

Luke 21:20-28 – “The Olivet Discourse”, part 3: Desolation and the Descent of the Son of Man, January 22, 2023

I. Welcome and Review

A. Good morning! Ohaiyou-gozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni. It is such a blessing to be here with you all this morning.

1. *Welcome any new people and those who may be streaming content.*

B. Before we continue any further, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School class.

1. As well as our Bible English class with Mr. Dan. (2nd Service)

C. Today, we're going to continue in our verse by verse study through the gospel of Luke and the study we began two weeks ago looking at Jesus' "Olivet Discourse" that He gave to His disciples as they departed the temple.

1. Today will be part 3 of our study and I hope that you all have been tracking with me as we've made our way through this very important teaching that Jesus gave referring to things and events that would take place in the future.

2. This teaching Jesus gives focuses in upon the answer to a few questions the disciples had asked Jesus after He made a very bold and surprising statement to the disciples as they exited the Temple.

3. Recall, if you've been with us, that the disciples were in awe of the temple and the massive stones that were used in King Herod's renovation of the temple, and as they were in awe of the temple, Jesus declared, "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." (**Lk. 21:6**)

4. In response to Jesus' statement the disciples asked Jesus, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"
 - a. The disciples asked a "when?" question and a "what" question.
 - b. The disciples wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed, when the stones would be completely dismantled and one will not be left upon another.
 - c. But, they also wanted to know what sign would proceed these things. Now we know from Matthew and Mark's parallel account of this text that the "these things" Luke writes about is not limited to just the destruction of the temple for the disciples also asked Jesus what sign would there be before Jesus' coming and of the end of the age. (**Mt. 24:3b**)
5. And thus far, we have focused upon answering the what question. Last week we looked at what signs would be associated with the second coming of Jesus Christ and the end of the age.
 - a. Jesus spoke of religious deception, wars and commotions, nations rising against other nations, kingdoms coming against other kingdoms, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and fearful sights and signs from heaven.
6. We noted in our study that these things have been going on throughout the history of the world. And so just because we see some of these things happening doesn't mean that the end is upon us.
7. Jesus said there would be a delay, that the end wouldn't come immediately. We also noted how in Matthew and Mark's gospel Jesus spoke of some of

these signs as “the beginning of sorrows”, or “the beginning of birth pains” in some translations.

8. And so we come to the understanding that while an individual occurrence of these events may not mean that the end is here, nonetheless, like birth pains, the closer we get to the time of delivery, the more frequent these things will occur and they more intense they will be.

D. In our text today, we’re going to see Jesus give more signs that will precede His coming, but He will also answer the question of “when?”, when the temple would be destroyed and not one stone left upon another.

1. Our text this morning is going to be Luke chapter 21 verses 20-28 and this is part 3 of our study through Jesus’ **Olivet Discourse**.

2. Will you all rise to your feet in honor of the Lord and His Word? I’m going to read through our text from my Bible. Do your best to follow along in your own Bible. Luke records the following in vs. 20... (R & P)

II. Outline

A. Last week, as part of our study of the Olivet Discourse I mentioned some principles or guidelines that we need to keep in mind when interpreting the Bible and specifically when interpreting Bible prophecy.

1. I mentioned the importance of looking to the scriptures first and foremost. That we need to let scripture interpret scripture.

2. I spoke of how important it is that we not make definitive statements on matters the scriptures don’t make definitive statements on, especially when it comes to types and symbols.

3. Also, we talked about how the simplest interpretation is usually to take things literally when symbolism and

allegory are not obvious. We shouldn't jump to symbolism and allegory when interpreting things that could be clearly understood as literal events.

4. While at the same time we can't ignore the use of symbolism and types within the scriptures and within Jesus' teachings.

5. And lastly, we spoke about how some Bible prophecies will have dual fulfillments, or multiple fulfillments. That it is possible for prophecies to speak of events that will transpire on multiple occasions or how certain events will seem to fulfill a certain prophecy, but they will really be a foreshadowing of what is to come at a later time.

