

## Signs Of The End-Being Revealed Luke 21:5-36

There are so many, many mysteries that are revealed to us within the words of our scriptures. Some of those mysteries involve events of the past, but other of those mysteries involve events yet to come at some future time. And yes, those future mysteries will remain a mystery until the timing that God has for their answers to be made known.

And of all of those mysteries that are "yet to be revealed", this one that we have approached here in our study today is, no doubt, probably one that has gained some of the greatest of interest and concern, this mystery that Jesus is describing as the "End of Days" for this earth as we know it.

And this particular mystery is especially captivating not only so for those of us who believe in the words of this Book, but it is also especially captivating for many of those who claim not to believe, those in our public media and especially those in the entertainment world, with all their many books and movies and other fascinations being played out daily throughout our modern culture.

And though there be a number of differing opinions that have developed about how this mystery will finally reveal itself, there seems to be one constant that is common among all those variations. And that constant is that yes, we know that there surely was a beginning of days. And yes, there surely will also be an end of days.

And here in today's scripture passage, Jesus began to reveal some small portions of that very special mystery. Here, He confirms to us that yes, there surely will come a time when all of life as we know it to be, and all of the things that both God and man have created and devised within it, will cease to exist.

And within His words, He gives a fearsome warning that the manner in which that end will take place will not be a pleasant one.

Let's pause for a moment and read these words of this passage given here in Luke chapter 21, beginning in verse 5,

<sup>5</sup> And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he (the Lord Jesus) said, <sup>6</sup> "As for these things

that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”<sup>7</sup> And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”<sup>8</sup> And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them.”<sup>9</sup> And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”

<sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”<sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.<sup>12</sup> But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake.<sup>13</sup> This will be your opportunity to bear witness.<sup>14</sup> Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer,<sup>15</sup> for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.<sup>16</sup> You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death.<sup>17</sup> You will be hated by all for my name’s sake.<sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head will perish.<sup>19</sup> By your endurance you will gain your lives.

<sup>20</sup> “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.<sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it,<sup>22</sup> for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.<sup>23</sup> Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.<sup>24</sup> They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

<sup>25</sup> “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves,<sup>26</sup> people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.<sup>27</sup> And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.<sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

<sup>29</sup> And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. <sup>34</sup> "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:5-36)

Here in these words, and in similar words given in Matthew chapter 24 and in Mark chapter 13, Jesus clearly reveals the events that men have come to refer to as, "the end of days".

I wondered why the other gospel, the Book of John, did not give us a similar account. I concluded that perhaps it was because John was given the whole Book of Revelation as his contribution. And folks, between these words given here in the gospels, and those given in the Book of Revelation and then even some from the Old Testament Prophets, especially the Book of Daniel, we have been given adequate warning. And we are without excuse.

And again, prophecies such as these have always stirred a keen interest in the minds of men, prompting many "would-be prophets" throughout the generations to observe the events of their own times and conclude that the day of Christ's return would soon come to them during their day, but not so.

I have personally spent many, many hours searching these scriptures for their meaning and especially for clues as to when and how these events might take place.

But as Jesus told these disciples, and as He has made clear to me, we will never be able to know the exact day of His coming. We are simply to remain ready and waiting, eagerly anticipating His coming, as with the Parable of the Ten Virgins, with our lamps filled with oil, and with the wicks carefully trimmed.

So then, as we take our first steps into the words of this mystery, may we begin with the most basic of questions concerning it, and that being, if our minds are unable to truly know, to truly comprehend its full meaning, why then did Jesus give it to us?

May I say that the answer to that question might be a very simple one! We are His beloved children! And Fathers tell their children about things that they don't tell other people!

May I take a moment and emphasize this special condition of our soul. To be a "true child of God" is not to simply know things about Him. Many, many people know things, lots of things about Jesus. They might have been life-long church goers, even walked that isle a couple of times. But that does not always mean a person is truly saved and is a true child of God.

No, the real test of our salvation and our adoption into the family of God is defined for us in words like those given in John chapter 1, where we are told,

<sup>12</sup> . . . as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

And also, as it is given in Romans chapter 8,

<sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:14-17)

These words are clear folks. And there are two absolute requirements of us to be saved and to become a true child of God. We must "believe" in Him, and we must "receive" Him. And then yes, He, the Lord Jesus will do all the rest. He will save us and He will adopt us into His forever family.

May I give us one more assurance, one that I especially love. It's given to us in Romans chapter 10 beginning in verse 9, and it reads,

<sup>9</sup> if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

And dear Christian, in receiving Christ as our Savior and Lord, we become God's beloved children, part of His household, with all of the rights and benefits and blessings that sons and daughters of God rightfully have. And as His children, God, our Father will tell secrets to us that He does not tell to other people who are not His children.

