

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 21: 12-24**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Luke Chapter 21 and today we will read verses 12 to 24.

**Verse 12: "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake."**

The things Jesus spoke about here were soon fulfilled in the opening chapters of the Book of Acts. At the next Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out. Peter stood up and testified for Christ, and three thousand people were saved at once. Afterward, he performed another miracle, causing a lame man to rise up, walk, and praise God. As a result, another five thousand people were saved. Then persecution began. The earliest persecution came first from the Jews, the chief priests, and the Pharisees. The believers were brought before synagogues and even thrown into prison. Later, in the latter half of Acts, another apostle greatly raised up by God — Paul — gave testimony before King Agrippa. Therefore, what Jesus mentioned here in verse 12 was fulfilled one by one within the following thirty years.

**Verse 13: "But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony."**

Jesus encouraged His disciples not to fear persecution, because these persecutions would become opportunities for their testimony. In peaceful and comfortable circumstances, the preciousness of our faith is not easily revealed. But when we are placed in adversity, when we are treated unfairly, and we are still able to stand firm

for God and boldly testify for Him, these things become our most beautiful testimony. Therefore, in verse 14, Jesus encouraged them:

**Verse 14-15: “Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.”**

They had just experienced what happened in chapter 20, where the scribes, chief priests, and Pharisees tried in every possible way to test Jesus, yet Jesus very wisely refuted them. Right at this moment, Jesus also foretold in advance that His disciples would likewise suffer persecution in the future. At the same time, Jesus promised them that He would give them words and wisdom that none of their adversaries would be able to resist or refute.

Therefore, He told them not to worry, and even to settle it in their hearts not to prepare beforehand how they should defend themselves or what they should say. Although circumstances may be unpredictable, God’s supply is faithful. The preservation of the Lord Jesus Christ is even more certain; at the very moment we are in need, He will grant us His help.

**Verse 16: “You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.”**

Jesus made it very clear to them that what would happen in the future would not only involve persecution from enemies, but even their own family members—parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—would rise up against them, hand them over to the authorities, and some among them would even be put to death. It seems that Jesus was strengthening His disciples’ faith in advance by foretelling their future martyrdom. Later, according to church history, with the exception of John, the other disciples were martyred one by one.

**Verse 17-18: “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost.”**

Here, Jesus seemed to be telling His disciples: if it is God’s will for you to be martyred, then face martyrdom joyfully and with faith. But if the time has not yet come, or if it is not God’s will, then not even a hair of your head will perish.

**Verse 19: “By your patience possess your souls.”**

Jesus therefore encouraged them to endure patiently. The word “life” here in the original language is *soul*—meaning that they would preserve their souls, or their soul-life.

Regarding the signs before the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus spoke very plainly to His disciples and foretold that they would suffer persecution. Yet in the midst of their persecution, if it was not God’s will, Jesus clearly told them that not a hair of their head would perish. Therefore, when they found themselves in all kinds of circumstances and tribulations, Jesus encouraged them to persevere with endurance. If we are willing to suffer for His sake, although our bodies may experience persecution and hardship, in the end our souls will be preserved.

**Verse 20: “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.”**

At this point, Jesus very clearly told them when Jerusalem would be destroyed: it would be when Jerusalem was surrounded by armies. Jesus told them that when this happened, the time of its desolation was near.

**Verse 21-22: “Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter**

**her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.”**

Among the three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—only the Gospel of Luke records it in such a direct and clear manner. When Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, they are to know that its time is near. At that time, they should not enter the city, but flee to the mountains.

According to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, beginning in AD 66, conflict broke out between the Romans and the Jews, and the Roman emperor sent troops to besiege Jerusalem. From that time until AD 70, when the Roman prince Titus destroyed Jerusalem, several years passed in between. According to historical records, we also see that Jesus’ disciples truly understood the prophecy He had spoken concerning Jerusalem. Therefore, they indeed left the city, because Jesus Himself had told them: those in Judea should flee to the mountains; those inside the city should leave; and those in the countryside should not enter the city, for these were the days of vengeance.

According to Josephus’ record, a total of 1.1 million Jews died by the sword of the Romans during this period. But thank the Lord, those whom God had chosen and preserved—especially the apostle John the Apostle and the other disciples—escaped from Jerusalem, allowing the gospel of Jesus Christ to continue and the testimony of the church to endure.

**Verse 23: “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.”**

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples around AD 30 on the Mount of Olives. Forty years later, they were fulfilled in Jerusalem exactly as He had foretold. Because of Jesus’ prophecy, His disciples fled across the Jordan River to Pella.

Throughout this entire process, God especially preserved the Apostle John, because twenty years later God would still use him to write the Gospel of John, I John, II John, III John, and the Book of Revelation. Especially in Revelation, God allowed John to see the signs that must take place before the end of the age and before Jesus returns again.

John personally witnessed how Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70. Therefore, he could testify that the destruction of Jerusalem was only a foreshadowing of the future judgment that will come upon the world when Jesus returns again. Jerusalem was destroyed and Israel came under judgment; but when Jesus returns, God will judge the whole world. Therefore, the words Jesus spoke to His disciples—how to escape the destruction of Jerusalem—are likewise God’s message to His church today: how the children of God should prepare themselves for the time when He returns to judge the world.

**Verse 24: “And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”**

History truly tells us that when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, many Jews—1.1 million of them—fell by the sword, while the remaining Jews were scattered among the nations. They were carried away into many countries, and from that point on, the Jewish nation ceased to exist, and Jewish society was no longer established in its land. This situation continued until the reestablishment of Israel in 1948.

“Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Here in the Gospel of Luke, a special phrase is introduced: “the times of the Gentiles.” God allowed Jerusalem to be trampled by the Gentiles, but His permission had a definite limit. In the Old Testament, whenever the Israelites failed to obey God’s law, God raised up Gentile kings to discipline them; yet every period of discipline had its appointed duration. This time was no exception.

God allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed and trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles would be fulfilled. Under God's sovereign authority, when the times of the Gentiles are complete, it will be the time for Jesus to return and establish His kingdom on the earth.

The disciples who were with Jesus at that time understood His warning, and therefore escaped the great disaster that came upon Jerusalem at its destruction. In the same way, today God is also speaking to His church. One day He will return to judge the world, and His judgment must begin with the house of God. Just as the disciples understood the words Jesus spoke to them, we also should pray that we may understand what God is saying to us. While there is still time today, may we prepare ourselves, so that when Jesus returns again, we will be found ready.

Let us pray together: Lord, bless us and give us ears that can hear, and hearts that are soft before You. While there is still time today, help us to be willing to spend time daily in Your word and to have personal, intimate fellowship with You every day. Through our reading of Scripture, through our prayers, and through our church life, preserve every one of Your children, so that in these last days we may prepare ourselves to welcome Your return. Bless my life today. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!