JESUS FORETELLS THE COMING INVASION OF TITUS

Every year I take groups of folks to Israel, and, while in Jerusalem, I take them to the Israeli Museum. Our trip is rather short - just a few hours, but I could spend days there. Our main goal at the museum is twofold:

a) The model of Jerusalem as it was in the days of our Lord
b) The Dead Sea Scrolls.

The model of the city is huge – 22,000 square feet – and rests on an outdoor slope of the museum. It was designed by architect Michael Ave Jonah - whom I have met. Once, while I was there, he was working on some renovation and gave me a rather rare piece of the Great Temple, which I treasure to this day.

The construction, under Herod’s the Great supervision, took most of a half century to build. Many experts maintain it should have been one of the ancient wonders of the world.

One day when Jesus had only a few days to live in His earthly body, the disciples asked Jesus about the building:
Matthew 24:1-3

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. [2] And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. [3] And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matthew 24 and 25 are known as the great Mount of Olives discourse – the ultimate prophecy from our Lord. It must have seemed ludicrous to the disciples that the great Temple could - or would - be destroyed. Yet, about 35 to 40 years down the road, that is exactly what happened.

Pilate was the Roman governor who sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion around 30 AD. A few years later, Pilate sanctioned a death march against Samaritans - an act so vicious that not even Rome would put up with it. Pilate was recalled to Rome. One of the contemporary history writers of that day claimed that Pilate was exiled to the Alp Mountains where he committed suicide. That is only conjecture – we do not know for sure.

What we DO know for sure is that Rome sent in a series of governors who were disasters. Cuspus Fadus was one...and after a short rule he was followed by Alexander Cumanus, Felix and Festus (of Paul’s incarceration in Caesarea), and at length by a man named Florus who used the office for his own well-being and was hated by the rank and file Jew of that day.
Now a new group arose in the land - called the Zealots. And they meant to overthrow Rome. They could not endure any more of Florus’ insanity, so they rebelled. For a time they were successful, and many cities in Israel assumed an independence that they really did not have and dared Rome to do something about it. Rome did!

In the mid 60's AD, an army made up of Romans and Syrians attacked Israel led by a Syrian named Cestius. At this point, the Jews of Israel meant to fight Rome to the death. For six months, the war raged on and thousands died.

That brings us up to Emperor Nero, who was so vile he could not live with himself and finally committed suicide. He sent the great general Titus to Israel to put down the rebellion. Titus brought a force of 80,000 men to Jerusalem in February of 70 AD - thus fulfilling Jesus’ prophecy a few decades earlier. The historian Josephus - who was there with Titus - reported that there were over a million Jews inside the Jerusalem city walls.

The Romans had put up an impregnable siege and demanded full surrender of the Jews, which they certainly would not do. Titus crucified as many as 500 Jews per day. He cut off the hands of others and sent them into the city to spread fear and terror. Famine stalked the city. Houses and streets were filled with unburied corpses.

Although it was Titus’ intent to spare the great Temple from destruction, a furious Roman soldier grabbed a flaming torch and threw it through a Temple window, where it caught a wooden
beam and began the inferno that destroyed the Temple **JUST AS JESUS HAD PROPHESIED LONG BEFORE.**

Jesus made a full and detailed prophecy about the end of days that culminate with the Rapture of the Church, the coming seven-year Tribulation period and the rule of the vicious and deadly Antichrist. Good friend, you do not want to be on this earth when that Tribulation occurs. You want to be taken with all Christ’s followers at the Rapture.

**THE BIG QUESTION IS THIS: ARE THERE CLUES OR SIGNS THAT TELL US WHEN JESUS WILL RETURN?**

According to Matthew 24 and 25 there are many signs, some of which we are seeing right now.

**DECEPTION OF BELIEVERS**

This sign is so important that Jesus mentioned it a number of times:

Matthew 24:4-5

*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. [5] For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

Matthew 24:11

*And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*
Matthew 24:23-24

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. [24] For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

“The very elect” here means those who have believed in Christ and committed their lives to Him. SO HOW COULD THEY BE DECEIVED?

1. They have attended churches that do not preach the Gospel but rather “a social gospel.” One that is accepted by social believers only.

2. They do not know the Bible. They haven’t read or studied it.

(A great illustration is my early days here, 33 years ago. “Yes, come to my study and see me... and bring your Bible.” The response was: “Why should I do that?”)

A fellow wrote a book entitled “88 reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988.” Then, he had the gall to write a sequel: “89 Reasons Why Jesus Will Come in 1989.” We had people leave the church when I taught how wrong these two books were.
HOW EASY WOULD IT BE TO DECEIVE YOU? HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE?

NATIONS WILL RISE AGAINST NATIONS

Matthew 24:6-7
And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. [7] For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places.

So many come crying “peace, peace” and yet wars proliferate. In my 83 years of life there has never been a single day without a war or skirmish somewhere.

PERSECUTION OF SAINTS

We are seeing this persecution of believers on an escalating basis all over the world. WHY? BECAUSE CHRISTIANS ARE BECOMING A MINORITY.

Matthew 24:9
Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Matthew 24:10
And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.
A recent study by Gordon Conwell University reveals that over the past ten years, an average of 90,000 believers have been killed (or martyred) for their faith.

(Recent developments as time permits)

MANY FALSE CHRISTS WILL RISE
TO THE FOREFRONT

Matthew 24:11
And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

We are seeing many of these phonies show up in our day, claiming to be Jesus. Go to your computer and look up “would-be” christs and you will be shocked at the lists.

All of this is to remind us to be prepared for the coming of the Lord, the Rapture. This is the essential reason for believers today to worship Him in spirit and in truth and to evangelize the whole world.