



Name: _____

Date: _____

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM (AD 70)

Scripture Focus

"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.'" — Matthew 24:1-2 (NKJV)

Historical & Apologetic Overview

In AD 66, the Jewish people started a huge, armed war against the cruel and harsh rulers of the Roman Empire. To fight back, Rome sent its most powerful armies under the leadership of General Vespasian and his son, Titus. By AD 70, the Roman army had completely surrounded and trapped the city of Jerusalem. After months of people starving and fighting fiercely inside the city, the Roman soldiers broke right through the walls. They killed hundreds of thousands of people and set fire to the beautiful, amazing Second Temple. To get the gold that had melted down into the cracks between the massive stone blocks, Roman soldiers took apart every single stone, completely flattening the building. This terrible disaster permanently ended the Old Testament way of offering animal sacrifices and marked a huge turning point for the early Church.

Fun Fact

Ancient historical records written by the Jewish historian Josephus show that the Christian community living in Jerusalem miraculously survived the trap! Remembering Jesus's exact warnings in Luke 21 to run away when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, the Christians left the city early and went to the mountain town of Pella to be safe!

Fill in the Blanks

1. The Roman general who commanded the final siege and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was _____.
2. Roman soldiers completely dismantled the Temple to salvage the _____ that had melted down into the stone cracks.



Name: _____

Date: _____

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM (AD 70)

Short Answer Questions

How did the total destruction of the Temple and the end of animal sacrifices in AD 70 prove the New Testament message that Jesus' death on the cross was the final, perfect sacrifice?

A large, empty rounded rectangle with a thick black border, intended for a student to write their answer to the question.

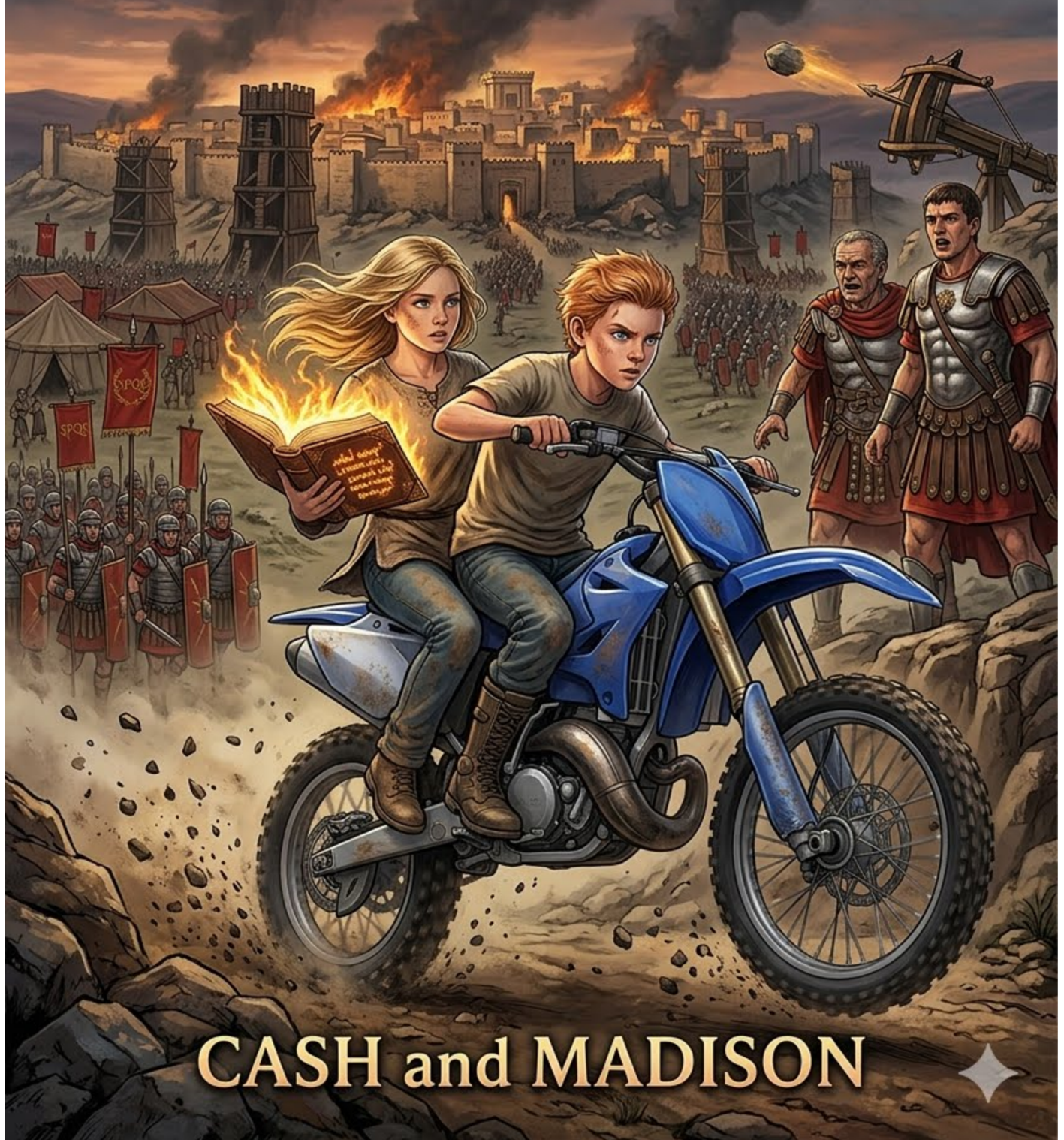
Skeptics often try to claim that the Gospels were written hundreds of years after Jesus lived. How does the accurate fulfillment of Jesus' prediction in Matthew 24:1-2 give strong proof inside the text for the divine inspiration and reliability of the Bible?

