

"Jesus- on End Times"

Mark 13

CORE: Jesus' response to His disciples' questions RE: the destruction of the Temple and the signs of such "end of the world" events strongly reveal:

- * His shepherding heart**
- * His settled authority**

1. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

What began as a casual conversation (I.e., Galilean country boys awed by the structure of the temple...massive marble stones weighing 100 tons and more...the heaviest stones in the pyramids weighed 2 tons...gold-laden designs...this was not Solomon's temple...rather, the one built by Herod), immediately became a prophecy of impending tragedy.

Shocked by His words, the disciples asked: "When?" (not "why?"; they trusted His words).

Jesus gave them 4 signposts that would precede the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70:

- 1. False Messiahs**
- 2. Wars and rumors of war**
- 3. Earthquakes and famines**
- 4. Persecution...some even martyred**

Each of these words were fulfilled in the next 4 decades leading up to Titus's destruction of the temple in A.D. 70:

*** Lots of false messiahs and false prophets making false claims. How could people believe them? Remember, even John the Baptist doubted Jesus' authenticity!**

*** Five major earthquakes (in Crete in 46; in Rome in 51; in Phrygia in 53 & 60; and in Camponia in 63)**

*** Three great famines in Judea (44), in Greece (50), and in Rome (52).**

*** In addition, A.D. 65 was the worst year of famines and earthquakes in the entire history of Rome.**

*** The Book of Acts records increasing persecution of these first generation Jesus-followers. Some were martyred (I.e., James, Stephen). Church father, Tertullian: "The blood of Christians is seed."**

*** A.D. 69 was known as "the year of the four emperors" filled with violent takeovers, political upheaval and confusion unlike anything the Romans had ever experienced. Wars and rumors of wars was the**

climate of this highly unsettled time.

Yet, Jesus said, "But the end is not yet."

He then got even more specific: "The abomination that causes desolation." First prophesied by Daniel in Daniel 9:27.

* First installment of this "abomination" came in December of 167 B.C. When Antiochus IV placed a statue of Zeus on the altar, sacrificing a pig to this pagan deity.

* THE "sign" for Jesus' hearers came in A.D.68 when the Zealots anointed a clown as high priest.

Jesus gave them one clear word of warning: "Watch! Look for these specific signs."

And they did. History records that most (if not all) of Jesus' followers heeded His words, fleeing to the city of Pella, in the mountains across the Jordan. They were instructed to "pray that it won't happen in winter"- a time when streams were swollen and the Jordan was treacherous, making travel difficult especially for pregnant women and those with young children.

NOTE: The Roman armies surrounded the city of Jerusalem for at least a one-year period, beginning in A.D. 69. Their banners unfurled with the image of a vulture on them (Note: Matthew's inclusion of Jesus' warning of vultures gathering for the "carcass" of Jerusalem. The Roman armies cut off food supplies, causing the starvation ("famine") of many.)

(13:18-19) "Days of distress unequalled from the beginning"- 100,000 Jews were taken as prisoners. Another 1.1 million died by starvation & slaughter. So many Jews were crucified that hills were emptied of trees.

NOTE: Jesus' shepherding heart as He prepares His followers for horrific natural disasters.

NOTE: "This generation" refers to those hearing Jesus' words. Those who would need His practical words of warning for their own survival. Yet, the word "genea" also refers to a "lineage." He was saying, "Though these events will seem overwhelming. Formidable. Yet, My people will not be annihilated. They will persevere."

Jesus then speaks of events occurring before His triumphal return.

2. JESUS WILL RETURN.

His first warnings involved earthly events. His second statements regarded heavenly events. The sky would be darkened (obviously capturing the attention of the world), setting the stage for Jesus' glorious appearance in the sky. The omnipresent One, visible to every eye, responded to by every knee.

"This is not the end" It will not end with My people hiding, escaping. It will end with Me returning, gathering My people, judging, clarifying...reigning. The whole world will know that I am Lord! (See Mark 8:38).

CONCLUSION- These words of Jesus speak BOTH to His hearers as well as to future generations. (Two-fold nature of prophecy)

- 1. I will prepare you, keep you--in the same way I prepared My disciples. So trust Me.**
- 2. No one knows the hour. My Father knows. The issue is PREPARATION, not CALCULATION. Or speculation.**
- 3. Be found awake. Alert, during the "four watches of the night" (Roman). Not asleep, either avoiding responsibility or overwhelmed in anxiety. Lit.- "dulled in spirit or in mind."**
 - * Be aware (13:5)**
 - * Be on your guard (13:9,23,33)**
 - * Keep awake (13:35)**
 - * Keep watch (14:34)**
 - * Watch and pray (14:38)**

NOTE: Guard your heart from doubting that Jesus is who He says He is (I.e., John the Baptist in prison--doubting Jesus was the Messiah).

4. The most important thing to Jesus--that we be found FAITHFUL when He returns. Loving Him back...and loving people as He loves them...and so leading them into a relationship WITH HIM. FAITHFUL when He returns--not KNOWING WHEN He will return---is what will bless Him!