

The Lord's prophecies and warnings in this passage are commonly called the Olivet Discourse after the Mount of Olives where the scene is set. The apocalyptic discourse ranges over centuries of time, some in the past before the Lord's time and some in the future.

The "abomination of desolation" (verse 14) echoes Daniel 9:27. It speaks of the Antichrist of the end times. But it also had a partial fulfillment described in Daniel 11:31, when the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanies performed a pagan sacrifice of a pig in the temple.

The utter destruction of the temple (verse 2) will take place in A.D. 70 when the Romans under Titus put down a Jewish revolt and leveled Jerusalem. The parallel passage in Luke makes this more explicit (Luke 21:20,24). But the terrible warnings concerning Jerusalem will also find a second fulfillment in Revelation 20:9.

There's a pattern here:

Daniel wrote his prophecy on the verge of the rebuilding of Jerusalem (described in Ezra and

Nehemiah), a partial independence for the nation of Israel.

The atrocities committed by Antiochus sparked the Maccabean revolt of 167 BC, leading to full independence of Israel for over 100 years.

The siege and fall of Jerusalem represented the complete downfall of the nation of Israel (although, miraculously, not the assimilation of the Jewish people).

Add to this a common interpretation of verse 28: That the fig tree putting out its leaves is the modern nation of Israel, reconstituted after nearly 2000 years. All these events relate to momentous changes for the nation of Israel.

It seems clear that the Lord is speaking to his disciples as representatives of the Jewish nation, more so than as Christians. The church at this time is still a "mystery hidden for ages and generations" (Colossians 1:26).

Questions:

1. Do you think the disciples in verse 1 are disappointed by what the Lord says in verse 2? If so, why?
2. What are the four disciples mentioned in verse 3 asking the Lord in verse 4?
3. List the various things the Lord speaks of in verses 6-9.
4. What promise does the Lord make to those who are delivered up in verse 11?

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5. What does it mean to "endure to the end" in verse 13?

6. What is the "abomination of desolation" in verse 14?

7. When did/will the events of verses 15-19 take place?

8. Will Christians go through the tribulation? Cite verses.

9. When will verses 24 and 25 take place?

10. Who are the elect in verse 27?

11. What does the fig tree symbolize?