

Good News for all people.

The Gospel of Luke



Week 23 **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Week of 3/12/23

Text: Luke 21:5-38

This is a difficult chapter! Smart, Jesus-loving scholars disagree on the finer points of the verses we're reading, and it's common for people to read this chapter and have questions. Rather than focusing on what's debatable, we are intentionally focusing on what's most clear while setting aside things that require greater study and that typically lead to less consensus. A good study Bible, such as those published by Crossway (ESV) or Zondervan (NIV) can be helpful tools if you're interested in diving deeper.

Icebreaker: If you knew Jesus is returning tomorrow, what would you do with the rest of your time today?

1. Look at verses 5-7. What questions is Jesus answering in the rest of the chapter? Jesus is responding to the disciples' amazement of the temple structure by saying, in effect, "You might think it's impressive, but a day is coming when it'll no longer be standing." In response, they ask when this is going to happen and what sign they should be on the lookout for (v. 7). The rest of the chapter, then, is in response to their questions.

Application: Why do you think people often want to know details about the future? If you can relate to this curiosity, what questions would you want to ask Jesus about it?

2. Jesus accurately predicted Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 about 40 years before it happened. What else did Jesus predict, but that has not yet occurred in history? Jesus has also predicted his future return! This can be easy to pass quickly by, but we should slow down to think about how impressive the temple and its surrounding must have appeared. This would have only added to the feeling that the city and the temple would surely endure—and even more so when we consider that it was the center of Jewish culture and worship. It would have been hard for the disciples to imagine a world in which the temple didn't exist. (We might imagine a similar sense of shock if we picture ourselves standing in front of the Twin Towers in NYC prior to September 11, 2001, with someone telling us that they'd soon be a pile of rubble.) Just as sure and as shocking as Jerusalem's destruction was, so will the coming of Christ be.

Application: How does Jesus's promise of his future return impact your life today? What kind of thoughts or values do you think it should lead to in your life?

The last question also covers this topic.

3. Jesus describes a future that may appear chaotic and fearful at first glance. Where in this chapter do you see him calling the disciples to actually be hopeful in the midst of it all?

Building Christ-centered communities of people fully devoted to loving God and loving others.

Here are examples that apply immediately to Jerusalem's fall in AD 70, but that we might also apply to the trials of our lives:

v. 13—The trials are “your opportunity to bear witness.”

v. 15—Jesus will “give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.”

vv. 18-19—In the midst of it all, “not a hair of your head will perish,” likely meaning that God will provide ultimate, eternal protection over a person's life. Endurance will lead to eternal life.

Here are examples that likely apply to Jesus's second coming:

vv. 28-33—The surrounding devastation means redemption and God's kingdom are close. God's promises are assured and enduring. (Verse 32 raises questions that a good study Bible can help address.)

v. 36—Jesus desires for us to endure through these trials and fully expects that, by prayer, we will!

Application: Think of the current difficulties you face—both in your personal life and in the broader society. Do any of these verses give you a sense of hope about the future?

4. Look at verses 34-36. What is Jesus warning his disciples about in these verses when he says things like “watch yourselves” and “stay awake?”

Jesus wants them to be ready for his return, believing it could happen at any time and aware of the magnitude of what it will mean. This should lead us to live with a great sense of purpose rather than apathy.

Application: As you think about these words from Jesus, what kind of “cares of this life” are you prone to being “weighed down” or distracted by rather than alert and ready for Jesus's return?

5. Calvary's [doctrinal statement](#) includes the following: “We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.” What do you see in this statement that reflects what Jesus states in Luke 21?

This paragraph of our doctrinal statement is informed by multiple passages in the Bible, and Luke 21 is one example. Verse 27 speaks of the “power and great glory” of Jesus's return, which will be observed by people on earth. This is reflected in the first sentence of the statement. Next, Jesus does not give a precise date for the question of when this will happen. It's a time “known only to God.” Verses 34-36 are consistent with what is expressed in the rest of the statement.

Application: Think of an example or two of what it looks like for you to pursue “godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission?” Pray for each other, that you would grow in your commitment to these pursuits in light of Christ's return.