



January 19, 2024

## **An Increasingly Troubled World**

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Prophecy is always a topic that boosts Bible Study attendance. Even today in the non-Christian world, many are interested in prophecy. I remember conducting a Public Bible Lecture in Florida back in the early 80's and a large number of folks showed up, validating this interest was above normal.

One of the most informative chapters in the Scriptures concerning prophecy is Matthew 24. The words there were spoken by the same person who later revealed to the apostle John some amazing prophecies concerning events relating to the time period called the "*Day of the Lord*" or as John describes it "*the Lord's Day*." In addition to prophetic details, Jesus gives some warnings and prodding to be alert to what is happening around us in an increasingly troubled and indeed dangerous world.

Matthew 24 has a two part application.

Jesus had referred to the stones of the Herodian Temple being thrown down (v.2). The disciples came to Jesus privately and asked Him, "*when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?*" Some of the events that Jesus predicted would apply to both the time of 70 AD and the destruction of the Herodian Temple by the Roman armies and also to the time period referred to as the "*end of the age*".

The parallel prophecy in Luke is interesting. Notice Luke 21:20: "*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.*" There is

both an initial application of this prophecy and a later or latter day one.

The following text is from the scholastic "Handbook of Biblical Chronology", Finegan, 1999, p. 106: "In his account of the second destruction Josephus gives the following sequence of events. On Xanthikos 14 Titus encamped before the city (War 5.99; 5.133; 5.567). On Panemos 17 the daily sacrifices ceased (6.94). On Loos 8 the Roman armies completed their earthworks (6.220) and Titus ordered the gates of the temple area set afire (6.228). On the following day, which was Loos 9, Titus resolved to spare the temple (6.241). On yet the following day, which was Loos 10, amidst the fighting, a soldier cast a firebrand into the temple and it was burned (6.244, 252). The date of the burning is stated explicitly by Josephus: "the tenth of the month Loos, the day on which of old it had been burnt by the king of Babylon" (6.250). In the later correlation of the Macedonian calendar as it was used in Palestine, Loos was parallel to Ab, the fifth month. Therefore Josephus's date of Loos = Ab 10 is identical with Jeremiah's 52:12 date of the tenth day of the fifth month for the first destruction, and just one day later than the ninth day of Ab taken as the official date by the rabbis".

The account in Matthew 24 adds something more: "*Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*" (v.15-16) I suppose the action of the Roman soldiers entering both the holy place and the most holy place to destroy them and then cart off any valuable items could be looked at as an "abomination" and a "desolation."

It seems possible that in the latter days some kind of structure that is termed the temple will be set up as well as an altar, and daily rituals will be associated with them which will be terminated when the abomination is set up. (Revelation 11:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Daniel 8:11-14, 26; Daniel 12:11) Analyzing the details is a subject for another time.

But, will the future armies entering Jerusalem and the desolation of a temple take

place at the same time of year as the previous desolation of the temple of Solomon and that of the temple of Herod? Only time will tell.

It appears that there will be a window of opportunity for those who are alert and watching to quickly get away from Jerusalem and flee to the mountains and wilderness areas.

There's another interesting statement made concerning Christ's disciples who will be present in the area of Jerusalem at the end of the age. Jesus instructs them, "*And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.*" (Matthew 24:20) This is an obvious validation that the disciples of Jesus (implied by the word "your") will be observing the weekly Sabbath at that time. Why else would Jesus mention this?

Jesus then introduces the coming of "great tribulation" on a scale such that it will be the greatest ever to take place! (v.21) In future Friday evening thoughts, I want to look at challenges and warnings that are brought out in the verses that follow. My friends, we live in times where we need to make sure we are connected to Our Father and His Son, for man is unable and cannot ultimately protect any of us from utter destruction.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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