



Luke 21

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Tape #8065
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn to Luke chapter twenty-one of the gospel according to Luke tonight.

The ministry of Jesus is in its final days. Sunday He made His triumphant entry into the city, was rejected. Monday He came back into the temple and cleansed it. And daily He was in the temple teaching. On one of these days, perhaps Tuesday, the religious leaders came seeking to trap Him in His speech, asking Him trick questions, hoping that He would get caught in saying something negative towards Rome or towards their religious beliefs; in order that they might accuse Him and get Him a sentence of death. Jesus was far too clever for them. He could perceive their duplicity and He actually silenced them. They really hesitated asking Him any further questions because of His brilliant answers.

He then spoke out to the people, warning them to beware of the scribes which love to wear long robes and love the greetings in the marketplaces, the homage that was paid to them by the common people. They take the best seats in the synagogues and at the feast they occupy the highest rooms. They devour widows' houses though and their prayers were very showy. Long prayers just to impress people, not to impress God. And He said, They're going to receive a greater damnation.

Now it's right in this context of this verbal battle with the religious leaders and His warning of the people to beware of them,

That He looked up, and saw the rich men as they were casting their gifts into the treasury (21:1).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of men" (Matthew 6:1). Don't let your righteous actions be motivated by your desire to be praised by men. So that you do them in such a way as you draw attention to yourself. And He spoke about how you give. He said, "Don't sound a trumpet before you so that everybody knows how generous your gifts are. But, He said, don't let your right hand know what your left hand does. Just give to your Father in secret" (Matthew 6:3,4). Don't make a big show of it. I don't know that they actually had bands go before them and trumpets playing as they brought their gifts or the trumpet flare, here he comes, and the guy comes in. The idea is don't make a big, flashy show of it.

Now He is watching and no doubt, He was referring to people who did make very showy presentations unto the Lord. And so, "He looked up and He saw these rich men as they were casting their money into the treasury."

And he saw also a certain poor widow who threw in two mites (21:2).

Which would be worth maybe a quarter of a cent.

And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow has cast in more than all of them: For all these have all given out of their abundance: but she out of her poverty has cast in all of her living (21:3,4).

She gave everything. What they gave wasn't going to hurt them at all. They gave of their surplus, their penury, their abundance. But she gave of her living, her substance, that's all she has, Jesus said. It's interesting God has an interesting bookkeeping system. It isn't really how much you have given but what kind of a sacrifice it was for you to give. And God honors the sacrifices that we make for Him--the sacrificial giving.

At this point, some of the disciples began to just talk about the huge stones from which the temple was built. Herod had a thing for big rocks. He was a short, little fellow, they say about four foot eleven, and so he loved big things. Josephus tells us that some of the rocks that were used in the temple, of course, they were all squared off and so finely were they chiseled that they did not use mortar, they just would lay flat on top of each other. Even today you can hardly insert a knife blade in the crevices. They are so finely finished. And they were noticing these huge stones, they were remarking of them and also of the ornateness. The temple dome was covered with gold and it was just an extremely beautiful ornate building, something like twelve stories high. Just a marvellous bit of architecture. Something that would draw your attention. And so

the disciples were talking about it, the great stones and all. And Jesus made an interesting prediction. He said unto them,

That not one of these stones which you see here will be left standing on another, but they shall be thrown down (21:6).

In other words, He predicted that it would be destroyed deliberately. Not a stone left standing upon another. When they went over to the mount of Olives as they were accustomed to do; in the daytime, Jesus would teach in the temple; at night, He would go over to the mount of Olives with His disciples, and when they came over to the mount of Olives,

The disciples asked him, saying, Master, when will these things be? and what is the sign when these things shall come to pass (21:7)?

Matthew tells us that they also asked Him, “And what will be the sign of Your coming, and the end of the age” (Matthew 24:3)? They really thought that they were asking for one set of signs. In other words, they thought that when the temple was destroyed, it would be the end of the age. They thought it would be all over. When there is such destruction to the temple, that surely is the end. In reality, there was to be a space of time between the two events. And we know that that space of time has been over 1900 years so far, between the destruction of the temple and the coming again of Jesus Christ.

Jesus began to give to them signs and first of all, just sort of general, and then He becomes specific. So in general,

He declares, Take heed that you are not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Messiah; and the time is drawing near: but do not go after them (21:8).

There will be those who would come along. They’ll claim that they are the Messiah. They’ll claim that they’re ready to bring in the new world order. Jesus said don’t go after them. That, of course, has been true. There have been so many people who have come along and raised up followings and are actually getting to the place where they declare that they are going to bring in God’s new order. There are many groups that do that. But Jesus said don’t go after them.

