

THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM AND THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

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ONE OF THE MORE DISPUTED PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE IS THE DISCOURSE OF JESUS ABOUT THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM AND THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN. THIS DISCOURSE IS RECORDED IN MATTHEW 24, MARK 13, AND LUKE 21. A QUICK READING OF ONE OR ALL OF THESE ACCOUNTS OF THIS DISCOURSE MAY LEAVE THE READER CONFUSED. THERE ARE TWO REASONS FOR THIS INITIAL CONFUSION. FIRST, THE LANGUAGE THAT IS USED IS OFTEN HIGHLY SYMBOLIC, BEING DRAWN TO A GREAT EXTENT FROM THE LANGUAGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS. SECOND, THERE ARE TWO THEMES (THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM IN A.D. 70 AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST) WHICH ARE WOVEN TOGETHER TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT IT IS HARD TO DISENTANGLE THEM. THIS FACT HAS OPENED THE WAY FOR TWO MAJOR MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF THIS DISCOURSE: ONE WHICH SEES THE ENTIRE DISCOURSE RELATING ONLY TO THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM IN A.D. 70 AND THE OTHER WHICH SEES THE ENTIRE DISCOURSE RELATING ONLY TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THE LATTER VIEW IS HELD MOSTLY BY PREMILLENNIALISTS. IT IGNORES MANY OF THE PLAIN STATEMENTS IN THE PASSAGE RELATING IT TO THE FIRST CENTURY AND MAKES THE WHOLE THING UNFULFILLED. ITS DANGER IS THAT IT STARTS PEOPLE PREDICTING SPECIFIC CURRENT EVENTS BY A LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF SYMBOLIC BIBLE PASSAGES. IT LOOKS FORWARD TO THE RESTORATION OF THE LAW OF MOSES, A BURDEN WHICH WAS DONE AWAY WITH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST, AND TO AN EARTHLY KINGDOM OF THE JEWS WHICH IS ALL POWERFUL. WHEN FOLLOWED TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION, IT PRESENTS JESUS AS ONE WHO CAME TO ESTABLISH AN EARTHLY JEWISH KINGDOM BUT DIDN'T PROVE POWERFUL ENOUGH. THUS HE ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT UNTIL SUCH TIME AS HE SHOULD BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO COME A SECOND TIME AND ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM.

THE FORMER VIEW IS HELD PRIMARILY BY AMILLENNIALISTS WHO ARE STRONGLY ANTI-PREMILLENNIAL. IT TAKES THE PASSAGES WHICH REFER TO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN AS SYMBOLIC FOR COMING IN DESTRUCTION UPON THE CITY OF JERUSALEM. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THESE PASSAGES ARE TIGHTLY TIED BY LINGUISTIC PARALLELS TO MOST OTHER PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT REFER TO THE SECOND COMING. WHEN FOLLOWED TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION, IT PRESENTS ALL THE PASSAGES RELATING TO THE SECOND COMING, THE RESURRECTION, THE END OF THE WORLD, AND THE FINAL JUDGMENT AS BEING SYMBOLIC FOR WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70 AND THUS COMPLETELY DOES AWAY WITH ANY FUTURE HOPE.

IT IS IN THESE CHAPTERS THAT THE EDITORIAL ACTIVITY OF THE GOSPEL WRITERS IS MOST CLEARLY SEEN. MARK SEEMS TO PRESENT THE APOSTLES AS VIEWING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AS HAPPENING AT THE SECOND COMING.^[1] MATTHEW, HOWEVER, MORE CLEARLY SEPARATES THE TWO, RECORDING THE DISCIPLES AS ASKING: FIRST, "WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BE" (I.E., THE THROWING DOWN OF THE STONES OF THE TEMPLE) AND SECOND, "WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN^[2] OF YOUR ADVENT^[3] AND OF THE COMPLETION OF THE AGE?"^[4] LUKE, STILL DIFFERENTLY, GATHERS MUCH OF THE MATERIAL RELATING TO THE SECOND COMING TOGETHER AND PUTS IT IN CHAPTER 17: 22-37, LEAVING MOST OF CHAPTER 21 REFERRING TO THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM.^[5] THESE DIFFERENCES OF APPROACH TO THIS DISCOURSE MUST BE KEPT IN MIND AS ONE COMPARES THESE THREE DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS. THE DISCOURSE CAN BE OUTLINED AND SUMMARIZED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY.

