

THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE

Luke 21: 5-19

5. And some who were standing there passing the time of day chewing on roots and drinking unclear beverages spake to each other of the temple and declared how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts and Advent calendars and nice curtains (with Jericho lace, let the draper understand) and soft cushions. And Jesus, hearing their utterances and other windy exhalations, said,
6. Ahem. As for these things which ye behold each morning as ye pass by and seek the taverns, the days will come in the which the shops will be shut and the temple gates unopened, and there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down, nor one flagon unshattered and its contents poured into the drains.
7. And they asked Him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass – and not just into the drains? and where shall we find our sustenance then?
8. And He, raising His eyes unto heaven in a most unLucan way, said, O do pay attention – doubly so. Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ, and behold I have fine wines and ales that are strong for they have an heavenly gravity; for the time draweth near and there shall be no bells rung for Last Orders: but go ye not therefore after them. For that time, gentlemen, is nigh – if it pleases ye.
9. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, and strange men of power with an amber hue, and monarchs that sitteth upon their thrones – and I am not referring to drains again - be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass and be told unto all nations by those that tell the news; but the end is not by and by or therewith, or even apparent as the dawn. Ready? Here's the bit they shall call eschatology. Yes, it is Greek.
10. Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and republics shall challenge each other, and there shall be elections and debates, and many lies shall be told therein for there is nothing new under the sun:
11. And great wibbly-wobbly earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and plagues of boils and measles and the pox of chickens that shall be super-scratchy; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven, with unusual cloud formations, strong winds – no, not what ye are thinking - and many rains, and there shall be a strange scent of garlic. I know not why I said that last one but never mind.
12. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, even upon thy parts that are covered, and persecute you, and there shall be many frosty mornings and much ice in evidence with face scarves, and they shall deliver you up to the synagogues, and the courts, and even into prisons without evidence, and ye shall appear before kings and rulers and judges and the twelve persons that sitteth in the city gate, and all for my name's sake.
13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony – glory be - and a witness, and take the form of a weekly serial in the scrolls that are journals, or even a part-work that stretched over many months. Even longer. Unfortunately, sequels are a possibility.
14. Settle it therefore in your hearts and let your mind be calm and empty, and do not to meditate before what ye shall answer:
15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom and a tongue which is but a little member, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist, and which some will find attractive. But not all.

16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends, and even those who know ye not but who have heard rumours in the marketplace; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death which will be a bit extreme. Fingers crossed, eh?
17. And ye shall be hated of all men and women and others, and even thy neighbour's manservants and maidservants, and the ass that dwelleth in the barn, for my name's sake.
18. But there shall not an hair of your head perish, though there might be some loss in other areas.
19. And Jesus concluded, In all of this, and I know it's a lot to take in, your patience possess ye your souls. And there was much muttering, and some did ask about the temple and the price of Advent wreaths, for they had not followed His reasoning and were perplexed to say the least.