

INVESTIGATION INTO DYNAMICS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

The attempt is made herein to make sense of the prophecies, dynamics and events of the first century. Nothing less than great upheavals or changes could be expected when God decides to visit the world. Yet the exploration of the first century events don't seem to have received much focus in Christian writings.

ATMOSPHERE/MOOD

This topic provides a description of some conditions fundamental to the beginning of the first century upon Jesus' birth.

1. State of Judeaens
 - a) following other gods
 - b) focusing on the gold of the temple
 - c) children of the devil John 8:4
 - d) rejected the Messiah
 - e) the leaders covered up the knowledge of the Messiah
 - f) this may be like the deception of the media not sharing news today
2. Pride of Nations
 - a) the power of the Roman Empire
 - b) the worship of the emperor
 - c) the degradation of the nations may have occurred at this time
3. Power of the devil -- prince of this world Jn 12:31
 - a) Prince of the power of the air
 - b) Spirit of disobedience
 - c) the devil is a liar and murderer from the beginning Jn 8:44ff
 - d) the temptation of Jesus Matt 4 and Luke 4
 - e) the formation of the perverse generation -- John 8:44
 - f) possibly the promoting of the aspects of evil common among man
4. The timing established publicly by:
 - a) Dan 2 -- and fourth empire
 - b) the coming of John the Baptist announcing the Messiah and the judgment -- Malachi
 - c) the 69 and 70 weeks of years being completed
5. Revealing the meaning of Daniel's prophecies
 - a) Dan 12:4 showed the book sealed until the time of the end
 - b) Revelation shows the book unsealed
 - c) Jesus was revealing in Matt 24 the explanation and fulfillment of Daniel
 - NEED EXAMPLES

PROPHECIES OF THE TIMES

1. Last Days -- Joel 2:28-32
2. Bruising the head of the serpent -- Gen 3:15
3. Judging of nations -- Isa 10, Isa 13, Dan 2, Ps 2
4. Daniel prophecies

THE COMING TIMES AS DESCRIBED BY JESUS AND HIS LIFE

1. Judging of Judeans
 - a) Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand
 - b) Conflict between Jesus and the devil
 - Luke 4 and Matt 4 temptation of Jesus
 - Judeans as children of the devil John 8:44
 - c) Matt 23 -- the blood of Abel to Zechariah on this generation
 - d) Matt 24 --end of the covenant shown in destruction of temple and in Matt 24:28 carcass reference that connects with Deut 28:26
2. Judging the devil
 - a) John 12:31 -- now shall the prince of the the world be cast out
 - b) So this is a political judgment too and shift of political powers
 - c) There was approaching the likely fulfillment of Gen 3:15 bruising of the head
 - d) Even the fact that the devil tempted Jesus is a hint that the devil was trying to avoid some consequences
3. Judging the nations
 - a) See in Matt 13 parable of the dragnet
 - b) Seen in preaching the gospel to the nations – so they had chance to repent beforehand.
4. Trouble through all the nations -- Matt 24
 - a) anger or attack against Judea --that a reason was found to attack Judea
 - b) rumors of wars and actual wars
5. Trouble in Judea
 - a) False Messiahs
 - b) Surrounding Jerusalem
 - c) Destruction of temple
6. Saving of the world
 - a) Joh 3:16-17 Jesus came not to judge but to save the world
 - b) Start of the kingdom Matt 6:10ff and Matt 13 kingdom parables
 - c) The kingdom of God seems to be the mechanism of fixing the world
 - d) Seems to be the restoring of the focus on the Tree of Life Rev 22:2

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

1. Died to take away the sins of the world --- John the Baptist
2. Atonement for the sins of man
3. Killed momentum of influence of Jesus as a man. Church would start all upon the Holy Spirit. (they no longer knew Him in the flesh. 2Cor 5:16)
4. Sign of Jonah -- this means:
 - a) three days in grave and resurrected
 - b) the reaching of the nations --even the repulsive nations
 - c) the pending judgment if there is no repentance
5. Showed to be an action against the rulers of the world

- a) Ps 2
 - b) Jesus as King of Dan 7:13-14
 - c) 1 Cor 2:8 The princes of the world would not have crucified the Lord of glory
6. Jesus cut off after 3.5 years in the middle of the 70th week of Daniel

