

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**
Chapter 21- Luke 21:7-38

314- When Therefore Will These Things Happen?-
Part 1

May 29, 2016

Luke 21:7-38

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?"

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.

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."

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

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

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.

13 "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.

14 "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;

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

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

17 and you will be hated by all because of My name.

18 "Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives.

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

21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;

22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.

23 "Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;

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.

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,

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.

27 "Then they will see *THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD* with power and great glory.

28 "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

29 Then He told them a parable: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees;

30 as soon as they put forth *leaves*, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

32 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.

33 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

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;

35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

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."

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.

38 And all the people would get up early in the morning *to come* to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

To the Glory of God

Now when we look over the history of Mankind, we need to ask two very important questions:

1. What is God doing?
2. What should our response be?

Now Deism is a false religion that teaches that at the beginning of time God created everything, and then stepped back and allows the Universe to roll along on its own. The “god” of Deism is an unconcerned “god” who does not involve himself in the day-to-day affairs of Man. The “god” of Deism is not concerned about your well-being or injustice in the earth or even your eternal soul. The Deists believe in a very impersonal “god” who does not insult his own deity by involving himself in our affairs.

And even though some very famous people have been Deists, even some of our Founding Fathers, the sacred Scriptures declare clearly and repeatedly that the one, true, living God of the Bible is *intimately* involved in the affairs of Man. So, in spite of how many people may ascribe to it, Deism is found to be false. So, what we must know is that God didn’t merely create everything, but He is involved in every detail of our existence from the creation of super-novas to the movement of subatomic particles.

The God, Who is the Father of Jesus Christ, knows and understands you better than you understand yourself. And He reigns supreme in His pristine Holiness as all-knowing and all-wise and all-powerful. No one can ultimately resist His Will, and so there is no area of your life, including all your thoughts and all your choices, that God is not only *aware of*, but that He controls and rules over to the point that every action by every single human being is working in concert with God’s Will. And that is why the Bible says in **Proverbs 16:33**:

The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the Lord.

So there is no such thing as “luck” or “chance”. There are no “accidents” or “random occurrences”. God takes every act, every choice, every thought, and every spoken word, and He sovereignly and mysteriously and wondrously works them all together so that two things always are true:

- A. God is glorified
- B. God’s Will is carried out

Now just how that indisputable fact of Reality works out with Human Responsibility is the subject of another Sermon. But suffice it to say that because God is absolutely sovereign over everything, all the time, and because we are fallen creatures, we are always fully culpable for all our sin and God is solely responsible for all Good in the earth. So we are charged and held accountable for our wickedness, whether that is murder or unforgiveness, and God receives all Glory and all Honor and all Praise for everything that is Holy and Right.

And Scripture was given to us so that we would come to terms with these things. Because there is another false religion that is similar to Deism that is just as wrong and just as destructive as Deism. And that other false religion is “Humanism”. And one of the many reasons that Humanism is so evil is because it places Man at the center of all that God does and says.

And so one of the fundamental issues that we must learn and be taught from Scripture is that God is not interested in having to measure up with some human standard of “fairness”, but God is passionately interested in being God. So the Goals of God are what is in His Own best Interests, *not* necessarily ours. And so Salvation is where God so completely changes me so that God’s Goals become my goals. And it is in that Truth that we are to understand the Love of God and the Will of God.

So I am safe in Jesus precisely because I am *not* the “pearl of great price”. I am secure in my Savior precisely because God does *not* place me at the center of the Universe. I am loved and wanted and called and chosen precisely because God’s main interest is *Himself* and not me.

So, while it is true to say that God saved me because He loved me, it is horrifically incomplete. Because if I stop there I put forth the implication that I am the center of all God's Actions, and that is only not true, it is blasphemy. God saved me because He loved me so that by so radically changing me in Salvation, I would love Him.

