaching them of their sinful, lost condition and their desperate need for a Savior and Redeemer. Whether He explained that He was the Lamb of God that would soon be the fulfillment of the Passover Lamb is uncertain, but possible. What a model Jesus presents for all His followers -- **teaching** (present tense = continually) right up to end of His life on earth! O, to have such Spirit enabled desire and power to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ until we take our last breath (Amen). What was Jesus teaching? Luke is silent, but given these are His last words before the Cross, one has to presume He is speaking of the purpose of the Cross and the need to believe in that purpose for eternal life.

**But at evening ([nux](#)) He would go out and spend the night ([aulizomai](#)) on the mount that is called Olivet** - One might ask "Since Jesus knew these were His last hours, why didn't He teach all night, for even Paul taught all night?" (Acts 20:7-10, 11-note) Interesting question. We cannot state with absolute certainty but Jesus seems to be teaching us that we need rest for ministry, regardless of whether it is our first day or our last hours. Dear servant of Christ, are you getting enough rest or are you burning the candle at both ends and on the verge of burning out? Follow the example of Jesus and rest, using your time wisely (Eph 5:15-16+), but also resting wisely! Of course, another consideration is that He spent the night in prayer, which certainly was the case the night before His crucifixion (cf Lk 22:41-46, cf Luke 6:12-note, Mk 1:35, Mk 6:46, Jn 6:15).

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**Teaching** ([1321](#)) ([didasko](#) from [dáo](#)= know or teach) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting, passing on information focused on content, with the purpose of discovering truth, in marked contrast to the forums popular among Greeks, where discussion and the bantering about of various ideas and opinions was the primary concern (see Acts 17:21).

**Evening** (night) ([3571](#)) ([nux](#)) means night, the opposite of day, the period between sunset and sunrise (Mt. 14:25; Mk 6:48; Lk 2:8; Rev. 8:12; 21:25; 22:5; Ge. 1:5; Job 3:6, 7). In the phrase **night and day** - continually (Mk 5:5, Lk 2:37, 18:7; Acts 9:24, 26:7; 1 Th 2:9, 3:10, 2 Ti 1:3; Rev. 4:8, cf Mk 4:27, Mt 12:40 of Jonah in belly of sea monster). At midnight (Mt 25:6, Acts 27:27). Descriptive of Peter's denial (Mt 26:34). Of the lie of the Jews regarding the resurrection (Mt 27:64). Descriptive of night watches (Mk 6:48; see [watch of night](#)). Of Nicodemus visit with Jesus (Jn 3:2, 7:50, 19:39). A literal use depicting an ethical truth (Jn 11:10). Of Judas'

departure from Jesus and the other 11 disciples (Jn 13:30). Of the eschatological "night" (Ro 13:12). Descriptive of the Lord's return (1 Th 5:2, cf Mt 25:6). In the first NT use "Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still **night**, and left for Egypt." (Matt. 2:14) In Rev 22:5 John records "there will no longer be any **night**." In one of the most important NT uses Matthew 12:40 records "just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE **NIGHTS** IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three **nights** in the heart of the earth." **Vine** - metaphorically, of "the period of man's alienation from God," Ro 13:12; 1 Th 5:5 **Nux** sometimes in classical Greek was used of moral darkness. As a proper noun **nux** was the name of the Greek goddess of night. **Nux** sometimes used figuratively to mean "death" or some other calamitous circumstance.

**Friberg** - ; (1) **literally**; (a) as a period of time night (Mt 4.2), opposite hemera (day); (b) genitive *nuktos* answering the question "during what time?" during the night, at night (Jn 3.2); with prepositions: *dia nuktos* = at night, during the night (Acts 5.19); *mestes nuktos* = at midnight (Mt 25.6); (c) dative *nukti* = answering the questions "when? at what point of time?" at night; *taute te nukti*, = this very night, tonight (Mk 14.30); *te epiouse nukti*, = the following night (Acts 23.11); (d) accusative *nukta*, = answering the question " (for) how long?" for a night, throughout the night (Mt 12.40); *nukta kai hemeran* = (through) night and day (Mk 4.27); (2) **figuratively**; (a) as a symbol of death (Jn 9.4); (b) as a sphere of moral darkness (1 Th 5.5); (c) as a symbol of the present age (Ro 13.12). (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**TDNT** says **Nux** "means "night," "darkness," "the dark," and figuratively "blindness," "harm," or "death." In mythology deified Nux is a dreadful figure. Night is a time for demons and hence for magic. But it is also a time for revelations, especially by dreams as the consciousness is released from the empirical world. In the NT nux has first the literal sense of "night" (divided into three or four watches or 12 hours). Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night (Jn. 3:2). The reference to 40 days and nights (Mt. 4:2 etc.) stresses the length of time (unless it is OT pleonasm). Jesus does not fear the night, but spends nights in converse with God (Luke 6:12). The NT introduces dreams only where they mediate divine commands (Matt. 1) or instruct or exhort (Acts 16:9; 18:9; 23:11; 27:23). It may be the Lord or a messenger who issues the directions, and the revelation is at night because there is greater openness to it during the night. Since darkness is sinister, Revelation associates the darkening of the stars with judgment (8:12), and declares that there will be no darkness in the end-time (21:25)." (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume)

