

## APPENDIX II

# STUNNING MESSAGES IN CHRIST'S COMMAND TO "FLEE"

Christ's prophecy regarding Jerusalem's fall and associated temple destruction is filled with amazing end-time missives. Most expositors are convinced that there is a dual application between Jerusalem's fall in 70 A.D. and the events surrounding the second coming (*parousia*), the latter emphasized more. The linguistic variation between those messages in the gospels conveys additive information which embellishes those events.

Expositor White saw several apocalyptic applications also and amplified those temple/Jerusalem destruction prophecies into those end-time themes. Deciphering these unfolds stunning insight into truth that has been previously elusive. Here are several initial examples from those writings:

"In these words His meaning was **twofold**. He referred not only [1] to the destruction of the Jewish temple and worship, but [2] to His own death,—the destruction of the temple of His body. This the Jews were already plotting. As the priests and rulers returned to the temple, they had proposed to kill Jesus, and thus rid themselves of the troubler. Yet when He set before them their purpose, they did not understand Him. They took His words as applying only to the temple at Jerusalem, and with indignation exclaimed, 'Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?' Now they felt that Jesus had justified their unbelief, and they were confirmed in their rejection of Him."<sup>1</sup>

"Christ's words had been spoken in the hearing of a large number of people; but when He was alone, Peter, John, James, and Andrew came to Him as He sat upon the Mount of Olives. 'Tell us,' they said, 'when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?' Jesus did not answer His disciples by taking up separately the destruction of Jerusalem and [3] the great day of His coming. He mingled the description of these two events. Had He opened to His disciples future events as He beheld them, they would have been unable to endure the sight. In mercy to them He blended the description of the **two great crises**, leaving the disciples to study out the meaning for themselves. When He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, His prophetic words reached beyond that event to the final conflagration in that day when the Lord shall rise out of His place to punish the world for their iniquity, when the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. **This entire discourse was given, not for the disciples only, but for those who should live in the last scenes of this earth's history.**"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 164 (emphasis added).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 628 (emphasis added).

Three of the four gospel writers convey those end-time teachings in explicit detail. Intriguingly, they were **not** the disciples who were present when he shared those prophecies (Peter, John, James and Andrew – Mark 13:3).

- Equally captivating is the variation in how those messages are portrayed.
- Since all three were inspired, they each have special instructive values.

One key area that varies in those gospel records is the subject of this study. All are couched in a “timing” theme: “**When ye shall see.**” The issue: “See what?” That begins prophetic counsel.

	<u>See What?</u>	<u>Do What?</u>
Luke 21:20	<b>Armies</b> surrounding Jerusalem (threatening – not penetrating City)	Flee to mountains Depart out
Mark 13	<b>Abomination</b> stands where it ought not to (entered City)	Flee into the mountains
Matthew 24:5	<b>Abomination</b> stands in holy place (entered Temple)	Flee into the mountains

This dramatically unfolds a progressive study of the historical military attacks against Jerusalem, as we will see. Since there is also an end-time symbolism – Jerusalem (God’s people), the temple (His church) and the very conscience of the remnant will be subject to progressive coercive attacks at the end.

### **Roman Threat in its Final Symbolism**

All expositors see these “armies” as from the Roman Empire. It is important to note that the ensign of those armies was an **eagle**. The Roman soldiers offered sacrifices to these standards in preparation for battle.

The Jewish historian Josephus made these observations regarding the siege of Jerusalem that Jesus predicted:

“1. Now, as Titus was upon his march into the enemy’s country, the auxiliaries [non-Roman citizens] that were sent by the kings marched first, having all the other auxiliaries with them; after whom followed those that were to prepare the roads and measure out the camp; then came the commander’s baggage, and after that the other soldiers, who were completely armed to support them; then came Titus himself, having with him another select body; and then came the pike men; after whom came the horses belonging to that legion. All these came before the engines; and after these engines came the tribunes and the

leaders of the cohorts, with their select bodies; after these came the **ensigns**, with the **eagle**; and before those ensigns came the trumpeters belonging to them.”<sup>3</sup>

“Then came the ensigns encompassing the **eagle**, which is at the **head of every Roman legion**, the king, and the strongest of all birds, which seems to them a signal of dominion, and an omen that they shall conquer all against whom they march.”<sup>4</sup>

The “eagle,” which was their omen for victory, was at the head of their moving legion.

