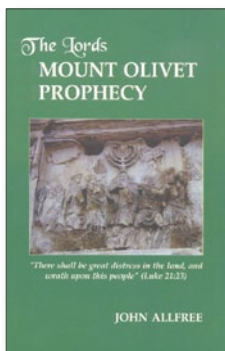


Prophecy on the mount

John Nicholls



The Lord's Mount Olivet Prophecy.

John Allfree, Bible Study Publications, 1 Penrith Place, Mansfield, NG19 6NE.

140 pages. £5.75 for a single copy inclusive of postage. Multiple copies £4.50 each plus postage.

Cheques payable to 'John Allfree'.

IT IS A PLEASURE to review another book written by Brother John Allfree, this one about the Olivet Prophecy.¹ The reviewer first heard Brother Allfree's ideas on this subject at a Bible School in the 1970s, and well remembers the discussions and reactions that took place amongst the brethren and sisters present. A large number of critical questions were put to him on the Thursday evening Question Night to prove that his ideas were wrong, but my recollection is that he dealt with them ably and consistently, and was unmoved!

The main thesis of the book is that A.D. 70 and the events leading up to that time fulfilled all of the Olivet Prophecy, and that we are guilty of poor exposition of Scripture if we apply this prophecy to events today. The book is a second edition, the first appearing in 1996. The ideas for the book originated in Brother Thomas's articles entitled "The Last Days of Judah's Commonwealth", later published as a booklet, which are largely an exposition of 2 Peter 3.

Method of approach

The Olivet Prophecy is found in three of the Gospels, and Brother Allfree's approach is to set out the three records in the form of parallel passages at the beginning of each section of the prophecy. He then expounds the section. There are ten chapters in the book, the first being, "When shall these things be?", and the last, "The good and evil servants". It is a detailed verse-by-verse exposition, but not at all tedious as some such expositions can be. There are detailed footnotes and acknowledgements of sources, and several helpful digressions.

Page 9 shows that, in the Old Testament, Divine judgements against Israel are described as the 'coming of the Lord'. Micah 1:3 says, "the LORD cometh forth out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth". This did not occur literally. In the same way, Jesus in his parables spoke of how he would come in judgement against the nation that was about to reject him. This did not occur literally, but was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Romans came and destroyed the Jewish state and its institutions and carried the people away captive amongst the nations.

In this same chapter of the book, the phrase "the end of the world" is considered and carefully expounded in the light of other scriptures. The next chapter is, "The beginning of sorrows", and there is here, quite incidentally, a very helpful exposition of Isaiah 66:1-7. Chapter 3, "Jewish apostasy and Gentile opportunity", contains some citations from historians, and, again incidentally, has some good exposition of Deuteronomy 32. Chapter 4 gives a good explanation of "the abomination of desolation" of Daniel's prophecy, and of the great trouble that came upon the nation when the Romans came and destroyed the temple. Jesus told his hearers that they would see the abomination when it came to Jerusalem.

This trouble is further expounded in chapter 6 of the book, and Brother Allfree has some wise words to say about "the times of the Gentiles", a phrase occurring only in Luke's version of the Olivet Prophecy. Chapter 7 deals with "Sun, moon and stars", and shows that they refer to the Jewish heavens that were about to be destroyed in the catastrophe of A.D. 70. Brother Allfree also considers the phrases, "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn", and the angels' gathering "[God's] elect from the four winds", which many might think refer to the future coming of Jesus. The author makes a good case, however, for these words being fulfilled in A.D. 70. The Parable of the Fig Tree is next dealt with and the associated

1. The other books by Brother Allfree reviewed recently are [Edom in Bible Prophecy](#) (Mar. 2006, p. 75) and [The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today \(William Davison\): A Reply and Restatement of Christadelphian Belief](#) (May 2006, p. 167).

words, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled". He points out, amongst other things, that our pioneer brethren did not expound these words as applying to a (for them) future date, but saw the fig tree shooting forth as fulfilled in the coming of the Lord in A.D. 70.

Chapter 9 is entitled, "Watch ye therefore". There is an interesting footnote on page 103 expounding the passing away of the Jewish heavens and earth spoken of in Hebrews 1. This chapter is particularly interesting as it challenges expositions of the Olivet Prophecy that are heard every now and then from our preaching platforms. The days of Noah are applied to the times preceding A.D. 70, and the taking of one and not the other is stated to refer to the taking in judgement. So we read, "the flood came, and took them". Those who are left are spared. The final chapter is entitled, "The good and evil servants", and Brother Allfree again reasons from Scripture that these words applied in A.D. 70.

Conclusions

Not everyone will agree with the conclusions reached in this book, but all will agree that his thesis is consistently applied and well argued Scripturally. He reasons well and with conviction. On pages 115-119 he reaches his summary and says that we should apply the exhortations from the Olivet Prophecy, especially those concerning the good and evil servants, to ourselves in the ecclesia today. He also concedes that it is possible the prophecy has a dual application and could be applied to end-time events taking place before the literal advent of our Lord. But he issues

a challenge to us: produce a carefully reasoned, Scriptural argument.

To produce such an exposition of comparable consistency and logic such as in this book of Brother Allfree's would be difficult indeed, and I suspect few will care to take the challenge up. However, it seems to the reviewer that many prophecies *are* dual, having both short- and long-term fulfilments, and that it is likely, to say the least, that the Olivet Prophecy falls into this category.

The book concludes with an appendix called "Realised eschatology—is it sustainable?". The word 'eschatology' means a study of last things. Many evangelical churches claim that the Olivet Prophecy was fulfilled in A.D. 70, using arguments from the Scriptures in a similar way to Brother Allfree. However, they reject the return of Jesus to sit on David's throne to rule over the Kingdom of God on the earth. They reject the resurrection, believing in heaven-going, and fail to understand the new covenant. Brother Allfree has acquainted himself with the arguments of such and refutes them. This appendix is a model of Scriptural reasoning and the defence of the Truth's doctrines, and all will benefit from perusing it. The book ends with a bibliography.

This is a stimulating book which will help all who read it, even if they are unable to accept all the author's conclusions, and is worth purchasing for the excellent incidental Scriptural expositions alone. It is warmly commended to all who want to understand the Word of God better and be ready for the Lord's coming, when "every eye shall see him".

The Gospel of John Revisited

Come and See: The Gospel of John Revisited is a 272-page study of the Gospel of John by Brother David Nightingale. The price is £6 plus £1.50 postage and packing for a single copy. If purchasers pay £10 (plus postage and packing), £5 will be donated to the Christadelphian Bible Mission. Money with order is requested, cheques payable to 'David Nightingale'. Copies available from the author at 32 Church Lane, Barton Under Needwood, Burton-on-Trent, DE13 8HU; tel. 01283 713997; email adnight@aol.com. The following is taken from the introduction:

"The central figure of true Christianity is Jesus of Nazareth. A clear understanding of who he was and is, is vital for our own personal salvation. Having come to believe that he is vital to us and realising how essential, pivotal and focal he is in the purpose of God, it is only natural that we will want all others to know him and become full partners with us in salvation's processes.

"In this the apostle John, the beloved disciple, was fully engaged when, as a willing participant, he was inspired to write the fourth gospel record. It is clear he wishes us to know his Lord and Master as Jesus Christ, the Son of God and through him to receive that precious gift of love, eternal life".