

Luke 21 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

VIII. The Judean Ministry 9:51-24:53

L. Teaching In The Temple 20-21

It's the last week of Jesus' ministry.

He's in Jerusalem, along with about 2 million other Jewish pilgrims who've crammed into the Holy City to celebrate the Passover.

As the end of Ch. 21 tells us, at the end of each day Jesus would make the short trek from Jerusalem to the Mt. of Olives where the village of Bethany & the home of His good friends, Martha, Mary, & Lazarus was located.

There He spent the night, returning early each morning to teach in the temple courtyard.

The Sunday before Passover was the day of the Triumphal entry.

Monday He cleared the temple courts of the religious marketplace that had been set up there.

Tuesday was the *Day of Questions* & the events of ch. 20, when 3 different groups came to embarrass Jesus in front of the crowds.

But it was they who went away shamed.

What we read about here in ch. 21 could have taken place on Tuesday afternoon, or on Wednesday.

They're still in the temple when . . .

7. True giving 21:1-4

¹ And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, ² and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. ³ So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; 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."

[Diagram of temple]

In the Court of the Women in the Temple there were 13 boxes known as "the Trumpets" because they were narrow at the top & wider at the base.

Each was assigned to offerings for a different part of the temple service.

- One was for the wood that was used to burn the sacrifice.
- One for the incense that was burned on the altar.
- Another for the upkeep of the vessels, & so on.

Jesus was near these offering boxes, watching as people came & made their offerings.

We know it was here because we read that a **woman** came.

This was the only place she'd be allowed to do so – in the Court of the Women.

The word Luke uses for the widow's offering was a *lepton*; the smallest of all coins.

Lepton means "thin one." It was worth 1/40th of a penny.

She gave 2, so her offering was only 1/20th of a cent.

But Jesus said that it out-valued all the other offerings the people made, because it was **everything she had**.

Two things determine the **value** of a gift.

First, is the **spirit** in which it's given.

A **gift**, by its very **definition**, is something that is given out of a motivation to **bless**.

With the gift there must be a desire that what's given **benefits** the one it's given to.

Regret in giving, or any sense of **reluctance** to part with the gift detracts from the act of giving.

This is why in 2 Cor. 9:7, Paul says God's loves those who give with a sense of joyous delight.

Yes – the **ACT** of giving ought to **bring blessing** to the giver, for it is more blessed to give than to receive.

[Acts 20:35]

For something to be a **gift**, there must be an **absence of self** in the giving.

If the giving is **coerced** in any way . . .

- Through guilt,
- Or an appeal to greed,
- Or as a platform for self-display & prestige

Then really, it's no gift at all.

Real gifts are the overflow of a loving heart that wants to bless.

The **Second** thing that determines the *value* of a gift is the *sacrifice* it involves.

The measure of a person's love, which is the motivation of true giving, is made manifest by the *cost* of the gift to the giver.

In 2 Sam. 24:24 King David said that he would not give to God that which had not real cost to him.

He understood that true giving includes a measure of sacrifice, of parting with something dear.

But – that which is little more than a pittance to one person could be a fortune to another.

We see that here. The gifts of the rich, as they tossed their coins into the collection boxes, did not really cost them much.

The widow's 2 *lepta* was a tiny fraction of their gifts, but proportionally, she gave more because she gave ALL SHE HAD.

The wealthy had given by calculating what they could afford. The widow gave with a seeming reckless generosity which could give no more because it was everything.

2 *lepta* was really not enough to provide for her *daily* needs. She knew that.

She could buy a lottery ticket & try to parlay her little holdings into more.

She could toss them in the gutter in despair.

She could make up a sign that said, "Down to my last 2 *lepta*" & stand at the intersection as chariots drove by, hoping for a handout.

Instead, she gave her last 2 coins to God, & cast herself on Him.

The greatest gifts are those which carry a measure of *sacrifice* in them, when they *cost* us something we count as valuable.

If our giving does not include the loss of self in it, then it's not really giving; it's something *else*, something *less*.

There's a hymn we sing that has the words,

Were the whole realm of Nature mine, That were an offering far too small;

Love so amazing, so divine - Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Really? Why then when the offering comes by do some calculate

how *little* to give rather than how *much*.

Why do they measure their giving by asking what amount they can *afford* to part with instead of what love for God calls for?

We must not read this story of the widow's gift & Jesus' commendation of her without some serious & humbling self-examination of our own attitudes toward giving.