So the ultimate Goal of Salvation is not me. It is not in merely rescuing me from His Wrath so that I could walk on streets of gold and walk through pearly gates, and be reunited with loved ones who have gone on before me. No. The ultimate Goal of God in Salvation is that God could display the Glory of His Grace by so transforming unworthy sinners by what He alone did, that wicked sinners would come to delight themselves in Him.

And because that is true, I am very interested in what my Father's Will is, over and above my own will. I am keenly aware that it is God's Will and not my own will that is primary, and it is in submitting myself to God and His Will where I find the fullness of Joy.

And so Salvation is not me merely experiencing God's Love and Forgiveness, which is indescribable, but that I would then labor with all my heart, with absolutely no reservation, to see to it that my Father's Passion to be known and loved and enjoyed by sinful humans would come to pass.

It is a very arrogant and ungrateful son who has no keen interest in the Goal that lies most heavy on his Father's Heart. The faithful son longs to know and to understand his Father's deepest Intentions so that he can bring his own thoughts and affections and actions into alignment with that.

Or, to put it another way, you don't really know a person until you know what moves him most deeply. So, it makes no sense at all to say that we "know God" when we don't care or we are *not* acquainted with His strongest Desires and with the main Goal that guides all of His Actions. But, if we don't know God, then we can't worship Him and we can't imitate Him.

In other words, if we are to be faithful children of our heavenly Father and worship Him and imitate Him as we ought, then it is incumbent upon us to answer the questions:

- ✓ What is the supreme Goal of God in history?
- ✓ How should I respond to that?

And this question is based on a fundamental assumption which I should make plain and try to support from Scripture. I assume when I ask this question that God is ultimately in control of all that happens in the world, that He is the Author and the Director of this great drama we call "history", and that He designs and disposes all things for the accomplishment of His ultimate Goal. The American author, Clyde Kilby said:

"I shall bet my life on the assumption that this world is not idiotic, neither run by an absentee landlord, but that today, this very day, some stroke is being added to the cosmic canvas that in due course I shall understand with joy as a stroke made by the Architect Who calls Himself. 'the Alpha and Omega.'"

And this assumption is well grounded in Scripture. According to the Prophet Isaiah, the very fact that God is God means that He had a very precise and determined Purpose and Goal from the very beginning and, because He is God, that Purpose cannot be frustrated. Isaiah said:

Isaiah 46:9&10

9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

The Prophet Jeremiah came to the conclusion that no human commands are ever executed unless the Lord ordains it:

Lamentations 3:37&38

37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded *it*?

38 *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth?

In the New Testament we find that God had a Plan and a Goal in all that happened to Jesus. The early Church gathered together in Jerusalem and they prayed like this:

The Acts 4:24b-28

24 ..."O Lord, it is You who *MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,*

25 who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, '*WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?*

26 '*THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.*'

27 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

So we see here the puzzling twin action that on the one hand evil men gathered together against Jesus as an act of their own volition and yet Peter says that what they did was:

to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

So from that we know that the enemies of God do not frustrate God's Decrees. To their own great confusion the enemies of God are merely tools to bring God's Will to pass.

And so, when we come to the end of the New Testament and to the end of history in the final "Revelation of Jesus Christ", as written by the Apostle John, we find God in complete control of all the kings who wage war. For example, in Chapter 17, John speaks of ten horns and a beast and a harlot. These are ten kings, the antichrist and the Roman religious system. And, in verses 16 and 17 we read:

Revelation 17:16-17

16 "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.

17 "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Now we should not get the idea from these texts that God only superintends the affairs and thoughts of kings and princes and military leaders, because He is just as much God over individuals as He is over nations. So we must know and believe and trust that the evil intentions of evil men never frustrate the Decrees of God.

So, what is God's supreme Goal in history? And as I ask this, I am telling you that the Bible tells us clearly and repeatedly that God has an overriding Passion and a Goal and a Purpose in history, and that God is very busy employing all of His sovereign Power and Wisdom in ten thousand different ways every second of every minute of every hour of every day to bring that Goal to pass. And that overriding Goal is this:

To Display His Glory- so that the peoples of the nations will marvel.

