

Believing for the Advent-ure!

Living a Life of Daring Faith between Jesus' First and Second Coming

Luke 21.1-28 Spiritual Synapses

Opening thoughts

- Synapse - A chemical connection between the sensory nerves (from the sensory organs) and the motor nerves in the CNS (*Central nervous system*), causing a muscular or glandular response according to information received.
- A spontaneous impulse reaction
- Diagram of the Central Nervous System
- Example – touching a hot stove
- Parallel analogy: Spiritual synapse – What would cause a disconnect between Biblical truth received and life response?
 - CNS = heart – spiritual sensitivity – processing truth and the world condition to righteous and fast response.
 - What dulls the heart and would inhibit response?
 - Sin of any kind
 - Rebellion
 - Shame and guilt
 - Bitterness and unforgiveness
 - Self centeredness

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Main Text

Luke 21 - The Widow's Offering [She had synapse]

1 While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people dropping their gifts in the collection box. 2 Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two small coins. 3 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. 4 For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has."

- Her spontaneous reaction to truth
 - God knows me and loves me
 - He is my provider
 - He is trustworthy and dependable to meet all of my needs.
 - God honors and blesses obedience and faithfulness

2 Corinthians 8:4-6 [The Message]

They gave offerings of whatever they could—far more than they could afford!—pleading for the privilege of helping out in the relief of poor Christians. This was totally spontaneous, entirely their own idea, and caught us completely off guard. What explains it was that they had first given themselves unreservedly to God and to us. The other, giving simply flowed out of the purposes of God working in their lives.

Jesus Foretells the Future- If we don't have synapse working in good times how would we ever expect it to happen when crisis hits?

5 Some of his disciples began talking about the majestic stonework of the Temple and the memorial decorations on the walls. But Jesus said, 6 "The time is coming when all these things will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!"

- Fulfilled in 70 A.D. – Rome destroyed the temple and burned Jerusalem.

7 "Teacher," they asked, "when will all this happen? What sign will show us that these things are about to take place?"

8 He replied, "Don't let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and saying, 'The time has come!' But don't believe them. 9 And when you hear of wars and insurrections, don't panic. Yes, these things must take place first, but the end won't follow immediately." 10 Then he added, "Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and plagues in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven.

12 "But before all this occurs, there will be a time of great persecution. You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons, and you will stand trial before kings and governors because you are my followers. 13 But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me. 14 So don't worry in advance about how to answer the charges against you, 15 for I will give you the right words and

such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you! 16 Even those closest to you—your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—will betray you. They will even kill some of you. 17 And everyone will hate you because you are my followers. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish! 19 *By standing firm, you will win your souls.*

20 “And when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived. 21 Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. Those in Jerusalem must get out, and those out in the country should not return to the city. 22 For those will be days of God’s vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be fulfilled. 23 How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. For there will be disaster in the land and great anger against this people. 24 They will be killed by the sword or sent away as captives to all the nations of the world. And Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the period of the Gentiles comes to an end.

- This seems to refer to an apocalyptic event that is yet to be fulfilled.
- Vs. has happened in recent history. 24 They will be killed by the sword or sent away as captives to all the nations of the world.

25 “And there will be strange signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides.

- This sounds a bit like the effects of global warming

26 People will be terrified at what they see coming upon the earth, for the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with power and great glory. 28 So when all these things begin to happen, *stand and look up*, for your salvation is near!”

Characteristics of the last days

- False religion
- World violence - Wars and insurrections
- Natural disaster – earthquakes
- Famines and world hunger
- Plagues, disease and epidemic
- Persecution – Man’s inhumanity to fellow man
- Relational breakdown because of faith – even those closest to us (16 Even those closest to you—your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—will betray you. They will even kill some of you.)

Those who have had a synapse:

- This will be their best hour. They will see this as a time of opportunity not a time to fear. (13 This will be your opportunity!) Light is best seen in darkness.

- Will stand firm – (19 *By standing firm, you will win your souls.*)

Awareness and alertness

29 Then he gave them this illustration: “Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. 30 When the leaves come out, you know without being told that summer is near. 31 In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that the Kingdom of God is near. 32 I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things have taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

34 “Watch out! Don’t let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don’t let that day catch you unaware, 35 like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. 36 Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man.”

- Nothing to inhibit *spiritual* synapse: 34 Don’t let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don’t let that day catch you unaware, 35 like a trap.

37 Every day Jesus went to the Temple to teach, and each evening he returned to spend the night on the Mount of Olives. 38 The crowds gathered at the Temple early each morning to hear him.

Re:form Vision – Seven areas of world crisis that Christians must be ready to confront

1. Spiritual deadness and confusion
2. Disease and a need for health care
3. Global environmental decline
4. World hunger
5. Human injustice
6. Education and illiteracy
7. Visionary and ethical leadership