START OF CHURCH

- 1. Day of Pentecost
- 2. Experiencing the joy and unity of the new experience
 - a) all things in common
 - b) giving to those in need
 - c) even setting up the feed of the widows
- 3. Signs and Miracles demonstrating the Last Days of Joel 2:28-32
- 4. The reaching of the elect among Israel Rom 9:6 (Those of the bloodline Israel who have come under the promise)

LAST DAYS INTRODUCED

- 1. A time of signs and miracles leading up to the judgment Joel 2:28-32
- 2. The time of repentance before the judgment -- John the baptist saying "repent for the kingdom of God is at hand"
- 3. Described by Moses in Deut 31:29 "in the latter days"

PRESSURE ON CHURCH

- 1. Stephen stoned
- 2. Annanias and Saphira die for lying to Holy Spirit
- 3. Persecution begins on Church by Jews

EVIDENCE OF JUDGMENT APPROACHING

- 1. Time characterized by John the Baptist
 - a) Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand
 - b) The time limit is given -- the coming of the kingdom
 - c) Who told you to flee from the wrath to come

APOSTASY OF CHURCH

Intro

The apostasy reflects the harshness of that period

Reflects spiritual warfare

Purification of the saints

Perseverance was the only response of true believers

Those who had persevered were counted Worthy of the kingdom

Those who stayed as believers thereby had entered the kingdom

And they inherited the kingdom upon the start of the kingdom

Purity of doctrine was one reason for the reduction of numbers in the Church

Specifics

- 1. Occurred as a result of the Tares planted by the devil. Matt 13 parable of the Wheat and Tares
- 2. Occurred in reaction to the pressures of the persecutions
 - a) by the Jews -- see stoning of Stephen.. see oath to kill Paul ... see Matt 23

- b) by the government -- See Rom 8 and Rom 13
- 3. Occurred as purification of the believers and doctrine
 - a) remove the casual followers who may introduce their own doctrine due to quick growth of church
 - b) to allow Apostles and Prophets to lay foundation of doctrine
- 4. Increased in the approach to 66-70AD because of the oppression of the times
 - a) The Roman believers were resorting to the flesh cause of the persecutions Rom 6, Rom 8
 - b) If even the elect might fall away -- Matt 24
- 5. 2 Pet 2:1 --shall be damnable heresies among you

SAVING OF THE ELECT OF ISRAEL

This is the fulfillment of all things promised.

- 1. Rom 9-- Israel of the promise.
- 2. Rom 11:5 -- the remnant was present. Paul was saying the work toward the remnant was done.
- 3. Israel remnant had to exist to receive the kingdom (Acts 1:6)
- 4. Making the Jews jealous by increase of the Gentiles Rom 11
- 5. Shows the faithfulness of God to His promise Rom 9 to 11

INCREASE OF TROUBLES

Features:

The downward motion of morality

The increased tensions

Increase of evil unto judgment

All nations of the land are involved.

Specifics:

- 1. Rumors of wars Matt 24
- 2. Earthquakes, signs in the skies Matt 24
- 3. Tribulation
 - a) Rom 8 persecutions
 - b) Peter -- 1Pet 1:7 trial of their faith
- 4. Man of Sin and Deceit Dan 7:25
- 5. Love will grow cold Matt 24:12
- 6. Nations gather in war. Isa 13:4-5 from a far country

TIME OF SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

- 1. Man of Sin and Deceit Dan 7:25
- 2. Revelation -- dragon and beast
- 3. Matt 13 parable of Wheat and Tares. This was seed planted in the first century. It was a specific crop.
- 4. Rom 16:20 Satan will soon be under your feet
- 5. The deceit of the nations before binding suggests spiritual warfare on nations Rev 20

MENTION THE END IS NEAR

The epistles were generally in existence by 60AD

- 1. 1 Pet 4:7 the end of all things is at hand

2. Rev 1:1 the things that shall happen shortly
3. 1 John 2:18 it is the last time
4. Rom 16:20 -- Satan will soon be under your feet

PEOPLE LACKED UNDERSTANDING THAT THE END WAS NEAR

1. Matt 13 shows Jesus speaking in parables to keep them from understanding
2. Matt 13 -- that if they understood they would be converted and healed. The lack of understanding could likely only apply to the first century. Cause at some point in time afterwards, people in general could know what the kingdom is
3. They were like sheep without a shepherd
4. Dan 12: 10 Those with understanding would be saved

TIME OF TRIBULATION

Luk 21:22 for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written.

