

Sermon Handout

Preparing for Calamity

Acts 4:32-37

I. Background: Doom Predicted for Jerusalem

- a. John the Baptist speaks of the “wrath to come” Mt 3:7-12
- b. Jesus warns of the overthrow of the Israelite rulers Mt 21:42-45 *cf.* vv 33-41
- c. Jesus’ warning in the parable of the wedding Mt 22:1-14
- d. Jesus: the temple is abandoned to ruin (“desolate”) Mt 23:31-38
- e. Jesus depicts the destruction of the temple Mt 24:1-2 *cf.* 21:18-21
- f. The warning: prepare to flee Jerusalem Mt 24:3-22
 - i. Difficulties will confront the Apostles vv. 6-8
This is the “beginning” of trouble v. 8
 - ii. The Apostles & company will be persecuted vv. 9-13
 - iii. The gospel preached throughout the Empire v. 14 (fulfilled in Acts)
 - iv. The coming of the Romans to Jerusalem v. 15 *cf.* v. 28
 - v. Christians are to flee from Judaea vv. 16-28
Great tribulation v. 21 *cf.* Rev 1:9; 2:22; 7:14
 - vi. The end of Israel & the enthronement of Jesus vv. 29-31
 - vii. The timing of *all* these events vv. 32-35 esp. v. 34 *cf.* v. 3
- g. Peter, quoting Joel, connects this with Pentecost Acts 2:16-21, 40
- h. Coming calamity in Jerusalem predicted in the epistles also
I Thess 2:16; Heb 10:25, 37-39; 12:18-29
Rev 7:1-8 (“servants of our Lord” v. 3) *cf.* Mt 24:13, 22
Jas 5:8-9 (*cf.* 1:1); I Pet 4:7-8; I Jn 2:18-19

II. The Response of the Early Church

- a. Selling possessions, including land and houses 4:32, 34 *cf.* 2:45
Including Barnabas, a Levite of Cyprus vv. 36-37
- b. Supporting one another in preparation for the calamity to come
- c. The Apostles were responsible for administration 4:35; 5:2; 6:1-4

III. Communal Living, Divestment is not the standard for all time

- a. These were special circumstances, anticipating the end of the age
Severe tribulation of the coming days Mt 24:21
- b. Similar concerns expressed by St. Paul regarding the near term
I Cor 7:6-7, 25-27; Rom 13:11-12; Col 3:2-6
- c. No Biblical indication this was to be standard practice forever