



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

New Testament Survey

Lesson 13 – Jesus Talks about Future Events

What the Future Would Bring

On Holy Tuesday, Jesus' last day of public teaching, He kept thinking of future events:

1. that the Jews would reject Him
2. that many Gentiles would accept Him
3. that God would send judgment on the impenitent Jews
4. that the whole world would be judged on the Last Day, and His people saved

The request of certain Greeks to see Jesus prompted Him to think of all the fruit (all the believers) that His coming death and resurrection would produce among the Gentiles. The voice of God from heaven, which sounded like thunder to the people, reminded Jesus of the glory that would come to God's name from all nations after He was lifted up, that is, crucified.

But His own people rejected Him. There were some who accepted Him, but the majority rejected their Messiah and Savior. Those who rejected Him could only expect judgment and condemnation. Jesus looked ahead with sadness to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to take place 40 years later, in 70 AD. Jesus also spoke of His own second coming in glory and power that would take place at the end of the world. Jesus told His two last parables to keep His believers both waiting and working until the end, when Jesus as Judge shall divide His sheep from the goats and every man will either enjoy eternal life or suffer everlasting punishment.

Meanwhile, the high priest Caiaphas, the leaders of the people, and the traitor Judas made their plans to arrest the Lord and put Him to death. According to God's design this had to happen during the time of the Passover, for Jesus is the true Passover Lamb whose blood smeared on our hearts by faith saves us from everlasting death.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Woe! (Matthew 23:13-39)

These are terrifying words, but they are designed to warn Jesus' followers against hypocrisy and to lead the hypocrites to repentance.

Note that in verse 34, Jesus says that it is He who sends the prophets!

A cent (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4)

Quantity is not what Jesus look at in a gift of money given for His cause. God sees the trust in the giver's heart that is willing to part with a great percentage – even all. Should we give to God only leftovers?

“We want to see Jesus” (John 12:20-26)

When Jesus hears that Gentiles want to see Him, He thinks of the fruit of His death. A kernel of wheat must be put into the ground and die before it produces fruit. Similarly, Jesus must die and rise again to produce fruit: believers from all over the world.

Following Jesus means hating your life, serving Christ, and being honored by God.

The Light (John 12:27-36)

Jesus was troubled by His coming suffering, but He did not pray to be released from that suffering. A voice came from heaven, as at Jesus' baptism and at His transfiguration. This time the voice said (like thunder): **“I have glorified My name and will glorify it”** (v. 28).

Jesus then told how His death would mean the defeat of Satan and that it would produce fruit. He also warned the Jews to accept His light while He was still with them.

The Jews don't believe (John 12:37-50)

Despite all of Jesus' many miracles, the Jews did not believe Him as Isaiah had foretold. Yet some Jews, even leaders like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, believed in Jesus secretly. It is impossible for one truly to believe in God if he does not believe in God's Son, Jesus. When anyone rejects Jesus or His Word, that Word of Jesus will condemn him on the Last Day.

The Temple will be destroyed (Matthew 24:1-2; Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:5-6)

The disciples admired the beautiful Temple built by Herod the Great for Jewish worship, but Jesus said it would be destroyed. When the Roman general Titus (who later became Roman emperor) surrounded Jerusalem with his armies in 70 AD, he did not want to destroy the Temple. He even promised to give the Temple back to the Jews if they would stop fighting. But the Jews continued to resist the Romans, and Titus changed his mind. The Temple was totally destroyed, and the ground of the city was plowed up by the Romans.

Sorrow ahead! (Matthew 24:3-14; Mark 13:3-13; Luke 21:7-19)

Jesus told His disciples that terrible things would occur in the future. We can think of these events as signs reminding us of the end – both of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

Among these signs:

1. Deceivers coming in Christ's name, false Christs
2. Wars and reports of wars

3. Famines, plagues, and earthquakes
4. Persecution and martyrdom of Jesus' followers
5. Hatred and separation between friends and families
6. False teachers
7. Love for Christ growing cold

Jesus said these signs would take place while the present generation was still alive. One very positive thing would take place: the preaching of the Gospel of Christ in the whole world. See Colossians 1:6, 23.

