

Sin takes you further than you want to go

Reading Luke 21

- What happened to Jerusalem and the Jewish nation after Jesus?
- The history of the Jewish nation when it comes to the recognition and acceptance of the Messiah is a lesson for all mankind because it pictures us as individuals. The nation had been taught by the Lord through the direct Word (prophets) leaders, teachers, powerful deliverances, signs/wonders over and over pointing to the Messiah as Saviour from sin. However, in the most part their minds were unspiritual. The prophecies were so obvious that one couldn't fail to miss them, but on a national level they turned Him into an earthly king. In essence, they were 'horizontal' in their thinking. So, when he came he was not what they wanted, or thought they needed. They rejected him just like they had done the prophets before. They were hard hearted, stubborn and disobedient, clinging to idols and running after the trappings of the world. They should have been humble but they were proud. Theirs was a nominal faith, an outward religion, they were white washed sepulchres.
- Of course, God has always saved in the same way and his plan was never to choose a literal nation to reform, but a spiritual one. We are saved by grace not race! The Jewish nation was blessed in the same sense as a person born into a Christian family is blessed with a favourable environment. In the end they rejected the Lord and handed him over to the Romans to be crucified. This was allowed by the Lord, permitted so that he was made a 'sin bearer' but it does not remove the fact that it was wrong for the world to reject their Saviour. The judgement and removal of the Jewish nation had been reserved and was now being poured out. No longer would God wrestle with a mixed multitude, some having faith and others not. Now it would be the international Jewish/Gentile church of Jesus Christ, all of whom would know the Lord
- The Jews continued without repentance in a quest for earthly aims, for power, freedom from rule and from oppressive taxes. As always having rejected their ruler the Lord, they wanted to rule themselves. God had led them captive by the powerful Assyrians, Babylonians Medo-Persians, and now the Romans because of their disobedience and sin. God had frustrated their lives and their plans. Now came the conflict. Refusing to pay taxes to the Romans provoked the Romans to plunder the temple. In response the Jews revolted and there was war and rebellion for a short while, the Jews winning small victories. They could not see that their true enemy was Satan, a master manipulator of their own sinful character.
- At this time Vespasian the Roman general was sent to deal with Judea by Emperor Nero. Under him his son, Titus Flavius, took back various cities through sieges, an example being Jotaparta. Finally he besieged Jerusalem whose walls were strong, built like a fortress. Siege engines were brought in and there was vicious fighting. The Romans built up earth works and rammed the walls with battering rams within siege engines. In response the Jews sent out raiding parties and dug tunnels under the walls and the siege engines

setting light to combustibles at the end of them causing collapse of the siege towers. The first and second walls were breached on one occasion because the wall had collapsed having been weakened by the tunnel dug beneath.

- Becoming impatient, the Romans cut off supplies to the city building a temporary wall entirely surrounding the city. This was done in three days, a remarkable achievement. Now, within the city there was fighting and starvation. The stench was overpowering. Bodies lay in the streets and the ravines. People were reduced to chewing on leather and there was a deathly quiet. Most of the Christians had left, remembering the Lord's words in Luke 21:20-24.
- *Mary of Bethzuba page 358 Jospheus*
- Any captured Jewish soldiers were crucified around the walls as a deterrent. There were so many that there was not enough room for all of the crosses. Those that deserted surrendered to slavery. Some, on the brink of starvation, were given food and ate so much they burst. Others were found picking through their own excrement for coins they had swallowed in order to hide them from the Romans. In the light of this others were cruelly ripped open by the Romans looking for coins.
- The third wall then fell (*check order of events and cause*) There was more fighting within the city culminating in the Temple being burned in a bloody fight. All that was left was rubble and ruins. This was only cleared many years later by the Arabs. The Jews were dispersed as slaves, never again to be a nation under God's laws with prophets, priests and kings.

Why am I telling you this? Because we can liken ourselves to the Jews in Jerusalem in order to avoid the same fate. They rejected the Saviour. They wanted idols and an earthly king. They did not recognise or accept him. They had not listened to the prophets warnings. We reject Christianity for the world. We can be heedless of the Gospel. They wanted earthly power and freedom. We quest materialism, earthly pleasures, worldly respect and friendship, power and reputation. They had won small victories, and in a sense so do we, sin being pleasurable for a season. This seems to condone our course. But the Jews had conflict, and for us the conflicts of life will come. Maybe relationship troubles, work troubles, financial snares. Being unable to control your own character, for sin changes you, you will become selfish, desensitised to sin, driven and ruled by your emotions and passions. A person's character will be darkened and become rotten. You will become a cliché, a stereotype, just another victim of Satan.

- With the Jews the cities started to fall and we shall have ever deeper problems in life. Events will seem to pick you up and carry you along. Without God's guidance you will lurch from one wrong path to another. You will not be able to control life's twists and turns and will experience personal heartache and despair. Others may see this before you do, observing a disastrous personal life and a horrible character. Your increasing downward progression may even shock you resulting in a hatred of yourself. Without God you are spiritually

bankrupt; all you have invested your life in will fail you and let you down not delivering what it had promised. Maybe even depression will result. Certainly you will have bodily breakdown, your youth will go, and like the Jews all you will be able to do will be to look back on past days which were not even days of glory but full of sin. A life lived like this will have no comfort of a loving family, relationships not being what they should be, being full of conflicts and loneliness. You will be walled in by your own sins and situation. You will have failed to flee to Christ and will have made your home in this world. You will be surrounded by a godless world which does not care for you, ultimately just wanting your money and labour. You will be hemmed in with no way out. By now you have rejected the Bible and the wisdom of God. You may not have read God's word for years. This being so, you cannot understand life and your soul will be starving. Therefore you may try to escape in various ways. You may try the self help books, but these will offer no help at all, only solutions that do not exist. You may seek help from the doctor, but can they help you with your soul? You may lash out at friends and family, and blame government and society, anyone but yourself. By now, just like the Jews, there will be internal fightings of conscience. You will have a deep sense of disquiet, unease and unhappiness. Life will seem to have no future.

- Have you arrived there? Flee to Christ from the wrath to come. Cry for mercy. Soon the city will be destroyed. It is He that has frustrated your life and set his face against you, desiring to bring you back. So plead for forgiveness and he will graciously smile upon you and be your Friend, Father and your Protector.
- But if you persist in your ways you will slowly die in the city of your soul. You will try to swallow this world's wisdom, its lies and sinful entertainments but you cannot keep your possessions just like those coins. You will lose everything you tired to cling onto. The world will rip you apart. Your fears will come upon you. You will have loved your life and will loose it. These things will do you no good, but much harm. They cannot save you. Remember Mary of Bethzuba, she ate her own child; your sin will consume you. All you have worked for may come to nothing. Many of your opinions will be wrong. You will end up eating your own words about life. You will see your desires for what they are and where they have got you, but by now you cannot change. You haven't grown as a person. In the end your gifts and talents have been consumed. What started as folly will have become wicked madness.
- The temple was finally burned and blood flowed down its steps. Without conversion the heart and soul will be utterly ruined in the flames of hell. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 is a cautionary tale for us. May their fate not be yours spiritually. Hebrews13:12-14