

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD LESSON 11

The book of Acts concludes with the Apostle Paul living in Rome, awaiting an audience with Caesar around 66AD or 67AD. The 1st Century Church was acutely aware that this world was not their home and that they were awaiting the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Jerusalem is Destroyed:

- a. Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, its temple, and the scattering of God's people. (Read Luke 19:43-44 & Matthew 23:37-24:2)
- b. In 70AD, the Roman general Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem, looted the temple and scattered the people of Israel.

II. Israel is Restored:

- a. Many of the Old Testament prophets, prophesied about the dispersal and restoration of Israel.

Isaiah 43:5-6 (KJV 1900)

5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, And gather thee from the west;

6 I will say to the north, Give up; And to the south, Keep not back: Bring my sons from far, And my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Isaiah 11:12 (KJV 1900)

12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, And shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

Jeremiah 29:14 (KJV 1900)

14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

- b. By UN charter, Israel became a nation in May, 1948.
- c. Israel's reunification was a sign for the nations and key marker for understanding the end time season.

[Read Ezekiel 37:21-22]

III. The Signs of the End Times:

Matthew 24:3 (KJV 1900)

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?

The disciples, like many, were eager to know about the end of the world and the return of the Lord Jesus.

a. No-one knows the day nor the hour:

Matthew 24:36 (KJV 1900)

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

b. However, Jesus teaches that we can know the season. Jesus gave them the parable of the fig tree.

Matthew 24:32–33 (KJV 1900)

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

c. The Scriptures provide a list of signs regarding the end time:
(Read Matthew 24:4-14 & 2 Timothy 3:1-5)

- i. Wars and the threat of war – Matt 24:6
- ii. Famines, pestilence, and earthquakes – Matt 24:7
- iii. Many will be offended – Matt 24:10
- iv. False prophets and powerless religion – Matt 24:11 & 2 Tim 3:5
- v. Iniquity and sin will abound – Matt 24:12
- vi. Break down of family – 2 Tim 3:2
- vii. The Gospel will be preached to all the world – Matt 24:6
- viii. Knowledge will increase – Daniel 12:4

IV. The Catching Away of the Church – The Rapture:

(Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

- a. The word rapture means to be “caught up” or “snatched away.”
- b. The bodies of raptured saints will be changed at the rapture of the church. (Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-53)
- c. The rapture will be a sudden event and unexpected by many. (Read Matthew 24:40-42)
- d. The rapture is not the same as the Second Coming of Jesus. We will meet Him in the clouds, but He will not return to the earth at the rapture.