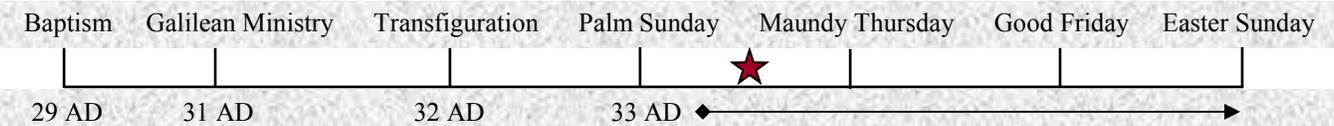
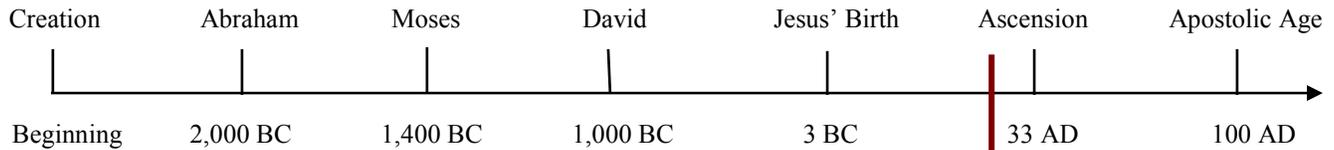


Across the Generations

Learning from God's Word and from Each Other

Sunday, December 3, 2006
"Everywhere a Sign"

Context and Time Frame



Overview: Luke 21:25-36

"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. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near."

"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."

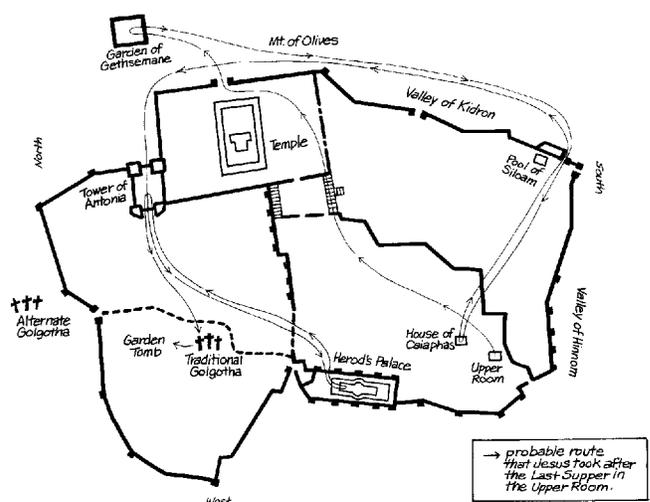
"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Review

The lesson takes place in the late afternoon. Jesus and his disciples are on their way out of the temple. From the temple they make their way to the Mount of Olives. Here Jesus entertains questions privately from his disciples.

Luke 21:7—"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place.

The disciples were genuinely concerned because of the shocking prophecy Jesus gave regarding the temple (21:5,6). Their focus was an "earthly one." If the temple was going to be destroyed, how could Jesus rise up to take David's throne?



Signs were an important part of the Jewish culture and faith. Consider Paul's lesson in 1st Corinthians: "Jews demand miraculous signs." Also refer to Matthew 16:1. Unfortunately, a sign is not very valuable if it is not connected to the words and promises of God.

What signs did Jesus offer his disciples?

What emotion gripped the disciples when they heard these things?

What did Jesus do to allay these feelings (27,28)?

Why is it important to know "the kingdom of God is near?"

What does Jesus mean by "this generation?"

Again, Jesus offers comfort to help his disciples. Why is it important to know "Jesus' words will never pass away?"

What could happen if I am not careful?

My View

How should I understand these signs today?

What is Jesus telling me when he repeats this list of signs in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6?

Closing View

What should always be my focus in the last days?

How much time do I have?

Devotional Thoughts - Luke 21:25-36
Monday, December 4th through Saturday, December 9th

Monday

Read Christian Worship 220 st. 1,4

O'er the distant mountains breaking comes the redd'ning dawn of day.
Rise, my soul, from sleep awaking; rise and sing and watch and pray.
'Tis your Savior, 'Tis your Savior, on his bright returning way.

With my lamp well-trimmed and burning, swift to hear and slow to stray,
Watching for your glad returning, waiting for the blessed day.
Come, my Savior, come, my Savior, O my Savior, quickly come!

What will always keep me alert and awake?
What is the difference between Jesus' first advent and his second advent?
What makes it possible for me to pray, "O my Savior, quickly come?"

Prayer Thoughts:

O gracious Savior, my Lord Jesus Christ, according to your promise you are coming again in glory.
On this day, everyone will see you and everyone will stand before your throne. By grace through
faith in you, keep me ready at all times. Then, through prayer, help me hasten the day of
your glorious return. Amen!

Tuesday

Read Matthew 24—the parallel account to Luke 21
Jesus answered, "Watch out that no one deceives you."

What are some of Satan's deceptions to keep us from being ready on the last day?
List as many of the "signs" as you possibly can.
How many pertain to what happens within the church / outside the church?
What sure source of strength will keep us ready in these difficult times?

Prayer Thoughts:

O dearest Jesus, I thank you for giving me wisdom and understanding with respect to the last days.
Because of what you have revealed, I know I will have to draw daily on the sure source of
strength you provide in your Word. Keep me faithful to you, and to your Word, so that
I can remain confident of life in heaven. Amen!

Wednesday

Read all of Luke, Chapter 21

Although this is a shorter section than Matthew 24, how many signs are repeated
between the 2 Gospel accounts?
What will help us escape all that is about to happen?
The "generation" Jesus talks about is "every generation"—those who believe in
him and those who reject him. There will always be people like this until the
Lord returns in glory.

Prayer Thoughts:

I thank you Jesus because you have prepared me to stand faithful and strong by means of your Word.
Help me draw daily on that Word, not only for strength, but also for reassurance, comfort,
forgiveness and peace. Make it my constant companion, my strength and my guide
throughout this life. Amen!

Thursday

Take a look at a newspaper. See how many signs from Matthew and Luke are contained in its pages.

What does this tell us about the accuracy of God's prophecy in Scripture?

What do I need to do as I see more and more signs being fulfilled?

Where do I need to look for comfort and peace in these difficult days?

Prayer Thoughts

O gracious Savior, Jesus Christ, I thank you for giving me the signs that say, prepare and be on my guard. I also thank you for the gift of your Word which allows me to stand strong and confident as I see the last days unfold before my eyes. Keep me faithful to you in all things so that I can look forward to life with you in your heavenly kingdom. Amen!

Friday

Read The Lutheran Hymnal 449 st. 1,3,4

My soul, be on thy guard; ten thousand foes arise,
And hosts of sin are pressing hard to draw thee from the skies.

Ne'er think the victory won nor lay thine armor down;
Thine arduous work will not be done till thou obtain thy crown.

Fight on, my soul, till death shall bring thee to thy God;
He'll take thee at thy parting breath to his divine abode.

What does this hymn say about the fight in which we find ourselves?

What does it say about the victory that God has prepared for us?

Prayer Thoughts

O Lord, keep me alert and on my guard. I know many enemies surround me who seek to destroy me—now and for eternity. I also know you will be with me to strengthen me and to give the final victory. Keep me close to your side until you call me home to heaven. Amen!

Saturday

Read Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip, tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitits, and Lysannias tetrarch of Abilene—during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the Word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall he filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation.'"

What do all the names tell us about this section of Scripture?

Who were these people?

Who is the account specifically about?

What major "road project" does the Lord tell his prophet to undertake?