Why is this significant? The eagle was also used as an emblem by the ancient kings of Babylon.<sup>5</sup> Babylon also is a metaphor for apostasy of Christianity at the end. That too is associated with an eagle!

Long ago Israel’s God inspired Moses to warn Israel of a king from the north (Babylon) who would come if they were disobedient “as swift as the **eagle flieth**.”

“The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, [as swift] *as the eagle flieth*; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; *A nation of fierce countenance*, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young: And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which [also] shall not leave thee [either] corn, wine, or oil, [or] the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, *until he have destroyed thee*. And he shall *besiege thee in all thy gates*, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee” (Deuteronomy 28:49-52).

That was fulfilled in 605 B.C. The symbol of the eagle became detestable to the Jews. The Essenes, a Jewish “branch” would commit suicide before they would permit that ensign of Rome to enter the precincts. The non-Christian Jews that escaped the Roman advances, called the Sicarii, sought refuge in the great plateau of Masada in 70 A.D. All committed suicide before the advancing Roman armies with their eagle standard as they were about to invade those cliff havens.

An actual eagle example from this era is on a Roman coin:



<sup>3</sup> Josephus, Flavius; *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 5, Chapter 2, Section 1 (emphasis added).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 3, Chapter 6, Section 2 (emphasis added).

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.boston-catholic-journal.com/a-primer-to-catholic-symbolism.htm#The\\_Eagle\\_](http://www.boston-catholic-journal.com/a-primer-to-catholic-symbolism.htm#The_Eagle_)



Roman denarius coin showing on its back two types of ensigns, the center being an eagle.<sup>6</sup>

Those ensigns were called “abominations.” Luke is the first to address the military operations. He referred to them as armies. Mark and Matthew refer to them as “abomination,” which they personified as something detestable that was attacking. That is exactly what Christ wanted to convey because He said: “**When** you **see** the ‘abomination.’”

C. H. Spurgeon wrote (1888): “This portion of our Saviour’s words appears to relate solely to the destruction of Jerusalem. As soon as Christ’s disciples saw ‘the abomination of desolation,’ that is, the Roman **ensigns**, with their idolatries, ‘stand in the holy place,’ they knew that the time for their escape had arrived; and they did flee to the mountains.”<sup>7</sup>

Albert Barnes wrote (1949): “The abomination of desolation means the Roman army, and is so explained by Lu, xxi. 20. The Roman army is further called the **abomination** on account of the **images of the emperor**, and the **eagles**, carried in front of the legions, and regarded by the Romans with divine honours.”<sup>8</sup>

Sir Isaac Newton, a detailed apocalyptic expositor, saw these ensigns also as the “abomination.”

At this **time of the end** we note that these great symbols of the past apply with uncanny precision:

- Babylon will be a “great city” that God’s people are to escape from (Revelation 14:8, 18:2) – many of its inhabitants drink the wine of apostasy (fornication) (cf. Hosea 4:10-19, Jeremiah 3:2-3).
- In place of the symbol of an ancient pagan religion, the end-time imagery is of an apostate church called Babylon (Revelation 17:5). She is making the world drink of her wine which God now calls – here it is – abomination, filthiness of her fornication (again, cf. Hosea 4:10-19, Jeremiah 3:2-3). Revelation 17’s prophecy notes that she is centered in Rome (city of seven hills).
- A “king of the north” will rule all apostate powers (Daniel 11:40-45). This ties to Lucifer (Isaiah 14:13; cf. Psalm 48:3) and to his earthly leaders.

