

## Olivet Discourse Part 6 Luke 21:25 - 28

*Ch. 21:25 “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth anguish among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 “And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. 28 “But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”* Legacy Standard Bible

*When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?* Lk. 18:8b

Poor little Greta Thunberg was so upset about what she was taught in her school when she was 8 years old that she became depressed and ceased eating. Of course she ceased growing too. Depression and malnutrition cannot cause thriving.

What is she so upset about. Climate change. She fears the world will end before she is an adult. Ten years have passed. I've gotten apricots 2 years in a row. She may be right. But her fear and activism is mis-guided at best. If she only knew what Jesus has planned for this planet, the climate change would seem like a cool breeze at a hot summer picnic.

In some sense we should be shamed by her. She has let mis-information drive her to lengths of activism that have harmed her and her family. Her mother was an international opera star, and out of concern for her starving child gave up her career and the necessary jet travel with the carbon emissions.

She says she didn't give up international travel and stardom to save the planet, she did it to try to rescue her daughter. But Greta, encouraged by real carbon changes within her own family as a direct result of her, decided she could make real change in the bigger world. And the media welcomed a new darling. A quirky girl with aspergers with the physique of an 11 year old but who, when she decides to speak, is apparently quite direct and well spoken.

By comparison, we have the real truth, spoken by the person who created the world and owns the worlds, which is actual truth, no science needed, and I will beg you to not ask me how many of my neighbors doors I have knocked on in order to warn them of real calamity that as far as we know, may ensue before this day is over.

Last week we talked about hyperbole. (tonopahchurch.org) Jesus doesn't engage in hyperbole. When He states a truth, He means exactly, exactly what He said. Don't worry about silly speculative so-called science by consensus. Worry about what Jesus has said He will do to the climate, which needs no science, you can take His words to the bank. Every word He uttered will be realized.

This is now our 6th week that we have considered the Olivet discourse. These words combined with Matthew 24 and Mark 13 comprise the single longest answer to any question that Jesus ever gave.

The question posed by the disciples on the occasion of Jesus telling Israel that their window of opportunity had ended and that they would be left desolated, empty, razed to the ground, not one stone left upon another was thus.

*Tell us, when will these things be, what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age.* Jesus here is going to get somewhat specific about the end of the age, which coincides with His 2nd coming. These terrifying events will be happening immediately prior to His arrival in judgement.

If what He says is true, and not hyperbole, then worrying about global warming or climate change becomes moot. Like chasing a fly with a fly swatter while unbeknownst to you a tidal wave has curled around the building you are in and will soon wash you and the fly out to sea in utter violence.

It's a little bit like what happened to the anti-diluvian world after they ignored Noah's preaching for 120 years while he built the ark, and then suddenly, after the door was sealed to them, the waters came upon them like a flood. Like

that tidal wave. One minute you're upset about what's on TV and the next minute your house is swept out to sea.

People are nailing the deck chair legs to the deck of the ship because they are beginning to slide from the angle of the deck, but the boat is sinking.

*25 “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth  
anguish among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,  
26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming  
upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

The disciples seem sort of non-plussed by this. The powers of the heavens will be shaken, signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, the sea waves roaring. Terror. Heart stopping terror. Literally.

The disciples are taking all of this pretty well. Why? Because it's not the first time they've heard it. What Jesus says here aligns perfectly with what the old testament prophets have said over and over. The disciples would be familiar with all of the old testament prophecies about the end of the age.

In fact the familiarity with those passages may also play into the pharisee's refusal to believe. In Matthew 16:1 the unbelieving pharisee's ask Jesus for a sign from heaven. *Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came and tested Jesus by asking Him to show them a sign from heaven.* If you're really the messiah show us some of the signs in the sky that the old prophets foretold.

Let me *quickly* take you through some of those old testament passages they would have been very familiar with. (Last week my most respected critic spanked me a little bit for what she claimed was the longest sermon ever on the hottest day ever. I quickly reminded her that somehow the church has managed to survive for 20 centuries, 19 of them without refrigerated air conditioning.) But we can quickly set the stage for what Jesus has just told His disciples about the signs of His return.

