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## THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM FORETOLD

– MAY 31. – Luke 21:20-36. –

**Golden Text – "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. – Luke 21:33.**

IT should be remembered that this lesson is but a fragment from our Lord's long discourse, in answer to three distinct questions propounded by the disciples: – When shall these things [the destruction of the Temple, etc.] be? What shall be the sign of thy [second] coming? What shall be the sign of the end of the age?

Verses 20-24 have reference primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity in the close of the Jewish age, altho they have a secondary reference to events in the end of the Gospel age, the antitype of the Jewish age. This, however, is no part of our present lesson.

The literal fulfilment of this portion of the prophecy is disputed by none. The Roman army besieged the city, and then suddenly withdrew (A.D. 69). Vespasian, the Roman general, learning of the death of the Roman emperor, and that insurrection prevailed at Rome, hastened thither and assumed the emperorship. Meantime, before Titus had assumed command of the army and renewed the siege of Jerusalem, the Christians of the city acted upon our Lord's instruction, fled from the doomed city and thus escaped the awful horrors of its siege, in which it is claimed that 1,100,000 Jews perished. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says of this event: "The misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so terrible as theirs were"; "nor did any age ever produce a generation more fruitful of wickedness, from the beginning of the world." As a nation, the Jews had experienced great blessings and privileges, and these being misused brought great darkness and ultimately a terrible national judgment, as predicted. (Verse 22 and 1

Thes. 2:16.) All of these things correspond to the conditions in the "harvest" or end of this Gospel age. Here the light of the Lord's second presence rejected will bring special responsibility upon nominal "Christendom," whose wickedness at the time will be very great, proportioned to its light; and its fall will be in the midst of a time of trouble still greater than that which overwhelmed the typical city and nation.

Our Lord's prediction, when uttered, seemed most improbable: the city and country were more prosperous than for a long time, and the temple, after forty-six years of building, had just been completed and was truly magnificent. Yet within forty years it was an awful ruin. (See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chap. 4.)

Verses 25-31, leaping over centuries, point to events near the close of Gentile Times, and mention the signs of the close of the Gospel age, and connected with the revealing of the Son of Man in glory. The signs in the sun, moon and stars were to give a general idea as to the time when the Kingdom would be nigh. We will not here particularize respecting these signs, but will mention them: – The remarkable darkening of the sun and moon, May 19th, 1780; and the notable falling of stars or meteoric shower on the morning of Nov. 13th, 1833. While we believe also in a symbolic fulfilment of the darkening of the sun and falling of the stars, yet we cannot overlook the literal fulfilment, and hence expect, in harmony with

Verses 32,33, that some of the generation which saw the falling stars will continue to live until God's Kingdom shall be fully established.

Verses 34-36 are a general exhortation, as applicable to us to-day as to the disciples eighteen centuries ago.

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