A large, empty rounded rectangle with a thick black border, intended for a student to write their answer to the question.

BOOK TWO IN THE CHRONICLES OF LIGHT

THE GATES OF DESTRUCTION

A Journey to the Fall of Jerusalem, 70 AD



CASH and MADISON



Name: _____
Date: _____

Chapter 1: The Gathering Storm

The mid-morning California sun beat down on the dusty bed of their dad's truck at Fox Raceway. Twelve-year-old Madison sat cross-legged on the tailgate, idly flipping through a notebook, while her ten-year-old brother, Cash, was focused on his dirt bike. He was using a T-handle wrench to tighten the rear axle block on his 125cc two-stroke, his spiky strawberry-blond hair catching the light as he worked.

They had been debating a video Cash saw online earlier that morning. "I'm telling you, Maddie," Cash said, wiping a grease smudge from his athletic shorts. "The guy in the video said the Bible was just written by random kings hundreds of years later to control people. He said there's no way to prove any of it actually happened, can you believe how crazy he is to spread this lie?"

Madison shook her head, her long blond hair swaying past her waist. "There are so many people these days who believe this lie, Cash. We believe and we know what we read in the Bible is true, there's real history behind those pages."

Madison reached into her gear bag and pulled out the heavy, ancient leather book they had discovered on their last adventure. She laid it flat on the tailgate between them.

"Cash, look," Madison whispered, her voice tightening.

On the blank pages of the book, dark crimson ink bled into the fibers, spelling out a stark warning: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near." Beneath the verse, the ink shifted to form a precise, unforgiving date: 70 AD.

Cash dropped his wrench. Still at ten years old, his spiky strawberry blond hair was slightly longer, but his striking blue eyes held a serious look that hadn't been there before their first trip to Rome.

"That's the year the Roman legions destroyed the Temple," he said softly. "Master Pat just talked about this. It was one of the worst moments in history."

"The book is pulling us there, Cash," Madison said, her waist-length blond hair catching the blue glare of the coils. "We don't have a choice."



Name: _____

Date: _____

Cash kicked the starter. The engine roared, harmonizing with the ancient pages. Madison leaped onto the back, holding the book tightly to her chest. The garage wall dissolved into a swirling vortex of blinding white light and rushing wind, dragging them out of modern California and hurling them straight into the most terrifying siege of the ancient world.

With a bone-jarring crash, the dirtbike slammed onto hard, rocky terrain. The clean Pacific air was gone, replaced by the suffocating stench of smoke, sulfur, and the distant, rhythmic thud of thousands of iron-shod boots. They were standing on the ridge of Mount Scopus, looking down at the magnificent city of Jerusalem.

But it was completely surrounded.

Chapter 2: The Iron Ring

Four massive Roman legions formed a terrifying wall of iron and red banners around the city walls. Massive stone-throwing catapults—the ballistae—groaned in the distance, launching massive blocks of white stone over the battlements.

"We need to hide the bike," Cash said, scanning the rocky hillside. They quickly pushed the machine into a deep limestone cave, covering it with dried brush.

Before they could slip away, the sharp metallic clank of armor echoed right behind them. A patrol of elite Roman legionaries stepped out from the olive trees, their short swords drawn.

"Halt! Who goes there?" the lead centurion barked, his eyes narrowing at their modern clothes. "Spies from the city? Or deserting rebels?"

