

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

By the Rev. Dr. Harry Wendt, Founder of Crossways International
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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

Luke 21:5-36

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

Year C - Proper 28, Text: Luke 21:5-28 (29-36)
Year C - Proper 28, also Advent 1, Text: Luke 21:5-19

Editor's Note: *This commentary was created by rearranging and splicing together two of Dr. Wendt's gospel commentaries. These commentaries were for the texts: Luke 21:5-19 (RCL, Year C, Proper 28) and Luke 21:25-36 (RCL and LSB, Year C, Advent 1).*

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus predicts clearly and powerfully the coming dreadful siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Luke does not make reference to the Old Testament phrase, "abomination of desolation" (Daniel 9:27, 1 Maccabees 1:54) found in both Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14, pointing to the Roman army's eventual desecration of the Jerusalem Temple.

Verses 21:5-6: Some of those with and around Jesus talk about the Temple, and how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God. Jesus responds by declaring that the day is coming when the Temple structure will be destroyed, and not one stone will be left upon another. These words were fulfilled when the Romans destroyed the Temple in AD 70.

Verses 21:7-8: The disciples ask when this will take place, and what sign will declare that "The time has come!" Jesus responds by telling His disciples that false prophets will appear and proclaim lies about the issue. They are not to believe or follow them.

Verses 21:9-19: In these verses, Jesus refers to things that will happen prior to the destruction of the Temple:

- There will be wars and rumors of war. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.
- There will be earthquakes, famines, and plagues — and portents and signs from heaven.
- Jesus' brothers and sisters will be arrested and persecuted. They will be brought before synagogues and imprisoned, and brought before kings and governors. Why? Because they belong to Jesus' family!
- Jesus' brothers and sisters will be betrayed by their parents, brothers, relatives, and friends who will put some to death because of their faith in Jesus!

No matter what happens, those who believe in and follow Jesus need not worry about what they might say when brought to trial. Why? Because Jesus will provide them with words and wisdom that their opponents will not be able to withstand or contradict.

Jesus assures His followers that not even a hair on their head will perish. They will gain their souls and get to experience true life in this world and the one to come!

Verses 21:25-28: Luke picks up on the thought referred to in 21:11 and for a few verses looks ahead to the coming of the Son of Man "with power and great glory." He again makes use of Old Testament figures of speech that picture the world convulsing under the impact of God's redemptive power.

Luke nowhere makes reference to the ignorance of the Son of Man concerning the final days (Mark 13:32-37). He alone includes the comforting remark that on the day of greatest struggle, redemption is at its nearest. The word *redemption* (v. 28) belongs to Paul (Roman 3:24). Here in Luke is the only place in all four Gospels where the term is used.

Verses 21:29-36: Luke points out that the generation of his day would witness the fall of Jerusalem. Even so, Jesus directs His hearers' attention not to horrors, but to new life in the Kingdom of God. In verse 33, Jesus (reflecting a Jewish idiom) is saying, "Even if the sky and the earth were to pass away, (all) My words (and not just those of the final discourse) will not pass away."

In getting his message across, Luke weaves Pauline themes into his text:

Luke 21:34, 25 > compare 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

Luke 21:34a > compare 1 Thessalonians 5:7

Luke 21:36 > compare 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12, 18

Christian life is to be a prayerful preparation for the coming Final Appearing of the true Son of Man!

Jesus As the Son of Man

The term “Son of Man” surfaces twice in this pericope (verses 27, 36). It is used 82 times in the four Gospels — 30 times in Matthew, 14 times in Mark, 25 times in Luke, and 13 times in John. Its roots are in Daniel 7; see 7:13. In Daniel 7, the writer sees a series of monsters rise out of the sea — monsters that represent the series of empires under which the Jewish people had already suffered or would eventually suffer: Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece, and the Syrian Seleucids.

Jesus applies this prophecy and the term “Son of Man” to Himself. Through His death, resurrection, and ascension; Jesus as the Son of Man will attain dominion over the nations of the world and will also be the first of a new and true people of God.

Through the power of His Spirit, His people will extend His dominion over the earth by serving the nations and people of the world! Without a doubt, the organized church needs to grapple with the meaning of this term and its significance for the life of God’s people.

What do Jesus’ words proclaim to us today?

We live in an uncertain world that continues to be troubled by earthquakes, famines, and plagues — and wars, tsunamis, hurricanes, financial woes, disease, poverty, racial and religious strife, spiritual ignorance, and an idolatrous overemphasis on achieving prosperity. History reveals that worldly empires usually last about 200 years — and then “go under.”

The only hope for the world is to embrace Jesus’ teachings and reflect His manner of life — things that, in the minds of many, are not all that popular. Jesus teaches His followers that loyalty to Him can lead to persecution and even martyrdom. But He promises us that the day is coming when He will save us once and for all and forever.