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## Luke Chapter 21

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**Abstract:** A commentary on the events of Luke 21, accompanied by parallel columns of the King James translation of the chapter alongside a new rendition.



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# Luke Chapter 21

## INTRODUCTION

The Savior briskly brings his teaching to another high boil. In the prior chapter, we listen to his teachings during the early days of his last week, probably on Monday, Tuesday, and early Wednesday. Then, likely on Wednesday afternoon, he draws his closest disciples into his confidence when he offers an enlivening view of the future that goes back to an earlier question about this topic: “As ye have asked of me concerning the signs of my coming, in the day when I shall come in my glory . . . I will show unto you how the day of redemption shall come, and also the restoration of the scattered Israel” (D&C 45:16–17).<sup>1</sup> The chapter begins with the gift of a poor widow and ends with crowds seeking his company (see 21:1–4, 37–38). In between he shines light on his grand eschatological vision (see 21:5–36).

For Latter-day Saints, chapter 21 presents readers with one of seven versions of Jesus’ sermon on the Mount of Olives. Naturally, we know the versions that are presented in Mark 13 and Matthew 24–25. But there are more. We first notice that the Joseph Smith Translation completely freshens the reports of the sermon preserved by Mark and Matthew with a large number of changes that render their records largely the same;<sup>2</sup> fewer adjustments appear in Luke 21. In each, the alterations bear on the meaning and thrust of Jesus’ words. Thus far, we see six versions—those in the three synoptic Gospels and those in the JST version of those Gospels, one of

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1. S. Kent Brown, “Jesus’ Sermon on the Last Days: Matthew 24,” *Brigham Young University 1999–2000 Speeches* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2000), 69–77.

2. In a comparison of parallel passages, differences are mostly minor: JST Matt. 24:8 and JST Mark 13:12; JST Matt. 24:11 and JST Mark 13:13; JST Matt. 24:13 and JST Mark 13:15; JST Matt. 24:18 and JST Mark 13:20; JST Matt. 24:19 and JST Mark 13:21–22; JST Matt. 24:22 and JST Mark 13:24; JST Matt. 24:40 and JST Mark 13:44; JST Matt. 24:41 and JST Mark 13:45; JST Matt. 24:45 and JST Mark 13:49; a larger change occurs between JST Matt. 24:56 and JST Mark 13:61.

which is partially reported in Joseph Smith—Matthew of the Pearl of Great Price. The seventh record of the sermon lies in Doctrine and Covenants 45:16–59. As a preface, the Lord tantalizingly declares that “I will speak . . . and prophesy, as unto men in days of old. And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh” “upon this mount,” the Mount of Olives (D&C 45:15–16, 48). With these words, we learn the vivid detail that Jesus imparts in the sermon while standing before his disciples, as a distinguished teacher, not sitting with them as Matthew 24:3 and Mark 13:3 lead us to believe.

In contrast to Mark 13 and Matthew 24–25, Luke chapter 21 provides two delectable dishes, not just one, ending with crowds still seeking Jesus’ company (see 21:38). The first small dish consists in the refreshing story of a poor widow’s two mites, complete with tasteless displays of wealth that contrast with her tiny gift to the temple that glows with her adoring devotion (see 21:1–4). Why is this story in this place? Possibly because of Mark’s placement of it just before the Savior’s sermon on the future (see Mark 12:41–44). On this view, the fact that Luke includes this story here may demonstrate a dependence on Mark’s order of events for Jesus’ last week. Perhaps significantly, Matthew omits the story, effectively dulling the notion that Mark serves as Luke’s main or only source for Jesus’ last days in Jerusalem, including the sermon on the Mount of Olives. Another possibility glimmers in front of us: Jesus’ mention of “widows’ houses” in the foregoing (20:47) may instead form a verbal bridge that brings the widow’s story here, pointing to a catchword association, a feature that may also infuse Mark 12:40–42.

But why recount this story about the widow before rehearsing the sermon about the fate of Jerusalem and its citizens? Because, after a first glance, her story brings together a raw, untouched comparison between her situation and the gleaming opulence of both the temple and its contributors, the latter offering a practiced yet worn piety that will not save the temple from destruction. In addition, we sense that, while the temple’s importance remains strong in the minds and hearts of even the poor, its officials and major contributors are out of touch with common persons, rudely flaunting their wealth in their presence. Such a perception may also give flavor to Jesus’ prior talk about those who “devour widows’ houses” (20:47).

In the eschatological discourse on the Mount of Olives, the second and longest part of this chapter that rehearses Jesus’ grand and often frightful vision of the future (see 21:5–36), the words of Jesus stir together a number of prophecies that appear elsewhere in Luke’s Gospel. The list is short: the exhortations to watch (see 12:35–48; 21:34–36; especially JST 12:35–57);

the warnings about deceptions (see 17:20–24; 21:8–9); the desolation that stalks Jerusalem (see 13:34–35; 21:20–24; JST 13:35–36); and the signs of the Second Coming (see 17:26–37; 21:25–28; JST 17:26–40). The main question is whether the Savior indeed speaks such words away from Jerusalem, as Luke reports Jesus’ teachings. The answer is Yes, as both the JST version of Luke 12:41–45 and Jesus’ declarations about Jerusalem’s fate and the future kingdom make abundantly clear (see 13:33–35; 17:20–37). Hence, we should see Jesus’ discourse on the Mount of Olives as one wherein he brings together sayings uttered on other occasions, along with fresh prophecies, and shapes them into a whole piece that addresses the issues of the future of Jerusalem, of the disciples, and of the end-time (see the Notes on 12:40; 13:34; 17:22–23, 37; the Analysis on 12:35–40; 13:31–35; 17:20–37).

In light of the Savior’s introduction to the sermon preserved in modern scripture, “As ye have asked of me concerning the signs of my coming” (D&C 45:16), no compelling reason exists to suppose that it is Luke who selects some of these sayings from their original setting in this sermon and inserts them into other, earlier contexts, or vice versa. Even so, we find what may be hints that Luke pens his version of the sermon after the Jewish War (AD 66–70), for he tops it with the vivid notation, “ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies” (21:20; also 19:43). The other accounts omit this detail. Instead, they feature the “abomination of desolation” (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14), an expression from the book of Daniel which the Joseph Smith Translation interprets as “the destruction of Jerusalem” (JST Matt. 24:12; JST Mark 13:14; see Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). This said, reasons exist to question the scholarly insistence that Luke writes in hindsight, after the end of the war (see the Analysis on 21:20–24; the Introduction V.A).

This view of the discourse does not enjoy widespread support. Many see the sermon as a collection of disparate sayings that Mark, the first Gospel writer, artfully stitches together into an absorbing sermon that simply reflects the major concerns in the primitive church’s preaching, that is, warnings against false Christs and prophets, the sufferings of believers, the judgment upon Jerusalem, and the requirement of disciples to watch for Jesus’ return. In this view, much of the sermon illumines Jesus’ teachings, but Mark alone, or his source, is responsible for its ordering and flavoring, or even its composition.<sup>3</sup> For Latter-day Saints, both the inspired changes introduced into the Joseph Smith Translation of the synoptic Gospels and

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3. Bultmann, *History*, 125; Beare, *Earliest Records of Jesus*, 216; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1323–25; Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*, 350–65.

the first-hand account of the sermon that the Savior rehearses in Doctrine and Covenants 45:16–59 stand firmly against such a view. Instead of Mark presenting a table of teachings based on the church’s preaching interests, it seems more likely that it is Jesus’ words in the sermon that set the agenda for those interests.

In a completely different vein, this sermon will save the lives of uncounted disciples who, knowing of Jesus’ warnings about the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, will flee from the capital city which becomes the headquarters of the church in its early days. Rather than retreat into the city for safety, as thousands do when war breaks out with Rome late in AD 66 and again when Roman armies approach Jerusalem’s gates in AD 70, Christians flee northward, many of them settling in a gentile town, Pella, on the east bank of the Jordan River. There they wait out the war and survive intact.

## THE WIDOW’S TWO MITES (21:1–4) (Compare Mark 12:41–44)

### King James Translation

1 And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. 2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. 3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poorwidow hath cast in more than they all: 4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

### New Rendition

1 And looking up, he saw the rich casting their offerings into the treasury. 2 And he saw there a poor widow casting in two copper coins. 3 And he said, “Truly, I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than they all. 4 For all these men from their abundance have cast into the offering chests, but she from her poverty has cast in all of the livelihood which she had.”

### Notes

**21:1 *he looked up*:** The same verb (Greek *anablepō*) appears in 9:16 and 19:5, hinting at an eyewitness memory of this moment (see the Notes on 7:9, 44; 19:5),<sup>4</sup> much as Mark’s notation conveys, “Jesus sat [down]” (Mark 12:41).

4. BAGD, 50; TDNT, 5:317, 327, 343–44; TDOT, 10:38, for “to lift the eyes.”

**the rich men casting:** The literal expression is “the rich [who were] casting.” No specific group seems to be in Luke’s mind. The overt emphasis on the wealthy (Greek *plousios*)<sup>5</sup> sets up the judgment of Jesus that the poor widow actually gives more (see 21:3).

**gifts into the treasury:** Naturally, the Passover season brings many to the city who will make their donations to the temple. One of the purposes for such gifts is the ongoing renovation of the temple which Herod begins long before, in the winter of 20–19 BC. This renovation will continue through the prefecture of Albinus (AD 62–64). Johnson suggests that officials of the treasury also quietly distribute gifts to the poor from this place.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the widow may be giving her gift for other poor people. The first time that Jesus comes to this place, he is carried as an infant by his mother (see 2:22; the Note on 2:24).<sup>7</sup>

**the treasury:** According to the Mishnah, thirteen shofar-shaped chests sit inside the Court of the Women where people put their gifts. This courtyard must be “the treasury.” These chests carry labels such as “New Shekel dues,” “Gold for the Mercy-seat,” and “Freewill-offerings,” evidently allowing donors to choose which fund to contribute to.<sup>8</sup> From this courtyard, it is possible for women to see the great altar of sacrifice through the Nicanor Gate, a place that they are not allowed to go (see the Note on 2:24).<sup>9</sup>

**21:2 poor widow:** The term for “widow” (Greek *chēra*),<sup>10</sup> of course, links to Jesus’ statement about widows in 20:47, but we do not know whether he is thinking of poor widows in the prior saying. The scribes may well target rich widows rather than the poor (see the Note on 20:47).

**two mites:** This copper coin, called a *leptos*,<sup>11</sup> is the smallest in circulation in Palestine (see the Notes on 12:6, 59). Later Jewish law obliges even the poor to give to charity.<sup>12</sup>

**21:3 he said:** It seems apparent that Jesus aims the following declaration about the poor widow mainly at “his disciples,” although others are hanging on his words (20:45).

5. BAGD, 679; TDNT, 6:328.

6. Edersheim, *Temple*, 69–70, 74–75; Johnson, *Luke*, 315.

7. TDNT, 3:236–37; Kraeling, *Rand McNally Bible Atlas*, 400.

8. *Mishnah Shekalim* 6:5; Edersheim, *Temple*, 48–49.

9. TDNT, 3:236–37; Kraeling, *Rand McNally Bible Atlas*, 400; Ritmyer and Ritmyer, *Ritual of the Temple*, 14–15.

10. BAGD, 889–90.

11. BAGD, 473.

12. Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, 54.

***I say unto you:*** This formulaic expression carries the weight of Jesus' authority to what he will say next (see 4:24; 5:24; 7:9, 14, 26, 28, 47; etc.; the Note on 6:27). Such words are also spoken by John the Baptist (see 3:8).

***more than they all:*** We may understand that Jesus' judgment is based on a common observation about the widow's pitiable appearance. But one of the strong themes of this Gospel is its insistence that, with divine ability, Jesus perceives the intents and personalities of people. This characteristic allows him to say what he says in the next verse (see the Notes on 5:22; 6:8; 11:17; 20:23).