THE PREDICTION OF THE TEMPLE'S DESTRUCTION AND THE RESULTING QUESTIONS (MATT. 24: 1-3; MARK 13: 1-4; LUKE 21: 5-7)

FIRST, SOME OF JESUS' DISCIPLES POINT OUT THE BEAUTIFUL TEMPLE BUILDINGS. JESUS RESPONDS BY SAYING THAT THEY WILL BE DESTROYED TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT ONE STONE WILL NOT BE LEFT ON TOP OF ANOTHER. LATER THE DISCIPLES ASK HIM TWO QUESTIONS: (1) "WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BE?" AND (2) (AS MATTHEW RECORDS IT) "WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF YOUR ADVENT AND OF THE COMPLETION OF THE AGE?" NOTE THAT MARK HAS THIS SECOND QUESTION WORDED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SHOW THAT THE DISCIPLES THOUGHT THE

TEMPLE WOULD BE DESTROYED AT THE END OF THE WORLD. THEY ASK, "WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN WHEN THESE THINGS [I.E., THE THROWING DOWN OF THE STONES OF THE TEMPLE] ARE ALL TO BE COMPLETED?" ALSO NOTE THAT LUKE DOES NOT INCLUDE A QUESTION ABOUT THE SECOND COMING. IN LUKE THE SECOND QUESTION REGARDS WHEN "THESE THINGS" ARE GOING TO "HAPPEN."

WARNINGS AGAINST BEING LED ASTRAY AND FALLING AWAY (MATT. 24:4-14; MARK 13:5-13; LUKE 21:8-19)

JESUS ANSWERED FIRST TO CLEAR UP THEIR MISUNDERSTANDING. HE TELLS THEM TO TAKE HEED LEST THEY BE LED ASTRAY. THERE WILL BE WARS, RUMORS OF WARS, EARTHQUAKES, FAMINES, AND PESTILENCES, BUT THEY SHOULD NOT BE ALARMED.^[6] NOTE THAT TODAY THESE ARE OFTEN LISTED AS SIGNS OF THE SECOND COMING, BUT JESUS HIMSELF SAYS THAT WHEN THESE THINGS HAPPEN, "THE END^[7] IS NOT YET," RATHER, "THIS IS BUT THE BEGINNING OF THE BIRTH-PANGS."^[8] HE WARNS AGAINST GOING AFTER THOSE WHO SAY, "THE TIME HAS COME NEAR." HE GOES ON TO SAY THAT THEY WILL BE PERSECUTED AND EXHORTS THEM TO ENDURE.^[9]

THE GREAT TRIBULATION (MATT. 24:15-22; MARK 13:14-20; LUKE 21:20-24)

NEXT JESUS ANSWERS THEIR FIRST QUESTION ABOUT WHEN THE TEMPLE WILL BE DESTROYED. HE SAYS THAT WHEN THEY SEE THE "ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION" (THAT IS, THE ABOMINATION THAT CAUSES DESOLATION--NIV) SPOKEN OF BY THE PROPHET DANIEL (IN DAN. 9:27 AND 12:11; COMPARE ALSO 11:31),^[10] THEN THEY WILL KNOW THAT IT IS TIME FOR THOSE IN JUDEA TO IMMEDIATELY FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS. LUKE EXPLAINS THAT THIS ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION IS TO BE ARMIES SURROUNDING JERUSALEM,^[11] AND IT IS JERUSALEM ITSELF WHICH IS TO BE DESOLATED. NOTE THAT JESUS PLACES THIS EVENT IN THE LIFETIME OF THE DISCIPLES; HE TELLS THEM, "WHEN YOU SEE." HE FURTHER SAYS THAT THIS WILL BE A TIME OF GREAT TRIBULATION, SUCH AS HAS NOT BEEN FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD UNTIL NOW, NO, AND NEVER WILL BE."^[12] IT WILL BE A TIME FOR JEWS TO BE KILLED AND TAKEN CAPTIVE AND FOR JERUSALEM TO BE TRODDEN DOWN BY THE GENTILES.^[13]

