

## Olivet Discourse Part 5 Luke 21:20 - 24

*Ch. 21: 20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. 21 "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 "Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

When I was growing up in churches 50+ years ago and churches had those bulletin boards along the curb that you could change with catch phrases and previews of what the pastor was going to be talking about, prophecy was always used to draw the people to a church.

People get all tingly about prophecy. It isn't so different from a taro card reader or other spiritists that claim they can tell you the future. People want a glimpse into the future. We have this curiosity, where is all this going, and where are we at right now, and what's going to happen next.

There's a bunch of earthquakes over on Hwy 395. Doesn't the Bible mention earthquakes? We experienced a pestilence. Covid-19. Most of the pestilence was self inflicted by the government. Doesn't the Bible say there's going to be pestilence. Are we actually entering "the end times"??

Is the apocalypse coming? The earth's resources seem to be taxed. The population has tripled in my lifetime. Highway 95 definitely isn't safe. I have no idea how people in huge cities cope. We can barely cope out here with 40 people. Population is going to get us if we keep adding, and it's going to get us if we don't add. China realizes that. They're trying to get people to have more than one kid now! It all seems unsustainable. It is unsustainable. Is the apocalypse near?

I watch a stand up comic show sometimes at lunchtime while I take a break. They joke about the apocalypse. This one guy's taking helicopter lessons and the other comedian asks him why helicopters? And the guy says; the apocalypse. How else are you going to get out of town? Not on the highways. If you aren't a millionaire and can't afford a helicopter I think a Honda Trail 90 might be your best bet.

We laugh about it but everyone's had those thoughts. We sort of know it's coming, but we don't want to think about it, and joking about it is right up there with joking about death. We make light of it.

The motivation for our interest is all wrong. It's all about me. How's it going to be for me. How will I cope. What survival things will I need. Yesterday the lady on the radio in Goldfield is talking about the drought. Lake Mead is almost empty. Better buy some cases of drinking water. Just to be sure.

This is the 5th week now that we have looked at the longest answer Jesus ever gave to any question. And you'll recall that the question driving all of this prophecy is; *When will these things be; What will be the sign of your coming; And of the end of the age.*

But there's a difference between the apostles interest and ours. We're driven by self preservation. The disciples are freaked out because Jesus has told them He's going away. Our problem is all about me. Their problem is not having Jesus. Not seeing His face. Not being with the Son of God. That is unimaginable to these men who have spent 3 years with Him.

That's the right motivation, that wanting to **BE with** Jesus, and it's actually what Jesus told them to pray for. "*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*"

The right motivation for a curiosity about biblical prophecy is the Glory of God revealed to every eye, and the deposing of the ruler of this world, and the re-taking of this world for God's rule, and ultimately the glory of God. When

will your kingdom come. Physically. When will your will be done on earth, as opposed to Satan's will which is the ruling influence now?

In all of heaven, everywhere in creation, God's will is not challenged. There is no rebellion. In heaven, which is everywhere else in all of the universes except here, God's will is done. Earth alone is in rebellion against God. An evil ruler has usurped the rule in this place, and he holds all people captive because all sin.

That's why I don't believe in space aliens, blah blah blah. Big deal in the news lately. Congress has forced the people who know about the ufo's to tell all. The latest is, we don't know. We've seen things we can't explain. That's all we know. Big deal. Demon's could accomplish that.

*Thy will be done **on earth**, as it is in heaven.* Earth is in rebellion. Heaven is not. That's all I really need to know. From this book, as usual. Thy kingdom come. The authority to reign of God, as opposed to Satan who will be deposed and locked away for future punishment, COME! That's our motivation to know as much as we can learn about end time events.

God the Son is returning to this earth to crush evil, to judge and eliminate rebellers, and to set up a glorious kindgom here where He will rule in paradise regained. Glory upon glory upon glory for the glorious Son of God. We want to know about that. Our motivation is the same as the apostles. We want to see His face. We want Him to be glorified. We want Him to rule on earth.

