

Your Redemption Is Drawing Near

Luke 21:5-28

Introduction

In our Gospel lesson in **Luke 21**, the people were commenting on the marvelous temple. This prompted Jesus to say, *“As for these things you see, the days will come when there will not be left one stone upon another that will not be thrown down”* (**Luke 21:6**). Of course, the people wanted to know when that was going to happen. What will be the sign of it coming to pass? Jesus’ long answer, from **verse 8** to **verse 28**, foretells two ends: the end of Jerusalem and the end of the age. He talks about a lot of bad things that are going to happen, but in **verse 20**, He says, *“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.”* And in A.D. 70, the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem and destroyed it, including the temple the people were admiring. In **verse 27**, He says, *“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”* That’s the sign of His Second Coming and the end of the age. All the rest are merely signs of the times.

The Times We Live in

Let’s look at the signs of the times we live in.

v. 8 False Messiahs

The first sign of the times comes in **verse 8**, where Jesus says, *“for many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and ‘The time is at hand! Do not go after them”* (**v.8**). It seems like someone has a “new” Gospel every day. But throughout history, there have been false teachers and false Christs, people who claimed to have the answer for all of life’s questions but were really false prophets.

v. 9-10 – Wars & Tumults

While it seems like wars and fighting are increasing, the only thing that has changed over the years is technology. It’s easier to kill more people and wreak more havoc than in the past. Martin Luther said that the weapons they had in his day made ancient wars look like child’s play. Technology also makes battlefields more accessible. During Viet Nam, the nightly news brought pictures and videos of the war into our living rooms for the first time. With the Internet and cell phones, we can see things from anywhere in the world almost instantly. We don’t have to wait for the nightly news.

v. 11 – Natural Disasters

Natural disasters have always been around, it’s part of the fallen world. Once again, technology makes them more accessible.

v. 25-27 – Heavenly Signs, Fear

Just as there are natural disasters on earth, things happen in the heavens. These cause people to fear. In olden times, people saw this as judgment from the gods. We fear what we do not understand. Today, it’s things like viruses.

v. 12 – Persecution

God's people have always been persecuted. It's cyclical. For the ancient church, persecution worsened or lessened depending on who was Emperor. Church historians say we are heading for a persecution in the West that will rival the persecution the early church experienced.

Blessings

There are blessings that come with persecution. It gives us more opportunity to witness, and a witness during persecution has more power. Because of the purging effect of persecution, the church grows stronger at these times. As Tertullian said, *the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church*.

This May Be the End

These are all signs of the times in which we live. The sign Jesus gives for His second coming is that people will see Him coming in the clouds. By then, it will be too late. The truth is, God doesn't want us to be able to predict when Jesus will return. It wouldn't be good for us. Like schoolkids procrastinating on assignments, we would put off doing what needs to be done until the last minute. We would waste the time we do have. Not knowing gives us an urgency to live each day as if it were our last.

Straighten Up and Raise Your Heads

Since this could be the last day, we are called to straighten up and raise our heads. Jesus is coming back. We are one day closer today than we were yesterday. We straighten up, that is, prepare ourselves for His coming, by spending time in the Word, receiving the Sacrament, and living for Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. Lift up your heads, *Your Redemption Is Drawing Near*.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
