

## **Do We Hear Him Now?**

LUK 21:7-11;29-36

<sup>7</sup>“Teacher,” they asked, “when will all this happen? What sign will show us that these things are about to take place?” <sup>8</sup> He replied, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and saying, ‘The time has come!’ But don’t believe them. <sup>9</sup> And when you hear of wars and insurrections, don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place first, but the end won’t follow immediately.” <sup>10</sup> Then he added, “Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and plagues in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven.” LUK 21:7-11

<sup>29</sup> Then he gave them this illustration: “Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. <sup>30</sup> When the leaves come out, you know without being told that summer is near. <sup>31</sup> In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that the Kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things have taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear. <sup>34</sup> “Watch out! Don’t let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don’t let that day catch you unaware, <sup>35</sup> like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. <sup>36</sup> Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man.” LUK 21:29-36

In verses 5-6 of this chapter, some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, Jesus said, **“These things which you see; the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.”**

This temple was originally rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra ([Ezra 6:15](#)), but greatly expanded and improved by Herod. It was the center of Jewish life for almost a thousand years. The temple was so revered, that it was customary to swear by the temple ([Matthew 23:16](#)), and speaking against the temple could be considered blasphemy ([Acts 6:13](#)).

Herod more than doubled the temple mount area, increasing it to about 36 acres (150,000 square meters). Herod’s rebuilding work started in 19 B.C., and was completed in A.D. 63, taking more than eighty years. It was finished only seven years before it was destroyed.

The temple wasn’t just big, it was also beautiful. The Jewish historian Josephus said that the temple was covered on the outside with gold plates, that were so brilliant that when the sun shone on them, it was blinding to look at. Where there was no gold, there were blocks of marble of such a pure white that from a distance, travelers thought there was snow on the temple mount.

As great as the temple was, Jesus never hesitated to claim that He was greater than the temple ([Matthew 12:6](#)). For many Jews of that day, the temple had become an idol – it began to mean more to the people, than God Himself.

Good things can become our worst idols; and sometimes, God sours our tastes for them or takes away even though we think they are good things, that we have made our idols. As great as the temple was, as beautiful as it was, Jesus never hesitated, not once, to claim that He was greater than the temple, or any other manmade thing in this world. (Matthew 12:6).

It is said that at the fall of Jerusalem, the last surviving Jews fled to the temple, because it was the strongest, most secure building in the city. Roman soldiers surrounded it, and one drunken soldier started a fire that soon engulfed the whole building. Ornate gold detail work in the roof melted down in the cracks between the stone walls of the temple, and to retrieve the gold, the Roman commander ordered that the temple be dismantled, stone by stone. The destruction was so complete, that today it is true difficulty to know exactly where the temple was.

All of this prompts me to ask: ***Do we hear Him as he speaks to us in this story?*** Many of those who said they worshiped Him back then, did not. The end of this great temple, and possibly the Jewish religion, was pending, as far as many saw it.

I don't know about you, but many people have been wondering, ***“What in the world is going on right now?”*** Look at the world closely, as many major events have taken place in recently which cause many of us to wonder what on earth is happening?

- ***People being killed in mass numbers, over and over, many more being injured in some of the worst attacks in recent history.***
- ***Devastating earthquakes, storms, and harsh weather, taking hundreds, if not thousands of lives in nations around the world.***
- ***Hurricane after Hurricane, major fires, causing loss of life, property and millions displaced from their homes.***
- ***Weather that has been to extremes, over and over, although in truth, this has taken places for generations.***

Yet, because we believe that God is in control, at all times, we know that He is not caught off guard, unaware, when tragedy strikes. In fact, He has to allow these tragedies to happen before, and many more will take place in the time to come. So, my thought is, ***“Is God trying to say something to us?” “Are we listening?” “Do we hear Him?”***

**Illustration:**

*Do you remember that old commercial, where the man from Verizon Wireless man travels around the world, stopping every so many feet to say, “Can you hear me know?” “Can you hear me now?” It was funny to most of us, probably because so many of us have Cell Phones with weak signals, and yet, it reminds me over and over that we don't seem to hear when we need to hear. Perhaps the equipment we are using, or not using, is the issue?*

Let's look at this passage more closely:

## **First ~ The signs are here!**

<sup>7</sup>“Teacher,” they asked, “when will all this happen? What sign will show us that these things are about to take place?” <sup>8</sup> He replied, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and saying, ‘The time has come!’ But don’t believe them. <sup>9</sup> And when you hear of wars and insurrections, don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place first, but the end won’t follow immediately.” <sup>10</sup> Then he added, “Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and plagues in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven.”

