

Lesson One

A.D. 70

The Relevance and the Timeline

"One of the main reasons, I suppose, why the obvious way of reading Mark 13 has been ignored for so long must be the fact that in a good deal of Christian theology *the fall of Jerusalem has had no theological significance*. This has meant not only that Mark 13 is found puzzling, but also that all the references to the same event elsewhere in the gospels — even where it stares one in the face, as in Luke 13:1-5 — have been read as general warnings of hellfire in an afterlife, rather than the literal and physical divine-judgment-through-Roman-judgment that we have seen to be characteristic of Jesus' story."

(N.T. Wright *Jesus and Victory of God*, pp. 343-344. Fortress Press, 1996).

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), in his work titled "Miscellany #1199", directly tied Christ's predictions of His coming as recorded in the gospels to the events of A.D. 66-70:

"Tis evident that when Christ speaks of his coming; his being revealed; his coming in his Kingdom; or his Kingdom's coming; He has respect to his appearing in those great works of his Power Justice and Grace, which should be in the Destruction of Jerusalem and other extraordinary Providences which should attend it (See Luke 17:20 – 18:8)."

As this idea of Christ's coming in A.D. 70 is likely revolutionary for anyone immersed in Dispensationalist thought, it will be given more attention in the section where Christ's words in the Olivet Discourse are examined. Jonathan Edwards, though, in his work titled "History of Redemption," called this event the "final end to the Old Testament world," and added that "the dissolution of the Jewish state was often spoken of in the Old Testament as the end of the world." According to Edwards, this was an "instance of removing those things which [were] ready to vanish away, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain," a reference to Hebrews 8:13 and 12:27-28. Edwards' position was that the Old Covenant was rendered obsolete because of Christ's work on the cross, yet it was still "becoming" obsolete at the time Hebrews was written because the worship life that centered on Jerusalem and the temple was still alive (though meaningless) as long as the temple stood (Dennis Todd, 2009 [1]). These things did vanish away in A.D. 70, and it became abundantly clear to anyone with eyes to see that all types and shadows had been replaced by the reality, Christ Himself. Judaism has never been the same since that time.

With this interpretation John Piper (1996), the pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, agrees. He states that it "is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of what happened in A.D. 70 in Jerusalem. It was an event that, for Jews and Christians, was critical in defining their faith for the next 2000 years."

We will emphasize in this study that 70 A.D. brought an official end to the Mosaic economy of Temple worship, and followers of Jesus Christ were confronted with a radically new way of worship (**Heb. 8:13**).

1. A new Law-Giver (Christ over Moses)
2. A new Law (The Royal Law of Love)
3. A new method (spirit and truth)
4. A new place ("you are the Temple")
5. A new mission ("go and tell" rather than "come and see")
6. A new expectation ("All the promises of God are 'Yes and Amen'")
7. A new people ("nation, people group, and ethnicity")

A Timeline of A.D. 70

A.D. 26 - John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the fall and announced Him as Israel's Messiah (John 1:29-42), which concluded week 69 and began week 70 of Daniel's 70 weeks that some in Israel had been calculating for obvious reasons (Luke 2:25,38; 3:15; 23:51; 24:21).

A.D. 30 - Jesus laid down His life in the spring, at Passover, 3½ years after His baptism, in the midst of Daniel's 70th week, rose from the dead, and ascended gloriously to His throne in heaven.

A.D. 30 - The apostles received great power at Pentecost and took the gospel to Jews and then Gentiles.

A.D. 33 - The main confirming of the covenant with Jews came to an end, as Daniel's 70th week ended. Some identify this event with the stoning of Stephen, the "legal end" to the Old Covenant.

A.D. 66 - The gospel had been preached in all the world to every creature by this time, which was the final condition Jesus had determined before the Romans could come and destroy the Jews.

A.D. 66 - The Jews became more and more rebellious and revolted against Caesar and Roman authority.

A.D. 66 - Cestius Gallus brought the Twelfth Legion from Antioch in November, surrounded the city, and could have taken it easily, but left for no reason and at great loss! This enflamed the Jewish rebellion with false hope, and it angered Rome greatly to totally destroy the Jews! But it began the 1290 and 1335 days prophesied by Daniel leading up to the Jews' scattering (Daniel 12:1-13).

A.D. 67 - Nero appoints Vespasian in charge of Judea, who brings several legions and begins a slow and methodical campaign of destruction of the Jews from city to city that lasts for 2 years.

A.D. 70 - Believers in the city and country, knowing the warnings, and having witnessed Cestius's surrounding of Jerusalem, left for the mountains before Titus set his siege (Luke 21:20-22). Titus, son of Emperor Vespasian, and prince of Rome, united four Roman legions and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its temple in August after a five-month siege. This ended the 1290 and 1335 days prophesied by Daniel leading up to the Jews' scattering (Daniel 12:1-13). The siege was bad enough for women to eat their children (See Josephus). But the Jews killed more themselves due to demonical factions that had no mercy for life, the city, or the temple.

A.D. 70 - The total number dead was over 1.1 million, for Titus besieged the city at Passover, when it was filled with visitors for worship; and there were only 97,000 captives taken for slaves. No individual city had ever endured such pain. World War II was modest in comparison. For example, Hiroshima only lost around 100,000, most of them dying instantly and painlessly.

A.D. 70 - Captives over 17 not taken to Rome for public display were carried by ship to Egypt as slaves, where they were sold very cheaply due to the supply far exceeding the demand (Deut. 28:68). Titus ordered the city dug up, until it appeared to have never been inhabited; and Terentius Rufus, commander of the Tenth Legion, plowed Mount Zion like a farmer's field (Micah 3:12).

A.D. 73 - The fortress of Masada was besieged by Rome and 1000 final Jewish rebels committed suicide.