

Sermon Series: Luke 21:5-38

Grace to Stand When the World Is Falling

Sermon Text: Luke 21:20-33 The Grace of Trust

Christ reveals God's sovereign, saving plan when considering the coming judgment, so that we will live with confident faith and hope in Him.

1) Christ reveals God's sovereign, saving plan when considering the coming judgment.

- a) Jerusalem's fall is part of God's plan of salvation through judgment.
 - i) "When you see Jerusalem surrounded . . . then know" (21:20a)
 - ii) "Its desolation has come near" (21:20b)—cf. "abomination of desolation" (Mk 13:14; Dan. 9:27)
 - iii) "days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written" (21:22)
 - (1) covenant curses in the Law (Lev. 26; Deut. 28)
 - (2) covenant lawsuits of the latter prophets (esp. Isa. 34:8; 61:2; 63:4, irony)
 - (3) Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 5.1.19.
 - iv) "wrath against this people" (21:23b)
 - (1) Divine wrath is the outworking of God's holy-love against that which corrupts what is beloved
 - (2) Divine wrath is judicial (*lex talionis*)
 - (3) "Woe to those who are pregnant . . ."—joy is turned to gloom when God judges; gross injustices perpetrated on pregnant women and infants during siege (Deut. 28:52-57)
- b) Rome's fall is part of God's plan of salvation through judgment.
 - i) "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (21:24b)—OT pattern of foreign powers used to punish Israel, then punished for their own wickedness (Psalm 137:7-9; Hag. 2:6-7)
 - ii) "signs in sun and moon and stars" (21:25a)—signs in created order; symbolic and "symbiotic"
 - iii) "and on earth distress . . ." (21:25-26a)—corresponding with signs in sun and moon and stars
 - iv) "the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (21:26b)—cf. Isaiah 34:4-8; Hag. 2:6
- c) Jerusalem's fall is the exercise of Christ's universal dominion, which anticipates the final judgment/salvation of the nations.
 - i) "the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (21:27)—Dan. 7:13-14
 - ii) "seen" in the judgment upon Jerusalem
 - iii) anticipates seeing Him return in final judgment/salvation (Acts 1:9-11)
- d) Jerusalem's fall is ironically Zion's redemption:
 - i) "your redemption is drawing near" (21:28)—cf. Isa. 34:4, 8
 - ii) "the kingdom of God is near" (21:31)—near at hand; present and active
- e) The first generation of New Covenant people sets the tempo for every generation until the consummation of the Kingdom.
 - i) "this generation will not pass away" (21:32)
 - ii) "until all has taken place" (21:32)
- f) **Application:**
 - i) Divine judgments within history are very much a part of God's government of the world and His plan of salvation for the nations. Being sovereign over creation, God uses calamities to judge and to warn of impending judgment. Being sovereign over the nations, God uses wars

and revolutions to judge and to warn of impending judgment. The stories of Job and of the man born blind (John 9:1-3) caution against specific interpretations of God's providence in personal suffering. The stories of the Galileans whom Pilate slaughtered and of those killed in the fall of the Tower of Siloam teach us to examine ourselves when considering God's purpose in calamities and suffering (Luke 13:1-5).

- ii) Divine judgments within history herald a final judgment of all nations and individuals (Revelation 20:11-15).
- iii) Christ is the necessary and only way to be delivered from the judgment of God.

2) Christ equips us to live with confident faith and hope in Him.

- a) Christ's instructions to that first generation of New Covenant people:
 - i) "flee" (21:21a)—do not resist Rome
 - ii) "let not those who are out in the country enter it" (21:21b)—don't trust city walls
 - iii) "Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (21:28).—confident faith in Christ; knowing the Kingdom of God is not falling with the destruction of Jerusalem/Rome; but that God is vindicating His Christ and His people through His judgments (cf. Rev. 16:5-6; 18:19-20; 19:1-2)
 - iv) "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees." (21:29-31)—discernment from Christ's teachings when it's the end of the world as we know it
 - v) According to an early Church historian, the Church in Jerusalem listened to Jesus.
 - vi) Noah, Lot listened to God and were delivered, when God's judgment fell
- b) Christ's eternal word is our firm confidence (21:33): "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."
- c) **Application:**
 - i) Seek first the kingdom of God . . ." (Matt. 6:33). Loyalty to Christ supersedes all other loyalties—Christ above country, family, vocation, "life." Be controlled by the love of Christ above all other loves (2 Cor. 5:13-14).
 - ii) Discern "news and events" theologically:
 - (1) with knowledge of God's revelation
 - (2) with faith in God's providence
 - (3) with peace from God's goodness
 - (4) with hope from God's promises
 - iii) Live with confident faith and hope in Him whose words will not pass away.
 - iv) Jesus told His people to flee from the wrath to come, but Jesus went to Jerusalem to bear the wrath of God.

Doxology: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4