**21:4 *of their abundance . . . of her penury:*** This contrasting pair of expressions forms one of the important pivots over which Jesus' observations balance, one representing the privileged and the other the underprivileged. The priests, of course, will notice the gifts of the wealthy and will pay little attention to the widow's gift, this in contrast to Jesus' sharp observation.

***in unto the offerings of God:*** The prepositional phrase *of God*, appearing in a number of early manuscripts but missing in others, leads us to understand that Jesus speaks of the offering chests, with the meaning "into the offering chests" (see the Note on 21:1).<sup>13</sup>

***cast in all the living:*** The term translated "living" (Greek *bios*) generally has to do with one's manner of living, but here it has to do with the widow's livelihood.<sup>14</sup> Hence, she dips deep into her means of subsistence to produce her gift, a true sacrifice.

## Analysis

These verses frame a bridge that links the Savior's condemnation of the scribes (see 20:45–47) and his warning about the temple's destruction (see 21:5–6). His critique of the scribes is direct and open. At the center of his harsh words stands his rebuke of how some of them treat women, specifically widows, the most vulnerable people in his society. All are under scriptural mandate, especially the scribes, the experts in interpreting scripture, to look out for the best interests of women and widows. But they do not (see Isa. 1:17, 23; 10:2; Jer. 7:6; Micah 2:9; Zech. 7:10; etc.; the Note on 20:47).

On a similar track, Jesus chastises temple authorities, but his reprimand is indirect. He speaks of the temple and gifts that come to it (see 21:3–4) and its eventual fate, not mentioning priests and Levites directly; yet he

13. *TDNT*, 8:598; Marshall, *Luke*, 752.

14. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 316; BAGD, 141; Marshall, *Luke*, 752.

implicates them by condemning the temple culture that pays attention to gifts of the wealthy and barely acknowledges the gifts of the poor, in this case gifts from widows, the persons least able to afford to give.<sup>15</sup> But these women give from the inner depths of their souls. And no one notices. Except Jesus.

Because Jesus notices, he is able to draw his disciples into a lesson of ultimate sacrifice, ultimate devotion, ultimate worship, ultimate discipleship. The poor widow's gift reaches into the fabric of her livelihood, into her empty cupboards, her spent storage jars, her bare clothes closet, her bed made lonely by the death of her husband. Her gift diminishes her ability to provide for herself in even the most basic ways: "she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had" (21:4). She is the true disciple, giving all.

Moreover, the widow's appearance here brings forward, as does the mention of widows in 20:47, the whole matter of Jesus' interest in families, particularly families who experience enormous challenges in the absence of fathers. How so? Because the Old Testament, the guiding scripture of Jesus' society, links the welfare of widows closely with that of the fatherless and orphans (see Deut. 14:29; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Ezek. 22:7; Zech. 7:10; etc.). More than this, scripture insists that the mistreatment of widows and orphans will bring an offender, frighteningly, "into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31; see. Deut. 10:18; Ps. 146:9).

In a literary way, Jesus' notice of the "poor widow" in "the treasury" (21:1–2) forms an *inclusio* of sorts, bringing to completion a theme that Luke introduces at the beginning of Jesus' mortal life when his mother brings him to the temple, specifically to the Court of the Women or the treasury, where she pays the five-shekel redemptive price for her firstborn son and where, at a distance, she witnesses the sacrifice of the two birds, a sacrifice of the poor (see the Notes on 2:22, 24). This aspect of poverty, shared by the young Mary and the widow and emphasized dramatically by the refined and opulent presence of the temple, frames virtually all of Jesus' mortal life, imparting to his life and ministry a quiet assurance of his concern for those who experience poverty as a part of their lives, for he has known such a life (see the Analysis on 2:21–24).

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15. Green, *Luke*, 725–26.



**THE TEMPLE'S FALL****(21:5–6)**

(Compare Matt. 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2)

**King James Translation**

5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

**New Rendition**

5 And while certain men were speaking concerning the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and offerings, he said, 6 “These things which you see—the days are coming in which not one stone will be left upon another which will not be thrown down.”

**Notes**

**21:5 *some spake of the temple:*** Other accounts indicate that this part of the conversation between Jesus and his followers takes place in or near the temple grounds (see Matt. 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2). Perhaps oddly, Luke does not record a location for this initial conversation and for the following sermon although he mentions the temple “treasury” (see 21:1). It is possible that Luke intends readers to think of Jesus’ discussion occurring within the Court of the Women, the “treasury” (see the note on 21:1), or at least beginning in that area where a person, tantalizingly, can see the altar of sacrifice and the sanctuary itself through the Nicanor Gate.<sup>16</sup> The Joseph Smith Translation adds no further notation in Luke’s Gospel about the locale for Jesus’ following sermon. That the full discussion takes place on the Mount of Olives becomes clear from Matthew 24:3, Mark 13:3, Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:4, and Doctrine and Covenants 45:48.

***adorned with goodly stones and gifts:*** Josephus is a main source for our understanding of the stunning, overall appearance of the temple; the Mishnah tractate *Middoth* is another.<sup>17</sup> Between the two we gain a clearer understanding of the refined beauty of the sanctuary and its associated buildings.<sup>18</sup> It remains unclear what feature Jesus’ associates are gazing at.

**21:6 *the days will come:*** Jesus seems to imply that destroying the temple will take time (see 21:22). The term *days* points to a critical time in the life

16. *TDNT*, 3:236–37; Kraeling, *Rand McNally Bible Atlas*, 400.

17. Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *Ritual of the Temple*, 7.

18. Josephus, *B.J.* 5.5.1–6 (§§184–226); Josephus, *Ag. Apion* 2.9 (§119); Josephus, *A.J.* 15.11.3 (§§392–402); 15.11.5–6 (§§410–21); *Mishnah Middoth*.

of the city, a time of decision (see 5:35; 17:26, 28; 21:22, 34; 23:29; D&C 52:11; 61:15; the Note on 17:22).<sup>19</sup>

**one stone upon another:** The Greek term for stone, *lithos*, often has to do with a quarried and cut stone, one that is shaped to fit in a certain place.<sup>20</sup> All of the fitted stones that make up the temple and its grounds will be pounded “to powder” (20:18; see D&C 45:20; the Notes on 19:44; 20:17–18).

**thrown down:** In an earlier vivid warning, Jesus declares that Jerusalem’s enemies “shall lay thee even with the ground,” indicating widespread destruction throughout the city, beyond the temple grounds, so that future visitors will doubt that the city “had ever been inhabited” (see 19:44 and the Note thereon).<sup>21</sup>

## Analysis

The fall of the temple and the city will form a watershed for the Jewish people matched only by the first fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC.<sup>22</sup> In both instances, the survivors find themselves exiled to faraway lands among completely foreign peoples or, worse, subjected to the vagaries and indignities of slavery. The city will not welcome them again until the twentieth century. And the temple will remain only a vacant, dim memory.

The Doctrine and Covenants and the Joseph Smith Translation add significant pieces to this brief yet broad sweep of the Savior’s vision of the city’s future. For example, he hints at the length of time before fearsome events engulf the city—people now residing in Jerusalem will live to see its fall: “this people shall be destroyed and scattered among all nations”; further, “this generation of Jews shall not pass away until every desolation which I have told you concerning them shall come to pass” (D&C 45:19, 21). In another vein, the overwhelming wave of “desolation shall come upon this generation as a thief in the night,” allowing little time for preparation and crippling the powers of resistance (D&C 45:19). Along the way, “in those days, shall be great tribulation on the Jews, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; such as was not before sent upon Israel, of God, since the beginning of their kingdom until this time; no, nor ever shall be sent

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19. Also Isa. 39:6; Jer. 7:32; 9:25; 19:6; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47, 52; Amos 4:2; 8:11; *TDNT*, 2:671, 946, 950–51.

20. BAGD, 475; *TDNT*, 4:269, as the examples show.

21. Josephus, *B.J.* 7.1.1 (§§1–4); also 6.9.4 (§434); *TDNT*, 4:338; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1259.

22. John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 329–30.

again upon Israel” (JST Matt. 24:18; also JST Mark 13:20). The Savior’s prophetic words that “there shall not be left one stone upon another” will be literally and frightfully fulfilled (21:6).

## SIGNS OF THE END-TIME (21:7–11)

(Compare Matt. 24:3–8; Mark 13:3–8)

### King James Translation

7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? 8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. 9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. 10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

### New Rendition

7 And they asked him, saying, “Teacher, when therefore will these things be, and what will the sign be that these things are about to come to pass?” 8 And he said, “See that you are not led astray, for many will come in my name saying, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time draws near.’ Do not go after them. 9 But when you hear about wars and insurrections, do not be disturbed. For these things must happen first, but the end is not at once.” 10 Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. 11 And there will be great earthquakes and famines and plagues in various places. And there will be dreadful sights and great signs from heaven.”

### Notes

**21:7 *they asked him:*** At this point the Joseph Smith–Matthew text describes the switch of place from the temple area to the Mount of Olives. Thus, this question belongs to the gathering “upon the Mount of Olives” which consists of “the disciples [who] came unto him privately” (JS–M 1:4). According to Mark 13:3, only four disciples, “Peter and James and John and Andrew,” the first-called pairs of brothers, are present at Jesus’ sermon on the Mount of Olives. More generally, Matthew 24:3 mentions “disciples” and, in a change to Mark 13, JST Mark 13:7 notes the presence of “disciples,” implying more than the four men. Notably, the Joseph Smith

Translation changes “they asked” to “the disciples asked,” clarifying who is interacting with the Savior (JST 21:7).

**Master:** This Greek title, *didaskalos*, is usually addressed to Jesus by those who are not followers (see 7:40; 8:49; 9:38; 10:25; etc.), perhaps underscoring Luke’s sense that Jesus delivers the sermon on the Mount of Olives to a large audience. The term is roughly equivalent to the title *Rabbi* and, importantly, is applied once to John (see the Notes on 3:12; 7:40; 10:25; 11:45; and 12:13).<sup>23</sup>

**when shall these things be?:** This question percolates in everyone’s mind who believes that Jesus will return again and that special events will accompany his coming (see Acts 1:6; 2 Thes. 2:1–5; D&C 45:16).

**what sign:** From Jesus the disciples know enough about the future to ask about events that will signify the looming destruction of the city (see 13:33–35; 19:41–44). In fact, in the Joseph Smith Translation, the disciples indicate their awareness of Jesus’ controlling mastery over events at the end-time when they ask, “what sign *wilt thou show*, when these things shall come to pass?” (JST 21:7; emphasis added). The term translated “sign” (Greek *sēmeion*) here points to an apocalyptic expectation or portent, not to a proof,<sup>24</sup> implying that the disciples wish to learn about Jesus’ coming at the end-time as well, an event that, in his preaching, he ties to the fall of Jerusalem (see 13:35; also D&C 45:19–24) and about which they have already quizzed him (see D&C 45:16).

**21:8 Take heed that ye be not deceived:** Jesus’ warning about deception frames one of the major themes in this discourse although, perhaps oddly, it does not appear in the version preserved in Doctrine and Covenants 45. We come back to his earlier observation about those who follow him without thinking: “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (16:8).

**many shall come in my name:** The plain sense of Jesus’ words points to those who claim to represent him but do not, to those who claim his authority but do not possess it. In fact, they seemingly tout themselves as the “coming one” but are really counterfeits (see the Notes on 3:16; 19:38; 20:16; the Analysis on 19:28–40; 22:39–46).<sup>25</sup> Uttering “my name” raises a

23. TDNT, 2:152–57; Marshall, *Luke*, 310.

24. TDNT, 7:232; Green, *Luke*, 734.

25. Simon J. Gathercole, *The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 66–67.

host of connections to Jehovah in the Old Testament, particularly in light of the divine name that follows (see 21:12).<sup>26</sup>

***I am:*** In the Greek text, this expression stands by itself, plainly repeating the name of Jehovah, “I am that I am” (Ex. 3:14).<sup>27</sup> Mark’s account is the same as Luke’s, whereas Matthew reports Jesus’ words, literally translated, as “I am the Christ” (Matt. 24:5; Mark 13:6; also JS–M 1:6; JST Matt. 24:6; JST Mark 13:10). This may be the inspiration for the King James translators when they add the title “Christ” in italics to Luke’s quotation.