B. In our text today, we're going to talk about that very thing. How something could be part of fulfilled prophecy, but at the same time still speak of a yet to be fulfilled aspect of that prophecy. A dual fulfillment prophecy.

C. For those of you who like to take notes and outline our text, we're going to break up our text into two major sections.

1. In verses 20-24 we're going to be looking at Luke's description of the "Desolation of Jerusalem".

2. And then in verses 25-28 we're going to be looking at Luke's description of the "Descent of Jesus".

D. In Luke's description of the Desolation of Jerusalem, he is going to answer the question of "when". In his description of the "Descent of Jesus" he will mention more signs that pertain to the "what?" question.

E. Let's dive in and see what Luke has to say about the Desolation of Jerusalem by looking at verses 20-24 again.

III. Luke 21:20-24; The Desolation of Jerusalem

A. These verses in Luke's gospel are very unique. While Matthew, Mark, and Luke have a record of Jesus' teaching known as "The Olivet Discourse", Luke is the only one to record for us the information here in verses 20-24.

1. If you were to read a side-by-side account of Matthew, Mark, and Luke's record of Jesus' teaching, you will see that while Matthew and Mark stick to the same points of Jesus' teaching, Luke was led of the Spirit to record a different aspect of Jesus' teaching, that isn't found in Matthew and Mark's teaching.
2. This has led to some confusion for some and has led to some coming to certain conclusions that are problematic. Some look at what Luke records here in verses 20-24 and assume that he is speaking about the same thing that Matthew and Mark talk about in their gospel.
3. But a close look at them will show that they are definitely speaking about different events that were yet to come.
4. In these verses Luke, I believe, is writing about an event that would transpire in the not-too-distant future for His first century audience. But Matthew and Mark speak of a different event. We'll take some time later in our study to look at Matthew and Mark's account, but for now, let's focus in upon what Luke has to say for us.

B. Luke begins verse 20 by warning the disciples about the coming desolation of the city of Jerusalem. He says, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near."

1. This is not the first time that Luke has recorded Jesus mentioning the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

- a. You may recall that when Jesus triumphantly entered into the city of Jerusalem upon the back of a donkey, identifying Himself as their Messiah, Jesus also mentioned at that time.
 - b. While all the people were rejoicing and praising God and shouting “Hosanna, Hosanna”, we know that Jesus was quite sorrowful.
 - c. Luke records how as Jesus drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.’” (Lk. 19:41-44)
2. The destruction of the Jerusalem was something that Jesus knew was going to happen, and it all came to pass primarily because they (referring to the Jews) did not know the time of their visitation.
- a. In other words, they did not know that Jesus, their Messiah, had come to them. They failed to recognize Jesus for who He was; the Son of God and their Messiah.
 - b. Instead of receiving Him and worshipping Him, they would end up rejecting Him and crucifying Him upon a Roman cross.
 - c. And their destruction was going to come upon them because of this great failure of theirs. They did not know that when Jesus came into the city on the back of donkey that it was their day, the day God had predetermined as the one where Jesus would

present Himself as their Messiah, a day that was meant to be a day of peace, but would end up pointing to a day of great destruction.

C. Jesus taught that when they see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies that the people were to flee to the mountains, to depart from the city, and those out in the country should not enter in.

1. This would be the exact opposite of what you would normally do. If you start to see enemy forces coming toward your city, the natural instinct at that time would be to flee into the walled city for protection.
2. Those caught outside the city walls would have no means of defense and would quickly and easily either be taken captive or more than likely be slaughtered by the enemy forces.
3. Jesus said “woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing”, those who had small children basically, because it would be especially challenging for them to run and flee from the surrounding armies and find the support and help they would need.

D. Now, we do not have a written record of the destruction of the temple in the Bible, but we do have historical records that let us know of the details of the fall of the city and the destruction of the temple.

1. It was the year 66AD, less than 40 years after Jesus' arrival, that the Jews endeavored to separate from the rule of the Roman empire in an attempt to gain the peace and sovereignty they so desperately longed for.
 - a. The Jews were fed up with Rome and how they were being treated by the Romans. They greatly protested the taxes Rome was levying upon them and how the Romans would routinely attack Jews without any repercussions.