It doesn't take long before we realize that according to the criteria we've just set for giving from this passage, the Greatest Giver is God & the Greatest Gift is Jesus Christ.

8. Things to come 21:5-38

a. vs. 5-19 • Great distress

⁵ Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ⁶ "These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

It's best to understand this taking place on Tuesday afternoon, after Jesus' encounter with the rulers, Pharisees, & Sadducees.

Matthew tells us that the disciples said this to Jesus as they were leaving the temple grounds after these Jewish leaders had officially & finally rejected Jesus.

This was the turning point – the Day of Inspection that I mentioned in our study on Sunday.

This day, Tuesday, the 10th of Nissan was the day when the priests inspected all the lambs to be offered at Passover.

The sacrifices had to be without blemish & the 10th of Nissan, 4 days before the Feast was the day they were inspected there at one corner of the temple court.

Jesus came to the same court that day for another kind of inspection.

As the Lamb of God Who fulfilled all that the Passover foreshadowed, He came to be inspected by the Jewish leaders.

Though they were putting Him to the text, the fact is, it is *they* who were on trial.

This was their moment – to determine if they would receive

their Messiah, their Salvation, or reject Him as flawed.
Though Jesus knew the inevitable outcome, it was still a
mighty blow when they turned away from Him in rejection.
Israel's fate was now cast in stone!

The cross lay before Him, just as the terrifying events of just
40 more years lay in store for Jerusalem, when the
armies of Rome would come and lay siege to the City.
The Time of Inspection had come & passed.
Jesus, the Owner of the vineyard's Son had come to receive
the fruit of faith the rulers ought to have yielded.
They refused to give to Him what was owed.
The dark corner of history had been turned, & Jesus
knows it.

His sorrow is obvious, so the disciples tried to cheer Him up.

They didn't realize they were like uncomprehending children
trying to cheer a man who'd just lost his wife in a terrible
accident.

They say, "Look how beautiful the temple is!"

Indeed it *was* a beautiful structure.

In order to gain the respect of his Jewish subject as well as the
admiration of his Gentile peers, Herod the Great had spent a
fortune on the Temple.

It was made of white marble, extensively trimmed with gold
decoration.

A band of gold filigree capped the upper edge of the temple,
like a crown.

And on the massive doors of the temple was a huge solid
gold cluster of grapes, symbolizing the nation of Israel in
her prosperity under God.

Historians say that it was a jewel that shone so brightly when
the sun was on it, it hurt the eyes from many miles away.

The rabbis said it was the *epitome* of earthly beauty.

But Jesus wasn't fooled by the outward appearance of the temple.

As gorgeous as it was, it was little more than a monument to the
futility of vain religion.

Supposed to be a place where man could meet with & worship
God, it had become a mockery God would not tolerate. It was
doomed – & Jesus told them it's doom was coming.

Though the temple was built of massive limestone blocks, He warned that the time would come when they would all be pulled down.

About 36 years after this, the Jews revolted against the Romans and managed to drive them from Israel for a time.

The Romans were not ones to let an insurrection go unpunished & determined to make an example of the Jews.

They returned with a massive fleet & in a brilliantly staged campaign, conquered Galilee, then moved South to lay siege to Jerusalem.

The City managed to hold out for a long time, but eventually fell in 70 AD.

When the City wall was finally breached, the last Jewish survivors fled onto the temple mount which was its own fortress inside the city.

They managed to hold the temple for a while longer, finally crowding into the temple itself when the Romans finally breached the courtyard walls.

Though the Roman commanders had given an order to not attack the temple building directly, a drunk Roman soldier who was despondent at having lost a comrade in the battle with the Jews threw a lit torch into the temple to try to smoke or burn the last holdouts out of their hiding places.

The siege supplies the holdouts had massed in the temple caught fire & burned furiously, causing all the wood paneling in the temple to catch fire.

The temple quickly turned into a blazing oven, killing the last Jews & causing the gold trim that capped the temple to melt.

It dripped down the stones of the temple, filling between the blocks like mortar.

Once cooled, the Romans dismantled the temple block by block to extract the gold as booty, & in the process, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy.

Since some of these stones weighed tons, it was *unthinkable* to the disciples such a thing *could or would* happen.

7 So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"

In a word, they asked, "*When??*" *When* would the destruction of the

temple take place.

Now, In Matthew's account of this, he says they also asked what would be the sign of the end of the age and His coming.

While we understand the destruction of the temple and the Return of Jesus Christ as distinct & different events, we need to realize that in the Jewish mind of that time, they were one & the same.

