

# Luke 21-22



Easter Stories Week 3

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1. The decline and corruption of the Church

## Luke 21

7 And they asked Him, saying, Teacher, when then shall these things be, and what *is* the sign when these things shall come to pass?

8 And He said, See that you be not led astray, for many shall come in My name, saying, I am, and, The time is near. Do not, therefore, go after them.

9 But when you shall hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must first come to pass, but the end is not straightway.

10 Then He said to them, Nation shall rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

11 And there shall be great earthquakes in various places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful *things* and great signs shall be from heaven.

12 But before all these things they shall thrust their hands on you, and shall persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons, being brought before kings and governors for My name's sake.

13 But it shall turn<sup>1</sup> into testimony for you.

14 Put it therefore into your hearts not to premeditate what you shall respond.

15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all those opposing you shall not be able to contradict nor stand against.

16 And you shall be betrayed by both parents and brothers, both kinsfolk and friends, and they shall put *some* of you to death.

17 And you shall be hated by all on account of My name.

18 And there shall not a hair of your head perish.

19 In your patience you possess your souls.

TCR 180. In the Gospels (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21) the successive states of decline and corruption in the Christian church are described, and... the infestation of truth by falsities, even until no truth remains that is not falsified and consummated.... This has come to pass because the church, instead of acknowledging the unity of God in trinity and His trinity in unity in one Person, has acknowledged these in three persons. And in consequence the church has been based in the mind upon the idea of three Gods, and on the lips upon the confession of one God. And thus men have separated themselves from the Lord, and at length to such an extent that no idea of Divinity in His Human nature is left with them, when in fact He is God the Father in the Human, and therefore He is called:

The Father of eternity (Isa. 9:6) ....

AC 8868. It must be briefly told what is meant by truths which are from some other source than the Lord. They are in general those truths in which the Lord is not. The Lord is not in the truths with a man when the man denies Him and His Divine, and also when he acknowledges Him and still believes that good and truth are not from Him, but from himself, and who consequently claims righteousness for himself. Also, truths in which the Lord is not are those which are taken from the

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<sup>1</sup> Greek: "step" or "progress"

Word, especially from the sense of its letter, and are explained in favor of self-rule and self-gain. In themselves these are truths, because they are from the Word; but in this case they are not truths, because they are wrongly explained and thus perverted. They are such as are meant by the Lord by these words... in Luke:

See that you be not led astray; for many shall come in My name, saying, I am; and, The time is at hand; do not, therefore, go after them. (21:8).

AE 813:2. “The patience of the saints” signifies the temptation of the faithful, or of those who are made spiritual by the Lord, because “patience” signifies spiritual patience, which is patience in sustaining temptations. And those have that patience who fight in themselves against the falsities that are contained in the dogma of faith alone and that adhere to it, for that faith is confirmed by reasonings from the natural man and from the Word wrongly applied and thus falsified. The temptations that such people sustain when they fight against falsities are meant by “patience.”

#### Questions and Comments

1. Why is it so important that we acknowledge the Lord as the one God of heaven and earth, and not three? How does this tie in with a good life?
2. Which of the examples of truths in which the Lord is not present seems most prevalent and problematic in our culture at this day? Which are most likely to lead us astray?
3. Are we likely to undergo persecution for our faith? On what issues or in what situations? Even within our families? What good might the Lord bring out of such persecution?

## 2. The coming of the Son of Man

### Luke 21

20 And when you shall see Jerusalem surrounded with armies, then know that her desolation is near.

21 Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her depart, and let not those in the countryside enter into her.

22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 But woe to those who have in the womb, and to those who nurse, in those days! For there shall be great necessity on the earth, and anger upon this people.

24 And they shall fall by the mouth<sup>2</sup> of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden by the nations, until the times of the nations be fulfilled.

25 And there shall be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish<sup>3</sup> of nations in perplexity, the sea and the waves resounding;

26 men *whose* souls go out for fear and the expectation of those things that are coming on the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and much glory.

28 But when these things begin to come to pass, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near.

AC 3652:4. "Then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains," signifies that they who are of the church must not look elsewhere than to the Lord, thus to love to Him, and to charity toward the neighbor.... By "Judea" is signified the church.... By a "mountain" is signified the Lord Himself, but by "mountains" love to Him and charity toward the neighbor.... According to the sense of the letter the meaning would be that when Jerusalem was besieged, as it came to be by the Romans, then they should not take themselves there, but to the mountains, according to what is written in Luke 21:20-21....