***the time draweth near:*** Jesus states clearly that, despite the false claims of some, the end will not be soon—it is in this sense that we read time-connected expressions such as “must first come to pass” and “the end is not by and by” (21:9); “before all these” (21:12); “when ye shall see” (21:20); “until the times of the Gentiles” (21:24); “then shall they see” (21:27); “when these things begin” (21:28); “when ye see these things” (21:31). The term for “time” (Greek *kairos*), meaning a critical moment,<sup>28</sup> is intended in Luke’s report to create a climate of anxiety on the lips of false messiahs (see 21:24 for *kairos*; the Notes on 8:13, 12:56; 19:44). Importantly, the Joseph Smith Translation moves this expression to the front of the verse so that it reads: “And he said, The time draweth near, and therefore take heed that ye be not deceived” (JST 21:8). Thus, in this modification, the declaration derives from Jesus and not from deceptive pretenders.

**21:9 *when ye shall hear:*** The post-resurrection events that Jesus next features will come during the lifetimes of the Twelve except James who is executed soon after the church begins to accept gentile members (see Acts 12:1–2) and, of course, Judas Iscariot (see Acts 1:16–20).

***wars and commotions:*** Wars are a standard theme in apocalyptic writings, draping Jesus’ words with an apocalyptic cloak (see Dan. 11:44; Rev. 6:8; 11:13; 4 Ezra 13:31). The term translated “commotions” (Greek *akatasiasia*) has to do with anarchy or unruliness, perhaps pointing to civil war. In succeeding decades, as an example, Rome will undergo a series of civil conflicts as one emperor follows another in quick succession.<sup>29</sup>

***be not terrified:*** At the base of Jesus’ plea lies the sense that God is in charge and that he will bring events to his planned outcome, a typical motif

26. TDNT, 5:253, 271–74.

27. TDNT, 2:345–49.

28. TDNT, 3:455–56, 458–61.

29. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 48; BAGD 29; TDNT, 3:446; 7:571; Thomas W. Africa, *The Immense Majesty: A History of Rome and the Roman Empire* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1974), 232–35.

in apocalyptic documents: “these things *must* [Greek *dei*] first come to pass” (emphasis added).<sup>30</sup>

***the end is not by and by:*** Literally, the expression means “the end is not immediate.” The Greek term for “end” (*telos*) can be understood either as the temporal conclusion of events or as the goal or planned result of God’s work.<sup>31</sup> The Joseph Smith Translation changes this expression to a more direct statement, “this is not the end” (JST 21:9).

**21:10 *Nation shall rise against nation:*** Jesus spells out what he means by “wars” in the previous verse. The looming conflict that will devastate people in Palestine will be the Jewish war against Rome that will drag on for four years (AD 66–70), ending with the later collapse of rebel forces at Machaerus and Masada. A second Jewish rebellion against Rome, the so-called Bar Kokhba War, will flare in AD 131, lasting three years.<sup>32</sup>

**21:11 *earthquakes . . . and famines:*** Jesus divides the looming afflictions, beginning with those that will occur on earth and ending with the heavenly. In other passages, such events are designed to capture the attention of the lax and unbelievers and to lead them to repentance, often with no effect (see Rev. 9:20–21; 1 Ne. 18:20; 19:11; D&C 43:25; 45:33).<sup>33</sup>

***pestilences:*** This noun (Greek *loimos*) is unique to Luke’s account in the New Testament, although it appears as an adjective in Acts 24:5. Notably, Matthew 24:7 also mentions pestilences, but the manuscript reading is very questionable. The meaning of the term has to do with diseases and plagues and is repeated in Doctrine and Covenants 43:25 in the context of warnings during the last days, a different setting from this passage.<sup>34</sup> In a similar scenario of the last days, Doctrine and Covenants 45:31 speaks of both “an overflowing scourge” and “a desolating sickness,” expressions that bear a like meaning and are paired with “many desolations” in Doctrine and Covenants 45:33. Luke will later record both a famine and an earthquake that occur within a few years of Jesus’ prophecy (see Acts 11:28; 16:26).

***fearful sights and great signs:*** Now come the heavenly dramas (see the Note on 21:25). It is uncertain what Jesus has in mind, but Josephus records the unusual appearances of a star, a comet, and an unidentified light that precede the burning of the temple in August AD 70.<sup>35</sup>

30. Philipp Vielhauer, “Apocalyptic,” in *NTA*, 2:590–92; BAGD, 171.

31. BAGD, 818–19; *TDNT*, 8:54–56.

32. Schürer, *History*, 1:542–52.

33. Draper, Brown, and Rhodes, *Pearl of Great Price*, 156–57.

34. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 1060; BAGD, 480.

35. Josephus, *B.J.* 6.5.3 (§§288–90).

## Analysis

These verses produce a zesty whiff from the cooking pot of the substantial delay between this moment and events associated with the Savior's return. For, in Jesus' words as recorded by Luke, enough time will pass that a twin deception will be mixed into the stew: some, because of the delay, will come with a false double message, "I am Christ; and the time [of the end] draweth near" (21:8). For many commentators, the language of delay is not original with Jesus but arises from the early church or, partially, from Jewish apocalyptic expectation.<sup>36</sup> Why? Because, in their view, Jesus expects to be back soon: "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled" (21:32). But the Joseph Smith Translation clarifies that Jesus himself, not his followers, sets out the dimensions of the long interval.

In this section, the JST takes out one of the parts of the false double message, which is preserved only in Luke's report, and moves it to the beginning of the verse so that JST 21:8 reads: "And he said, *The time draweth near*, and therefore take heed that ye be not deceived" (emphasis added). Thus, for the first time, and in answer to the Apostles' question "when shall these things be?" (21:7), Jesus' saying churns an element of time into the mix that arises within Jesus' words, not those of deceivers. That said, the declaration "the time draweth near" does not mean that the time is at the door. Why not? Because the JST interprets this expression in the next verse by subtle changes at its conclusion: "these things must first come to pass; but this is not the end" (JST 21:9) instead of "these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by" or, more accurately, "the end is not immediate" (21:9; see the Note on 21:9). The JST reading carries a clearer, firmer sense that the events Jesus predicts do not herald the end-time. Instead, the end-time stands in the far distance, on a slow boil. As we shall see, other JST changes in following verses, both in Luke and in the other Gospels, garnish this conclusion.

We are left to speculate why Luke does not locate the sermon on the Mount of Olives as do the other two evangelists and modern scripture (see Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:3; D&C 45:48). The guesses are many, ranging from Jesus' desire to make his discourse a public affair, topped with a bitter conflict with temple authorities,<sup>37</sup> to Luke's interest in connecting the sermon to the temple, a sermon that deals in part with the temple's fate.<sup>38</sup> Surely he

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36. Beare, *Earliest Records of Jesus*, 216–17; Caird, *Luke*, 227–29.

37. Marshall, *Luke*, 760; Green, *Luke*, 734.

38. Evans, *Luke*, 306; Johnson, *Luke*, 320, 325; Stein, *Luke*, 510; Tannehill, *Luke*, 301.

knows the setting of this sermon, a mostly private affair with the Twelve on the Mount of Olives, but for his own purposes he positions it in the temple in a public setting.

We also see that the tradition associated with this sermon pictures Jesus as sitting when speaking to the Apostles (see Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:3). But this scene is wrong. Instead, he stands. This item is an example of how memories grow dim or details can be lost as stories are passed along from one person to another. In the Risen Savior’s recollection, a first person reminiscence directly from him, he declares, as he is about to rehearse his whole sermon, “I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples *as I stood before them* in the flesh, and spake unto them” (D&C 45:16; emphasis added).

## THE DISCIPLES’ FATE (21:12–19)

(Compare Matt. 24:9–14; Mark 13:9–13)

### King James Translation

12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake. 13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: 15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. 18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish. 19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

### New Rendition

12 “But before all these things they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you into the synagogues and prisons, being led before kings and leaders on account of my name. 13 It will result in a testimony for you. 14 Therefore, put it in your hearts, not meditating beforehand what to speak in your defense. 15 For I will give you eloquence and wisdom which all those opposing you will not be able to resist or contradict. 16 But you will be betrayed also by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. 17 And you will be hated by all on account of my name. 18 And not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your souls.”



## Notes

**21:12 *before all these*:** Again, Jesus raises the matter of the passage of time, framing events that will impact the Twelve before the temple and the city fall. The Joseph Smith Translation adds three words: “But before all these *things shall come*,” sharpening the sense of when the disciples will begin to experience persecution (JST 21:11; emphasis added).

***lay their hands on you*:** The Greek verb *epiballō* bears a number of meanings, depending on the context. Here it has to do with “hostile seizure” (see 20:19; Acts 4:3; 5:18; 12:1; 21:27).<sup>39</sup> Notably, the version of the sermon in Doctrine and Covenants 45 omits any reference to the rough handling of the disciples. But the Savior promises to Joseph Smith that, when he takes up his translating work on the Bible, the Lord will reveal more as “the New Testament [is] translated” (D&C 45:60). Such a change becomes visible in Mark 13:11 which reads in broad terms: “when they shall lead you, and deliver you up.” The JST focuses Jesus’ prophetic warning to: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (JST Mark 13:11; see John 16:2).

***synagogues . . . prisons . . . kings and rulers*:** These words mark out specific circumstances that the Apostles will face. Omitted is reference to scourging or whipping in synagogues which, incidentally, is not as severe as scourging by Romans (see Matt. 10:17; 23:34; JST Matt. 6:25).<sup>40</sup>

***for my name’s sake*:** At first glance, the phrase simply ties to afflictions suffered because of loyalty to Jesus.<sup>41</sup> But more is at play here. The mention of “name” lifts up links to the name of God. Specifically, a person’s loyalty to God’s name in the Old Testament rests on covenant agreements that are made and renewed at the temple and in worship settings during prayer and other sacred activities (see Gen. 4:26; 12:8; 1 Kgs. 18:36–37; Mal. 1:11; Moses 6:3–4).<sup>42</sup> In addition, Jesus’ name comes from heaven and thus bears special meaning to those who tie themselves to him and to his cause (see 1:31; Matt. 1:21). The expression in 21:17 means “because of my name.” The appeal to the power in Jesus’ name in 9:49 is very different.<sup>43</sup>

**21:13 *And it*:** The Joseph Smith Translation moves this short verse from this position to a place after 21:15, a position that makes it verse 14 in the JST and confers on it a dissimilar meaning (see the Note on 21:15; JST 21:14).

39. *TDNT*, 1:528–29.

40. *TDNT*, 4:516–17, 519.

41. Marshall, *Luke*, 767.

42. *TDOT*, 2:111–13, 253–79; 15:140, 160; *TDNT*, 5:255, 259–60, 273, 276.

43. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:820–21.

***it shall turn to you:*** The main sense of the Greek verb *apobainō* is “to alight or disembark” (see 5:2; John 21:9). But when applied to events, it means “to result” in something (see Philip. 1:19).<sup>44</sup> Hence, Jesus’ words apply to the result of the disciples being hauled before religious and civil authorities—they receive opportunity to bear testimony of their Lord. The view that such a testimony is intended to stand against authorities in the last days is possible,<sup>45</sup> but does not harmonize with Jesus’ promise to “give [the disciples] a mouth” in whatever circumstance they find themselves (21:15).

