

Message #48

Mark 13:1-13

In January of 1985, Roger Boisjoly, an engineer, observed that under cold conditions an o-ring seal on the Space Shuttle's solid rocket booster would fail. Tests were done and Roger wrote a memo that said this: "It is my honest and very real fear that if we do not take immediate action to dedicate a team to solve the problem...then we stand in jeopardy of losing a flight...". In January of 1986, the launch of the space shuttle "Challenger" was set to launch. Roger was still voicing his concerns, but a management decision was made to launch anyway. The Challenger was launched on January 28, 1986 and 73 seconds into its flight, it broke apart, killing 7 NASA crew members. Because good advice of an engineer was rejected, one of the most destructive and disastrous moments in our history occurred. The results were seven caskets and seven devastated families.

Jesus Christ is God and was the engineer who designed this entire universe. He decided to leave the splendor and glory of heaven to step into this world in order to save sinners. All He asks is that you believe in Him. That is what He asked Israel to do and that is what He asks us to do. If you reject Him, you can be absolutely certain there will be eternal destruction and eternal disaster. That point is very clear from this text.

THOSE WHO REJECT JESUS CHRIST ARE GUARANTEED TO SUFFER FUTURE DESTRUCTION AND DISASTER.

Jesus makes a series of scary predictions concerning the time when "all" things will be fulfilled before He comes back to reign. It will not be a nice time for anyone.

There are a total of ten specific predictions we want to examine. **One of the predictions has already come true and nine of them will eventually come true.** We believe they are not too far off from coming true.

Now **verse 1** presents to us a critical context to all of this. Jesus was going out of the Temple where He had been challenged by one phony religious group after another and one of His disciples said, "**Teacher**" this is just a wonderful place. This temple has beautiful stones and buildings.

Now the disciple had just been with Jesus when He had showed the Scribes that He was much more than a teacher, but since everyone else called Him teacher, apparently the disciple just went along with that assessment.

This disciple was impressed with the buildings. He was acting like some "awestruck tourist." He did not realize the real tragedy taking place here—Jesus is leaving the Temple. The glory of God is leaving the temple. **The God/Man/Messiah/Savior/King is leaving His Temple.**

The real key to this is when we read in **verse 1** that Jesus "was going out of the temple." This is exactly what happened back in the days of Ezekiel. The glory of God left the Temple and in the aftermath of it, the Temple was destroyed (Ezek. 10:18-19; 11:22-23). Jesus Christ should have been sitting in the Temple.

He should have been reigning in this Temple. He should have been worshipped in this Temple. But the fact that He is leaving the Temple tells us something has really gone drastically wrong.

Now the Temple complex was impressive. In fact, at the time Jesus was there it was “one of the great wonders of the ancient world.” There was a famous rabbinic saying that said, “He who has not seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building in his life.” It was, as Mark Strauss said, “one of the great architectural wonders of the ancient world” (*Mark*, p. 569). Josephus says there were beautiful white stones that glistened and made the place look brilliant. He claimed that from a distance the Temple looked like a “snow covered mountain.”

Now what makes something beautiful from God’s perspective and from men’s perspective are two different things. Jesus had just demonstrated that with the widow. The rich people looked impressive with their gifts, but God saw it differently.

So while this disciple was just impressed with the structure, the glory of God was leaving it and Jesus knew exactly what would happen to this entire Temple complex. Jesus was about to pop the air out of their balloon of patriotic pride.

So in **verse 2**, He makes His first prediction:

PROPHETIC PREDICTION #1 – All Temple buildings will be torn down completely. **13:2**

Jesus said to His disciples, do you see all of these impressive buildings that have been made by the hands of men, well they will all be demolished and come tumbling down. This very point will be brought up against Him in trial in order to kill Him. He will be accused of threatening to destroy the Temple (Mark 14:58).

Now predictions about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple are not new. Many O.T. prophets predicted that because of Israel’s rebellion and sin, both Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed. This was an amazing prediction. Jesus is predicting that these monumental, beautiful buildings will be totally and completely destroyed. He said that none of the great buildings would be left standing and this prophecy did literally come true.

In A.D. 70, Titus and his Roman army came into Jerusalem and literally demolished the Temple and overturned every stone of every building looking for loot. The Romans massacred the Jews—men, women, children, old people, religious leaders all killed. Josephus said over one million Jews were killed by the Romans. Josephus said that they so demolished the city and the Temple that future visitors would have no reason to believe that it had ever been inhabited by anyone. The only thing left in the city of that Temple today is a wailing wall.

