

“The Signs of His Coming”

Mark 13

Introduction

- We are doing a study in the final week of Jesus’ life, the greatest seven day period in human history
 - Where man was redeemed, where our sin was paid for, and where Jesus had victory over death
 - The greatest week ever
- It started with Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, fulfilling prophecies from Daniel 9 and Zechariah 9
 - The next day after Jesus prayed it in and thought it thru was the cleansing of the temple
 - Then later that day He is examined by the Sanhedrin and the Herodians, the Pharisees and the Sadducees

The reason as you remember, this was Passover Season and all over Jerusalem on the 10th of Nisan, those lambs would be brought into homes – yes to have your family fall in love with the lamb, but also to examine it and to make sure it was without spot of blemish

- Well on the very day those lambs were brought into the homes, Jesus was examined by the religious leaders and found to be truly without spot or blemish

Well ahead of us will still be the last supper, the garden of Gethsemane, the trial of Jesus, the betrayal of Peter, the crucifixion and the resurrection

- but this morning we are going to examine the longest answer Jesus ever gave to one single question
 - and if that sounds like I just told you to strap in, its going to be a while – well I did

No – this morning will not be any longer than normal, but we are going to cover all of chapter 13, because it all goes together and it is fascinating as it deals with prophecy and end times and the second coming of Jesus Christ

- Now this sermon of Jesus, this longest answer that He ever gave to one single question, has been called by Bible scholars the Olivet Discourse
 - And the reason it is called this is because it was taught while Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olive

Olivet Discourse – taught from the Mount of Olives

- I say that because when I taught the gospel of Mark in the church in Texas one sweet lady said to me afterwards, “I now know why they call this sermon the All of it discourse, because Jesus covered all of it in one sermon
 - He does cover all of it, but it’s Olive as in Olive oil, not A-L-L-O-F-I-T Discourse
- The Mount of Olives sits east of Jerusalem

Mount of Olives picture – view from Jerusalem

- Here is view of the mountain from Jerusalem in our time – you can see man has dotted the hillside with churches and places of worship, you can even see the tour busses
- It is from the Mount of Olives that Jesus ascended into heaven, it is where He will return to earth as we will study this morning and it was where this sermon we are about to read was given

Mount of Olives picture – view from Mount of Olives

- The view from the Mount of Olives is the typical view of Jerusalem you always see in pictures, this is taken from the mount of olives

So as I have said, the Olivet Discourse is the longest answer to any one question that was given but it’s important that we first understand what was the occasion of the question

Mark 13 – The Olivet Discourse

The Occasion of the Question – Mark 13:1-2

- the disciples are about to ask a very important question of Jesus
 - a question that will produce the longest answer Jesus ever gave to any one question
 - but what was the occasion of the question, what brought it on in the disciples minds

When you understand the context Jesus has just taught what would be His last public Sermon

- It came on the heels of Jesus' examination by the religious leaders – it was summarized in Mark 12:38-40, but if you want all the gory details, you need to read Matthew 23
 - Jesus is really hard on the religious leaders in Jerusalem
 - calling them snakes and vipers, white washed tombs
 - and this sets the disciples back a bit

Understand that when we hear the Word Pharisee, it is a synonym for hypocrite

- and so to hear Jesus calling these Pharisees snakes and vipers and it doesn't hit us like it would have the disciples
 - you understand that this was all they knew growing up – these men were how they related to God just a few years ago
 - and Jesus' words, though they understood were still a little offensive even to them, because it was their past, their history and Jesus was being very critical of it

I mean you can image, I know many of you come from a Catholic Background, as my Father was and Step Father is. And though I don't feel this way, let me repeat, I don't feel this way, let me look into the camera so everyone understands – I don't feel this way – but if I said on a Sunday Morning – those Catholic snakes, those leaders of that false church are hypocrites and fools – now I don't think that, I know many wonderful people who are Catholics and they love Jesus but if I said that and meant it – many of you would be taken back a bit

- Where do you come off saying something like that
 - Don't you know what they have accomplished, don't you know what that church has been involved in for thousands of years, the hospitals, the peace missions
 - You would be a little offended, you would want to open my eyes to the truth

And don't miss that, because that is exactly what the disciples then try to do

- they are leaving the temple area
 - and they say to Jesus , “do you see these great buildings, aren't they amazing!!!”

The point is, hey Jesus, you have been a little ruff on our religion and we understand some of those guys may not be as genuine as you

- but do you see what Judaism has created
 - do you see the magnificent buildings we have
 - and the context is – it can't be all bad!!!!