If that's your motivation, join me now in Luke 21 and we'll give these words a go and try to determine what we can. In our time. But first; here's something to think about.

There is a sense, I believe, that these words are only partially written for us. I believe prophecy, these words written between 2000 - 3500 years ago have a *need to know* component. A need to know that is increasingly necessary as the tribulation period approaches.

So you can go read Daniel 12 and it's a blow by blow account and all we can do is make silly guesses about who it's talking about. Daniel himself was scratching his aching head trying to figure out what it meant and the angel told him, seal it up Daniel. It isn't for you. It's for the time of the end.

When that time comes, the people living then, the jews who God will call out of this world to belong to Him, they'll look at what Daniel wrote 2500 years ago and it'll be a blow by blow map of what's happening around them. A lot of what's written, even here, won't be fully understood until the people living in the apocalypse, who God opens their eyes to it, will understand everything here perfectly.

But there is truth here for us. If we, like the disciples who first heard these words are driven by a longing to be re-united with Jesus, to try to understand when we will again see His face, in person, and witness His glory, these words as well as all of the prophecies, and especially the book of Revelation can keep us longing to see that glorious face.

It's all about Jesus coming here to rule in glory. It's the final chapter of the disaster that happened in the garden of Eden in Genesis 3. Paradise lost. Paradise regained.

But in the middle 6000 years, God has been calling a remnant out of this world, He has planned for their redemption, He has accomplished redemption from sin in the death of Jesus on the cross, the just for the unjust, and ultimately all of history is moving towards the glory of the reign of Jesus on earth. Evil rebellion crushed. Earth flourishing under the rule of Jesus. That's the whole book in a nutshell. Quite a story. We're in it!

*VS 20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand.*

Wikipedia has a timeline for Jerusalem that spans 4000 years. I spent a significant period of time reading through all of the different events that have surrounded Jerusalem for 4,000 years. My conclusion is that these words of

Jesus are very much like the words that say there will be wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes in various places and famines and pestilence.

There's always been wars. There's always been earthquakes. There's always been famine and pestilence. And when it comes to Jerusalem, 30 year periods of relative peace when it isn't surrounded by armies are the exception, not the rule. Jerusalem seems always to be surrounded by armies.

So what do we do with this prophecy? Is it meaningless? 20 *“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand.*

It's normative for Jerusalem to be surrounded by armies. Go read through that timeline. We could say it's surrounded by armies today. As we speak. Jerusalem is surrounded by enemies on every border, every side, including the sea. All of those peoples have armies. And some of them don't have armies but they can still somehow afford old Toyota pickup trucks with rocket launchers.

That's happening today! What did Jesus mean? Are His words of any help, any value at all? Well, the preterists (Preterism, a Christian view of future things, interprets some (partial preterism) or all (full preterism) prophecies of the Bible as events which have already been fulfilled) ... those folks would say, yes, of course, this is an important prophecy and it was completely realized at 70 AD.

Actually in the long timeline there have only been 2 times where Jerusalem was razed to the ground. And 70 AD was one of them.

I believe that prophecy which comes from the mind of God is often telescopic in a way. It's like the long view with a 600mm lens on the Nikon of ascending mountain tops. Peak after peak after peak. All together. But the Nikon isn't showing you the wide valleys in between.

I believe we have a dual fulfillment here. Jesus told them their house was

being left to them desolated. And in 70AD Rome came and did the job. BUT and this is a huge but, there is language both here, and even more so in the Matthew 24 version of this answer that is not completed at 70AD. What do you do with that.

Well, if you're a preterist and you think we're lost somewhere in the 2000th year of the thousand year millenium (not sure how that works out) you simply say; This is hyperbole. That's all. Jesus is using great big words to prove a point here. It's hyperbole for the grand effect. Ouch!

In other words, Jesus doesn't know what He's talking about and you have to take a lot of His verbage with a grain of salt, He was just puffing stuff up for the effect He wanted. Really? What else did He puff up that I can simply call hyperbole? Divorce? Immorality? Maybe everything He says is only 20% true. 30%? Yikes.