<sup>6</sup> [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b2/Denarius\\_Mark\\_Anthony-32BC-legIII.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b2/Denarius_Mark_Anthony-32BC-legIII.jpg)

<sup>7</sup> Matthew, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 215 (emphasis added).

<sup>8</sup> Matthew, p. 254 (emphasis added).

- A **bird** represents a fourth living creature (Revelation 4:7) that is like an eagle. That symbolizes the leading tribe of Dan to the **north**.
- A group of people supporting Satan, wanting to be like God (whose throne is to the north – Psalm 45:2) will represent an eagle-like power just like Dan. (The “pale horse” of the fourth seal (Revelation 6).

### What does “mountains” mean?

Historically, some Jews did flee to the mountains. Eusebius (H.E. iii,5,3) says that the Christians actually fled to Pella at the foot of the mountains about seventeen miles south of the Sea of Galilee. They remembered the warning of Jesus and fled for safety.<sup>9</sup> Is this the response to each threat from that apostate Roman church?

- Symbolically, mountains represent God’s power (Psalm 121:1-2), where God dwells (Mt. Zion) (Psalm 2:6, 135:21; Isaiah 8:18; Joel 3:21), where God’s people will go for security and worship (Revelation 14:1).
- *“It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”* (Isaiah 2:2-4).
- Symbolically, the setting for these prophecies – the escape to the mountain – means to **flee from Babylon** (apostasy) to a place where **spiritual safety lies** (Lord’s house on top of the mountains).
- We will see shortly that expositor White ties the message to “flee” **initially** to getting out of the big cities. Spiritually, that becomes a time when we must flee to the “mount of God,” the “stronghold of the Lord.”

### Looking at Luke’s Attacking Armies

The end-time narrative given to us by Luke creates a foundation for us to build upon:

- Some plants require a **trellis** to grow on.
- Luke’s narrative is a **trellis** to our understanding for the “living” prophecies of Mark and Matthew to develop and expand.

Jesus had been asked what the “sign” of the temple’s destruction would be (Luke 21:6-7). To understand the end-time significance of His answer:

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<sup>9</sup> Robertson’s Word Picture on Matthew 24.

- **Jerusalem** was not only a city important to the Jews but –
  - It was personified by Jesus (Matthew 23:37-39, Luke 13:34-35) as His people.
  - Jerusalem was seen also as a mother (Isaiah 54, 62:1, 4).
  - Here and in the two other gospels, it is portrayed as **God's people**.
- The Temple was where God dwelt (among His people and within us) (pre- and post-Cross).

*“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).*

*“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (II Corinthians 6:16).*

Jesus said in Luke's narrative that the sign of the attacking armies would be a siege on Jerusalem.

- Christ talked about that contemporary (within one generation) fulfillment in Luke 19:43-44.
- At the end He noted that Satan's host would lay siege on God's people.
- The only ones to escape were those who follow the instruction Jesus gave to “flee.”

The setting in Luke 21 is far different from that in Matthew or Mark. Luke's review of one attack is in 17:22-37. The admonition of not going back for a coat if in the field or into the house if on the rooftop is **missing** in the Luke 21's Jerusalem discourse.

- Those illustrations were metaphors for urgency. Thus, the setting here is more “casual.”
- The word “flee” (*pheugetosan*) is used in each place but implied differently. It is a different imperative flow of thought:

*“Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto” (Luke 21:21).*

- It is **invitational**, almost pastoral, to entreat action when God's people will be morally attacked – seek spiritual safety when that occurs.
- Escape from the danger.

We get insight for this eschatological prophecy from its first historical application (not in Luke's parameters).