You’re going to hear of commotions, don’t be terrified (21:9):

There will be wars, you’re going to hear of wars. Rumors of wars. Throughout the history of man, we’ve had eighteen years of war to every one year of peace. It seems like always there is conflict going on somewhere in the world as men lusting for power gather men around them and they begin to fight against others. And thus we see in the world today in so many areas, there are wars, there are slaughters, there are atrocities that are going on as people are seeking the control and power over other people. That’s just it seems a part of human nature, that desire for power and destroying in order to gain power. And He said, These things are not signs.

These things must first come to pass; but the end is not yet (21:9).

It hasn’t come yet. This isn’t the signs of the end.

Then He said unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom (21:10):

There will be nations that will join together in a confederacy and so you’ll have groups of nations that will be joined together against groups of nations. It won’t be just internal type of civil wars. But you’ll actually have groups of nations that will combine to come against other groups of nations. World war, if you would. And of course, we have seen two such wars in this century.

And then there will be great earthquakes in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven (21:11).

These famines, pestilences, earthquakes in divers places, and great signs in the heaven. We are seeing a precursor to these. What we see today in famines is not really the complete fulfillment. What we’re seeing is just sort of a preview of what’s going to be. What we see now is just a foreshadowing of what’s going to come. A small foreshadowing. During the great tribulation, there is going to be horrible famines upon the earth. In the book of Revelation, it speaks about how “when the third seal is open [I believe it is], the black horse of famine, a voice said, “A measure of wheat [which is about a quart] for a day’s wage” (Revelation 6:5,6). Whatever the average wage is for a labor, say a quart of wheat for forty dollars. And the three measures of barley for forty dollars. So tremendously inflated prices because of the shortage of food.

Pestilences, we see pestilences now. We see increased pestilences. We are coming up against some exotic germs. They have mutated to where they are resistant to the drugs that we have generally used in fighting them. And mutant strains are coming that are impervious to the drugs. We are extremely concerned right now about this new strain of tuberculosis which is beginning to spread throughout the world. Because it seems to be impervious to the drugs that we've been using in the past to control tuberculosis.

There, of course, is the HIV virus which we are struggling with and we don't really have any answer to that. It's one that sort of defies any kind of attempts of control it. Because it is mutating so rapidly and coming out in different forms, if we develop an antidote for one form, there are so many mutant forms that one antidote wouldn't touch that it's really a big problem. But that's only a foreshadowing. That isn't really into completely the pestilences that Jesus is referring to.

And the same with earthquakes. You haven't seen anything yet. You've seen a few little shakes but nothing compared to what's going to come as the scripture does prophesy of some really horrendous earthquakes. Not localized, not on the San Andreas fault or the Newport fault but earthquakes that will shake the whole world.

Then these will be coincident with signs in the heavens. And we'll get to that a little further as Jesus amplifies this.

But before all these (21:12),

He took them out to the end. That's just before He returns and the end of the world age as such. But before this is going to happen, coming back to the signs of the destruction of the temple.

they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, and you'll be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony (21:12,13).

Or it will give you an opportunity to testify, to bear witness. So you're going to be arrested, you're going to be brought before the courts, you'll be standing before kings but it'll just give you an opportunity to witness for Me.

It's interesting to look at the book of Acts. You find how that Stephen was brought before the religious court. But what a testimony he laid on those fellows. Powerful testimony. Paul was brought before various governmental officials, even before Nero. We don't know anything about Paul's witness before Nero but you can be sure it was heavy duty. As Paul was witnessing to Festus, the Roman governor, the guy was under such conviction he began to shake and he said, I got to get out of here. I'll talk to you some other time. As he was giving his witness to Felix who replaced Festus, again he shared with him the gospel and what the Lord had done for him.

And finally, when King Agrippa came along, Paul thought, Alright, what a chance to witness, if I could win Agrippa to the Lord, what that would do. And he laid on Agrippa such a heavy testimony. In fact, it was so heavy that Festus who was standing there got a little shook. And he said, Paul, you're crazy. You've learned too much. You've studied too hard. You've flipped, man. And Paul didn't pay any attention. He said, Agrippa, you believe the scriptures. I know you believe the scriptures. You know that these things are true. This wasn't done in a corner. Agrippa, do you believe? He said, Wait a minute, Paul. You trying to make me a Christian? Yes he was, he was definitely trying to do that.

