

WE SHALL BEHOLD HIM

Luke 21:29-36

We have to go back and finish what we started 6 weeks ago.

Why? 3 reasons for review:

After 6 weeks we forget what we saw.

3 parts of story are related; we have to pick up the thread.

Most prophetic confusion surrounding the passage arises out of last part of chapter.

In approaching our Lord's Words, let plain sense sink in, before we let *our* theological grid take control and confuse everything; or try to fit current events into *OUR* scheme.

We want to pick up the thread, where we left off before.

We've made 2 weeks of preaching into 3.

We want to finish what we started.

Lee already moved on to the following passage.

JESUS HEADED TOWARD THE CROSS 19:28-23:56

Formal presentation 19:28-48

Official opposition develops 20-21

JUDGMENT PROVOKED BY OPPOSITION 21:5-36

Stage 1: Immediate Judgment 5-24

Stage 2: End-of-the-Age Judgment 24-36

IMMEDIATE JUDGMENT 5-24

Destruction of the temple 5-6

Persecution of Jesus' followers 7-19

3 things characterize **THE END**:

1. International conflicts 10 Wars

2. Natural tragedies 11a Earthquakes, famines, etc.

3. Unnatural signs 11b Frightening signs in heaven

How should God's people act in hard times?

Trust God.

Be faithful to Him.

Use affliction as launch pad for witnessing!

Sometimes God intervenes and saves people.

Sometimes God *doesn't* intervene.

Heb. 11 –Some miraculously delivered ...

"But others, ..." (11:35) died terrible deaths.

Either way **God wins!**

No objective reason for difference.

God chooses what will glorify Him.

TWO MAIN AUDIENCES to whom message is addressed:

It's addressed to those who reject God's Son.

Warning: You may win debate; defeat opposition today.

But payday **WILL** come someday.

Eventually God's judgment falls—as on that generation

When God's day comes,
those who fought His Son, will face His judgment.

It's addressed to those whose world seems upside down.

You trusted Christ.

You thought you would *"live happily ever after"*

But it hasn't worked out that way.

Jesus warns those who follow Him that family and friends will turn on them on His account.

Let moment of *affliction be launching pad for witness*.

Answer to their question 20-24

"What's the sign these things are about to happen? =>20

"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by enemies"

Stage 2: End-of-the-Age Judgment 24-36

The disciples have just asked when the temple will be destroyed—What sign they should watch for.

Jesus responds that following persecution, they should watch for foreign armies to surround the city, and then get out!

From that day forward, Jerusalem will be trampled on by Gentiles until the pagans' days are over.

The campaign our Lord referred to occurred in A.D. 70;
trampling by pagans has been taking place since.

Jesus describes what those final days will look like:

Scary times lie ahead.

They'll make men and nations panic.

Don't let their panic get to you!

*To them = **sign of anxiety**, for us = **sign of deliverance**.*

In the world, these scary signs provoke fear and terror.

For us, they are evidence our Deliverer is coming.

Instead of panic, when you see signs,
look up; pray for deliverance.

REVELATION OF SUPERNATURAL SIGNS 21:24-28

Continuous affliction of Jerusalem 21:23-24 *"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 in all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."*

In **"God's day"** it'll be different (=> "Day of the Lord")

How will we know when God's day is about to begin?

SUPERNATURAL SIGNS of end 25-28

Significance for the lost 21:25-27 *"There'll be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea."²⁶ Men will*

*faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.*²⁷ *At that time they'll see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."*

In God's day there will be supernatural signs

Frightening signs alert man that Christ is about to come in glory to redeem His people from oppressed state.

When people see awesome signs, they panic.

Everything seems out of control!

What can you trust? ... if earth quakes, seas roar and toss, heavens fall apart; its pieces smash into earth?

All the things you rely on as stable and secure, fall apart.

Then where do you turn for security?

That's what times will be like!

Jesus says, when you see such terrifying things,

lift up your heads!

Nations will be in anguish and perplexed.

People will faint from terror; they'll be worried sick.

The nations have never known a time of panic like this.

These events are a SIGN OF JUDGMENT for the lost.

They still don't turn to God!

Climaxed by sign—Son of Man in the heavens,
announcing His return.

In darkness, sky is suddenly illuminated by His glory!

It catches everyone's attention

like a lightning bolt in the night sky!

When you see awesome signs—**Don't panic! Look up!**

SIGNIFICANCE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE 21:28

"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

SIGN OF DELIVERANCE for God's people.

We can trust Him and not be afraid.

These events remind us His coming is near; we can be encouraged as we ***look up and wait for His return.***

Spurgeon: "You ask, perhaps, 'How shall we do that?' You cannot do it without your Lord. With God, all things are possible. In Christ, you can do all things; without Him, you can do nothing. If you live away from your Lord and Master, in those days of terror that are yet to come, your hearts will quail for fear and you will be like other men. If you run with them, you will fear with them. If your strength is where their strength is, you shall be as weak as they; but if you have learned to look up, why, even in those stormy times you shall keep the habit of looking up; and if you have learned to lift your heads above the world, you shall keep to the habit of lifting up your heads. If your portion is in heaven, it shall not be shaken when the earth rocks and reels to its very foundations; if your treasure is in heaven, then your treasure shall not be lost."

His coming is even sooner than these verses indicate.
 These are signs of His return to establish His kingdom.
 Message is for those awaiting God's program for Israel.
 He may come anytime for His church. No signs needed.
 As we see these signs we can be assured
 we're even closer to His coming for the church.

MEANING OF SUPERNATURAL SIGNS 21:29-33

Illustration from the fig tree 21:29-30

"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.'"