And for our understanding, we would probably have thought this too, for the temple was an amazing structure

- Josephus tells us the stones were 40 feet in length, 20 feet wide

Picture of the Temple Stones (underground)

- Here is a picture of one from underneath the temple mount – to give you a size perspective, this stone is the size of a train box car
 - This was a massive structure – covered on the outside in gold

Some Scholars have estimated that in today's money if you added up the worth of the property, building materials and the labor for the workforce to build this exact structure today, the price tag would surpass one trillion dollars – now that is a building project

- That would be a cool building fund – we need one trillion dollars for God's new house
 - The structure was magnificent

The Babylonian Talmud records that in the ancient world you had not seen a magnificent building until you had seen the temple in Jerusalem

- And this coming from those who had constructed the hanging gardens of Babylon, and many other wonders of the ancient world
 - and the disciples were obviously very impressed with it – if your church had a trillion dollar building you would want to show it off as well
- and they point it out to Jesus
 - to kind of soften up his words and attitude toward the religious leaders

And as they do this Jesus gives them the first prophecy of the Olivet Discourse

- Jesus says, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

Jesus, in this first prophecy of the Olivet Discourse, tells them that as wonderful as that structure seems to be to you, and it was

- That structure is going to fall!!!
 - In fact more than fall
 - It is going to be completely destroyed

This had to seem highly unlikely to the Disciples

- in their mind – Israel was about to enter its greatest age

The greatest symbol in Israel was her temple

- A structure among structures
 - How they must have thought
 - “Man – we thought the guy was weird when He talked about Him dying - But now this is totally bizarre – the temple being destroyed
 - Highly unlikely

But it happened gang, it happened

- In 70 AD Titus Vespasian led Roman legions down into Israel to stop the civil unrest that was growing
 - They were commanded not to touch the temple
- But as they ransacked the city
 - One night a drunk soldier threw a torch into the temple structure

The temple was destroyed

- but more than that
 - in the fire the gold melted around the stones
- And so because the temple had already been destroyed
 - The order was given to remove the stone one at a time, and remove the gold from them
 - Many historians believe Rome used the money to build the Coliseum there in Rome from the money they stole off the temple
 - But that aside
- Not one stone was left upon the other
 - Jesus’ prophecy was fulfilled
 - Very literally and exactly as He said it would

In fact when we go to Israel you go by the only remaining part of the temple today and that is the foundation stones known as the Western Wall

- and as you walk down a little to the south, they have excavated down to the street used in the first century or in other words right where Jesus walked

And what they found were these massive 40 foot long, 20 foot wide, temple stones, thrown down from above because they were cracked and broken

- and there is a humorous sign placed there by the Jewish ministry of tourism that says, these stones placed here courtesy of the Romans in 70 AD

- But I wanted to add a tag note, that not only were these stones put there by the Romans, but the event was foretold by Jesus – King of the Jews, but that probably wouldn't have gone over too well
- Jesus said it was going to happen

And here is what we need to take away from this

- sometimes when we talk about end times prophecy, it is a little hard to believe
 - there is going to be an Antichrist – Jason you really believe that
 - a real battle of Armageddon, billions of people dead
 - come on Jason
- I admit, sometimes it's hard to believe
 - It is in our day, it would have been in their day

And so Jesus gives them a prophecy that they must have thought was unlikely, but one they would see fulfilled in their time

- And I believe that was so they would trust and have confidence that what Jesus said would happen, no matter how unlikely it seemed at the time
 - And that is a lesson we need to hold onto
 - Jesus says what He means and means what He says
- There is a tendency in me and maybe in you to look at the world around us and think it will always be this way
 - There will not be things falling from the sky

There will not be some world leader controlling everybody – it just can't happen

- In Texas we say "Remember the Alamo", well in studying bible prophecy the mantra should be "Remember the temple"
 - Jesus said, not one stone will be left upon the other
 - And that is exactly what happened
- And we need to remember this as we study prophecy

Mark 13 – The Olivet Discourse

The Occasion of the Question – Mark 13:1-2

The Question itself – Mark 13:3-4

- Jesus has just told the disciples the temple would be destroyed, not one stone left upon another
 - And as they get to the Mount of Olives, no doubt this thought is troubling the disciples who must have believed Israel was about to enter its most glorious age

You see they believed Jesus was the Messiah, which He was

- but to them that meant a military commander, one who would free them from Rome and set up God's kingdom forever
 - and yet every time they would talk about this with Jesus, He seemed to focus on His death, not setting up a Kingdom
 - And so finally they ask Him – When will these things be, what will be the sign when these things will be fulfilled

Now some have taken the question as posed in Mark's gospel and said

- They are just asking when the temple is going to be destroyed - And so the Olivet discourse is a prophecy about 70AD not the end of the world, not the tribulation period – I would agree except in Matthew's account, we read they add this...

