

NOT A HAIR WILL PERISH!

Luke 21:5-24

With tonight's sermon topic, I thought I should use myself somehow as an illustration to introduce it.

I was reminded of the hair preservation commercials.

But I couldn't decide if I ought to be the "before"
or the "after" part of the commercial!

You know, "Trust Christ and you could be like me!"

We'll get to the hair preservation part in a moment,

but first we need to understand the flow of the passage.

JESUS HEADED TOWARD THE CROSS 19:28-23:56 **Formal presentation**
19:28-48

Official opposition 20:1-21:38

When Jesus threatens the system, religious leaders are forced to respond to the challenge, thus the opposition develops.

JUDGMENT CAUSED BY OPPOSITION 21:5-36

Judgment comes in two stages,

one immediate and one at the end of the age.

IMMEDIATE JUDGMENT 21:5-24

DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE 21:5-6

How did the people feel about the temple? 21:5

Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God.

The temple was the epitome of grandeur and security.

Four football fields wide and five football fields long.

Made of pure marble,

it looked like a great mountain of snow from a distance.

One wall was gold so as to shine blindingly in sunlight.

While coming out of the temple,

they observed it's greatness and beauty:

*"Look at the beautiful workmanship,
the beautiful stones and how they are fit together!
Have you ever seen a more awesome building?"*

*"Look at those huge marble stones,
they must be 50 or 60 feet tall!"*

*"Think of the capital funds drive they had
to raise enough for this structure!"*

How must they feel about Jesus' bombshell?

21:6 *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."*

For all it's magnificent splendor, it won't last.

It will be destroyed; not one stone left on another!

How would they feel about that concept?

In A.D. 70, 7 years after reconstruction, it's gone.

PERSECUTION OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS 21:7-19

The disciples' question 21:7 *"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"*

They want to know when this will occur.

What sign should they watch for?

Jesus' response to their questions 21:8-24

Three Warnings 21:8-9 *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 revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."*

1. Don't be deceived 21:8a

Warning: There'll be lots of fakes.
 For 40 yr after death, fakes claim to be Messiah.
 Everyone expects him,
 until the city falls and the temple is destroyed.
 His warning follows probe about the future.
 Deception revolves around future prediction.
 When curiosity seeks to know what future holds,
 we can be misled by all kinds of fakes!
 People want to know about tomorrow,
 they turn to astrology, fortune tellers, tarot cards, ouija boards.
 It opens us up to satanic deception.
 Religious racketeers prey on such people.
 Jesus says, "Don't let the fakes fool you."
 People offer everything you ever wanted,
 even in Jesus' name! Don't follow them!
 They come in His Name
 They come saying "I am"—claim to be Jesus.
 They come saying "The time has come near"

2. Don't go after them 21:8b

3. Don't be terrified 21:9

Scary times *will* come!—wars and revolutions.
 God hasn't lost control!
**These things have to happen,
 but it's still not the end!**

Three things characterize THE END 21:10-11

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."

1. International conflicts 21:10 Wars

2. Natural tragedies 21:11a

Earthquakes, famines, plagues

3. Unnatural signs 21:11b

Frightening/signs from heaven

Things that have to happen before the end 12-19

What to expect: 21:12 *"But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name."*

Before that time arrives,
 Jesus' followers will be persecuted by their people.
 It will not be easy to follow Jesus.
 Those who follow Him will pay.

We suffer because of Him,
 because world rejects Him, *not* because of us.
 Suffering for His sake; *not* our offensiveness.
 Suffering *for this reason* is no disgrace.

How to react: 21:13-15 *This will result in your being witnesses to them. 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.*

It'll be a "launching pad" for witness! _ **1 Pet. 3:13-17**

Decide to be faithful,
 but don't worry how to defend yourself.
 God will provide a response—wisdom to answer.
 Those who attack won't be able to resist nor refute it

Three things will happen to you: 21:16-17

You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. 17 All men will hate you because of me.

1. You will be betrayed

Parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends.
 Everyone will turn on you.

2. You will be killed

3. You will be hated

by ALL on account of MY NAME

BUT, in spite of it all,

you cannot be destroyed. 18-19 *But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By standing firm you will gain life.*

"What does it profit a person if he gains the whole world and loses His soul? What will we give in exchange for our soul?"

They may betray us. They may kill us. (16)

They may hate us.

But *they can't harm what really matters!* "Life" = "soul" —the essence of life, *not physical body*, but real you. They can't touch that.

Maybe I'm a bit emotional about hair business;
 it's becoming clear: Jesus has a point to make.

He introduces idea in **Luke 12:7**.

He talks about people who can kill the body
 but no more. *They can't harm the real you.*

God has hairs of our head numbered.

We may be killed, but we will acquire life.

"Not a hair of your head will perish."