In fact, some have argued that every stone was not overturned because the wall is still standing. But notice the prediction in **verse 2**, the buildings of the Temple and the Temple itself will be torn down and they were. Not only was the Temple destroyed, but so was the entire city.

Now the context of this prediction is critical. **This was all permitted to happen because of the fact that Jesus Christ was rejected in His Temple. In other words, the rejection of Jesus Christ led to the judgment of God.**

So this part of the prophecy pertaining to Israel was fulfilled literally which means we must assume that the remainder of the prophetic predictions for Israel will also be fulfilled literally.

According to **verse 3**, Jesus went up on the Mount of Olives and sat down. From this perch you could actually look at the Temple. As they were sitting there, Peter, James, John and Andrew started questioning Christ privately.

They wanted to know what would be the “sign” when “all” these things would be fulfilled (**Verse 4**). Not just the Temple coming down, but when all prophetic things would be fulfilled that would lead to Him taking over as the King of Kings. What would be the signs that would indicate that Christ’s Kingdom was about to take over the world?

So there is a question about the time “when” and there is a question about the “sign” that all things are being fulfilled.

Before we tackle this, I want to make two observations:

Observation #1 - This has nothing to do with the church. This is about the Temple, about Israel and about “all things” being fulfilled for Israel. These are not signs of the Rapture or Church.

Observation #2 - There are predictions made here that have not yet been fulfilled completely. The time when all of these things will be fulfilled will be during the Great Tribulation, specifically the time of Jacob’s trouble that will occur during the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation.

Now Jesus gives **9 sign predictions** of things that will lead to His return. This will be a package of signs. There have always been these kinds of things in existence, but not a time when they have happened in rapid fire succession. These things will intensify more and more as the time nears and after the Rapture, they will bust loose full force:

SIGN PREDICTION #1 – Many will try to mislead Israel claiming they are the Messiah and way to God. **13:5-6**

Now it is important to observe that He is having a private conversation with His close disciples and He basically begins it by saying, “You watch out” or “you see to it.” This same verb is used all throughout this discourse aimed at His own disciples (13:5, 9, 23, 33).

Now the first sign prediction is there will be false Christ’s and false prophets that will surface claiming they are the Messiah (13:21-22). This apparently will be a major prelude to Christ’s second coming. There will be an influx of religious leaders who will claim they can lead Israel to God.

We know from Acts 5:36-37 that early in the Church Age, Theudas surfaced who, according to Josephus, was a charlatan who claimed he could part the Jordan. Then there was Judas of Galilee who surfaced who claimed he was sanctioned by God to lead a revolution against Rome.

There was a guy named Moses of Crete who in the 5th century claimed he would part the Mediterranean Sea and lead his followers from Crete to Israel. He took his followers to a cliff in the island of Crete and said they were to jump off and the Sea would part. Well they jumped off and hit rocks and were killed and those who hit water drowned.

In 1666 a man claimed he was the son of God and led his followers to Constantinople (Istanbul) Turkey where he was arrested. The Turkish Sultan ordered him to prove he was the Messiah or be executed, so he converted to Islam.

We have had our share who claim they are the special agents of God: Joseph Smith; Charles Taze Russel; Mary Baker Eddy; Sun Myung Moon; Jim Jones; David Koresh. Now there have always been religious kooks who claim to be the Messiah or anointed one; but they are seen as religious kooks. There will come a time when they will not be viewed as religious kooks. They will be very convincing.

Israel will need to realize this and watch out for this. After the Rapture of the Church, the only religions left will be false religions. Those false religions will flourish because that is all that will be left.

SIGN PREDICTION #2 – You will hear of wars and rumored wars. **13:7**

During the days of Christ, the one military force that dominated the world was Rome. There wasn't much news about war and rumors of war because Rome dominated everything.

However, just before Christ returns the world will become scary and dangerous. The news will not be good. All one will hear about is war and rumors of war in various parts of the world.

Now we must admit that just lately we have been hearing about some unusual military activity that comes from Syria, Russia, China and Korea. There are military problems in Turkey and perhaps the biggest threat is Iran. There are rumors flying out there about military activity in preparing for war.

This will intensify. As soon as the Rapture occurs, war will break out all over the world. Both civil war and international war and, as a result, millions and millions of people will die (Rev. 6:3-4).