Isaiah 13

*6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near!  
It will come as destruction from the Almighty.*

*7 Therefore all hands will fall limp,  
And every man's heart will melt.*

*8 And they will be terrified,  
Pains and anguish will take hold of them;  
They will writhe like a woman in labor,  
They will look at one another in astonishment,  
Their faces aflame.*

*9 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming,  
Cruel, with fury and burning anger,  
To make the land a desolation;  
And He will exterminate its sinners from it.*

*10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations  
Will not flash forth their light;  
The sun will be dark when it rises,  
And the moon will not shed its light.*

*11 Thus I will punish the world for its evil,  
And the wicked for their iniquity;  
I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud,  
And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.*

*12 I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold,  
And mankind than the gold of Ophir.*

*13 Therefore I shall make the heavens tremble,  
And the earth will be shaken from its place  
At the fury of the LORD of hosts  
In the day of His burning anger.*

Folks, this isn't hyperbole. God isn't just throwing words around to let us know, He really means business. Like parents we see threatening their kids, and the kids roll their eyes and keep right on doing what they were doing.

Every word of these prophecies will be realized in the day that Jesus returns to depose Satan and judge every person who has rebelled and hated His ownership of this world.

Listen to the words of a scientist named Belakovsky who describes what might happen if another heavenly body passed by near enough to upset our world from its axis even slightly. BTW I'm stealing this from a sermon on the same subject by John MacArthur, so this is a quote of a quote. I don't want to be the next victim in a plagiarism scandal. The following is stolen;

*""A faint idea of what it might be like can be gathered by a description that I found by a scientist who was trying to warn the world of the possibility of being bombarded by celestial bodies. What could happen, for example, if a rogue star came too near the earth? What could happen if a rogue planet came too near the earth? What could happen if a rogue moon came too near the planet or any other flotsam and jetsam careening out of space came near the earth?*

*Not necessarily hitting the earth, but coming so near the earth as to create the kind of waves that would affect the delicate balance of the earth, a scientist named Belakovsky(?) said that if something came very close to the earth, it could readily cause it to tilt a few degrees on its axis. It is so perfectly aligned on that axis that even the smallest tilt would produce this. Here is his description. "At that moment, an earthquake would make the earth shudder. Air and water would continue to move through inertia. Hurricanes would sweep the earth. The seas would rush over continents carrying gravel and sand and marine animals and casting them on the land. Heat would be developed. Rocks would melt. Volcanos would erupt. Lava would flow from fissures in the ruptured ground, covering vast land areas. Mountains would spring up from the plains and would travel and climb on the shoulders of other mountains, causing faults and rifts. Lakes would be tilted and emptied.*

*Rivers would change their beds. Large land areas with all their inhabitants would slip under the sea. Forests would burn and the hurricane and wild seas would rest them from the ground from which they grew and pile them branch and root in huge heaps. Seas would turn into deserts, their waters flowing wildly away." Just a slight tilt.'"* end quote.

The balance of the globe spinning on it's axis. The bible uses words and we'll see some of them in our passages today that are non scientific first century descriptions of balance. Words like totter. A word we might use to describe an infant's first wobbly steps, or the steps of a drunken person who doesn't have normal balance.

Listen to Isaiah 24

*1 Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface, and scatters its inhabitants. 2 And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor. ( I can't resist adding here, the Marxists finally get their wish. Everybody is totally equal when the Lord brings this calamity) 3 The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word. 4 The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. 5 The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.*

*7 The new wine mourns,  
The vine decays,  
All the merry-hearted sigh.*

*8 The gaiety of tambourines ceases,  
The noise of revelers stops,  
The gaiety of the harp ceases.*

*9 They do not drink wine with song;  
Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.*

*10 The city of chaos is broken down;  
Every house is shut up so that none may enter.*

*11 There is an outcry in the streets concerning the wine;  
All joy turns to gloom.  
The gaiety of the earth is banished.*

*12 Desolation is left in the city,  
And the gate is battered to ruins.*

*13 For thus it will be in the midst of the earth among the peoples,  
As the shaking of an olive tree,  
As the gleanings when the grape harvest is over.*