Any loss of the temple *had to be* connected to the end of History when the Kingdom of God would come.

While hindsight has taught us that the destruction of the temple & the return of Christ are separated by *at least* 2,000 years, it's important to realize that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD *do* provide a template, or a prophetic foreshadowing of what things will be like in the Last Days.

There's a commonly used illustration to describe how often times in prophetic passages, we see both a *near & far* fulfillment.

A prophecy will be given which speaks about events that are to take place, some close to the time of the message, & the rest much farther off in the future.

It's like looking at a mountain range from a distance.

One peak is closer, while another peak is more distant.

Standing at a distance, you can't tell how far one peak is from the other.

And being of the same range, they look similar, when in fact they are different & separated by dozens of miles.

Such is the case with what we find here in Luke 21.

Jesus gives warnings to the disciples about what is to take place in Jerusalem in less than 40 years at the hands of the Romans.

But He will also speak about what lies in the *distant future*, when history wraps up.

⁸ And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them.

In just a another couple days, Jesus will make it clear that He is leaving them, but that He will come again.

Here He warns them not to be fooled by fakers who will come pretending to be Him.

Israel had known a whole slew of false Messiah's who'd come,

playing on the people's hope for a Deliverer.

Jesus tells them that just as there had already been a bunch, more would come after Him.

But they were not to be fooled by such False claimants.

When Jesus returned, there'd be no doubt it was Him for He would come in such manifest glory it would be obvious!

Anyone who has to **CLAIM** to be the Messiah is automatically proven to be a liar.

BTW – this is another strong proof that Preterism can't be right.

Preterists say that Jesus returned in 70 AD in the destruction of Jerusalem.

They say that it was His presence in the armies of Rome that destroyed the temple & swept Israel off the map as judgment for rejecting Him.

They say that God is now done with Israel, and that the Church has replaced her in God's plan.

That the modern State of Israel exists is to them nothing more than a fluke, a bizarre accident that has absolutely no prophetic significance.

It is this doctrinal position that prompts several of the major mainline denominations to call for sanctions against Israel & prompts them to support the Palestinians.

You may have read in the papers recently that a few mainline denominations have withdrawn all of their investments that benefit Israel and have called for a general boycott of Israeli finance.

It's all based on what is known as **Replacement Theology** – that the Church has **replaced** Israel in God's plan.

Preterism is part & parcel of Replacement Theology.

And Preterists say that Jesus came again in the destruction of Jerusalem.

It's important everyone here tonight hear what I'm about to say clearly – THERE ISN'T ONE CHRISTIAN who live at that time, & certainly **not one** of the disciples who heard Jesus say these words here in v. 8, who ever taught, wrote, or believed Jesus came in 70 AD!!!!

No, it took many hundreds of years until the first Preterists said Jesus came in 70 AD.

Here's what Jesus says to all such silliness – “Don't believe them if they say, 'I've come'.”

Don't go after these guys & this new wind of doctrine that's blowing through the Church right now.

For years those of the Reformed faith had a weak & inconsistent eschatology because it could not be supported Biblically.

All Preterism has done is provide them with something that *looks* good so they've latched onto it by default.

It doesn't take the serious Bible student long to realize Preterism makes a mess of Scripture.

What Jesus says here ought to arm us with sufficient warning against such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses & the various cults who all claim to be the living embodiment of the Returned Christ.

Many of us remember the full page ad that appeared in a dozen major newspapers in the early 80's saying, “The Christ Is Now Here.”

Benjamin Crème claimed to be the spokes-hole for the Messiah, a front-man for someone called Lord Maitryea.

This is exactly the kind of thing Jesus was warning His followers *against*.

When He comes again, He won't have to take out ads in the paper. He won't need a spokesman. He won't need a stage or PA system. When He comes again, every eye will see Him and His revelation will be like the piercing flash of a lightening bolt.

It won't be one little girl who's pointing at the TV & saying, “He's back!”

The whole world will point to the *sky* & shout it!

But the disciples had asked for the signs that would point to His Return, as well as the coming destruction of the temple. So He says –

9 But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.”

It's human nature to see large scale distress as the harbinger of doom.

When war or natural disasters come, many conclude it's a sign the world is coming to an end.

Jesus said these things do **NOT** constitute a sign of the last days.

On the contrary, history will see many wars & global distress.

His people are not to be shaken or to draw the conclusion the end is at hand based on such general trouble.