*“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand.*

I believe this has to be a time when there is a surrounding by armies unlike any other seige on Jerusalem in previous times. Somehow this is different than any other seige surrounding of Jerusalem. The people living when this final surrounding of Jerusalem happens will know; Jerusalem is going to look like Nagasaki after the bomb, except a thousand times more powerful devastation.

Something about this prophecy that we don't know yet, but that the people living in the tribulation period will recognize will make this prophecy distinct. Like a repeat of 70AD but with thermonuclear war heads on every side with fingers on the trigger buttons.

Jesus distinctly says of this event; *for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. 22 “And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.*

This surrounding of Jerusalem is distinct from every other seige. There is tribulation that exceeds any other distress since the beginning of the world. We have not seen this level of trouble, tribulation, before, ever. That didn't happen in 70AD. It will be distinctly recognizable when the words of Jesus are true for the final fulfillment of this prophecy.

Complete annihilation will be moments away. Unless God intervenes. *there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.*

Folks, if those words were completed in 70AD, we've got a huge problem. If that's the case, Jesus is guilty of abusive hyperbole and we need to discount everything He ever said. We can go through all of His words with a red highlighter and get rid of about 90% of it. Hyperbole. Won't happen. Doesn't really mean this. Means about 20% perhaps of what this says.

Or we can take the literal approach and look at these words with awe and wonder! A level of trouble, tribulation, is coming at Jerusalem, that the world has never experienced before since time was set in motion, nor will it ever be as bad after this happened again.

If those words are literal and 70AD completed this prophecy, throw your Bibles away, because Nagasaki was far worse than Jerusalem in 70AD and that means Jesus didn't know what He was talking about.

This level of threat and destruction had to wait until such a time as now. When Jesus said those words, men didn't have the technology to even make those words true. Build a seige wall, starve the people inside until they're committing cannibalism, storm the place and raze it to the ground.

That was possible then, and it happened regularly. It does not and can not approach a literal accomplishment of a level of trouble that has never been seen since time began nor ever will be seen again. Those words require something like we have invented in the last 80 years. Thermonuclear

holocaust and biological warfare can accomplish those words. Restrained but improved for the last 80 years. Waiting. For what?

*21 "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city;*

The preterists say; See! That was the perfect wise thing for the folks at 70AD to have done. When you see Rome's armies surrounding the city making provision to lay seige, get out of town. Anyone there who listened to Jesus and got out of town 40 years later was very wise. Very wise, and perhaps survived. This works perfect for 70AD. Very smart move. Rome is surrounding us getting ready to lay seige. I'm out of here!

But then He says; *22 because these are days of vengeance, in order that **all things** which are written may be fulfilled.*

Oops! Were all of the Old Testament predictions surrounding the end times fulfilled in 70 AD. Did the mountains melt like wax as the earth shook loose from it's moorings? Did the stars crash into the earth? Did the lights go out. Was there thick darkness where the sun and the moon didn't give their light. Just some of the things the old testament prophets foretold. Nevermind the New testament!

But I'll give the preterists this, they're consistent. They will insist that everything predicted was fulfilled in 70AD. It's hyperbole. IF you were there you would have felt like the mountains were melting like wax and that the sky had gone thick black. That's how it would have seemed to those folks. It's all completed.

Folks, that seems like lunatic reasoning to me. You have to go so far out on this limb to make all of these words of no meaning. I'm frankly astonished.

Jesus specifically states . . . *these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*

That means if we're going to be literalist at all we have to conclude that 70AD was only a partial realization of this prophecy. It was a mountaintop definitely in our Nikon picture, but there's yet another mountain top beyond that one that will actually complete this prophecy in a very very literal sense that gives meaning to every word Jesus spoke here.