Madison's book pulsed warm against her ribs, translating the Latin instantly in her mind. "We aren't spies!" she cried out. "We're just travelers!"

"Take them to the command tent," the centurion ordered. "The commanders are inspecting the siege lines today. Let the generals decide what to do with these strange youth."



Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 3: The Flavian Command

The Roman command tent was massive, draped in scarlet silk and smelling of leather, old wine, and iron polish. Inside, a large bronze map of Jerusalem's three defensive walls lay across a central table.

Standing over the map was an older, stocky man with a heavily lined, weathered face and sharp, calculated eyes. This was General Vespasian, the seasoned commander who had recently been declared Emperor by his troops but had stayed behind to oversee the Judean campaign before departing for Rome.

Beside him stood his son, Titus—a younger, imposing military leader with tightly curled hair, a sharp jawline, and an intense, commanding presence.

"The inner wall is stubborn, Father," Titus was saying, his finger tracing the northern fortification. "The factions inside are fighting each other, yet they fight like lions when we breach the gates."

Vespasian looked up as Cash and Madison were pushed into the tent. His gaze was heavy and piercing. "What is the meaning of this? Why are children brought into a war council?"

"We found them near the Scopus ridge, Caesar," the centurion bowed low. "They dress like no nation we know, and they carry this bizarre book."

Titus stepped forward, snatching the leather book from Madison's hands. He flipped through the pages, but to his eyes, the text appeared as nothing more than blank parchment. "There is nothing here but empty sheets. Are you mockers? Or are you casualties of this miserable war?"

"We aren't mocking anyone," Cash said, stepping in front of Madison, his blue eyes defiant despite his pounding heart. "We know who you are. You're Vespasian, and you're going to be the Emperor in Rome. And you're Titus, his son."

The tent grew dead silent. The guards shifted uncomfortably, their hands tightening on their spears. Vespasian's eyes narrowed into dangerous slits. "The senate in Rome barely knows of my ascent, yet a strange boy on a Judean hillside speaks it plainly. Who sent you?"



Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 4: The Prophecy and the Escape

Madison stepped forward, her voice steady. "No one sent us to spy. But we know what happens here. We know the Temple is going to burn, even if you try to save it, Titus."

Titus frowned, looking at the blank book, then back at Madison. History recorded that Titus genuinely desired to preserve the magnificent Temple of Jerusalem as a trophy of Roman victory.

"If you know the future, then you know Rome's victory is absolute," Titus said coldly. "Keep them under guard in the secondary baggage tents. We will question them further when the northern tower falls."

For months, Titus had imposed a brutal starvation blockade. Inside the city walls, rival Jewish political groups (factions) were engaged in a violent civil war. In a desperate bid to force the citizens to fight the Romans instead of hoarding food, some of these radical groups actually burned the city's massive storehouses of grain.

The resulting famine was horrifying, weakening the city's defenses until Roman battering rams finally breached the outer walls.

As they were led out of the command tent, Cash noticed something strange. A small group of camp servants—men carrying water and tending to the wounded auxiliary soldiers—were whispering among themselves. One of them looked directly at Madison's book, his eyes widening.

That night, as the camp quieted down under the shadow of the siege towers, the rear fabric of their tent was silently sliced open. A young man with a kind, anxious face motioned for them to follow.

"Hurry," the young man whispered in Greek as they crept past the sleeping guards. "My name is John. I am a follower of the Way—a Christian. We saw your book. We know the signs."



Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 5: The Fleeing Church

John led Cash and Madison down the dark, rocky slopes away from the Roman camp, heading toward the valley.

"I don't understand," Madison whispered as they stumbled through the dark. "Why are you out here in the Roman camp? Why aren't you inside the city defending the Temple?"

John stopped beneath the shadow of a large boulder, looking back at the glowing campfires of the legions. "Because our Master, Jesus, warned us decades ago. He told us that when we saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, we must flee to the mountains. The leaders inside the city chose the path of war and violence, but the church chose the path of peace and obedience. Nearly all the believers left Jerusalem months ago. We fled to a town called Pella, across the Jordan."

Cash looked at John in awe. "So none of the Christians are trapped inside?"

"A few stayed to help the sick and the desperate slip out," John explained, his voice heavy with grief. "But as a community, we obeyed the warning. The power of our faith isn't tied to the stone walls of the Temple anymore. The Temple is inside us now, through the Holy Spirit."

Suddenly, the night sky was split by a terrifying sound—a massive crash as a portion of Jerusalem's second wall gave way under the relentless pounding of the Roman battering rams. Shouts and horn blasts echoed across the valley.

