

## **Luke 21 - Christ's Prophetic Timeline**

### **PROPHECY POINTS TO THE END OF THE WORLD**

“The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal "to the time of the end." Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on the fulfillment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Daniel 12:4.” {GC 355}

“There are those now living who, in studying the prophecies of Daniel and John, received great light from God as they passed over the ground where special prophecies were in process of fulfillment in their order. They bore the message of time to the people. The truth shone out clearly as the sun at noonday. Historical events, showing the direct fulfillment of prophecy, were set before the people, and the prophecy was seen to be a figurative delineation of events leading down to the close of this earth's history. The scenes connected with the working of the man of sin are the last features plainly revealed in this earth's history. The people now have a special message to give to the world, the third angel's message...” {2SM 102}

- Matthew 24:1-3
- Luke 21:5-7

“Jesus did not answer His disciples by taking up separately the destruction of Jerusalem and the great day of His coming. He mingled the description of these two events. Had He opened to His disciples future events as He beheld them, they would have been unable to endure the sight. In mercy to them He blended the description of the two great crises, leaving the disciples to study out the meaning for themselves. When He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, His prophetic words reached beyond that event to the final conflagration in that day when the Lord shall rise out of His place to punish the world for their iniquity, when the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. This entire discourse was given, not for the disciples only, but for those who should live in the last scenes of this earth's history.” {DA 628}

Note: Jesus blended the destruction of Jerusalem with the events that would usher in His return leaving them to “study it out for themselves.”

### **SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

- Matthew 24:3
- Luke 21:7

Note: The questions asked by the disciples were specific; *when* will the destruction of Jerusalem be and *what* sign (**singular**) were they to look for that would mark His soon return.

### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

- Luke 21:8-19
- Matthew 24:1-34
- Mark 13:1-30

Note: Many read through these verses carelessly and think that these are disjointed events, but Jesus was covering the events that would happen in the life of His disciples before the destruction of Jerusalem. It is vital that we recognize Jesus is laying out a precise delineation of events. Refer back to Luke 21:10-12.

“Turning to the disciples, Christ said, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Many false messiahs will appear, claiming to work miracles, and declaring that the time of the deliverance of the Jewish nation has come. These will mislead many. Christ's words were fulfilled. Between His death and the siege of Jerusalem many false messiahs appeared. But this warning was given also to those who live in this age of the world. The same deceptions practiced prior to the destruction of Jerusalem have been practiced through the ages, and will be practiced again.

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, men wrestled for the supremacy. Emperors were murdered. Those supposed to be standing next the throne were slain. There were wars and rumors of wars. "All these things must come to pass," said Christ, "but the end [of the Jewish nation as a nation] is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Christ said, as the rabbis see these signs, they will declare them to be God's judgments upon the nations for holding in bondage His chosen people. They will declare that these signs are the token of the advent of the Messiah. Be not deceived; they are the beginning of His judgments. The people have looked to themselves. They have not repented and been converted that I should heal them. The signs that they represent as tokens of their release from bondage are signs of their destruction.

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." All this the Christians suffered. Fathers and mothers betrayed their children. Children betrayed their parents. Friends delivered their friends up to the Sanhedrin. The persecutors wrought out their purpose by killing Stephen, James, and other Christians.” {DA 628-629}

### **A DELINEATION OF EVENTS**

- Luke 21:20-32

Note: Jesus now takes up the disciples' two questions and He begins with the destruction of Jerusalem.

#### **1. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM: 70 A.D.**

- Matthew 24:15-18; Mark 13:14-16 cf. Luke 21:20-23

“And the Saviour warned His followers: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21. When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay. Throughout the land of Ju-

dea, as well as in Jerusalem itself, the signal for flight must be immediately obeyed. He who chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down into his house, even to save his most valued treasures. Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to return for the outer garment laid aside while they should be toiling in the heat of the day. They must not hesitate a moment, lest they be involved in the general destruction.” {GC 25}

Note: Jesus taught that “the abomination of desolation” was the armies of pagan Rome that would besiege Jerusalem.

### **TWO DESOLATING POWERS:**

- Daniel 8:11-13
- Daniel 11:31
- Daniel 12:11

Note: The “abomination of desolation,” “abomination that maketh desolate and “transgression of desolation” are the papacy. Jesus was teaching a very important prophetic principle, namely, that there are two desolating powers in Bible prophecy; the “daily” desolation and the “abomination of desolation,” or paganism and papalism.

- Daniel 9:26 cf. Revelation 12:3-6, 13-15

### **WRATH UPON THIS PEOPLE:**

- Luke 21:22-24a

Note: The destruction of Jerusalem by pagan Rome was mentioned by Christ as taking place “that all things which are written may be fulfilled.” Where is Jerusalem’s destruction mentioned in the O.T.?