- b. In response to their revolt, Roman authorities plundered the temple and arrested numerous senior Jewish figures.
 - c. But this only enraged the people more and led to a widespread rebellion. The Syrian army was brought in to quell the unrest, but they were unsuccessful.
 - d. The Jews set up a provisional government of their own and the stage was set.
2. Roman General Vespasian was given four legions and tasked by Nero with crushing the rebellion. Vespasian invaded Galilee in the year 67AD and within several months had claimed major Jewish strongholds in that area for himself.
- a. The zealot rebels who were driven from Galilee along with thousands of refugees travelled south and arrived in Jerusalem creating tension between those who lived in Jerusalem and the rebel factions.
3. In the year 69AD, Vespasian was called to Rome and appointed Emperor of Rome, leaving behind his son Titus to besiege Jerusalem in the year 70AD.
- a. Titus built a large embankment around the city just like Jesus described and after 7 months of laying siege to the city, it finally fell.
4. Now Josephus, the Jewish historian writes about the fall of the city with great detail. And interestingly enough we find that Titus actually didn't want to destroy the temple.
- a. Josephus writes of how Titus actually gathered many of his commanders and other leaders together to talk about what they should do to the temple when they attacked.
 - i. Some counseled Titus to treat it like any other building under the rules of war and to demolish it.

- ii. Other suggested that they only demolish it if the Jewish forces took up arms within it. If they fled from it and didn't use it as a place to fight from, they would then spare it. This would then give Rome an excuse for why they destroyed it, putting the blame upon the Jews for using it as a type of citadel.
 - b. But Josephus states that Titus was not in any case for destroying so vast a work as that temple was, because it would be a mischief to the Romans themselves, as it would be "an ornament to their government" while it continued.
 - c. So Titus' plan was to keep the temple in tact as much as possible so that Rome may claim it for themselves. His orders went out that the temple was not to be destroyed.
5. Nonetheless on the day in which they stormed the temple, a random soldier snatched up some materials in the court that had been set to fire and proceeded to have another soldier lift him up and set fire to a golden window, through which there were passages to the rooms that surrounded the temple.
- a. When Titus got word of the fire that was spreading through the outer rooms of the temple, he rose up in great haste and ran into the temple hoping he may be able to quench the fire before it made it's way into the inner temple. He ordered troops to put out the fire, but they were in the midst of fighting Jewish rebels.
 - b. Despite all of Titus' efforts he was unable to successfully put out the fire and the temple ended up being burned down to the ground.
6. Now, the temple itself was definitely a sight to behold. Josephus writes, "it was the most admirable of all the

works that we have seen or heard of, both for its curious structure and its magnitude, and also for the vast wealth bestowed upon it, as well as for the glorious reputation it had for its holiness.”

- a. Now part of that wealth bestowed upon it was gold. The temple was overlaid with gold throughout and as the temple burned down the gold was melted down into liquid form and seeped down in between the cracks of the massive stones of the temple.
- b. After the fire was put out and the Jews no longer were a threat the Romans went in and unturned every single stone in the temple in order to gather the gold that had melted down through the cracks.
- c. And in doing so they fulfilled this prophecy of Jesus that He spoke about in Luke 19 when entering into the city of Jerusalem and here again in Luke 21 when talking about the desolation that was coming.
- d. Not one stone was left upon another as the Romans gathered up all the gold that had been melted down in between them.

E. And so, we understand that what Jesus said and described here in Luke 21 verses 20-24 was fulfilled in the year 70 AD.

1. Jesus described the days of Jerusalem’s fall as days of vengeance.
 - a. The word “vengeance” speaks of doing justice. It’s the noun form of the verb that means to execute justice.
 - b. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple were part of God’s divine justice upon the Jews for their part in rejecting God and His Son.
2. Jesus also described how there would be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.