**Nux** - 62x in 62v - evening(1), midnight\*(2), night(55), night night(1), nights(3). Matt. 2:14; Matt. 4:2; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 14:25; Matt. 25:6; Matt. 26:31; Matt. 26:34; Matt. 27:64; Matt. 28:13; Mk. 4:27; Mk. 5:5; Mk. 6:48; Mk. 14:27; Mk. 14:30; Lk. 2:8; Lk. 2:37; Lk. 5:5; Lk. 12:20; Lk. 17:34; Lk. 18:7; Lk. 21:37; Jn. 3:2; Jn. 7:50; Jn. 9:4; Jn. 11:10; Jn. 13:30; Jn. 19:39; Jn. 21:3; Acts 5:19; Acts 9:24; Acts 9:25; Acts 12:6; Acts 16:9; Acts 16:33; Acts 17:10; Acts 18:9; Acts 20:31; Acts 23:11; Acts 23:23; Acts 23:31; Acts 26:7; Acts 27:23; Acts 27:27; Rom. 13:12; 1 Co. 11:23; 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Thess. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:2; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:7; 2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Tim. 5:5; 2 Tim. 1:3; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 4:8; Rev. 7:15; Rev. 8:12; Rev. 12:10; Rev. 14:11; Rev. 20:10; Rev. 21:25; Rev. 22:5

**Nux** in Septuagint - 294x in 279v Gen. 1:5,14,16,18; 7:4,12,17; 8:22; 14:15; 19:5,33-35; 20:3; 26:24; 30:15-16; 31:24,39-40; 32:13,21-22; 40:5; 41:11; 46:2; Exod. 10:13; 11:4; 12:8,12,29-31,42; 13:21-22; 14:20-21; 24:18; 34:28; 40:38; Lev. 6:9; 8:35; Num. 9:16,21; 11:9,32; 14:1,14; 22:8,19-20; Deut. 1:33; 9:9,11,18,25; 10:10; 16:1; 23:10; 28:66; Jos. 1:8; 2:3; 4:3; 8:3; 10:9; Jdg. 6:25,27,40; 7:9; 9:32,34; 16:2-3,16; 19:25; 20:5; Ruth 3:2,13; 1 Sam. 14:36; 15:11,16; 19:11,24; 25:16; 26:7; 28:8,20,25; 30:12; 31:12; 2 Sam. 2:29,32; 4:7; 7:4; 17:1,16; 19:7; 21:10; 1 Ki. 3:5,19-20; 8:29,59; 19:8; 2 Ki. 6:14; 7:12; 19:35; 25:4; 1 Chr. 9:33; 17:3; 2 Chr. 1:7; 6:20; 7:12; 21:9; 35:14; Neh. 1:6; 2:12,15; 4:9,22; 6:10; 9:12,19; Est. 1:1; 4:16; 6:1; Job 2:13; 3:3,6-7,9; 5:14; 7:3; 17:12; 18:15; 24:14; 27:20; 30:17; 34:25; 36:20; Ps. 1:2; 6:6; 16:7; 17:3; 19:2; 22:2; 32:4; 42:3,8; 55:10; 74:16; 77:2,6; 78:14; 88:1; 90:4; 92:2; 104:20; 105:39; 119:55; 121:6; 130:5; 134:1; 136:9; 139:11-12; Prov. 31:15,18; Eccl. 2:23; 8:16; Cant. 3:1,8; 5:2; Isa. 4:5; 15:1; 21:8,12; 26:9; 27:3; 28:19; 34:10; 38:13; 60:11,19; 62:6; Jer. 6:5; 9:1; 14:17; 31:35; 36:30; 49:9; 52:7; Lam. 1:2; 2:18-19; Dan. 2:9,19; 4:13; 5:1,30; 7:2,7,13,15; Hos. 4:5; 7:6; Amos 5:8; Obad. 1:5; Jon. 1:17; 4:10; Mic. 3:6; Zech. 1:8; 14:7

**Spend the night** (835)(**aulizomai** from **aule** = corral, enclosed space exposed to open air, a sheepfold or place where sheep are housed) means to be put or remain in a field or stable as sheep. **BDAG** - originally of spending the night in the aule, viz. in the open air, then also of temporary lodging, w. context indicating whether outdoors ('bivouac') or indoors.