It doesn't take a lot of profound study to figure out what Jesus is saying:
 When trees "put out" [sap or leaves {?}],
 you know summer isn't far behind!

You see the sap or the leaves

You know summer's coming

Those who see **these signs** are assured their generation will witness return of Christ to establish His kingdom.

Popular misinterpretation: Restoration of fig tree (Israel) = that generation will see His coming—basis for 1948+40-7=1981 for Christ's return for church.

I said back in '76—it doesn't say "when you see the fig tree restored." It says "learn a lesson from the fig tree."

We don't accept allegorical interpretation!

This is an illustration and it is figurative.

That *doesn't* mean any old figurative meaning will do!

When all else fails, ask *the speaker* what figure means.

Can't we take *Jesus'* Word for what He means?!!!

Lesson from the fig tree 21:31

"Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the Kingdom of God is near."

Just as trees put out leaves before fruit,

His coming has antecedents that are visible in advance.

When you see these things happening

(Matt. adds "ALL these things!")

What things? The ones described in vv. 25-26!

You see the awesome supernatural signs

You know the kingdom (His coming) is near

Don't panic. Look up! Your redemption is near—completion of what was promised we've been waiting for.

Don't panic. These things are an advance signal that God's in control; He's about to fulfill His promise.

Know that the world isn't coming to an end.

You won't die—at least your generation won't be eliminated by these frightening events!

Know that the Kingdom of God is near!

Look up! We don't have to fear!

Our Lord's coming is near.

Get ready! Look up! He's coming soon!

Promise of the fig tree 21:32-33 *"I tell you the truth, 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."*

While earth is capable of passing away in such events,
you can count on the endurance of God's Word;
He has said it won't pass away.

Assurance of fulfillment 21:32

Permanence of His Word 21:33

We may not trust nature to hold together,
but we can trust His Word.

While awesome signs cause the world to panic,
they ought to cause God's people to rejoice
and prepare for His coming.

Promises are a bit different for us,
but they should encourage us as well.

The world isn't coming to an end.

Ex. The Chicken Little story: the sky is falling in.

We don't have to fear that!

WARNING CONCERNING SUPERNATURAL SIGNS

21:34-36

In light of these judgments, we should prepare for His coming

Danger of identification with world and its perspective

21:34-35

Identical response 21:34

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap"

Even when the world looks like it's coming to an end, we aren't to copy everyone else's response.

*"Be careful lest **your** heart be weighed down"*

The world's response includes:

1. Drink it off—in despair—"hangovers" [lit.]

Either bar room blues or

Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.

2. Worry yourself to death over it.

Guatemala experience—Rosa at bus stop. Rumor army coming to town to wipe it out that day.

"How do you keep from panic?"

His people could join panic over the end of the world and stop looking up.

Then what people need to fear, His coming,
would take them by surprise too.

Identical consequence 21:35 *"For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth."*

Neither response prepares us
for the Lord's Day which the signs announce.

Importance of prayer 21:36 *"Be always on the watch; 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."*

For escape For salvation

If you look up and pray for redemption, you'll be ready.

Jesus warns us: be alert; prepare to escape judgment
so as to enjoy promised blessings.

Continuous prayer accomplishes two things:

1. It enables us to escape affliction and judgment.
2. It prepares us to stand before Son of Man.

Warning directed to God's people before church is born.

It's for Israel in the tribulation.

They need to be prepared for His coming.

They should avoid attitudes that serve as traps to them.

Rather, they should be alert and ready for His return.

WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS FUTURE REALITY MAKE IN OUR LIVES TODAY, WHEN NATURE SEEMS SO STABLE?

Direct teaching for Israel in end times—valid principles for us.

Most obvious: for people of the nations, who without faith in Christ await this terrifying time of judgment.

You don't have to face this judgment,
nor the eternal judgment of God.

All judgment has been removed in Christ.

"There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ!"

Spurgeon put it this way: "As for you who are not His people, begin to look for a place to hide yourselves, for Christ is coming! ... I wish that you would so look for a hiding place that you would find one in that One who presents Himself as the best hiding place for every sinner who will trust Him."

Second, in distressing world conditions,

it's easy to join the world in panic, the wringing of hands,
concern for our children and our future.

In such times, "look up!"—focus on God and His plan.

The world is certainly capable of destroying itself.

But His Word remains forever;

it has declared how the end will come out.

In hard times and uncertainty, we don't have to panic!

When we can't see the light, we don't turn to panic
 We don't turn to crystals, astrology and fortune tellers

We turn to the God whose Word endures forever!

Never doubt in the darkness

what God has shown us in the light!

His Word is sure. It won't pass away. We can trust it.

Because of that certainty,

we can call on Him during times of affliction.

We can cry out for the time

when His will shall be done on earth as in heaven

when we shall behold Him, face to face.

However troubling times become,

we know the One who wrote the book on the future

Who's in control of history—Who delivers us from affliction.

We need to focus on Him—to look for His coming,

when WE SHALL BEHOLD HIM!

The sky shall unfold, preparing His entrance;

The stars shall applaud Him with thunders of praise.

The sweet light in His eyes shall enhance those awaiting;

And we shall behold Him then face to face.

The angel shall sound the shout of His coming;

The sleeping shall rise from their slumbering place.

And those who remain shall be changed in a moment;

And we shall behold Him then face to face.

REFRAIN: And we shall behold Him, We shall behold Him,

Face to Face in all of His glory.

O we shall behold Him, We shall behold Him

Face to face, our Savior and Lord.

Look up! We don't have to fear!

Our Savior is coming!