

## HOW THE WORLD WILL END

This week we will study the *Olivet discourse* (see also **Matthew 24** and **Luke 21**). It is the most extensive single unit, given by Jesus, on the subject of the end times ("*eschatology*"). This week we will study **Mark 13:1-27**. In covering the entire flow of the passage in one lesson it's easier to grasp the sequence of events than if we chopped it up over several lessons.

### 1) NOTICE THE DIFFERENT QUESTIONS THE DISCIPLES ASKED - **MARK 13:1-4**

**"And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" [2] And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." [3] And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, [4] "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"**

This is a very important first step in this involved passage. They asked *several questions - not just one*. This is made even more clear by Matthew - **Matthew 24:3** - **"As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?'"**

When would the temple be destroyed? What would the end of the age be like? When would Jesus come again? These are not the same question asked in different ways. Jesus, in His answer, deals with each one in turn.

### 2) THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND JERUSALEM - **MARK 13:1-13**

**"And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" [2] And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." [3] And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, [4] "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" [5] And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. [6] Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. [7] And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. [8] For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains. [9] "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. [10] And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. [11] And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. [12] And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. [13] And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**

These words of Jesus were fulfilled about forty years later (**60 A.D.**) when Roman general Titus ransacked the city and totally destroyed the temple area. Literally, there were no two stones left on top of each other.

Notice especially the warnings attached to this event in **verses 5-8** - **"And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. [6] Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. [7] And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. [8] For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the**

**beginning of the birth pains.**" Jesus didn't want His disciples to think that every time difficult situations were taking place they were on the doorstep of His coming. **False teachers prey on hard times.** People will be particularly vulnerable to false messages when things are crumbling around them. History has shown that false teachers and deliverers rise to the surface when the world scene is in turmoil. This happened when Jerusalem was taken captive back in the days of Jeremiah:

**Jeremiah 29:8-9** - "Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. {9} They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD."

**Notice also verses 9-13** - "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. [10] And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. [11] And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. [12] And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. [13] And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved." The disciples were to remain at their tasks until the very end. They were to keep spreading the gospel until Jesus came back or they died witnessing. They were not to be **diverted or distracted** from their work at hand. Notice **verse 10**. The gospel still **must be preached!** God would provide special help for special situations. The disciples were to look beyond the tribunals of men to the throne of God. They were to remain on the offensive. They were to trust their lives to the sovereignty of Father God.

### 3) THE GREAT TRIBULATION - MARK 13:14-23

**"But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [15] Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, [16] and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. [17] And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! [18] Pray that it may not happen in winter. [19] For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. [20] And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. [21] And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. [22] False christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. [23] But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand."**

The sign that Jesus sets as the kick off point for this event is the **"abomination that causes desolation"** (14) spoken of by the prophet Daniel (**Daniel 9:24-27**). There may have been **shadows** of its fulfillment in our world's history but the thrust of Daniel's words indicates that the **fulfillment** of this event is still in the future - **as can be seen most clearly in verse 24** - **"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."** We simply don't have everlasting righteousness or peace on earth yet. Those things (tied to the abomination of desolation in verse 27) are still in the future.

Also **Mark 13:19** makes it clear that this time of trouble is something this world has never seen the likes of. Certainly, we have seen times of trouble on this earth as great as the destruction of the temple under **Titus** or any previous event.

Once again, notice the **warning about being led astray by false leaders (21-23)**. People will be looking to anyone who seems to have some answers. **Christians will be marked by gullibility in the last days.** They will especially be looking for someone with **manifestations of power and the supernatural**. This fits perfectly with Paul's warning about the last days in **2 Thessalonians 2:5-12** - **"Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? [6] And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. [7] For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be**

revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. [9] The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, [10] and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. [11] Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, [12] in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

4) **THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST - MARK 13:24-27**

“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, [25] and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. [26] And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. [27] And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.” These words follow immediately upon the description of the Great Tribulation. Jesus will come and "gather His elect". His coming will be glorious and visible. There will be nothing secret about it. There will be huge signs in the heaven itself.

Notice **verse 26** - "Men **will see** the Son of Man coming in clouds" - Nobody will miss this event. This is also described in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** and **Matthew 24:29-31**.