IT IS NOT UNUSUAL TO HEAR SOMEONE TEACHING THAT THE "GREAT TRIBULATION" IS STILL IN THE FUTURE. IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT JESUS USES THE PHRASE TO DESCRIBE THE TIME WHEN THE STONES OF THE TEMPLE WOULD BE THROWN DOWN, WHEN JERUSALEM WOULD BE SURROUNDED BY ARMIES, DESOLATED, AND TRODDEN DOWN BY THE GENTILES, AND WHEN THE JEWS WOULD BE KILLED AND TAKEN CAPTIVE. ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED IN THE PERIOD FROM A.D. 66 TO 70. THE JEWISH HISTORIAN JOSEPHUS RECORDS THAT DURING THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM ROBBER BANDS MADE MURDER THE RULE^[14] AND THE FAMINE BECAME SO SEVERE THAT ONE WOMAN KILLED AND ROASTED HER OWN INFANT SON.^[15] HE ESTIMATES THAT OVER A MILLION JEWS DIED IN THE SIEGE AND OVER 90,000 WERE TAKEN CAPTIVE.^[16] THE CITY WAS BURNED AND LEVELLED AND PUT UNDER ROMAN RULE, JUST AS JESUS HAD PREDICTED.^[17]

WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS (MATT. 24:23-28; MARK 13:21-23)

JESUS GOES ON TO SAY THAT IF AT THIS TIME SOME ONE SHOULD PREDICT THE SECOND COMING, NOT TO BELIEVE IT. RATHER, THE ADVENT OF THE SON OF MAN WOULD BE AS OBVIOUS AS THE LIGHTNING THAT BRIGHTENS THE WHOLE SKY--IT WOULD BE AS OBVIOUS AS THE LOCATION OF A CARCASS BEING CIRCLED BY VULTURES. THIS INTRODUCES THE SUBJECT OF THE SECOND COMING. IT IS STRANGE IN LIGHT OF THE CLEAR TEACHING OF THIS PASSAGE THAT SOME SHOULD BE TEACHING THAT THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN WAS IN A.D. 70 WHEN JERUSALEM WAS DESTROYED.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (MATT. 24:29-31; MARK 13:24-27; LUKE 21:25-28)

IT IS EQUALLY STRANGE TO HEAR SOME PEOPLE TEACHING THAT THE GREAT TRIBULATION IS YET TO HAPPEN AND THAT IT WILL NOT HAPPEN UNTIL AFTER JESUS HAS COME AGAIN AND CAUGHT UP (RAPTURED) TO MEET HIM IN

THE AIR. FOR JESUS HIMSELF GOES ON TO ANSWER THE SECOND QUESTION ABOUT HIS ADVENT AND THE "COMPLETION OF THE AGE." AND IN DOING SO HE PLACES THE TIME OF THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN "AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS." THIS ALSO RULES OUT A SYMBOLIC COMING AT THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. IT IS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION THAT VARIOUS HEAVENLY SIGNS BEGIN TO BE SEEN. THESE SIGNS (SUN AND MOON DARKENED, STARS FALLING FROM HEAVEN, AND HEAVENLY POWERS SHAKEN) ARE SYMBOLIC FOR POLITICAL UPEHAVAL. (COMPARE ISAIAH 13: 1, 10, 17 AND EZEKIEL 32:2, 7, 11 WHERE THE SAME TYPE OF LANGUAGE IS USED TO DESCRIBE THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON BY THE MEDES AND OF EGYPT BY BABYLON, RESPECTIVELY.) IT IS THEN, DURING THIS TIME OF POLITICAL TURMOIL, THAT THE SON OF MAN WILL COME ON THE CLOUDS^[18] OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY AND WILL SEND OUT HIS ANGELS TO GATHER HIS CHOSEN ONES FROM ALL THE WORLD.^[19] NOTE TOO THAT JESUS PLACES THIS EVENT AFTER THE LIFETIME OF THE DISCIPLES; HE SAYS, "THEY WILL SEE," NOT, "YOU WILL SEE."