They may kill us, but they can't destroy us!

Not even the hair is destroyed.

God has it numbered; He will preserve it.

[Seems small feat, but it shows God's attention to detail; (very fine detail!!!)]

As we remain faithful,
 we assure only life that matters—eternal life.

Worst they can do is send us to our Father's house. What harm can that do?!!!
 Did they die? Of course.

Jesus said they'd be killed. They were.
 Did they perish? NO!
 They left realm of evil; went home to Father's house
 This promise is always true!

Special meaning for generation which saw destruction of temple.

In A.D. 70+, city destroyed. People wiped out.
 They ate their children.
 They fought to end in suicide mission at Masada.
 Eusebius: no Christians died in that conflict. Why not?

Two reasons:

1. This promise 21:19

Excluded from identification with Israel.
 They're rejected and thrown out.

2. The last part of today's passage.

Our Lord issues instructions in 21:21.
 They obey and survive.

When Jerusalem is surrounded, they remember, leave Jerusalem, and flee to Pella
 [Not Iowa!];
 protected by Rome so they don't endure judgment on Jerusalem.

ANSWER TO OTHER QUESTION 21:20-24

What's sign these things are about to happen? 21:20 *"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near."*

Three things to do when they see it 21:21

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.

1. Flee to the mountains

2. Get out of town

3. Don't come back into town

—nothing worth coming for!

These events are a "dress rehearsal"
 for affliction that follows in THE END.

God uses pagans to punish Jerusalem for rejection of Son and abuse of His people.

21:22-24 *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.*

1 Ki. 9:6-9

Dan. 9:26

They'll fall by the sword

Josephus: over a million people die in this conflict.

They'll be taken captive into all the pagan lands

—100,000 taken captive

They'll be "walked on" by pagans UNTIL THE PAGANS' DAYS END. (= "Times of the Gentiles")

Spot temple stood occupied by Moslem mosque.

Not one stone left in place

"Pagans" are trampling on the spot Jesus predicted.

Don't miss promise: ***The pagans' day will end.***

The city will be restored.

God's day is coming. They'll be restored.

But these are the days of the pagans.

Days of the pagans are numbered.

Conditions which climax first judgment carry over to start of final judgment in THE END (21:24-36)

Meanwhile, God works in the world through His church,
calling out of every nation a people for His name.

God's people suffer,

but God uses pagan nations

***to punish Jerusalem for rejecting His Son
and abuse of His people.***

***Everything they know and depend on
is going to be shaken up.***

We live in a world like that!

You never know what will happen next.

International conflicts go on and on, one after another.

Disasters strike: earthquakes, famine, drought,

then floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, depression, recession.

You can't count on

tomorrow!

How are God's people to act in the midst of such troubling times?

Trust God. Be faithful to Him.

Things aren't out of His control!

Use affliction as launch pad for witnessing!

Sometimes God intervenes and saves His people.

In **Uganda on April 12, 1978**, Idi Amin's soldiers fired at the Makerere Gospel Mission, a Uganda Church near Kampala. With bullets ricocheting and tearing holes in walls and roof, 600 people fell to their knees and began to praise God. Soldiers arrested and beat 200 of them and dragged them off to the Nakesero State Research Bureau headquarters, where thousands of Ugandans had already lost their lives.

They sat huddled in a circle with gasoline cans around them. They were told they'd be burned alive. Soldiers said they're awaiting the order by a high-ranking official. It turned out that the officer had an automobile accident, which the people took as God's intervention on their behalf.

Sometimes God *doesn't* choose to intervene. Either way ***He wins!***

"Why does God let these things happen to us?"

Life used to be so simple.

Now it seems everything's falling apart! Why?"

One reason is for a launching pad

--an opportunity to share His love with others.

TWO MAIN AUDIENCES to whom message is addressed:

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

You may win the debate and conquer the opposition today.

But payday WILL come someday.

Eventually God's judgment falls--as for that generation

When God's day comes,

those who fought His Son, will face His judgment.

Do you prefer to win the world, or to gain your own soul?

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.

If passage indicates anything about God's people and pop culture, it indicates our culture will never join us.

Nation's roots are founded on a personal relationship with God; Jesus warns those who follow Him that family and friends will turn on them on His account.

If we follow Him, we'll be counter-cultural;
we can be sure those near us won't like it!

How do we respond to Him?

Can we trust Him?

Can affliction be launching pad for witness?

Children of the heavenly Father Safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven Such a refuge e'er was given.

God His own doth tend and nourish,
In His holy courts they flourish;
From all evil things He spares them,
In His mighty arms He bears them.

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord His children sever;
Unto them His grace He showeth,
And their sorrows all He knoweth.

Though He giveth or He taketh,
God His children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely
To preserve them pure and holy.