Now, the term "glory of God" in the Bible refers, in general, to the Beauty of God's manifold Perfections. It is an attempt to put into words what God is like in His Magnificence and Purity. So, the phrase "glory of God" refers to the breathtaking radiance of the totality of all of God's Fullness.

Another term which signifies almost the same thing is "the Name" of God. For example, when the Scripture speaks of doing something for God's Name's sake, it means virtually the same as doing it for His Glory. Here, it means "for the sake of God's Name", or in other words, for the purpose of displaying the importance and beauty and majesty of God's Name or His Reputation or His Character.

And it is God's Own Omnipotence that causes the *first* part to happen; God is going to "get Himself Glory". But, it is Salvation that causes the *second* part to happen. You see, by nature, we are all "God haters". Because of the Original Sin of Adam, we do *not* love God naturally or normally. Because of the Fall, we naturally and normally only love two things:

- ✓ Sin
- ✓ Self

And so, it is *abnormal*, it is *unnatural* for fallen human beings to love God. In other words, it is beyond the scope of normal and natural inclinations to love or want or desire and enjoy God. Loving and enjoying God lies outside of the normal ways that humans think and behave. And so we have no interest in God displaying His Glory, and we have even *less* interest in marveling at it.

So Salvation is God doing for us what we *cannot* do for ourselves, and that is to know God, love God, and enjoy God forever. For any human being to actually do that takes a sovereign Act of God to radically and miraculously change him. And sin stops that from happening. Sin not only stops us from marveling at God, it stops us from even *wanting* it.

So that is what Salvation does. God sovereignly removes our sin and our natural hostility toward Him, at great Cost to Himself, the death of His Own Son, and He gives to unworthy sinners a new nature that is created in Righteousness and true Holiness. And that new nature produces three things in us about God:

1. Awe
2. Admiration
3. Respect

And the result of us being in awe of God and admiring God and respecting God is that we know God. And we know that there is no one like God. And the result of knowing God is that we love Him. And the result of us loving God is that we now truly delight ourselves in Him, and we reach the fullness of our own Joy in submitting ourselves to Him in obedience and worship.

So the straight and narrow path is not a burden to us, it is a pleasure. God's Commandments are not burdensome to us, they are the pathway to the fullness of Joy. We have no greater Joy; we reach no greater satisfaction than when we are humbled down at His Feet, loving and obeying Jesus.

And so, when God changes our nature, God's overriding Goal to be glorified and marveled at by the peoples of the world becomes the

overriding goal of our own lives. And, that is God's Will becoming our will. And, the result is that all truly saved people, as a normal and natural outflow of possessing the new divine nature, pray and give and labor and struggle so that Jesus Christ becomes the Treasure of the peoples of the world.

Now I suggest to you that this has *always* been God's Goal. This did not become God's Goal as He saw that His people simply could not measure up to the requirements of the Old Covenant. Redemptive History simply does not work like that.

We need to know that it is false to assume that there is one religion in the Old Testament, Judaism, and there is *another* religion in the New, Christianity. That is not true. What is true is that both the Old and New Covenants, or Testaments, describe the single Truth about the worship of the one, true, living God. What you have in the Old Covenant is a partial and inferior Revelation of the Truth of God. And what you have in the New Covenant is the fullness or the fulfillment of that very *same* Revelation.

God is the *same* in both Covenants. But, Salvation is the same as well. It is false to think that people were saved by works in the Old Covenant, or by their obedience or adherence to the Law, and that Salvation by Grace through Faith came about in the New. That is not true. Noah and Abraham and Moses and David and Isaiah were saved the very *same* way that we are saved right now:

- ✓ By Grace
- ✓ Through Faith

The only distinction between the two is that the Old Testament saints were saved by Grace through Faith in the one single God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whereas we are saved today by Grace through Faith in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. No sinful human being has ever been saved by works or through their obedience. Everybody who is saved is saved by Grace and through Faith.