NOW SOME TEACH THAT THIS COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IS A SYMBOLIC COMING IN DESTRUCTION ON JERUSALEM. OTHERS TEACH THAT IT IS A THIRD COMING SEVEN YEARS AFTER THE RAPTURE WHEN THE CHOSEN ONES NOT IN THE CHURCH (AS THEY SUPPOSE) WILL BE SAVED. THAT NEITHER OF THESE VIEWS IS TRUE IS SEEN FROM THE FACT THAT THE SAME LANGUAGE IS USED TO DESCRIBE THIS COMING AND THE SECOND COMING IN OTHER PASSAGES. IN THE DISCIPLES' ORIGINAL QUESTION ABOUT THE "SIGN" THE WORDS "ADVENT" AND "COMPLETION OF THE AGE" ARE USED. "ADVENT" (TRANSLATED "COMING" IN MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS) IS A TERM WHICH USUALLY IS USED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SECOND COMING, SUCH AS IN I COR. 15: 23 (THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST HAPPENS AT THE ADVENT), I THESS. 4: 15 (THE RAPTURE HAPPENS AT THE ADVENT), II THESS. 2: 1, 8 (CHRISTIANS ASSEMBLE TO MEET CHRIST AT HIS ADVENT WHEN HE DESTROYS THE LAWLESS ONE), AND II PETER 3: 12 (THE HEAVENS AND EARTH BURN UP AT THE ADVENT). THE "COMPLETION OF THE AGE" IS ALSO USED IN MATT. 13: 39, 40, 49 AND 28: 20 WHERE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT ITS MEANING IS THE END OF THE WORLD. THE "SIGN" IS THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN,^[20] A SIGN WHICH IS SEEN (COMPARE REV. 1: 7). AT THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN THE TRUMPET IS SOUNDED, AS I COR. 15: 52 AND I THESS. 4: 16 ALSO RECORD WILL HAPPEN AT THE SECOND COMING. THE "GATHERING" OF THE CHOSEN ONES IS ALSO FOUND IN II THESS. 2: 1 WHERE IT IS CHRISTIANS GATHERING. LATER IN THE DISCOURSE JESUS NOTES THAT THE COMING WILL BE LIKE A "THIEF" (COMPARE I THESS. 5: 2; II PETER 3: 10; REV. 16: 15) AND THAT WE ARE TO "WATCH" (COMPARE I THESS. 5: 6). WE ARE LIVING IN THIS TIME OF POLITICAL UPEHAVAL. THEREFORE, WE OUGHT TO LOOK UP AND RAISE OUR HEADS, BECAUSE OUR REDEMPTION IS DRAWING NEAR (COMPARE ROM. 8: 23).

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE (MATT. 24: 32-33; MARK 13: 28-29; LUKE 21: 29-31)

NEXT JESUS TELLS THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE. WHEN THIS TREE PUTS ON LEAVES, YOU KNOW THAT SUMMER IS NEAR. IN THE SAME WAY, WHEN YOU SEE ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENING, YOU KNOW THAT HE^[21] IS NEAR. WE HAVE SEEN THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM; WE SEE POLITICAL TURMOIL AND HAVE FOR 1900 YEARS; HE IS NEAR! PRAISE GOD! BUT NOTE THAT "THESE THINGS" PRECEDE HIS COMING--THEY DO NOT INCLUDE IT. HE IS ONLY NEAR, NOT HERE.

STATEMENTS ABOUT TIME (MATT. 24: 34-36; MARK 13: 30-32; LUKE 21: 32-36)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS IS SEEN IN THAT OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD NEXT PASSAGE WHERE JESUS SAYS, "THIS GENERATION"^[22] WILL NOT PASS AWAY UNTIL ALL 'THESE THINGS' HAPPEN."^[23] NOW SOME WANT TO UNDERSTAND THE PHRASE "THESE THINGS" TO INCLUDE EVERYTHING THAT JESUS HAS TALKED ABOUT UP TO THIS POINT. HOWEVER, WE HAVE JUST SEEN THAT IN THE PREVIOUS VERSE THE PHRASE "THESE THINGS" DOES NOT INCLUDE THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN; RATHER IT REFERS TO THOSE THINGS THAT PRECEDE IT. AND ALL "THESE THINGS" DID TAKE PLACE BEFORE THAT GENERATION HAD PASSED AWAY; THEY HAPPENED JUST FORTY YEARS LATER. ON THE OTHER HAND, "THAT DAY," WHICH NO ONE BUT THE FATHER KNOWS, REFERS TO WHEN "HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PASS AWAY."^[24] NO ONE KNOWS WHEN CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN. IT IS TRAGIC THAT SO MANY CONTINUE VAINLY TO SET DATES.