TCR 764. THIS NIGHT IS FOLLOWED BY MORNING, WHICH IS THE COMING OF THE LORD.

As the successive states of the church in general and in particular are described in the Word by the four seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and by the four divisions of the day, morning, noon, evening, and night; and as the present church in Christendom is the night, it follows that the morning, that is, the beginning of a new church, is now at hand....

TCR 766. The Lord is present with every man, urging and pressing to be received; and His first coming, which is called the dawn, is when man receives Him, which he does when he acknowledges Him as his God, Creator, Redeemer, and Savior. From this time man's understanding begins to be enlightened in spiritual things, and to advance into a more and more interior wisdom. And as he receives this wisdom from the Lord, he advances through morning into day, and this day lasts with

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<sup>2</sup> This means the "edge" (see AE 175:12), but is called the "mouth" in both the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament, and usually in the Latin of the Writings (see AC 1857:5, AC 2799:18, AC 9164, et al.).

<sup>3</sup> Greek is "that which besets."

him into old age, even to death; and after death he passes into heaven to the Lord Himself. And there, although he died an old man, he is restored to the morning of his life, and the rudiments of the wisdom implanted in him in the natural world grow to eternity.

TCR 776. THIS SECOND COMING OF THE LORD IS NOT A COMING IN PERSON, BUT IN THE WORD, WHICH IS FROM HIM, AND IS HIMSELF.

It is written in many places that the Lord will come in the clouds of heaven (as in... Luke 21:27...). And as no one has hitherto known what is meant by “the clouds of heaven,” it has been believed that the Lord would appear in them in Person. Before this, it has not been known that “the clouds of heaven” mean the Word in the sense of the letter, and that the “glory and power” in which He is then to come... mean the spiritual sense of the Word, because no one as yet has had the least conjecture that there is a spiritual sense in the Word, such as this sense is in itself. But as the Lord has now opened to me the spiritual sense of the Word, and has granted me to be associated with angels and spirits in their world as one of them, it is disclosed that “a cloud of heaven” means the Word in the natural sense, and “glory” the Word in the spiritual sense, and “power” the Lord’s power through the Word.

#### Questions and Comments

1. Why is the coming of the Lord preceded by such calamities, representing the end of the church? What does this correspond to in an individual’s life?
2. “Woe to those who have in the womb, and who nurse in those days” in the spiritual sense means those who receive the goods of love to the Lord and the truths of that good; but at the end of the church, because of the overwhelming influence of hell, they cannot keep these goods and truths (see AE 710:7). Does this relate also to the very low birth rate in the western world?
3. How does the second coming of the Lord help us love Him and follow Him better, if we are willing, even though it is not a coming in person?

3. The parable of the fig tree; stay awake

Luke 21

29 And He told a parable to them: See the fig tree and all the trees!

30 When they already shoot forth, seeing it you know of yourselves that summer is already near.

31 So also you, when you see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is near.

32 Amen I say to you that this generation shall not pass away until all things come to pass.

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

34 But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be heavy with feasting and drunkenness and anxieties of this life, and that day come upon<sup>4</sup> you unawares.

35 For as a snare, it shall come upon all who sit upon the face of all the earth.

36 Be ye sleepless, therefore, entreating<sup>5</sup> in every time, that you may be held worthy to escape all these things that are about to come to pass, and to stand in front of the Son of Man.

37 And in the day He was teaching in the temple, but going out at night, He stayed in the mountain called *the Mount of Olives*.

38 And early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

AE 403:15. This [parable] treats of the consummation of the age, which is the Last Judgment... That a new church is then to begin, which in its beginning will be external, is signified by, "Behold the fig-tree and all the trees, when they have shot forth." This parable or comparison was related because "the fig-tree" signifies the external church, and "trees" signify the knowledges of truth and good. "The kingdom of God," which then is near, signifies the new church of the Lord; for at the time of the Last Judgment, the old church perishes and a new one begins.

AC 9348. ... The signification of "a snare," when said of evils, is allurement and deception. That evils allure and deceive is because all evils spring from the loves of self and of the world... and the loves of self and of the world are born with man, and from [these loves] he feels the delight of his life from the moment of his birth; in fact, from this he has life. Wherefore these loves, like the unseen currents of a river, continually draw the thought and the will of man away from the Lord to self, and away from heaven to the world, thus away from the truths and goods of faith to falsities and evils. Reasonings from the fallacies of the senses then especially prevail, and also the literal sense of the Word wrongly explained and applied.