Let's bring Matthew 24 into the discussion here and you'll see exactly what I'm talking about. Mt. 24:15

*15 “Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; 17 let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; 18 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. 19 “But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! 20 “But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; 21 for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. 22 “And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.*

Whoa! Wait a minute. We can tell this is the same prophecy about get out of town quick, but this version from Matthew's gospel is a lot more specific about an event in time that triggers this panic.

*Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee*

What is the abomination of desolation? Jesus is referring us to Daniel, and Matthew or perhaps it was Jesus himself says, *let the reader understand*. That's a clue. If we are not in that place, in that time, we won't completely understand. But if we are the folks living in that place at that time, we will understand perfectly!

Someone someplace sometime is going to read this and say; That just happened! That just totally happened like Daniel said 2500 years ago. Time for me to get in the helicopter and scoot. Hope the Honda 90 has some fresh gas and is going to start. Because something specific that a prophet said 2500 years ago and that Jesus said you would do well to understand, so when you physically see it, it's time to run as fast as you can. What did Daniel say??

Jesus is referring us to Daniel 9:27 *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”*

And **he** will make a firm covenant . . . Who?? Who is this talking about? It's very specific, but we need to know who the "he" is.

Good, good. Now we're thinking like literalists who think perhaps Jesus meant something very specific when He spoke the words we're studying. Who is this person. OK, back up a verse;

26 *“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.*

The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city . . . Jerusalem has been razed to the ground 2 times. Once was before Daniel spoke these words. That leaves a single event possible. Rome. 70AD. The people of the prince who is to come . . . OK, class, if the people here are Rome, where does this prince who is to come come from. Rome.

And we can broaden that a little. The Bible pictures a second Roman empire in the end times that arises and this ruler comes from that conglomeration somewhere and puts this second Roman empire together and he through a coalition of nations actually rules over the whole earth, much like the original

Roman empire did in it's day. European Union. Belgium? Perhaps.

Some people think this is Rome, the city. Many believe it's the Pope. A pope. Certainly that would work in the constraint. I'm willing to broaden that to some person who is a political leader from a coalition of nations that roughly occupies the same area as the original Roman empire at it's height.

If you look at old maps, that can include many muslim nations that surround the Mediteranean sea from N. Africa all the way around to Europe. The prince will arise from a rebuilt world power that is a physical match to the old Roman empire. That's a lot of real estate. Maybe it's the Pope. I've not ruled that out.

Here's one thing I do think though. When this is all coming down, America isn't even a blip on the radar anymore. I believe we have been the big stick that has silently (and sometimes not so silently) been in the shadows as the protectorate of Israel. I believe God raised up and blessed America to do that job.

But suddenly Israel has to make a deal with this prince for it's safety. That tells me America is no longer willing or able to do that job. OK, that's my thoughts and totally FWIW.

The prince who is to come is the Anti-Christ who will delude the entire world into following him. He does miracles. He comes back from the dead. Sort of. That's one reason I think miracles have ceased after the first century apostles. The stuff we have today is paving the way for the anti-christ to come and set up shop. He claims to be Jesus. Complete with miracles. Beware world.

But the real Jesus is very specific; *And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate*

In the middle of the week of years. 3 1/2 years after the anti-christ makes this deal to protect Israel, he will enter a rebuilt temple where sacrifices are taking place and he is going to desolate it.

We have a smaller mountain picture of something *like* this in history. Daniel prophesied about someone who would desecrate and desolate the holy place. And if you read that timeline I talked about there is a man named Antiochus who did that.

He brought swine into the temple, slaughtered them there and forced the priests to eat swine. In 175BC. He erected a statue of Zeus and forced the jews to worship a foreign non god.

That's our little mountain picture of what this prince will do. And we have some specifics. Revelation 12 and 13 picture this event as well as 2 Thess. 3. It says he enters the temple and sets up an image of himself that can speak and demands the world to worship him.

Jesus simply says, when you see that event, it's time to flee for your life. No other explanations or definitions will be needed!

*21 "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city;*

Don't go back to get your stuff. Specific event that has not yet taken place. Let the reader understand. When you see that happen, run for your life. Literally, run for your life. Flee to the mountains. I think a trail 90 would be perfect. Pretty nimble. You could dodge the other folks who are fleeing. Get to the mountains. Quick.