- “Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given his disciples warning, and all who believed his words watched for the promised sign. ‘When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,’ said Jesus, ‘then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the moun-

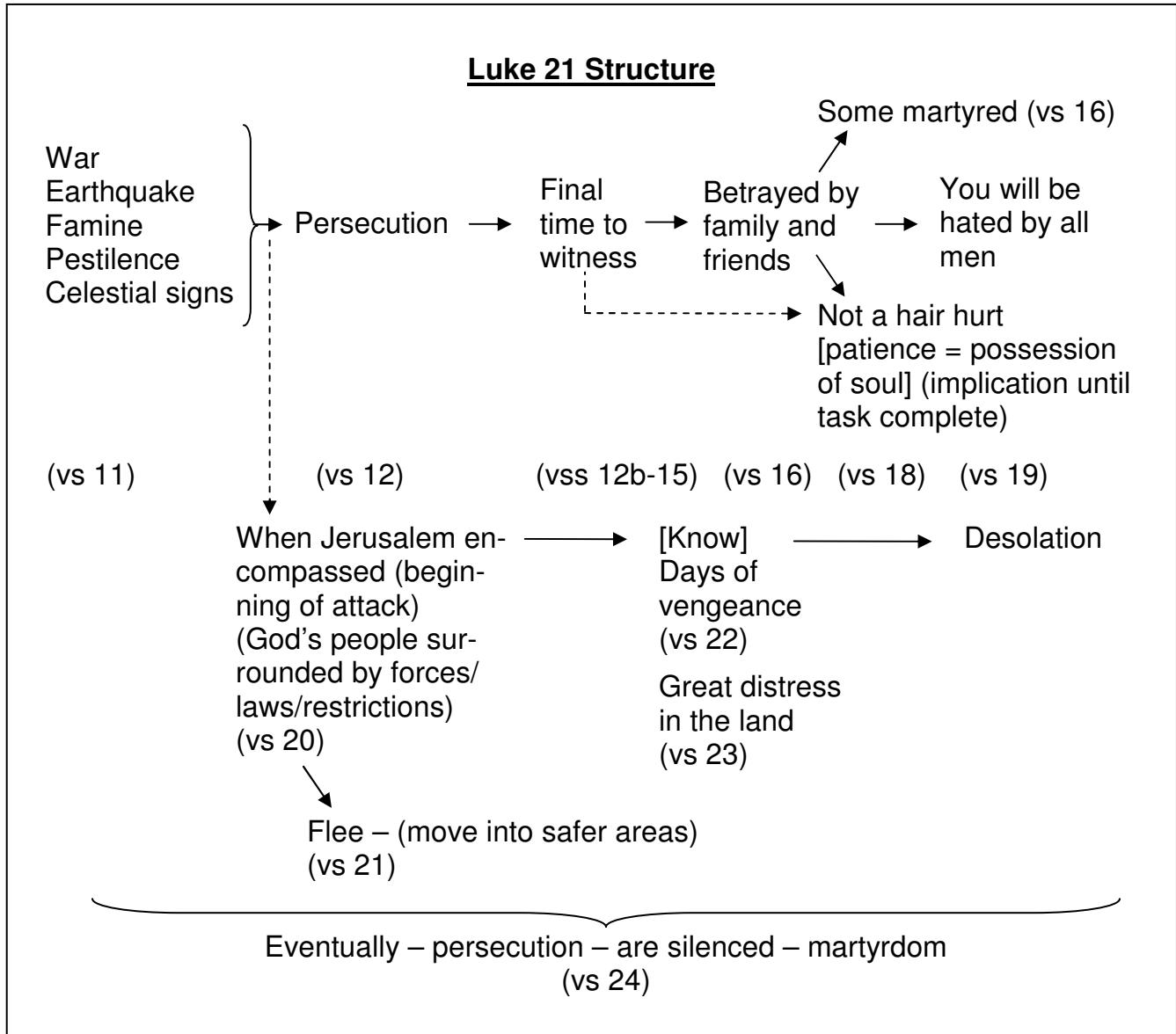
tains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out.' [Luke 21:20, 21.] After the Romans under Cestius [Gaius Cestius Gallus – Roman general who had been assigned to Syria A.D. 63-65 and came to squelch the Jewish revolt by Nero's orders] had surrounded the city, they unexpectedly abandoned the siege when everything seemed favorable for an immediate attack. The besieged, despairing of successful resistance, were on the point of surrender, when the Roman general withdrew his forces, without the least apparent reason. But God's merciful providence was directing events for the good of his own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was afforded for all who would to obey the Saviour's warning. Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army, and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city. At this time the country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them. At the time of the siege [66 A.D. – **beginning** of the three and a half year period], the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the **Feast of Tabernacles**, and thus the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested. Without delay they fled to a place of safety,—the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan."<sup>10</sup>

This was the **onset** of a three and a half year war against God's people. It would have to end at Passover.

