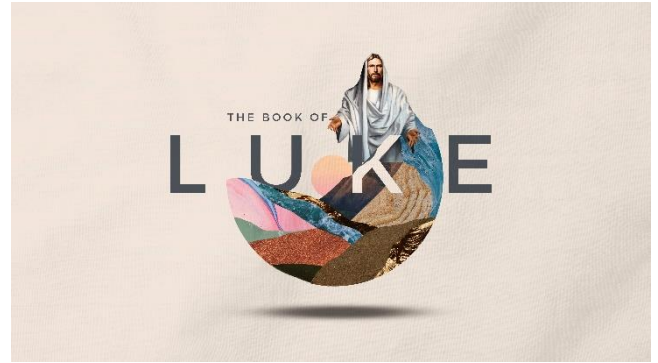


## ON THE EVE OF DESTRUCTION

“Don't you understand, what I'm trying to say?  
And can't you feel the fears I'm feeling today?  
If the button is pushed, there's no running away  
There'll be no one to save with the world in a  
grave” (Barry McGuire)

Consider the world ‘near ends’ over your lifetime. What did it ‘feel like’ to experience those times? What was the predominant narrative around churches or the kitchen table at home?



**Read Luke 21:1-37** like you were reading for the first time in the first century, taking the time to reflect upon phrases and words used, new things learned, repeated phrases, words you're unsure of the meaning, questions you're asking and listening to what God is saying:

1. What can we learn from the story of the poor widow vv 1-4 (cf Mark 12:44)? (see also 1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 8:14 [twice]; 9:12; 11:9; Phil. 2:30; Col. 1:24; 1 Thess. 3:10).
2. Background: (see also Matthew 24-25; Mark 13) This is often referred to as the ‘Olivet discourse’, or Jesus’ sermon on the Mount of Olives where He unfolds more fully Jerusalem’s destruction (their immediate future) and the prophetic program of the ‘end’.

Consider the disciples questions<sup>1</sup>:

- a. When shall these things be? Matt 24:3
- b. What will be the sign when these things are about to take place? Luke 21:7
- c. What shall be the sign of your coming? Matt 24:3
- d. What shall be the sign of the end of the age? Matt 24:3

Narrow these down to two considerations that Jesus is addressing here:

- a. The judgement upon Jerusalem involving the destruction of the temple (AD 70) by Titus and the Roman army<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Hence the disciples question Acts 1:6 they say, “Lord, is it this time that You're going to start Your Kingdom?” They had the same curiosity about timing details.

<sup>2</sup> The first temple was Solomon’s, destroyed by the Babylonians. The second was rebuilt under Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ez 6:15). This was the third temple – King Herod more than doubled the temple mount area, increasing it to about 36 acres (150,000 square meters). Herod’s rebuilding work started in 19 B.C., and was only completed in A.D. 63, taking more than eighty years. It was finished only seven years before it was destroyed.

- b. The return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom.
3. How does Jesus respond to the questions of the disciples: “<sup>7</sup>... when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”
  4. What precedes the ‘signs of the times’ vv 10-11, and how were the readers to respond? (see vv 12-19 cf Romans 5:3; Hebrews 10:36; Mathew 24:13; Luke 18:8)
  5. The ‘end times’ was a familiar theme in Luke’s gospel. Consider 12:35-48; 17:20-37; 13:34-35; 19:41-44 – taken together they form the core of Luke’s teaching on eschatology (the doctrine of the last things). Avoiding speculative thinking, what do these passages teach us of the providence of God?
  6. How would Luke have the reader to respond to his teaching in chapter 21?
  7. Discuss what Jesus meant in Luke 21:28 (ESV) <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (see also Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 8:23).

JOURNAL:

Out of this study what is it that the Holy Spirit is impressing on your heart.

You could write it in words, draw a picture, or write a prayer of thankful anticipation of the glorious appearing of the King and the arrival of the Kingdom.