"Now 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 end of the age?'" – Matthew 24:3

- It was not just the destruction of the temple they were interested in
 - They are asking when are you coming to set up your kingdom?
 - When are we going to enter into that glorious age of the rule of the Messiah?

And Mark 13 is Jesus' description of what will happen right before He returns to earth

- It is not a study of what will happen right before the Rapture as many Bible teachers use this for
 - This is talking about the events of the period coming on earth know as the Great Tribulation
- Now in defense of those Bible teaches who use Mark 13 to talk about the nearness of the rapture of the church
 - I personally believe the Rapture will happen before the Tribulation begins
 - And so if Mark 13 is telling us what will happen right before Jesus' second coming, and we see those things developing today, and I believe Jesus' second coming comes at least 7 years after the rapture – well then Mark 13 does teach us of the imminence of Christ's coming for His church

But we need to remember the context

- This is Jesus, the Rabbi, talking to His Jewish disciples about His coming to set up His Kingdom
 - An event we would call today, they wouldn't have back then, the second coming of Jesus Christ

And what Jesus outlines in Mark 13 is what happens right before Jesus comes back or in other words the outline of the events in the Tribulation period

- Many Bible Scholars believe the Tribulation is a 7 year period coming upon planet earth

But important for our understanding this morning, is the Tribulation is divided into two 3 ½ year periods with a middle event called the abomination that makes desolate

- And this is how chapter 13 is divided as well

Mark 13 – The Olivet Discourse

The Occasion of the Question – Mark 13:1-2

The Question itself – Mark 13:3-4

The Answer to the Question

#1 – The First Half of the Tribulation– Mark 13:5-13

#2 – The Middle of the Tribulation – Mark 13:14-23

#3 – The Second Half of the Tribulation – Mark 13:24-27

- Let's look at those parts of His answer for a few minutes together

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The Occasion of the Question – Mark 13:1-2

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The Answer to the Question

#1 – The First Half of the Tribulation– Mark 13:5-13

And in this first section Jesus gives His disciples 6 signs for the future that He is on the way – note them briefly here and we will look at them one at a time – Six Signs of His Coming

#1 - False Christ's

#2 - Wars and rumors of war

#3 - Earthquakes in various places

#4 - Famines

#5 - Pestilences or diseases (Matthew 24:7, tells us what the “troubles mentioned in verse 8 actually are)

#6 - Persecution of believers in the Tribulation

It is interesting to look at these six signs and realize in the book of Revelation John's vision is that the Tribulation will open up with 6 seals

- And they are an exact match, and that is why it is important to notice verse 8

These six signs that Jesus says, these are the beginning of sorrows

- Now understanding what He is talking about is key for our understanding of this text
 - Beginning of sorrows means the beginning of labor or birth pains

Those of you who have had children, you understand how labor pains work

- Before you get to that day, you feel an uncomfortable pain and you ask, I wonder if that is a contraction
 - Any veteran Mom around you says, you will know
- And when they hit you do – but the worst is not yet

For they grow in intensity and they get closer together

- Christy with our first, she puts on make up and has me take pictures, a few hours later those pictures showed a little worry, and an hour or so later there was pain on her face

And what I think that means for our understanding of this passage is...

- there has always been false christs since Jesus, there has always been wars and earthquakes, famines and pestilence
 - but as we get closer to the Lord' return they grow more frequent and become more intense
- there is always some new messiah figure in the world – wars and our ability to destroy one another grows, even though we have wonderful medical advances, plagues mutate and figure a way to survive

I am not saying that to scare anyone, its just evidence that the time of the Lord's return is close

- but I don't think the point of Jesus was to give us things to compare to the nightly news
 - I think though we see an increase in false christs – the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation will bring the ultimate false christ – Antichrist
 - Though wars increase in frequency and intensity, the Ultimate War is unleashed in the second seal of Revelation chapter 6
 - In fact as you go through Revelation 6 we will see an exact parallel to the signs mentioned by Jesus in Mark 13
- And the reason is because it is talking about the same period of time
 - The intensity of these signs increase like birth pains until we see the culmination in the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, the ultimate false christ, the ultimate war, the ultimate famine and Pestilence, earthquake and persecution

But as bad as they are – things will get worse

- Because as we notice when we studied the book of Revelation – this first part of the Tribulation, these first six signs and seals are basically the result of man finally getting their way
 - Their ultimate leader, which leads to war, which lead to famine and disease, which lead to blaming God's people and then God gets involved
 - And the last three and half years will make the first look like paradise, because God will be judging a Christ rejecting world
 - And we see that as we continue

