

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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OF THINGS
TO COME

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Living Stream Ministry
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In Luke 21:5-36 the Lord gave a prophecy to His disciples in which He unveiled to them the things to come during the time from His ascension until His return. These things include the destruction of the temple (vv. 5-6), the plagues between His ascension and the great tribulation (vv. 7-11), the persecution of His disciples in the church age (vv. 12-19), and the great tribulation and His coming (vv. 20-27). The first thing He unveiled was the destruction of the temple.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

Luke 21:5 and 6 say, “And as some were speaking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and devoted gifts, He said, As for these things which you are gazing at, the days will come in which there will not be left a stone upon a stone which will not be thrown down.” Because the disciples were boasting about the temple, the Lord told them that what they were gazing at would be destroyed. He revealed that there would be a complete destruction, a leveling,

of the temple. This destruction took place approximately thirty years after the Lord's ascension. In fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy, Titus, the Roman prince, destroyed Jerusalem with the Roman army in A.D. 70.

THE PLAGUES BETWEEN HIS ASCENSION AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

In [21:7-11](#) the Lord speaks regarding the plagues between His ascension and the great tribulation. After years of study and after consulting a number of reference books, we have seen that these verses refer to the plagues, sufferings, and disasters that will take place during the long period of time between the Lord's ascension and the coming great tribulation. Today we are still living in this period of time.

WARS

In [verse 7](#) the disciples questioned the Lord, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" In His answer the Lord said, "Beware that you be not led astray; for many will come in My name, saying, I am He, and, The time has drawn near. Do not go after them. And

when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be alarmed, for these things must take place first, but the end is not immediately” ([vv. 8-9](#)). The wars in [verse 9](#) refer to all the wars from the first century to the present. They are signified by the red horse of the second seal in [Revelation 6:3 and 4](#). “The end” is the consummation of this age ([Matt. 24:3](#); [Dan. 12:4, 9, 6-7](#)), which will be the three and a half years of the great tribulation.

If we study history, we shall see that before the Lord’s ascension there were not that many wars. But since His ascension, wars have been increasing. There has been one war after another. The long history of wars from the time of the ascension until now is a fulfillment of the Lord’s word in [Luke 21:9](#).

In [verse 10](#) the Lord goes on to say, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” The word “nation” here refers to people, to the Gentiles, and the word “kingdom” refers to an empire. The rising up of nation against nation refers to civil war, and the rising up of kingdom against kingdom refers to international war.

EARTHQUAKES, PESTILENCES, AND FAMINES

In [verse 11](#) the Lord says, “There will be both

great earthquakes in various places and pestilences and famines; there will be both terrors and great signs from heaven.” Since the time of Christ’s ascension, earthquakes have been increasing. Throughout the centuries there have been more and more earthquakes, and earthquakes will be intensified at the end of this age (Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18). Famines are mostly the issue of war. According to history, war has always brought famine, signified by the black horse of the third seal in [Revelation 6:5 and 6](#). Earthquakes, pestilences, famines, terrors, and great signs from heaven will continue to take place.

THE PERSECUTION OF HIS DISCIPLES IN THE CHURCH AGE

In [Luke 21:12-19](#) the Lord speaks about the persecution of His disciples in the church age. During the present period of time, which is the church age, faithful Christians will suffer persecution. In [verse 12](#) the Lord says, “But before all these things they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, leading you away before kings and governors for the sake of My name.” Here the pronoun “you” refers to the disciples as

faithful believers in Christ. The “synagogues” indicate persecution in the Jewish land, and “kings and governors” point to persecution in Gentile lands. In [verse 13](#) the Lord says that this persecution will turn out to the disciples for a testimony.

THE LORD GIVING THE DISCIPLES UTTERANCE

In [verses 14 and 15](#) the Lord continues, “Settle it therefore in your hearts not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all those opposing you will not be able to resist or refute.” Here the Lord says that our hearts should be settled and should not be in suspense. Neither should we prepare beforehand to defend ourselves. Whenever we are about to suffer persecution, we should not consider beforehand what we shall say. Instead, we should trust in the Lord, for He will give us a mouth and wisdom.