SIGN PREDICTION #3 – There will be nations who will rise up against nations. **13:8a**

This word not only has to do with Gentile nations rising up against each other, but also those who are against Israel (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 129). The world will be in military upheaval. Now when we hear of such things, we should not be overly concerned or shocked or dismayed. All this says to us is that we are nearing the end of the Church Age.

SIGN PREDICTION #4 – There will one kingdom who will turn against another Kingdom.
13:8b

This has to do with a particular territory of sovereignty or dominion (*Ibid.*, p. 77). We would say that the United States is a sovereign nation and kingdom. Great Britain would be another. What will happen is that major kingdom nations will turn against each other.

SIGN PREDICTION #5 – There will be earthquakes in various places. **13:8c**

There will be violent earthquakes all over the world. There is no question that one of the things that will happen in the Tribulation will be a series of major earthquakes (Rev. 6:12; 11:13, 19; 16:18).

For the most part, earthquakes in the U.S. don't cause any deaths. But that is not true in other parts of the world. In 2004 in Sumatra, 227,898 were killed in an earthquake. In 2005 in Pakistan, 86,000 were killed in an earthquake. In 2008 in China, 87,587 were killed in an earthquake. In 2011 in Japan 20,896 were killed in an earthquake. In 2012 in Haiti, 316,000 were killed in an earthquake.

What this predicts is there will come a time when a series of massive earthquakes will hit that will lead to a major earthquake that will literally drop the major cities of the world (Rev. 16:18-19).

SIGN PREDICTION #6 – There will be famines in various places. **13:8d**

It has been estimated that every 3.6 seconds someone dies of starvation. Every year 15 million children die of hunger-related medical problems. Famines are typically seen in third world countries and in the very poor nations of the world. Someone wisely observed that we are “just one bad harvest away from starvation here in America.” Starvation will come; you have God's word on it.

There is a judgment coming that will hit the whole world. There will be a real worldwide shortage of food. Very early in the Tribulation, famine will hit the world (Rev. 6:5-6). It is also specifically predicted that having enough food to eat will be a specific judgment that God will pour out against His own people, Israel. Ezekiel graphically describes a time when famine will be so severe that people will eat the flesh of the dead bodies of their own relatives (Ezek. 5:8-10, 16-17). Jesus says this is just the beginning of the birth pangs. Think of this. Just before Christ returns, what He just described is just the beginning. This is nothing yet.

SIGN PREDICTION #7 – There will be hostility against those who proclaim
God's Gospel. **13:9-11**

Now at this point in the sign predictions, Jesus interjects in **verse 9** “be on your guard.”

This next thing on the list would actually hit them. They needed to be prepared to endure some serious opposition.

We know that throughout the book of Acts those apostles and early Christians did experience some of these things. When you present the truth about Jesus Christ, it rubs most of the religious world the wrong way.

What this indicates is that prior to Christ's return, there will be an outbreak of persecution that will occur for any true person related to God. There will be arrests and there will be beatings right in religious places like the synagogues. **This will happen because of the name of Jesus Christ.**

Political leaders will turn against those who are right with God and so will the false religious leaders.

Now **verse 10** explains why God will permit this to happen, so that "the gospel must be preached to all the nations."

What this means is that when this happens, the Gospel of the grace of God and Jesus Christ will come to the attention of the governing authorities and they will demand some accounting from those who preach it. This happened to Paul, it happened to Martin Luther and it has happened to others. But this will be a worldwide attempt to destroy any who proclaim truth. During the Tribulation, many will be killed because they were proclaiming the truth of God and Jesus Christ (Rev. 6:9).

God has a sovereign plan and purpose for permitting His men to suffer difficulty; it proclaims the truth of God and the program of God.

God says to His people, when you are hauled into court for His sake, the Holy Spirit will actually speak through you. He will give you right thoughts and right words.

SIGN PREDICTION #8 – There will be betrayal to death. **13:12**

This will be the ultimate time of betrayal. Brother will betray a brother even to the point of execution. A father will betray his child. Children will betray their parents. They will actually rise up against parents to have them put to death.

We believe this will happen when the Antichrist reigns.

SIGN PREDICTION #9 – There will be hatred against any connected to the name of Jesus Christ. **13:13**

Notice one right with God will be hated by "all," not just some. The reason for the hatred is the name of Jesus Christ.

Those who wish to gain their life will have to lose it.

Now why will all of these horrible things happen? Jesus Christ was rejected! God loved this world and the people in it and He sent His Son to save people from sins. Reject Him and you are doomed. Receive Him and you are saved.