

Mark 13:28-31- The Time of Jerusalem's destruction

TSK, DeMar, Poole, GreekLexicon, HebrewLexicon, Barnes, FourFoldGospel, JFB, Trapp, Robertson, Calvin, Henry, Geneva, Clarke, Rienecker Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Jesus prophesied (预言) that Jerusalem, her people, and her leaders were going to be destroyed. Why? They had rejected God's covenant (约) and they had rejected his prophets (先知). They hindered (阻碍) others from coming into his kingdom. They tried and successfully murdered him. And they were going to intensely persecute (逼迫) Christians shortly. The Jews deserved to be destroyed. And Jesus gave many signs so Christians would be safe when judgment came.

Today we will look at the certainty of the timing of Jerusalem's destruction.

Our headings are:

The time of Jerusalem's Destruction Confirmed by Illustration (举例说明, 比喻)

The time of Jerusalem's Destruction Confirmed by Word

The time of Jerusalem's Destruction Confirmed by an Oath (誓言)

Our goals are: That knowing that God judged his own covenant people who became complacent (自满的) in their faith and worship, that you will be motivated to stay close to God, and work for and worship him.

The time of Jerusalem's Destruction Confirmed by Illustration

28 "Now learn this parable (比喻) from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

1. In order to show the time of Jerusalem's destruction, the Lord used an illustration of a fig tree blossoming.

Illustrations make the point of the speaker clearer. The Lord did not want any ambiguity (模棱两可).

But why did the Lord use a fig tree for his illustration? A fig tree was one of the most common trees in Israel. There were even wild fig trees – uncultivated ones everywhere. So everyone would understand the message of this illustration.

2. So what was the illustration:

After a fig tree wakes up from winter, the hard branches of the fruit trees that seem dead, would start to get tender and sprout buds. Then there would be leaves, blossoms, and fruits. That is certain! So the Lord was teaching that similarly it is certain, absolutely certain, that after these signs (persecution of Christians, etc.)-soon after-his judgment would come on the Jews.

This illustration was not referring to the harshness of life (winter) and then followed by good things (spring). That might be true, but that was not what the Lord was teaching. This illustration was referring to the certainty of what was coming. (Be very careful with illustrations. Only use the point that the speaker was making. Don't read into the text.)

3. Lessons:

a. Thank the Lord that he often illustrated things that are difficult to understand using simple imagery (形象, 图画). This is why the Lord used many parables. (We describe parables as earthly stories with heavenly (spiritual) meanings.)

b. God will stop the wicked in his tracks so the kingdom can be protected and expand! Persecution won't last forever! In other words, troubles won't hinder the church from growing and spreading. Nothing can stop Christ's kingdom.

c. God's timing is always the right timing. You may want everything "yesterday." You may want your sickness to go right away, your unemployment, your loneliness, or your financial difficulties... But God will do what is best when he is ready!

The time of Jerusalem's Destruction Confirmed by Word

29 "So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near — at the doors!

1. The Lord then stated the fact: The time is near and the time is at the doors.

2. So what do "near" and "at the doors" mean?

"Near" has never been used in history to mean 2000 + years. So the Lord had to be referring to something that was going to happen soon.

"At the door" has never been used in history to mean 2,000 miles away. "At the door" means something so close you can almost touch it.

Look at Jesus' warnings after he described Daniel's account of the impending destruction of Jerusalem for her wickedness:

Luke 21:28 "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption (救赎) draws near."

This means that this “redemption” was attached to the impending (即将来临的) destruction of Jerusalem. This also meant that Christians would be free (redeemed) to go about their business of spreading Christ’s kingdom! (This was an encouragement, not a threat.)

3. With Christians’ freedom tied to the destruction of Jerusalem, Christians had to consider the activities that would take place before Jerusalem would be destroyed!

1 Thessalonians 2:14 For you, brethren (弟兄们), became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men,

4. Lessons:

a. Only by listening to the Lord’s Word will you know when real danger near. The Devil and his people lie! They teach that God doesn’t exist and many people believe it. If they see your house on fire they would say that you are having a big candle-lit dinner! And even if the Devil’s people teach that God exists, they teach that God exists for man’s pleasure. This is lie as well. These devilish people will never tell people that eternal destruction in hell is waiting for those who don’t know Jesus! They would say that man’s greatest problem is that “he doesn’t love himself enough.” What a lie! So if you walk away from God and obeying God’s Word you are in imminent hell-bound (地狱方向的) danger! (The self-love movement has progressively made the church worse!)

b. If people don’t listen when you warn them of danger apart from God, you have still done your duty! Don’t get frustrated. It is not up to you to change anyone; it is up to you to speak the truth to them in love.

c. Learn to watch out for danger and warn the church and warn her so that she would stay on the course of God’s righteousness (公义). Will people in the church think you are nuts for warning about complacency if faith and worship? Often. They may think you are paranoid! But speak the truth. You know better, and you are therefore obligated to speak up.

The Time of Jerusalem’s Destruction Confirmed by oath

30 "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

1. The Lord then used an oath formula to explain what this parable meant!

An oath formula was used to show certainty of the consequent statement. The old KJV translated this as “verily.” Others use the expression, “truly, truly.” The point of this oath formula, then, was to show certainty!

