



## The Gospel of Luke - Chapter Twenty One

### VI. Luke 19:28-21:38 - The Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (continues/concludes)

#### Summary of Chapter Twenty One

Through the example of a poor widow's offering, Jesus shows us that our own giving should be sacrificial.

On leaving the temple, the disciples point out the beauty of its structure. Jesus then goes into a detailed account of both the end times and also the destruction of the temple that would occur in AD70 during the Jewish-Roman war.

Believers are to be prepared, at all times, for the Second Coming of the Christ and should not be caught out by it. They have nothing to fear if they are ready.

Jesus continues to teach daily in the temple courts but leaves the city and goes out to the Mount of Olives each evening.

#### VI.j Luke 21:1-4 - The widow's offering

The point of this story, which is told in Mark 12:41 also, is that God measures gifts, not by their size or monetary value, but on the basis of how much of a sacrifice it was to give the gift, and how sincere and selfless the heart was that gave it.

<sup>1</sup>As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. <sup>2</sup>He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins.

<sup>3</sup>I tell you the truth, he said, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. <sup>4</sup>All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.

#### Luke 20:1-4

Temple treasury or offering box was one of the 13 collection chests in the temple with trumpet-like openings (Mishnah, *Shekalim* 6.5).

The two very small copper coins, referred to as mites, were about one centimetre in diameter. They had almost no monetary value but were all the widow had. See the image.



#### VI.k Luke 21:5-24 - Signs of the age

Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. The teaching of Jesus in the temple, which began in Luke 19:45, now

concludes with his foretelling the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem (vv.5-24), and the coming of the Son of Man (vv.25-38). Most of this material is found also in Mark but assuming that Luke built on Mark's account, Luke has added vv.12, 15, 18, 20-22, 23b-26a and 28. As is also the case, earlier in Luke, i.e. Chapter 17:22 and 19:43-44, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 is used by Jesus as a pattern or a type, i.e. a typological example, that points to the ultimate destruction that will come at the end of the age when Christ returns.

We frequently hear people asking 'when will this happen?' or 'what will be the signs it is about to start?', when what we should be asking is 'What should I be doing in order to be ready when it does happen?' According to Jesus in this passage, the first thing we must do is not be deceived or become distracted from what we should be doing. Peter states: <<For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?>> (1 Peter 4:17-18).

#### VI.k.i Luke 21:5-6 - Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple

The disciples make a simple complimentary comment about the beautiful architecture of Herods' Temple, which prompts Jesus to prophesy it's destruction that would occur within a generation. Jesus corrects a number of misconceptions regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

<sup>5</sup> Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, <sup>6</sup> As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.

#### Luke 21:5-6

How the great temple was adorned refers to the beauty and size of Herod the Great's Temple Mount, which exceeded that of most of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was more than twice the size of the Acropolis in Athens. Its perimeter was 0.96 of a mile or 1.55km, and it enclosed a space equivalent to one-sixth of the entire city.

Beautiful or noble stones. One of the stones of the temple complex still remaining measures 45x11.5x12 feet or 13.7x3.2x4m, and is estimated to weigh 570 imperial tons.

Gifts or offerings are tapestries, gold and bronze doors, golden grape clusters, etc.

The time will come refers not to the Second Coming but to a time in history before that, i.e. AD70. See Luke 5:35, 17:22, 19:43 and 23:29.

Not one stone will be left on another. As mentioned in previous chapters, Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the temple was fulfilled in AD70, when the Roman army under Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Not one stone upon another may be intended as a metaphor for total destruction, or it may be understood as something that was literally fulfilled in the destruction of the temple building itself, but not the entire Temple Mount, some of which remains to this day.

#### VI.k.ii Luke 21:7-9 - Signs before the destruction

This discourse addresses both the destruction of the temple and Jesus Second Coming, which would be a later historical event that would occur at a time of God's choosing.

<sup>7</sup> Teacher, they asked, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?

<sup>8</sup> He replied: Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he', and 'The time is near'. Do not follow them. <sup>9</sup>When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.

