**THE SON OF MAN COMING**

Luke 21:1-38

Key Verse: 21:27

"At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

Jesus, the son of God, came to seek and save the lost. For the last over 3 years, to find the lost, Jesus had traveled to villages in Galiess, Jedea, Samaria, and even Gentile regions. Wherever he went and whoever came to him, he served them with compassion, healing the sick, driving out demons, and especially teaching the word of God and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Just a few days ago, Jesus entered Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. The crowd of disciples praised God in loud voices: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” Jesus, the king of salvation, entered Jerusalem to set sinners free from the slavery of sin and the condemnation through his perfect sacrifice on the cross for the sin of the world.

Luke Ch20-24 records the last week of Jesus’ earthly life. Upon entering Jerusalem, Jesus cleansed the temple and taught the word of God. Soon, he faced opposition and challenges from the religious leaders. The teachers of the law sent spies to trap him with a question about paying taxes. The Sadducees challenged him with a question regarding resurrection. Yet, Jesus outwitted all their arguments, teaching that God is the God of the living, and affirming that He, the promised Messiah, is the Son of God. Teaching the truth, Jesus could not avoid sharp conflict with the religious leaders, even though it put His life in danger.

In today’s passage, Jesus tells what will happen in the future, in the end times. Understanding where history is headed is important. It is because without knowing the end no one can set the right direction or goal for their life. It is like trying to use GPS without knowing the destination. History is moving forward, toward the Second coming of Jesus Christ in power and great glory. In the end times, Only in Jesus, there will be salvation, redemption, and the ultimate victory. The living hope of the new heaven, the kingdom of God, will be realized. When we know this, we can confront the present times, no matter the circumstances, and set the right goal of our lives for what is coming. This lesson is crucial for all of us. Let us listen to Jesus and learn how to live in our time in the light of this great hope of His coming.

1. **Jesus honors a widow's offering (1-4)**

In the temple, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins - worth only a few cents in today’s terms. Yet, Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all the others." Why was this so? Jesus explained, “All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in all she had to live on." We often admire the large offerings of the rich. But, Jesus was truly pleased with the widow’s small offering. It is Because he does not see just the amount, but the heart behind it. Though the rich gave without pain or sacrifice, the widow gave out of poetry, sacrificing everything she had. If anyone had an excuse not to give, it was this woman. She was not only poor, but also a widow. This offering is the expression of her wholehearted love for God. It is the expression of her faith and trust in God. In terms of the size of the gift, the rich gave much more than the widow, but God measures offering in terms of sacrifice, love, trust, and devotion. She gave more than any one.

We learn two things from the widow and Jesus. First, how to offer to God in a way that pleases Him. It is to give sacrificially, wholeheartedly, and devotedly. Such acts of sacrifice, love, and faith are what pleases Jesus. Many people misunderstand that NJ UBF is so rich that we welcome and serve many guests with generosity and delicious food. In fact, none of us give offerings because we have too much money. We could serve many guests, the next generations, campus missions, and world missions because of someone’s sacrificial offerings to God. People might not notice, but Jesus sees what you give, more importantly, what you have given up - sacrifice - for God and for the gospel.

Secondly, we learn how to recognize true sacrifice for God. we may not be overly impressed by the large offerings of the rich, or take lightly the genuine sacrifice of the poor. Please forgive me if I did not see your sacrificial offering to God. Since I am a man, I cannot see one’s heart but Jesus. Jesus is not pleased with mere amounts of money, but he is pleased by those who give their hearts. We may bring tears of repentance; praises and prayers of our hearts in quiet places; worship with truth and spirit; devotion to serve one lost sheep; dedication to teach /preach the gospel; thanks with sacrificial offerings.

1. **The End times (5-24)**

Look at verse 5. It seems that the disciples were not listening to Jesus. Though Jesus taught how to see spiritual realities, they were fascinated by the temple’s beauty, remarking on its massive stones and golden plates “Wow! Wow! "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" The temple was indeed impressive with massive stones, blue-white marble. The foundation stones were almost the size of box cars. Some of the stones were covered by plates of gold. When reflecting the sunlight, it was so dazzling that it blinded the eyes. It was so magnificent that it seemed to last forever.