- It was the symbolic *end-time beginning* of the 42 months of persecution noted elsewhere (Revelation 11:2, 13:4).

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<sup>10</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 30-31.



- “But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months” (Revelation 11:2).

This was in turn echoing Daniel.

- “And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these [things] shall be finished” (Daniel 12:7).

Notice that the end-time persecution is related to the world of non-Jews (Gentiles), just like Cestius (11:2) – civil powers.

- Here, Luke notes the same with similar language:  
*“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”* (Luke 21:24). The “time of the Gentiles” followed the gospel to the Jews, which ended in A.D. 33-34.
- Christ called these “*days of vengeance*” (Luke 21:22) – persecution.

For the remnant – in the end-time application – God does not promise a total escape from this persecution or even martyrdom. **But** – He does give counsel on how to **minimize its impact** (by fleeing):

- *“Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto”* (Luke 21:21).
- At the onset of the three and a half years the Sunday laws will be a signal for God’s people to act to minimize hostilities! We know that from cross-reference to Daniel.
- “The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places [**that will apply to Matthew’s discourse**]. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians [**leaning now on Luke’s account**], so the assumption of power on the part of our nation [the United States] in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be **time to leave the large cities**, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains.”<sup>11</sup> (This latter will not occur until close to the end of the three and a half years.)

Here, expositor White notes that “fleeing” at the **onset** of the siege on God’s people was to get out of the cities. Her message there becomes progressive! But there is more.

Jesus said here that when armies would encompass Jerusalem, desolation would not be far away.

- In Matthew 24:15 Jesus said that an abomination would lead to desolation.
- He said that that was explained in Daniel.
- There:  
 Chp. 8: **Place** of God’s sanctuary is cast down (representing law, justice, righteousness) (12)  
 A specific sin related to this hostility leads to **desolation** and the sanctuary and God’s “host” is trodden down (13) (persecution).  
 After 2300 years, the sanctuary where God resides is totally cleansed (14) (9:24).

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<sup>11</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Maranatha*, p. 180 (emphasis added).

- Chp. 9: Satan makes **desolate** God's sanctuary (27) (apostate church) right up until the consummation because of his abomination.
- Chp. 11: A "king" "person" pollutes the sanctuary – military might on his part (31), by an abomination that leads to **desolation**.
- Chp. 12: An abomination makes **desolation** (12:11).

All these refer to the same sin/desolation!

There, the sin (transgression) that led to desolation is rebellion against the Sabbath (chapter 8). Later, in the rest of Daniel, Jesus called that transgression an "abomination."

- Combining Luke and Daniel, the armies surrounding Jerusalem **represent**:
- Preparation** to use force against God's people to honor a false Sabbath. Everything is now in place.
- There are Sunday laws, but they aren't enforced.

That becomes a **sign** to God's people to relocate – seek a place of spiritual security (symbolically, this is called a "wilderness") (i.e., where God can protect).

- Cestius Gallus attacked in the fall of 66 A.D.
- He retreated – and it appears that by 68 A.D. all of God's remnant had escaped. The window of time was long.

Sunday laws will be like the armies surrounding Jerusalem with the intent to penetrate its boundaries. But the laws are not initially enforced.

- Though there are possibilities for adverse encounters to occur – time to escape/relocate is clearly given.
- As it was in the "Jerusalem surrounded" imagery, time to leave the cities will then be given. God will provide the opportunity to liquidate assets and relocate to a more secure place.
- Finishing the work still lies ahead – thus it won't be a time for isolation.
- This is a key to understand this prophecy.