EXHORTATION TO WATCH
(MATT. 24: 37-25: 46; MARK 13: 33-37)

SINCE NO ONE KNOWS THE TIME OF CHRIST'S COMING, MATTHEW CONCLUDES THE DISCOURSE WITH SEVERAL PARABLES ON THE NEED TO WATCH FOR THE SECOND COMING AND ALWAYS BE READY. THESE CONTINUE ON INTO CHAPTER 25 AND END WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE JUDGMENT. AND MARK CONCLUDES WITH JESUS SAYING, "AND WHAT I SAY TO YOU I SAY TO ALL: WATCH." LET US KEEP WATCHING!

ENDNOTES:

[1] APPARENTLY THE DISCIPLES THOUGHT THAT WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED THE END OF THE WORLD WOULD COME. IT WOULD SEEM THAT MARK GIVES THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE APOSTLES' QUESTION AND MATTHEW AND LUKE MODIFY IT TO MAKE IT MORE UNDERSTANDABLE TO THE READER.

[2] THE QUESTION ABOUT THE "SIGN" IS ANSWERED IN MATT. 24: 30.

[3] GREEK *PAROUSIA*, USUALLY A TECHNICAL TERM FOR THE SECOND COMING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT HAS THIS-MEANING IN THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES: MATT. 24: 3, 27, 37, 39; I COR. 15: 23; I THESS. 2: 19; 3: 13; 4: 15; 5: 23; II THESS. 2: 1, 8; JAMES 5: 7, 8; II PETER 1: 16; 3: 4, 12; I JOHN 2: 28. *PAROUSIA* IS USED IN I THESS. 2: 9 TO REFER TO THE ADVENT OF THE LAWLESS ONE.

[4] KJV TRANSLATES "END OF THE WORLD"; THE PHRASE "COMPLETION OF THE AGE" IS FOUND IN MATT. 13: 39, 40, 49; 24: 3; 28: 20. THE NOUN "COMPLETION" (GREEK *SUNTELEIA*) AND THE VERB "COMPLETED" (GREEK *SUNTELEO*) ARE FOUND IN THE LXX TRANSLATION OF DANIEL 9: 27 (TWICE); 11: 36 (TWICE); 12: 4, 7 (TWICE), 13 (TWICE).

[5] THE THREE USES OF *PAROUSIA* IN JESUS' ANSWER IN MATTHEW (IN 24: 27, 37, 39) ARE ALL FOUND IN SECTIONS WHICH HAVE THEIR PARALLEL IN LUKE 17: 22-37.

[6] SEE I THESS. 2: 2 FOR "ALARMED."

[7] SEE MATT. 24: 13, 14; MARK 13: 13 FOR "END"; ALSO I COR. 1: 8; I PET. 4: 7 WHERE "THE END" IS THE WORLD'S.

[8] SEE I THESS. 5: 3 FOR "BIRTH-PANGS."

[9] MARK 13: 9-13 AND LUKE 21: 12-19 ARE PARALLEL TO MATT. 10: 17-22, WHERE JESUS IS SENDING OUT THE TWELVE.

