

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... The Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. - Part 2

Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in Matthew 24:4-35. Last week we noted the signs that Jesus gave to the disciples when they asked Jesus, "Tell us, when these things [the destruction of the temple] happen?" Jesus told the disciples that "THIS generation will not pass away until all these things take place," (Matt. 24:34). A generation is considered 30-40 years, between the birth of parents and the birth of their offspring. Jesus warned the elect [Christians] to flee in verses 16-20, when the Roman army arrived. Jesus was not warning them of His second coming because it would not matter whether He returns on a Saturday or Sunday; what difference does it make if He returns in winter or summer? However, if they were trying to flee from an invading army [Titus and the Roman army] a warning to flee to the mountains would make perfect sense.

Jesus warned the disciples, "there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will," (Matt. 24:21). Josephus, a Jew and second-century historian, wrote in "The Wars of the Jews" (5:12:2) that Roman legions camped at the Mount of Olives and built a 9-mile trench around Jerusalem, and that over a million Jews were slaughtered in the destruction of Jerusalem, and another 100,000 were carried away as slaves. In view of the world population at that time, it was truly a great tribulation. Jesus said, "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect THOSE DAYS will be cut short", (Matt.24:22). According to history, Titus, the general of the Roman army, received news from Rome, urging him to return to Rome as he was greatly needed. Therefore, "those days" were shortened and many lives of the elect were saved.

In verse 29 Jesus used the language of judgment [apocalyptic - a prophecy of destruction] to describe God's judgment on Israel (Matt. 23:37-39). In the Old Testament, similar language is used to describe the fall of kingdoms. Examples of this same language are used in the fall of Babylon (Isa. 13:10-13), the fall of Edom (Isa. 34:4-6), and the fall of Pharaoh, King of Egypt (Ezek. 32:37-38). In one of Daniel's visions he wrote, "with the clouds of heaven, One like a Son of Man was coming and He came up to the Ancient of Days [God in heaven] and was given dominion, Glory, and a kingdom [the church]," Daniel 7:13-14. Daniel's prophecy agrees with what Jesus said in verse 30.

When Jesus answered the disciples' second question, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" He said, "But of THAT day and hour NO ONE knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone," (Matt. 24:36-38). These verses teach that there will be NO signs or warnings before His second coming (2 Peter 3:10).

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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