- a. The word distress speaks of troubling times and the word “wrath” speaks of God’s divine judgment being inflicted upon the wicked.
3. He said that the people would fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations.
 - a. Again, Josephus writes in his “The Wars of the Jews” that the total number of those slain from the siege and the attack upon the city totaled 1.1 million. And states that some 97,000 were carried away captive.
 - b. Now some of you may be thinking, “That number seems larger than the normal population of what the city would normally hold.” If you are thinking that, you’d be correct in doing so.
 - c. The city wouldn’t normally have that many people living within it. And that’s just it, the people didn’t heed Jesus’ warning here. They didn’t listen to His word. Jesus told them to flee the city, to not enter into the city, but that is exactly what the people did.
 - d. The city swelled with people that normally didn’t have residence within the city. People had fled from other areas that had been attacked and the people were looking to Jerusalem to protect them.
 - e. Josephus also writes that the Roman forces didn’t surround the city until the Jewish feast of Unleavened Bread. They were able to trap all those visitors and refugees in the city creating a very big problem.
 - f. As the armies laid siege to the city, it quickly ran out of food supplies, and they were struck with a famine and people started dying off pretty quickly.
 - g. Remember that the city was under siege for 7 months. And the people were dying from starvation

on the inside. Once Rome broke through the walls, it was a quick mop up job after that of laying waste to the weak forces within the city.

- h. People were slain with swords, but many died from starvation before the walls of the city were even breached.
- i. Over a million were killed and nearly another 100,000 were taken away into captivity all because they did not listen to the word of Jesus. They didn't listen to Jesus' word and it brought death to them.
- j. If they would have listened to Jesus and done what He had said, and fled to the mountains, and got as far away from the city as possible they would have lived. So sad.

4. And yet this reminds us of a very important truth for us to consider. The people didn't listen to Jesus' words and it led to their death. But if they had listened to Him, they would have lived.

- a. The same is true for us. If we will not listen to and heed the Words of Jesus it will end in our destruction.
- b. But, if we do **listen to and heed the Words of Christ** it will lead to life everlasting.
- c. Jesus calls us to repent and believe upon Him for the salvation of our souls. We have the choice, we can either listen to His word and heed it, or ignore it or reject it and end up facing the consequences of our own sinful choices.
- d. May we be those who learn the lesson here of the importance of listening to and heeding the Word of God.

F. Now Jesus said that Jerusalem would be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

1. What this means exactly is uncertain. It would seem to be pointing to the fact that the city of Jerusalem will be overrun and ruled over by Gentiles for a certain amount of time.
2. The trampling of the city of Jerusalem really began back in the year 586BC when the Babylonians came in and destroyed the city and the first temple that Solomon had built.
3. The people were taken away captive and never again had complete control and autonomy to rule from the city of Jerusalem.
4. Even after the Babylonian captivity had ended and the people returned to the city of Jerusalem and rebuilt it, the city and the region was still under the power and control of the Medo-Persian Empire.
 - a. In fact, from the year 586BC when Babylon took over the city, it has been ruled by and controlled by various Gentile superpower empires.
 - b. It was the Babylonians, then the Persians, then the Greeks who took over after them, then the Romans. After the Romans it was the Byzantine Empire, then the Islamic and Christian Crusades, followed the Muslims again. Then the Ottoman Empire rose, followed by the British empire.
 - c. Throughout history Jerusalem has been under the control of Gentiles. But that all changed back on June 10, 1967. This date marked the end of the Six-Day War.
 - d. Israel fought against a coalition of Arab states (primarily Egypt, Syria, and Jordan) and in the process gained complete control over the entire city of Jerusalem which prior to then was partly held under Jordanian control.

