



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1681 ~ Jesus Foretells the Future.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

The Bible records God speaking to the Israelites through His prophets with many predictions and promises about the future. Some of these prophecies have already been fulfilled. The ones about the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, coming to earth for the first time are complete but none about His second return have happened yet. Have you ever seen a picture puzzle in small pieces and wondered what the finished picture will look like? Understanding future prophecies from the Bible can sometimes seem like that.

There are a number of prophecies about the future in the Bible books of Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Psalms, Revelation as well as the Minor Prophets, all with pieces of the puzzle about the future. Yet none of us living on earth today can know the way everything will finally come together. But we believe that God always keeps His word, even when we don't understand it all.

In Isaiah, Chapter 17, the Lord says: "Damascus will not be a city any longer; it will be only a pile of ruins. The cities of Syria will be deserted forever. They will be a pasture for sheep and cattle, and no one will drive them away. Israel will be defenceless, and Damascus will lose its independence. Those Syrians who survive will be in disgrace like the people of Israel. I, the Lord Almighty, have spoken."

Damascus has been one of the oldest cities in the world to be continually inhabited. Paul was on the road to Damascus when the Lord Jesus first met him, an event that transformed not only his life, but the course of human history. But God has spoken that one day, Damascus will be destroyed.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, Jesus' disciples were admiring the magnificent slabs of marble that made up the Temple walls in Jerusalem. Yet Jesus warned them that the Temple would one day be destroyed. The disciples were very keen to find out when this would happen.

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The signs Jesus gave for the end of the age are recorded in Matthew, Chapters 10 and 24; Mark, Chapter 13 and Luke, Chapter 21.

Jesus' disciples asked in Matthew, Chapter 24, "Tell us when all this will be and what will happen to show that it is the time for your coming and the end of the age." The disciples asked both these things together because they supposed that the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world would come at the same time. In His answer, Jesus divided up His prophecies into the fall of Jerusalem, the signs of the end of the age and then Jerusalem again. Jesus knew when the destruction of Jerusalem would happen, but not when the end of the world would come. Only His Father knows when that will happen.

From this chapter, we can understand that the signs that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem will be similar to the signs that will precede the end of the world. The destruction of Jerusalem is a warning for us for future events. Jesus didn't tell the disciples where and when these things would happen, but he said something much more important: "Watch and be on guard." If the disciples did this then it wasn't so important to know the times.

Jesus prophesied that three types of things would happen as signs to watch out for. Jesus said: "Watch out that no one deceives you." Deceivers are much more dangerous to the church than persecutors. Satan's main weapon against Christians is not persecution but deception. Many Christians have been seduced into following new christs and new gospels and thus have lost their faith in the one true Christ, God's Son. Deception also happened before the fall of Jerusalem.

In Acts, Chapter 5, when the apostles were on trial before the Jewish council, the respected Pharisee Gamaliel spoke up, warning those present to be careful what they did with the followers of Jesus. He named two men who had gathered a following but were killed and their followers scattered. The same might happen to the followers of Jesus now that Jesus had been killed. Gamaliel warned the council that if the things done by the apostles were of human origin, they would ultimately disappear but if God's hand was in what they were doing, then the council couldn't possibly defeat them.

Since the time of Christ, there have been many false christs, some of them do miracles and perform amazing signs. But we must not be deceived. We will be able to recognise false christs because they won't bring glory to Jesus; when questioned, they will deny that Jesus is the true Son of God.

Secondly, Jesus said that there would be wars and rumours of wars. In the 10 years before Jerusalem fell, there were many wars throughout the Roman Empire and many rumours of revolts against the emperor.

Thirdly, Jesus said that there would be earthquakes in various places and famines. In Acts, Chapter 11, it's recorded that some prophets left Jerusalem and went to Antioch. One prophet under the power of the Holy Spirit predicted that a severe famine was about to come over all the earth. The Scriptures noted that this came to pass when Claudius was Roman emperor.