So he used every opportunity as Jesus said, It will turn to you for a testimony. So everytime they were arrested, everytime they stood before the courts, they just really gave a strong witness for Jesus Christ. So He said,

Settle it therefore in your hearts beforehand, that you're not going to meditate on what you're going to answer (21:14):

In other words, don't think, Oh boy, what will I say? And make up your little speeches in advance. But He said,

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist (21:15).

I'll give you such wisdom that your adversaries won't be able to answer you. You'll just have such a powerful witness. And again, I would encourage you to read Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin and

that's exactly what happened. It was dynamite. It was powerful. And they weren't able to resist the things that he said, the scriptures said. It was just so powerful was his preaching that they weren't able to resist. They were upset by it and stoned him for it but it was tremendous defense. A mouth of wisdom.

And you will be betrayed by your parents, by your brothers, your family, and your friends; and some of you they will put to death. And you'll be hated of all men for my name's sake (21:16,17).

They're going to be arrested for His name's sake. Brought before the rulers and so forth for His name's sake. And some of them will be put to death for His name's sake.

It's interesting that when the disciples were arrested and were beaten and commanded not to speak any more in the name of Jesus, they went from those beatings rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus Christ. So they saw it as suffering for Him. Those that were martyred looked at it as dying for Him. And He said, Dying for My name's sake.

This is something I don't quite understand what Jesus meant by this. Maybe some of you can write me a note and give me some suggestions.

But there shall not a hair of your head perish (21:18).

I'm sure there's some spiritual significance to this. He has just told them that they're going to be killed. Some of them are going to be killed. So He's not saying that there's not going to be any harm come to you. I would think that the word perish is probably meant in an eternal sense. As God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe on Him would not perish. And so the perish is in an eternal sense. In other words, as Jesus said, Don't be afraid of those who can kill your body and after that, have no power. But fear Him who after the body is killed, has the power to cast your soul into hell. That's the one you need to fear.

So He told them plainly, Some of you are going to be killed. You're going to be beaten. He didn't hide the problems that they were going to face as Christians. And so, the perish I think is in an eternal sense rather than just this body. You see, the Lord puts far more emphasis upon your soul and your spirit than He does your body because He knows that your body is only here for a limited time. You've got a planned obsolescence. You're going down the hill. Catabolic forces have set in. You're getting old. It's only a matter of time and you're going to check out.

So knowing that the body is temporal, the Lord places the emphasis upon the soul and the spirit of man because those go on long after the body is dissolved in the grave. Your soul and spirit continues to exist. And thus, the Bible puts the emphasis upon the spiritual aspect of a man's being, rather than the physical aspect of a man's being.

And then Jesus said these words,

In patience possess ye your souls (21:19).

Be patient. Be in control by being patient. We so often want to fly off. We so often want to respond. We want action. I want to see it now. And we so often are going around all tense. But Jesus said, "Possess your soul." Control it. "In patience control your soul."

Continuing concerning the signs now, coming back to the signs of the destruction of the temple.

When you will see Jerusalem encircled by the armies, then know that the desolation thereof is close (21:20).

When you see the Roman troops setting the siege against Jerusalem, when you see them camped on Mount Scopus and on the mount of Olives, when you see them surrounding the city and building their forts around the city, know that the destruction of the temple is near. The desolation that is of the temple itself is getting close.

Then let them which are in Judaea 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 back into the city (21:21).

Don't come into Jerusalem but get out of here. According to early tradition, of course, the main church was in Jerusalem. We know that for the most part, the apostles escaped the destruction of Jerusalem. John lived on another twenty-some years after the destruction of Jerusalem. He escaped from the destruction of the Roman army and the mass slaughter, as did the apostles.

Early tradition declares that the church when the city was surrounded by the Roman troops, and of

course, Josephus in his book, *The Wars of the Jews*, gives graphic details of the siege and of the slaughter of the people within the city, as they were fighting each other for food, killing each other for food. Gangs roaming the street and going into houses, killing the people and taking their food. It was real anarchy within the city. Josephus said more Jews were killed by Jews than were killed by the Roman soldiers.

Early tradition declares that the church was gathered one evening in prayer and the Spirit of God through prophecy warned them to flee out the east gate that night. And according to this tradition, they just all fled that night out the east gate and for some unknown reason, the Roman guard at the east gate was not posted that night and thus, the church escaped that night as a result of direction and warning of the Holy Spirit.

We do know that they did escape, whether or not that tradition is accurate, we do know that they did escape and Jesus is warning them here. When you see the city encircled, you know that destruction is close. So flee to the mountains and let them in the midst of the city depart out and those that are in the countryside, don't come in.