*14 They raise their voices, they shout for joy.  
They cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the LORD.*

*15 Therefore glorify the LORD in the east,  
The name of the LORD, the God of Israel  
In the coastlands of the sea.*

*16 From the ends of the earth we hear songs, "Glory to the Righteous One,"*

*But I say, "Woe to me! Woe to me! Alas for me!  
The treacherous deal treacherously,  
And the treacherous deal very treacherously."*

*17 Terror and pit and snare  
Confront you, O inhabitant of the earth.*

*18 Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit,*

*And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare;  
For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth  
shake.*

*19 The earth is broken asunder,  
The earth is split through,  
The earth is shaken violently.*

*20 The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard,  
And it totters like a shack,  
For its transgression is heavy upon it,  
And it will fall, never to rise again.*

*21 So it will happen in that day,  
That the LORD will punish the host of heaven, on high,  
And the kings of the earth, on earth.*

*22 And they will be gathered together  
Like prisoners in the dungeon,  
And will be confined in prison;  
And after many days they will be punished.*

*23 Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed,  
For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,  
And His glory will be before His elders.*

Those words would be familiar to this generation of men in Israel. Signs in heaven and distress on earth. The mention of pollution is interesting. *The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants*

This isn't the pollution that Greta is so troubled about. This is the pollution of sin and rebellion against Creator and owner of this world, God. This is spiritual pollution. We would call it . . . sin.

Joel 3. I need to speed up.



*12 Let the nations be aroused  
And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat,  
For there I will sit to judge  
All the surrounding nations.*

*13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.  
Come, tread, for the wine press is full;  
The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.*

*14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!  
For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.*

*15 The sun and moon grow dark,  
And the stars lose their brightness.*

*16 And the LORD roars from Zion  
And utters His voice from Jerusalem,  
And the heavens and the earth tremble.  
But the LORD is a refuge for His people  
And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.*

*17 Then you will know that I am the LORD your God,  
Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain.  
So Jerusalem will be holy,  
And strangers will pass through it no more.*

Listen to Ezekiel 38

*18 “And it will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,” declares the Lord GOD, “that My fury will mount up in My anger. 19 “And in My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. 20 “And the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake*

*at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse, and every wall will fall to the ground. 21 “And I shall call for a sword against him on all My mountains,” declares the Lord GOD. “Every man’s sword will be against his brother. 22 “And with pestilence and with blood I shall enter into judgment with him; and I shall rain on him, and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire, and brimstone. 23 “And I shall magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD.””*

Earthquakes, hail, fire, brimstone. Again and again in the prophets of Israel. A day like no other day.

## Haggai 2

*6 “For thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. 7 ‘And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts. 8 ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ declares the LORD of hosts.*

## Zephaniah 1:

*14 Near is the great day of the LORD,  
Near and coming very quickly;  
Listen, the day of the LORD!  
In it the warrior cries out bitterly.*

*15 A day of wrath is that day,  
A day of trouble and distress,  
A day of destruction and desolation,  
A day of darkness and gloom,  
A day of clouds and thick darkness,*

*16 A day of trumpet and battle cry,  
Against the fortified cities  
And the high corner towers.*

*17 And I will bring distress on men,  
So that they will walk like the blind,  
Because they have sinned against the LORD;  
And their blood will be poured out like dust,  
And their flesh like dung.*

*18 Neither their silver nor their gold  
Will be able to deliver them  
On the day of the LORD's wrath;  
And all the earth will be devoured  
In the fire of His jealousy,  
For He will make a complete end,  
Indeed a terrifying one,  
Of all the inhabitants of the earth.*

Are you beginning to see the correlation between Jesus answer to His disciples about when He will return and what the signs will be when that happens.

How many times have you heard it said that the old testament God is an angry horrible God and the new testament God is gentle and kind and merciful. It's like there's 2 different Gods.

Jesus doesn't see it that way. His disciples ask Him, what will be the signs of your coming, and of the end of the age, and what Jesus says corresponds perfectly to what the old testament prophets of Israel said over and over.

*Ch. 21: 25 "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth anguish among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,*

Luke is the only one who mentions the waves of the sea. I remember thinking about this and picturing people standing on cliffs marveling at the bigger than usual waves.