- e. In addition to the entire city of Jerusalem, Israel seized the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza strip that had been under Egyptian control and the Golan Heights that were previously under the control of Syria.
 - f. This was the first time in over 2,500 years that Israel ruled and reigned over all of the city of Jerusalem.
 - g. Now, does that mean that the time of the Gentiles has been fulfilled now that Israel once again rules over Jerusalem? I don't know.
 - h. But it certainly is interesting to consider the fact that something that hasn't been the case for the last 2,500+ years, all of a sudden now is something.
 - i. At the very least, it ought to perk out interest and make us pay attention to what is going on.
5. Now, it is interesting that Jesus gives this time marker for us saying that Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
- a. It interests me because it seems the immediate context of what Jesus is speaking about here in Luke 21:20-24 is about the fall of the city of Jerusalem. And this occurred back in 70AD.
 - b. But by making this statement here about the times of the Gentiles it would seem that perhaps Jesus had a yet future event in mind as well.
- G. And that brings us to the parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark's gospels concerning what they recorded as part of Jesus' Olivet Discourse.
- 1. Instead of referring to the surrounding of the city of Jerusalem by armies as something that they should be watching for, both Matthew and Mark record how Jesus spoke about something called "the abomination of desolation" that was spoken of by the prophet Daniel.

2. Turn with me quick to the book of Mark; Mark chapter 13.
 - a. Mark writes in verse 14 ““So when you see the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not’ (let the reader understand), ‘then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter. For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.” (Mk. **13:14-20**)
 - b. Now there is some similar wording in here that may lead us to think that Mark is talking about the same thing. But upon a closer look we come to understand that these are totally different events that Mark and Luke are talking about.
 - c. There are existing parallels in how people should respond to the events. In both cases people are exhorted to flee to the mountains, and in both events woe is pronounced over those who are pregnant and nursing kids because in both events it will be difficult to run and escape carrying the extra weight of an unborn or recently born baby.
 - d. But the mention of the abomination of desolation is different from the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies.

3. The abomination of desolation is something that Daniel prophesied about back in Daniel chapter 9.
 - a. If you were here with us a couple months back, you may recall our study of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and how it correlated with the 70 weeks prophecy that is found in Daniel chapter 9.
 - b. In Daniel 9:24 it says, "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." (**Dan. 9:24**)
 - c. In our study of that portion, we noted how the 70 weeks were not to be understood as weeks as we know them, but sets of seven years. So, the timeframe is actually 70 7-year sets; or 490 years. We also noted how the 70 "weeks" were broken up into three sections.
 - d. The angel Gabriel who was speaking to Daniel at this time, giving Him this information, declared, "know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;" (**Dan. 9:25**)
 - e. There was going to be 7 weeks, then 62 weeks, and then one final week.
 - f. Now in our study of the Jesus' Triumphal Entry into the city of Jerusalem, we noted how Jesus entered into the city at the end of the first 69 weeks. 483 years after the command to restore and build the walls spoken of in the book of Nehemiah, Jesus presented Himself to His people as their Messiah.
 - g. But then He was cut off. 70 weeks were determined for Daniel's people, the Jews, and for his city,

Jerusalem, but then the time was cut off at the 69th week.

- h. There still remains one more week for the Jews and for the city of Jerusalem before the end of sins comes, and everlasting righteousness and the anointing of the Most High.
- i. This seven year period, this final week, is what many refer to as the “Tribulation” or “the time of Jacob’s trouble”, or even “The Day of the Lord” spoken of by many OT prophets; it is the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy.
- j. In Daniel 9:26 it states, “after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself”. The sixty-two weeks followed the seven weeks, so at the end of the 69 weeks of years the Messiah would be cut off. (**Dan. 9:26a**)
- k. This cutting off is explained by Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 53. There he declares, “For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.” (**Isa. 53:8**)
- l. Isaiah is referencing the sacrifice of Jesus and how he was murdered alongside criminals for our transgressions but buried with the rich for he was buried in Joseph of Arimathea’s own tomb, a wealthy and prominent man of the day.
- m. The phrase “but not for Himself” is better understood in some other translations as it states He will have nothing. The Messiah will come but will not receive His kingdom, He will be cut off.
- n. Daniel describes in verse 27, that after the Messiah is cut off there will arise a prince that will confirm a

covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,” (**Dan. 9:27**)

