

FAITH UNCOMPROMISED

As we Gather

Luke 21:5-19 can be difficult unless we remember that Jesus (a Jew) was giving a message to Jews (His disciples) about the future of the Jewish nation.

Reading Scripture **Isaiah 65:17-25 and 12:2-6** **2 Thessalonians 3:6-13** **Luke 21:5-19**

Thinking Together

When responding to His disciples questions, Jesus spoke against the background of

- the Jewish mindset of the Day of The Lord (Isaiah 13:9 Joel 2:30-32).

Jews believed they lived in the present age of sin and strife which would be followed by the Lord's judgement -the Day of the Lord. This in turn would be followed by the age to come (Isaiah 65:17-25) and they looked for a sign of the coming of Messiah (Luke 21:7 1 Corinthians 1:22).

In describing the age (Luke 21:8-11), Jesus was warning them of the terrible things people would suffer for His sake (Luke 21:12-19)

Compare Luke 21:8-19 with Isaiah 65:17-25. What is your reaction? Discuss
(see also Isaiah 12:2-6)

- the prophesied fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) when the Jewish nation would be obliterated by Roman soldiers and the Temple destroyed (Luke 21:5-6).

Jesus was not discussing His return / coming for the Church, as this can come at any time, and no signs need precede it (1 Corinthians 15:51-58 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18). The Church looks for a Saviour (Philippians 3:20=21) and the early Church eagerly awaited His coming, particularly as many of the events Jesus had foretold occurred.

Natural disasters, wars, famine, disease, persecutions and false messiahs have been seen in every age of the Church, no less so today

Do you think the Church today waits eagerly for Christ's return, or have we become too comfortable in our prosperity? Discuss

These phenomena will increase and intensify as sin in the life of a believer always affects the rest of the Church. False views of Christ's return breed confusion and the danger of deceiving the minds and hearts of the spiritually immature (2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 11:1-4 +13-15)

Are you aware of this occurring in the wider faith community / in your local church?
Discuss

The only way to remain balanced in a deceptive world is to know the Scriptures and obey what God tells us to do (2Peter3:17-18)

Do you have a particular Scripture reading / text to which you turn when troubled?
Discuss

Jesus reassured His disciples – and also believers today – there is no need to be afraid in trouble and trials. We are not alone, He is always with us. We may suffer for His name sake (Luke 21:12 Colossians 1:24), but suffering provides opportunities for us to witness – share the Good News (Luke 21:13-14), as His Spirit (Holy Spirit) will always give us the words we need in any situation (Luke 21:15).

Is it always necessary to witness by means of words? Discuss

In Closing

Jesus' warnings and promises are still applicable today (Philippians 3:10). He believes in each of us enough to give us the privilege of carrying on with His work on earth. As Christians, when we look with the eyes of God, we see things as they are, not as we wish them to be; and the Holy Spirit remains with us to guide, comfort and protect us. He gives us the courage and hope to keep our faith uncompromised.

Those who walk with Christ may die physically, but never spiritually.

PRAYER

God of all time and the whole creation, in Christ you make all things new.
Grant us wisdom to interpret the signs of the times, courage to stand firm
in the time of trial and faith to witness to your truth and love.

Amen