



Christ had made several visits to Jerusalem, the city He loved. He was dedicated as a child in the temple at Jerusalem (Luke 2:21-40). At the age of twelve He attended the Passover with His parents in Jerusalem and remained in the temple for three days with the Priest, listening to them and asking them questions (Luke 2:41-49). At the beginning of His ministry He went into Jerusalem and cleansed the temple of its defilement. At the close of His ministry He went into the city not to be received of men, but rejected by them. The message He had to carry to the people about their fate and that of Jerusalem was heavy upon His heart.

1. How did Christ feel about Jerusalem, the city He loved, as He was making His final visit before His crucifixion?

Luke 19:41, 42 –

Note: There are many cities in our day that ought to be wept over, as they are not aware of the day of salvation and let it slip away in mere carelessness. Although in Christ day, there was none to be more lamented over than Jerusalem, “the joy of the whole earth...the city of the great King.” Ps. 48:2. Christ did not cry because He was about to be betrayed, bound, scourged, and spit upon, but because of the manifold opportunities the people missed that they did not improve upon.

2. What did He say about the coming destruction?

Luke 19:43, 44 –

Note: The Romans besieged the city, cast a trench about it, compassed it round, and kept their inhabitants in on every side. Josephus relates that Titus ran up a wall in a very short time, which surrounded the city, and cut off all hopes of escaping. They laid it even with the ground. Titus commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, and the whole compass of it was leveled, except three towers. Not only the city, but the citizens were laid even with the ground by the cruel slaughters that were made of them, and there was scarcely one stone left upon another.

3. What heartfelt appeal did He make to the impenitent city?

Matt. 23:37 –

4. What did He say as He was about to leave the Temple?

Matt. 23:38 – “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

Note: That which was to fill up their cup of iniquity was their final rejection and crucifixion of Christ, and their condemnation and persecution of His apostles and people after His resurrection. See Matt. 23:29-35; John 19:15; Acts 4-8.

5. Hearing Christ speak these words, what questions did the disciples ask him?

Matt. 24:3 –

Note: Christ's answers to these questions are worthy of the most careful study. The destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish nation attending it are a type of the final destruction of all the cities of the world, and the overthrow of all nations. To some extent, therefore, the descriptions of the two great events seem to be blended. When Christ referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, His prophetic words reached beyond that event to the final conflagration when the Lord shall rise out of His place "to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity," and when the earth "shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Isa. 26:21. Thus the entire discourse was given not for the early disciples only, but for those who were to live during the closing scenes of the world's history. During the discourse Christ did, however, give definite signs, both of the destruction of Jerusalem and of His second coming.

6. In His reply, how did Christ indicate that neither the end of the world nor the Jewish nation was immediately at hand?

Matt. 24:4-6 – "Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁵ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. ⁶ And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."

Note: Christ gives them no answer as to the number of days and years his prediction should be accomplished, for it is not for us to know the times (Acts 1:7). But the question of "What shall be the sign" He fully answers. The prophecy of Christ looks as far forward as the general judgment. However, it should be observed that Christ answers to the disciples tends more to engage their caution than to satisfy their curiosity; more to prepare them for the events that should happen than to give them a distinct idea of the events themselves. This is the understanding of the times that we should covet, and based off of history of old, know what to do: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be" (Ecc. 1:5,6,7,9). Too many today are fixated on the intricate details of the events (and become seduced by it) rather than on the caution and making a spiritual/physical preparation for it and miss the whole point.

7. What did Christ say of the wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquake which were to precede these events?

Matt. 24:8 –

Note: These were to precede and culminate in the great calamity and overthrow, first, of Jerusalem, and finally of the whole world; for, as already noted, the prophecy has a double application, first to Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, and secondly, to the whole world; the destruction of Jerusalem for its rejection of Christ at His first advent being a type of the destruction of the world at the end for its rejection of Christ in refusing to heed the closing warning message sent by God to prepare a world for Christ's second advent.