It is significant that in [verse 15](#) the Lord says, “I will give you a mouth and wisdom,” whereas [12:12](#) says, “the Holy Spirit will teach you in the same hour what should be said.” Furthermore, [Matthew 10:20](#) says, “For you are not the ones speaking, but the Spirit of your Father is the One speaking in you.” According to the record

in [Mark 13:11](#), the Lord said, “It is not you who are speaking, but the Holy Spirit.” These verses indicate that the Father, the Spirit, and the Son, the Man-Savior, are one. When the Father gives utterance, this means that the Spirit and the Son give utterance.

HATED BY ALL BECAUSE OF HIS NAME

In [Luke 21:16](#) and [17](#) the Lord goes on to say, “And you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death; and you will be hated by all because of My name.” Here we see that even family members will cause others in the family to be put to death because of their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s word here is a fulfillment of His word in [12:52](#) and [53](#): “From now on there will be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against the mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law.” Throughout the centuries many families have been divided during times of persecution.

BY ENDURANCE POSSESSING OUR SOULS

In 21:18 the Lord says, “And a hair of your head shall by no means perish.” This indicates that nothing of the faithful ones will perish. Therefore, their person certainly will not perish.

Verse 19 says, “By your endurance you will possess your souls.” The Greek word rendered “possess” here may also be translated “acquire.” The Lord’s word here means that the faithful believers in Christ will preserve, save, possess, their souls. Although they may be persecuted and suffer in both body and soul, that suffering will be a salvation to their souls in the coming age. In the next age, when the kingdom comes, their souls will be saved to enjoy the coming jubilee, the release from bondage, and the entering into the enjoyment of the Triune God announced in Luke 4, and they will share in the joy of the Lord.

In Matthew 25 the Lord says to the faithful ones, “Enter into the joy of your lord” (vv. 21, 23). This is the invitation to participate in the Lord’s joy. Entering into the joy of the Lord will primarily be an enjoyment in our souls. The unfaithful ones, however, will lose their souls during the coming age. This means that they will lose the

enjoyment of the Lord's joy in the millennial kingdom. Hence, the Lord's word about possessing our souls by our endurance is related to the enjoyment of the jubilee in the coming age of the kingdom.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND HIS COMING

Luke 21:20-27 refers to the great tribulation and the Lord's coming. How long the period of time will be for [verses 8 through 19](#) no one knows. But the prophecy in [verses 20 through 27](#) will be fulfilled in the last three and a half years of this age, the time of the great tribulation ([Matt. 24:21](#)), the second half of the last week prophesied in [Daniel 9:27](#). This period of time will begin with the setting up of Antichrist's image (the idol) in the temple ([Matt. 24:15](#)) and will end with Christ's open coming ([Luke 21:27](#)).

Verse 20 says, “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that her desolation has drawn near.” This does not refer to the time in A.D. 70 when the Roman armies, led by Titus, surrounded Jerusalem and destroyed it. Verse 20 refers to something that will take place in the future. Antichrist will bring his army to Jerusalem, and the city will be surrounded by this army.

The Lord says that when we see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, we know that her desolation has drawn near. Then those in Judea should flee to the mountains, those in the midst of Jerusalem should get out, and those in the country should not enter into the city ([v. 21](#)). All those who remain in Jerusalem will be involved in her suffering.

[Verses 22 and 23](#) say, “Because these are days of vengeance, that all the things which have been written may be fulfilled. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those nursing their babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people.” The “land” here does not refer to the entire earth; instead, it refers to the land of Palestine, to the holy land. The “people” in [verse 23](#) denotes the Jewish people. The Jewish land and the Jewish people will suffer under the hand of Antichrist. According to [verse 24](#), “They will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive to all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled by the nations until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

[Verses 25 through 27](#) say, “And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth anguish of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the billows, men fainting

from fear and expectation of what is coming upon the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” These supernatural calamities in heaven will follow the great tribulation at the close of this age. This will differ from the fourth trumpet ([Rev. 8:12](#)), which will occur very close to the great tribulation.

[Verse 27 of Luke 21](#) speaks of the Man-Savior’s open coming. This is the open aspect of His second coming.

The Lord’s word in [Luke 21:20-27](#) refers to the great tribulation, the destruction of Jerusalem by Antichrist, and to the coming back of the Man-Savior.

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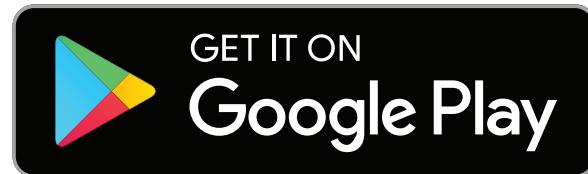
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