



Field

⁵When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, ⁶“As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.” ⁷They asked him, “Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?” ⁸And he said, “Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is near!’ Do not go after them. ⁹“When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.” ¹⁰Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven. ¹²“But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. ¹³This will give you an opportunity to testify. ¹⁴So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; ¹⁵for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷You will be hated by all because of my name. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your souls. Luke 21:5-19

Thoughts

At the beginning of the movie based on E. M. Forster’s 1924 novel, “A Passage to India,” a Muslim Character, Dr. Aziz, sought solace in a mosque when he was startled by an Englishwoman. He angrily yelled at her for trespassing in a Muslim holy place. She introduced herself as Mrs. Moore and quietly explained that she had removed her shoes. Dr. Aziz softened and commented that so few people visiting would have taken off their shoes when no one was around. She responded, “God is here.”

Mrs. Moore was from a country that claimed India as its territory and did not live during a time of very much openness between religions. But whatever her religious practices, God was not stationary for her. The encounter reflected later choices characters would make about love and human dignity when in crisis.

The disciples’ understanding of where God dwells must have been challenged by Jesus’ foretelling the destruction of the Temple. Or were his words a culmination of what they came to understand about God’s Temple within us? Was the Temple a reminder of collaboration with the Roman empire? Did they hear Jesus’ prediction as judgment, grief over impending loss, or as a matter-of-fact prediction.

The Temple was a mixed institution. Jesus defended the Temple as a house of prayer when driving out money changers. The Temple was operated by a small caste of priests, who were the only ones permitted to enter certain parts of it, but the Temple also had broad influence. The holy place was a pilgrimage destination, especially during the Passover, with its societal-wide message of liberation for the Jewish people. Many viewed the building as the most sacred place on earth. Herod wanted to turn the Temple into “the centerpiece of Jewish life and identity, that would rival all temples in the ancient world.” “And so apparently, he poured, enormous amounts of money into it.” The project started in 20 B.C.E. and took 80 years to complete. Sadly, it would be destroyed again only a few years after completion.*

However we hear Jesus’ message, the profound loss of the Temple would be a crisis point to realize and witness to God’s presence beyond any one place. God is mobile. God is here and here. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy

*[Temple Culture, Shaye I.D. Cohen](#)