8. In what language did Christ briefly describe the experiences of His people previous to these calamities?

Matt. 24:9-12 - "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and

shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ¹² And because the iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

Note: The false prophets or deceivers would pretend to divine inspiration, an immediate mission, and a spirit of prophecy, when it was all a lie from the enemy of souls. This happened formerly and will/is happening again (Jer. 23:16; Ezek. 13:1-9). If the thing of which they spoke comes not to pass, believe them not. These false prophets and false Christ's will have their agents and emissaries busy in all places to draw people in to themselves. Then when times become troublous, great, and threatening, and the people are looking to catch at anything that looks like deliverance, then Satan will take advantage of imposing on them, and those lead into error will say, “Lo here is Christ, or there”, but we are to “believe it not”. Matt. 24:23.

9. Who did He say would be saved?

Matt. 24:13 –

10. When did Christ say the end would come?

Matt. 24:14 –

Note: In 60 A.D. Paul carried the gospel to Rome, which was then the capital of the world. In A.D. 64 he wrote of the saints of “Caesar’s household” (Phil. 4:22); and the same year he says that the gospel had been “preached to every creature which is under heaven.” Col. 1:23 Very soon after this (October, 66 A.D.) the Romans began their attacks against Jerusalem; and three and one-half years later the overthrow of the city and of the Jewish nation followed in the notable five months’ siege under Titus, in the spring and summer of 70 A.D.

Thus it was respecting the end of the Jewish nation; and thus it will be in the end of the world as a whole. When the gospel, or good news, of Christ’s coming kingdom has been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, the end of the world—of all nations—will come. As the end of the Jewish nation came with overwhelming destruction, so will come the end of the world. The world will be struck with the besom of destruction under the seven last plagues.

11. What sign did Christ mention by which His disciples might know when the destruction of Jerusalem was near?

Luke 21:20 –

12. When this sign appeared, what were the disciples instructed to do?

Matt. 24:15, 16 –

Note: In October, 66 A.D., when Cestius came against the city, but before some unaccountable reason suddenly withdrew his army from it, the Christians discerned in this the sign foretold by Christ, and fled. After the departure of Cestius, Josephus, in his “Wars of the Jews,” chapter 20, says that “many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it is going to sink.” It is a remarkable fact that in the terrible siege which occurred under Titus three and one-half years later, not a single Christian is known to have lost his life, while 1,100,000 Jews are said to have perished in it. Here is a most striking lesson on the value and importance of studying and believing the prophecies, and giving heed to the signs of the times. Those who believed what Christ had said, and watched for the sign which He had foretold, were saved, while the unbelieving perished. So it will be in the end of the world. The

watchful and believing will be delivered, while the careless and unbelieving will be snared and taken. See Matt. 24:36-44; Luke 21:33-46; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.

13. When the sign appeared, how suddenly were they to flee?

Matt. 24:17, 18 – “Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: ¹⁸ neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.”

14. Besides telling His disciples when to flee, how did Christ further show His solicitude and tender care for them?

Matt. 24:20 –

Note: the winter would be an unfavorable time in which to flee, entailing discomfort and hardship; and an attempt to flee on the Sabbath day would doubtless have been met with difficulty, so false and pharisaical were the notions of the Jews respecting the true character and object of the Sabbath. See Matt. 12:1-14; Luke 13:14-17; Mark 1:32; 2:23-28; John 5:10-18.

The prayers of Christ's followers were heard. Events were so over-ruled that neither Jews nor Romans hindered the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews pursued after his army, and the Christians thus had an opportunity to leave the city. The country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them. At the time of this siege, the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and thus the Christians of Judea were able to escape unmolested, and in the autumn, a most favorable time for flight.

15. What trying experience did Christ foretell?

Matt. 24:21 –

Note: In paragraph 4 of his preface to his “war of the Jews,” Josephus, referring to the destruction of Jerusalem says: “The misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable.” In this terrible calamity, the prophecy of Moses recorded in Deut. 28:47-53, was literally fulfilled. He said, “Thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters...in the siege, and in the straightness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.”