For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled (21:22).

The vengeance of God against the nation who rejected His Son, His promised Saviour. They said, when Pilate washed his hands and said, I'm innocent of this man's blood, see you to it. They said, His blood be upon us and our children. And here it was fulfilled. And as I said, graphically chronicled for us by Josephus. "Days of vengeance, that all of the things which are written may be fulfilled."

But woe unto them that are pregnant at that time, and to those who are nursing in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people (21:23).

The Romans, when they took the city, were ruthless. They didn't spare. Women, children, wholesale slaughter.

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 (21:24).

And thus, it happened. When the Romans took the city of Jerusalem, those that survived the horrible slaughter were taken as slaves back to Rome. They had a big procession marching the slaves through the streets of Rome with the trophies that they had taken from Jerusalem. And Jerusalem from that day, 70 A.D. to June of 1967 was trodden down by the Gentiles. It was under Gentile control.

The times of the Gentiles is a period of time that actually goes back to Nebuchadnezzar. When Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem and conquered Judah, that began the time of the Gentiles. The temple was destroyed and it was a time of the Gentile world powers. Nebuchadnezzar's dream dealt with the full spectrum of what's going to happen during the times of the Gentile world powers. But it began with Nebuchadnezzar and it is still today, we are still in the times of the Gentiles, except that it seems that we're sort of in a transition. Because in 1967 when Jerusalem again came under the control of the nation of Israel, that would signify that the times of the Gentiles in a technical sense was fulfilled. We are in a small transition period here between the times of the Gentiles and the establishing of the kingdom of God and the reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth.

There are these other events, this further cleansing of the earth, the fiery judgment of God that's going to come in the purifying and in the sifting out and all, but we're in a transition period right now. We are at the time of the end. There can be no question about that. The fact that Jerusalem is under the reign now of the nation of Israel. Of course, we know that that's one of the hot issues in the Middle East right now. Because the Palestinians are claiming that their intent is to set up their capital in Jerusalem. And Israel has said it shall never be. That Jerusalem belongs to them. But yet it is a sore point. In the negotiations and all, Jerusalem seems to be the stickler. But it is under Jewish control and to ever be rested from Jewish control would, it won't be done without a humongous battle which would probably also include nuclear weapons which Iran, of course, is seeking to develop and Israel has already developed.

It's one of those sore spots but the interesting thing is that it is under the control of the nation of Israel and thus was trodden under the foot of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. That's the signs of the destruction of the temple. Now Jesus turns to the signs of His coming. The end of the times of the Gentiles. The end of the Gentile world rule. The time of the end of man's rule over man. The governments of man. And so, coincident with the end of the age of man's governments,

There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon (21:25),

This goes back to verse eleven, “Great signs from heaven.” “There will be signs in the sun, and in the moon,”

and in the stars; and upon the earth there will be distress of nations (21:25),

In the heavens, there are going to be signs. It’s interesting to me how that there is such constancy of scripture. Jesus here speaks of the signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars.

And other places throughout the scriptures it speaks of these signs that will take place in the heavens, in the celestial heavens. In the book of Revelation, chapter six, “I beheld when He opened the sixth seal,” that is, of the seven sealed scroll, “there was a great earthquake.” The earthquake is coincident with the signs that are in the heaven. “The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the moon will not cause her light to shine” (Revelation 6:12). God said, “I will punish the world [in Isaiah] for their evil, and the wicked of their iniquity, and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible” (Isaiah 13:11). “And the moon will become as blood” (Revelation 6:12). Revelation 6:13, “And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig tree cast her untimely figs, when it’s shaken in the mighty wind. The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places” (Revelation 6:13,14).

Great cataclysmic events taking place here on the earth. The mountains being moved. Islands disappearing. New mountain ranges being thrust up. A total cataclysmic upheaval of the geographical surface of the earth.

“The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, were hiding themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And calling on the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, and to hide them from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:15-17). Isaiah 13:6,7 said, “Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. And all hands will be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt.” Notice the people are fearful for the things that are coming upon them in Revelation.

Jesus said,

Men’s hearts failing them for fear (21:26),

because of the things that are coming to pass” (). Isaiah said, “Howl ye: for the day of the Lord is at hand; it will come as destruction.” “All hands will be faint, every man’s heart will melt.” And “they will be afraid: pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman who is in travail: and they shall be amazed at one another; and their faces will be as flames. Because the day of the LORD is coming, cruel with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he will destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations will not give their light: the sun will be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. [God said] I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity (Isaiah 13:8-11).

