

The Destruction of Jerusalem (Part 1)

Luke 21.5–9

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Scripture Reader and Reading: Billy Henshall – Luke 21.34–36

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on Christian Living

I. Luke 21.5–7 • When Shall Jerusalem Be Destroyed?

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.” 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?”

A. The disciples focused on Jesus, but

1. they also noticed the temple, for
2. it was the most beautiful thing in the land of Israel.
 - a) Even if they had seen it a hundred times before,
 - (1) it was an impressive sight, and
 - (2) they just had to say something to Jesus.

“The exterior of the sanctuary did not lack anything that could amaze either mind or eye. Overlaid on all sides with massive plates of gold, it reflected in the first rays of the sun so fierce a flash that those looking at it were forced to look away as from the very rays of the sun. To strangers as they approached it, it seemed in the distance like a mountain clad with snow; for any part not covered with gold was of the purest white. From the top rose sharp golden spikes to prevent birds from perching on the roof and soiling it. Some of the stones in the building were 45 cubits in length, five in height and six deep.”

– Josephus, Book V, chapter V, No. 6; p. 360

- b) When King David gathered material for the first temple,
 - (1) he made a remark about the nature of the temple and
 - (2) how that it was supposed to be,

- (a) which is why he made abundant preparations
 - (b) for Solomon to build the temple.
- (3) First Chronicles 22 reveals the thinking of David:

5 Now David said, “Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it.” So David made abundant preparations before his death.

– 1 Chronicles 22.5

- (a) Without a doubt,
 - (b) the temple that stood in the days of Jesus,
 - i) was built with the same kind of thinking.
 - ii) Consider these photos of the model in Jerusalem.
- B. Then Jesus must have floored his disciples when he revealed
- 1. that the days were approaching
 - a) in which all those stones would be thrown down.
 - b) Please notice that he did not speak of the whole city of Jerusalem, but
 - (1) he spoke of the temple.
 - (2) I had a fellow preaching school student
 - (a) who believes that the destruction prophesied by Jesus
 - (b) has not happened yet, because
 - (c) the Western Wall or the Wailing Wall is still there.
 - i) However, the temple was up above on the platform
 - ii) where the Dome of the Rock currently stands, and
 - (1) there is not one stone left from the temple.
 - (2) It is all gone or

- (a) if it is in the area,
 - (b) we do not know that it is, but
 - (c) simply appears as a block or stone unidentified.
 - (d) However, they are no longer stacked.
2. Jesus let his disciples know
- a) that utter destruction was headed for Jerusalem, and
 - b) no doubt what he said reminded them of
 - c) the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.
3. However, this one was going to be much worse.
- a) The Romans would obliterate the building itself and
 - b) they would carry away forever all the articles of the temple.
- (1) On Wednesday evening,
 - (2) we learned from the Book of Ezra
 - (a) that King Cyrus of Persia helped the Jews
 - (b) return from Babylonian captivity.
 - i) The Babylonians had kept the precious items of the temple,
 - ii) then Persia retrieved those things and
 - (1) the Jews could at that time take them back and
 - (2) put them in a new temple that they would build.
- 7 King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; 8 and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9 This is the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, 10 thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar kind, and one thousand other articles. 11 All the articles of gold and silver were five thousand four hundred. All these Sheshbazzar took with the cap-**

tives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem.

– Ezra 1.7–11

4. Today, we do not have the gold, silver, and other precious things, because
 - a) the Romans took it all and
 - b) who knows what they did with it.

(1) We know the Romans took everything back to Rome, because

(2) they built an arch commemorating the Roman victory over Jerusalem.

(a) Here is the front view of the Arch of Titus

i) (who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple).

(b) Here is a side view.

(c) Then notice this panel.

i) It shows the Romans parading the candlestick,

ii) which is how we know what it looked like.

C. Then the disciples asked Jesus when these things would happen.

1. I can see why they asked.
2. The Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the temple,
 - a) was a major turning point in the history of Israel and
 - b) Jesus warned them that another major turning point,
 - (1) in fact, one even greater than the Babylonian and Exodus ones,
 - (2) was going to happen.
 - (a) Would you not want to know when that would happen?
 - (b) Would it be in your lifetime?
3. I think that they knew it was going to be big, because
 - a) he said nothing of a rebuilding.

