

Jesus Christ and A.D. 70

The view expressed by Brother Russell Ebbs in his article "The abomination of desolation" ([Sept. 2001, p. 366](#)), that Jesus somehow headed up the Roman legions who in A.D. 70 sacked Jerusalem and butchered her people, was discussed at a mutual improvement class fifty years ago about the time of my baptism. It revolted me then and it still revolts me.

Surely it was the Roman general Titus, the son of the Emperor Vespasian, who led the army of 65,000 men, and allowed them to commit bestial acts of slaughter, pillage, burning, rape, crucifixion, torture and mutilation, not the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, Son of God and Saviour. If it were true that he personally headed up the Roman forces then it would mean that he was responsible for and condoned all these dreadful atrocities. I find this idea foreign to Jesus's teaching in the New Testament.

Truly Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Mt. 23:37, 38), but he made it quite clear that he would not reveal himself to the Jews until his return, that is, his second coming in power and glory (v. 39).

Regarding the abomination of desolation itself (24:15), this was likely to have been the raising of the hated Roman standards in the burnt-out shell of the temple, as a sign of Titus's victory.

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Reply

That the Lord Jesus Christ was at the head of the Roman armies, and that the terrible events of A.D. 70 were Divinely directed, is shown by many scriptures, of which the following are a selection:

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined" (Dan. 9:26). The prince here is "Messiah the prince" of verse 25, who would "confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week . . . shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate" (v. 27). History shows that "the people of the prince" who

destroyed the city and caused the Aaronic "sacrifice and . . . oblation to cease" were the Roman armies. Thus these armies were operating under the control of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all power and authority have been given.

"But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (Mt. 22:7). Here we see that it was on the orders of "the king" that the destruction of the city of Jerusalem was carried out, that city containing those murderers who rejected the king's invitation and slew his apostles (vv. 3-6).

"But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others" (Mk. 12:7-9). The husbandmen—the high priests, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the scribes—were to be destroyed by the lord of the vineyard as a consequence of their wicked actions. History shows this happened in A.D. 70.

". . . whose [referring to Jesus Christ in context] fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Mt. 3:12). John Baptist speaks of the burning up of the chaff of Judah's forty-second generation since Abraham as the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we know that this was achieved through the Roman armies.

"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (10:23). The preaching of the apostles was to come to a conclusion at the time when Christ would come, which was A.D. 70.

". . . for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh . . . the judge standeth before the door" (Jas. 5:8,9). If "the coming of the Lord" here refers to a coming 2,000 years later, then the statement is untrue. However, if it was an invisible coming of the Lord in A.D. 70 to which James is referring (he is writing to the twelve tribes) then it makes sense.

I have deliberately omitted referring to Matthew 24 and 2 Peter 3, which fill out this subject, but I would commend Brother Thomas's small publication *The Last Day's of Judah's Commonwealth* as an excellent treatise on these chapters. I have also omitted some key aspects of God-manifestation in my comments on the above-mentioned scriptures.

Brother Davison says that the idea that Christ came at the head of the Roman armies revolts him. May I suggest that he is placing in his understanding of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ all the emphasis on the love and mercy of Christ (Eph. 3:19) and neglecting the aspects of severity and judgement (Mt. 25:26,41; cf. Rom. 11:22). These aspects of the righteous character of God are evident throughout Scripture, as in Isaiah 10:5,6, for example: "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets".

Russell Ebbs