#### Luke 21:7-9

#### When will these things happen? And what will be the sign?

The disciples ask two questions:

1. When will these things be?
2. What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?

Jesus' answer to these questions apparently intertwines prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and his Second Coming. The near event, the destruction of Jerusalem, serves as a symbol and foreshadowing of the more distant event: the Second Coming. The discourse can be divided into three parts:

1. A generally chronological description of events preceding Christ's return.
2. Lessons on watching, waiting and being prepared for Christ's return.
3. A warning of judgment and a promise of reward at the time of Christ's return.

Matthew's version of this question, in Chapter 24 of his Gospel, makes explicit mention of the Second Coming that is more developed and detailed than the question in the parallel passages in Mark 13:4 and here in v.7.

In response to Jesus' statement about the future destruction of the temple, the disciples ask him, 'When will these things be and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished? Jesus' answer deals primarily with the second part of their question 'what will be the sign', but he also addresses the timing of the coming events, i.e. where Mark 13:5-23 focuses on local and world events, such as the destruction of the temple, persecution and universal evangelism; vv.24-27 focus on cosmic events, such as the transformation of the known cosmos, and the coming of the Son of Man. The disciples assume that the destruction of the temple will coincide with the end of time, but Jesus corrects their thinking in v.7 and v.13. Since Jesus predicts these events, believers must not lose heart. The destruction of Jerusalem, which came in AD70, functions as a type of the last judgment, which will occur when Jesus returns. God already knows about them and the elect will be preserved.

For many introduces *what* the disciples should not be deceived by.

People claiming the title Messiah are imposters who will say I am he or come in my name, i.e. 'I am the Messiah', and therefore, the time is near. We see this confirmed in Daniel 7:22 <<until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom>>, in Revelation 1:3 <<Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near>>, and in Revelation 22:10 <<Then he told me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near>>.

Do not follow them for these pretenders are not Christ himself. This is confirmed in Luke 17:23 by: <<Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them>>.

When you hear of wars and revolutions. For such cataclysmic events will be a regular part of this age until the return of Jesus to redeem all of creation.

#### VI.k.iii Luke 21:10-19 - Nation will rise against nation

Jesus warns of calamities caused by nature and by humanity (vv.10-11), of persecution from government (vv.12-15), and by family (vv.16-17). He also offers words of encouragement in vv.13-15, and vv.18-19.

<sup>10</sup> Then he said to them: Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

<sup>12</sup> But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.

#### Luke 21:10-12

Before all this, i.e. before the events of vv.6-11.

<sup>13</sup> This will result in your being witnesses to them.

#### Luke 21:13

Opportunities in your being witnesses is noted in Luke 24:48 <<You are witnesses of these things>>, and in Acts 1:8 <<But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth>>.

<sup>14</sup> But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.

#### Luke 21:14

Not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves or how to answer. As confirmed by: <<When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say>> (Luke 12:11-12).

<sup>15</sup> For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. <sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

#### [Luke 21:15-16](#)

[You will be betrayed even by parents](#) intensifies [Luke 12:53](#) <<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>>, and [Luke 14:26](#) <<If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple>>.

[Some of you](#) suggests that martyrdom will be the exception, although it was only John out of the Twelve who would die a natural death: <<Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” Because of this, the rumour spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?” >> ([John 21:20-23](#)). [Matthew Chapter 10](#) provides information on how much disciples will suffer for following Christ and this particularly applies to Jewish converts, although history has shown that it is a world-wide issue. Following Paul’s conversion, God speaks to Ananias of Paul and says: <<I will show him how much he must suffer for my name>> ([Acts 9:16](#)). And this came to pass, which Paul confirms on several occasions, including: <<For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honoured, we are dishonoured! To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world>> ([1 Corinthians 4:9-13](#)).

<sup>17</sup> All men will hate you because of me. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head will perish.

#### [Luke 21:17-18](#)

In light of the prediction that some disciples will be put to death (v.16), it is best to take [not a hair of your head will perish](#) as a metaphorical way of saying that God’s people will suffer no eternal spiritual harm.

<sup>19</sup> By standing firm you will gain life.

#### [Luke 21:19](#)

Through [standing firm](#) or endurance, which is the Greek word *hypomonē* and means endurance, steadfastness, perseverance or patience, believers will [gain their life](#). That is, will be enabled to partake of the full benefits of final salvation in the end times as revealed by Jesus in [Luke 9:24](#) <<For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it>>. God will provide adequate protection for those who are persecuted as they serve him, but there will still be those who will suffer and indeed there will still be the need for

martyrs. Paul confirms that: <<As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered>> (Romans 8:36).