AC 9348:7. ... From the love of self springs contempt for others in comparison with self, next derision and abuse, afterward enmity if they do not favor, and finally the delight of hatred, the delight of revenge, thus the delight of violence, even of cruelty. In the other life this love climbs so high that unless the Lord favors those who have it and gives them dominion over others, they not only despise Him, but also deride the Word which treats of Him, and finally they act against Him from hatred and revenge. And insofar as they cannot do anything against Him, they practice such things with violence and cruelty against all who profess Him.... Everything of faith and love to the

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<sup>4</sup> Literally, "stand by"

<sup>5</sup> That is, praying to the Lord

Lord, and everything of love toward the neighbor, are destroyed by the delight of the love of self and of the world wherever it has dominion ....

AE 187. ... "Be wakeful" [means] that they should acquire for themselves spiritual life. This life is meant by "wakefulness" and "being awake," because spiritual life is to moral-life-apart-from-spiritual-life, as wakefulness is to sleep, or as noonday light is to the evening, even to darkness. But that this is so is not known or perceived by those who are in... moral life apart from spiritual life .... They believe themselves to be in light because they are able to reason, when yet they are in darkness.... After death... when the light of heaven flows in with them, it is changed into darkness, and they become so blind in respect to the understanding as not to be able to think at all.... Those who are in spiritual light are in angelic wisdom and intelligence, which is such as to be incomprehensible and ineffable to those who are in natural light<sup>6</sup> alone, and this not only with men while living in the world, but also when after death they become spirits, when intelligence and wisdom constitute wakefulness....

#### Questions and Comments

1. AE 403:5 says a new church in its beginning will be external, as represented by a fig tree (as opposed to a grapevine or an olive tree). What might be some signs of being external?
2. In verse 34, the Lord speaks of being wary lest our hearts be heavy with feasting, drunkenness, and anxieties of life. These presumably are part of the "snare" that can lead us into hatred and revenge, even against the Lord. What snares seem most prevalent in our culture?
3. How can we acquire spiritual life and stay awake, spiritually? What things tend to make us nod off to sleep?

4. Judas promises to betray Jesus.

#### Luke 22

- 1 And the festival of unleavened bread was near, which is called the Passover.
- 2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might slay Him, for they feared the people.
- 3 And Satan entered into Judas, called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

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<sup>6</sup> There are 2 words for light used here in Latin: *lux* for spiritual light, and *lumen* for merely natural light.

4 And he went away, and spoke with the chief priests and captains how he might betray Him to them.

5 And they rejoiced, and put together *an agreement* to give him silver.

6 And he promised, and sought an opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the crowd.

AC 2342. *And baked unleavened [bread]*. That this signifies purification, is evident from the signification of “unleavened” or “unfermented.” In the Word “bread” signifies in general all heavenly and spiritual food, thus heavenly and spiritual things in general.... That these should be free from everything impure was represented by bread without leaven; for “leaven” signifies that which is evil and false, by which heavenly and spiritual things are rendered impure and profane. On account of this representation it was commanded those who were of the Representative Church that in their sacrifices they should not offer any other bread, that is, gift-offering, than that which was unfermented or unleavened....

AC 2342:2. And it was therefore also commanded that on the seven days of the Passover they should not eat any other than unfermented or unleavened bread, as stated in Moses:

Seven days you shall eat unleavened [bread]; even on the first day, you shall cause leaven to cease from your houses. For whoever eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening, you shall eat unleavened [bread], until the one and twentieth day of the month at evening; [for] seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses. For whoever eats what is leavened, that soul also shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a sojourner or born in the land (Exod. 12:15, 18-20, and elsewhere....

Hence the Passover is called the “festival of unleavened bread” (Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:16, 17; Matt. 26:17; Luke 22:1, 7).

AE 740:2. ...Both “the devil” and “Satan” signify hell, “the devil” signifying the hell from which are evils, and “Satan” the hell from which are falsities. This hell is called “Satan” because all who are in it are called satans, and the other hell is called “the devil” because all who are in it are called devils....

AE 740. In a word, they love the things of the body and of the world above all things, and they love heavenly things only as things serviceable. Thus they make the things of the body and of the world the head, and heavenly things the feet. They are such because they make the life to be of no account, saying that faith alone saves, and not any good of life.... Moreover, a man continues [to be] such after death; for such as a man is interiorly, such he is in respect to the spirit, and the spirit of man is the affection from which is the will and the life from it. From this it follows that those who make no account of the life are interiorly devils and satans, and they also become devils and satans when their life in the world is ended and they become spirits.