**Gilbrant** - It originally may have meant "to pass the night" in the aulē, as shepherds and sheep did, more or less exposed to the open air. The emphasis is to spend time somewhere as a transient, at least overnight, and in some cases for an extended time. It does not refer to establishing a permanent residence. The word occurs nearly 50 times in the Septuagint most frequently translating a form of the Hebrew word līn, "lodge." (Ibid)

**Aulizomai** - 61x in 58v - Jdg. 18:2; Jdg. 19:4; Jdg. 19:6; Jdg. 19:7; Jdg. 19:9; Jdg. 19:10; Jdg. 19:11; Jdg. 19:13; Jdg. 19:15; Jdg. 19:20; Jdg. 20:4; Ruth 1:16; Ruth 3:13; 2 Sam. 12:16; 2 Sam. 17:16; 2 Sam. 19:7; Neh. 4:22; Neh. 13:20; Neh. 13:21; Job 11:14; Job 15:28; Job 19:4; Job 29:19; Job 31:32; Job 38:19; Job 39:27; Job 41:22; Ps. 25:13; Ps. 30:5; Ps. 55:7; Ps. 91:1; Prov. 19:23; Cant. 1:13; Cant. 7:11; Jer. 31:9; Dan. 4:23; Dan. 4:25; Dan. 6:18

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**Jon Courson** - I can so easily be sucked into the cares of this life, bogged down by the things of this world. But when I study the words of Jesus, I am reminded of the big picture all over again. I am reminded that I'm only here for a short time. I am reminded of eternity. Every single believer who is hurting physically or emotionally, every single saint who is struggling financially will indeed be healed and freed incredibly. It might be tonight; it might be this week. It might be this year. It might not be until heaven. But God's promises to you will be kept perfectly if you don't lose sight of the big picture. Spend consistent time with Jesus. Be like those in our text. Come early to hear Him—early in your day, early in your life, early in the situation before you—and be reminded of heaven all over again. (A Day's Journey)

**Luke 21:38 And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.**

KJV Luke 21:38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

- John 8:1,2
- Luke 21 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 21:25-38 On Guard! He's Coming!](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 21:37-22:2 God's Preparation for Christ's Cross](#) - John MacArthur

### **EARLY IN THE MORNING: A GOOD TIME TO LISTEN TO JESUS**

**And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him** All of the people is an incredible statement and doubtless somewhat of a hyperbole as the numbers in Jerusalem for the Passover would have been many hundreds of thousands.

**Get up early** (only NT use)([3719](#))(**orthrizo** from **orthros** = dawning of day, early morning - Lk 24:1) means to rise early or come early in the morning. **Gilbrant** - The Septuagint mentions that Moses **orthrizō**, "rose early," and then specifically adds the words "in the morning" for clarity (Ex 24:4). Compare **orthros**, "pertaining to the morning." The word **orthrizō** is also often used literally in connection with the early morning watch. It frequently carries the connotation of diligence and earnestness in seeking God (Job 8:5; Ps 78:34; Isa 26:9), in repentance (Hosea 5:15), and in the fulfilling of one's tasks (Ge 20:8; Ex 8:20; etc.), as well as the faithfulness of God (Jer 25:3). (Ibid)

Today we can still **get up early in the morning to come to Him**- How? By prayer and by reading His Word, and listening for His Spirit to speak to our heart through His Word. Are you listening to Him?

Throughout the millennia, many godly souls have arisen **early in the morning** to meet with the Lord - Abraham in Ge 19:27, Job in Job 1:5, Jacob in Ge 28:18, Moses in Ex 34:4, Hannah and Elkanah in 1 Sa 1:19, David in Ps 5:3.

Many if not most of these who got up to listen to Him were not even believers! O my! What a holy rebuke and conviction to we who are His brethren, who have been blood bought and are heaven bound and yet we arise more often with morning thoughts of the world than of the other world! Lord, forgive us for not imitating these Jewish people listened to your last words and enable us by Your Spirit to have the desire and power to follow through tomorrow morning. Amen

Take time to be holy  
Speak oft with Thy Lord  
Abide with Him always  
And feed on His Word

Take time to be holy  
The world rushes on  
Spend much time in secret  
With Jesus alone

## [Play Hymn](#)

**Matthew Henry** - Morning lectures have their advantages. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning (Ps 5:3, cf Ps 88:13, Ps 55:17).