Historians also note a number of earthquakes that occurred in different parts of the Empire at that time. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, a comet appeared over Jerusalem for many nights with a tail shaped like a sword. Such warnings were given for those people who wanted to listen and heed them.

In Chapter 9 of his book, Daniel received a revelation from God after many prayers and confession of personal and national sins. The angel Gabriel came and revealed to Daniel how his nation Israel, his people the Jews and his holy city Jerusalem would play a central role in God's plan for all people of all generations. They would serve as the role of God's prophetic clock. Israel, Jerusalem and the Jews would be the focus of world attention as God's clock moved forward in time.

This is the explanation that Gabriel gave to Daniel: "Seven times seventy years is the length of time God has set for freeing your people and your holy city from sin and evil. Sin will be forgiven and eternal justice established, so that the vision and the prophecy will come true, and the holy Temple will be rededicatedFrom the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem until God's chosen leader comes, seven times seven years will pass. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defences and will stand for seven times sixty-two years, but this will be a time of troubles. And at the end of that time God's chosen leader will be killed unjustly." This prophecy means that only 69 of the 70 weeks in Daniel's prophecy have come to pass at this point in time.

When King Artaxerxes signed letters for Nehemiah to go to Judah to rebuild Jerusalem in 445 BC, God's restoration period of 49 years commenced. When that time passed and Jerusalem and the second Temple were in place, the next period of 62 weeks or 434 years commenced. This period ended when the Lord Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday the week before He was crucified. Although Jesus was presented as their king, the people rejected Him.

Since the first year of the early church when the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jesus's apostles and believers everywhere, the church age has continued until our present time. No one knows when the church age will be completed except that it will climax with the rapture of those who truly love the Lord and live for Him each day. Then and only then can the 70th week (or 7 years) in Daniel's prophecy start for the nation of Israel. This period of time will be one of great trouble for Israel. The Antichrist or world dictator will make a 7-year treaty with Israel so that their third temple can be built. In Romans, Chapter 11, the Apostle Paul says that partial blindness has happened in Israel until the complete number of the Gentiles comes to God. Then all Israel will have their eyes opened and be saved through Jesus too.

In some churches, a doctrine of Replacement Theology is taught. These people say that Israel is finished and all the predictions and promises yet unfulfilled that were made to Israel now belong to the church. This isn't true. God hasn't finished with Israel yet. Half-way through his treaty with Israel, the Antichrist will set himself up in the temple to be worshipped as god and once again, the temple will become desolate.

In our present-day world, Israel has many enemies surrounding her and this too was foretold in the Scriptures. Her enemies want to totally destroy Israel and blot out any memory of such a nation. In Psalm 83, the surrounding nations are predicted to say: 'Let us seize for our own use these pasturelands of God!' Some prophecy teachers think that Isaiah, Chapter 17 and Psalm 83 are speaking about the same war. But could Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39 on war come first? Most of us aren't sure, as the pieces of the puzzle aren't yet clear to us.

The Bible names for those nations coming against Israel are in the present-day land ownership of Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, Syria and parts of the West Bank.

God created the universe in six days and rested on the seventh. It's widely thought that at the end of 6,000 years, the Lord Jesus will return and reign on earth for a Millennium or a thousand years before Satan is released again for a short time. The Jewish calendar starts from day one and is counted from the beginning. It's now in the 5,770's. The Jews know that a couple of hundred years were missed out at one stage in their calendar, so it's not possible for anyone but God to know when the 6,000 years are actually up.

In all history since the creation of the world, there are only two events of significance that will last forever. These are the first coming of Jesus into the world as a little baby and His return again on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

Does it matter when Jesus returns? For all the people who lived since Noah's flood, they've lived less than 120 years before dying. It's far more important to ask what we did do with our lives for God and Christ while we had the opportunity to do so.

God tells us in Jeremiah, Chapter 29, Verse 13, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." If you are a true seeker and you want to know the true God, then He will reveal Himself to you.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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