Now, that phrase is thrown around so much I fear it has lost much of its significance. To be saved "by Grace" means something. The word "by" means: *origination or source or cause*. So the *cause* of our Salvation is Grace, not human choice. The *origination*, the *root*, the *source* of our

Salvation is the Grace of God, not what we do. And what that means by definition is that God *initiates* Salvation. And thus the Scripture that says:

Romans 9:16

So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

Now the “**it**” here is Salvation. So Salvation does not “**depend**”, it does not “rest upon” or “sit on top of” the man who “**wills**”, meaning that Salvation has nothing to do, *initially*, with the exercise of the will of Man. In other words, Salvation does *not* originate with human choice. No, Salvation is “by” Grace. So it is God’s Own Free Will that He exercises, without any encumbrances or obligation, that determines who He will save and who He will leave to themselves.

Neither does Salvation depend on the man who “**runs**”. In other words, Salvation is not something we earn if we work hard for it. So we should not understand Salvation to be a reward that is given to the one who fights for it the most.

But if Salvation does not depend on human choice or human effort, then how is a lost sinner saved:

- ✓ By Grace
- ✓ Through the gift of saving Faith

Well, why does God save people like this? To display the Majesty of His Grace, so that the peoples of the world will marvel.

Ephesians 2:9

[Salvation is] not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

So the great distinction between the two Covenants or the two Testaments is *not* in Salvation, but in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesu Christ. So as soon as Jesus was raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father it was not enough for God’s people to merely believe in God. No, we must now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And we must not merely believe that an historical figure named “Jesus” lived, but

that this Jesus is God Almighty in human flesh. And we must believe that God raise Jesus from the dead. As the Apostle Paul said:

Romans 10:9-10

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

So the main distinction between the two Covenants is in just *how* God's Glory is displayed throughout the world so that the peoples will marvel at it. Under the Old Covenant God's Glory resided and was manifested and was contained and displayed to the nations of the world through the one single nation of Israel. God gave Israel their religion and their language and their civilization and their land and their government. God chose the Jew to be a peculiar, set aside, and holy people who would live for no other reason than to display God's Glory. The Bible says that God:

- ✓ Chose them
- ✓ Clothed them
- ✓ Rescued them
- ✓ Kept them
- ✓ Healed them

... for His Glory! And God told them over and over and over again that He did *not* do all this because they were worthy, or because they were easy to work with, or because they were more obedient than other people, or because they possessed some special characteristic that made them attractive to God. Look at the one single reason why God Himself said that He chose the Jew:

Exodus 19:4-6a

4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.

5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...

The Jew was set apart, or made "holy", above all the peoples of the world so that they would display God's Glory to the nations of the world. And to facilitate that one single Goal, God gave them His Law, He visited them with angels, and He sent them His Prophets. And the very man that God used to bring them the First Covenant told them that this Covenant was *not* the final Revelation of God.

Exodus 23:20-21

20 "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.

21 "Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him.

This is an early prophecy about Jesus coming to pardon transgression and that God's Own "Name", or the very Character of God Himself, would be in Him.

And throughout the entire time that the Old Covenant was in force God sent Prophets to warn the people that there was coming a day when the final, full, and completed Revelation of God would come to the world, and that it would be radically different from the inferior Revelation that it would replace. Please turn with me to **Jeremiah 31:**

Jeremiah 31:31-34

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Ezekiel 36:22-27

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, 'It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

23 "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

So, this was *always* going to happen. This was *always* the Will of God. This was *always* the Goal of Redemptive History and this was always the direction that all that God was doing in the earth was moving toward the entire time that the Old Covenant was in force. It was *always* God's Will to end the very Covenant that He Himself initiated.

And He wasn't going to end the First Covenant simply because He could, but God was going to bring about the end of the First Covenant so He could bring in the infinitely *superior* New Covenant to take its place so the Glory of God would be displayed through the Face of Jesus Christ to the entire world, and not to merely one nation, so that people out of every tribe and nation and language would marvel!