The psalmist wrote "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Thy words." (Psalm 119:147)

**Spurgeon - I rise before dawn and cry for help.** He was up before the sun, and began his pleadings before the dew began to leave the grass. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing speedily. This is the third time that he mentions that he cried. He cried, and cried, and cried again. His supplications had become so frequent, fervent, and intense, that he might hardly be said to be doing anything else from morning to night but crying unto his God. So strong was his desire after salvation that he could not rest in his bed; so eagerly did he seek it that at the first possible moment he was on his knees.

**I wait (hoped) for Thy words** Hope is a very powerful means of strengthening us in prayer. Who would pray if he had no hope that God would hear him? Who would not pray when he has a good hope of a blessed issue to his entreaties? His hope was fixed upon God's word, and this is a sure anchorage, because God is true, and in no case has he ever run back from his promise, or altered the thing that has gone forth from his mouth. He who is diligent in prayer will never be destitute of hope. Observe that as the early bird gets the worm, so the early prayer is soon refreshed with hope.

**Thomas Manton** - Those that make a business of prayer will use great vigilance and diligence therein. I say, that make a business of prayer; others that use it as a compliment and customary formality, will not be thus affected; they do it as a thing by-the-by, or a work that might well be spared, and do not look upon it as a necessary duty; but if a man's heart be in it, he will be early at work, and follow it close, morning and night: his business is to maintain communion with God, his desires will not let him sleep, and he gets up early to be calling upon God. "But unto thee have I cried, O Lord: and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee." Psalms 88:13. Thus will good men even break their sleep to give themselves to prayer, and calling upon the name of God.

**John Morison** - Early prayers are undisturbed by the agitating cares of life, and resemble the sweet melody of those birds which sing loudest and sweetest when fewest cars are open to listen to them. O my soul, canst thou say that thou hast thus "prevented the dawning of the morning" in thy approaches to God? Has the desire of communion with heaven raised thee from thy slumbers, shaken off thy sloth, and carried thee to thy knees?

**Wesley** - How much happier were his disciples in these early lectures, than the slumbers of the morning could have made them on their beds! Let us not scruple to deny ourselves the indulgence of unnecessary sleep, that we may morning after morning place ourselves at his feet, receiving the instructions of his word, and seeking those of his Spirit. (Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament)

**Edersheim** suggests that the hills around Jerusalem would be covered with tents, and every available corner of the city occupied by the vast number of Jews who, from every part of the land of Israel and from many far-flung places in the Roman empire, had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. The crowds were very large and the interest of the people in His teaching was still very great.

### **There is a QUIET PLACE**

[\(Play this hymn\)](#)

Far from the rapid pace,  
Where God can soothe my troubled mind.  
Sheltered by tree and flow'r,  
There in my **quiet hour**,  
With Him, my cares are left behind.  
Whether a garden small  
Or on a mountain tall  
New strength and courage there I find;  
Then from this **quiet place**,  
I go prepared to face  
A new day with love for all mankind

**-Ralph Carmichael**

**Related Resource:**

- [Quiet Time: 7 Minutes With God](#)

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**Oswald Chambers** has wisely commented on the transforming power of even 5 minutes in the presence of the Lord. Indeed, even a short time spent in intercession and the Word still has great value: "It is not the thing on which we spend the most time that moulds us, but the thing that exerts the greatest power. Five minutes with God and His Word is worth more than all the rest of the day." Now, it may sound like Chambers has made an overstatement. Yet powerful results can come from even a short time of prayer, because God is powerful."

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**J. Hudson Taylor Missionary to China** referring to the value of quiet time in the morning once quipped "You don't tune up the instruments after the concert is over. That's stupid. It's logical to tune them up before you start!"

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**Robert Morgan** - In college I discovered the habit of rising early to hear His voice. My school required students to rise at 6:15, and, after showering and dressing, to devote a half hour to personal devotions before breakfast. I resisted at first, but it gradually became an ingrained habit.

British army chaplain Bishop Taylor Smith testified, "As soon as I awake each morning, I rise from bed at once. I dress promptly. I wash myself, shave, and comb my hair. Then fully attired, wide-awake and properly groomed, I go quietly to my study. There, before God Almighty and Christ my King, I humbly present myself as a loyal subject to my Sovereign, ready and eager to be of service to Him for the day."

Early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood before the Lord.  
Genesis 19:27

Early in the morning Jacob took the stone that was near his head and set it up as a marker. He poured oil on top of it and named the place Bethel.  
Genesis 28:18-19

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He got up, went out, and made His way to a deserted place. And He was praying there.  
Mark 1:35

Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb at sunrise.  
Mark 16:2

Early in the morning my song shall rise to Thee —Reginald Heber (My All in All)