***for a testimony:*** Three meanings are possible for this phrase: (1) The disciples are to bear testimony after their arrest;<sup>46</sup> (2) the testimony of the disciples will stand as an eternal witness against the authorities who abuse them, taking effect in the final judgment;<sup>47</sup> (3) the experience leads to the strengthening of the disciples’ testimony. In Luke’s ordering, the disciples’ “testimony” (Greek *martyrion*) will be borne during the moments of their arrest, the first and likely second meanings.<sup>48</sup> In the JST ordering, the disciples’ “testimony” will result from or become firmer by the inspiration that comes to them when they need it: “I will give you a mouth and wisdom” (21:15; JST 21:13).

**21:14 *Settle it therefore in your hearts:*** Jesus asks the Twelve to make a conscious decision to trust his promise of timely inspiration, a decision that allows them to face challenges with unshaken confidence (see JST 14:28; the Note on 14:27).

***to meditate:*** The main thrust of the verb (Greek *promēletaō*) has to do with practicing or preparing a speech or presentation beforehand, an action that Jesus does not want his disciples engaging in (see 12:11; Isa. 51:16; Hel. 5:18).<sup>49</sup>

***answer:*** The Greek verb *apologeomai* bears the strong sense “to defend oneself,” not merely to respond to an accusation.<sup>50</sup>

**21:15 *I will give you a mouth:*** The Savior’s remarkable promises now roll out to those who need to defend themselves for his “name’s sake” (21:12). Such persons, in that moment, literally become Jesus’ mouthpiece, speaking his words (see 4:22; Isa. 6:6–8; 51:16; 2 Ne. 8:16; Hel. 5:18; D&C 84:85;

44. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 192–93; BAGD, 88.

45. Marshall, *Luke*, 768.

46. Morris, *Luke*, 324.

47. Marshall, *Luke*, 767–68.

48. *TDNT*, 4:503–4; Marshall, *Luke*, 767–68.

49. BAGD, 715.

50. BAGD, 95.

100:5–6; 124:97; the Note on 12:12). Almost instinctively, we think of God’s mouth infusing Adam with the breath of life (see Gen. 2:7; Moses 3:7).<sup>51</sup>

**wisdom:** This term (Greek *sophia*), that ties to the creation (see the Note above), carries a clear connection to God’s gifts and powers that Jesus dispenses (see Job 28:12, 23; Ps. 119:72; Prov. 2:6; 8:22–30; Ben Sirach 1:1–10; Mosiah 8:20; the Notes on 7:35 and 11:49).<sup>52</sup>

**to gainsay nor resist:** Some manuscripts reverse these two verbs with no effect on the meaning. The Greek verb rendered “to gainsay” (*anteipon*) means “to contradict” or “to speak against” (see Acts 4:14).<sup>53</sup> After this expression, the Joseph Smith Translation inserts 21:13 (see JST 21:14), altering the placing of the key expression “for a testimony.” In its new place, the “testimony” no longer ties to the act of arresting a member of the Twelve, and therefore standing eternally against the authorizing agents (see 21:12), but to the act of the Apostle defending himself with a “mouth” filled by the Savior with “wisdom” so profound that his “adversaries” cannot contradict “nor resist” him (see D&C 93:52; the Note on 21:13).

**21:16 ye shall be betrayed:** The Greek verb *paradidōmi* in one of its active, positive senses means to pass something on to someone else, to transmit (see 1:2; 10:22; Acts 6:14; etc.). In one of its negative colorations, it has to do with betrayal, often Jesus’ betrayal (see 9:44; 18:32; 22:4, 6; etc.).<sup>54</sup> Hence, the disciples will pass through what Jesus passes through: betrayal (see the Note below and on 18:8; D&C 6:29–30).

**parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends:** Resistance to believers will come from inside families and, by extension, from within the church. Thus, persecution will completely surround disciples (see 21:17), from within their own numbers and from without (see 12:11; 21:12; 1 Ne. 11:34–35). Jesus’ words indicate that family ties will still be important in the lives of his Apostles. But some family members will resent their dedication to the Savior’s ongoing work (see the Notes on 12:53; 18:20).<sup>55</sup>

**cause to be put to death:** Although this is the only occurrence of this verb in Luke’s writings (Greek *thanatoō*),<sup>56</sup> in other contexts it applies to Jesus’ execution, strengthening the connection between Jesus’ fate and that of his closest followers (see Matt. 26:59; 27:1; Mark 14:55; the Note above).

51. TDNT, 7:693, 696, 699.

52. TDNT, 7:489–92, 515, 696.

53. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 150; BAGD, 72.

54. BAGD, 619–21; TDNT, 2:169–72.

55. Balla, *Child-Parent Relationship*, 133–34, 138–42.

56. BAGD, 352; TDNT, 3:21.

**21:17 *ye shall be hated of all men:*** The exception to this broad declaration of hate, of course, consists of those who respond positively to the disciples' message following Jesus' death. But the resistance is so massive that, as Nephi sees in vision, "the multitudes of the earth . . . were gathered together to fight against the apostles of the Lamb" (1 Ne. 11:34; also Matt. 24:9; Mark 13:13; John 17:14) and the Joseph Smith Translation changes and strengthens this expression to "ye shall be hated of all *the world*" (JST 21:16; emphasis added). The resistance during the Apostles' lifetime comes chiefly in the persons of Jews living away from Palestine, residing in the diaspora, although Gentiles join them, particularly against the Apostle Paul, as Luke records later (see Acts 7:57–60; 8:3; 9:1–2; 14:5, 19; 16:19–24; 17:5–13; 18:12; 21:27–30; 24:5–6; 1 Thes. 2:15–16; the Analysis on 2:21–24). Doubtless, the other Apostles also suffer such indignities. The first organized Roman persecution arises under Nero in AD 64, largely limited to Rome.<sup>57</sup>

**21:18 *not an hair:*** This promise is unique to Luke's report who, if he is a physician, will possess an interest in such a detail. There is more. The promise also illustrates the Savior's micromanaging of these particular matters. He will not let events stray from his purposes.

**21:19 *In your patience:*** This is Luke's Greek rendition of Jesus' Aramaic words about endurance, a theme found in the other accounts of this sermon (see Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13—"he that shall endure unto the end"). The Greek term translated "patience" (*hypomonē*) also bears the meaning of perseverance.<sup>58</sup> In all cases, Jesus' words underscore the promise that God is in charge and will see events to their proper end.

## Analysis

The Savior now stirs together a spicy stew of international flavors that the Apostles will partake of, whether they want to or not. This future will be theirs. To be sure, Jesus underscores beforehand the broad reaches of his prophecy—"Nation shall rise against nation" and "great earthquakes shall be in divers places" and "great signs shall there be from heaven" (21:10–11). But such events may or may not impact the Apostles and their ministry. What will curtail their efforts are those who "shall lay their hands on [them], and persecute [them]" and those who cause them "to be put to death." These occurrences will take place in "prisons," not in a prison in Jerusalem, and before "kings and rulers," not before the Roman prefect

57. Friend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 151–77; Africa, *Immense Majesty*, 346–57.

58. BAGD, 854.

who has charge of Judea (21:12, 16). Other than James son of Zebedee, who is executed in Jerusalem (see Acts 12:1–2), some disciples will be forced out of the small kitchen that is capital city and will travel far and wide, driven away by their enemies (see Acts 8:1, 14).<sup>59</sup>

It is important to observe that, by recording Jesus' prophecy about the Apostles' future, Luke is already looking back on some events that fulfill this part of Jesus' predictions, as Luke's record in the book of Acts will verify. Throughout his life as a converted disciple, Luke witnesses or knows of persecutions that envelop other believers in different regions of the Roman Empire. Writing in the second half of the first century, he certainly knows of the execution of James by King Agrippa (see 21:16—"some of you shall they cause to be put to death"; also Acts 12:2). Peter and Paul are thought to have been executed during Nero's reign (AD 54–68), and we have an account of their deaths through Clement, bishop of Rome, who writes an epistle to the church members in Corinth about AD 96 and includes rather unspecific details about the two Apostles and their deaths.<sup>60</sup> These unhappy events may simply lie beyond the scope of Luke's book of Acts. But it is also possible that Luke writes his two-volume work—his Gospel and his book of Acts—before Peter and Paul meet their end (see the Analysis on 21:20–24; Introduction V.A).<sup>61</sup>

Within these verses, the Joseph Smith Translation deals once again with the delay of Jesus' return, attributing the added words to Jesus himself. In Luke's version of 21:12 we read, "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you." The JST adds three words: "But before all these *things shall come*, they shall lay . . ." (JST 21:11; emphasis added). The sense remains the same from one version to the other, but the inserted words underline more sharply both the sequence of events and the fact that, before the looming turmoil that lies in their future, the disciples will experience severe challenges.

In any analysis, the Savior's promise of inspiration on the spot is extraordinary (see 21:14–15). Nothing in ancient literature is its equal. Naturally, one of the main reasons for such inspiration grows out of his unwearied desire to try to touch the souls of everyone through his disciples, including hostile authorities and their associates. Besides that, another need is to let the disciples' words stand as a sleepless witness against perpetrators in the final

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59. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.9.1–4; 2.23.1–24; 2.25.3–8; 3.5.2–3; 3.17.1–18.4.

60. *First Clement* 5; Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 3 vols. (rpt.; Utrecht: Spectrum Publishers, 1966), 1:42–45.

61. Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles*, 10–14.

judgment, as it is expressed in other scripture: “that the judgments which [God] shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall . . . cry mightily against them at the last day” (Alma 14:11).

## THE FALL OF JERUSALEM (21:20–24)

(Compare Matt. 24:15–22; Mark 13:14–20)

### King James Translation

20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

### New Rendition

20 “But when you see Jerusalem encircled by armies, then know that her desolation has drawn near. 21 Then let those in Judea flee into the mountains, and let those in her midst depart, and let those in the rural regions not enter into her, 22 because these are days of vengeance, that all things that are written may be fulfilled. 23 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those nursing in those days: for there will be a great calamity upon the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword and they will be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

### Notes

**21:20 *Jerusalem compassed with armies:*** Events occur as Jesus foretells. The Romans surround the city with a siege wall which they man at every key point with squads of soldiers.<sup>62</sup> Some hold that this prediction comes from Luke and not from Jesus. But on the view that Jesus does foresee future events in detail, it is not necessary to posit that this statement originates with Luke because, earlier, Jesus predicts a similar event (see the Notes on 19:43–44;

62. Josephus, *B.J.* 5.6.2–3, 5.9.2, 5.11.4, 5.12.1–2 (§§258–74, 356–61, 466–72, 491–511); Schürer, *History*, 1:503–4; Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, 190–91, map 261.

also 23:28). Even if Luke writes his Gospel after the siege of Jerusalem (see the Analysis below), this view does not therefore mean that Jesus does not utter these words about armies surrounding the city. The plural term *armies* invites other questions. Do Jesus' words anticipate that the force arrayed against the city will consist of an army of mixed origins, which it will?<sup>63</sup> Or of multiple legions, four, which it does?<sup>64</sup> Or does the term perhaps refer to other destructions of the city? Does it foretell, for instance, the conquests by the Crusaders (July 15, 1099) and by Saladin (October 2, 1187)? The conquest of the city by the Crusaders will be bloody, that by Saladin will not.

**desolation:** This term (Greek *erēmōsis*),<sup>65</sup> without qualifiers, also appears in Doctrine and Covenants 29:8; 45:19, 21; and 112:24. The other New Testament accounts record “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14). The Joseph Smith Translation interprets this longer expression as “the destruction of Jerusalem” which fits Luke’s spare terminology (JST Matt. 24:12; JST Mark 13:14; also 2 Ne. 25:14; D&C 5:20). The point is that a solid scriptural basis exists for the vivid term “desolation” standing by itself, as Doctrine and Covenants 29:8 and other passages show. The expression “the desolation of abomination” also applies to “the last days” (D&C 84:117).

