

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 3RD–4TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

THINGS TO COME (MARK 13:1–4)

As Jesus and His disciples leave the temple and the heated conflict with the Jewish leaders, the disciples draw Jesus' attention to the buildings in the 35-acre temple complex (v. 1).

- Herod's temple (which would have still been under construction during this time) was an awe-inspiring sight with a gleaming white exterior and golden rooftops.
- For many, it was a symbol of national identity.

Many looked to the structure and beauty of the temple as the primary indicator that they were God's chosen people.

- In reality, Jesus was more concerned with Israel's inward condition and covenantal faithfulness to God than the structures of Jewish nationalism.

- “Not one stone will be left upon another” (v. 2)—the temple would be destroyed because of Israel's rejection of their Messiah.

Jesus and His disciples made their way across the Kidron Valley and up onto the Mount of Olives, which overlooked the 35-acre temple complex and the city of Jerusalem (v. 3a).

- The disciples were probably still reeling from Jesus' shocking revelation about the temple's destruction.
- To them, the destruction of the temple could only mean one thing: the end of sacrifices and the Old Covenant.

So they ask Jesus two questions to which He provides answers: 1) When will these things be? 2) What will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?

- What follows is Jesus' most lengthy discourse concerning the end times (known as the Olivet Discourse).
- There are many schools of thought concerning the interpretation of this passage.

1. Preterist View (Past Fulfillment)—most (if not all) of Mark 13 was fulfilled in the 1st century in 70 A.D. by the destruction of the temple.
2. Futurist View (Future Fulfillment)—most of Mark 13 will be fulfilled in the end times before Christ's second coming.
3. Historicist View (Throughout History)—describes the unfolding of church history across the centuries leading up to Christ's return.

TWO THINGS ARE VERY CLEAR:

1. It was necessary for something to have happened in that very generation (v. 30).
 2. Jesus was going to return to gather His elect from the four winds/ends of the earth to the ends of Heaven (vs. 26–27).
- These two events prophesied by Jesus can be understood like two progressive mountain peaks. Imagine you are standing miles away from a mountain range. From your viewpoint, the mountains look like they are right next to each other (almost like a single wall of rock).
 - But when you get closer, you realize there is a big valley between the first peak and the second one.
 - Prophecy in the Bible often works this way—immediate fulfillment/ultimate fulfillment.

The first event (the destruction of Jerusalem) sets the stage for and foreshadows the second event (the coming of the Son of Man in final judgment).

- The prophecies of verses 1–23 and 28–31 most likely had their immediate fulfillment in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem.
- However, the fulfillment of these prophecies—false Christs and prophets, wars and rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, a “great tribulation”—will continue as precursors to Christ's final return (vs. 24–27, 32–37).

But then there is an ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies—the Son of Man will return in clouds with great power and glory (v. 30)!

- We are called to be on watch and to be ready. Jesus has told us in advance what the spiritual climate on planet Earth will be like leading up to His return.
- We are not to be shocked, taken off guard, or unprepared as these things unfold.

“HOW IS THIS SUPPOSED TO HELP ME??”

- We need to be reminded that none of the structures or fixtures of this world are permanent—they are passing away.
- We need to be reminded that the truth of God's Word and the reality of His Kingdom ARE permanent—and if we are not living for Him, our hope is built on nothing.
- What are we standing for and trusting in?

SIGNS OF THE END (MARK 13:5–10)

Remember, Jesus is prophesying specifically to His disciples and members of “this generation” (v. 30) about things that will happen before Jerusalem is destroyed.

- But He is also prophesying about things that we can expect to continue to happen as we get closer to the final return of Christ.
- It will become increasingly more difficult to be a follower of Jesus as we get closer to the end.

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS WILL FACE DECEPTION (VS. 5–6)

We can expect Satan to continually work to deceive and lead people astray through false teaching, prophets, and even false messiahs.

- This was prevalent in the early Church, and individuals in modern times like David Koresh and Jim Jones have all falsely claimed divine status.
- Deception is usually much more subtle. In our day it usually begins with a denial of God's Word.

TWO GREATEST DECEPTIONS OF OUR DAY AND AGE:

- “Jesus is not the only way to salvation. All paths to God are equally valid as long as someone is sincere.”
- “The Bible's teachings on human sexuality are antiquated, dangerous, backwards, and are to be rejected in favor of our own desires.”

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS WILL FACE TRIBULATION (VS. 7–8)

Jesus speaks of the “beginning of birth pains” (v. 8), which will include wars, rumors of wars, famines, and earthquakes in various places.

- Jesus tells us to expect these things, not so we can pinpoint an exact date for His coming based on one particular event, but so we will not be alarmed and can remember that God is the one who is in control.

