

“The Great Tribulation – Part 2”
Mark 13:9-20
(Preached at Trinity, July 30, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As Jesus was departing from the temple His disciples came to Him boasting about its beauty and greatness. Jesus divulges to them that the entire system of Judaism was about to come crashing down. The Temple structure was going to be utterly destroyed. Every stone would be moved from its place.
2. Of course this was a terrible revelation to the Disciples. To the Jews the Temple was the bedrock of all things. They assumed it would be standing until the end of time. They asked Christ the obvious question, “When?”
3. While the disciples probably had a single question in mind, in His answer Jesus spoke of two separate events: the destruction of Jerusalem *and* the second advent of Christ. As we've seen Jesus is actually referring to the entire period between the advents of Christ, what is referred to as the inter-advental period. We also call it the Gospel age.
4. Last time we began to look at the terrible tribulation that Jesus described as the Abomination of Desolation as foreseen by Daniel.
Mark 13:14 NAU - "But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (let the reader understand)"
5. Jesus is declaring the interpretation of those things disclosed to Daniel. As we saw last time, Jesus was disclosing those things which are near at hand – the destruction of Jerusalem and but was also describing things as they will continue to be. As I've pointed out Jesus is saying there are no particular signs prior to His return. He describes conditions that would characterize the entire Gospel age. However, there is progression and increasing intensity as with the pains of a woman in labor.
6. Last time I pointed out the Abomination of Desolation spoken of in Daniel has taken place with ever increasing intensity.
 - A. The first fulfillment was Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. when he erected a pagan altar over the altar of burnt offering and offered swine upon it.
He banned Judaism and put an end to the sacrifices.
 - B. But Antiochus Ephiphanes was only a foreshadow of the desolation to come.
 1. In Matthew's Gospel Jesus is calling the destruction of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy.
Matthew 24:15-16 NAU - "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."

2. Jesus warned them that when they saw this coming to flee for their lives
Luke 21:20 NAS - "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand."
Mark 13:14 NAU - "But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."
 3. This was the darkest hour Jerusalem had ever experienced. It was far worse than when Babylon destroyed it in 587 BC or when Antiochus Epiphanes desolated it in 163 BC. It is said that when Titus overtook Jerusalem more than a million Jews, who had crowded into the city, perished.
Mark 13:19 NAU - "For those days will be a *time of tribulation* such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will."
7. Just as the desolation of Antiochus Epiphanes was but a foretaste of what Jerusalem would experience at the hand of the Romans the desolation upon Jerusalem in 70 AD was also but a foreshadow. The birth pangs continue to intensify. There will be a final great time of tribulation upon God's people the church when Antichrist shall violate all that is sacred?
- I. The Tribulation as it applies to the Gospel age
Mark 13:19-20 NAU - "For those days will be a *time of tribulation* such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will. ²⁰ "Unless the Lord had shortened *those* days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days."
- A. There are various views regarding applying this to the second coming of Christ
 1. Dispensationalism –Highlights of this system of eschatology include an increase in “signs” just prior to the return of Christ, a secret rapture of the church just prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation but as it applies only to the Jews. They see this passage as referring to the nation Israel back in the land of Palestine with a rebuilt Temple, only to suffer at the hand of the antichrist after the Christians are removed by a secret rapture. This period following the rapture of the church is called the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation ends with Armageddon and the return of Christ to defeat the armies of the earth.
 2. Historic Premillennialism – Similar to Dispensational Premillennialism except they do not see a pretribulation secret rapture. They believe the church will go through the Great Tribulation. All will suffer at the hands of the Antichrist.
 3. Post Millennialism – Although some hold to a Tribulation period for the church, many hold to a preterist view that this passage speaks only to the tribulation of the Jews in 70 AD. They see the Gospel ushering in a golden age before the return of Christ with most of the world being saved. It will be an era of great peace and prosperity.

- B. What does the Bible have to say about the Tribulation of God's Church?
1. The Bible teaches that the interadvental period, the Gospel age will be characterized by both triumph and tribulation. It is a time of conquest as the enemies of Christ are being crushed beneath His feat.
John Murray – "Interadvental history is characterized by tribulation, turmoil, strife, perplexity, wars and rumors of wars. Contemporaneous with this, however, is the universal expansion of the church."
 2. The church has from the beginning been the persecuted church, the church militant, and the church triumphant.
 - a. On one hand the church will march forth victoriously. The gates of hell will not prevail against. Like leaven it will continue to increase dramatically. Like a mustard seed it will start small but become a great tree.
 - b. On the other hand, during the interadvental period the victorious church will be the suffering church.
 3. From the time of the crucifixion the persecution of God's people has continued – Remember, **Verses 5-13** describe the interadvental period.
Mark 13:13 NAU - "You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."
John 16:33 NAU - "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
1 Peter 4:12-13 NAU - "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation."
Matthew 5:11-12 NAU - "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
Acts 14:22 NAU - "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."
 4. Like birth pains (**Verse 8**) they will continue in frequency and intensity. Throughout the history of Christianity there have been countless martyrs and it continues today.
 - a. Because of the persecution many fall away – they hang on tightly to this present age.
Matthew 24:10 NAU - "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another."
2 Timothy 4:10 NAS - "for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me" - αἰῶν
Matthew 13:22 NAU - "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world (αἰῶν) and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."

- b. In addition, wickedness increases in intensity
Matthew 24:12 NAU - "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold."
- C. The great Abomination of Desolation prophesied by Daniel was fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. when he erected a pagan altar over the altar of burnt offering and swine were offered upon it.
1. But Jesus is saying here in His Olivet Discourse that this was only a foreshadow of the desolation to come during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
 2. It also serves as a type and foreshadow of the great profaning of God's Temple which is the church. This has been taking place from the beginning of the Church and will only increase. The spirit of antichrist and beast have been among us continually
 3. But Scripture seems to point to a particular individual at the end of the age.
2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 NAU - " Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."
 4. At the end of the age before Christ returns there will be a great apostasy bringing great suffering upon the church of Christ. This seems to be the interpretation of **Daniel 7**.
Daniel 7:8 NAU - "another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great *boasts*."
Daniel 7:21 NAU - "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them"
 5. Revelation 20 describes Satan being loosed out of his prison for a season
Revelation 20:2-3 – "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."
 6. If the destruction of Jerusalem was just a foreshadow how terrible will be the suffering of God's people during this final time of apostasy and the persecution of God's people.

Conclusion:

1. While we are warned against seeking to know the times and seasons, yet we should always remain watchful. As we see the great moral decline throughout this world and our own nation and as we see the great decline of the mainstream church are we witnessing this great apostasy occurring before our eyes?
2. Will we see this terrible persecution in our lifetime – tribulation like the church has ever seen? Will we endure?
Mark 13:13 NAU - "You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."
3. It will all culminate with the return of Christ
Mark 13:24 NAU - "But in those days, after that tribulation . . ."
Mark 13:26-27 NAU - "Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory. ²⁷ "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven."
4. What is our duty? Be watchful and continue faithfully serving Christ.