**21:21 let them which are in Judæa flee:** When the Jewish revolt flares (AD 66–70), the first Roman blows fall on Galilee and only later on Judea and Jerusalem. Jesus’ words seem to anticipate not only that a huge number of people, seeking safety, will gather into the capital city, and thus become victims of the city’s destruction, but also that, before this date, his Jewish followers will be concentrated largely in Judea and Jerusalem. These, he warns, are to flee. In fact, a large number of Christians escape to Pella, a gentile town in the hills east of the northern Jordan Valley.<sup>66</sup> Notably, in modern scripture the reverse is commanded, with a promise, in D&C 133:13, 35.

**in the midst:** This expression seems to refer to Jerusalem as the holy center, and perhaps to the temple (see 19:41–44; 21:20).<sup>67</sup> In their turn, several

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63. Josephus, *B.J.* 3.4.2 (§§64–69).

64. Josephus, *B.J.* 5.1.6 (§§41–42); Schürer, *History*, 1:501–2.

65. BAGD, 309; *TDNT*, 2:660.

66. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3; Schürer, *History*, 2:145–48; Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, map 256.

67. Plummer, *Luke*, 481; Marshall, *Luke*, 772; Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, ed. Don E. Norton, vol. 12 of *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992), 14–22.

Jewish factions take control of the city and temple during AD 67–69 and, between deadly squabbles, hold them until the Romans drive them out.<sup>68</sup>

**let not them . . . enter:** The customary response of people to the threat of an invading army is to flee into a city for safety. Jesus warns that this action will not offer protection.

**21:22 the days:** This expression and the words “the day,” found elsewhere, often point to an era of difficulties (see 5:35; 17:26, 28, 30; 21:6; 23:29; D&C 52:11; 61:15; the Note on 17:22).<sup>69</sup>

**the days of vengeance . . . written . . . fulfilled:** The tenor of Jesus’ remarks points to the fulfillment of written prophecies about Jerusalem, coloring them in horrific hues because he terms that age “the days of vengeance.” Whose vengeance is it? On one level, it is the Lord’s (see 1 Kgs. 9:6–9; Jer. 7:32–34; 19:6–9; Amos 4:2), an act that results from a legal process against wickedness in the city, one of the meanings of the Greek term *ekdikēsis*.<sup>70</sup> From the divine perspective, the atrocities by one person against another, say, Jew against Jew in the city, accomplishes God’s vengeance.<sup>71</sup> In light of the horrors inside the city, we might compare Jesus’ remarks about God’s punishment in JST Mark 13:20 to the effect that “great tribulation [will be] on the Jews, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; such as was not before *sent upon Israel, of God, . . . no, nor ever shall be sent again upon Israel*” (emphasis added). It is to be the very worst of times.

**all things which are written:** Is the only purpose of the destruction to fulfill “all things which are written?” Hardly. Such a dire event results from wickedness (see 13:34; D&C 45:26–33). It is evident that prophecy will be fulfilled, but specifically prophecy that appears in written form (see Ezek. 7:5–15; 38:16–17; Micah 3:1–4, 12; Zeph. 1:12–13). Jesus, of course, knows the prophecies about Jerusalem’s duress given to the Nephites and others, which may also be in his mind when he speaks of “all things which are written” (see 2 Ne. 10:3–6; 25:14; also 1 Ne. 11:36; 19:13–14).

**21:23 them . . . with child, and . . . give suck:** Here Jesus shows that he sees the atrocities committed against women as the unquestionable measure of the horrors of suffering (see also Morm. 4:14, 21; Moro. 9:8–9, 16),<sup>72</sup>

68. Schürer, *History*, 1:496–508.

69. Also Isa. 39:6; Jer. 7:32; 9:25; 19:6; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47, 52; Amos 4:2; 8:11; *TDNT*, 2:671, 946, 950–51.

70. *TDNT*, 2:443, 445–46, 946.

71. Josephus, *B.J.* 4.3.3–5, 4.5.4, 4.6.1, 4.9.10–12 (§§135–46, 334–44, 355–65, 556–65, 573–84); 5.13.1 (§§527–33); Schürer, *History*, 1:496–98, 500.

72. Josephus, *B.J.* 5.10.3 (§§430, 433); 6.3.4 (§§201–12).



much as he sees their circumstance as the indicator of genuine need (see the Notes on 20:47; 23:27–28; the Analysis on 7:11–17; 20:45–47).

**wrath:** A frightful and threatening term (Greek *orgē*), it appears first in the words of the Baptist, “who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (3:7). This wrath, coming from God, is not random or driven by uncontrolled emotion but arises because of wickedness (see Rom. 1:18; 13:4; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; Rev. 6:16–17; D&C 43:23–26; etc.).<sup>73</sup>

**21:24 they shall fall . . . and shall be led away captive:** All of 21:24 is unique to Luke’s report of the sermon, a graphic summary of the fate of Jerusalem’s citizens. This observation forms one of the pieces that scholars point to as evidence that Luke or his source reshapes this information because, as they assume, he writes his Gospel after the fall of the city and enjoys the advantage of hindsight.<sup>74</sup> Significantly, the only first-hand account of this sermon affirms Jesus’ words for this scene. Quoting him, the report reads: “desolation shall come upon this generation as a thief in the night, and this people shall be destroyed and scattered among all nations” (D&C 45:19; also 45:24). What is more, in an insight into the leaders of Jerusalem in that era, Jesus says that the disciples’ “enemies say that this house [the temple] shall never fall” (D&C 45:18), a point of view echoed in the misrepresenting charge that Jesus claims he will rebuild the temple within three days after its destruction (see Matt. 26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58; 15:29). The modern report adds one important, hope-filled ray of light: “a remnant [of the city’s citizens shall] be scattered among all nations; but they shall be gathered again” (D&C 45:24–25; also 2 Ne. 6:10–11; 25:15–17).

**Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles:** This event may take place in two stages. The first, of course, occurs at the conclusion of the first Jewish war with the Romans in control of the city (AD 66–70). The second may come at the end of the second Jewish revolt (AD 131–35) which sees Jerusalem turned into a Roman city and renamed Aelia Capitolina—Jews are not allowed inside the city and surrounding territory.<sup>75</sup> During the following centuries, people other than Jews hold power in Jerusalem, a situation that changes only with the six-day war in 1967. The question is whether this is the era when “the times of the Gentiles” will “be fulfilled.” Doctrine and Covenants 124:36 pictures Jerusalem as a place “for refuge” in the latter days.

73. *TDNT*, 5:422–29.

74. Marshall, *Luke*, 770–71; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1342–43.

75. Schürer, *History*, 1:552–57; Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, 68.

*times of the Gentiles:* Earlier we see John’s and Jesus’ interest in Gentiles: biological ties to Abraham do not ensure God’s protection and acceptance (see 3:7–8); Jesus’ attempt to preach in gentile territory leads to his healing of the Gergesene demoniac (see 8:26–39; the Note on 8:26); the mission of the Seventy disciples succeeds (see 10:1–20; the Notes on 10:7–8); Gentiles will join Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God (see 13:28–30); and God’s stewards of his vineyard will be destroyed and replaced (see 20:16). In the New Testament, the doctrine is best framed by Paul: “through [the Jews’] fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles”; in effect, “blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:11, 25). In a word, most Jews of Jesus’ era reject his message, thus propelling the Apostles toward the Gentiles. After the Gentiles receive the gospel, it will go to the Jews (see 1 Ne. 10:14; also D&C 19:27; 20:9; 21:12; 45:25, 30).<sup>76</sup> Importantly, this situation will be true of “the latter day” (3 Ne. 16:7; see 3 Ne. 16:4–15). This distant era is to exhibit a fearfully negative aspect, “in that day . . . the whole earth shall be in commotion,” with a promising positive outcome, “a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel” (D&C 45:26, 28; see D&C 88:91; the Note on 1:79; the Analysis below). In another vein, the Joseph Smith Translation adds an entire verse at the end of 21:24 that forms a transition from Jesus’ concern with the fall of Jerusalem to the signs that mark the approach of the end-time: “Now these things [Jesus] spake unto them, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. And then his disciples asked him, saying, Master, tell us concerning thy coming” (JST 21:24). Clearly, it is the disciples’ query that leads to the next topic.

## Analysis

Two verses in particular, 21:20 and 21:24, both from the Savior’s lips, bring two issues to a boil. The passages read: “when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies” (21:20); “they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles” (21:24). The questions that these verses pose are: (1) Does Jesus utter these predictions as we have them? and (2) When does Luke compose his Gospel and the book of Acts? These questions press hard for an earnest answer, first, because of the specific details that

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76. Monte S. Nyman, “Gentiles, Fulness of,” in *EM*, 2:541–42.

both match the Roman siege of Jerusalem and uncover the blighted fate of the people in the city and, second, because Jesus' language in these two passages appears in no other ancient source. With these passages we group Jesus' predictions in 13:35, 19:43–44, and 23:28–30 that also exhibit a high level of specificity for Jerusalem's bleak future. Except for an almost exact parallel between 13:35 and Matthew 23:38–39, Luke's reports are thus unique, a feature of his record that we encounter in dozens of other passages (see, for example, the raising of the widow's son at Nain [7:11–16], the parable of the Good Samaritan [10:25–37], the story of Martha and Mary [10:38–42], and the parable of the Prodigal Son [15:11–32]).

Any person's judgment about Jesus' inability to prophesy the future, in detail—any detail—rests squarely on that person's unsupported assumption that no one, including Jesus, can predict what will occur. This point of view has ever been with us and affects not at all whether Jesus is able to foresee the future. To be sure, we mortals struggle to anticipate what will happen to us over time. But that struggle has nothing to do with Jesus' capacity to look into the future. Scripture brims with accounts of prophets and teachers who, under heavenly inspiration, learn what the future will bring. And that is certainly the case with him. Remarkably, when a person chooses to believe such reports, that person can come to enjoy, in modest measure, flashes of inspiration about the future that will serve as a guide: "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate . . . I will give you . . . wisdom" (21:14–15).<sup>77</sup>

In this light, what might we say about the dating of Luke's records? For, if Jesus speaks prophetically, in detail, about Jerusalem's fate, we need not suppose that Luke or his source adds such details after the fact. This observation throws open the question about the date of Luke's literary efforts. Dating the composition of his Gospel and book of Acts in the 80s of the first century, a preferred estimate, rests in large measure on seeing some particulars of his record, especially those within Jesus' predictions about Jerusalem's future, as looking back to specifics from the capture of the city by the Romans in AD 70.<sup>78</sup> But if we see Jesus as the prophetic voice that spells out these predictions, then Luke may well compose his Gospel before the war even breaks out in AD 66, perhaps as early as the late 50s or early 60s, as F. F. Bruce suggests (see the Introduction V.A).<sup>79</sup>

77. *TPJS*, 160; Riddle, "Revelation," 3:1225–28.

78. Marshall, *Luke*, 770–71; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:54; 2:1255, 1343; Johnson, *Luke*, 326.

79. Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles*, 13–14.

In this connection, one further matter deserves attention. The Joseph Smith Translation lets Jesus’ prophetic words stand as they appear in Luke’s record. But more than this, the JST adds words to Jesus’ discourse where it focuses on the fate of the city as recorded in Matthew and Mark. In Matthew we read: “then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time” (Matt. 24:21). Mark’s report is similar: “in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation” (Mark 13:19). The JST version of each of these passages is much fuller, with more detail: “then, in those days, shall be great tribulations on the Jews, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; such as was not before sent upon Israel, of God, since the beginning of their kingdom” (JST Matt. 24:18; JST Mark 13:20). Thus, in the records of Matthew and Mark the JST attributes to Jesus a marked ability to foresee the dark future of the city, just as Luke’s report does.