Listen . . . these are words that I have quoted so often to us given in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 . . .

<sup>6</sup> . . . we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, <sup>8</sup> which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." <sup>10</sup> But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:6-10)

These words tell us why God's children can know "spiritual" things such as these. But other people, such as those who write books and movies like the DiVinci Code and other such stories, can never quite get their facts correct. God will not reveal the true meaning of His mysteries to such people. To them, He only reveals enough to give warning of an impending recompense.

Why does God do that? It is simply that yes, He really does love every person and does not desire that any should perish, even those who refuse to believe in Him and to receive Him as Savior and Lord. But He still calls out to them with a stern warning, telling them to turn from their wicked ways and be saved from the eternal sufferings that these words foretell.

But for you and me, those who have willingly surrendered our lives to Him, God invites us to read these words and to freely ponder their full meaning. The first and most important of which is, this mystery is not just about the end of our days,

as the public media would have us to focus on. But rather, this mystery is about the return of Christ, His coming back to earth to complete His redemption of His people, the redemption that He began on the cross.

The mystery is also about Christ bringing final and complete justice to all who live on the earth, justice to satan and to his rebellious angels, and justice to the corrupt and perverse people of this earth. And also to defeat the very last enemy which is "death". And then when all of those things have been completed, to establish His everlasting righteousness upon a new, incorruptible heaven and earth.

Listen as I read about that in the Book of Revelation chapter 21? Listen, verse 1, <sup>1</sup> Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." <sup>5</sup> Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me (John), "Write, for these words are true and faithful." <sup>6</sup> And He (the Lord Jesus) said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. <sup>7</sup> He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (Revelation 21:1-7)

If for no other reason, we should always be studying these and other scriptures like them, looking forward to and anticipating the return of our precious Savior and Lord.

But unfortunately, this most important of motives, the return of Christ, gets pushed aside in favor of some of the more fascinating and intriguing elements within the mystery. That is especially so for the unbeliever who reads these words. But unfortunately, it is also true for many strongly devoted believers.

We have only to read books like the "Left Behind" series by Jerry Jenkins and Tim LeHaye, or turn to the Christian channel of our television and we find preachers

like Jack Van Impe and Hal Lindsey and others like them giving the whole focus of their preaching to the many fascinating events that they perceive will take place in the end times.

And many within the church community, even myself included, are looking at the events of our day and asking, "Are the things taking place today perhaps the beginning of the 'end of days' as Jesus is describing them here to be?"

And again yes, I know that many, in earlier days have done the same thing. They have looked at the events of their day and asked the same question. And no, for them it was obviously not the end of days.

William Miller, one whose followers later founded the "Seventh Day Adventist Church" is perhaps the most famous of those preachers. In the 1840s he began to preach about the world's end, saying that Jesus would return for the long-awaited Second Coming and that the earth would be engulfed in fire sometime between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. Through his teachings, as many as 100,000 "Millerites" sold their belongings and took to the mountains to wait for the end.

When that end didn't come, Miller changed the date. And he did that on several other occasions, each time ending in disappointment and discouragement.

Could it be said that he and his followers were "fools" for the things they did? Perhaps to some degree, but in another sense, perhaps not! In 2 Peter chapter 3, the Apostle Peter gives us this word about our anticipation of the coming of the Lord,

<sup>10</sup> . . . the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. <sup>11</sup> Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives <sup>12</sup> as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. <sup>13</sup> But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup> So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace

with him. <sup>15</sup> Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation. (2 Peter 3:10-15)

So then, for us as Christians, what path should we choose as we read words like these that are being given by the Lord Jesus? Should we be so fearful of turning out like William Miller that we pass on by all these many words given to us by the Lord Jesus? Or should we press on ahead and study them carefully and ask God to simply reveal the amount of truth that He intends for us to know for this moment?

I personally do sincerely believe that we should take the latter course. God's word is always good and it is being presented to us for study and we dare not pass it by.

And so, we will study it as it is given, beginning today with this first and most important of reasons, and that is that Jesus surely will come again to be with us.

And yes, because these and other accompanying scriptures tell us about all the many fascinating events that will lead up to His return, we will study some of those also.

But I do want us to keep our hearts and minds focused on the most important part of this mystery, and that is that the Lord Jesus surely is coming back. And when He does, we will go to be with Him. And at that moment, and for all the moments of eternity that follow, we will have joy unspeakable.

We'll close for today with these words of Revelation chapter 22!

<sup>12</sup> "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." <sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. <sup>15</sup> Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. <sup>16</sup> "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." <sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. (Revelation 22:12-17)



Pray with me!