- i. This one-week covenant is the final week of the 70 week prophecy. During this final week of years, the “prince” will make a covenant with Israel, presumably to protect them from their enemies and he will also permit them to rebuild their temple.
- ii. But half way through the seven-year period this prince will break his agreement with them and bring an end to the sacrifices in the temple and commit what is known as the abomination of desolation.
- iii. Now 2 Thessalonians describes for us what will happen. In 2 Thessalonians 2 Paul writes about the day of the coming of Jesus Christ and we read, “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (**2 Thes. 2:3-4**)
- iv. This man of sin, the son of perdition will be the Antichrist. The Antichrist will help Israel rebuild the temple, but once it is complete he will enter into the holy place in the temple and will declare Himself to be God and demand to be worshiped as God.
- o. This is what I believe to be the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by the prophet Daniel. Mark writes, “when you see the abomination of desolation

spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing where it ought not” then it’s time to flee. Where is this place it shouldn’t be standing? It’s in the holy place of the temple.

- i. Matthew’s gospel confirms it. He writes, “when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place.”; a clear reference to the temple according to Matthew’s gospel. (**Mt. 24:15**)
 - ii. The Antichrist is going to come on the scene and thing swill seem good for the first 3.5 years of this seven-year period. The Israelites will get another temple built, there will seemingly be peace in the land of Israel, something that really hasn’t happened since the days of Solomon.
 - iii. But all that is going to change half way through the 70th week.
- p. Mark records how in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.”
- i. This time of tribulation coincides with the events written of in the book of Revelation from chapters 6-18. If you want to know what it will be like during the second part of the seven year Tribulation, you can read all about it in the book of Revelation.
 - ii. Time won’t permit us to dive into it, but suffice it to say, it’s not something you want to witness firsthand.
4. And so, it would appear that perhaps what we have here in Luke 21 and Mark 13 is somewhat of a dual fulfillment type of prophecy.

- a. The city of Jerusalem was indeed surrounded by armies and laid waste and the temple was destroyed.
- b. But the city still has yet another week to come. A time where the city will once again be surrounded by armies during the Tribulation.
 - i. Something I believe that may be pointing to the battle of Armageddon when all the kings of the earth gather their armies for an all-out assault on Jerusalem as discussed in Revelation chapter 16.
 - ii. Also the prophet Zechariah speaks of this in Zechariah chapter 14 in reference to the day of the Lord that is coming.
 - iii. Zechariah declares, “For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remanent of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.” (**Zech. 14:2-3**)
 - iv. Zechariah continues to talk about the Lord returning and stepping foot down on the Mount of Olives, but that is us getting ahead of ourselves and our text here in Luke.

H. So let's reel it back in a little. We've looked at the “Desolation of Jerusalem” and how it was fulfilled in 70AD and how it still may have yet a future fulfillment in connection to the Tribulation. Now let's quickly look at what Luke records for us about the “Descent of Jesus” in verses 25-28.

IV. Luke 21:25-28; The Descent of Jesus

- A. Here in these verses Jesus gives the final signs as to what to expect immediately preceding His return. So He is back to answering the “what?” question pertaining to signs of His coming and the end of the age.
- B. Note with me real fast the signs He mentions. There are three of them.
1. First of all, Jesus says in verse 25 that there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars. At the end of verse 26 He says, “the powers of the heavens will be shaken”.
 - a. The word shaken carries the idea of something being distressed. And so, we see that there will be great distress in the heavens.
 - b. These distresses in the heavens that will take place right before the coming of the Lord have long been prophesied by the prophets.
 - i. Isaiah the prophet spoke some 700 years before Christ’s first coming in Isaiah 13, “Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; the Sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause it’s light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity;...Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the Lord of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.” **(Isaiah 13:9-11a, 13)**
 - ii. Joel prophesied “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness” **(Joel 3:14-15)**

iii. Zechariah spoke concerning the day of the Lord saying, “It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish.”
(Zec. 14:6)

c. These distress in the heavens will occur immediately before the return of Christ and will be a sign for all to see and for all to know that the day of the Lord is at hand.

2. Number two, Jesus mentioned that there would also be distress of nations upon the earth.

a. All the nations of the earth will see what is happening right before the coming of the Lord and they will be greatly distressed. The turmoil of those days will be like the tossing of the waves in rough seas.

b. Constant turn over, constant pounding, wave after wave will be overwhelming.