The expression *the times of the Gentiles* (21:24) invites more exploration, particularly because the Savior makes a series of statements about this future era in the first-person rehearsal of his sermon preserved in the Doctrine and Covenants. This age, he declares, will be filled with news about “wars and rumors of war”; additionally, “men’s hearts shall fail them, and they shall say that Christ delayeth his coming”; moreover, “the love of men shall wax cold”; and that generation “shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land”; furthermore, “there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations”; and, sadly, “they will take up the sword, one against another, and they will kill one another” (D&C 45:26–27, 31, 33; also Isa. 29:6; 2 Ne. 25:12). On the other hand, “when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness”; as a result of the coming of this divine light in this stormy era, “my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved”; moreover, “when they shall see all these things, then shall they know that the hour is nigh [for the Second Coming]” because “they shall see signs and wonders . . . in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath”; as a consequence, “they shall look for me, and, behold, I will come” (D&C 45:28, 32, 38, 40, 44; also D&C 39:16, 21).

As in prior sections, the Joseph Smith Translation adds a piece to the issue about the timing of future events, clarifying that Jesus and the disciples see them occurring afar off. The additional piece comes in a verse that does not appear in Luke’s record as it stands. The JST contributes the following after the text of 21:24: “Now these things he spake unto them, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. And then his disciples asked him,

saying, Master, tell us concerning thy coming?” (JST 21:24). Plainly, as they sit together on the Mount of Olives, the disciples grasp that Jesus is disclosing a series of future scenes and that his Second Coming is detached, in time, from the destruction of Jerusalem.

## SIGNS OF THE COMING SON OF MAN (21:25–28)

(Compare Matt. 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27)

### King James Translation

25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

### New Rendition

25 “And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth anguish of nations in anxiety at the sounds of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and expectation of things coming upon the world, since the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and much glory. 28 And when these things begin to occur, stand up and raise your heads, because your deliverance approaches.”

### Notes

**21:25 *there shall be signs*:** Picking up the thread at the end of the prior verse about “the times of the Gentiles,” the Joseph Smith Translation adds introductory words from Jesus to this verse: “And he answered them, and said, In the generation in which the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, there shall be signs” (JST 21:25). Thus, the signs that Jesus discloses will characterize particularly that distant age. Incidentally, the Greek term for “sign” (*sēmeion*) appears elsewhere in negative dress (see 2:34; 11:16) as well as positive (see 2:11–12; the Notes on 11:16, 29; 21:7).<sup>80</sup>

***the sun, . . . the moon, . . . the stars*:** This celestial set of signs often appears in different but somewhat obscure language: “before the day of

80. BAGD, 755–65; TDNT, 7:231–36, 238–40.

the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood, and the stars fall from heaven” (D&C 45:42; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24–25; also Ezek. 32:7; D&C 29:14). Even though this more descriptive language is missing from Luke’s report, Jesus’ recorded words clearly point to an important day, the day of the Lord (see Isa. 13:9–10; 34:4; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Acts 2:20; 2 Pet. 3:10, 12). This scene is augmented in other scripture that speaks of future events, almost as if the heavenly spheres are alive: “the sun shall hide his face, and shall refuse to give light; and the moon shall be bathed in blood; and the stars shall become exceedingly angry, and shall cast themselves down” (D&C 88:87). What is more, at the time of the Savior’s coming, “so great shall be the glory of his presence that the sun shall hide his face in shame, and the moon shall withhold its light, and the stars shall be hurled from their places” (D&C 133:49). But he adds the caution that “these things . . . shall not pass away until all shall be fulfilled” (D&C 45:23). Even so, when the moment arrives, the celestial world will acknowledge the arrival of its king in dramatic fashion (see D&C 43:18; 49:23).

***upon the earth distress of nations:*** Mirroring the celestial disturbances are terrestrial events that will engulf “nations” or “peoples” (Greek *ethnos*).<sup>81</sup>

***the sea and the waves roaring:*** The latter part of this verse and the first part of 21:26 stand only in Luke’s account. This image of nature out of control appears nowhere else and the Joseph Smith Translation strengthens this scene: “The earth also shall be troubled, and the waters of the great deep” (JST 21:25; also Moses 7:66). Further hints exist in Jesus’ first-person account: “the whole earth shall be in commotion” and “there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations” and “the earth shall tremble, and reel to and fro” and the earth’s inhabitants “shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth . . . in the earth beneath” (D&C 45:26, 33, 48, 40; also 2 Ne. 6:15; 8:6). In related language, scripture pleads for people to repent in the aftermath or midst of alarming natural phenomena (see Rev. 9:20–21; 1 Ne. 19:11; D&C 43:25; 88:87–91). Notably, the JST makes a subtle adjustment that impacts the meaning of Luke’s expression: “there shall be . . . upon the earth distress of nations . . . *like* the sea and the waves roaring” (JST 21:25; emphasis added).

**21:26 *Men’s hearts failing them for fear:*** In the human sphere, the celestial and terrestrial terrors will cause unparalleled fright (see D&C 88:89, 91). Besides fear, in this era “the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound” (D&C 45:27). This circumstance will be reversed among believers:

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81. BAGD, 217.

rejoicing, they will be confident that their “redemption draweth nigh” and “that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand” (21:28, 31; also Joel 3:16).

***those things which are coming on the earth:*** The Greek verb (*eperchomai*) bears the sense “to come upon” with unpleasant consequences.<sup>82</sup> In the first person account, the Risen Savior spells out his meaning in more detail: “they shall behold blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke” (D&C 45:41). Moreover, in this dark moment “the nations of the earth shall mourn” and “calamity shall cover the mocker . . . and they that have watched for iniquity shall be hewn down and cast into the fire” (D&C 45:49–50; also 87:6–8; JST 2 Pet. 3:10, 12).

***the powers of heaven shall be shaken:*** The meaning of this declaration remains unsure. This description appears in all the records of this sermon, but only partially in Doctrine and Covenants 45:48, and exhibits Old Testament ties (see Joel 2:10; Hag. 2:6, 21). The context consistently connects this statement to the “signs” of the sun, moon, and stars as well as the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds (see 21:25, 27; Matt. 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27; JST 2 Pet. 3:10; JS–M 1:33–36; D&C 88:87; 133:49). Hence, the prophecy has much to do with the heavens, occasionally partnered with the earth. But the identity of “the powers” (Greek *dynamis*), which seem to possess individuality, continues unspecified although other New Testament passages make reference to them (see Rom. 8:38; Eph. 1:21; 1 Pet. 3:22; also D&C 24:1; 38:11). It seems plain that events of the end-time will fracture their world (see D&C 21:6).<sup>83</sup>

**21:27 *And then shall they see:*** Before this expression, the Joseph Smith Translation inserts all of verse 28 and adds three words; by doing so, it becomes apparent that Jesus cements the link between “signs” in heaven and earth (see the Notes on 21:25–26), and the event they point to—his Second Coming: “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for *the day of your redemption draweth nigh*” (JST 21:27; emphasis added). In a different vein, the audience for Jesus’ distant arrival, noted by the pronoun “they,” remains unclear in Luke’s account. Matthew 24:30 holds that “all the tribes of the earth” will see his arrival (also JST Matt. 24:37–38; JST Mark 13:41–42). In other scripture, the audience is “the remnant [that] shall be gathered unto this place [Jerusalem]” (D&C 45:43). At some point, ominously, “the arm of the Lord [shall] fall upon the nations” (D&C 45:47; also D&C 1:13–14; 35:14; 45:45).

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82. BAGD, 284; *TDNT*, 2:680–81.

83. BAGD, 207; *TDNT*, 2:285, 307–8.

***the Son of man coming in a cloud with power:*** As in other passages, the “coming one” is the Savior (see 3:16; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7; Acts 13:25; Mal. 3:1; Mosiah 3:9; D&C 29:11; 133:2, 10, 17, 19, 66; the Notes on 3:16; 13:35; 19:38; 20:16; 21:8, 27; the Analysis on 3:7–20; 19:28–40; 19:45–48; 22:39–46).<sup>84</sup> But on this occasion, he comes as he has never come before, descending from heaven. Concretely, he will arrive at several spots near one another, including the Mount of Olives (see Zech. 14:4; D&C 45:48; 133:20), Mount Zion (see D&C 133:18), and Jerusalem itself (see D&C 133:21).

***great glory:*** This time, Jesus, the coming one, will arrive in royal dress, in royal hues, and in his resurrected form (see 24:26; also 9:26; D&C 29:11; 45:16, 44, 56).<sup>85</sup>

**21:28 *And when these things begin:*** The Joseph Smith Translation relocates this entire verse to a position preceding 21:27, forming an introduction to the arrival of the Son of Man (see JST 21:27–28).

***these things:*** The reference seems to be to the “signs” that Jesus enumerates in 21:25–26,<sup>86</sup> a view made more secure by the movement of this verse in the JST.

***lift up your heads:*** The lifting of one’s hands or eyes or voice often points to a special, sometimes sacred occasion, including prayer and giving blessings (see 16:23; 18:13; 3 Ne. 11:5, 8; the Note on 6:20).<sup>87</sup>

***your redemption draweth nigh:*** This teaching, already linked in the Old Testament to the Lord’s voice heard from Jerusalem (see Joel 3:16), is expressed in other scripture a bit differently: “your redemption shall be perfected” by the coming of the Lord (D&C 45:46; also Moses 7:67). The Greek term for “redemption” (*apolytrōsis*), appearing only here in the Gospels but frequently in Paul’s writings (see Rom. 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7, 14; etc.), bears the sense of being delivered.<sup>88</sup> The Joseph Smith Translation adds three words: “*the day of your redemption draweth nigh*” (JST 21:27; emphasis added). Such language indicates that Jesus’ actions will occur in an earthly time frame and not in a timeless setting. In a related vein, modern scripture holds that the newly baptized church members will intelligently begin to look “for the signs of [Jesus’] coming, and shall know [him]” (D&C 39:23). After this final expression in verse 28, the JST inserts

84. TDNT, 2:666–69.

85. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:789; Green, *Luke*, 740.

86. Marshall, *Luke*, 777.

87. TDNT, 1:186.

88. Plummer, *Luke*, 485; TDNT, 4:351–56; Morris, *Luke*, 328.



verse 27: “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory” (JST 21:28).

### Analysis

In these verses, the Savior turns to the signs that will precede his Second Coming and the end-time, illuminating a gap between the fall of Jerusalem and these future events. By borrowing language from the Old Testament that is difficult to grasp in places, Jesus predicts troubling portents in the heavens, on the earth, and among men and women.<sup>89</sup> Frighteningly, no one will escape except those who can “lift up [their] heads” and confidently anticipate that their “redemption draweth nigh” (21:28). Hence, Jesus graciously offers the optimistic view to his followers that he and they will ultimately triumph even when challenges seem most sharp and daunting.<sup>90</sup>

Earlier, Jesus presents himself as Son of Man in both his contemporary, earthly contexts and future, heavenly scenes (see 9:26; 11:30; 12:8, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8).<sup>91</sup> In each of these settings, Jesus offers a hint or an aspect of his work, both here and hereafter. But when he sketches his future arrival as one “in a cloud with power and great glory,” he places a capstone on his ministry, affirming that he comes as lord and king of all (21:27), arriving “with all the holy angels” (D&C 45:44; “all the hosts”—D&C 29:11).

More concretely for his Apostles, Jesus affirms personally to them in his first-person account that, when he comes again, “if ye have slept in peace blessed are you; for as you now behold me and know that I am, even so shall ye come unto me” from their sleep in the grave. More than this, in that day “your redemption shall be perfected,” bringing a glorious climax to their quest for eternal life (D&C 45:46).

In this section of Luke’s record, the Joseph Smith Translation adds clarifying words both to the setting with the Twelve and to the Savior’s sayings that support the idea of a substantial gap in time between the fall of Jerusalem and his Second Coming. At the beginning of 21:25 where we read “there shall be signs,” the JST inserts the following: “And he answered them, and said, In the generation in which the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, there shall be signs” (JST 21:25). Jesus is responding to a request

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89. Green, *Luke*, 740, nn. 44–47 for references; we note that Green’s reference in n. 46 should be to Isa. 5:30, not to Jonah 5:30, which does not exist.