But why couldn't God display the fullness of His Glory through the Old Covenant? Because the Old Covenant was weak. And it was weak in that it functioned through human obedience. Please turn with me to **Romans 8** to read what the Apostle Paul said about that:

Romans 8:3-8

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

So, in a nutshell, what makes the New Covenant infinitely superior to the Old is that it is based on infinitely superior Promises, facilitated through an infinitely superior Sacrifice, offered by an infinitely superior High Priest. The Old Covenant was made between God and Man. And basically the Old Covenant said:

You (Jew) do this and I (God) will do that

"You walk with Me and I will walk with you. You obey Me and I will bless you. You keep all my Commandments and I will reward you with Righteousness." And the end result is that the Jew did not keep all of God's Commandments, and thus, they did not attain unto the Righteousness that the Law promised. And they *did not* keep all of God's Commandments, because they *couldn't*. And so nobody was saved by adhering to the Old Covenant. All who were saved were saved by Grace and through Faith, just like we are.

But, if that is true, then what was the point of the First Covenant? The point was to have a sure and solid foundation on which the New Covenant could be built. And this is why God had to bring in the New Covenant. But the only way God could bring in the New Covenant was by *abolishing* the Old. And the only way that God could do that was through Judgment.

Now keep in mind that all throughout Redemptive History every single time that God moved in a new way in the earth He moved

through Judgment. God judged Adam in the Garden. God judged the world through Noah. God judged Sodom and Gomorrah through Abraham. God judged Egypt through Moses. God judged Palestine through Joshua, and God judged Israel through David.

And all of this Judgment was not merely God's Vengeance against sin, it was to bring in a new Order on the earth which brought the entire world closer to seeing the Glory of God through the Face of Jesus Christ and marveling at it.

And so here we are in the beginning of **Luke 21**. And everything I just told you puts you into the correct context of why Dr. Luke wrote all this. So this is the background that allows us to understand what Jesus is talking about here.

The long awaited Messiah has now come. God has inserted Himself into His Own Creation in the form of a baby in the womb of a virgin, and God Almighty has become Man.

And for three and a half years God incarnate has walked through the nation of Israel performing signs and wonders and miracles to prove His Deity. He has preached and taught perfect Truth. He has chosen and taught and empowered and anointed very common men to carry on His Ministry after He leaves. And He has finally made His way down to the place where the focus of every Jew was, Jerusalem.

And this is the last week of Jesus' earthly Life. And Jesus has been spending all week in successfully confronting and condemning each of the three religious groups who were unsaved and evil men who had propagated a vicious, perverted, false and man-made religion that made the claim that it represented God. These groups were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and finally, the lawyers of Israel during the 1st Century, the Scribes.

And all three groups had condemned Jesus. They have rejected God incarnate. They have rejected His Words and they have rejected Him Personally. They have linked Jesus to satan. And they have now sealed their doom. This moment is the culmination of every Act, every Miracle, every Word, and every Thought of God Almighty, and every human since the Garden. It is time now to bring in the fullness of the Glory of God. It is time for Jesus to die. It is time for God to institute the New Covenant. And to do that, God will destroy the Old.

Now just a few weeks ago, we saw the very epitome of what false and man-made religion does to people. Dr. Luke gave us the perfect

example of the horror of false religion through the first four verses of Chapter 21 in the example of the widow woman.

Now we are living in a day when false and man-made teaching is seldom if ever exposed and condemned. What is usually condemned today is sound, Biblical Truth, because it is so contrary to what most people are taught, while false and man-made teaching is readily accepted and embraced. It is truly a rare moment when God raises up somebody to confront and condemn the lies that are propagated in the modern Church. Most of the time, people will defend and hold on to error and false teaching.

And it has always been that way. A lie is easier to teach and easier to learn and easier to believe than the Truth. False and man-made religion makes sense to the instincts of lost or lukewarm people. Gospel Truth, however, runs counter-intuitive to the natural mind. And so carnal and lost people can readily understand and embrace false teaching while it takes a sovereign Act of God to illumine the human mind to understand Divine Truth.