We know Luke's narrative relates to the end of time because:

- Those "days" relate to when "*all things which are written may be fulfilled*" (Luke 21:22) – Written where? Daniel.
- And**
- "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"* (Luke 21:28).
- When the collective events that Christ presented begin to trend upward – the end is upon us.

What does Luke mean by:

- If in Judea – flee to the “mountains”?
- If in Jerusalem – depart to a safe place?
- If in the country – don’t go into the city?  
(We’ll look at these more when we move into Matthew’s account.)
- For now, the context is – “move to a **more secure place spiritually.**” Don’t expose yourself unnecessarily to danger.

Again, we know these things because they represent the **beginning** of the final three and a half years that E. G. White applied this to also!

### **Mark Records His End-Time Impressions (Mark 13)**

*“But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:”* (Mark 13:14).

The imagery of “standing where it ought not” is couched in language of great urgency (like Matthew). This is **very** different from Luke! The city has been penetrated. The force of apostasy is in the body of Christ.

- If on housetop (roofs were flat and a place to relax/socialize). Don’t go into the house – flee (vs 15).
- If in the field, don’t return to where your coat is (vs 16) – flee.

The picture is one where the abominable laws against the Sabbath have now begun to be a threat – “standing where it ought not” – suggesting:

- They might be forced on God’s people. They could prohibit Sabbath worship.
- The churches could be coerced.
- “Standing” means “control over” wherever it is positioned.
- Legal measures have been taken to force Sunday worship – **the** abomination of Daniel – and restrict conscience.
- Religious liberty is now in peril.

Daniel **wasn’t** appealed to in Luke!! Here he is. The issue is now specific.

- God’s people are being asked to honor something detestable to God.
- A sacrilege is being forced on the world.

Again, this represents a time of persecution noted in Daniel and Revelation.

- “*And it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them*” (Daniel 8:10b) (referring to the saints).
- “*And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days*” (Daniel 11:33) (referring to the remnant).
- “*When he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished*” (Daniel 12:7b). God, here, promises a time limit on Satan/Antichrist’s persecution!”
- “*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*” (Revelation 2:10) (ten days – “short period of time”).
- “*And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months*” (Revelation 11:2b). This “city” is symbolic of God’s people.

