

Days of the Son of Man

a. Two Great Signs – Deception, Persecution (21:1-19)

21:1-4 What is very obviously on the Lord's mind as He confronts the 'temple cult'? (19:45-48; 20:45-47)

[1] [21:1] The Court of the Women obtained its name, not from its appropriation to the exclusive use of women, but because they were not allowed to proceed farther, except for sacrificial purposes. Indeed, this was probably the common place for worship, the females occupying according to Jewish tradition, only a raised gallery along three sides of the court. This court covered a space of upwards of 200 feet square. All around ran a simple colonnade, and within it, against the wall, the thirteen chests, or 'trumpets', for charitable contributions were placed. These thirteen chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets, whence the name. Their specific objects were carefully marked on them.

Alfred Edersheim *The Temple* p. 48

[2] [21:3,4] Jesus' words, if taken literally, mean not 'more than any one of them' but 'more than all of them together'. If the measure be what is left over after giving, she certainly outdistanced them all, for they gave out of their abundance, and thus had much left over. She gave all she had. This is real sacrifice. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 295

[3] [21:3,4] What a contrast to the avarice for which the scribes and Pharisees are upbraided in the preceding piece! This incident, witnessed by Jesus at such a time, resembles a flower which He comes upon all at once in the desert of official devotion, the sight and perfume of which make Him leap with joy. Such an example is the justification of the beatitudes, *Luke* 6, as the preceding discourse justifies the ... woes, in the same passage. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 443

21:5-8 The first 'sign' of the end?

[4] [21:5] Some of the stones of the substructure

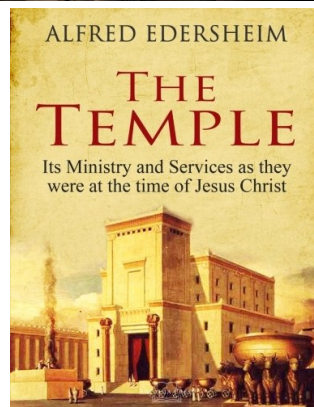
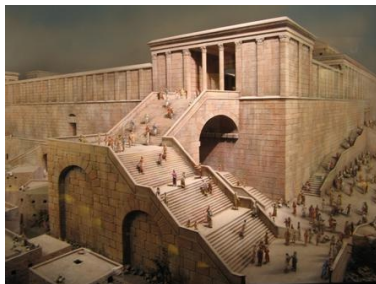
were enormous. The columns of the cloister or portico were monoliths of marble over forty feet high. **A. Plummer** *Luke* p. 476

[5] [21:5] 'It is almost impossible to realise the effect which would be produced by a building longer and higher than York Cathedral, standing on a solid mass of masonry almost equal in height to the tallest of our church spires' (**Wilson**, *Recovery of Jerusalem*, p.9). **A. Plummer** *Luke* p. 476

[6] [21:6,7] The harvest of an early tree announces and inaugurates the general harvest; so the judgment of Jerusalem is the prelude and even the first act of the judgment of humanity. The Jew has priority in judgment, because he had priority of grace (comp. the two corresponding [*proton* = firstly], *Rom* 2.9,10). With the judgment on Jerusalem, the hour of the world's judgment has really struck. The present epoch is due to a suspension of the judgment already begun – a suspension the aim of which is to make way for the time of grace which is to be granted to the Gentiles. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 446

[7] [21:8] The claim to Messianic authority is followed with a prediction that the time, the end time, the time of national deliverance, is near. The significance of these words should not be overlooked. Jesus was not predicting the end of the world within the lifetime of men then living. He regarded those who make such forecasts as false prophets. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 296

[8] [21:8] We know of no false Messiahs between the Ascension and the fall of Jerusalem. Theudas (*Acts* 5:36), Simon Magus (*Acts* 8:9), the Egyptian (*Acts* 21:38) do not seem to have come forward as Messiahs. Dositheus, Simon Magus, and Menander might be counted among the "many antichrists" of 1 *John* 2:18, but not as false Christs. We seem, therefore, at the outset to have a sign which refers rather to Christ's return than to the destruction of Jerusalem. **Alfred Plummer** *Luke* p. 478



Edersheim on the size and splendour of the Temple

[10] The Temple plateau had been artificially levelled at immense labour and cost, and enlarged by gigantic substructures. The latter served also partly for the purpose of purification, as otherwise there might have been some dead body beneath, which, however great the distance from the surface would, unless air had intervened, have, according to tradition, defiled the whole place above. As enlarged by Herod the Great, the Temple area occupied an elongated square of from 925 to 950 feet and upwards. Roughly calculating it at about 1,000 square feet, this would give an extent more than one-half greater than the length of St. Peter's at Rome, which measures 613 feet, and nearly double our own St Pau's, whose extreme length is 520 1/2 feet. And then we must bear in mind that the Temple plateau was not merely about 1,000 feet in

length, but a square of nearly 1,000 feet! It was not, however, in the centre of this square, but towards the north-west, that the Temple itself and its special courts were placed. Nor, as already hinted, were they all on a level, but rose terrace upon terrace, till the sacred edifice itself was reached, its porch protruding, shoulder-like, on either side – perhaps rising into two flanking towers – and covering the Holy and Most Holy Places. Thus must the 'golden fane' have been clearly visible from all parts; the smoke of the sacrifices slowly curling up against the blue Eastern sky, and the music of its services wafted across the busy city, while the sunlight glittered on its gilt roofs, or shone from its pavement of tessellated marble, or threw great shadows on Olivet behind. ... And now we must search very deep down, sinking the shaft from 60 to over 125 feet through

