

Israel's Time of Affliction

Jesus told his disciples of a great time of affliction which would begin with the destruction of the Temple along with the city of Jerusalem. He warned his followers to flee to the mountains when they saw the armies encircle the city. There would be no protection from God offered to those who remained behind.

The years before this desolation would be marked by wars, earthquakes, persecution against the Christians, the rapid spread of the gospel, and the arising of false Messiah figures. All this was fulfilled in the decades leading into this time of affliction. Jesus was clear that this was not a worldwide tribulation, but a time of affliction upon the Jewish people. He said, *"for there shall be great distress in the land, and **wrath upon this people.**"* (Luke 21:41)

The duration of this great time of tribulation was revealed when Jesus said, *"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."* (Luke 21:24) This time of affliction began with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and would continue until Jerusalem returned to Jewish control. The latter happened in June 1967 during the Six-Day War. This marked the end of an 1897-year period during which the Jewish people suffered things which are almost beyond description.

When the Roman armies finally breached the walls of Jerusalem in 70 AD, they were angry and full of vengeance. The fate of almost all the defenders and inhabitants of Jerusalem, estimated to be 100,000 to 1,100,000, became either death or slavery. The temple was burnt, and the entire city turned into rubble.

Fifty-nine years after this first Jewish rebellion ended, an

uprising known as the Bar Kokhba Revolt began in another attempt to cast off Roman rule. In crushing this revolt, the Romans showed how horrible their wrath could be. Jerusalem still lay in ruins from the destruction in 70 AD, but this time the Romans' path of destruction encompassed the entire region of Judaea. Estimates are that two-thirds of the population was slaughtered Zechariah 13:7-9, while the remaining who did not escape were forced into slavery throughout the Roman Empire. Jesus had warned of this, saying, "they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations." The desolation was so complete that much of the region of Judaea became an abandoned wasteland for nearly a century. It was at this time that the Romans changed the name of this region from Judaea to Syria Palaestina, and Jews were forbidden from even entering the region. This seemed to be an attempt to erase all Jewish connection to the land God had promised them through Abraham.

For the eighteen-plus centuries which followed, Jews were a people without a homeland. As they attempted to settle among the nations, they endured much hardship, persecution, expulsions, and attempts at extermination. Much of their suffering came from those who claimed to be followers of Christ. I say claimed, because nothing could have been more antichrist in nature.

In WWII, these same people were faced with the mass extermination event we now call the Holocaust. One third of all Jews worldwide were killed, including almost two-thirds of Jews who lived in Europe.

Finally, in June 1967, the Nation of Israel, which had been reconstituted in 1948, took control of the city of Jerusalem. The time given the Gentiles to "trod Jerusalem underfoot" had finally come to an end.

Over nineteen centuries before, Jesus foretold of the agony to come. It would be a time of "*great tribulation, such as was*

not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matthew 24:21. His words revealed the great suffering the Jews would endure, but it also contained a promise. Jesus said, "*nor ever shall be.*" Just as God promised after the flood in Noah's day, an affliction of this magnitude would never come to them again.

I believe we are nearing the time when, according to the Prophet Zechariah, "...all nations (will be gathered) against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity." This again will be a horrible day, but it will end differently. This time God will fight for Jerusalem when, according to Zechariah, "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced (Jesus Christ), and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son." In that day, God's wrath will not be against Jerusalem, but upon those who war against it. Israel will certainly face fearful things in the future, but for them the worst is over.

Simply Christ Gospel Insight is shared weekly by **Pastor Keith Surface** with believers in over 150 nations. For more information or to subscribe free, visit [Calvary Outreach](#).