However, what did Jesus say about the temple? Look at verse 6: "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down." Jesus declared complete destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. It was a shocking prophecy to the disciples since the temple was the heart and soul of Israel’s worship. To the Jews, the destruction of the temple means the end of the world. Out of surprise and curiosity, they asked Jesus. “Teacher, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

Jesus did not give them a simple answer. It’s because His main concern was not to satisfy their curiosity, but to equip them spiritually for the times to come - The end of times - the times of persecution - His Second coming. So, Jesus taught them not only the signs of the end of the age, but also gave them warnings and instructions in verses 8-19 - to be ready for what is coming!!

**First, watch out that you are not deceived (8).** Look at verse 8. "He replied: 'Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, "I am he," and, "The time is near." Do not follow them.'" Historically, there have been so many false messiahs. In the end times more false messiahs or prophets will come in many forms of deceptions. They promise happiness, peace, and salvation, enticing us to follow them. But, Jesus said “Do not be deceived” by the lies of the world. These false messiahs cannot deliver us any happiness or salvation, but despair, emptiness, meaninglessness, and destruction. Our only true Messiah is Jesus Chirst, who gives us the living Hope of the kingdom of God through his death and resurrection from the dead. Today, False messiahs can be specific people, but also take the form of ideologies like materialism, hedonism, or humanism. So, we must watch out not to be deceived. To do so, we must follow Jesus, our true Messiah. Jesus said “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”(Mt 16:24)

**Second, do not be frightened (9-11)**. In verses 9-10 Jesus tells his disciples that there will be wars, revolutions, great earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and many fearful events such as wild-fires, Tsunamis, Hurricanes, Volcano eruptions, economic crisis with inflations, and so on. When we hear about all these things, we cannot but be fearful. We are too small and weak to do anything against such natural disasters. But, Jesus says “Do Not be frightened!” How can we do so? Jesus said “These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.” It means that God is the Sovereign Ruler; all things are under God’s hands. Though the world seems to get out of control, God is in control. No matter how awful the world may seem, these are part of God’s plan to bring eternal salvation and victory to his people. Trusting God’s sovereignty and his power, we may overcome fear, but have the peace given from Jesus. Jesus promises in John14: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me… Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

**Third, Stand Firm.** Verses 12-17 tells what would happen to the disciples. They will be persecuted; they will be delivered to synagogues and prisons; they will be brought before kings and governors. Not only that, but also they will be betrayed by family members and friends; even they will be hated and even killed. Why would such things happen to the disciples - us? What have we done? It is All because of Jesus; all because of our faith in him. Then, is it time to disown Jesus and deny our faith? If we do so, would we be free from these persecutions? What are Jesus’ instructions for us? Look at verse 19. “Stand Firm and you will win life.” During these times, Jesus will not leave us alone; he will be our strength, our wisdom, our fortress, and our ark of salvation. Look at verse 13-18. Jesus will give us words and wisdom to defend ourselves and to testify to Jesus; Jesus will protect us so that not a hair of us will perish; Eventually Jesus will lead us to win eternal life. So, stand firm. Not only that, but also through the persecutions, troubles, and hardships, Jesus will refine our faith to be like pure gold; Jesus will make God’s people to be witnesses of Him to the whole world; Jesus will enable us to win the victory over any adversary for his glory and salvation purpose. So, Stand Firm! All we have to do is to decide not to worry, but stand firm in Jesus. Though we might be in such terrible circumstances, we may make up our mind “Not to Worry.” Here “stand firm” means endurance. No matter what happens to our physical life, when we stand firm in Jesus, we will win life; we will receive eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Look at verses 20-24. Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple, which actually will be fulfilled in A.D.70 by the Roman general Titus. In history, Jerusalem and the temple were completely destroyed, so that not one stone was left on another. The destruction was without mercy, even for pregnant women and nursing mothers. Why did it happen? Look at verse 22. This was God's punishment! Even though Israel was chosen, God severely punished them for they rejected and killed his one and only son like the rebellious tenants. In reality, it was to warn his people of the coming judgment, so they could flee from it. In fact, those who remembered Jesus’ words and fled to the mountains survived.