Jerusalem will be destroyed (Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20; Luke 21:20-24)

Jesus' followers in Judea and Jerusalem should watch for one key sign: the abomination in the holy place. The Gospel of Luke explains that this means that Jerusalem would be surrounded with (Roman) armies. When this took place, all believers in Christ were instructed to leave Jerusalem at once. They were to flee to the mountains.

The Christians in Jerusalem in 70 AD followed Jesus' instructions when the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem. They escaped to a town called Pella on the other side of the Jordan River where they were safe. The destruction of Jerusalem was the greatest disaster in history, and there will never be greater misery on earth. Over one million Jews were killed by civil war, by famine, and by the Romans. About 100,000 Jews were sold into slavery. The whole gruesome story is told by the historian Josephus, who was an eyewitness and published his account in 75 AD.

Jesus will come again (Matthew 24:23-35; Mark 13:21-31; Luke 17:22-25, 21:25-33)

There are no signs by which we can attempt to predict when the end of the world will come. We know there will be many false signs and false teachers who claim to know the time of the end. But when Jesus truly comes again, there will be no advance warning. His coming will be like lightning throughout the earth. But first the Son of Man must suffer and be rejected. His second coming, however, will be in power and glory.

People will not expect Him (Matthew 24:36-41; Mark 13:32; Luke 17:26-37)

The Last Day will come unexpectedly like the judgment came in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot. **"Remember Lot's wife"** (Luke 17:32). We need not be concerned about earthly things on that day. On that day friends and associates on earth will be forever separated, for believers in Christ will be separated from unbelievers.

Be ready! (Matthew 24:42-51; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:35-48, 21:34-36)

Since we do not know when Jesus will come, it is important that we always be ready for His coming. We need to be ready, like servants who are waiting for their master to return. Those who are ready will be blessed. Jesus is coming like a thief in the night. The wise managers and stewards of the house are those disciples who feed the Church with good spiritual nourishment until He returns. The unwatchful and the unfaithful managers

will be cut off. Many stripes and few stripes will be given on that day – many stripes to those who knew better but did not act according to their knowledge.

The Bridegroom is coming (Matthew 25:1-13)

This parable teaches us to wait for our Lord to return. He is our Bridegroom. There are both wise and foolish virgin girls who wait for Him to return – five wise, five foolish. The wise had oil for their lamps, but the foolish did not. Therefore, the foolish girls were locked out of the wedding feast, and only the wise were allowed to enter.

Three kinds of workers (Matthew 25:14-30)

This parable teaches us to work until our Lord returns. The man with 5 talents¹ ended up with 10 + 1 + the joy of his master. The man with 2 ended up with 4 + the joy of his master. The man with 1 ended up with nothing + weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus will judge the world (Matthew 25:31-46)

All the world, both the living and the dead, will be divided into two groups: sheep and goats. The sheep are believers in Jesus; the goats are unbelievers.

To the sheep Jesus says: **“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”** (v. 34). Jesus defends His sheep before the world and publishes the good works they have done to Him by being good to His “brothers”, that is, other believers in Jesus. And the sins of His sheep are forgotten.

To the goats He says: **“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels”** (v. 41). The goats are condemned for their lack of good works. Without faith in Christ, it is impossible to please God. Unbelievers are unable to do any good works in the sight of God no matter how good what they do may seem to us. Note that hell was not prepared for people, but rather for the devil and his angels.

Questions

1. For what purpose did Jesus denounce the Pharisees as He did?
2. What is God’s desire for all people everywhere?
3. What did Jesus teach His disciples in connection with the widow’s gift?
4. What did Jesus think about when He heard the request of the Greeks?
5. What are some of the reasons for the Jewish rejection of Jesus?
6. How were Jesus’ words about the destruction of the temple fulfilled?
7. Why can we not use the various signs mentioned by Jesus to determine when Jesus will return?
8. What would lead the Christians in Jerusalem to get out of the city?
9. What happened to those who remained in Jerusalem?

¹ A talent was the equivalent of 20 years wages for a laborer.

10. How did Jesus prepare His disciples for the end of the world?
11. Who are the sheep and who are the goats in Jesus' teaching about Judgment Day?