I want you to notice that. This great tribulation, who is it directed against? “I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible” (Isaiah 13:11). So that God’s judgment is directed not against Christians, not against the church but against the wicked, the sinners, the evil ones. So God said, “I’ll shake the heavens, and the earth will be moved out of its place, and the wrath of the Lord of hosts, the day of his fierce anger” (Isaiah 13:13).

Joel said, “The earth will quake before them; the heavens will tremble: the sun and the moon will be dark, and the stars will withdraw their shining. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, there will be blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come” (Joel 2:10,30,31). That is, the second coming of Jesus Christ. The awesome day of the Lord comes. The word terrible there is awesome.

“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, the stars shall withdraw their shining” (Joel 3:15). Haggai joins in and says, “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all

nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:6,7).

Prior to the coming of the desire of nations, Jesus Christ, there’s going to be this tremendous upheaval of the earth, the cataclysmic kind of judgments from God affecting the earth and affecting the skies. In Zechariah 14:5, “And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with Him.”

Revelation 16:18, “And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” As I said, you haven’t seen anything yet. They’re talking about 8. And so forth, that’s a baby. This thing is going to be huge. “And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found” (Revelation 16:19,20). Again, the description of this upheaval that’s going to take place upon the earth.

Isaiah 34 said, “Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that are in the world, and all of the things that are going to come forth. For the indignation of the LORD” (Isaiah 34:1,2).

And the word indignation is an Old Testament word used for the time of the great tribulation. You’ll find it in Daniel and all, and is used for the time the great tribulation.

“The indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to slaughter. Their slain also will be cast out, and the smell will come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains will be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven will be dissolved, and the heavens will be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree” (Isaiah 34:2-4).

And so, these events are described a tremendous meteorite shower that will impact the earth. Huge meteorites hitting the earth. You look at that crater out there in Arizona and think of that maybe happening right in Santa Ana. It would wipe out everyone in Orange County. Not a person will be left in Orange County. And can you imagine and picture a world being devastated by the divine judgment of God as these meteorites are hitting like figs falling from a tree, overripe figs when the time of these horrific winds, when they begin to blow these figs just falling off and thus these great meteorites.

Hailstones, ninety pounds plummeting the earth. Just terrible devastation during this time known as the great tribulation, also referred to as the day of His wrath has come. God’s judgment because of a Christ-rejecting, rebellious world, who has refused to submit to God but has said, We want nothing to do with God and we will live apart and without God.

Romans chapter one, Paul warns us that “the wrath of God is coming against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness;” beginning there with verse eighteen, he said, “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even the eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:18-20). God has left His signature all over the world. Every life form, God’s left His mark, His signature. It takes a fool to say there is no God. That’s what the Bible says, “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 53:1).

This whole business, and it’s supposed to be science, and it is taught as science, from grade school on up through college, is taught as science that matter acting on matter over an indefinite period of time can produce anything. Thus, you are the product of matter acting on matter over billions of years and here you are, you’re the product of this long series of fortuitous occurrences of accidental circumstances. Now let’s carry this, let’s just look at this theory for a moment.

Matter acting on matter can produce anything provided you have enough time. How many of you believe that if we went prospecting out in the desert, we might be able to find a new Porsche coming out of the rocks. Matter has been acting on matter out there for a long time. If it can produce something as complex as the human body, surely it can produce something as simple as a Porsche. But this is a special Porsche

because this Porsche has the capacity to repair itself when it's damaged. Because your body does that, so your wife has it and she runs into a telephone pole. You say, Oh, it's alright, honey, just park it in the garage, couple weeks it will be okay. It will straighten itself out. You're out on the freeway blowing the thing out and you throw a rod. Oh boy, that will take three weeks. Park in the garage for it can repair itself. But give it a little rest, some chicken soup and it ought to be feeling fine.

You want a new one? Park yours next to your wife's, you have baby Porsches before long. We laugh because it's idiocy. Our brain says, That can't be, that just can't happen. Then why are we so gullible as to think that something as complex as the human body could be produced by matter acting on matter over billions of years of time. It's plain, Paul said it, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22). He said, and boy, this is so right, "Because they knew God, they didn't glorify God as God, neither were they thankful; they became vain in their imaginations" (Romans 1:21).