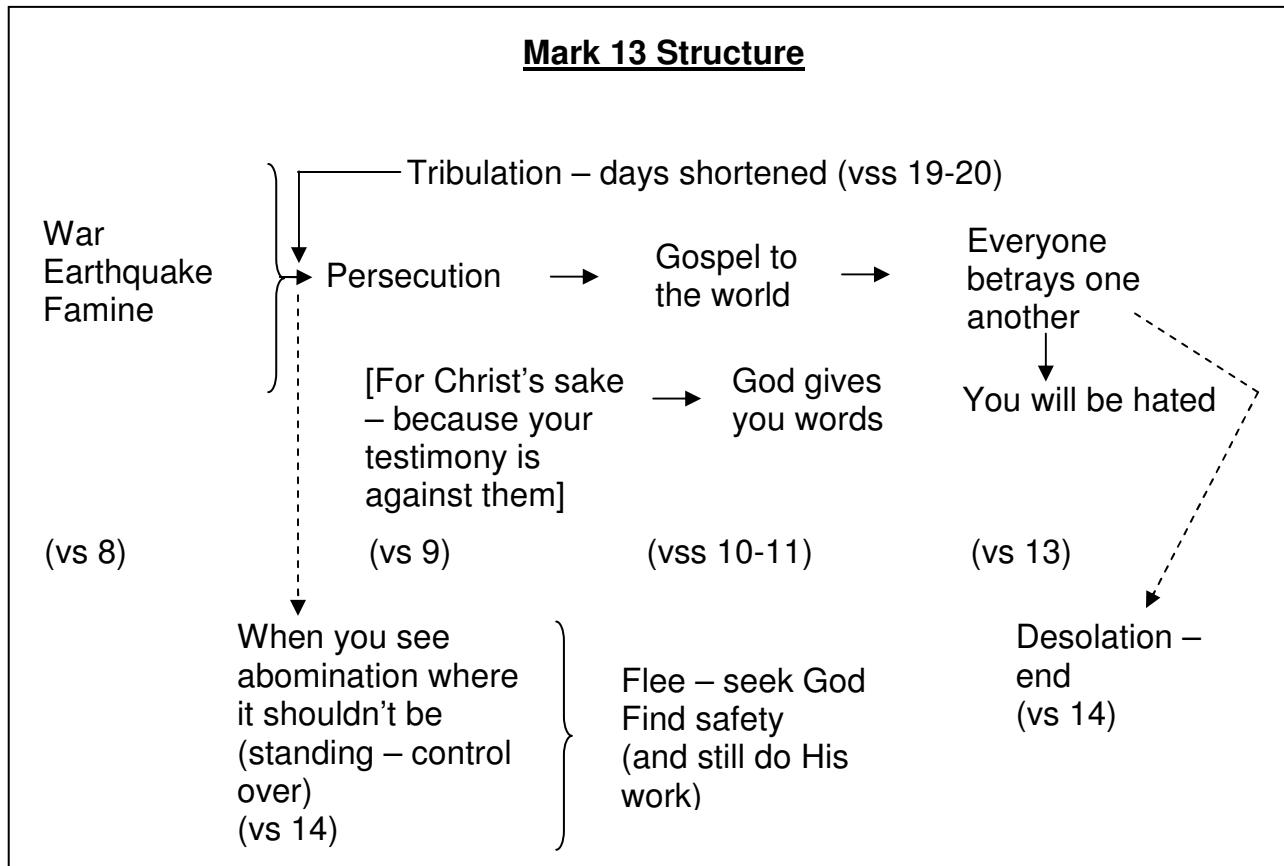
This is tied to Revelation 12:17 (cf. 13:7): “*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*”

- God’s people have gone to the mountain of God.
- “*And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death*” (Revelation 12:11).

It is now assumed that the three and a half year period is far along. In the end-time metaphor, God’s people are out of the cities, in smaller hamlets. Now everything needs to be done to minimize a direct confrontation. If a threat comes, urgent action to alleviate it and prevent its reoccurring is advised. This coincides with General Vespasian’s attack. He had full control of Judah. The lives of God’s people were suppressed, like the time when they must work on the Sabbath.

At the time of Cestius Gallus only a part of Palestine was under siege; and when he and his forces were routed, the Jewish Christians were given time to escape. When Vespasian came in it became suppressive, but a small reprieve came right near the end.

Mark's sequence/imagery:



That was opportunity **two** to “flee” like Luke directed. That was in 66-68 A.D.

Nero, upset at Gallus’ ineptness, ordered General Vespasian to subjugate completely the Jews. He assembled 60,000 troops and captured all the cities of Judea. In these attacks he slaughtered thousands. Then he laid siege on Jerusalem, totally blocking all movement in or out of the city. But he retreated because of Nero’s death (suicide) and the amazing conflict as to who would lead the empire. This gave another window of two years grace to the Jewish people, especially the Christians. ***That was opportunity number two*** – just like Mark notes.

When Vespasian ascended the throne, he ordered his son, Titus, to attack and subdue Jerusalem. At the end, new laws will be passed to enforce existing religious laws.

“Support will be withdrawn from those who proclaim God's law as the only standard of righteousness, the only sure test of character. And all who will not bow to the decree of the national councils, and obey the national laws to exalt the Sabbath instituted by the man of sin, to the disregard of God's holy day, will feel not only the oppressive power of the Papacy, but the oppression of the Protestant world, who will seek to enforce the worship of the image of the beast.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *The Review and Herald*, March 9, 1911.

## The Mathian Record

*"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:"* (Matthew 24:15)!!