Following the destruction of Jerusalem came the persecution of the early Christians under the pagan emperors during the first three centuries of the Christian era, that begun under Diocletian in 303 A.D., and continuing for ten years (Rev. 2:10), being the most bitter and extensive persecution of God's people the world had yet witnessed. Following this came the still greater and more terrible persecution of the saints during the long centuries of papal supremacy, foretold in Dan. 7:25 and Rev. 12:6. All these tribulations occurred under either pagan or papal Rome.

16. For whose sake did Christ say the period of papal persecution would be shortened?

Matt. 24:22 – “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”

Note: Through the influence of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and the movements which grew out of it, the power of the Papacy to enforce its decrees against those it pronounced heretics was gradually lessened, until persecution ceased almost wholly about the middle of the eighteenth century—the beginning of an epoch of freedom.

17. Against what deceptions did Christ then warn us?

Matt. 24:23, 24 –

18. Answering the question as to what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the world, what did Christ say?

Luke 21:25, 26 –

19. When were these signs first to appear, and what were they to be?

Matt. 24:29 –

20. How is that expressed by Mark?

Mark 13:24, 25 –

Note: Papal persecution almost wholly ceased about the middle of the eighteenth century. Then the signs of His coming began to appear.

21. When was there a wonderful darkening of the sun?

On May 19, 1780

Note: May 19, 1780, is known in history as “the dark day.” On this day over a large portion of the New World, upon which at this time the eyes of all the world were centered, there occurred, at midday, a remarkable darkness. “Candles were lighted in many houses. The birds were silent, and disappeared. The fowls retired to roost.” In harmony with the impression God evidently designed should be made by the sign, many thought the day of judgment was at hand.

22. When did the moon refuse to give her light?

The night following the darkening of the sun, May 19, 1780.

Note: Although the moon had full only the night before, the darkness of this night was so intense that for a time no luminous body whatever appeared in the heavens, and a sheet of white paper could not be seen when held within a few inches of the eyes.

23. What sign was to follow the darkening of the sun and the moon?

Matt. 24:29 –

24. When did the stars fall, as here predicted?

Nov. 13, 1833

Note: On the morning of Nov. 13, 1833, there occurred the most wonderful exhibition of shooting stars the world has ever seen. Those who witnessed it, says Professor Olmsted, the celebrated astronomer of Yale College, “probably saw the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals covered by the pages of history.” The extent of this shower, he says, “was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the earth’s surface.” And, like the darkening of the sun and moon, it was considered by many who saw it as “the harbinger of the coming of the Son of man.”

25. What were to be the signs on earth of Christ's coming?

Luke 21:25, 26 –

Note: This is an exact picture of the condition of the things in the world today. Through greed of gain, lawlessness, licentiousness, increasing violence, trouble between capital and labor, international complications, and preparations for war, the nations are perplexed, and men's hearts tremble with fear as they look into the future. The elements are also disturbed, as seen in the great earthquakes and storms on land and sea.

26. What did Christ say was to be the next great event following these signs?

Luke 21:27 –

(See **Matt. 24:30**)

27. When these things should begin to come to pass, what did Christ tell His people to do?

Luke 21:28 –

28. When the trees put forth their leaves, what do we know?

Matt. 24:32 –

29. What may be known with equal certainty when these signs have been seen?

Luke 21:31 – “So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” (See **Luke 21:33**)

30. What did Christ say of the certainty of this prophecy?

Matt. 24:34, 35 –

Note: Anyone at all acquainted with history knows that what Christ foretold concerning the destruction of Jerusalem came true to the very letter. So likewise may we be assured that what He has said concerning the end of the world will as certainly and as literally be fulfilled.

31. Who alone knows the exact day of Christ's coming?

Matt. 24:36 –

32. What did Christ say would be the moral condition of the world just preceding His advent?

Matt. 24:37-39 –

33. In view of the fact that we do not know the exact time of Christ's coming, what important admonition has He given us?

Matt. 24:44 - "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

34. What will be the experience of those who say in their hearts that the Lord is not soon coming?

Matt. 24:48-51 -