#### VI.k.iv [Luke 21:20-24 - Jesus foretells the destruction of Jerusalem](#)

Whereas vv.8-19 describes what will occur before Jerusalem's destruction, Luke now describes the destruction itself. In vv.8-19 the audience is Jesus' followers 'you'; here it is described as 'those', 'women', 'this people' and 'they', indicating that Jesus' followers are not in immediate view.

<sup>20</sup> When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.

#### [Luke 21:20](#)

The first fulfilment of [Jerusalem being surrounded by armies](#) was the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 and this destruction may also foreshadow a greater judgment at the end of the age. So that some of what Jesus predicted in vv.5-24 may also find fulfilment in events that precede Christ's Second Coming. As Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple, he corrects a number of misconceptions regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. The [desolation](#) refers not to the Second Coming but to a time in history before that, i.e. AD70.



**Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Francesco Hayez**

<sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judæa flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city.

## Luke 21:21

Then, while there is still time, flee to the mountains. The ancient church historian Eusebius reports that, during the Jewish revolt of AD67, Jesus' warning was fulfilled when Christians fled to the mountains of Pella (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5.3).

Those in the city get out before the Roman siege occurs

Church tradition has it that the Apostle John and Jesus' mother Mary, who was by this time quite elderly, left Jerusalem before the siege and travelled to Ephesus, where John became a senior church figure and Mary died and was buried; her tomb is now a popular tourist attraction and, for some, a place of pilgrimage.

<sup>22</sup> For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written.

## Luke 21:22

Time of punishment or vengeance refers to God's vengeance and judgment, not Rome's.

In fulfilment of all that is written is confirmed in Luke 18:31 <<Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled>>, in Luke 24:44 <<He said to them, This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms>>, and in Acts 13:29 <<When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb>>.

Between 132-135AD, there was a second Jewish revolt led by Bar Kochba that also ended in large scale slaughter. Jerusalem was razed to the ground and then rebuilt by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, who renamed it Aelia Capitolina. All Jews were excluded from Jerusalem but Christians were made welcome, which may seem strange as Hadrian had previously been a persecutor of them. It was not until 362AD that Cæsar Julian the Apostate allowed Jews to enter and live in the city.

<sup>23</sup> How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people.

## Luke 21:23

In war, pregnant women and nursing mothers are among the most vulnerable people. Thus, what was for most women a blessing, would now present great difficulty.

<sup>24</sup> 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.

## Luke 21:24

Fall by the sword is a term commonly seen in scripture, such as: <<You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you>> (Leviticus 26:7), <<Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle>> (Isaiah 3:25), <<You will fall by the sword, and I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD>> (Ezekiel 11:10), <<After that, declares the LORD, I will hand over Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the people in this city who survive the plague, sword and famine,

to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to their enemies who seek their lives. He will put them to the sword; he will show them no mercy or pity or compassion>> (Jeremiah 21:7), and writing about the OT prophets: <<They were stoned; they were sawn in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and ill-treated>> (Hebrews 11:37). Historians claim that between 580,000 and 1.1 million people died in the Jewish wars but that no Christians died at all in the siege of Jerusalem!

Until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled may suggest a time when Israel and Jerusalem will repent and be restored to God's favour. See Romans 11:11-32 and associated notes on this series, which helps to explain this.

Many commentators accept the Lord's statement here to mean that the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 and the subsequent Diaspora, where the Jewish nation was scattered around many countries and not just exiled, was the fulfilment of all that God had in store for Israel and that all end times prophecies were then applicable only to the church. However, God has said: <<For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this>> (2 Kings 19:31), Jesus <<has not left himself without testimony>> (Acts 14:17), and then God seals 144,000 Jews for the final time of judgement in Revelation Chapter 7. It seems likely that Israel will still play a significant part in the Second Coming of Jesus, as seems to be indicated by this verse by Luke, in Ezekiel Chapters 38&39, and Revelation Chapter 16.

Peter adds his thoughts to this final time of judgement on the whole world with these words: <<But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat>> (2 Peter 3:10-12).

## VI.I Luke 21:25-38 - Jesus foretells the coming of the Son of Man

Having warned of the approaching destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem (vv.5-24), Jesus turns now to the more distant future and foretells his Second Coming.

