

# Luke 21

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## Interpreting the Signs!

One thing most bible students know is the Bible never says this will happen "on this or that date". Yes, some Bible predictions can be calculated if one correctly understands the math. A great example is the Book of Daniel Chapter 9 after applying some math leads exactly to Palm Sunday. Most of the time in the bible a prediction is Jesus or a prophet saying this is what to watch out for so you'll know when this will occur! It's done that way to keep us on our toes. Let me explain: It's mostly Jesus saying this will occur. He describes well the Jewish Temple destruction that occurred in 70AD. That's roughly 40 years after He states these predictions. We know it was written before the Temple Destruction since the New Testament never mentions the Temple destruction as prophecy fulfilled. Much of what Jesus says here is "end time stuff", which obviously has hasn't occurred yet! So why does God state all of the end time stuff, when the date is unknown? Think of working at a desk. If we know the boss is standing over our shoulders, we work harder! Such predictions keep us on our toes since we never know the date but we trust that God knows the future!

I should also state after many years of Bible study, I've heard every theory on how the end times occur. If you disagree with my views, no problem, we'll discover the truth one day. A fascinating thing is that whenever demons encounter Jesus, they ask if He's sending them to hell before "the time"! I'd state the demons hold a pre-tribulation view based on that! Anyway, before I get into all that, realize Jesus in all the text in this chapter gives us things to interpret with no dates! No chapter breaks existed when Bible books were written. In the last part of Chapter 20, it was most likely Wednesday before the Friday that Jesus was crucified. Most of Chapter 20 was Jesus arguing with religious leaders as they wanted to trap Him, so they'd have an excuse to arrest Him. Bottom line, arguing with God is not only a bad idea, but also a reminder that we can't outwit God on questions!

That leads me to Chapter 21. It opens with Jesus commenting on is a women putting her last two coins in the Jewish Temple "collection box". This is not a lecture on giving per se. Jesus never tells the "12" to dump all their money in that place. Jesus' point is she gave all she had to live on. Yes, God wants us to be generous givers, but Christianity is not a call to beg for money if we gave all we had away. Jesus pointed this woman out as He was criticizing the Jewish religious leaders for taking advantage of those who come to the Temple to fill their pockets. Anyway, Jesus is just warming up with illustrations here.

Remember Jesus is with His disciples (the 12 and probably others). The religious leaders gave up on an effort to trick Jesus into saying something to get Him arrested. Anyway, the disciples wanted to discuss the Jewish Temple. To begin, understand it was considered a marvel of the ancient world. It was a big white structure with gold and jewels mixed in. It was said to be blinding when the sun hit it! Jesus said to His disciples a day will come when not one Temple stone will be left standing. Approximately forty years later, the Romans had enough of Jewish rebellion and decided to destroy Israel. Multitudes were killed and many more sold into slavery. The Romans wanted the gold in the temple, so they destroyed it "brick by brick". The point being Jesus correctly stated history again, 40 years before it happened as if He witnessed it Himself.

Keep in mind the disciples expected Jesus to rule the world from that temple. Trusting Him, they asked the logical question of "when", and how would they know it was about to occur? I realize all that took

place about 2,000 years ago and some of what Jesus states applies to that time, and part to "end times"! If Jesus described accurately the Roman destruction of the temple, that means we can also trust Him on the accuracy of Second Coming events! What if you believe (as I do) that you'll be raptured before that bad stuff occurs? The issue isn't just about believers, but warning others about what awaits them if they refuse to accept Jesus. Some people wrongly think we can worry about that when it occurs. I'd argue if you can't live for Jesus now, what makes you think you can do it then, when it'll be hard to change?

Meanwhile time for Jesus to explain what is the future (from His time frame): Before Jesus begins that lecture on when Jerusalem will be destroyed, He states many people will claim to be Him. Realize that before the Temple got destroyed the historian Josephus (a pro-Romans Jewish historian) wrote that lots of people were claiming to be Jesus. He states many points in this little sermon that literally came true, just as reported. Jesus ends with saying, "The end will not come right away" that refers to Jerusalem as it was being destroyed AND at the same time, He's talking about His Second Coming!

Verses 10-11 teaches Jesus has more than 70AD in scope. He talks about nations fighting nations (not the case when the Romans destroyed Israel) plus other horrible things referring to the Revelation stuff! Then Jesus focuses on what'll happen to the disciples and many Christians in the first few centuries. It is well known history that each disciple (except John) were tortured and killed, as they refused to deny Jesus was dead despite the crucifixion. Jesus said not to worry what to say at trials! That doesn't mean we're to avoid Bible study, it just means when we have the opportunity to be a witness for Jesus, it also means the Holy Spirit will guide us into what to say! Note that Verse 18 states: not a hair on our heads will perish. Again, many have been martyred. The idea is we still have eternal life, not based on what we say at a trial but because we trust in Jesus' sin payment. I know developing a daily habit of trusting Jesus and stay focused on Him, worrying what to say in a key moment will not be an issue!

Verses 20-24 return to the Israel destruction story that occurred in 70AD. Jesus makes it clear it is time for punishment (not of individuals but Israel as an entity) for failing to accept Jesus. So why did it take 40 years to do that? Best guess, the number "40" is associated with a time of testing. (E.g., the rain that came down in Noah's day was for 40 days!) Bottom line, Jesus' prediction came literally true. I love to point out that many Christians managed to escape as they understood Jesus' prediction and escaped to a city in the northern part of Israel.

By Verse 25 Jesus obviously changed topics to end time stuff! He gets back to Second Coming events to state in effect when Jesus does return it'll be obvious and He will return to Jerusalem. Given our age of satellites and cell phones, I realize it will be seen around the world at that time! In Verse 29, Jesus is using an analogy most of us would know. When we see a tree spring new leaves, we realize summer is coming. In the same way when all the "Revelation Bad Stuff" (to keep it simple) occurs, it means Jesus will get the "show on the road" to begin the 1,000 years of Him ruling the world from there! Jesus was accurate in describing all the 70AD stuff, so we can trust Him with the end time stuff!

By Verse 34 Jesus is wrapping up. A key point is we as Christians are not to be wasting our lives doing what nonbelievers do. It doesn't mean being perfect. Again, we are only saved by His grace, not by the works we do. (The purpose of good works isn't to earn salvation but to be a witness for Him!) For us, the issue is we must always live as if "God is standing over our shoulders watching us work!" I realize all too well, none of us are perfect. Jesus expects to keep the Second Coming in mind as we live, as to use our lives as a witness for Him. I'll end with the reminder I realize a lot of good Christians differ on end time stuff. The agreement is that Jesus will return, and He explains the future well!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on the link for the detailed study. It's still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for everyone who reads this.