1. Dan 12:1 -- time of trouble as never before
2. Matt 24 -- tribulation
3. Rom 8 -- persecution by Roman govt against believers
4. Deut 28:26 suggesting there would be a carcass and much trouble
5. War with the saints
 - a) Dan 7:21 introduces the war with the saints
 - b) Matt 24:22 shows that even the elect could have been destroyed
6. Luke 21:26 shows hearts would be failing
7. Isa 13:7 describes man's heart as melting
8. The time period is described as 3.5 years
 - a) This matches the duration of 66-70AD events
 - b) Dan 7:25 mentions the three and half years
 - c) Dan 12:11-12 also mentions the equivalent number of days
 - d) Daniel also provides the 69 and 70 weeks of years. The last "week" is split in half to give 3.5 years
 - e) Jesus' ministry was the first half the 3.5 years
 - f) Revelation gives the 3.5 years also
9. This was a time of endurance for believers
 - a) Luk 21:19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.
 - b) These were the ones saved from the wrath of God Matt 3:7

JUDGMENTS COMING

Dan 8:19 last end of indignation

IMPENDING JUDGMENT UPON THE WORLD

1. 2Pet 3:5-7 world reserved against the day of judgment
2. Isa 10 -- The fruit of the king of Assyria was being judged, the pride of ruler ship
3. Parable of the Dragnet Matt 13
4. Rising up of the man of intrigue. And being broken without hand Dan 8:25

IMPENDING JUDGMENT OF SATAN

1. Rom 16:20 -- Satan will soon be under your feet
2. Gen 3:15 -- bruise the head of the serpent -- the head is the ruling power
3. John 12:31 -- prince of this world will soon be cast out
4. Binding of the devil --Rev 20 -- this seems to be the bruising of Gen 3:15

FULFILLING THE GUILT UNTO JUDGMENT

1. His blood be upon us and our children
2. Guilt of Abel to Zechariah
3. The wicked shall do wickedly Dan 12:10

SIGNS

1. Matt 24 rumors of wars, earthquakes
2. Love growing cold Matt 24
3. Man of Deceit and Trickery Dan 7:25

TIME GETS WORSE

1. Worse as world condition deteriorates
2. People became desperate
3. Jerusalem was encircled
4. Rulers got worse
5. There were earthquakes and signs in heaven. Such was mentioned in Matt 24:

FINAL JUDGMENTS

66 to 70 AD

This was the wrath spoken of by John the Baptist, the Day of the Lord

Wrath of the Lord

1. Who told you to flee from the wrath Matt 3:7
2. Isa 13:13 "in the wrath of the Lord"
3. Saved from the wrath through him Rom 5:9
4. Luke 21:23 "wrath upon this people"
5. Dan 8:19 last end of indignation

Judgment of Judea

1. Matt 24:28 -- connects with Deut 28:26 the carcass. This was a judgment of Judeans for following other gods
2. Matt 24:29 -- coming of the Son implies the judgment of Mal 3 and 4
3. Jesus coming in the kingdom suggests the judgment -- it wasn't mentioned as a peaceful situation

Punish the world

1. Joel 2:28-32 mentions The sun being darkened.
2. Matt 24:29 speaks of the sun being darkened.
3. Isa 13:10-11 then shows the sun being darkened as being connected with the punishment of the world for its evil and pride.

