

The Bible According to Jesus 7

This is our last in the series of the Bible According to Jesus. We've seen how important it is to be familiar with the Word so we can apply it correctly to our situations in life and share its truth with others. In this last lesson we will see Jesus last quotations from the Bible that were recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.

After a whole chapter rebuking the religious leaders of that day, Jesus closes with this remark: Matt 23:39 (NIV) *39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'*" He is quoting again from Psalm 118:26. Last week we saw how fitting that passage was. They had seen it fulfilled before their eyes and yet remained hard-hearted. Jesus tells them that even if they don't change the prophecy will be fulfilled. They will one day say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." Just because we choose not to believe it does not mean it will not happen. Sometimes we may be led to leave people with a word of prophetic warning. Remember Jesus' heart is to turn them to the truth. He is angry at the spirit of pride and their surrender to it. This word of warning did bear fruit as many of the religious leaders were converted according to Acts 6:7.

After this Jesus is leaving the temple when the disciples ask about the destruction of the temple and the end of the world. They did not realize it was two separate time periods. To them, the destruction of the temple would be the end of the world. In Jesus' answer he quotes an expression from Daniel and Joel. Matt 24:15-16 (NIV) *15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand-- 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.* He is referring to Daniel 9:27 Many think this was fulfilled in the time period when Titus put down the zealot revolt. The Christians knew Jesus' words and when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by the Roman army they fled into the hills. The Temple was leveled and thousands of Jews were crucified along the streets. It seems that Daniel was referring to the last seven years – often referred to as the Tribulation Period. Since the question from the disciples related to two time periods, Jesus answer may have actually fit them both. Jesus reminded them that they should know the answer to their question by being knowledgeable about the Word.

The next verse He quoted was also a description of the time of the end, but this one came from the prophet Joel. Matt 24:29 (NIV) *29 "Immediately after the distress of those days "'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'* Jesus is quoting Isaiah 13:10 and 34:4.

In this study I have only taken examples where Jesus directly quoted from Scripture. There are a number of times when he drew parallels without quoting the passage. What parallel is being drawn in the following passage?

Matt 24:36-39 (NIV) *36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*

We can and should use the Word to illustrate what we are trying to say. As Toynbee said, "History repeats itself." Prophecy seems to be fulfilled in small ways and eventually in an ultimate way. Some events foreshadow future events. Judgement of the world in the day of Noah has parallels to the final judgement. Jesus use of the story lent credibility to what He was saying. It happened suddenly then. It will happen suddenly in the future. The vast majority will ignore the warning signs.

Jesus warned the disciples from the Word that He would have to suffer and die.

Matt 26:31 (NIV) *31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."* He was quoting Zechariah 13:7. Quoting this passage served a number of purposes. It showed that it was in the will of God, not something happening out of God's control. The fact that it was foretold should have helped them to see it was all in God's hands. It should have prepared their hearts somewhat for what was about to take place. We are all appointed to trials. We are to count it all joy when trials of various kinds come into our lives. It doesn't help with the difficulty before us, but it does give us peace of mind knowing that it is part of God's plan to mature and perfect us.

Jesus last quotation of Scripture came on the cross: Matt 27:46 (NIV) *46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

Here Jesus began quoting Psalm 22. That psalm was a prediction of all that He was going through. Again, for those who heard and understood, it should have helped them to know that as horrible as it was, something was happening that was in the will of God. Somehow through all the darkness and horror of the moment, God was working something wonderful. As they thought through the Psalm they must have been amazed at the accuracy with which it was being fulfilled. For us today it gives us insight into Jesus' thoughts on the cross. He saw that the Word foretold His crucifixion. When we go through trials, too, we can see the Word foretold what we would go through. Though our individual lives were not foretold in such detail in Scripture, we know that the LORD planned each day before we were born. (Psalm 139:16) The Word can comfort us through our trials and help us endure to the end.

What have you learned from this series? What is the over all impression and are there any specifics that you will take with you? Any suggestions for our next study?