### VI.I.i Luke 21:25-28 - The coming of the Son of Man

Jesus paints a picture of the cosmic disturbance and the effect on human life that his Second Coming will have. This will not be a quiet event that could go unnoticed, but will be something that the whole world will observe. For believers it will be a mixture of awe, wonder and trepidation. For those who have rejected the Gospel it will be a time of absolute terror!

Jesus turns next to teachings about the consummation of all things and his return. However, some commentators take this to be a continuation of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, which, along with the abolishment of the Levitical priesthood that also came about at this time, is necessary for Jesus to truly become our only high priest.

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> Men will faint with terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a

cloud with power and great glory.<sup>28</sup> When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

### Luke 21:25-28

Signs in the sun, moon and stars. It is possible that this is entirely literal language with stars perhaps referring to large meteor showers. Others take it as a mixture of literal and figurative language and still others take it as entirely figurative, pointing to political judgment on nations and governments. The argument in favour of a figurative interpretation is that this verse echoes possibly figurative language about heavenly disturbances in the OT prophets, such as Isaiah 13:10 <<The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light>>, in Isaiah 34:4 <<All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shrivelled figs from the fig-tree>>, in Ezekiel 32:7 <<When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light>>, in Joel 2:10 <<Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine>>, and in Amos 8:9 <<'In that day', declares the Sovereign LORD, 'I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight'>>.

Those arguing for a literal interpretation point to biblical accounts of actual darkness: as confirmed by Exodus 10:21-23 <<Then the LORD said to Moses, Stretch out your hand towards the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt – darkness that can be felt. So Moses stretched out his hand towards the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. No-one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived>>, and by Matthew 27:45 <<From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land>>.

The idea of the stars falling and the heavens being rolled up is mentioned elsewhere in the NT as well. This is seen in Hebrews 1:12 <<You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end>>, in 2 Peter 3:7-12 <<By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat>>, and in Revelation 6:13-14 <<and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig-tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place>>.

Whether these events are to be understood as being primarily literal or primarily figurative, it is clear that these will be 'earth-shattering' events through which all creation will be radically transformed at the return of the Christ.

For the heavenly bodies or powers of the heavens will be shaken describes great changes in the skies and was covered in many of the previous examples.

They will see. The Second Coming involves the visible return of the Son of Man from heaven as foretold by the angels: <<Men of Galilee, they said, why do you stand here looking into the

sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven>> (Acts 1:11).

The Son of Man is the glorious King and Judge who will return to establish God's kingdom on earth. Some suggest that this is a type of heavenly standard or banner that unfurls in the heavens as Christ returns in 'power and great glory', **I personally can't see this!** While others understand it to be the arrival of the Son of Man himself as the sign of the end-time consummation of the age.

The people alive at that time will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (v.27). This most clearly is end-time language that recalls Daniel's prophecy: <<In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven>> (Daniel 7:13), and points to Jesus' return at the end of the age. Again, this is confirmed by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 <<and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you>>, and in Revelation 19:11-16 <<I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no-one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords>>.

Christ will be revealed as the eternal ruler of the Kingdom of God designated by the Ancient of Days to receive worship and to exercise dominion over the earth and all of its inhabitants. The return of Christ is a literal event in which Christ will come in the same way that the disciples saw him go into heaven.

The punishment of unbelievers and the reward of believers both occur on the day of the Lord, when Jesus comes to save his people. Confusion regarding the timing of the day of the Lord has been a major problem throughout church history. Jesus will, at that time, be glorified in his saints; that is, his glory will be seen in them. Believers will be fully and finally transformed so that they are holy and blameless at the Second Coming. In addition, Jesus will be marvelled at among all who believe. To proclaim the Gospel is to bear testimony to the saving act of God in Christ.

These things begin to take place refers to cosmic signs that will herald in the Second Coming of the Christ.

Stand up and lift up your heads is a posture of hope and confidence.

Redemption refers to the time of Christ's return when mortality puts on immortality. Paul writes: <<For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality>> (1 Corinthians 15:53), and the redemption of the body takes place. This is confirmed by: <<Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies>> (Romans 8:23).