No, there will be lots of war & trouble *before* the end.

Now, this is *crucial* because it's another proof Preterism isn't valid.

You see, Preterism is based on a few statements we find regarding the timing of end-time events.

Revelation has several references to things taking place “quickly,” or that they are “at hand.”

Preterists interpret this in the narrowest possible way say that it means things would happen IMMEDIATELY.

When the same Greek word for ‘quickly’ is used in *other passages* not referring to the end times, it means *rapidly*, that is, its duration is short – not that it begins at a time close to the statement.

For instance, if I say, “The contestants in the Olympic 100 meter dash will run quickly,” do you take me to mean they will run *tomorrow*, or will run fast in the next Olympics?

That's the way the word *ought* to be interpreted in Revelation – that when the end time events begin, they will take place in a short period of time.

They are not to be understood as stretching over vast eras.

John wanted the readers of Revelation to take the things he saw as visions of a real future & that they were to be understood *literally*, not spiritually.

They would occupy a specific short period of future history.

Now, to be fair, there are other passages Preterists base their view on, but they are all centered around a very narrow interpretation of specific words they refuse to consider the way the same words are used in other passages.

What Jesus says here in v. 9 is a solid & straightforward blow to the “near” fulfillment demand of the Preterist. Look at it again –

9 But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.”

Jesus pushes the end out, *away* from that time.

10 Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 And there will be great

earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

Does this sound to you like Rome coming against tiny Israel, or a long stretch of history marked by general global distress?

What Jesus says here is to *elaborate* on what He's summarized in v. 9.

He's saying that history will go on for a long time & be marked by major news of global distress.

That's just to be the general course of normal history – & so it has been for the last 2,000 years.

12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake.

Take careful note of this – Jesus says that *before* the general flow of history as given in vs. 10-11 takes place – His followers will face persecution.

Indeed, the first 3 centuries of the Church saw 10 severe periods of persecution under the Roman Emperors. ^[1]

Estimates are tough because of the way the word “martyr” was used in the early church, but nearly 6 million Christians were put to death in the first 3 centuries, with countless more who were jailed, exiled, & abused by their pagan neighbors. ^[2]

13 But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

As indeed persecution proved.

It was the determined faith of the martyrs that *shook* Rome where no foreign power had been able to.

The confident joy of persecuted Christians stood as a startling testimony among pagan people who thought their lives were governed by an uncaring fate.

As one of the Early Church fathers said, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

The hotter persecution became, the more rapidly it seemed people came to faith in Christ.

When persecution is on, life takes a much more honest & earnest

dimension for the persecuted.

When it's *dangerous* to be a Christian, the fellowship believers share is more important, urgent, & intimate.

That kind of shared life stands in marked contrast to the pettiness of the world and makes many unbelievers hungry for the reality & meaning Christians have found.

Think about it – if it were dangerous to be a Christian, who among us tonight wouldn't be here – & what difference would the fervency of the faith of those who *did* come make to our time together?

Really – that's the way we ought to be living now.

14 Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

Jesus tells them not to worry about what to say when they're hauled before people of authority.

He will be faithful to speak through them by His Spirit in that situation.

Who among us hasn't imagined being challenged by some brainy unbeliever and felt ourselves unprepared to give an answer?

We've probably all thought about this & dreaded the thought of having to face a hostile skeptic.

It's not that we're concerned about having **OUR** faith shaken so much as dishonoring the Lord by not being able to defend Him.

The result of this fear is that many Christian *never* open their mouth or make it known that they're a Christian for fear of a challenge they can't answer.

Jesus is not saying here we ought not study and prepare to defend the faith.

Peter makes it clear we are to have an answer ready for those who ask us a reason for our hope.

What Jesus is saying here is that we are not to *worry* about it.

We're not to meditate & ruminate on it to such a point that we avoid challenges for fear of not being able to give a good answer.

I've known lots of men & women who're quite capable of defending the faith who are worried they won't remember the right verses and answers.

They've prepared to answer all kinds of things but are concerned of being asked something they haven't learned yet, so avoid all challenges!

I've discovered first-hand, many times, that when faced with a challenge by an unbeliever, if I'll just turn it over to the Lord right then, the Spirit will put things together in my mind, then send the answer through a heart of compassion that leaves me blown away and the skeptic speechless.

16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 By your patience possess your souls.

How can Jesus say not a hair of their heads will be lost when He's just said some would be killed?

What He means is that no *real or lasting harm* will befall them.