Actually if the earth is moved off of it's axis and is tottering back and forth, reeling like a drunk who has lost his balance, the water will actually be thrown out of the seas like a soup bowl you're carrying and you trip and half of it comes out of the bowl onto the ground.

Mass destruction, because water in those kinds of quantities isn't light. Millions of tons of water, airborne, and squash goes the cities. We've all seen pictures of the destruction a tidal wave brings. These will be magnitudes worse. Sea front property may be a beautiful temptation, but I think Tonopah may be a good spot. Can't recommend any of the lots that sit atop of old mine shafts though.

*26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

We take the terra firma for granted. I lived through the 1971 Sylmar earthquake where the freeway bridges collapsed and there was a lot of damage. Our driveway bucked so that we couldn't even use it. And then the aftershocks that just keep renewing the fear. When the earth moves under your feet, it's sort of terrifying.

What the bible is talking about here is thousands of times worse. That little 6.9 earthquake was a 4rth of July picnic by comparison. If the earth is rocking back and forth like a top that is slowing down, wobbling around before it finally tips over and stops . . . not only is the water getting thrown out of the sea, but the mountains will be literally collapsing. All of those rocks that are piled up that we call mountains, will literally get shaken level.

Colossians 1:17 says simply; *And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

Scientists can't explain why atomic structures with opposing positive and negative charges don't fly to pieces. I think the Bible explains it very simply. In Him, In Christ who precedes all created things, He holds all things together.

This verse *for the powers of the heavens will be shaken*. has some interesting words. The word for powers is dunamis. It's the word for miraculous powers beyond our control.

And the single word translated *will be shaken* is saleuthēsontai from the root word salos which means to shake something. To agitate something by rocking it back and forth. Ever shook up a paint spray can. That's the word here. To agitate, to rock back and forth.

Well, a paint can is one thing, pretty small potatoes, but when the heavens are getting torn asunder and the earth is reeling on it's axis, what this verse defines as to the reaction of men on earth is pretty easy to imagine.

*men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world;*

Men will literally be frightened to collapse. And they should be. Because the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll. The universes will be split open and Jesus will literally be coming from heaven where God dwells to earth in the sight of every person.

*27“And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. 28“But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”*

The first time Jesus came to dwell with men on earth, He set His glory aside and became a humble man, not born into worldly wealth at all.

The second time He comes, the heavens will be ripped asunder and rolled up like a scroll and every eye will see Him coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

On that day, the day of the Lord, trust me when I say you don't want to be on

the receiving end. You want to be behind Jesus, charging out of heaven clothed in His righteousness, on white horses following Him on the bringing end, not the receiving.

The Bible begins with a catastrophe in Genesis 3. Satan tricks the woman, sin enters this world, and Satan usurps authority over this domain, because all sinned.

The entire book after that event is the story of God redeeming this planet along with the redemption of His chosen elect. He calls His own out of this world to belong to Him in another world.

This event, Jesus returns to earth and deposes Satan, locks him away for future punishment, crushes all evil and sets up His kingdom on earth, paradise regained, is the ultimate solution to the catastrophe at the beginning.

Paradise lost through the first Adam. Paradise regained through the obedience of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. The events described by Jesus in simple words in answer to the questions of His disciples are the culmination of history. It's all going right here. God owns this stolen planet and Jesus just described what it's going to look like when God returns to crush the rebellion of this place and retake it for His glory.

Enoch, in the seventh generation after Adam made this prophecy recorded for us by Jude; vss 14,15

*14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, also prophesied about them:*

*“Behold, the Lord is coming  
with myriads of His holy ones*

*15 to execute judgment on everyone,*

*and to convict all the ungodly*

*of every ungodly act of wickedness*

*and every harsh word spoken against Him by ungodly sinners.”*

We look around us at the rebellion of this world and it's hatred for it's Creator

and we think these events may be very soon.

God is indeed angry with the rebellion of this place. But He sent His own Son to pay this debt we owe for every person. Our sins can be removed, and we can know the loving and merciful God. However, if that offer is rejected, only the angry God remains.