"The legionaries are advancing!" John cried. "You must go back to wherever safety lies for you. The city is about to fall."



Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 6: The True Power

Before they could reach the cave where the dirt bike was hidden, a troop of Roman cavalry intercepted them. Titus himself rode at the front, his purple military cloak billowing behind him in the wind.

"The boy spoke the truth!" Titus shouted, glaring down at them from his horse. "The northern wall has breached, and a fire has broken out near the outer courts! Soldiers, seize them! They are either prophets or sorcerers!"

John stepped in front of Cash and Madison, raising his hands peacefully. "Generals of Rome, these children have done nothing! Let them depart in peace!"

A Roman soldier raised his spear, but John didn't move. He stood his ground with the exact same unshakeable, supernatural calm that Linus had shown in the Mamertine Prison months before. There was no hatred in his eyes—only a profound, deep pity for the soldiers caught in the machinery of an empire.

Cash saw that look and felt something shift deep in his soul. This is it, he realized. The power of the Christians isn't an army. It's the fact that they aren't afraid to die, because they know where they are going, and they refuse to stop loving people.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Madison opened her book. The pages suddenly blazed with a blinding, golden light that illuminated the entire hillside. The text finally appeared to Titus, the letters burning like fire across the white parchment: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

Titus's horse reared back in terror, the soldiers covering their eyes from the supernatural brilliance.

The glowing parchment of the ancient book in Madison's hands pulsed with a low, warm light as the dust of Jerusalem began to clear. She and Cash were still crouched behind the rugged lime ridge, their eyes wide as they looked out over the valley.

"Look at the pages, Cash," Madison whispered, her voice trembling but filled with awe as she wiped a streak of ash from her forehead. "The text is changing. It's showing us exactly what we just witnessed."

Cash shifted his weight, his dirt bike boots crunching softly on the loose gravel. His spiky strawberry-blond hair was dusted with white powder from the falling debris of the city. He looked from the glowing book down to the valley, where the smoke from the ruined Temple was still rising into the orange sky.

"Maddie, it's exactly like Jesus said," Cash said, his ten-year-old voice suddenly sounding much older. "Remember when we read Matthew 24 back home? The skeptics on the internet always claim the Gospels were written hundreds of years later by people making things up. But nobody could have guessed this."

Madison nodded rapidly, her long blond hair swaying past her waist as she looked down at the newly formed lines in the book.

"Exactly! The book explains that when the fire tore through that beautiful white-marble sanctuary, the heat was so intense that all the gold sheets on the walls melted. It literally ran down like water, seeping deep into the cracks between those massive stone foundation blocks."



Name: _____

Date: _____

"And that's why the soldiers went crazy with greed," Cash realized, his eyes flashing as he connected the pieces. He pointed down toward the ruins, where Roman legions were still working like ants.

"Look at them down there, Maddie. They're using iron crowbars and thick wooden levers. It's just like the simple machines we studied on my dirt bike swingarm—using mechanical advantage to multiply their strength. But they aren't using them to build anything. They're using those levers to pry every single massive block apart, completely leveling the building just to scrape out the gold."

Madison closed the heavy cover with a firm thud, the glowing text sealing into the leather. "Seeing a fortress that huge turned into a flat field of dust and broken rock leaves me completely breathless. But it proves the Bible is completely reliable, Cash. Jesus predicted that not one stone would be left on top of another, and the raw greed of a Roman army fulfilled it perfectly, block by block."

Madison watched the tragic scene unfold, a profound realization washing over her. She pulled the leather-bound book back into her hands for a brief second, watching the light catch the edge of the pages. "It's just like Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:10, Cash: 'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.'"

Madison looked from the gleaming, stolen flakes of gold in the dirt down below to the ruined mountain of white marble. "They traded a sacred place and their own honor for melted metal, destroying an entire architectural wonder just to satisfy their greed."

A horn blew in the distance—the sharp, piercing blast of a Roman military signal signaling the legions to reform their lines.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 7: The Journey Home

"Cash, now!" Madison yelled.

They broke into a sprint, scrambling up the rocky path to the hidden limestone cave. Cash tore the brush away from the dirt bike, throwing his leg over the seat. His blue eyes were fierce with a newfound understanding of what it meant to stand firm in a broken world.

He didn't need to struggle with the starter this time. The moment he placed his hands on the handlebars, his heart filled with a prayer for John, for the fleeing church, and for the desperate people trapped in the valley below.

The copper coils flared into a beautiful, pulsing blue light, enveloping the entire cave.

