

The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks – 7

*“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place - whoever **reads** (not “hears”), let him **understand** (think about the information in order to comprehend it), **16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” - Matthew 24:15.***

It was not those who heard this warning at the time Jesus gave it, but those who would **read** it nearly forty years later, and would connect it with **Daniel 9:26-27**.

So acting on the instructions of Jesus in his Mount Olivet prophecy - **Matthew 24; Luke 21** - the disciples of Jesus Christ escaped the terrible events that followed after they left Jerusalem. Luke’s account adds, *“and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” - Luke 21:24.*

After Vespasian had been proclaimed emperor, he appointed his son to resume the war against Judah with upwards of 80,000 troops. In April AD 70 the Romans besieged Jerusalem. Those who had heeded Jesus’ warning had already escaped to Pella. Repeated efforts by Titus, with the appeals of Josephus for a peaceful surrender, were met with attacks costing the lives of many Roman soldiers.

Joseph Ben Matthias, who was a Jewish priest, also took the Roman name Flavius Josephus. He was a scholar and historian who wrote a major book on the Jewish revolt. By July the Romans took the castle of Antonia in a night attack, placing them a short distance from the temple.

Josephus says that Titus intended to save the temple. But that his own soldiers, enraged by the stubborn resistance of the Zealots, set the structure on fire. Even as the fire spread, the defenders still clung to their messianic hope, placing all confidence in a false prophet - **Matthew 24:11, 24** - who said that the fire would bring the final rescue of Israel from the Romans. But it ended in the destruction of the temple on August 10, AD 70, the death of 1½ million Jews and more than 100,000 taken as prisoners of war.

Saul of Tarsus had the same mind-set in his tenacious hold on the Law of Moses with the tradition built up around it. Refusing to believe the reports of Jesus’ resurrection, it was only by seeing him with his own eyes that he accepted Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah the Prince.

But for the majority, recognition of Jesus of Nazareth can only come by a similar experience to that of Paul, when, *“I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him...” - Zechariah 12:10 .*

We still await fulfilment of this prophecy, but the prophecy in **Daniel 9:27** was fulfilled, in forecasting that Messiah the Prince would *“cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease”*. These had been established by command of God in His law given by Moses.

More next time, God willing.