And so as Jesus has now condemned the false religion of the Jews- He sees a poor widow woman giving all that she had into the Temple Treasury. The evil and wicked man-made religion of the Jewish leaders had compelled this poor deceived woman to give all that she had, thinking that this would earn her a place in Heaven.

And moved with Righteous Indignation, the Lord condemned that act by saying:

Luke 21:4b

... 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.

And right at that same moment, just when Jesus is furious at the end result of people being deceived and working so hard, trying to buy a place in heaven, He hears somebody talking about how pretty the Temple was because it was adorned with beautiful stones, and what Dr. Luke called, “**votive gifts**”.

Now a votive gift is a gift that is displayed or deposited, without the intention of recovery or use, in a sacred place for broadly religious purposes. Votive gifts are a feature of both modern and ancient societies, and are generally made in order to gain favor with the gods.

Some offerings have apparently been made in anticipation of the achievement of a particular wish, but in Western cultures from which documentary evidence survives it has been more typical to wait until the wish has been fulfilled before making the offering for which the more specific term “ex-voto” may be used.

Votive offerings have been described in historical Roman and Greek sources, although similar acts continue into the present day, for example, in traditional Catholic culture, and arguably, in the modern-day practice of tossing coins into a wishing well or fountain.

In the Roman Catholic Church offerings were made either to fulfill a vow made to God for deliverance, or a thing left to a Church in gratitude for some favor that was granted. Today votives can be in the form of votive candles, offered flowers, statues, vestments, and, monetary donations. Traditional special forms of votive gifts include small silver models of the afflicted part of the body, inscribed stone tablets, folk art paintings of an incident of danger, such as the votive paintings of Mexico, and model ships donated by sailors who have survived a dangerous voyage.

Many Catholic churches still have areas where such offerings are displayed. Notre-Dame-des-Victoires in Paris, displays over 10,000 votive gifts, with a military specialization, and including many military decorations given by their recipients. The Votive Church in Vienna is a late example of many churches which are *themselves* votive offerings, in this case it was built to give thanks for a narrow escape from assassination by Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria in 1853. Medieval examples include:

- ✓ Several votive crowns, such as those in the Treasure of Guarrazar
- ✓ The Iron Crown of Lombardy
- ✓ Henry III of England had a golden statue of his queen made and placed on the shrine of St. Edward at Westminster
- ✓ A falcon in wax at the shrine of St. Wulstan by Edward I
- ✓ A diamond and a ruby, adorning the tomb of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury
- ✓ Numerous crutches, left in the grotto at Lourdes
- ✓ The song "O Wilhelme, pastor bone" composed by John Taverner is a Votive Antiphon dedicated to Cardinal Wolsey¹

¹ Wikipedia, “votive gifts”; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Votive_offering

So, in a nutshell, a "votive gift" is a gift given with the anticipation that it will earn the giver Favor with God. And the Temple in Jerusalem was adorned with these kinds of gifts given by people just like this poor deceived widow woman.

And as He heard this type of blasphemy, Jesus cried out:

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.

And this means that Jesus is going to tear down the Temple, and with that destruction God is going to end the reign of the first Covenant and end the entire Jewish way of life, including his worship of God! Because the Temple was far more than a mere building; it represented everything the Jew held dear, even his concept of God!

So, why was Jesus going to do all this? Because it was time now for God to bring in the glorious New Covenant. And to do that He had to completely *abolish* the Old.

Now those of us who live on this side of that destruction don't look at this moment with the same degree of awe that the Jews who lived back then did. To us, Christianity is all we have ever known. We have never lived one moment underneath the inferior Covenant. But at this point the Old Covenant was all they knew. And they simply could not bring themselves to believe that God would destroy what He Himself had set up. And they certainly didn't believe that this itinerate from Galilee was the Instrument by which God was going to end their way of life.

