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## **Days of Vengeance (part 1) – Luke 21:5-19**

**Introduction** – We come to a passage where, if we come away with a good understanding, we should be extremely grateful and humble. This and other apocalyptic sections of the gospels (Matt 24, Mark 13) have been hotly disputed within the church, and so we must be careful. We will be taking a particular interpretive view, but hopefully it will be seen from the text and particularly in the context of the whole of the gospel as we have preached.

**Some Initial Set-up** – A few things should be said before looking at the passage.

**Three Views of Eschatology** – Views on apocalyptic passages of scripture can be generally summed up in three categories.

**Postmillennialism** is an optimistic view of the future of the gospel on the earth over the history of the age in which we live.

The Great Commission will be successfully fulfilled and then Christ will physically return.

**Premillennialism** also teaches of a “golden age” on the earth, but Christ will return personally to usher that age in at its beginning. Until that time the world and the church will continue to grow in wickedness and apostasy.

**Amillennialism** holds that the millennium is not manifested on this earth; it is a spiritual/heavenly reality for those glorified saints in heaven, and there is no promised literal manifestation of this victory upon the earth.

**Two Views: “Futurists” and “Preterists”** – Another eschatological debate has to do with when these (or the majority of these) apocalyptic passages were or will be fulfilled. Futurists believe that Luke 21 will be fulfilled in the future. Preterists believe that Luke 21 was fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD.

**The Flow of the Gospel of Luke** – Jesus came to be the Good Shepherd prophesied in Ezekiel. Yet, in coming to His own, His own did not receive Him. This too was ordained by God; the death of the Messiah would be the salvation of the True Israel. When He preached the gospel, when He healed (on the Sabbath), when He spoke words of warning and judgment, unbelieving Israel sought to lay hands on Him and kill Him. And for this, the Days of Vengeance would come (v22, also 13:35, 19:43-44).

**The Prophecy of Jesus Christ (21:5-6)** – Herod’s Temple was a breathtaking, wonder of the world; beautiful marble stones reported to be as large as 26 feet by 8 feet solid and gold-plated everywhere, the entire Temple building took up 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the entire old city. The disciples marvel, and Jesus warns that days will come when it will be completely destroyed. We should consider this passage as a prophecy our Lord made about the immediate future of Jerusalem, which authenticates Him as a prophet (Deut 18). And the passage gives us several “anchors” upon which we can fix this interpretation. Here are two – more will be considered in the next sermon.

**Remember the Question (v7)** – When Jesus tells the disciples that the Temple will be leveled, they respond with this question: “...when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?” Jesus says that when you see Jerusalem surrounded, you will know that the time has come (v20), and He explicitly says that “all things” He has spoken about will take place in this generation (v32).

**The Desolation (v20, 22, Mark 13:14)** – Considering the parallel passages, this “desolation” is the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel, but Luke emphasizes the time as when “Jerusalem is surrounded by armies,” and the warning is “to flee.” While the war against Jerusalem began in 66AD, a full siege did not begin until 68, and history records that the early Christians fled (recognizing the “signs”) before the siege was complete.

**Things Which Must Take Place First (vv8-19)** – This passage, therefore, is about signs that will take place before the desolation. Some will come saying they are Jesus returned (v8). There will be international turmoil, with nation rising against nation, various earthquakes and diseases (vv 10-11). There will be great persecutions by those who will turn them over to the synagogues (and so this is persecution by the Jews) and into prisons, and some will be put to death. The stories of false-Messiahs and international turmoil are all through the histories of Eusebius and Josephus during that generation, and the book of Acts chronicles many persecutions by the Jews.

**An Occasion for Testimony and Perseverance (vv13-19)** – Jesus is telling these disciples that following Him is not going to be easy. And yet, He is promising that there will be no difficulty that will be in vain (Rom 8:28). Nothing is ever out of God’s hands and so they do not even need to worry when brought before rulers who can kill them – God will tell them what to say and defeat their opponents (vv14-15, cf. Acts 6:8-15).

**What's Here for Us?** – In the end, what are we to learn, since this interpretation doesn't lead us to looking to the newspapers for the Last Days to begin? We learn to read our Bibles, studying the use of the Old Testament in the New. We learn to see all persecutions and trials upon our faith as opportunities to witness in deed and word. We learn through the stories of Jesus and His disciples' perseverance, and God's promises to us, to persevere by grace through faith no matter our circumstance (John 10:28-29, Phil 1:6).

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