

• *The Temple – a wonderful building but Jesus is not impressed*

• *What matters is whether the people are submitting to God*

• *God-given insight*

It is foolish to admire the institutions of a country without reference to its morality and spirituality

• *What made Israel great in the days before Jesus was the faith of a few of its leaders*

• *Moses and David*

• *Righteousness exalts a nation*

• *Some recovery under Ezra and Nehemiah*

With Jesus' coming – a new opportunity

When Jesus walks past the temple with His disciples they begin to admire the wonderful buildings^{☞1}. But Jesus is not very impressed with these wonderful buildings. He knows that what matters in the life of a country is not its wonderful buildings but whether that nation is full of people who will submit to Him and bow down to Him in faith. Jesus also knows something of the future of Jerusalem. He knows that the nation will reject Him. He has been predicting it many times as He journeys towards Jerusalem. He knows too that Jerusalem will come under the judgement of God. He tells the disciples: '*not one stone will be left on another*'^{☞2}.

How does He know such things? It is partly His knowledge of the Scriptures. He knows the Book of Daniel with its predictions of the fall of Jerusalem. And He has a God-given insight into the future by the Holy Spirit.

It is foolish to admire the institutions of a country without reference to its morality and spirituality. Here are these disciples admiring the wonderful buildings of Jerusalem. They look so beautiful. They look as if they will last a thousand years. But Jesus knows otherwise. He knows that what determines the well-being of a people is its faith in God, its spirituality, its morality, its integrity. '*Righteousness exalts a nation*'^{☞1} – nothing else does! What made Israel great in the days before Jesus was the faith of a few of its leaders. What a mighty man was Moses who shaped and moulded the nation right at the beginning. What a great man was King David – despite his weaknesses. Israel had become a great nation under the leadership of these men. At the times in their history when they had fallen away from the law of Moses, they had fallen into periods of chaos. David had been a man after God's own heart; he had hated idolatry. There was no idolatry in his day, and he raised his nation to heights of greatness and influence. His son Solomon inherited a great nation because of the love that his father had for God. When the people had forgotten the law of Moses in the days **after** Moses, and when they had drifted into idolatry in the days **after** David chaos and destruction had come upon the nation. It is righteousness that exalts a nation, and nothing else.

Then there had been the days of Ezra and Nehemiah when God gave the nation another chance and – because of the nation's hatred of idolatry – Israel to some extent had become great again. Yet the nation had still not recovered the greatness it had known in the time of Moses and in the time of David. The people were longing for its prosperity to return.

Now – as we read in Luke's Gospel – Jesus has come to the nation. The people and leaders of the nation are being given an opportunity to respond to God as never before – and yet it is quite clear that they are not responding to Jesus in faith. As Jesus speaks and as the disciples admire these buildings, He has only a few days to live. He is soon to be crucified. The disciples are acting as if they are tourists admiring wonderful buildings but the crucifixion of Jesus

☞1 21:5

☞2 21:6

☞1 Proverbs 13:34

• *But the disciples are missing the important fact of Jesus' approaching death*

is just a few days away! They are interested in the things that make Jerusalem famous and admired – and yet they have not taken much notice of Jesus' words concerning His fast-approaching death upon the cross. It is not great buildings that will preserve Israel; it is faith in God's Son. If the nation rejects God's Son the great walls and buildings of Jerusalem will be destroyed.

Questions about Jerusalem's destruction

The disciples want to know more^{□1}. They would like to know about the **timing** and the **signs** of the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus answers their questions. There will come false Messiahs^{□2} and wars^{□3} but the end of the city of Jerusalem will not come as soon as they might think. Contrary to what people often believe, Luke 21 (and Matthew 24 and Mark 13) are **not** giving 'signs of the end'. Jesus is warning that despite great social upheavals the end is not going to be as soon as people might think. International conflicts will come^{□4}, plus earthquakes and famines and pestilences^{□5}. Even great signs in the skies will appear. The last few words of Luke 21:11 is Old Testament language speaking of a great change in events coming through the fall of a city^{□6}. Sometimes literal signs in the skies appear^{□7} even before the end of the world.

• *False Messiahs*
• *Social upheaval*

• *International conflict*

• *Signs in the skies*

□1 21:7

□2 21:8

□3 21:9

□4 21:10

□5 21:11

□6 see Isaiah

13:10; 34:4;

Ezekiel 32:7

□7 as in Luke

23:45

Cities fall but the world continues

Cities fall but the world continues. The fall of Jerusalem is proof that Jesus has come to His kingdom. The generation after Jesus will see Jerusalem fall. But '*the end will not come right away*'. After the fall of Jerusalem will come a great time of opportunity for the disciples. About forty years after Jesus was crucified, Israel ceased to be a special people with institutions to enlighten the world. The Mosaic law ceased. The temple ceased to exist. Animal sacrifices ceased. Special holy days such as Passover time and the Day of Atonement ceased to be a part of God's requirement. God's kingly power in Israel was taken away. Jerusalem was destroyed. Jesus' words were fulfilled. Yet the opportunity for reaching the world with a message about Jesus was opened up as never before. Luke's 'Book of Acts' (only three chapters ahead in the two-part book Luke–Acts!) will tell the story. The end is not yet!

• *After the fall of Jerusalem will come a great time of opportunity for the disciples*

• *Reaching the world with a message about Jesus*



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