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The Answer to the Question

#1 – The First Half of the Tribulation– Mark 13:5-13

#2 – The Middle of the Tribulation – Mark 13:14-23

- The middle of the tribulation will be marked by something called the Abomination of desolation
 - Now what in the world is that
 - Well first we need to understand what it is not

It is not a prophecy about a President name Obama

- Like some guy in Texas told me, “Its in the Bible, when you see the Obama nation run for the hills”
 - No, not the Obama nation – the abomination
 - It comes from Daniel chapter 9

Daniel is explaining that last 7 year period of human history as we know it

- and he tells us that in the middle of that 7 year period, the World leader at the time, a man the Bible calls many things, but we know him best as Antichrist
 - will go into the temple in Jerusalem

You see remember the start of the Tribulation will be this same world leader making a seven year peace deal that involves Israel and the middle East

- and the world will hail him as a man of peace
 - the Jews will believe that he is their long awaited Messiah
 - until this day – until the Abomination

You see Daniel 9, 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelation 13 tell us that he will go into the rebuilt Jewish temple there in Jerusalem, and set up an image of himself in the temple and declare himself to be above all that is called God

- not just the God of the Bible, but everything called God
 - and the world will then know – He isn't the man we have been looking for – but its too late

And Jesus tells everyone to run for the hills, why does Jesus tell them living in that day to run – really for two reasons

Why Run???

#1 - At this time the Antichrist will unleash his furry on the Jews.

- up to this point he has been their defender, he has had a covenant with them
 - but now Zechariah tells us, 2/3 of the Jewish people will be destroyed
 - The destruction will be worse than anything the Romans or even Hitler was able to do
- 1/3 we are told escape to a place God has prepared for them
 - most scholars believe it is the Rock City of Petra
 - a naturally fortified city
- But even there, God will have to protect them because not only is Jesus telling them to run because of the wrath of Antichrist
 - But number two...

Why Run???

#1 - At this time the Antichrist will unleash his furry on the Jews.

#2 – At this time the wrath of God will be poured out on the world

- the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation
 - though they are filled with judgments
 - they are simply the result of Man's sin, and man being in complete control
- The Last 3 ½ years – which begins after the Abomination of Desolation
 - God is pouring out His wrath upon this world
 - And that bring us to our final section

And this last 3 ½ year period leading up to the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ is what is outlined in the rest of chapter 13 of Mark's gospel

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#3 – The Second Half of the Tribulation – Mark 13:24-27

- this section outlines the destruction that will take place on planet earth
 - but it also records the culmination of the Tribulation and the event the disciples were asking about so many years ago
 - the Return of Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom

- I want you to note 3 things about the second coming of Christ that when we consider them and pray them through I believe they will be a tremendous blessing to our walks with Christ

Three things about the 2nd Coming of Jesus

#1 – The Second Coming of Jesus will be preceded by destruction – verse 24-25

- The first half of the Tribulation is bad
 - Man is getting His way and yet instead of a glorious age of Aquarius, they get the worse time the earth has ever seen – many will die

But the second half is worse

- The book of Revelation outlines 21 judgments that come upon the planet in this 7 year period
 - 7 Seal judgments – Revelation chapter 6
 - these take place in the first 3 ½ year of the Tribulation and collate to the six signs Jesus gave in Mark 13 verses 5 thru 13
 - But then you have...
 - 7 Trumpet judgments – Revelation chapter 8 & 9
 - 7 Bowl judgments - Revelation chapter 16

And what they outline for us is 1/3 of the trees are destroyed – plant a tree

- All green grass is destroyed – see I don't have to mow the lawn
 - 1/3 of all sea life with the trumpet judgments and then all sea life with the bowls
 - 1/3 of fresh water with the trumpet judgments and then all fresh water with the bowls
 - 1/3 of the light goes away, but then comes back with a vengeance
 - Stinging locusts
- The ability to die leaves for five months – this is horrible experiencing the pain of death, but not the relief
 - More war so that 1/3 of the population left will be destroyed - Rampant sores
- Finally the battle of Armageddon where the armies of the earth gather there in Israel and turn their weapons toward God, but the blood will flow to horses bridles
 - Horrible horrible destruction

Jason I thought you said these things were going to be a blessing

- here is how I believe this first one can be
 - we need to realize this is going to happen

Remember the temple – not one stone upon another, this will happen

- and I believe, I could be wrong, but I believe it is this generation that will see it
 - that means people we know, people we go to school and work with – especially at my job
 - may there be a fervency with evangelism
- We get tricked by the enemy into thinking we have so much time, and even if they don't receive it won't be that bad

And so the little ridicules we receive, the little looks we get somehow in our minds are worse than what that man or woman is going to be facing

- Are you serious???

