

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

5-28-25

Luke 21

The Widow's Offering – Verses 1-4

² As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”

21:1-2 Jesus was in the area of the temple called the Court of the Women. In this area were seven boxes in which worshipers could deposit their temple tax and six boxes for freewill offerings, like the one this woman gave. Not only was she poor; because she was a widow, she had few resources for making money. Her small gift was a sacrifice, but she gave it willingly.

21:1-4 In contrast to the way most of us handle our money, this widow gave all she had to live on. When we consider ourselves generous in giving a small percentage of our income to the Lord, we resemble those who gave “out of their wealth.” Here, Jesus admired the woman’s generous and sacrificial giving. As believers, we should consider increasing our giving— whether money, time, or talents— to a point beyond convenience or comfort.

The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times – Verses 5-7

⁵ Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, ⁶ “As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.” ⁷ “Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

21:5-7 The temple the disciples were admiring was not Solomon’s temple— that had been destroyed by the Babylonians early in the sixth century B.C. This temple had been built by Ezra after the return from exile later in the sixth century B.C., desecrated by the Seleucids in the second century B.C., reconsecrated by the Maccabees soon afterward, and enormously expanded by Herod the Great over a 46-year period. It was a beautiful, imposing structure with a significant history, but Jesus said that it would be completely destroyed. This happened in A.D. 70 when the Roman army burned Jerusalem.

The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times – Verses 8-11

⁸ He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. ⁹ When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.” ¹⁰ Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

21:8-11 Jesus did not leave his disciples unprepared for the difficult years ahead. He warned them about false messiahs, natural disasters, and persecutions; however, he assured the disciples that he would be with them to protect them and make his kingdom known through them. In the end, Jesus promised that he would return in power and glory to save them. Jesus' warnings and promises to his disciples also apply to us as we look forward to his return.

Jesus Describes What His Disciples Must Expect To Endure – Verses 12-19

12 “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. **13** And so you will bear testimony to me. **14** But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. **15** For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. **16** You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. **17** Everyone will hate you because of me. **18** But not a hair of your head will perish. **19** Stand firm, and you will win life.

21:12-13 These persecutions soon began. Luke recorded many of them in the book of Acts. Paul wrote from prison that he suffered gladly because it helped him know Christ better and do Christ's work for the church (Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24). The early church thrived despite intense persecution. In fact, late in the second century the church father Tertullian wrote, “The blood of Christians is seed,” because opposition helped spread Christianity.

21:14-17 Jesus warned that in the coming persecutions his followers would be betrayed by their family members and friends. Christians of every age have had to face this possibility. It is reassuring to know that even when we feel completely abandoned, the Holy Spirit will stay with us. He will comfort us, protect us, and give us the words we need. This assurance can give us the courage and hope to stand firm for Christ no matter how difficult the situation.

21:18 Jesus was not saying that believers would be exempt from physical harm or death during the persecutions. Remember that many of the disciples were martyred. Rather he was saying that none of his followers would suffer spiritual or eternal loss. On earth, everyone will die, but believers in Jesus will be saved for eternal life.

Walking In These Dangerous Times – Verses 20-24

20 “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. **21** Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. **22** For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. **23** How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. **24** They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

21:20-24 The “times of the Gentiles” began with Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the exile of the Jewish people. Israel was no longer an independent nation but was under the control of Gentile rulers. In Jesus' day, Israel was governed by the Roman Empire, and a Roman general would destroy the city in A.D. 70. Jesus was saying that the domination of God's people by his enemies would continue until God decided to end it. The “times of the Gentiles” refers not just to the repeated destructions of Jerusalem but also to the continuing and mounting persecution of God's people until the end.

When The Final Period Of Calamity Hits The World, Look Up – Verses 25-28

²⁵ “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

21:25-28 The picture of the coming persecutions and natural disasters is gloomy, but ultimately it is a cause not for worry but for great joy. As believers see these events happening, they will know that the return of their Messiah is near, and they can look forward to his reign of justice and peace. Rather than being terrified by what is happening in our world, we should confidently await Christ's return to bring justice and restoration to his people.

When You See These Signs, You Know That The End Is Very Near – Verses 29-33

²⁹ He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰ When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. ³¹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

21:29-31 Look at the fig tree: The fig tree is just one example of a tree that buds before summer; no special reference to Israel seems to be intended (as indicated by the words, and all the trees). The idea is that when a fig tree buds, there is an inevitable result — summer is near, and fruit is coming. In the same way, when these signs are seen, the coming of Jesus in glory with His church to this world will inevitably follow.

21:32 This generation will by no means pass away till all things take place: Jesus did not refer to His own generation and that of the disciples, but of the generation that sees those signs; they will also see the very end. This is God's promise that He will not prolong what Jesus called the Great Tribulation Matthew 24:21 forever.

How To Live In The Last Days – Verses 34-36

³⁴ “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

21:34-36 Jesus told the disciples to keep a constant watch for his return. Although nearly 2,000 years have passed since he spoke these words, their truth remains: Christ is coming again, and we need to watch and be spiritually fit. This means working faithfully at the tasks God has given us. Don't let your mind and spirit be dulled by careless living, drinking, or foolishly pursuing pleasure. Don't let the cares of this life weigh you down. Be ready to move at God's command.

21:36 Only days after telling the disciples to pray that they might escape persecution, Jesus himself asked God to spare him the agonies of the cross, if that was God's will (22:41-42). It is abnormal to want to suffer, but as Jesus' followers, we must be willing to suffer if by doing so we can help build

God's kingdom. We have two wonderful promises to help us as we suffer: God will always be with us (Matthew 28:20), and he will one day rescue us and give us eternal life (Revelation 21:1-4).

The Public Nature Of Jesus' Ministry – Verses 37-38

³⁷ Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, ³⁸ and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.

21:37-38 In the daytime He was teaching in the temple: Luke emphasizes the public, open character of Jesus' teaching work, even teaching early in the morning at the most public place in Jerusalem. Jesus did not hide in these few days before His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion. At night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet: Like many Galileans who came to Jerusalem for Passover, Jesus essentially camped out on Mount Olivet in the days leading up to Passover.