



Today's Message

Date: May 29, 2022
Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas
Title: *"The Distant Triumphant Song"*

Text: Luke 21:20–24 (ESV)

²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹ 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, ²² for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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.

Introduction: Jesus continued his description of the global events that would come to pass because Israel rejected him. This text uses language that could apply to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. However, a closer look reveals that Jesus looked beyond the first century to the years immediately preceding his Second Coming. He tells a heart-wrenching story of human cruelty and divine judgment. But the paragraph concludes with a glimmer of glorious hope.

I. Jesus described events still future, not events now past.

Interpretive considerations:

- A. Jesus is his own interpreter: He explained the signs of his coming at the end of the age (cf. Matthew 24:3).

- B. Jesus used themes he previously applied to his Second Coming (Luke 17:31).
- C. Jesus used language derived from Old Testament prophecies connected with his Second Coming. 20, 22
- D. Jesus connected Jerusalem's destruction with global events. 23b
- E. Jesus described Jerusalem's destruction as the culmination of Messianic prophesy. 22b

II. Jesus told the story of Jerusalem's final siege. 20-24a

- A. The sign: Armies of the world will converge on Israel according to divine plan. 20
- B. The command: Flee with all urgency. 21
- C. The explanation: The "Day of the Lord" has arrived. 22
- D. The nature: The evil invaders will be merciless. 23
- E. The outcome: The nations will perpetrate slaughter and slavery. 24a

III. Jesus gave hope in the face of despair. 24b

- A. He reminded his followers that God has determined the final boundary of humanity's rebellion . . .
- B. And that the Great Tribulation will serve as the precursor to Christ's glorious return. Cf. 20ff.

Today's take-home truth: As the world goes from bad to worse, Christians do not *lose heart*; instead, we *take heart* because we know that Christ's coming is approaching.