- b) Jeremiah prophesied of the Babylonian destruction, but
 - (1) he also gave the Jews hope
 - (2) that they would rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.
- 4. However, the coming destruction
 - a) that the Romans would carry out against Jerusalem,
 - b) was one from which the city and the temple would never recover, and
 - (1) the almost two thousand years that have passed,
 - (2) show that it will not be rebuilt.
 - (a) It will not be rebuilt with God's approval, because
 - (b) we now have the temple in the spirit.
- D. Having heard Jesus prophesy of the leveling of the temple,
 - 1. the disciples had two questions for Jesus:
 - a) First, when would this happen.
 - b) Second, what sign or signs would precede the demolishing.
 - 2. It is these questions that form the basis for what Jesus said in Luke 21.

II. Luke 21.8–9 • Do Not Be Deceived

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. 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."

- A. Jesus warned his disciples of deceptions coming their way.
- B. Here he revealed that the deceptions would come with two claims:
 - 1. That someone was the Christ.
 - 2. That the time has drawn near.
 - a) However, they were not to go after the pretenders.
 - (1) When Jesus does appear for his Second Coming,

1. claiming that we are living in the end times.
2. They believe falsely
 - a) that we are living in the worst of times and so
 - b) this has to be the end, and
 - (1) if you claim that such is not so,
 - (2) they look at you with utter shock,
 - (a) this is especially the case if you are a preacher, because
 - (b) they expect you to agree with them readily.

D. With God's help,

1. avoid following what the crowds say,
2. making the word of God your only guide.
 - a) That will get you in trouble all the time, and
 - b) sometimes even with members of the church.

E. In verse 9, Jesus showed that he knew what news would be circulating.

1. They would hear news about wars and commotions.
 - a) When the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70,
 - b) it was not something that happened suddenly.
 - (1) Before Christ, Rome had come in and conquered the nation.
 - (2) Guerrilla warfare was an ongoing thing.
 - (a) Remember back in Luke 6.15,
 - (b) we read of Simon the Zealot, one of the apostles.
 - i) He was one who conducted guerrilla warfare.
 - ii) After the death of Jesus,
 - (1) battles between the Jews and the Romans grew,
 - (2) until finally Rome made their final attack on Jerusalem.
2. Jesus acknowledged that such had to come to pass, but

- a) he also said not to be terrified and
 - b) that the end was *not* imminent!
- F. He gave signs for the impending tearing down of Jerusalem, but
- 1. the Second Coming of Christ will be preceded by no signs.
 - 2. Back in Luke 12.39,
 - a) we heard Jesus compare his Second Coming
 - b) to the arrival of a thief:

39 “But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.”

– Luke 12.39

- c) Elsewhere in the New Testament, his apostles
- d) use the thief imagery to speak of his Second Coming:

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

– 1 Thessalonians 5.2

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

– 2 Peter 3.10

15 “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

– Revelation 16.15

- G. Please notice again, verse 9,

1. that Jesus continued to address the destruction of Jerusalem,
2. which has already happened.
 - a) People today say often
 - b) that you will hear of wars and such,
 - (1) concluding that the time is upon us, but
 - (2) again Jesus said the end will *not* come immediately, and
 - (a) he was not speaking of the end of time and earth,
 - (b) rather the end of
 - i) Judaism, the temple, and earthly Jerusalem
 - ii) as God's city.

Exhortation:

I. Luke did not write how the disciples took news of the impending destruction.

- A. How would you take a prophecy of the doom of our nation's capital?
 1. If an army could wipe out our capital,
 2. the rest of the nation would not be far away.
- B. Yet, Jesus had taught the disciples
 1. that the kingdom of God was on its way, and
 2. that the kingdom was not of this earth.
 - a) They would soon learn
 - b) that the kingdom/church
 - (1) is the greatest thing on this earth,
 - (2) which no one can destroy, as Daniel prophesied:

44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

– **Daniel 2.44**

II. If you are a disciple of Christ,

- A. if you have committed yourself to him,
- B. you are in that spiritual nation
 - 1. that supersedes anything else on this planet.
 - 2. So believe and so live
 - a) with that truth
 - b) buried in your heart.