This historical fact is also a warning for all believers. Any massive buildings or skyscrapers, High Technowledges, AI, any thing that we are amazed about and depend on - even gold, money, power - will not last long or be our shelter or refuges. Only Jesus is our shelter, our refuge and our salvation.

This Judgment of Jerusalem actually served God’s redemptive purpose. It is part of God's plan to save sinners by faith in Jesus alone. There is no need for the temple sacrifices, since Jesus opened the new and living way to God through sacrificing his own life. Salvation is in Christ Jesus by faith alone. Through such severe and systematic persecutions, God liberated the disciples from the bonds of Judaism and scattered them to the whole world.

**III. the Son of man comes in power and great glory (25-38)**

Here, Jesus tells about the end of the times; it will come with the Second coming of Jesus. Look at verses 25-26. "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.” Jesus describes the signs just before his Second Coming. These signs are unmistakable. The Heavenly bodies will be shaken. If the sun, moon or stars are shifted just a little, the earth is devastated. Men cannot but become helpless and very anxious. Who can save us from earthquakes? Who can save us from the burning sun? The power, the authority, the money, the talent, the genius brain are useless. There is nothing we can do. Men are doomed to death

Such a terrible day will be the most glorious moment in human history just like the creation of the world. Look at verse 27. "At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Here the son of man refers to Jesus and it is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel.(Daniel 7:13, 14) The words “in power and great glory” explain the nature of his second coming. It will be quite different from his first coming. When he first came, he came as a baby in a manger. Though he was the Son of God, he came to serve sinners. But when he comes again, it will be with power and great glory. He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords; the judge of the living and the dead. For the evil, it will be the day of Judgment. But for his people, it will be the day of redemption. It will be the day that we finally meet Jesus in glory. What a great day it will be when we see Christ face to face.

Look at verse 28. Jesus said, "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" Though there will be many trials and tribulations that Christians will go through in this world, our great comfort and hope is this - “The son of man is coming with power and great glory!” Jesus will wipe every tear from our eyes and crown us with everlasting glory. That day, there will be weeping and crying among unbelievers but there will be rejoicing and hallelujahs among the believers.

What an amazing word of Jesus. Can you believe it? In order to help us believe, Jesus gives us assurance. Look at verses 32-33. "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Here Jesus speaks with an authority far greater than that of any other prophet. Jesus speaks here as God, whose words are eternal, never failing. The fulfillment of Jesus' word is more certain than the ground we walk on or the air we breathe. Because Jesus promised to come and bring final victory, we can be sure of it. Words, in our day and time, are cheap. Promises in politics and businesses meant little. But Jesus assures his disciples that His words will never fail. If we value things on the basis of how long they will last, nothing has greater value than the word of God. We must hold this word of promise in our hearts.

Jesus also gave the disciples - us - the final warning. Look at verse 34. "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap." In fact, people cannot face the distressing terror of this world. So, they get drunk and use drugs and indulge into the pleasures of the world such as playing games endlessly! While they are escaping reality in such a way, they will be caught like an animal in a trap. Jesus' people must be careful not to fall into that kind of escapism. What then can we do? Look at verse 36. "Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." We can pray. Watch and pray - it enables us to escape the destruction, from the wrath of God. Watch and pray - it enables us to stand before the living God.

Jesus spent his last days teaching the word of God in the temple from early morning, and his nights praying on the Mount of Olives. In this way, he prepared himself for the coming of sufferings and death.

There is no more awesome event than Jesus’ coming day. For believers, it will be the day of their redemption; deliverance from their enemies. For unbelievers, the day will be the eternal judgement day, unexpected, a shock. For the believers, it will be the day that we have been eagerly awaited for! Until that day, we may learn from the fig tree. When its leaves sprout we know that summer is near. Likewise, when we see the fulfillment of these signs, we can know that the end is near and the son of man is coming. Until that day, we may remember Jesus’ teaching for us. Holding onto the word of God, do not be deceived by the lies of the world. Holding onto the word of truth, do not be frightened but witness Christ. Holding onto the words of God, stand firm and win life. Be always on the watch and pray. May God bless us to hold the hope of Jesus' coming. We may set the right direction and goal of our lives to live by faith. Let’s read the key verse 27.