After giving a dramatic sequence of end-time events, Jesus suddenly became directive: "Flee"! When the abomination is **in** the "holy place"! Note how this is structured (Matthew 24).

Josephus<sup>13</sup> says that when the Roman soldiers entered the temple they placed their standards [eagle with Emperor's head underneath (Barnes)] in the temple and in the eastern gate – direction of the rising sun.

- **Now** it is utterly urgent to escape – destruction had not begun.

A small window of time comes once again.

Josephus tells us that Titus' Roman Legions marched with standards (or ensigns) that bore the image of the Roman eagle on them.

- Titus suffered many defeats and made many strategic mistakes.<sup>14</sup>
- Once he sent spies into the city and **into the temple**, then suddenly began slaughtering priests and worshipers.
- In the confusion that followed, including a very successful counterattack by the Jewish military against his forces, another window for the Christians to escape came.
- Opportunity number **three**: This was the *last chance* for the Christians.
- It was only a brief time till Jerusalem was surrounded again.

Another siege was planned and Titus decided to personally inspect the city walls. He and a force of 600 men were ambushed. Titus barely escaped with his life.

- He retreated – but still had total control of movement around the city.
- All other Judean cities were secured by the Roman military.
- During this time Titus blocked all food access and permitted no one to leave the city. Travelers could enter Jerusalem but became imprisoned there.
- At the end, God's people won't be able to buy or sell.



<sup>13</sup> *The Jewish Wars*, b. vi., chapter 6.

<sup>14</sup> Josephus, *The Siege of Jerusalem*.

Catapulta

Then, in the few months leading up to Passover, he planned a major attack while starving the city.

- It was then, in the spring of 70 A.D. that the city was secured
- Then the temple was entered and destroyed.

Thus, the final escape opportunities under Titus came only under extreme urgency – after his spies were routed – just as Matthew reflected!

Three and a half years – Tabernacles to Passover. At the end of time, prophecy declares it would be Passover to Tabernacles! (That's another beautiful study.)

### **End-Time Imagery**

This brings to the fore a future time (soon) when the forces of law/military will come to control/destroy God's people.

- The knowledge that Titus killed more than one million Jewish people
- Show that it will be a time when a death penalty has been made

Daniel's three and a half year prophecy reveals that an abomination (false sabbath day enforcement) would begin the process and eventually become a life and death matter.

The story of the beasts in Revelation 13 notes several times that a decree will go forth to kill all who don't have the mark of the beast.

- "*And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed*" (Revelation 13:15).
- That is a **death decree** that means not only "escape" or fleeing must come but "hiding/seclusion" is now required.

"As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities [some are still there] and villages [that means that they have been living in areas from which they can reach out to help finish the work] and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries and will thank God for "the munitions of rocks." Isaiah 33:16. But many of all nations and of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, will be cast into the most unjust and cruel bondage. The beloved of God pass weary days, bound in chains, shut in by prison bars, sentenced to be slain, some apparently left to die of starvation in dark and loathsome dungeons. No human ear is open to hear their moans; no human hand is ready to lend them help."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 626.

	<u>Historic</u>	<u>End-Time</u>	<u>Final Meaning</u>
Luke 21:20	Armies surrounded city	Abomination – Sunday laws surround Christian world	Saints are threatened Escape to places of greater spiritual safety out of large cities
Mark 13:14	Abomination – Standing where it shouldn't	Sunday laws enforced God's church subjugated	Penetration of God's people – restriction of their activity Escape anything that threatens spiritual experience
Matthew 24:15	Abomination – enters temple	Death decree Forced to violate conscience	Coerce conscience upon death penalty Escape to solitary places



**Robert's Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem**

### **Summary of These Progressive Narratives**

This is a graphic progression of what lies ahead. We are not told to escape into solitary places. The key to these prophecies is to flee to places or environments that are spiritually safe. Yet, not until the very end; we must maintain a witnessing/proselytizing contact with the world.

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