Even His own disciples stood amazed at what Jesus was saying here and none of them fully grasped what all Jesus was doing at the time. And so upon hearing this startling news, the people, probably His Own Disciples, asked Jesus a very pertinent question:

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?"

Now I am fully aware that the Passage containing verses 7-38 are used all the time to discuss the Second Coming of the Lord. And all kinds of books have been written to try to make this Passage fit in with various eschatological views. But based on my very best effort to study this section of God's Word, it is taking these Words of Jesus completely out of context to assume that Jesus is talking about anything other than the time frame when He is going to destroy the Temple.

In verse 6 Jesus says He is going to tear down the Temple. And in verse 7- the disciples ask Him a very simple and important question, "*When?*" When what? When are You going to destroy the Temple, *not* when are You coming back.

So to think that these people are asking Jesus when He is coming back to this earth is to completely ignore the context of this Passage, and we simply don't have the authority to do that. In fact, I will tell you that keeping Biblical Statements in context, with how and when and under what circumstances they were made, is the main key to understanding Biblical Truth.

And the context here, at least until we get to verse 25, is the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Jewish way of life and the elimination of the Old Covenant, and *not* Jesus' Return to this earth. And so that is how I will proceed as we go through these verses in the coming weeks.

Now, please let me say something. I'm not trying to preach false doctrine or lead anyone astray. I have been saved for over four decades and have never taught on this subject precisely because of that concern. And in God's Providence, we are in **Luke 21** at the very time that I am teaching through Eschatology on Sunday Evenings. So this proves that God has a sense of humor in that the very subject that I fear the most is being handed to me in a double dose.

And so I cannot promise you that everything I say about this is perfect. But what I *can* promise you is that everything I teach about this is honestly the best I know. And since some of the most famous leaders throughout Church History *disagree* about Eschatology, that shows me that I am in good company.

So as we go through this, I want to say this: At some point in the future, Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth, bodily and literally. That is not debatable. That is part of Essential Truth. All of the historic Creeds and Confessions of the Church say that. And so if you

do not believe that, you're not saved and you're not a Christian. It is false teaching to say that Jesus is only coming back "spiritually" or "figuratively", and not literally and bodily.

But the *details* of what will happen before, during, and after, are simply not clear to us. The reason that there are three main historic views of Eschatology is because the Scriptures themselves seem to give credibility at various points to all three views. And, therefore, the details surrounding Eschatology are *not* essential Truths of the Faith, and, therefore, believers can and do disagree on these details and still be saved.

What is wrong, however, is when your Eschatology negatively affects your Soteriology. When your eschatological views force you to adopt different methods by which lost people can be saved, other than the one single way the Bible teaches, then your Eschatology is evil and false, and should be immediately discarded.

And the very best example of a person's Eschatology negatively affecting His Soteriology is a very famous Pastor in San Antonio, Texas, named John Hagee. Hagee ascribes to a view of Eschatology called "Dispensational Pre-Millennialism". And I will be teaching just what that is on Sunday Evenings. It is a relatively new understanding of "Last Things" that is about 150 years old. But it has swept over the modern Church and is now the dominant view held by the American Church.

Now most people who have been taught this view never take it out to its logical conclusion. But Pastor Hagee has. And the result is that John Hagee proudly and repeatedly teaches that there are two ways of being saved:

1. Gentiles are saved by Grace and through Faith in the finished Work of Jesus Christ
2. Jews are saved by being born Jewish

And, so, Hagee has *abandoned* the Biblical Gospel because his Eschatology has forced him to. And this false teaching is dooming Jews who listen to him and believe what he teaches because it is putting forth a false way of being saved.

So we must take heed to ourselves that while we are free to disagree on some of the minor details of Eschatology, we are not free to

just make stuff up. And so as we move forward into this Passage we have to labor very hard to maintain what is clear in the Bible and maintain what is Essential Truth.

And my pledge to you is that I will do my level best to do that as we continue our "journey" through the Gospel of Luke. May God help me.

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.