As for me, I am not one who believes that we need to walk around, crouching down, hiding under some table, or standing in some strong shelter. But I am one, who believe that mankind has been ignoring God’s attempt to communicate with Him, as He tries to help us get back on track. The more we ignore Him, the louder He will speak.

Jesus warned us, **“Don’t let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and saying, ‘The time has come!’ But don’t believe them.”**

Those are Jesus’ words, yet, that was not to say to us that we can ignore Him, and His calling unto mankind. We should understand, **YES, the end is coming**, and whether you like it or not, or agree with it or not, we will all pay a horrible price if we live in ignorance. If we persist in turning away from God, and His attempts to get our attention, we will pay the price. The signs are all around us. **So, why do we ignore the signs from God, who is seeking to direct our lives toward where we should be in Christ?** Is it ignorance? Is it because we have allowed ourselves to become too busy to stop and hear or see what He is saying? **Why do we struggle to see the signs?**

Those in the temple back then, ignored the signs and everything was destroyed. The Temple, and these structures that once provided safety and strength, are all gone. They didn’t seem to take notice as they should have, and we don’t seem to learn very quickly at times, do we? Do we want destruction, or, are we just not able to comprehend what the message is? I would like to believe we simply don’t see it, or understand it, but I think many times we actually do see it, and just don’t care. Or, see the real importance of the message.

The crowd gathered there were asking the Teacher questions, so they asked Him, **“When will this all take place?” “When will the end of time come?”** Jesus says, “Don’t be miss lead by those who shout loud voices, many of them really don’t know what they are saying. We need to look carefully at everything going on around us and then turn to God, especially when we come into His house. Jesus tells us that the signs are obvious. Yet, don’t get overly concerned about any one person’s claims that he or she has the only answer. He is telling them and us, **HE HAS THE ANSWERS....**

## **Second ~ The Power of God is real and obvious.**

Later in this passage, He begins shedding light on what we need to see. He says, “<sup>29</sup> Then he gave them this illustration: “Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. <sup>30</sup> When the leaves come out, **you know without being told**, that summer is near. <sup>31</sup> In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that the Kingdom of God is near.

<sup>32</sup> I tell you the truth, **this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things have taken place.** <sup>33</sup> **Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.”**

You will know when the Kingdom of God is near, that is powerful statement. The fig tree is just one example of a tree, that buds before summer; no special reference to Israel seems to be intended (**as indicated by the words, or any other tree**). The idea is that when a fig tree buds, there is an inevitable result – summer is near, and fruit is coming. In the same way, **when these signs are seen, and we will all know, those who are living for God, that the coming of Jesus in His glory, with His church, will inevitably follow!**

**This generation will by no means pass away till all things take place:** That is His promise for all of us. I do not believe He was referring only to His generation, and that of the disciples, but of every generation that recognizes these signs. The words He uses here, have three different possible meanings: **1)All of the descendants of a common ancestor; 2)A set of people all born at the same time; or, 3)The period of time occupied by such a set of people, often in the sense of successive sets of people.** One generation after the next and the next.