How did our eye develop according to the evolutionary concept? When the little worm had come out of the ooze, as it was crawling on the ground, the sun beat upon its upper side. Formed a little mutation, sort of a freckle. And gradually over a period of time that freckle turned into an eye and the little worm was able to see. Crawling over the rocks it sort of cut itself and sort of formed calluses and the calluses grew into legs and you had a salamander. So now you have little legs and you can walk and you have eyes and you can see. Few more billion years and you'll be able to stand upright and you'll be able to think and be able to do calculus and build computers and all. Just give enough time. "Vain in their imaginations. Their foolish hearts were darkened. And professing themselves to be wise, they actually became fools." "But the fool has said in his heart, There is no God."

And the only reason why the evolutionary theory has any acceptance at all, is because it gives man a highly imaginative cause for man's existence apart from God. In other words, we just evolved out of the nothingness of the past.

"They changed the glory of an incorruptible God into an image that was made like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, that they might dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Because they changed the truth of God into a lie, and they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore" (Romans 1:23-25).

Today we have a very strong movement of the worship of Mother Earth. The Ghia principle, that the earth itself is alive, it's an organism that is alive and all and so we are to respect Mother Earth. We're to worship Mother Earth. And we're to all of the environmentalists, that's all from Hinduism. God created that for us, for our blessing. Not for us to destroy but to take care of it. Yes. But not to worship. "For this cause God gave them up," that's pretty strong words. God gave them over and now God gives them up, "up to vile affections" (Romans 1:26).

This, you see, is when man turns from God, invents these fanciful fetteries to try to explain his existence apart from God, doesn't want God, and so God gives them over to reprobate minds. God gives them up to their vile lusts and affections and thus you have a whole breakdown in your society. As a result of this breakdown, you have murders, you have gang warfare, you have a disrespect for life and all. Let's find what Paul has to say.

"God gave them over to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, began to burn in their lust toward each other; men with men doing that which is unthinkable, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was fit for what they were doing" (Romans 1:26,27). You read of the practices that are going on in the homosexual community. The fisting, the scathing, and things of that nature, and what has happened to them. Paul said was just fit. In some of these bathhouses and all, I don't. Let's just go on. It's sickening. And the body wasn't made for that, wasn't intended for that. And when you introduce that much foreign protein in your body system, all of it is different and your body has to build up an immunity against the foreign protein that comes into the system and in building up the immunity, they've actually just destroyed the immune system. And that's where the HIV comes, the destruction of the immune system because of its trying to process and build the antibodies for the multitude of different proteins that

have been introduced into the body and the body just isn't capable, the system just breaks down and fails to function. And thus, that's really the problem that we have.

Paul said, "Men working with men and receiving the reward which is fitting for what they have done." And have been doing. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient or thinkable; Being filled with all unrighteousness, and fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, and murder, and debate, and deceit, and malignity; They are backbiters, they hate God, they're despiteful, they're proud, they're boasters, they're inventors of evil things [they even have shops now selling these kind of things], disobedient to parents, Without understanding, they are covenantbreakers, without natural affection."

When a mother can send her car down a slope into a lake with two little babies in their car seats, that's without natural affection.

"Implacable,"

When a man can pull up with a van and blow up a building not regarding the lives that are there, that's without natural affection. God didn't build us that way. You've got to come to that kind of a mindset that would do something like that. It's just hard for us to even imagine.

They're "unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of destruction, not only do they do the same, but they take pleasure in those that do them" (Romans 1:28-32). "Pleasure in those that do them," that's the thing I want to sort of push right now. How many of you love violence on TV? How many of you love seeing adulterous love scenes? If you enjoy that, if that's, you really, oh man, a great movie, they had all kinds of shootings and killings and boy, you could just see the blood pouring out. You're taking pleasure in those that do such things. You say, I'd never do that. But what's happening is our minds are being callused against these things. It gets to where your mind gets so callused and hard that when it happens, you just sort of pass it off. The condition of our world today is a direct result of man not glorifying God as God. Putting God out, not wanting God to be a part of their lives or of the national life. It's a rebellion against God. It's "worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever more." And thus, God's wrath is one day very soon going to be poured out against those that do such things.

And so Jesus is speaking of these conditions here in Luke 21 of the judgment of God that is going to come against those that are doing such things, cataclysmic judgments. And so, Jesus tells us that when there are these signs in the heavens; on the earth, He said, there will be distress of nations with perplexity. Let me give you another translation. National problems with no solutions. That's exactly where we are today.

We have a national problem of drugs. Drug trafficking. And we have no solutions. You know that in most cities today, if you call the Police department because of drug parties going on next door, they won't respond. They just say we're after those that are dealing the drugs. We've got too many of these cases, we can't even respond to it. That's in many cities already. They don't even attempt to respond to those that are using drugs. Just trying to get the traffickers. But there seems to be no solution. We have gang warfare that is going on. Every week in Orange County, there are several people being shot in gang wars. And there seems to be no solution.