90. Morris, *Luke*, 322; Green, *Luke*, 740–41.

91. Green, *Luke*, 740.

from the Twelve that does not appear in Luke’s report: “Master, tell us concerning thy coming?” (JST 21:24), elucidating that Jesus’ discussion of the “signs” arises from the disciples’ honest query. Those “signs” will appear only “in the generation in which the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled,” that is, in a distant day, and will include “The earth also [being] troubled” along with “the waters of the great deep” (JST 12:24). In a word, Jesus’ Second Coming and the signs that precede it are not imminent. They remain far away.

## PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE (21:29–33)

(Compare Matt. 24:32–36; Mark 13:28–32)

### King James Translation

29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. 33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

### New Rendition

29 And he spoke a parable to them: “Behold the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 When you see they are already putting out leaves, you know of yourselves that the summer is already near. 31 So also you, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly, I say to you that this generation will certainly not pass away until all things occur. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will surely not pass away.”

### Notes

**21:29 a parable:** As with other stories labeled as parables, this one bears one main message or point of comparison (see the Note on 5:36 and the footnote).<sup>92</sup> A version of this parable appears in all the copies of Jesus’ sermon (see Matt. 24:32–33; Mark 13:28–29; JST Matt. 24:41–43; JST Mark 13:45–47; D&C 45:36–39). Importantly, the parable will become meaningful “when the light shall begin to break forth,” likely a reference to the

<sup>92</sup>. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 295–99; Plummer, *Luke*, 125–26; Dodd, *Parables*, 18; *TDOT*, 9:64–67; *TDNT*, 5:744–61.

restoration of the gospel (D&C 45:36). Elsewhere, this short parable is held up as a crucial key for understanding the last days (see D&C 35:15–18).

***the fig tree:*** One of a handful of fruit-bearing plants known to be native to the region (see Deut. 8:8), the fig tree is the first noted tree in scripture (see Gen. 3:7; Moses 4:13) and, in Jesus' hands, becomes one of two trees from which he draws lessons (see 13:6–9, 19). Of the trees that grow in the country, the fig especially, after losing its leaves for the winter, exhibits signs of returning to life in late winter with the rising of its sap and the sprouting of fresh leaves on its lifeless-appearing branches, thus heralding the return of the warmth and harvests of summer. In this way, the fig tree comes to symbolize the return of life to the earth and, even more, the coming of celestial life to the believer. Hence, by drawing attention to the fig tree, Jesus emphasizes the positive outcomes for his followers even though they will pass through daunting times (see 21:25–26).<sup>93</sup>

***and all the trees:*** Only Luke records this expression. Some scholars hold that this addition breaks up the flow of the parable.<sup>94</sup> As noted above, the fig especially points early to the return of life to the earth following the winter, as do some other trees.

**21:30 *when they now shoot forth:*** In the lowlands of the eastern Mediterranean region, the first buds appear as early as February; in higher areas, the fig tree will bud in March.

***ye see and know:*** Even those who are moderately observant, who notice the change of seasons as they manifest themselves in fields and orchards, will see the “signs” (21:25) that point to the approach of the Savior's coming.

***summer is now nigh:*** Springtime is short in ancient Palestine; the summer comes quickly.<sup>95</sup>

**21:31 *these things:*** The reference has to be to the “signs” manifested in the heavens and the earth to which Jesus draws attention (21:25–26; see the Note on 21:28). Some try to equate the signs in Jesus' ministry (see 12:54–56) to these signs of the end-time, claiming that they rest on the same continuum and that the early church creates an artificial distinction between various signs because of a perceived delay in Jesus' coming during the lifetimes of his hearers (see 21:32; also 2 Thes. 2:1–5).<sup>96</sup>

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93. Jeremias, *Parables*, 120.

94. Bultmann, *History*, 123; Jeremias, *Parables*, 29.

95. Frank S. Frick, “Palestine, Climate of,” in *ABD*, 5:119, 125.

96. Jeremias, *Parables*, 119–20; Beare, *Earliest Records of Jesus*, 217.

***the kingdom of God is nigh at hand:*** Evidently, the full manifestation of God’s kingdom will occur in the future, that is, at the time of Jesus’ Second Coming<sup>97</sup> (see 13:28–29; 14:15; 22:16, 18, 30) even though the kingdom has been present during his ministry (see 10:9, 11; 11:20; 17:21).

**21:32 *This generation:*** On the surface, this term points to those living in Jesus’ era, adding grist for those scholars who see that Jesus and his followers expect him to return soon,<sup>98</sup> though other meanings are possible<sup>99</sup> (see 9:27 and the Note thereon). Sensing this meaning and the dissonance that it creates for the timing of the return of the Savior, the Prophet Joseph Smith adds an important explanatory statement: “this generation, *the generation when the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*” (JST 21:32; emphasis added). Thus, the generation to which Jesus points is not his own but a future generation. This observation receives strength in the first-person account when the Savior says to the Twelve on the Mount of Olives, “if ye have slept in peace . . . ye [shall] come unto me . . . and your redemption shall be perfected” (D&C 45:46). Plainly, Jesus here anticipates the death and resurrection of the Apostles as intervening events between this moment on the mount and his Second Coming (see D&C 45:45–46).

**21:33 *Heaven and earth shall pass away:*** What does Jesus mean? The verb “to pass away” (Greek *parerchomai*) appears with similar meaning in 16:17 and 21:32.<sup>100</sup> Jesus may repeat this saying to emphasize that his words spoken in the sermon will surely be fulfilled. Notably, the Joseph Smith Translation adds more of Jesus’ words to Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts that suggest the passing of the heaven and earth will be real events: “*the days will come that heaven and earth shall pass away*” (JST Matt. 24:36; JST Mark 13:40; emphasis added). In fact, Jesus draws on an image at home in the Old Testament, “the heavens shall vanish away . . . and the earth shall wax old” (Isa. 51:6; also Ps. 102:25–26), a theme mirrored in modern scripture where we read that the earth will die and then “be quickened again” (D&C 88:26).

***my words shall not pass away:*** Jesus underscores the strength and certainty of the prophecies that he utters in the sermon, and his knowledge of his Father’s will,<sup>101</sup> by appealing to an event that surely will come about in

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97. Marshall, *Luke*, 779.

98. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*, 443–45.

99. Marshall, *Luke*, 780; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1353.

100. BAGD, 631; *TDNT*, 2:681–82.

101. Marshall, *Luke*, 781.

the future, the passing away of the heaven and earth (see 16:17; Ps. 102:25–26; D&C 1:38). But even more certain is the fact that his words will not go unfulfilled, emphasized by the Greek double negative (*ou mē*) with the future tense.<sup>102</sup>

## Analysis

Death followed by life flavors the main dish of the Savior’s prophetic words in these verses. The fig tree, whose early budding signals the return of life to the earth following the winter, stands as a green marker of both physical well-being and approaching spiritual life (see 21:29–31; Micah 4:4).<sup>103</sup> As surely as the fig begins to bud in late winter, so “the kingdom of God [shall be] nigh at hand” to those who are watchful and faithful as events of the end-time are cooked and served (21:31).

The same menu of death followed by life rests in Jesus’ reference to the passing away of heaven and earth because their future, after their passing, is to be glorious and bright and full of life. Although the scriptural sources are scattered, it is possible to suggest an approximate order of scenes that are yet to unfold, beginning with Old Testament passages with which Jesus is familiar.<sup>104</sup> In scriptural language, “the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment” (Isa. 51:6). More specifically, “the earth” and “the heavens . . . shall perish,” after growing “old like a garment” (Ps. 102:25–26; also D&C 29:23; 88:26). The imagery portrays heaven rolled up “as a scroll” (Rev. 6:14) and passing away “with a great noise,” and “the elements” melting “with fervent heat” (2 Pet. 3:10). Among the inhabitants of the earth, in a repetition of plagues before the Exodus, “there shall be a great hailstorm sent forth to destroy the crops of the earth” and “I the Lord God will send forth flies upon the face of the earth” (D&C 29:16, 18). On the earth’s surface, “the mountains shall be thrown down” (Ezek. 38:20), “and the mountains shall melt” (JST 2 Pet. 3:10, 12), and “every mountain and island” will be “moved out of their places” (Rev. 6:14), with “every mountain and hill . . . made low” (Isa. 40:4; also D&C 49:23; 133:22).

All such phenomena are evidently part of the cleansing of the earth for which the earth herself pleads in words heard by Enoch: “When shall I

102. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §§2754–55; Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §365.

103. Jeremias, *Parables*, 120.

104. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 612–26.

... be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me?” (Moses 7:48). In a divine response, “righteousness and truth will I [the Lord] cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth” (Moses 7:62). At this point, the earth will “rest” in a millennial state after “great tribulations” and after the second “coming of the Son of Man, in the last days” (Moses 7:48, 54, 58, 61, 64–65; also D&C 29:11).<sup>105</sup> As a part of this stunning scene, “Michael, [the] archangel, shall sound his trump, and then shall all the dead awake, . . . and they shall come forth—yea, even all” (D&C 29:26).

Then the Lord will “create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered” (Isa. 65:17), for “the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev. 21:1). In the language of the Articles of Faith, “the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory” (A of F 10; also Ether 13:9; D&C 29:23–24). One of the evidences for this remarkable state is the Lord’s action to “make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water” (Isa. 41:18) because “in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Isa. 35:6; also D&C 133:29). Another evidence arises when the earth becomes a dwelling place for celestial persons, a feature into which only modern scripture offers a peek. Among those who will take up residence are the Savior, “the Son of Man, . . . for the space of a thousand years” (Moses 7:65; also D&C 133:25), “the righteous” (D&C 88:26), and “they who are in the north countries . . . and their prophets” (D&C 133:26). Following this millennial era, apparently, the earth will “be sanctified” and “be prepared for the celestial glory” (D&C 88:18, 26). It will be “crowned with glory,” when it receives “the presence of God the Father,” thus filling “the measure of its creation” (D&C 88:19; also 88:25). Hence, life in its fullest sense blossoms and continues on the renewed earth.

Through it all, the Savior assures his Apostles that God is in charge and that, even when nature herself seems troubled and events bring fellow humans to fear the future (see 21:25–26), they and other believers will “know . . . that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand” and that they will “escape all these things that shall come to pass.” The crowning moment will come, of course, when they “stand before the Son of man” (21:31, 36).

As elsewhere in this sermon, the Joseph Smith Translation of these verses further flavors the notion of a time differential between the occasion of the sermon and the timing of Jesus’ Second Coming. Concerning

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105. Draper, Brown, and Rhodes, *Pearl of Great Price*, 144, 148–49.

the matter of timing, in Luke's text we read: "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled" (21:32). According to this statement, it appears that Jesus sees the grand and daunting events of the end-time playing out within a few decades. In a word, his Second Coming is close. But the JST adds a temporal clause that changes everything: "this generation, *the generation when the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*, shall not pass away till all be fulfilled" (JST 21:32; emphasis added). Clearly, the generation when the signs appear and "redemption draweth nigh" (21:28) will arise in the far distant, not in the immediate future.

## WATCH YE THEREFORE (21:34–36) (Compare Mark 13:33–37)

### King James Translation

34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

### New Rendition

34 "Give heed to yourselves lest your hearts are weighed down in drunkenness and intoxication and anxieties concerning the affairs of daily life, and that day come upon you unexpectedly 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. 36 But keep alert at all times, praying that you might have strength to escape all these things about to happen, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man."