Ultimately, we will be taken out of this world before it is destroyed, but we are not immune to the continual tribulation of this broken world.

- That is why we cannot continually look to the world and its temporary systems for salvation and hope!
- The hardships and tribulations of this life remind us that we were made for someplace else.

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS WILL FACE PERSECUTION (V. 9)

The book of Acts (and the history of the Christian church) tells us about the realities of persecution that surrounded the early Christian movement.

- Even now, worldwide, 13 Christians are martyred every day, over 200 church buildings are attacked every week, and over 300 Christians are imprisoned unjustly every month.
- As American Christians, it is hard for us to imagine how God's plan might involve us having to suffer for our faith, but suffering is our witness.
- In Acts 7, Stephen's martyrdom might have laid the groundwork for Paul's conversion, and Paul's arrest led to him sharing the gospel before some of the highest governors and kings in the entire world (Acts 26).

THE GOSPEL WILL BE PREACHED (V. 10)

Even as persecution, tribulation, temptation, and deception abounded in the 1st Century, the Church proclaimed the gospel and Christianity spread like wildfire!

- Right now, in places like India, Iran, China, and Sierra Leone, disciple-making movements are EXPLODING despite some of the heaviest persecution on planet Earth.
- In America today, we are seeing deception, tribulation, and animosity towards the Christian worldview and those who hold to it.
- But the gospel is being preached, and many are responding to it despite how much it is costing us to hold to it (Gen Z revival is happening, and it is real).
- A costly commitment to Christ is worth something.

YOU WILL BE HATED (MARK 13:11–13)

IMMEDIATE FULFILLMENT, CONTINUAL FULFILLMENT, AND ULTIMATE FULFILLMENT

All of Jesus' 12 disciples eventually faced persecution and martyrdom in the years following Christ's ascension.

- All of Jesus' disciples through the ages of Church history can expect opposition as we proclaim and live out the truth of Christ. That persecution will be most intense right before Christ returns.

“YOU WILL BE HATED...BECAUSE OF MY NAME.”

Why is there so much irrational hatred of Christians in our world?

- Christ's call to repent and surrender your heart and life to Him is a radical message that humbles and convicts the human spirit on a level that other religions or philosophies simply do not.
- Unbelievers often do not know what to do with that conviction, so they take it out on Believers.

We will be hated simply because we bear Christ's name and stand for His message.

- 1 Peter 4:15–16 makes a very important distinction: if we face hardship and are hated, it should be because of our faithfulness to Christ, not because we are being obnoxious, sinful, or disagreeable.
- Are we identified primarily by the name of Christ?

GOD WILL PREPARE US TO STAND (V. 11)

So often we worry ourselves sick thinking about what we will do or say when the time comes for us to stand and suffer for our faith.

- Jesus tells us not to worry and promises that the Holy Spirit will give us what to say, if we just speak whatever He gives us.
- When that time comes, we are not to make it about us and our message but God's!

PERSECUTION EVEN FROM OUR OWN FAMILY (V. 12)

Jesus warns us that persecution will arise from within our own families. Brothers, fathers, and even our own children might turn on us because of our faith in Christ.

- This was true amongst the Jewish community in the 1st Century, it's true in Muslim communities, it's been true in atheistic communist nations, and it's even true in our modern Western context.

WE MUST ENDURE TO THE END (V. 13B)

Beginning the Christian life is a glorious experience but simply beginning it is not sufficient to assure its completion.

- Jesus says that “the one who endures to the end will be saved.” Many use the doctrine “once saved, always saved” to assure them of salvation, even as someone is rebelling against God or has denied Christ.
- Rom. 11:22 makes clear to us that “once truly saved, forever following” is a clearer description of what the Bible says about eternal security.
- The evidence of saving faith is not the intensity of emotion at the beginning, but the endurance of that faith over time despite what it may cost us as we live it out!

A COSTLY COMMITMENT TO CHRIST IS WORTH SOMETHING

- When our faith gets institutionalized to the point where it becomes little more than a symbol of national or cultural identity, we take it for granted.
- We start to think that (1) our symbols, structures, and traditions will always just be there, and (2) the symbols, structures, and traditions of faith are the things that can save us (idolatry).
- Jesus says that symbols can and will topple but faithful people remain. Christianity is not about buildings, structures, political parties, laws, or institutions; it is about faithful men and women radically committed to Christ.
- To what are you committed? How much is your commitment costing you?
- We must commit to taking a stand for God's truth in the face of deception and falsehood.
- We must commit to standing for Christ amidst tribulation and persecution.
- We must trust God to prepare us to stand and empower us to endure to the end.
- What are you standing for and trusting in?