### **Illustration:**

*How many of you know who Usain Bolt is? Usain Bolt was born on August 21, 1986 in Sherwood Content, Jamaica. He grew up obsessed with sports, excelling in football and cricket. At high school, his cricket coach encouraged him in athletics. It was a good decision. He first gained notice as a track prodigy at the 2002 world junior championships. Before a crowd of 36,000 in Jamaica's National Stadium in Kingston, Bolt, then just 15 years old, won a gold medal in the 200-meter race. He became the youngest male world junior champion in the history of sports.*

*By 2007, he was the fastest man in track and field history, setting his first 100-meter world record; and a year later, at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, he rose to international fame. In China, Bolt won titles in the men's 100-meter sprint, the 200-meter, and 4x100-meter, setting new world records in all three events. He has the title of being the fastest human who's ever lived based on known records. In 2009, at the World Athletics Championship in Berlin, he ran the 100-meter dash in 9.58 seconds, with an average speed was just over 23 mph and a top speed closer to 30 mph.*

*He amazed fellow athletics and fans alike, but he may be challenged by two runners from biblical days. The Bible tells the stories of Elijah and Philip as fast runners.*

*The story of Elijah is recorded in 1 Kings 18. "The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel." The Bible does not record how fast Elijah ran, but we do know that it was a miraculous speed.*

*King Ahab was riding in his chariot to stay ahead of the storm, and it is believed that his top speed would have been 35 miles per hour. The distance from Carmel to Jezreel was about 20 miles, and if Ahab was pushing his horses, then it is likely Elijah ran even faster than Usain Bolt's world record, and at a much longer distance.*

*The story of Philip and the eunuch is recorded in Acts 8. "Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him anymore." In a flash, Philip then appeared in Azotus, preaching the good news. The distance was about 30 miles to the north. Estimating a flash is one second, a track and field judge might calculate his speed at 30 miles per second or 108,000 miles per hour. This was another miraculous speed. In the finite mind of man, Philip's run and Elijah's run, would be completely impossible. But as the angel told Mary "... with God nothing will be impossible."*

In any event, Jesus was speaking of the real power of God at work within the world, His obvious work and power, to show His presence and our need to seek after Him, for time is short. **HIS** power is REAL, and it is obvious for most to acknowledge. Lord, help us open our eyes and try to see what you are trying to say to us. First and foremost, **ARE WE READY? Ready for His return?** Our God is an awesome God, who is all powerful and can do whatever he feels needs to be done. Ready means we have accepted Him, and we are trying to live in obedience to His Word. Is that where we are living?

Then Jesus says something I want us all to consider,

### **3~ Watchout**

*<sup>34</sup> "Watch out! Don't let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, <sup>35</sup> like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. <sup>36</sup> Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man."*

Here is a thought I want us to hear today. **Don't let the world cause us to get so involved in a worldly driven life, indulging in the worldly things, so much so, that we do things which are not that important, while we ignore that very things that are important!**

There are so many activities we feel we must do, yet, the most important things will always include serving God.

I believe that Jesus is telling us,

**"We can get so busy doing things, sometimes destructive things, destructive to us and others, that the Day of the Lord will come upon us, and we will not be ready..."** We have made far too many things far too important, that are not that important at all.

***We are consumed by doing, rather than being.***

Jesus is reminding us that, ***“It will come, (the last day of life) it will come upon everyone in this world.”*** So, He says, ***“Watch out, pray for God’s strength to make it through. Pray that you will stand before God, His Son Jesus, the final Judge, and hear Him say, “Well done!”***

Do not let our hearts become dull.... Dull to what, to Him and His calling....

However, at the rate we are going right now, I would say that there are many who still don’t get it. Why do I say that? In my lifetime I have seen so many anti-God decisions in this world.

- ***Pulling the Ten Commandments off the walls in public building.***
- ***Trying to get rid of “Under God” in the pledge of Allegiance and on our coins...***
- ***Removing prayer from schools, altogether in most cases.***
- ***Forbidding the use of our religious thoughts, lifestyle, and emblems.***
- ***Denial, that’s right, Denial of the presence of God in our world.***
- ***Blatant lifestyles which are directly against what the Lord teaches His children.***

It is no surprise to me, that the tragedies we are witnessing are taking place in our world even as we speak. For mankind has been and is ignoring the one who created them, ***God***. Don’t get me wrong, I hurt for those who are suffering loss, yet, I hurt just as much, if not more, for all those who don’t see why all heartache is taking place.

My fear is, that it may get worse before it gets better. Why? ***We don’t listen very well***, let alone see with our own eyes. How many more need to die, or suffer great loss, until the world stops and answers the question, ***“Do you hear Me know?”***

How about us? Do we hear Him?

Prayer!