## VI.I.ii [Luke 21:29-33 - The lesson of the fig tree](#)

The analogy of the fig tree (vv.29-30) indicates that, when the signs of vv.25-26 take place, the return of the Son of Man is at hand.

<sup>29</sup> He told them this parable: Look at the fig-tree and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. <sup>31</sup> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

### [Luke 21:29-31](#)

[Even so](#) introduces the reality to which the fig tree analogy of vv.29-30 points.

[These things](#) refer again to the Second Coming (vv.25-28).

[The Kingdom of God is near](#) means the consummation of the kingdom when the Son of Man returns.

<sup>32</sup> I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

### [Luke 21:32](#)

[This generation will certainly not pass away](#). Several interpretations have been offered for this difficult passage:

1. Some think [this generation](#) refers to the disciples, who were alive when Jesus was speaking, and [all these things](#) refers to the beginning but not the completion of the sufferings described.
2. Others see [all these things](#) as a prediction with multiple fulfilments so that Jesus' disciples will be both [this generation](#) that sees the destruction of the temple in AD70 and also those at the end of the age, who see the events surrounding the abomination of desolation.
3. The phrase 'the generation of' in the OT can mean people who have a certain quality and this could be in view here. Examples are written in Psalm 14:5 <<There they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous>>, and in Psalm 24:6 <<Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob>>.

Others understand [this generation](#) to refer either:

- a. To this generation of believers throughout the entire present age.
  - b. To this wicked generation that will remain until Christ returns to establish his kingdom, as referred to in Matthew 12:45 <<Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation>>, and in Luke 11:29 <<As the crowds increased, Jesus said, This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah>>.
4. Others, particularly some dispensational interpreters, i.e. those that separate God's dealings with man into several different time periods, understand generation to mean race and think it refers to the Jewish people, who will not pass away until Christ returns.
  5. Others understand [this generation](#) to mean the generation that sees [all these things](#). Matthew 24:33 says: <<Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is

near, right at the door>>, namely the generation alive when the final period of great tribulation begins. According to this view, the illustration of the fig tree shows that when the final events begin, Christ will come soon.

<sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

#### Luke 21:33

My words will never pass away. Jesus emphasises the permanence, certainty and truth of his words and his teaching; more permanent, in fact, than even heaven and earth.

This applies to all Jesus' teaching but specifically, in this context, to his teaching about the certainty and truth of his return and the events leading up to this. God's laws will never become void since they reflect the very person and character of God, who will never pass away, and where Jesus also claims that his teaching has the same divine authority and permanence as the Mosaic Law.

#### VI.I.iii Luke 21:34-38 - Watch yourselves

Luke ends the section Luke 19:28-21:38 with two warnings from Jesus concerning his return (vv.34-36), and a summary conclusion (vv.37-38).

<sup>34</sup> 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.

#### Luke 21:34

Be careful or watch yourselves. This and the next warning, i.e. stay awake in v.36, involve being prepared and remaining faithful as confirmed in Luke 12:35-48 and 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4, for that day, when the Son of Man comes (v.27) and the kingdom comes in its fullness (v.31).

<sup>35</sup> For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.

#### Luke 21:35

The warnings of v.34 and v.36 apply to people throughout the whole earth; not just those who are in Judæa (v.21).

<sup>36</sup> 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.

#### Luke 21:36

Be always on the watch or stay awake at all times means spiritual alertness made possible especially when we pray: <<But we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night>> (Nehemiah 4:9a - ASV).

Such prayer will enable the believer to escape all that is about to happen, i.e. to avoid being harmed by the tumultuous times and circumstances before Christ's return, and not to lose heart, as seen in Luke 18:1 <<Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up>>, but to keep the faith as in Luke 18:8 <<I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?>>.

To stand before the Son of Man is something we both anticipate with joy and with dread, and we should pray to escape judgment and to hear him speak to us as in Luke 19:17a <<Well done, my good servant!>>.

<sup>37</sup> Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, <sup>38</sup> and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.

#### Luke 21:37-38

Jesus chooses to spend the nights either on the Mount of Olives or with friends in nearby Bethany. He continues to draw large crowds at the temple on a daily basis. By preaching each day, seven days a week rather than just on the Sabbath, Jesus gives us an insight into how church should really be. This was reflected in the early church model as well: <<Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ>> (Acts 5:42).