Yeah, they may endure a time of torture, then be executed for their Faith.

But the moment they open their eyes in the Glory, Peace, & Reward of heaven, no one will have an ounce of regret at what they gave up on Earth.

What's true of those who suffer *persecution* for Christ is also true for those who suffer the loss of *simply being faithful* to Christ it *daily* things.

The gal who breaks off her engagement to her unbelieving boyfriend isn't going to regret it when she arrives in heaven.

The guy who lost his job because he refused to compromise his integrity at work isn't going to be upset at the loss when he stands in glory.

Jesus concludes this section on the coming persecution by calling His followers to make a tough-minded determination to stand firm when it comes.

They must remember that while they live in a body of flesh & bone, their real identity is immaterial.

They must not allow themselves to think only in terms of the body, about protecting & pampering it.

Their souls are of much greater importance, and they must live

with a mind that places the emphasis on that which is eternal as opposed to that which is merely temporal.

As I've mentioned before – Lynn & I are members of a gym.

It's important to us to be good stewards with our tents.

But far more important than the shape of our bodies is the condition of our souls & spirits.

No matter how much working out might try to make this sit up here, time & gravity are going to win & they are going to end up here.

Something we can all do is to invest in those exercises that will fit us for eternity rather than into one size smaller dress or one inch smaller waist.

Worship, study, prayer, fellowship, service, witness.

The word *patience* is a word which speaks of diligent fortitude that stands tall in the face of opposition.

This is the oak that weathers the storm, the palm that stands tall in the midst of the hurricane, the sequoia that endures the fire.

This isn't a passive, kick-back kind of *resigned* patience.

This is *active endurance* that presses & and keeps growing even when the environment is difficult.

Jesus says that with a tough-minded active endurance we are to take *charge* of developing our character.

Whenever I go to the gym, I see people there who are quite serious about developing their bodies.

I wonder, are we as serious about developing our *souls*?

Which is more important?

We ought to see this as a spiritual gym, & this is our work out.

Just as guys in the gym urge each other on to do one more rep, one more set, let's urge each other on to greater excellence in Christ.

b. vs. 20-24 • Jerusalem will be destroyed

Now Jesus speaks specifically about the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the

country enter her. ²² For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 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.

Jesus is speaking of the destruction of the holy city at the hands of the Romans.

The Jewish Revolt which began in AD 66 was led by the Zealots, Jewish Terrorists who managed to drive Rome from the land for a short time.

They knew Rome would counter-attack, but didn't care.

You see, many of them believed that the Messiah would come, only when Jerusalem stood in danger of defeat.

They thought they could *force God's hand* to send the Messiah by stirring the hornet's nest that was Rome.

Jesus warned His disciples, when the City was surrounded by enemies, rather than rejoice at the soon coming of the Messiah – they were to GET OUT OF DODGE!

Early historians tell us that as the Roman army marched on Jerusalem and began to deploy their siege, the Christians all fled across the Jordan River and took refuge in the city of Pella.

Not a single Christian died in the ruin of Jerusalem.

But 1.1 million Jews were killed.

Another nearly 100,000 were taken captive for the Roman slave market; so many slaves in fact that the market was glutted and Jewish slaves were sold so cheaply for the first time in history middle class Romans were able to buy slaves.

When the Romans were done with Jerusalem not a single Jew was left alive in the city.

The Romans eventually renamed Jerusalem, Aelia Capitolina & for many years would not allow Jews to enter the City limits.

That was the state of things for nearly 1900 years until Israel once again became a nation in 1948.

But even then, Jerusalem lay under Arab control.

It wasn't until 1967 that Israel captured Jerusalem, but fearful of world opinion if they took control of the *entire* City, including the Muslim holy places, they left sections under the control of the Jordanians.

Most notably, the temple mount was kept under Arab control. So, while Israel was somewhat back under Jewish determination, the City of Jerusalem continues to abide under the Gentile influence.

That's the way it will be until it's time for the Kingdom of God to emerge under the Return of the Messiah.

In v. 22 Jesus called this time when the Romans would attack "*the days of vengeance.*"

In 19:41-44, He wept over the City because He knew what was coming.

c. vs. 25-28 • Jesus will come again

Having spoken of the destruction of Jerusalem & the time of the Gentiles, Jesus then looks deeper into the future & speaks of the time of His return.

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;

Jesus may be referring here to actual trouble with the world's oceans, but more likely He's using the word 'sea' as a symbol.

