

Sermon Notes on Mt. 24:15-27, Trinity XXV

1. Our text is speaking about history's most severe judgment on man, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Romans and the scattering of the Jewish people throughout the world. Vs. 21 calls it history's severest judgment. At the same time, these vss. are a type of the final judgment, the end of the world.
2. Vs. 15 speaks of "the abomination of desolation" which Daniel 9:27; 11:31; and 12:11 foretold. That's why Jesus says: "Let the reader take note." Comparing this prophecy with the parallel at Lk. 21:20-21 we see that Jesus meant the Roman armies which would encircle Rome. Even the Temple was desecrated, the regular worship ceased. Since the time of Abraham (2000 B.C.) God had nurtured His children, Israel. He even sent His Son to save them. But they rejected Him viciously. He has not broken His Covenant with Israel but their favored status as a nation has ceased.
3. Vss. 16-19 warn the people of Jerusalem to flee when the Romans would lay siege to the city. It's like fleeing from a fire. Save nothing except yourself. Pregnant women and those with small babies would have great difficulty.
4. Winter weather would make flight from the city very burdensome. And flight on the Sabbath Day would be painful to the conscience because that day prohibited long journeys. Josephus the historian tells us that many fled Jerusalem for Pella in Perea on this occasion.
5. Vs. 22 Likely refers both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. In times of great stress false christs increase in number and in intensity of deception. But God in His mercy remembers His elect, His children, the believers in Christ. Vs. 22 is very comforting.
6. Vss. 23-27 very likely apply both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the final judgment of the world. Notice that the word "behold" occurs four times here: vss. 23, 25, and 26. It is used three times of false prophets and christs. But Jesus also uses it in vs. 25.
7. On vss. 23-26 cf. Lk. 17:21-23. The false prophets and christs preach and teach a false kingdom. Three times Mt. (4:23; 9:35; 24:14) speaks of "the Gospel of the Kingdom." How do you distinguish false prophets and christs from the true ones? **BY WHAT THEY PREACH.** If they do not preach the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, have nothing to do with them. They may even perform great signs and wonders. Their purpose is to deceive the elect. They claim that their error is true. Are these signs and wonders genuine? We do not know. But we can detect error. Do not permit false christs to deceive you.
8. What is meant by desert places and closets? It means that false prophets and christs lure you to come apart to a separate place where they will teach you. Or it may refer to the practice of monks and nuns who claim greater holiness by living in a monastery or convent. How do we decide whether their teaching is false or true? By asking whether their teaching is the pure and true Word of God. What does Jesus say? "Do not believe them. Do not go out after them."
9. Vs. 27 plainly speaks about the second coming of Christ. He will come as **THE SON OF MAN.** All eyes will see Him. Lightning strikes suddenly and without warning. Likewise the coming of the Son of Man will be sudden and without warning. He will come at a time when even the faithful will not be expecting Him. What is Jesus saying? He is saying: "Be prepared!" How do we prepare? By constant confession of our sins and constant faith in Jesus Christ Who has saved us and now enables us to be faithful to Him.
10. Vs. 28 speaks of vultures gathering around dead bodies. That is a picture of the sins and sinfulness of mankind attracting the judgment of God. Sodom and Gomorrah attracted God's judgment. At the end of the age the sins of man will attract God's judgment.

Sermon Outline on Mt. 24:15-27, Trinity XXV

Theme: LIVING BETWEEN THE TWO GREAT JUDGMENTS

Introduction: Our text speaks about the two greatest judgments in history: the destruction of Jerusalem and the final judgment on the last day. We ask ourselves two questions: "Why do these terrible judgments take place?" and "How can I prepare for these judgments?"

I-THE FIRST GREAT JUDGMENT: THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

A-Why it took place. Mt. 24, Mk. 13 and Lk. 21 speak about two great events in history: the first great judgment and the last great judgment. Why did the destruction of Jerusalem occur in 70 A.D., as we are told by Josephus the Jewish historian? First of all it had been prophesied by Daniel. Read Dan. 9:26,27; 11:31,32; and 12:11. There we find the expression "abomination of desolation." We know from Lk. 21:20-21 that Jesus is speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem. Why did it occur? Because the favored people, the Covenant people, the Jews, totally rejected the Lord Jesus. They became the Covenant people with Abraham, 2000 B.C. The Lord led them, saved them, sent them His Word and prophets, sent them His only Son. But they rejected Him. And so He took their land and their city from them. This terrible judgment is a warning to us. DO NOT REJECT THE LORD AND HIS WORD.

B-But some were saved. Read vs. 16-18 of our text. There was a minority among the Jews who believed the Lord and listened to His Word. To them He says: "Flee immediately when the enemy surrounds the city. Do not try to save anything. Run for your life." We know from the historian, Josephus, that this happened. Some of the Jews in the city fled east to Pella in Perea. Just as Lot and his daughters fled from Sodom and Gomorrah, so the believing Jews fled from Jerusalem. They are a type of Christians who will be saved in the final judgment.

II-THE SECOND GREAT JUDGMENT: THE LAST DAY

A-Why it will take place. The whole NT is a massive prediction of the last great judgment. For example: Mt. 24, Mk. 13, Lk. 21; Mt. 25: 13, 29-30, 46; Rev. 22:7, 10, 12, 20. The Lord will gather all nations before Him and divide them as a shepherd divides his sheep from his goats. The sheep will enter eternal life. The goats will suffer eternal damnation.

B-The cause of rejection. Read vs. 23-26 of our text. The greatest danger to the Christian is the false christs and the false prophets. There are many of these in each generation of the NT. Jesus says: "Don't believe them. Don't be impressed even if and when they do marvelous things. Do not follow them when they tell you to follow them to a deserted place." Can you distinguish false christs from the true Christ? Yes you can. How? You have His infallible Word, especially the Gospel. The only true religion tells us that the Son of God came to earth to suffer, die and rise again to save sinners who cannot save themselves. Jesus said: "If you continue in My Word then are you My disciples indeed and you will know the Truth and the Truth will make you free." Jn. 8:30,31.

C-Some will be saved. Vs. 26 is a warning to the faithful. Be prepared at all times because the second coming of Jesus will be like lightning which strikes without warning. YOU MUST BE PREPARED WHEN CHRIST COMES. Now read vs. 22. Jesus says that He will shorten those terrible days of judgment because of the elect, His children, His believers. You cannot control wars, floods, famines, persecution, murders, etc. But your Lord can and does protect you in all of these things. He says to you: "Absolutely nothing will harm you." Lk. 10:19.

Conclusion: History began to end when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. The curtain has been falling ever since. One of these days it will fall entirely. Be ready. Be prepared. He is coming at a time when you will not be expecting Him. But, until then, He will care for you.