My neighbor might think I am little obnoxious – but I don't want him to be eaten by stinging locusts – you see what I'm saying

- my family might think I am little pushy
 - but I don't want them to be scorched by the heat of the sun
 - these things may happen to people we know
- So I need to pray and I need to fast and I need to seek the Lord for open doors and when He gives them to me, I need to walk through them unashamed because this world is heading to a train wreck it can't even imagine – do you hear what I am saying this morning

We need to get away from reading the bible like it is some book of philosophy

- Oh that is interesting – all of the sea life is dead, amazing
 - No – this is really going to happen, and I want to pray it in, and be used to affect this world

Three things about the 2nd Coming of Jesus

#1 – The Second Coming of Jesus will be preceded by destruction – Verse 24-25

#2 – All will see it - Verse 26

- Jesus' first point about His second coming is that it will not be some secret affair for only a select few
 - But it will be something that all will see

I remember I was speaking at a chapel for the Christian School and there was probably 300 students and the worship was ending and the guy was praying, so I was trying to make my way to the front with my eyes closed – you know like those pastors that magically appear onstage after the prayer – that was my goal, but when I ran into the mic stand at a pretty good speed, knocking it, and me over with a loud crash – I hoped no one saw, that was not the case

And this will not be the case for Jesus' 2nd coming either

- And we need to keep that in mind for in today's world you have the Jehovah Witnesses' who claim just that – they have witnessed the Messiah
 - They believe and teach Jesus came back in the 1914 to a select group of people in New York City
 - That is simply not true, and its not biblical
- Jesus says that as the Lighting strikes from the east to the west in Matthew's account of this – so will His coming be
 - You are not going to miss it if you are around in that day
 - There will be no atheists in that day
 - There will be no unbelievers
 - Only those who are unconsecrated to God

Three things about the 2nd Coming of Jesus

#1 – The Second Coming of Jesus will be preceded by destruction – Verse 24-25

#2 – All will see it - Verse 26

#3 – It will be met with mixed emotions – verse 27

- When He does there will be a mix of emotions
 - In verse 27 it speaks of those who will be gathered together.
 - When Jesus comes back those who got saved during the Tribulation will be gathered – they will be happy as they see their hope

But in Matthew's account of this Olivet Discourse, it says those who are of the tribes of the earth will mourn

- the 2nd coming of Jesus will not be a joyous occasion for everyone
 - some will mourn

These people who mourn are of the Tribes of the earth

- In other words they are those who are not living for a future kingdom like the Bible speaks of Abraham and Moses
 - But they are living for the world now, they are of the earth

Those with that mindset will mourn

- because for them their time is over
 - and they will spend forever separated from the one they knew deep in their hearts was the one true God all along
 - All because they loved the world, more than the Lord
- And I really feel for these people – for as they were living for the world – they were miserable, and now that Jesus comes back – it only gets worse

Those waiting for the Lord

- it has been a hard 7 years

- but there has been joy in it, as God fills their heart
- But now it gets even better.
- Their hope is here, and the joy of their rest begins

And it is the same today

- People live for themselves and the world
 - And there are people living for the Lord

What good will the day of the Lord be to you???

- Will it be a culmination????
 - or will it be the end of everything you are living for??? – we need to pray that through

Mark 13 – The Olivet Discourse

The Occasion of the Question – Mark 13:1-2

The Question itself – Mark 13:3-4

The Answer to the Question – Mark 13:5-27

Our Response to Jesus' Answer – Mark 13:28-37

In verses 28-37 Jesus sums up the disciples response

- What Jesus is saying is watch the fig tree
 - When it starts growing leaves you know summer is near
 - An equivalent to us may be – when you start hearing “I’m dreaming of a white…” on your favorite radio station
 - Christmas must be soon!!!
- Jesus says that the generation that sees these signs
 - The ones we have been going over, the Antichrist, war to end all wars, devastating earthquake, abomination of desolation
 - The generation that sees that, will see the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus
 - The one long awaited by His disciples and many since then

Watch and Pray – we study these things – not to take out loans or to get lazy, but the opposite – I believe a Christian who is constantly aware of Christ’ return will live Holy

This life is meant to be lived realizing soon we will be on the move. That gives us the best life to know we’re living for another place and that place is coming soon! Set your mind on things above / this is the wilderness but we are going some where else / are we listening for the trumpets