[10] MATTHEW HAS THAT IT WILL BE STANDING IN A HOLY PLACE (GREEK *TOPOS HAGIOS*). SOME HAVE CONFUSED THIS WITH THE HOLY PLACE IN THE TEMPLE (GREEK *HAGIA*), BUT THE WORDS ARE DIFFERENT AND THE MEANING SEEMS TO BE "ON HOLY GROUND" (SO NAB). THE WORDS *TOPOS HAGIOS* ARE USED IN LEV. 6: 16 (LXX) TO REFER TO THE COURTYARD OF THE TABERNACLE. POSSIBLY THE WORDS MAY REFER TO THE HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM. MATTHEW USES THE WORD "HOLY" TO REFER TO THE CITY OF JERUSALEM IN TWO OTHER PLACES (4: 5 AND 27: 53). MARK HAS THAT THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION WILL BE STANDING WHERE THEY MUST NOT. IT IS POSSIBLE TO TAKE THE WORD *HESTEKOTA* AS A MASCULINE SINGULAR PARTICIPLE AND TRANSLATE "WHERE HE MUST NOT" (SO ASV, NEB). THIS INTRODUCES THE IDEA OF A PERSON, AND IS SOMETIMES TAKEN TO REFER TO A DOUBLE FULFILLMENT INVOLVING THE ANTICHRIST AT THE END OF TIME. IT SEEMS BETTER TO TAKE *HESTEKOTA* AS A NEUTER PLURAL PARTICIPLE. THIS GIVES THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION A PLURAL CHARACTER, WHICH AGREES WITH LUKE'S EXPLANATION OF IT AS "ARMIES" (LUKE 21: 20; GREEK *STRATOPEDON*, A NEUTER PLURAL NOUN).

[11] IN A.D. 66 THE ROMAN GENERAL CESTIUS GALLUS SURROUNDED JERUSALEM WITH THE TWELFTH LEGION AND OTHER SOLDIERS. THEY PUSHED TO ONE OF THE VERY GATES OF THE TEMPLE. THEN FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON THEY SUDDENLY WITHDREW TO THE COAST. THE TWELFTH LEGION WAS DESTROYED IN THE RETREAT AND THE CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO FLEE TO PELLA. JOSEPHUS, *THE JEWISH WAR*, II,XVIII,9-XX,L AND EUSEBIUS, *ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY*, III,V.

[12] MATT. 24:21; COMPARE JOSEPHUS, *WAR*, V,X,5. ALSO SEE EZEK. 16:16; DAN. 12:1; AND JOEL 2:2.

[13] LUKE 21:24; LUKE MENTIONS JERUSALEM BY NAME TWICE; THE OTHERS NEVER DO.

[14] JOSEPHUS, *WAR*, V,X, 2-3

[15] JOSEPHUS, *WAR*, VI,III,3-4

[16] JOSEPHUS, *WAR*, VI,IX,3

[17] JOSEPHUS, *WAR*, VI,VIII,5; IX,4; VII,I,1

[18] SEE DAN. 7:13-14; THE SYMBOL "CLOUD" REPRESENTS "DEITY"--SEE EX. 16:10; 19:9; 34:5; NUM. 11:25; 12:5; IS. 19:1; EZEK. 30:3; DAN. 7:10-13.

[19] THIS IS THE MEANING OF THE FIGURE OF SPEECH, "FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER"; SEE DEUT. 30:4.

[20] IT SEEMS BEST TO TAKE "SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN" IN APPOSITION TO "SIGN," AS A GENITIVE OF APPOSITION. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THIS INFORMATION WAS NEWS TO THE DISCIPLES, WHO HAD NOT YET WITNESSED THE ASCENSION. IT IS FUTILE TO SPECULATE WHAT SIGN WILL BE SEEN IN THE SKY WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN. THE SIGN WILL BE JESUS HIMSELF.

[21] IT IS PREFERABLE TO TRANSLATE "HE" (SO ASV, RSV) RATHER THAN "IT" (SO KJV) AND THUS TAKE THIS AS A REFERENCE TO CHRIST'S SECOND COMING. THIS IS BECAUSE LUKE IN THE PARALLEL PASSAGE HAS "THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NEAR" (LUKE 21:31). SINCE THIS IS REFERRING TO A TIME AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH HAD ALREADY COME INTO EXISTENCE BEFORE THAT (COL. 1:13), IT MUST BE REFERRING TO THE FUTURE HEAVENLY KINGDOM (II TIM. 4:18).

[22] "THIS GENERATION" IS THE GENERATION THEN IN EXISTENCE, NOT "THE JEWISH RACE"--SEE MATT. 11:16; 12:41, 42, 45; 23:36; MARK 8:12, 38; LUKE 7:31; 11:29, 30, 31, 32, 50, 51; ACTS 2:40.

[23] THIS IS THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST QUESTION, "WHEN WILL 'THESE THINGS' BE?"

[24] THIS IS PART OF A STATEMENT ABOUT THE CERTAINTY THAT JESUS' WORD WOULD BE FULFILLED.

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