We have runaway spending by the government. And there seems to be no solution. So many problems, we have a breakdown in the social order. A breakdown of the family. Divorce is so easy and adultery is so prevalent. It seems to be, there is no solution. All of the single moms trying to raise families. Or children being raised by single parents. There seems to be no solution. And that in itself brings other social problems.

"On the earth there is distress of nations, with perplexity;" our national problems with no solutions, "and the sea and the waves roaring." What we see now is not what Jesus is talking about. This is a precursor of things that are to come. We're seeing the beginning of it though. This is the beginning of it. The worst is yet to come but we're seeing the beginning. And thus, "men's hearts failing them for fear,"

and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven are going to be shaken (21:26).

We've read about that in the other prophets.

And then shall they see (21:27)

Immediately after the tribulation of those days, they'll see the Son of man coming in power and glory. So then shall they see,

the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (21:27).

Coming in the cloud, I believe, is a reference not to the clouds that are in the sky but coming with a cloud; that is, the cloud of witnesses which in Hebrews chapter twelve are the saints of God. "Seeing we're surrounded with such a great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1), and "Behold, He cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 1:14). Paul writing to the Colossians said, "And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). Revelation 17, When Jesus comes, he sees Him riding on a white horse and the armies that came with Him. And of course, we read in the Old Testament prophets, "Coming with the saints to establish God's kingdom upon the earth."

And when these things [notice this one] begin to come to pass (21:28).

They have begun. No denial. They've begun to come to pass. We haven't seen the fullness yet but they've begun. When these things begin to come to pass, Jesus said,

then look up, and lift up your heads (21:28);

It's close, your redemption is getting close. It's time for we, the body of Christ to begin to look up and lift up our head. It's getting close. The Lord is coming. I believe that prior to the great tribulation, Jesus is going to take His church out of this world. That is why I think Jesus is saying here, when it begins to come to pass, you look up, you lift up your head,

for your redemption is close (21:28).

The Bible over and over tells us that we have not been appointed unto wrath. Isaiah tells us that this time is reserved for the wicked and for the sinners. The time of God's indignation against the ungodliness and the unrighteousness of man who have held the truth of God in unrighteousness.

Paul said, "I'm going to show you a mystery;" A truth of God that hasn't been revealed before. "But we are not all of us going to die, but we're going to be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:51,52). Paul tells us, "For the Lord Himself is going to descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel, the trump of God: and the dead in Christ will rise first: and we who are alive and remain will be caught up"—harpazo, translated into Latin is raptus, snatched away by force—"to meet them together in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore [he said] comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

When these things begin to come to pass, look up, lift up your head.

Now He spoke to them a parable [in regards to this. He said,] Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, you see and know of your own selves that summer is now close at hand (21:29,30).

When you see the trees beginning to bud, you know that summer is coming. Summer is close at hand.

So likewise you, when you see these things come to pass (21:31),

When you start seeing these events,

know that the kingdom of God is near at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all of these things be fulfilled (21:31,32).

This generation could refer to the Jews and if that is so, it's true, they have not passed away. Miraculously they survived 2,000 years without a homeland. Or it could refer to the generation that sees the beginning of these things, such as, Jerusalem no longer trodden under the foot of the Gentiles. Jesus said,

Heaven and earth are going to pass away: but my words will not pass away (21:33).

He's affirming the certainty of the things that He said. It's interesting when Daniel gave his prophecies, he said, And the word is sure. He confirmed, these are the true sayings of God and he affirms it. And Jesus now is affirming. This is going to happen. "Heaven and earth may pass: but my words they're going to happen." They're going to be fulfilled.

So now, warnings from Jesus and exhortation. The warning,

Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be so filled with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that the day will come upon you unawares (21:34).

Be careful that you don't get so caught up in the worldly things, in the world system that you neglect your walk with the Lord. You get so involved in the things of the world, emphasizing making a living that

you begin to neglect your spiritual relationship with God.

For as a snare or a trap shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth (21:35).

That is, we can be trapped so easily into giving our attention, mind and heart over to the physical things. But you're going to pass away. So be careful that you don't get so deeply involved in the material things of the world. Paul the apostle in the seventh chapter of Corinthians writes to them that "the time is short, so that they that are married should live as though they were not married" (1 Corinthians 7:29). That is, in context, those that are married seek how they might please their wife. But those that aren't married seek to please God. So he's just saying, you need to seek to please God more than anything else.

