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Eagles or Vultures – Matthew 24:28

By Elder Keith Ellis

"For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."
Matthew 24:28

The carcasses or lifeless bodies mentioned here can be nothing other than the Jews. These people were now in a very sad, deplorable, and miserable condition indeed. Death was longed for by those remaining alive in order to escape the severity of the situation. In the beginning of this work we quoted from Josephus and mentioned the multitude of dead bodies which were counted by the keeper of the gate to the city. It was also mentioned that a great multitude of dead bodies remained in the city. This was a very dark scene without question. From a literal standpoint you can imagine the ravenous birds which would gather together in such a situation. Eagles belong to same family as vultures and buzzards. In America the eagle has a somewhat warm fuzzy (political correctness) image due to the fact the bald eagle is the national bird. However we may perceive them they are a bird of prey and by nature they are ravenous.

When God undertook to rescue the Jews from Babylonian captivity He speaks through Isaiah as to how this will be accomplished. He says he will call a ravenous bird from the east, that man that executeth His counsel from a far country. History will tell us this was Cyrus, king of Persia. He is referred to as a ravenous bird which denotes the swiftness in which he would fall upon his prey, Babylon. In the same sense God refers to the armies of Rome falling upon its prey, Jerusalem. However Christ could intend something else to identify the Romans by the use of the word eagle in the title text. The Romans were pagans and worshipped many false gods. Zeus, the god of the sky was the most popular god with the Romans during the era of the Caesar's. This false god was symbolized by the eagle. The eagle ensign was upon many of the articles which accompanied the Romans. It is possible the '*eagles*' designed in the above text could have reference to the Romans and their eagle gods. Many scholars think it was this eagle ensign which the Romans bowed down to in the temple area which was the abomination of desolation. We have already discussed this at length and shown it was not. So the prophecy of Jesus was similar to that which Jeremiah spoke.

"And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate."

Jeremiah 7:33-34

This text sounds very familiar to the subject of Matthew chapter twenty-four. Though I realize this is not a pleasant subject, it is one that must be considered. Jesus mentioned this for our benefit. Remember all scripture is profitable to the man of God.

This teaches us how God had utterly rejected the disobedient. It shows us when God speaks, it comes to pass. It shows us the consequences and rewards for sin in this life time. The voices of mirth, gladness, the bride and the bridegroom did all cease as Jeremiah said they would. This event is not future. It came to pass when Jerusalem was destroyed after Judah was taken in the Babylonian captivity. It happened again in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Mirth was turned into mourning. Gladness was turned into sorrow. The voice of the bridegroom would be heard no more in the land. The wrath of God would be poured out upon Jerusalem for the shedding of the blood of all the righteous saints shed upon the earth to that time. The blood of all these saints and the blood of Jesus would be upon the heads of this generation. Now it has come to pass. The sight of the fowls of heaven devouring the dead bodies of their fallen brethren caused the hope of many to wane. For now even a burial seemed as though it would take a special miracle.