The final 3 1/2 years are going to be deadly for jews, deadly for christians. Deadly for anyone not worshipping the beast. But worshipping the beast is the ultimate deadly. Because then God is going to judge you and punish you forever.

23 “Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be **great** distress upon the land,

From a literalist perspective this is simply common sense. Of course it's going to be difficult for anyone. This is panic escape time. But pregnant women and mothers nursing babies, the panic is real. They may not make it out. Woe here means; woe.

Great distress upon the land. You can read about that distress in Revelation. As the time gets nearer to the end, the distress from all quarters mounts up. wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famine, things happening to the world that are unprecedented. Terrifying problems. And God's wrath is unleashed against the rebellers who hate Him.

*and wrath to **this** people, 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations;*

From 70 AD until today this prophecy has been constantly being fulfilled. God literally gave the jews a homeland in Israel, it's recorded in scripture, *This land is mine, God gave this land to me*; that famous line from the song, Exodus that won every award when it came out . . . is true.

And when God scattered them everywhere, led captive into all the nations, they have never had a homeland again, until 1948 when some of the jews were able to form a sovereign territory, thanks to Britain in large part, and then to the USA who has been the big stick in the background protecting them . . . it's a big deal that they're back in the land.

All those century's with no home land the jews would begin to thrive a little bit and get chased out. Crushed, time and time again. Always unwelcome. They were foreigners no matter where they went. Israel is their homeland by decree from the Creator who owns it all. And if you begin to add up all of the real estate that God gave to Abraham . . . Oh My. That would be a fight.

Ask the A-millennial crowd what significance is there that people with DNA from Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are back in that land and they'll tell you none at all. That fact is inconsequential. Jews in their homeland; meaningless. I think not.

*and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

That time line that I spoke of earlier from 2000 BC to 2021 AD, a little over 4000 years, and jewish occupation where they were truly sovereign was only 564 years. Not very much.

Since 70AD Jerusalem has been trodden down by gentiles and even though they're in the land, everyone sort of knows, if it wasn't for America, the Arab countries would eradicate Israel. They'd make it a smoking hole if it wasn't for America promising to make them a smoking hole in the ground if they try it.

Jerusalem is still trodden down by the gentiles today. And the proof of that concept is the fact that when America dis-engages, for whatever that reason may turn out to be, the jews will seek their safety; where? From a gentile who is the anti-christ.

The final 3 1/2 years of the 7 year tribulation period is Jerusalem trodden down by gentiles on steroids. And so what this promise, this prophecy is really saying is Jerusalem will be trodden down by the gentiles until Jesus physically returns, to that very land, and treads down Satan himself and the antichrist and the false prophet and the image that can speak.

It's an interesting word study to think about what God told the serpent in the garden at the initial fall into sin. This idea of winner treading upon loser.

15 *And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her seed;*

*He shall bruise you on the head,  
And you shall bruise him on the heel.”*

The idea of trodding your enemy under your feet stems from these words. He shall bruise you on the head. Jesus is going to return to Jerusalem, which is trodden down by gentiles, and He's going to tread on the heads of those who were treading on her.

*The LORD says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” Ps. 110:1*

*and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*

I believe that happens when Jesus arrives, perhaps with thermonuclear bombs in the air, aimed at Jerusalem, can't be dogmatic about that, but it's a good guess. The ultimate treading down and Jesus returns and saves Jerusalem and it's inhabitants, and then treads on it's enemies.

These are exciting concepts to spend time thinking about. We believe we will see Jesus very soon. With our eyes, we will see Him and spend eternity in His presence.

Get your story ready. We need to get ready to provide every man an answer, as the time draws near and we may begin to see just the very beginning rumblings of birth pangs. Unprecedented heat waves. Earthquakes. Pestilence. Droughts. Famines. When the combined effect begins to make people ask questions, we need to be ready with answers.