He said, We really don't have any time to enjoy our joys or to really weep over our sorrows, or to possess our possessions. He said, Let your every contact with the world be just as light as possible, for the Lord is at hand. That's Philip's translation of First Corinthians chapter seven. I like the translation of that very much. Let your every contact with the world be just as light as possible. We have to live in the world but don't get rooted, don't. Hang loose. Be ready when the Lord comes. So Jesus said, "Blessed is that servant, when the Lord comes He finds him watching. For surely, the Lord will give him all that He has" (Luke 12:43,44).

So the importance of not getting caught up in the material things of the world.

Watch ye therefore (21:36),

Now the exhortation of Jesus. "Watch therefore,"

and pray always (21:36),

Time for prayer. Time for watching. The Lord's coming is close. Watch and be praying. Praying what? First of all,

that you'll be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are going to come to pass (21:36),

That is, the things of the great tribulation, the cataclysmic judgments of God, the upheaval of the earth and the darkening of the skies and all. "Pray that you'll be accounted worthy to escape these things" when the wrath of God is poured out upon the earth. As they say in Revelations, "For the day of His wrath is come, who shall be able to stand?" The answer is nobody. When God begins to judge, it's going to fall on all. So pray that you'll be accounted worthy to escape the things that are coming to pass.

and to stand before the Son of man (21:36).

In other words, pray that when this happens down here, you'll be up there in heaven around the throne of God with the saints of God declaring, Worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll and loose the seals for He was slain and has redeemed us by His blood out of every nation, tribe, tongue and people and made us unto our God kings and priests. And we will reign with Him on the earth. Pray that you'll be in that crowd, rather than in the crowd down here. And if He told me to, believe me, I'll do it.

And I do it. I pray, Lord, thank You for the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses me from all sin. Thank you for the righteousness of Christ that You've imputed to me because of my simple faith and trust in Jesus. And thus, I know Lord by Your grace I will be accounted worthy and I'll be standing there in that heavenly throng, singing with all my heart of the worthiness of the Lamb who loved me, who gave Himself for me that I might have eternal life.

Luke sort of just closes out this chapter by giving us a little bit of information saying,

In the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode or stayed in the mount that is called the mount of Olives (21:37).

He had a place over there in the mount of Olives where He and His disciples would spend the night together, probably build a little fire, eat, talk, pray and sleep there in the mount of Olives. That's why Judas was able to lead the soldiers of the high priest to the mount of Olives to arrest Jesus because he knew the place where Jesus was staying with His disciples there on the mount of Olives.

And all the people [Luke tells us] came early in the morning to him in the temple, in order to hear Jesus (21:38).

As He was teaching daily there in the temple.

Interesting, interesting things. May we give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, the book of Hebrews tells us, lest at any time we should drift away from them. For if the word spoken of by

angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how are we going to escape if we neglect the great salvation that God has offered to us through Jesus Christ? You don't have to go through the wrath of God. You don't have to face the wrath of God against your sins. God is offering you pardon and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

But if you neglect that great salvation, there will be no escape for you. But only as the book of Hebrews said, "that fearful certain looking forward to the fiery indignation and the wrath of God by which His adversaries will be destroyed" (Hebrews 10:27). Pray always, Jesus said, watch and pray.

Lord, thank You for the warnings. Thank You that You've not left us to grope in darkness. But You've laid out the plan so that as we look at our world conditions, we can know exactly where we are. We don't need to be confused about the issues that are confusing the people of the world today. Nor do we need to be dismayed or cringing in fear. Because Lord, we see that You're right on schedule, and You're going right according to plan. And as we see these things beginning to come to pass, some of them getting into advanced stages, help us, Lord, to look up and lift up our heads because our redemption is getting close. Lord, as you said to John, "Behold I come quickly. And John responded, Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus," so we respond, Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus. Bring to an end the sorrow, the pain, the hatred, the bitterness of this world system and bring in, Lord, Your everlasting kingdom. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

It's really wonderful that the Lord has left us the Guidebook so that we do not walk in darkness as do others. As Paul said, You are the children of light so don't walk in darkness as do others. But walk as children of the light. No excuse for us. We know the truth. God has given to us that truth. But with the truth then comes the responsibility. "They who knew the will of God and did not accordingly will be beaten," the Lord said, "with many stripes. Yet those who did things that were worthy of many stripes, because they didn't know the will, will be beaten with few. Unto whom much is given, much is required." May God help us to watch, to be ready, and to pray always. Be in prayer.