- Deuteronomy 28:45-58

“Thousands perished from famine and pestilence. Natural affection seemed to have been destroyed. Husbands robbed their wives, and wives their husbands. Children would be seen snatching the food from the mouths of their aged parents. The question of the prophet, “Can a woman forget her sucking child?” received the answer within the walls of that doomed city: “The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.” Isaiah 49:15; Lamentations 4:10. Again was fulfilled the warning prophecy given fourteen centuries before: “The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, . . . and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.” Deuteronomy 28:56, 57.” {GC 32}

- Leviticus 26:14-45

## **2. THE DARK AGES & DEADLY WOUND: 538 - 1798 A.D.**

- Matthew 24:21, 22 cf. Mark 13:19, 20

“From the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ passed on rapidly to the greater event, the last link in the chain of this earth's history,--the coming of the Son of God in majesty and glory. Between these two events, there lay open to Christ's view long centuries of darkness, centuries for His church marked with blood and tears and agony. Upon these scenes His disciples could not then endure to look, and Jesus passed them by with a brief mention. "Then shall be great tribulation," He said, "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ's followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain. Had not God's hand been stretched out to preserve His people, all would have perished. "But for the elect's sake," He said, "those days shall be shortened." {DA 630}

“The persecution of the church did not continue throughout the entire period of the 1260 years. God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial. In foretelling the "great tribulation" to befall the church, the Saviour said: "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24:22. Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798.” {GC 266}

- Luke 21:24 cf. Revelation 11:1, 2

## **3. THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS: 1780 - 1833 A.D.**

- Luke 21:25, 26 cf. Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25

“Twenty-five years later appeared the next sign mentioned in the prophecy--the darkening of the sun and moon. What rendered this more striking was the fact that the time of its fulfillment had been definitely pointed out. In the Saviour's conversation with His disciples upon Olivet, after describing the long period of trial for the church,--the 1260 years of papal persecution, concerning which He had promised that the tribulation should be shortened,--He thus mentioned certain events to precede His coming, and fixed the time when the first of these should be witnessed: "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 13:24. The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled.” {GC 306}

- Revelation 6:12, 13

“The signs in the sun, moon, and stars have been fulfilled.” {RH, November 22, 1906} See also Great Controversy chapters 17, 18.

#### 4. THE DISTRESS OF NATIONS: Aug. 11, 1840 A.D.

- Luke 21:25, 26

“I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken and that events come in order. War and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers in Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.” {EW 41}

Note: It was a common prophetic understanding of the Millerites that the distress of nations at their time was the Islamic crisis.

- Revelation 9:13-15

“By losing the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates, I understand that God was now about to suffer the four principal nations of which the Ottoman empire was composed, which had in vain attempted to subdue the Eastern Empire at Constantinople, and made but little progress in conquering Europe, now to take Constantinople, and to overrun and subdue one third part of Europe, which was the fact about the middle of the fifteenth century.” Works of William Miller, vol. 2, 120

“As the prophetic period of this trumpet commenced by the voluntary surrender of power into the hands of the Turks by the Christian emperor of the East, so we might justly conclude that its termination would be marked by the voluntary surrender of that power by the Turkish Sultan back again into the hands of the Christians. In 1838 Turkey became involved in war with Egypt. The Egyptians bid fair to overthrow the Turkish power. To prevent this, the four great powers of Europe, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, interfered to sustain the Turkish government. Turkey accepted their intervention. A conference was held in London at which an ultimatum was drawn up to be presented to Mehemet Ali, the Pacha of Egypt. It is evident that when this ultimatum should be placed in the hands of Mehemet, the destiny of the Ottoman Empire would be virtually lodged in the hands of the Christian powers of Europe. This ultimatum was placed in the hands of Mehemet on the 11th day of August 1840! And on that very day the Sultan addressed a note to the ambassadors of the four powers, inquiring what should be done in case Mehemet refused to comply with the terms which they had proposed. The answer was that he need not alarm himself about any contingency that might arise; for they had made provision for that. The prophetic period ended, and on that very day the control of Mohammedan affairs passed into the hands of Christians, just as the control of Christian affairs had passed into the hands of the Mohammedans 391 years and 15 days before. Thus the second woe ended, and the sixth trumpet ceased its sounding.” Uriah Smith, Synopsis of the Present Truth, 217

## 5. THE OPENING OF THE JUDGMENT: OCT. 22, 1844

- Luke 21: 27, 28

Note: Right here is where many place the second coming of Christ and so they fail in following His prophetic timeline. These verses do not relate to the second but to His coming within the second apartment in the heavenly sanctuary.

- Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14

"And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away." Daniel 7:13, 14. The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man--to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits." {GC 479}

Note: Christ's timeline has now brought us to the opening of the investigative judgment that began Oct. 22, 1844.

### THE DELAY

- Luke 21:28

Note: From here we can see why He stated that "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." We now have the assurance of knowing that there are no more time prophecies holding back His coming [See Revelation 10:5, 6]. The only thing keeping Him from returning are the fulfillment of prophetic events, which are hinged on His people being prepared and having His character.

- Revelation 7:1-4

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. "It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain." {COL 69}