"Hold on tight, Maddy!" Cash shouted over the roaring hum of the engine.

The burning skyline of 70 AD Jerusalem vanished in an instant.



Name: _____

Date: _____

The electric blue glow finally faded from the copper wires, and the heavy thrum of the time-travel jump gave way to the familiar, comforting sounds of the present day.

They weren't at the track anymore. The bike's tires settled firmly onto the concrete floor of their daddy's shop.

The air here didn't smell like the choking cedar smoke of Rome or the heavy, ash-filled dust of a collapsing Jerusalem. Instead, it smelled beautifully of motor oil, fresh rubber, and the clean scent of a Southern California afternoon.

Cash cut the engine, the final braap echoing off the tool-lined walls before fading into complete silence. He pulled off his helmet, his spiky strawberry-blond hair messy from the ride, his blue eyes still wide with the weight of everything they had just witnessed. He adjusted the flat-billed hat he had swapped his helmet for, leaning against the truck tailgate. His spiky strawberry-blond hair caught the morning sunlight, and his athletic posture relaxed.

Madison carefully climbed off the back of the 125cc bike, cradling the ancient leather book against her chest. She walked over to her dad's heavy workbench, setting the book down right next to a row of well used wrenches.

"We're home," Madison whispered, wiping a lingering speck of AD 70 dust from her cheek.

Cash leaned his dirt bike against its stand and walked over to the bench, his athletic frame relaxing for the first time in hours. He looked down at the closed leather cover. "Maddie, I'm never going to look at the Bible the same way again."

"Me neither," Madison said softly, her long blond hair swaying as she shook her head in amazement. "We actually saw it, Cash. We watched the Roman legions completely surround Jerusalem just like Jesus said they would in Luke 21."



Name: _____

Date: _____

"And while everyone else trapped inside was panicking and fighting out of raw greed, the Christians remembered His words. They didn't doubt. They simply obeyed, packed their things, and fled to the mountains of Pella."

"And they survived because of it," Cash added, a serious, mature expression crossing his handsome face. He looked around the shop, thinking about the video he had watched earlier that morning.

"Think about it," Madison agreed, her blue eyes shining as she looked at her brother. "Skeptics, like the one you were telling me about in that video you watched, they try to say the Bible was just made up later or that the Gospels were written hundreds of years after Jesus lived."

She smiled and continued with new found confidence, "But how could Matthew and Luke record a prediction so incredibly detailed—down to every single stone of the Temple being thrown down—unless it was truly God's inspired word? The accurate fulfillment proves the reliability of the Bible right there."

Madison touched the smooth leather of the book. "That's why it's so important for us to read the Bible every single day, Cash. We can't just read it like a regular storybook and forget its teachings. It's a living blueprint."

"Yeah," Cash agreed, nodding firmly. "Jesus gave the early Christians specific signs to watch for so they could be saved from the Roman army. And He did the exact same thing for us today. He told us what signs to look for before His second coming."

Madison looked out the shop window at the peaceful morning sky. "It means when we see the world getting chaotic or falling apart around us, we don't have to be afraid. We just have to stay sharp, study His word, and be completely obedient to what He told us to do."



Name: _____

Date: _____

They rested in the quiet of the shop and everything felt completely different now. For hours, they had watched the mightiest empire in human history try to crush a handful of believers. They had smelled the smoke of Rome, felt the terrifying vibration of marching Roman legions, and witnessed the literal leveling of the magnificent Second Temple in Jerusalem.

Yet, the very stones the Roman soldiers had pried apart to steal melted gold were nothing compared to the unshakeable foundation Linus, John, and the early Christians stood upon.

Madison looked down at her hands, still feeling the slight tremble from their narrow escape on Cash's 125cc dirt bike, the roaring braap of his engine still echoing in her ears. Rome had all the swords, the armor, and the political power, but the Christians had a promise.

When Jesus warned them in Luke 21 to flee to the mountains of Pella when armies surrounded Jerusalem, they didn't doubt Him. They didn't wait around to see if the massive stone walls of the Temple would protect them.

They trusted His words, packed their things, and stepped out in faith.

Cash smiled, his usual confident energy returning as he patted the seat of his dirt bike. "Empires come and go, Maddy. But God's word stands forever."

From the house, they heard the screen door click open, and the sweet, welcoming voice of Mommy Swank echoed across the yard, calling them in for lunch. Madison smiled at her brother, picked up the book to tuck it safely away in her gear bag, and knew that their lives had changed forever.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Write a Response to this Short Story about Cash and Madison:

