

# Gospel of Luke: Messiah's Foretelling (Luke 21)

Scott Redd, sredd@4thpres.org

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## Messiah's Foretelling (Luke 21)

1. Widow's Offering (1-4)
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## Widow's Offering (1-4)

Point of contrast with the hypocritical scribes of 20:45-47

Parallel in Mark 12:41

Widow's gift is indicative of the state of her heart.

*Christ Among the Doctors*, Paolo Veronese, c. 1560



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## Destruction of the Temple (5-9)

1. "The days will come" echoes Jesus' earlier words in 19:44 and connects with the language of "the days are coming" in OT prophecy: Isa. 39:6; Jer. 7:1-14; 22:5; 27:6; 52:12-13; Hos. 9:7; Amos 4:2; Zech 14:1.
2. Call for faithfulness: Jesus has already told them in 17:22-25 that his return will be visible, though unexpected; they should not be led astray by false messiahs.
  - V. 8 "do not be led astray": "πλανάω used in the LXX for seduction, e.g. to idolatry or disobedience – cf. Deut. 4:19; 11:28; 30:17; Ezek. 14:11; 44:10-15.
  - Jesus provides criteria for discerning false prophets.
  - Statement that "the end will not be at once" forces the disciples to keep watch. The destruction of the temple does not have a direct temporal connection with what follows in Jesus' discourse.

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## Wars and Persecution (10-18)

Imagery is reminiscent of the prophets: Isaiah 5:13-14; 13:6-16; 19:2; Jer. 4:13-22; 14:12; 21:6-7; Ezek. 14:21; Hagg. 2:6-7; Zech. 14:4

“Witness” (v. 13): key role for the disciples and a major theme in the book of Acts as they testify about Jesus. Though earlier Jesus had promised that the Spirit will give them the words to say (Luke 12:11-12), here it is Jesus who will give them the words to speak (v.15). See also: John 16:5-15; Acts 1:8; 2:30-36; 4-5; 7; 24-26.



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## Wars and Persecution (10-18)

Persecution: also a repeated occurrence in Acts, but one which provides an opportunity to bear witness.

- Acts 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 7:55-60; 20:26; 26:22
- Persecution will come from all angles – even the closest relations will oppose Christ’s followers.
- “Not a hair of your head will perish”: connection with 12:7 and the divine knowledge of and sovereignty over his creation. Death does not mean the end of those who are faithful.
- Call for faithfulness: the endurance mentioned here is not just passive waiting but active faithfulness. Cf. Luke 8:15; 18:1-8.



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## Destruction of Jerusalem (20-24)

Third prediction of this destruction in Luke's gospel (13:31-35; 19:41-44)

"Desolation" cf. Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:1

- Matthew's and Mark's records of this discourse include the phrase "abomination of desolation" in reference to the temple (Matt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14).

Women and children are the most vulnerable in this situation. Jesus's words here seem to echo Jeremiah's prediction of the Babylonian captivity (Jer. 7:14-26, 30-34; 16:1-9; 17:27; 19:10-15. See also Mic. 3:12; Zeph 1:4-13).

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## Destruction of Jerusalem (20-24)

"Times of the Gentiles"

Debate over the millennium; interpretation of this phrase in connection with Revelation 20:1-6. Cf. Rom. 11:26.

Connection with the role of the nations as the Lord's instrument of judgment against Israel (e.g. Ezek. 39:23; Dan 2:44; 8:13-14; Zech 12:3)

Can also be read as the shift in focus to witness the Gospel to the Gentiles.

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## Son of Man (25-28)

Further signs of the coming of the end connecting back to v. 11 and OT imagery.

- Signs in the heavens: Isa. 13:11, 13; Ezek. 32:7-8; Joel 2:10, 30-31
- Distress among the nations: Isa. 8:22; 13:4.
- Roaring sea: Isa. 5:30; 17:12; Jonah 5:30
- Fear of the people: Isa. 13:6-11

Son of Man: Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus has been building up this connection throughout Luke: 9:26; 11:30; 12:8, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8.

“Coming in the clouds” is language used of theophany (Ex. 14:20; 34:5; Num. 10:34; Ps. 19:1; 104:3)

Fear will give way to hope; the return of the Son of Man signals the victory of God and his faithful people.

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## The Fig Tree and Its Application (29-38)

Fig Tree: changing seasons marked by leaves. The disciples will need to be discerning as to the changing seasons in order to respond appropriately (Jer. 28-29)

Meaning of “This generation” of Jesus? Of the disciples? Reference to the Jews as a group? Humanity as a whole?

- Could be a term of quality rather than time
  - referencing the righteous (Psa 24:6)
  - referencing those resistant to God (see 7:31; 9:41; 11:29-32, 50-51; 16:8; 17:25)

Assurance of the certainty of God’s word. E.g. Ps. 102:25-27; 119:89, 160; Isa. 40:8; 55:10-11.

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## Application

Disciples have hope (Titus 2:11-14)

Call for faithfulness: Keep watch and stay alert for the coming of the son of man (see also 12:1; 17:3; 20:45)