

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

Mark 11:15 - 17 Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple,...

Mark 12:41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury,

Mark 12:10 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

Mark 13:2 Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Tribulation ahead. The magnificent temple before them was to be utterly destroyed? The Lord of the Temple slain? The stone the builders rejected made head of the corner? The temple raised again? His body? This stone building rebuilt too? What could all of this mean? When was Jesus speaking figuratively and when literally?

Three disciples evidently saw that Jesus spoke literally when He forecast the destruction of the temple then standing across the valley from them in Jerusalem. They asked when it would happen. What sign would be given to mark the time? What He outlined for them was nothing like what they had envisioned when they began to follow Him three and one half years before. Then He had told them they would become fishers of men. They had. But now at the close of His earthly ministry He laid out for them a far different picture of what awaited them. He had been rejected as Messiah by Israel. There would be troubled times from then on. The New Testament is replete with examples described by Jesus that affected the lives of those living and serving the Lord as it was being written.

- # Deceivers, false Christs. The real Christ would be dead, risen and ascended, as He had taught;
- # Wars and rumors of war among the nations and kingdoms of earth;
- # Natural disasters, earthquakes, famines;
- # Persecution by religious and secular authorities;
- # The gospel preached worldwide;
- # Instant support and guidance of the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ before hostile authorities;
- # Natural inter-family bonds and affections violated in persecution and betrayal unto death;
- # Hated by all for Christ's sake.

All of the above have been experienced by believers at various times and places down though the almost twenty centuries since this prophecy was spoken.

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

But these prophecies by the Lord specifically refer to the time after the Rapture at the beginning of Daniel's Seventieth Week (See Daniel 9:25-27) and progressively grow worse and worse. Since the fact of a Rapture was not yet revealed the Lord speaks as if the Seventieth Week would commence shortly after His resurrection. An indeed it could have if the nation had received Peter's appeal on the Day of Pentecost and repented. But they didn't. (So the Church was revealed.)

Daniel 9:25 ...from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:... And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;... And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate,...

During this seven years of tribulation those that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. Although some will die (Revelation 6:9-11), they are secure in the hope of resurrection, Revelation 20:4-6. Others who endure the seven years of tribulation to the end will be saved, both spiritually and physically, Revelation 7:1-8. They will enter the Millennial kingdom of the Lord, Revelation 14:1-5.

The Lord pointed to a unmistakable FUTURE sign that the end was at hand. They were given special specific instructions for when it appeared. This sign has not appeared and is yet in the future for those living today. Even though the Lord spoke as if those He was talking to would see it themselves they soon learned it was for disciples who succeeded them, John 17:20. James was killed by Herod. Peter was told he would die before the Lord returned, John 21:18,19, 2Peter 1:13-15. John died much later, after seeing these events by faith as revealed to him on the Island of Patmos.

The Sign. An Abomination will yet be set up where it shouldn't be. An abomination is the term used in scripture for an idol. A physical representation of a false god. Matthew tells us this idol will be set up in the holy place in the temple, Matthew 24:15. This idol will be set up by the False Prophet (the Antichrist), 2Thessalonians 2:9-10, Revelation 13:14; 19:20. (It will be an image of the Beast, the secular ruler of the western confederacy of formerly "Christian nations," Revelation 17 & 18.) As a result God will bring a desolator upon the land. A foreign invader who will ravage and pillage Israel. This event is prophesied in Daniel, other prophets giving additional details; for instance Zechariah 13:7-9; 14:1-9. At the time this idol is set up the disciples living then are to flee Jerusalem. All of faith will believe the warnings contained

in Matthew and Mark and will flee to safety.

Prophecies by the apostles Paul and John fill in with the truth of the Church, its Rapture before Daniel's Seventieth Week and more details regarding the False Prophet, the Beast, the False Church and sequences of events. The precision with which all the pieces of the future fit together is exquisite.

A more immediate threat. Both Matthew 24 and Mark 13 foretell the same, as yet future, events and warnings. While Luke 21 sounds similar at first glance, it really speaks of the invasion and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple that occurred about 40 years after Jesus' forecast. This came to pass less than five years after Peter and Paul had been martyred. John lived to see it (and flee it) and then do all of his inspired writings.

More details. The Lord reiterates His warning against false Christs and the urgency of immediate flight. Those living then are to pray in anticipation of this, knowing the times. If they are to pray that their flight be not in winter will the Lord answer their prayer? (Then can we assume the beginning of the seven years will be timed in answer to their not yet offered prayers?) If they believe the Lord's prophecy given almost two thousand years ago, won't they forego having unborn, newborn and unweaned children then? How often it is that our handling of basic and simple things in life that confirm our faith before God.

But there is more the disciples will need to know.

For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. 22, 23. See also Isaiah 13:9; Joel 2:31, et. al.

John tells us there are many antichrists in the world today.

1John 2:18 *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*
4:3 *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

Paul tells us those who are left behind having rejected or neglected the gospel will be sent a strong delusion,

2Thessalonians 2:11 *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

A delusion so strong Jesus says, "to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." What a promise! The elect in those days cannot be deceived. They can't be lost. They can't perish. Likewise, neither can those of us today who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. What **security!** What peace! What **danger** today for those as yet unbelievers Flee! Flee from the wrath to come! Don't hesitate. Don't look back as Lot's wife did. Now is the day of salvation. Don't neglect it and miss eternal life.

The Fig Tree again. He had pronounced a curse on a fruitless, leafy fig tree when entering the city earlier that week. It had withered and died that day. It was symbolic of Israel which bore no fruit for Him though having the appearance of life. Now He prophetically referred to a future Israel, again as a fig tree. When the fig tree leafs out summer is close at hand. Judgement, symbolized by summer HEAT, not the summers we know. The Jews are now back in the land where the Messiah was crucified. The fig tree is leafing out, a show of life, but as yet there is still no fruit for God nationally. They have not acknowledged their guilt in rejecting Jesus Christ. Nor will they until subjected to the Great Tribulation that Jesus described as unprecedented:

For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days, 20, 21.

Nothing in history and nothing we have seen in our generation, and we have seen a lot, will come close to the terrors of the last three and one half years of Daniel's Seventieth Week. The Lord's word on that! But it is discipline of the Nation that a purged out remnant might be saved to repopulate Israel in the Millennial earth, subject to the King who once lived here and was crucified here.

More details: Are the days shortened to less than 24 hours or is the period itself cut short? Either way His grace shines through even in discipline.

There will be natural disasters in the heavens

24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

But then all will see the greatest sky show ever seen in the skies. Greater than any comets, meteor showers, "northern lights", eclipses, glorious sunrises, thunder and lightening storms, tornados:

**And then shall they see the Son of man
coming n the clouds
with great power and glory.** 26

This is what the angels promised when He ascended bodily into heaven, Acts 1:9-11; 2Thessalonians 1:4-10, What a sight!

27 then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Does this speak of the Rapture of the church we wait for? No. That occurs secretly at least seven years before this glorious appearing. He will personally come for us to take us to heaven with Him. But He sends angels world wide to bring the Israeli elect to the land. Does "To the utmost part of heaven," envision future extraterrestrial settlements? If that has to occur first it will be a long time until He comes at the rate NASA is going. Rather it

emphasizes that no human being is out of reach of His saving grace or of His inexorable, unsparing judgement. And His word is sure!

Heaven and earth shall pass away

but my words shall not pass away.

AMEN

By Ron Canner, April 18, 2007.