### Notes

**21:34 *take heed to yourselves*:** The expression mirrors that in 17:3 wherein Jesus introduces instructions to disciples. The Greek verb *prosechō* means basically "to pay attention."<sup>106</sup> The Joseph Smith Translation adjusts Jesus' words from second person to third person so that they become more universal in application and not so focused on the Twelve: "Let my disciples therefore take heed to themselves" (JST 21:34). This change, wherein Jesus

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106. BAGD, 721.

effectively addresses future disciples, fits with the JST sense that the Second Coming will occur in a time long afterward.

**overcharged:** The meaning of the verb, in its passive form (Greek *bareō*), has to do with being weighed down, in this instance with bad personal habits and worldly desires.<sup>107</sup>

**surfeiting:** The primary sense of this term (Greek *kraipalē*) is intoxication; but its meaning here is more like a hangover, the result of intoxication.<sup>108</sup> A similar warning appears at 12:45–46.

**that day:** Jesus' words underline the importance of this future day, a day of divine reckoning. For this sort of expression, see the Notes on 6:23 and 21:6.

**come upon you unawares:** Listing the dire consequences, Jesus issues a similar warning to his disciples in the story about the chief servant who, because his lord delays his arrival, engages in all sorts of ill behavior and reaps a terrifying punishment when, suddenly, the master arrives (see 12:45–46).

**21:35 a snare:** Appearing only here in the Gospels, although the word occurs elsewhere in the New Testament (see Rom. 11:9; 1 Tim. 3:7; 6:9; 2 Tim. 2:26), the sense of the Greek term *pagis* points to a trap or snare for birds and small animals.<sup>109</sup> The expression “as a snare” stands at the end of verse 34 in the Greek text.

**come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth:** Jesus is emphatic about the forceful, universal reach of the snare—it will rush upon all and will fall across the whole earth, as the verb indicates (Greek *epeiserchomai*) whose basic sense is “to rush in forcefully.”<sup>110</sup>

**21:36 Watch ye:** The Joseph Smith Translation adds an entire line to the beginning of this verse, almost repeating Mark 13:37: “And what I say unto one, I say unto all” (JST 21:36). This addition fits with the universalizing of Jesus' words so that they apply to disciples who come after the Twelve. This verb “to watch” appears only here in Luke's record, and he may be influenced by its single occurrence in Mark's account at 13:33 (Greek *agrupneō*). It has to do with always keeping oneself alert (see Eph. 6:18).<sup>111</sup> More than this, significantly, it has to do with those in responsible positions watching faithfully over those within their stewardships (see Heb. 13:17; the next Note).

107. BAGD, 133; *TDNT*, 1:558–59.

108. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 989; BAGD, 449; Marshall, *Luke*, 782.

109. BAGD, 607; *TDNT*, 5:593–95.

110. BAGD, 284.

111. BAGD, 13–14.



***pray always:*** This expression is made up of two parts, each of which points to praying or beseeching on behalf of others, not just for oneself (see the Analysis below). We find the verb (Greek *deomai*) nodding toward this sort of activity when a father begs Jesus to heal his son (see 9:38) and when Paul pleads that church members “be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20; also 2 Cor. 10:2; Gal. 4:12).<sup>112</sup> To be sure, concerning this verb we must reckon with instances of individuals who request favors for themselves as in the case of the wild man (see 8:28, 38). But because Jesus is talking to the Twelve on the mount, he and they will likely have in mind their stewardships, not just their individual well-being. Next, the words translated “always” basically mean “at every important moment” when pleading for divine help (Greek *en panti kairō*), a phrase that also hints at being anxiously engaged not only for oneself but especially for others (see the prior Note).<sup>113</sup> Notably, the Joseph Smith Translation adds an expression directly after the command “pray always”: “and keep my commandments,” a directive that affects whether a person is “counted worthy to escape” (JST 21:36).

***accounted worthy to escape:*** The first verb, “accounted worthy” (Greek passive of *kataxioō*), does not appear in all texts and, in some manuscripts, instead reads *katischuō*, “to overpower.” In the latter instance, survival of the terrible events at the end-time will depend on possessing inner “strength to escape all these things” (RSV 21:36). According to the former reading, disciples escape because of worthiness. Both concepts, inner strength and worthiness, are at home in modern scripture (see D&C 109:38, 42, 45–46).

***stand before the Son of man:*** The scene is at home in a legal proceeding wherein the petitioner or the accused stands before a judge (Greek verb *histēmi*; see Matt. 25:32; 27:11; Rev. 20:12), hence portraying Jesus as judge of all.<sup>114</sup> The Joseph Smith Translation adds a line that specifies the occasion when disciples will stand before the Son of Man: “when he shall come clothed in the glory of his Father” (JST 21:36).

## Analysis

Perhaps surprisingly, these verses present a garnished meal of the Savior’s expectations for the Twelve and their stewardships, and they appear only in Luke’s record. To be sure, the Joseph Smith Translation makes adjustments that diminish the currency of Jesus’ words to the Twelve and, in a measure, reallocate his instructions to later generations of followers, especially in 21:34

112. *TDNT*, 2:40–41.

113. BAGD, 395; *TDNT*, 3:459–61.

114. BAGD, 382–83; *TDNT*, 7:648–50, 652; 8:434, n. 260.

where the second person plural “you” is changed to the third person plural “my disciples” and “them.” But Jesus is still speaking directly to the Twelve on the Mount of Olives where they can all behold the city. The setting where they hear him is firm and concrete. So are his words to them.

Jesus’ expectations for the Twelve wrap themselves around two assignments that come into focus in 21:36: watching over others and praying for those who face challenges. Of course, it is possible to understand Jesus’ instructions “Watch ye” and “pray always” as directives that apply to the individual circumstances of the Twelve who sit before him and of disciples who come after them, that is, that they watch out and pray for themselves. But at this moment he is addressing his leaders, effectively continuing the training of those who will bear the chief assignments in his kingdom after his death—in fact, he spends forty days with them after his resurrection in more training sessions (see Acts 1:1–3). It is all a part of their education for their ministries. In this light, at least part of the focus rests on how the Twelve will serve and provide leadership in the church. Their stewardship will include watching over members of the church and praying for them as they face difficulties. Nothing surprising arises from this observation. It fits naturally into the setting, Jesus and the Twelve together on the mount.

The Joseph Smith Translation makes adjustments which underline that Jesus’ words are for future disciples and leaders as much as they are for the Twelve who sit at his feet. Those changes occur in 21:34 and 21:36. In the place of “take heed to yourselves,” the JST substitutes and expands to “Let my disciples therefore take heed to themselves,” changing the second person to the third person (JST 21:34). Moreover, the last line of the verse, “that day come upon *you* unawares,” becomes “that day come upon *them* unawares” (emphasis added). Moreover, the JST adds an entire sentence to the beginning of 21:36, evidently modeled on Mark 13:37: “And what I say unto one, I say unto all” (JST 21:36). With these adjustments, Jesus’ words carry a more universal application, reaching out to those who come after the Twelve.

The fact that these verses appear only in Luke’s Gospel underscores the notion that he is not drawing on Mark’s early account of the sermon and then reworking it. Of course, Mark preserves language from Jesus that is vaguely similar: “Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is”; “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh”; “And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:33, 35, 37). But Luke’s report is so different that no connection can be seen.<sup>115</sup>

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115. Jeremias, *Parables*, 78, n. 28; Marshall, *Luke*, 782.

**DAY BY DAY****(21:37–38)**

(Compare John 8:1–2)

**King James Translation**

37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. 38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

**New Rendition**

37 During the days he was teaching in the temple. But during the nights, after going out, he spent the night in the mount that is called Olivet. 38 And all the people would awake early to come to him to hear him in the temple.

**Notes**

**21:37 in the day . . . at night:** It seems that, beyond the notations of the times of day when Jesus is active, Luke intends to draw our attention to when Jesus is in the temple and not. He is present from Monday, his first full day in Jerusalem, through Thursday which ends with the Last Supper. More than this, Jesus' presence infuses the temple and city with his divine presence, what the King James Bible terms the city's "visitation" (see the Note on 19:44). By contrast, his absence means that the temple is left empty, that is, without his divine presence. There may also be another figurative factor at work. Luke follows his observation about day and night with the story of Judas approaching authorities about betraying Jesus (see 22:3–6). Although this story may not carry the drama visible in John's Gospel of Judas leaving Jesus' enlightening presence at the supper and going into the darkness of night (see John 13:30), Luke's play on day and night, thus light and darkness, may form a prelude to the contrasts between the hope-filled experience of Passover (see 22:1) and the dark, dampening act of Judas (see 22:3).

**teaching in the temple:** Luke's summarizing words look back on Jesus' teachings that he rehearses in chapter 20. During those days, from Monday through Thursday, "he taught the people in the temple" (20:1).

**abode in the mount:** This notation may mean that Jesus and his disciples sleep somewhere on the Mount of Olives (see John 8:1; Mark 11:19). But Jesus also spends nights in Bethany (see Matt. 21:17; 26:6; Mark 11:11; 14:3), which lies less than two miles distant on the southeast slope of the mountain ("fifteen furlongs" or about three thousand yards—John 11:18).<sup>116</sup> One

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116. Dever, "Weights and Measures," 1130.

can make a case that, when he and the Twelve spend the night at the Mount of Olives, they sleep in a warm cave that in the autumn serves as an olive processing facility (see the Note on 22:40).<sup>117</sup>

**21:38 all the people:** These words repeat those found in 19:48, thus surrounding and binding Jesus' teaching in chapters 20 and 21 into a literary whole, the first part public and the next segment private (see the Note below), although the latter will become known to other followers of Jesus, as the escape of Christians from the war that engulfs Jerusalem demonstrates.<sup>118</sup>

**came early in the morning:** This expression translates a single verb (Greek *orthrizō*) which means "to rise early in the morning." The tense is imperfect and carries the sense "they used to get up early in the morning" to go to the temple to hear Jesus, indicating repeated experiences.<sup>119</sup> We can thereby conclude that Jesus arrives regularly and early as well, not wanting to miss any opportunity to teach (see John 8:2, "early in the morning he came again into the temple"). The crowd simply mirrors his practice by arriving early to hear him.

**in the temple:** This phrase mirrors that in 19:47 and 20:1, further tying chapters 20 and 21 together as a teaching unity (see the Note above). Although we cannot locate precisely where Jesus situates himself when interacting with the crowds, "temple" (Greek *hieron*) probably points either to the Court of the Gentiles or to the Court of the Women.<sup>120</sup>

**to hear:** One last time Luke underlines the importance of hearing what Jesus teaches. This theme brims throughout Luke's record, rising to inundate the hearts of those who will pay genuine attention (see 6:47, 49; 8:12–15, 21; 14:35; 16:29, 31; the Notes on 6:27; 8:8; 11:28; 19:48; the Analysis on 8:4–15). No doubt, many of these hearers will come under the influence of Jesus' disciples in future days and will join the church (see Acts 2:41). The reference to officials hearing only what they want from Jesus during the nighttime trial stands in studied contrast to this theme in Luke's Gospel (see 22:71).

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117. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 44; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It*, 130–31; Joan E. Taylor, "The Garden of Gethsemane: Not the Place of Jesus' Arrest," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21 (July/August 1995): 26–35, 62.

118. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3.

119. BAGD, 584; Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §§327, 325.

120. *TDNT*, 3:235–37; Edersheim, *Temple*, 42–47.

**Analysis**

Luke's comments in these last verses tie off the Savior's body of teachings, something Luke has been cataloging since Jesus' visit to the city as a twelve-year-old (see 2:41–50). To be sure, Jesus will teach more to the Twelve at the Last Supper (see 22:15–20, 25–37). But these items, at least for the moment, are for their ears only. The literary markers at the beginning and end of this last section of teaching not only signal the weightiness of Jesus' words in chapters 20 and 21 but also identify and put a wrap around the final block of divine disclosures—the references to “all the people” (see 19:48; 21:38) and to his activities “in the temple” (see 19:47; 20:1; 21:38).