

10/22/17 Jesus Encounters the Last Days – Luke 21:5-36

“There are few things as fascinating as prophecy. Or as problematic!”

This is why people always want to study it & why I don’t like to teach it!

We want to know about future things - either out of fear, or for the sake of planning, or out of curiosity, or simply because we want the inside scoop.

But where do we turn for answers? Horoscopes, fortune tellers, séances, tarot cards, etc... No, the key to knowing the future is looking to the past!

And the voice that speaks the loudest & is most reliable is the voice of Jesus!

You’ve heard it said that “history repeats itself!” In today’s passage that is exactly what Jesus is saying— one event in history will mirror & point to another!

Jesus is on the Mount of Olives with His disciples, across the valley from the temple, & the disciples are marveling at the appearance of the temple.

The temple was a wondrous sight! It was the center of their religious lives, but Jesus declares “As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” vs 6

This statement was unthinkable to the Jews of the day & to the disciples. So in their minds, if this is true then it must be associated w/ the end of the world!

So this prompts in the disciples a few questions: “When will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”

Luke dwells more on the event being discussed, but Matthew’s questions dwell more on what he thinks it must point to. Matthew asks, “and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” - Mt. 24:3

Jesus responds, but does He actually answer their questions? Interpreters disagree about how to understand Jesus’ answers, but let’s give it a shot!

Let’s break down this passage and see what answers Jesus gives!

- First Jesus warns about deceivers – vs 8.
- Then he shares about signs that aren’t really signs of the end! – vs 9-18  
“but the end will not come at once.” – vs. 9
- Then he gives an outline but not a detailed, dated calendar of events surrounding the first event – the fall of Jerusalem! Vs. 20-24

- Then He states a similar description of a different future event - vs 25-28  
“the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power & great glory!”
- Finally Jesus concludes with: “Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up & raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near... know that the kingdom of God is near.”

So if Jesus is the best voice into the “last days”, yet he doesn’t fully answer any of the questions posed to Him by his disciples, then how helpful is that?

I believe His response was intended to answer some different questions, ones that His disciples were not asking!

When speaking about the “last days” Jesus speaks more about how to live into them, how to persevere, rather than how to identify the time & signs.

Consider the meaning of the answers Jesus gave & hear His prophetic voice!

- 1) Do not follow false teachers! vs. 8
- 2) Do not be frightened by the events associated with the “last days.” vs 9-11
- 3) Don’t worry about your legal defense when persecuted as a witness for Christ. – vs 12-16
- 4) When all turn against you, persevere and take a firm stand. – vs. 17-19
- 5) Flee Jerusalem when it is besieged. – vs. 20-24
- 6) When the end does come, take heart at your coming redemption when the Son of Man returns. – vs. 25-28
- 7) Everything that comes to pass, even in the “last days”, is a part of the coming of the Kingdom of God. – vs. 29-31
- 8) Be assured that even in the “last days” the Word of God endures. – vs. 32-33
- 9) Be watchful & pray so that you will come through all these things in a way that the Son of Man will approve of. – vs. 34-36

All of this held true for the disciples as they faced the realities of the coming destruction of Jerusalem & the temple in 70 A.D. This all equally holds true for us today (except #5) as we face the realities of the “last days” in our lifetime!

What questions are you asking about the “last days”? Jesus gives us the answers to the most important questions, how will we respond to them?

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