AE 740:8. The Lord calls Judas Iscariot:

A devil (John 6:70);

And it is said that the devil put into his heart (John 13:2);

And that after he had taken the sop, Satan entered into him (John 13:27; Luke 22:3).

It is so said because Judas Iscariot represented the Jews who were in falsities from evil; and therefore from evil he is called a “devil,” and from falsities a “satan.” Therefore it is said that “the devil put it into his heart,” “to put into the heart” meaning into the love that is of his will. Also it is said that “after he had taken the sop, Satan entered into him,” “to enter into him with the sop” meaning into the belly, which signifies into the thought, and falsities from evil belong to the thought.

AC 4751e. ...When he sold the Lord, Judas’ representation was similar to that which Judah has in Genesis 37 when he said, “Come, and let us sell Joseph.”

#### Questions and Comments

1. How can we spiritually celebrate the festival of unleavened bread? How can we receive love to the Lord and love toward the neighbor free from impurities of evil and falsity? Or in other words, how can we prepare for the holy supper?
2. Why did the Lord call Judas to be one of the twelve?
3. “The devil” and “Satan” are representative figures in the Word, not particular human beings or fallen angels. What are some steps we can take to avoid having the devil and satan enter into us, or to flee from them, or to drive them out if they have invaded?

#### 5. Preparing for the Passover

##### Luke 22

7 And the day of unleavened bread came, in which the Passover must be slaughtered.  
8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go prepare for us the Passover, that we may eat.  
9 And they said to Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare?  
10 And He said to them, Behold, as you come into the city, a man shall meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he goes in.

11 And you shall say to the householder of the house, The Teacher says to thee, Where is the inn, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?

12 And he will show you a large upper room furnished<sup>7</sup>; there prepare.

13 And going, they found as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

AE 820:5. ...Because “Peter” signified truth from good which is from the Lord, and consequently also doctrine... he represented those who are in truths from good and in the doctrine of genuine truth from the Lord; and since people like this instruct others and are instructed by the Lord, therefore Peter so often spoke with the Lord and was also instructed by the Lord [as in the story above].

AE 706:12. An “inn” signifies a place of instruction.

AC 3068. A “water-jar” or “pitcher” signifies memory-knowledges. This comes from the fact that “water” signifies truth... and a pitcher is a vessel containing water, just as memory-knowledge is a vessel in which is truth. For every memory-knowledge is a vessel for truth, and every truth is a vessel for good. Memory-knowledge without truth is an empty vessel; and so too is truth without good. But memory-knowledge in which there is truth, and truth in which there is good, are full vessels. Affection which is of love is that which conjoins so that they may be within in order; for love is spiritual conjunction.

TCR 839. Finally we talked about the interior and exterior man [*compare with the upper and lower stories of a house*]. It was said that men who perceive things interiorly are in the light of truth, which is the light of heaven, while those who perceive things exteriorly are in no light of truth, because they are in the light of the world only. Thus interior men are in intelligence and wisdom, but exterior men are in insanity and in distorted vision.... Interior men are spiritual because they think from the spirit exalted above the body, and therefore see truths in light; while exterior men are sensual-natural because they think from the fallacies of the bodily senses....

Moreover, internal men are like those who live in the second or third story of a house or palace, the walls of which are a continuous window of clear glass, who look round about upon the city in its whole extent and recognize every cottage in it; while external men are like those who live in the lowest story, the windows of which are made of pasted pieces of paper, who cannot see even a single street outside of the house, but only what is within it, and not even that, except by the light of a candle or of the fire.... Furthermore, internal men perceive that what they know compared with what they do not know is like water in a pitcher as compared to that in a lake; while external men have no other thought than that they know everything....

TCR 186. ... The human mind is divided into three regions, as a house into three stories, or the angelic abodes into three heavens.

Then an angel standing near said, “With those who love truth because it is true, theological matters rise even into the highest region of the mind, because in that region is their heaven, and they

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<sup>7</sup> Literally, “spread”

are in the light in which angels dwell. But moral subjects theoretically examined and perceived have their place in a second region beneath these, because they communicate with spiritual things. Beneath these in the first region, political subjects have their place; while scientific matters, which are manifold, and may be referred to genera and species, form a door to these higher matters. Those with whom things spiritual, moral, political, and scientific are thus subordinated, think what they think and do what they do from justice and judgment. This is because the light of truth, which is also the light of heaven, illuminates from the highest region all things that follow, as the light of the sun, passing in turn through the ethers and through the atmospheres, illumines the eyes of men and beasts and fishes.