3. And then third and finally Jesus states, the hearts of men will be failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth. And so we see not only distress in the heavens, but distress in the nations, and ultimately distress in hearts of all men.

a. The world will be falling apart. It will be a world of chaos and distress. Death, destructions, and upheaval will be throughout. It will be the worse this world has ever seen.

C. And just when it seems it couldn't get any worse, as fear and uncertainty surrounds all, that is when Jesus will descend. That is when the whole earth will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

1. **Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth!**

2. The phrase “Son of Man” is a Messianic title that comes from Daniel.

a. Daniel prophesied, “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.” (**Dan. 7:13-14**)

D. His coming is described as being “in the clouds with great power and glory”. It will be an incredible sight to see for all.

1. **Revelation 1:7** describes the coming of the Lord, stating, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.”

a. The coming of the Lord will not be some secret event that only certain people will see or know about. The coming of the Lord will be seen by all, “every eye will see Him”, Revelation says.

2. When Jesus Christ returns to this earth during His second coming it will not be as He did during His first coming.

a. During His first coming, Jesus did not come as a conquering king, but as a suffering servant.

3. But all that will change in His second coming. In His second coming, Jesus will be coming as that conquering king the Jews were waiting for and wanting.

a. Revelation describes it this way, “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in

righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” (19:11-16)

b. Jesus is coming on a white horse as a conquering king, making war against the nations. His eyes are going to be like a flame of fire, and out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword. What an incredible day that will be.

E. Verse 28 concludes with “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

1. Now we have to understand something here and the audience Jesus is speaking to. Jesus is speaking to Jews and He is speaking about the final week of the Jews and the Jews’ city, Jerusalem.
2. I believe this exhortation, while a beautiful one we can be encouraged by as we see certain things happening. Ultimately, I believe this exhortation is not necessarily for us the church, but for the Jews and those who get saved during the 7-year tribulation.
3. I don’t believe that we will be around during the 7 year Tribulation. But don’t feel like you’re going to miss out on this awesome display of the Lord’s return. I think

you and I are going to be right in the thick of it when Jesus returns. How so?

- a. Did you notice as I read from Revelation that Jesus wasn't coming by Himself, that He wasn't coming alone?
- b. There with Him will be the armies in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean that will follow Him on what horses.
- c. Who makes up the armies of heaven? Who is dressed in these fine white linens? Revelation tells us, just a few verses prior to this in verse 7 & 8 of Revelation 19.
 - i. Revelation 19 describes a great multitude in heaven singing praises to God right before Christ's coming. And in verse 7 it reads, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." (**Rev. 19:7-8**)
 - ii. Let me ask you this, who is the bride of Christ? Who is His wife? The church. Ephesians chapter 5 teaches us that the bride of Christ is the church.
 - iii. The bride is clothed in fine linen and those fine linens according to verse 8 are the righteous acts of the saints, that's you and me. The church, the saints.
- d. You see, I do not believe the church will go through the tribulation, the time of God's wrath, because we have not been appointed to wrath according to 1 Thessalonians 5:9. (**1 Thes. 5:9**)

- e. I believe prior to the Tribulation, the Lord will call His bride to Himself in what we refer to as the rapture of the church and we will be caught up into heaven with him.
 - f. Then when He returns, we will be with Him, in our glorified bodies, clothed in fine linen, riding alongside Jesus on white horses.
 - g. The NT epistle of Jude attests, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints.” (**Jude 14b**)
 - i. That word “ten thousands” in the Greek isn’t a literal number, but a description of a great myriad. The NIV translates it “thousands upon thousands”. It’s describing an innumerable number of saints coming with the Lord when He returns.
4. The Lord is coming back and He’s coming back with His saints by His side.
- a. What an amazing day that will be as Jesus Christ comes and wipes out the Antichrist and binds Satan for a 1,000 years. Jesus Christ will rule and reign upon the earth. It will be a time of great peace and prosperity where all will worship the Lord.
 - b. How glorious that will be. Let’s pray!