2. The Lord vowed that “this generation” will by no means pass away until all these things take place.

3. To understand this oath, you have to know what “generation” means.

There are those who translate the word “generation” (“genea” in Greek) as “race.” (族类) So they say: “this (Jewish) race will by no means pass away till all these things be fulfilled.” And they argue that since the Jewish race is still here today, these terrible things would only happen at the end of the world not in the destruction of Jerusalem. To support their idea, they quote Peter.

1Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen **generation**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

But that is misusing the text. The Greek word for “generation” in Peter is “genus,” not “genea.” “Genus” and “genea” are not the same. So what is the difference?

“Genus” (1Peter 2:9) means race, stock, or tribe. (Mark 7:26; Acts 4:36; 7:19; 13:26; 17:28; 18:24; 2Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 1:14; Philippians 3:5). So “genus” could mean people of a race.

“Genea” is never translated this way. “Genea” refers to people of time period. Let me illustrate “genea.” I might say, “This generation is addicted to smart phones.” I am not referring their race but of people of this time.

Translating “genea” as race was popularized by Arminian theologian (阿民念神学家) Scofield.

4. Look at 2 examples of where “genea” is used to show people of that time rather than people of a race!

Consider Peter’s words in Acts 2.

Acts 2:40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse (弯曲悖谬的, 败坏的) generation (世代).”

Peter made the point that those who heard the Gospel had to be saved from that “genea” – from people of that time who were living wickedly. He was not saying you need to be saved from the Jewish race. That would be racist(种族主义者)! A person’s race is not harmful. Look at a second example where “genea” is use to show people of that time rather that people of a race.

Luke 9:41 Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.”

If “genea” has to be translated “race” then Jesus was a racist! Jesus would be saying the Jewish race was faithless and perverted. But he wasn’t. Most of Jesus’ disciples were Jews! He was speaking of faithless people who lived at that time!

5. There is one other false teaching that was common regarding “generation” that Jesus mentioned.

These people correctly understood “genea” to be a reference to a time but they insisted that that time began, not from the time Jesus was speaking, **but from when Israel was reborn as a nation in 1948.** They thought “summer” meant the end of the world and that Jesus would return within 40-50 years—one generation. They had to drop that idea as 70 years have now passed.

6. Don’t forget the context: The disciples asked when the temple would be destroyed and Jesus responded to their question.

Hear Luke’s account:

Luke 21:32 "Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation will by no means pass away till** all things take place.

34 "But **take heed to yourselves**, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing (贪食), drunkenness, and cares of this life, and **that Day come on you unexpectedly.** 35 "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 "Watch therefore, and pray always that **you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass...**

So Jesus was warning people of that time to **live with expectation of judgment** coming on Israel **in that generation.**

31 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but **My words will by no means pass away.**

7. The Lord then said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

Jesus said this in order to **confirm everything he had just said about the destruction of the temple:** The persecution of Christians, the luring of Christians by false christs, the coming of the Romans, the unspeakable suffering of the Jews when Jerusalem and the political, social, and religious orders were destroyed, the protection of Christians across the Jordan River, and the certainty of these events taking place **in that generation!** Christ said it; it would happen!

8. Let me conclude with showing you that the phrase “end times” is rarely used in an eschatological (末世论的) way; it rarely is used to describe the 2nd coming of Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews asserted that the end times started when Jesus died!

Hebrews 9:26 **He then would have had to suffer** often since the foundation of the world; **but now**, once at the **end of the ages**, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Apostle **Peter said Jesus appeared in the last times!**

1Peter 1:20 He indeed was foreordained (预先命定的) before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in **these last times** for you...

Peter pointed out that the **last times were already in effect at Pentecost (五旬节).**

Acts 2:16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass **in the last days**, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...

The disciples had asked Jesus when the temple would be destroyed...and he answered!

9. Lessons:

a. God is not a racist. He does not reject anyone because of his race. He rejects the wicked one who refuses his salvation.

b. While God was gracious and he gave the Jews a 30-40 year warning to get their lives in order and be saved, the church today might not have that long. You have to get the sense of urgency to save the church. **Challenge her complacency!**
Failure to confront serious sins within the church makes you complicit and her shame will become your shame.

c. You can trust the Word of God – for mercy or for judgment. Nothing is as permanent as God’s Word – not even heaven! What he says, he will do.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

Conclusion:

God judged and destroyed his covenant people because they became **complacent in their faith and corrupted his worship.** He told Christians about this so they would move to a place of safety, and further, that they would guard themselves against the sins of the Jews.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. God will protect you who listen to him because you are his. You are his through the sacrificial death of the Savior on the cross! Rejoice that you are his!

2. Rely upon God’s Word! It is the only way you will be safe. Read it. Believe it. Live it! Even when the world mocks what you do, don’t give up. Reject the lie of the world. Only God’s Word is absolute truth!

3. The wicked will not escape God's judgment (and the destruction of Jerusalem proves that), regardless how much they deny that it will happen. Pity them. Pray for them. Preach to them.

Finally: Only the blood of Christ, not good works, allows you to enter into the protection and peace of heaven when you die. So if you are not a Christian, take warning. You may never get this warning again!