Powers of heaven shaken

1. Matt 24:29 Powers of heaven shall be shaken

2. Isa 13:13 shows the trembling
3. John 12:31 "prince of this world be cast out"

Judgment of nations

1. Matt 24:29 coming of Christ matches with coronation of Dan 7:13-14
2. Ps 2 shows the nations in an uproar
3. Acts 4:24-27 even shows the time of Ps 2 fulfillment
4. The deceit of the nations before binding suggests spiritual warfare on nations Rev 20
5. Matt 25 speaks of the sheep and goats – a judgment of nations

Judgment of Devil

1. Highlighted for this time by Rom 16:20 with Gen 3:15
2. Suggested for sometime future in John 12:31
3. Rev 20:2-3 speaks of a judgment

Judgment between righteous and unbelievers

1. Maybe Rev 20
2. Righteous shall remain and shine in the kingdom -- Dan 12:3 This likely refers to the saints of old and the Judeans of that generation
3. John 5:24-25 the righteous pass from judgment into eternal life But the dead shall be raised. (This must be saints of old. Then John 5:29 applies to Dan 2:2)
4. Judgment given in favor of Saints Dan 7:22

TEMPLE DESTROYED

1. All stones of temple would be thrown down Luke 21:26
2. The destruction of the temple is of historic fact
3. The wicked had now been removed. Matt 13:41,48
4. But the believers still lived. (Those in Judea fled at the encircling of the city. Lk 21:20)
5. The physical judgment was done at this moment.
6. This was the end of the age. Matt 13:49

INAUGURATION OF JESUS AS KING

1. Matt 24:29 "coming on the clouds" matches coronation of Dan 7:13-14
2. "Christ" means "Anointed One" which is applied for kings and priests, especially for Israelites

REDEMPTION IS NEAR

1. This is essentially speaking of those believers alive in 70AD
2. Redemption basically means salvation by removing the problems
3. Luke 21:28 speaks of the redemption
4. Matt 24:31 mentions the same idea as "gathering of the elect"
5. Matt 13:41,48 speaks of the same idea as the removal of the stumbling blocks
6. Redemption may also be the same or in conjunction with the 1st resurrection
7. Matt 13:43 "righteous shall shine forth in the kingdom"

1st RESURRECTION

1. Rev 20:4 -- those who endured
2. Rev 20:4 thrones of judgment. T this is like that mentioned to the Apostles in John 14:1-4

3. John 5:25 the dead shall hear the voice ...and shall live
4. Dan 12:2 -- many of the dead shall rise. 1 Cor 15 deals with Dan 12:2 by the references to rising in the air
5. 1Cor 15:21-23 -- raising from the dead
6. The dead in Christ were sleeping but at the resurrection would reign

KINGDOM OF GOD COMES

1. Probably the kingdom came 45 days after the temple fell. Dan 12:11-12
2. Luke 21:31 said the kingdom would be near at hand.
3. Nations begin to be influenced by the policies of Christ Jesus (Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven Matt 6:10).

KINGDOM GIVEN TO SAINTS

1. Scripture speaks of the inheritance of the kingdom 1 Cor 15:50
2. Dan 7:27 "the kingdom is given to the saints of the Most High"
3. The saints had to be incorruptible to inherit the kingdom. (1Cor 15:22-23,50-53)
4. The saints were to shine in the kingdom Matt 13:43 and Dan 12:3. This may involve the saints who were alive in 70AD
5. Revelation speaks of the believers reigning as kings and priests. Rev 5:20

SAINTS BECOME JUDGES

1. Rev 20:4 speaks of the saints doing judgment. But of whom?
2. Luke 22:30 speaks of the apostles judging the twelve tribes. (Verse 30 is in the midst of the last supper with the Apostles, mainly or only).

NEW JERUSALEM DESCENDS

1. Rev 21:2 – this is the Church among the nations
2. The Church, as Jerusalem, becomes the area for fulfillment of the prophecies of Jerusalem after 70AD

CONCLUSIONS

An interesting array of scriptures come together in concert in a manner that largely suggests a first century fulfillment of the verses. There are many events that make the most sense when fulfilled within the same generation. Such ideas will be explored as the opportunity arises. For example, the preaching of John the Baptist saying "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand" only makes sense in light of a short arrival of the kingdom.

The problem, of not looking at history in light of fulfillments, may have come by the Christian's tendency to focus mainly on the spiritual benefits of reading scripture rather than on determining the historical context.

The ideas presented in this analysis are a first attempt to lay down the sequence of events with some effort to coordinate the various images developed throughout the New Testament writings and Old Testament prophecies.