the rubbish of accumulated ruins, before reaching at last the ancient foundations. And there, close by where once the royal bridge spanned the deep chasm and led from the City of David into the royal porch of the Temple, is "the Jews Wailing Place," where the mourning heirs to all this desolation reverently embrace the fallen stones, and weep unavailing tears – unavailing because the present is as the past, and because what brought that judgment and sorrow is unrecognised, unrepented, unremoved. **Alfred Edersheim** *The Temple* pp. 38,41

21:9-11 Itemize the 'signs' which will precede the 'end'

[9] [21:11] It is well known that the times which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem were signaled in the East by many calamities, particularly by a dreadful famine which took place under Claudius, and by the earthquake which destroyed Laodicea,

Hierapolis etc, in 67 or 68. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 448

21:12-19 To whom do these words apply?

[11] [21:16] Three of the four who heard these words – James, Peter, and Andrew – suffered a martyr's death. **Alfred Plummer** *Luke* p. 480

21:14,15 Are these words meant to negate the necessity of study & preparation? (1 Tim. 4:12-16; 2 Tim. 2:15)

[12] [21:13-15] This, of course, has nothing to do with sermons and lectures which the Christian must prepare as faithfully as anyone else. It refers to the replies believers will suddenly be called upon to give to hostile authorities in times of persecution. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 297

b. 'Signs of the End' - or Ends? (21:20-36)

[13] *In Luke, this discourse contemplates exclusively the destruction of Jerusalem. If mention is made of the end of the world (vv. 25-27), it is only in passing, and as the result of an association of ideas which will be easily explained. The Parousia in itself had been previously treated of by Luke in a special discourse called forth by a question of the Pharisees (chap. 17).* **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 444

21:20-24 Compare and contrast Luke and Matthew in this sequence (Matt. 24:15-22)

[14] [21:20-24] Luke makes it clear that this section of the discourse refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and not to the end time. He has some matter not in the other Synoptists, while conversely he leaves out things they include, such as the reference to 'the desolating sacrilege' (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14), which would probably not have meant much to his Gentile readers. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 298

[15] [21:20-24] The sign indicated by Luke is the investment of Jerusalem by a hostile army. We see nothing to hinder us from regarding this sign as identical in sense with that announced by Matthew and Mark in Daniel's words (in the Septuagint): *the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place*. Why not understand thereby the Gentile standards planted on the sacred soil which surrounds the holy city? Luke has substituted for the obscure prophetic expression a term more intelligible to Gentiles. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 449

21:24 Again, note the emphasis upon Jerusalem, so marked in Luke! (1:8,9; 9:51; 24:46-53)

[16] This is not an easy expression and a variety of explanations has been suggested: the time for the Gentiles to execute God's judgments, or to be supreme over Israel, or to exercise the privileges hitherto belonging to Israel, or to have the gospel preached to them. The reference to these times as being *fulfilled* points to a divine purpose in them. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 299

[17] Jerusalem is to be once more restored to its ancient inhabitants ... The Jews shall be restored. **J.C. Ryle** Vol. 2 p. 371

21:25-28 Are these 'signs' literal or symbolic? (Note Matthew has 'sign of the Son of Man' too! - Matt.24:30)

21:29-33 What 'spanner in the works' in this passage confuses many?

[18] [21:29-33] Many think that Jesus was prophesying the end of all things within a few years and that He was mistaken. In view of His explicit disavowal of knowledge of this point (Mark 13:32), this seems most unlikely. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 300

[19] [21:32] ... the unexpectedness of the end and the anticipation of 'sleeping' disciples (see on 17:20-37; cf. Mk 13:32-37, Mt. 25:1-13), repeated emphases in the teaching of Jesus, are inconsistent with a 'calendar appointment' within a generation. More decisive, in the Qumran writings the term 'last generation' (1 ZpHab 2:7; 7:2), apparently included several life-times. Their usage indicates that in the New Testament 'this (last) generation', like 'last hour' (1 John 2:18) or 'today' means only the last phase in the history of redemption. None of the terms are to be understood in a literal way. **E. Earle Ellis** *Luke* p. 246

21:34-36 Another paradox – how can these things be if the above signs be also true?

Reviewing Luke's version of the 'last days' discourse

[20] The four points treated by Jesus are: 1. The apparent signs, which must not be mistaken for true signs (verses 8-19); 2. The true sign, and the destruction of Jerusalem which will immediately follow it, with the time of the Gentiles which will be connected with it (verses 20-24); 3. The Parousia, which will bring this period to an end (vv 25-27), 4 The practical application (vv. 28-36). **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 446

[21] Each of the Synoptic Gospels contains an account of this discourse, though with some differences. There are some puzzling exegetical problems, notably those posed by the fact that part of the address seems to apply to the end of all things and part to the destruction of Jerusalem. In Luke the distinction between the two seems clearer than in the others and some scholars see in this Luke's distinctive contribution to eschatology. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 295