TCR 395:2. The human mind is like a house of three stories which communicate by stairs, in the highest of which angels from heaven dwell, in the middle men in the world, and in the lowest one, genii. The man in whom these three loves are rightly subordinated can ascend and descend in this house at his pleasure; and when he ascends to the highest story, he is in company with angels as an angel; and when he descends from that to the middle story he is in company with men as an angel man; and when from this he descends still further, he is in company with genii as a man of the world, instructing, reproofing, and subduing them.

#### Questions and Comments

1. When we prepare for the holy supper, do we too follow a man bearing a pitcher of water, spiritually? Do we seek an upper room as an "inn," a place of instruction?
2. How can we let the Lord fill our pitchers with water?
3. How can we seek to make sure to have the stories of the house of our mind right side up, with the Lord's Word ruling moral and political and scientific matters?

#### 6. The First Christian Passover

Luke 22

14 And when the hour had come, He reclined, and the twelve apostles with Him.

15 And He said to them, With longing I have longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

16 For I say to you that I will not eat of it any more until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And receiving the cup, He gave thanks *and* said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves.

18 For I say to you that I will not drink of the produce of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 And taking bread, He gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me.

20 And likewise the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new covenant<sup>8</sup> in My blood, which is poured out for you.

21 Nevertheless, behold, the hand of him who betrays Me *is* with Me on the table.

22 And indeed the Son of Man goes, according to what was determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!

23 And they began to dispute among themselves, who then of them it was who should commit this.

TCR 704. Anyone enlightened from heaven can perceive in himself that flesh and blood in the above passages do not mean flesh and blood, but that in the natural sense they both mean the passion of the cross, which they were to remember. Therefore, when the Lord instituted this supper of the last Jewish and the first Christian passover, He said:

This do in remembrance of Me (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25).

It may likewise be seen that the bread and wine do not mean bread and wine, but in the natural sense they have the same meaning as flesh and blood, that is to say, the passion of His cross....

TCR 706. The Lord's "blood" means His Divine truth and the truth of the Word, because His "flesh," spiritually understood, means the Divine good of love, and in Him these two are united. It is known that the Lord is the Word, and there are two things to which everything in the Word has relation, Divine good and Divine truth. If therefore, instead of "the Lord" we say "the Word," it is clear that these two are meant by His flesh and blood.

TCR 706:3. ... In the Apocalypse, "the blood of the Lamb" has a similar significance:

These have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14).

Also in this passage:

There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb and through the word of their testimony (12:7, 11).

TCR 706:4. For it cannot be imagined that Michael and his angels overcame the dragon by any other means than the Lord's Divine truth in the Word, for the angels of heaven cannot think of any kind of blood, nor do they think of the Lord's passion, but only of Divine truth and of the Lord's resurrection. So when man thinks of the Lord's blood, the angels have a perception of the Divine truth of His Word; and when men think of the Lord's passion, they have a perception of His

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<sup>8</sup> As in AR 379, TCR 285, etc. But "new testament" in AR 672, TCR 730, etc.

glorification, and then of His resurrection only. I have been permitted to learn this from much experience.

TCR 716. IN THE HOLY SUPPER THE LORD IS WHOLLY PRESENT WITH THE WHOLE OF HIS REDEMPTION.... Since then, His “flesh” signifies the Divine good of His love, and His “blood” the Divine truth of His wisdom, it is clear that the whole of the Lord is omnipresent in the holy supper in respect both to His Divine and to His glorified Human; consequently that the holy supper is a spiritual eating.

TCR 709. Every man in Christendom imbued with religion may know, and if he does not know may learn, that there is natural nourishment and spiritual nourishment, and that natural nourishment is for the body, and spiritual nourishment is for the soul.... But if anyone is so simple as to be unable to think from his understanding of anything except what he sees with the eye, I advise him, when he takes the bread and wine and hears them called the Lord’s flesh and blood, to think within himself of the holy supper as the holiest thing of worship, and to call to mind Christ’s passion, and His love for man’s salvation....

#### Questions and Comments

1. Luke mentions a cup before supper as well as the cup after supper. We learn the truth as the means to regeneration, and then in regenerate states, we have new insights into the truth. How do we take the cup from the Lord “and divide it among” ourselves?
2. Why is the holy supper story so closely connected to the story of the Lord’s betrayal? How can we *not* be among those who betray Him?
3. “Passion” of the cross means suffering or permitting it to happen. Why is it so important for us to remember this? Should we aim to be like the angels, focusing only on His glorification and resurrection?