It was a common Jewish idiom for the mass of Gentile peoples.

The Jews have an age old distrust of the sea, so it became a handy symbol for something else they disliked – the mass of the Gentile world.

Jesus is probably referring here to a time when the world is in chaos.

There will be disturbances in all creation; in the heavens above & on the Earth beneath that will shake the entire world and present to the human race a set of problems there's no escape from.

26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Again, some global threat has been presented from which there appears no rescue & no way out.

27 Then they

Who? Well, Jesus has just been speaking of the world, the *whole human race*.

27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Preterists tell us Jesus is speaking here in Luke 21 about the events of 70 AD.

- When were there signs in the sun, moon & stars?
- When were the nations of the world distressed & perplexed?
- When were the powers of the heavens shaken?
- And when pray tell, did they SEE Jesus coming in power & great glory?

They didn't because it never happened!

So, how do Preterists answer these things?

They turn every one of these things into purely symbolic and spiritualized statements that have no continuity or connection to what we read here.

I would give you their interpretations, except I don't get them!!!

What happens to our belief that Jesus meant these words to be understood by normal, everyday believers when it takes 3 Ph.D's, a wizard's cloak, a magic beanie & a pair of special glasses to understand them?

28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Here is a verse which helps us answer the problem Preterism poses.

Jesus says that when the events of vs. 25-27 *begin* to occur, believers who are alive & witnessing them must know that His return *is at hand*.

In other words, the troubles will be short lived & will climax *quickly* in His return.

d. vs. 29-33 • Parable of the fig tree

29 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰ When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Assuredly, I say to you,

this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Jesus points to nature as an example of how to discern the season.

We know it's Spring when the plants send out new shoots.

We know it's Summer when the fruit ripens.

In the same way, when the things He's talked about in this chapter begin to come to pass, be aware of the fact that **ALL** He's foretold will also come to pass.

What does He mean when He says in v. 32 –

This generation will by no means pass away till all things take place.

Greek grammar demands that we interpret the article "This" not to the generation Jesus lived in, but the generation that would witness the things He referred to.

Jesus was addressing Himself here, not primarily to the disciples of that day but the one's He began speaking to in v. 28, the ones who would witness the beginning of the things in vs. 25-27, the last things.

What Jesus is saying is that the same one's who witness the inception of those signs will see His return.

Then Jesus does something remarkable in v. 33 – He elevates His words to the place of Scripture, to the word of God itself by saying His words are *eternal*.

e. vs. 34-38 • Watch & be ready

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.

There's no grammatical break between v. 33 & 34, so we ought to understand these words as being aimed *mainly* at those believers who will find themselves in the last days.

Jesus calls them to make sure they are staying attentive to His word and the signs He's given of His impending return.

They have to make sure they aren't lulled by the world into thinking that His coming is non-existent or way off is some

distant future.

Jesus uses an interesting phrase here when He refers to those who dwell on the earth.

What's remarkable about it is that it's a phrase John uses in Revelation again & again; the "earth-dwellers."

These are people who reject Christ and become the object of all the horrors that come during the Tribulation.

Jesus calls His followers to make sure they are not caught up in the same judgments the earth-dwellers will experience.

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."

In light of the Lord's return, it's imperative we pay attention to what the Word says about the Last Days & current events so we can won't be caught off guard.

Staying in fellowship with Jesus by walking in the Spirit is the best antidote to the deluding influences of the world.

If we're in communion with Jesus today, we won't be surprised if today should see His return.

37 And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. 38 Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

CONCLUSION

The destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans does provide something of a *picture* of the terrible atrocities & trouble that will come upon the whole world during the Tribulation.

Just as the Christians heeded Jesus' warning and fled the destruction of the City, *we* must heed His warnings about the last days & stay alert to their onset.

-
- [1]
1. Nero (Roman emperor AD 54–68)
 2. Domitian (Roman emperor AD 81–96)
 3. Trajan (Roman emperor AD 98–117)
 4. Marcus Aurelius, (Roman emperor AD 161–180)
 5. Septimius Severus (Roman emperor AD 193–211)
 6. Maximinus, Gaius Julius Verus (Roman emperor AD 235–238).
 7. Decius (Roman emperor AD 249–251)

8. **Valerian** (Roman emperor AD 253–260)
9. **Aurelian** (Roman emperor AD 270–275)
10. **Diocletian** (Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus, reigned AD 284–305)

[\[2\]](#) Courson, Jon, Application Commentary